

**Curating the Cinematic Muse: The Role of Programming in the Film Festival Experience
– The 40th Toronto International Film Festival**

by

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EXAMINING COMMITTEE MEMBERSHIP

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AUTHOR'S DECLARATION

I hereby declare that I am the sole author of this thesis. This is a true copy of the thesis, including any required final revisions, as accepted by my examiners. I understand that my thesis may be made electronically available to the public.

ABSTRACT

International film festivals are clearly about something beyond the appreciation of cinema; they are forums for the collective exploration and celebration of films, showcasing the newest films, the exotic and forgotten cinematic productions. Within a contemporary context, they represent the ultimate celebration of cinema and films as a collection of creative texts. They engage participants in a celebratory environment that pays homage to film as an artform.

The research examines an international film festival with a focus on the role of programming, through the exploration of the understated elements of this multidimensional phenomenon that impacts the festival event. The significance and original contribution of the research is found in its methodological intervention into the burgeoning field of film festival research through a specific investigation of a non-competitive international film festival. The research explores how programming impacts the festival event and the emergent experience. Furthermore, the research is approached from a supply-side perspective with summative insights that provided pathways to conceptualize an international film festival as a field-configuring event, with discourse on the less encompassing areas of organizing, programming and curating the festival event.

The conceptual framework positions the research within an interdisciplinary context with theoretical perspectives from institutional theory, field configuring events and film festival studies to offer a broader lens to nuance the gleanings from film festival professionals. The research utilizes the qualitative research strategy of the case study augmented by research methods such as in-depth interviews with participants, textual analysis and secondary research to collect and analyze data to situate this investigation within a contemporary and historical context. The interview gives a distinct

focus to the film festival programmers to share perspectives to understand the contexts and settings; how they navigate the programming and the elements that impact the festival event. Textual analysis is used as a corollary to understand and provide meanings from the setting, the related activities, voices and the film festival context.

The research is on the Toronto International Film Festival (TIFF), its diverse programming practices and discursive positioning of films in an inclusive and influential event. The researcher problematizes festival programming to examine the film festival and uncover from festival professionals, their perspectives from an immersive and participatory lens in relation to organizing, programming and curating the festival event that embolden its *raison d'être*.

The research findings revealed that there are multiple elements to programming an international film festival and curating the festival event and the emergent experience. The participants demonstrated their knowledge and expertise and how as a collective they understood the issues that are significant facets which are central to the film festival's identity, status and reputation. Additionally, the discourse on the curation of the festival event and the emergent experience revealed characteristics of a field-configuring film festival event through several factors that were primarily connected to the multidimensional nature of the film festival - partnerships, collective sensemaking and information exchange that emerged as plausible and integral aspects both in a local and global context.

The overall findings highlighted that there is need for further understanding of film festival as a phenomenon and the multidimensionality of programming; therefore the research suggests additional areas for scholarly investigation that can contribute to our understanding of film festivals and their interconnectedness in relation to our cultures and societies.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Heights by great men reach and kept were not attained by sudden flight, but they while their companions slept were toiling upward through the night.

Henry Wadsworth Longfellow

My thesis emerged from a confluence of experiences both personally and professionally benefitting from the contributions of exceptional individuals whose contributions I wish to acknowledge. It is this invaluable support that has allowed me to succeed.

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1. INTRODUCTION

There is a tension in which the institutional framework of film festivals both converge and conflict, with the cinephile agenda. Any festival that matters has one crucial task, and that is to defend cinema; and many festivals fail to pay adequate reverence to the cinematic muse.

Richard Porton (2009, p.4)

Film festivals have become increasingly popular events and have been described as sites of intersecting discourse and practices because they occupy a special place in almost all cultures (Archibald & Miller, 2011; DeValck & Loist, 2009; DeValck, 2007) showcasing the richness in cinematic productions and have been the “driving force behind the global circulation of cinema” (Iordanova & Rhyne, 2009, p. 1). They function as a cosmopolitan space in which spectators are encouraged to participate in “a kind of cultural tour of the world” (Chan, 2011, p. 253) and provide a platform to showcase important aspects that are vital to global film culture (Van Hemert, 2013; Czach, 2004).

Film festivals are complex global phenomena that encapsulate multiple activities and events (Rouff, 2012; DeValck & Loist, 2009; DeValck, 2007), and have become an area of growing scholarly interest that provides a fascinating setting for research from a variety of perspectives in an expanding field of scholarship with the proliferation of film festivals globally (Ruling & Strandgaard-Pedersen, 2010; Stringer, 2001). According to Rouff (2012), they “are crucial exhibition circuits, because they nurture independent films, showcase national cinemas, and bring international films to ever-increasing audiences” (p. 1). The growth of film festivals make it increasingly important to investigate the role they play in exhibition and distribution of films, our culture, society and economy (Dickson, 2014; Archibald & Miller, 2011; Genkova, 2010) and many scholars have studied the phenomena through different lenses such as - organisation and operations (Ruling &

Strandgaard-Pedersen, 2010; Fischer 2009), programming (Genkova, 2010; Czach, 2004), stakeholders (Rhyne, 2009) competitive showcase (DeValck & Soeteman, 2010), distribution (Burgess, 2012; Iordanova, 2009), agendas (Peranson, 2009), exhibition (De Valck, 2007; Bachmann, 2000), geopolitical actors (DeValck, 2007; Elsaesser, 2005) and film festival circuit (Harbord, 2002).

With their emergence as one of the “foremost dynamic curatorial mechanisms” (Rastegar, 2012, p. 310) in film culture, it is necessary to investigate them in depth and detailed as significant contemporary phenomenon as a multidisciplinary field (DeValck & Loist, 2009; Fischer, 2009) through multidisciplinary approaches (Archibald & Miller, 2011; Lee & Stringer, 2012). Scholars such as DeValck and Loist (2009) opined that “academics have a key part to play in clarifying the formative yet complex role of film festivals in our cultures, industries and societies (p. 180) as they possess their own economies, social economic drivers, professional and political dynamics, and agendas. This research builds on DeValck’s (2007) perspective that despite the fact that while press coverage of festivals is “omnipresent”, it often “fails to provide us with an encompassing cultural analysis of the phenomenon that transcends the individual festival editions, both historically and on a contemporary level” (2007, p.14) and very few studies seek to understand it from an organizational perspective (Ruling & Strandgaard-Pedersen, 2010; Fischer 2009).

The research explore film festivals as field-configuring events (FCEs) and brings focus to a non-competitive international film festival that is audience-centered and the dynamism of film festival programming and how it contributes to its identity and reputation from a supply-side perspective within a contemporary context. As a concept, FCE (Lampel & Meyer, 2008; Lampel, Meyer & Ventresca, 2005) is derived from the field of management studies and according to scholars such as

Lampel and Meyer (2008) and Lampel et al (2005), through this concept it is possible to examine the inner workings of such events as festivals, tradeshow and conferences in order to comprehend their influence in a given field and as a place in which learning and development takes place through the lens of the individuals that represent the institution of the festival itself (Schübler et al, 2015; Vilhjálmsdóttir, 2011). FCEs are defined as “settings in which people from diverse organizations and with diverse purposes assemble periodically, or on a one-time basis, to announce new products, develop industry standards, construct social networks, recognize accomplishments, share and interpret information, and transact business” (Lampel et al, 2005, p. 1099).

According to Bossa (2013) and Lampel & Meyer (2008), field-configuring events can be applied in conjunction with approaches and ideas developed in film festival research; and this offers new methodological framework through which a film festival can be studied (2013, p. 9). Furthermore, through field configuring events, the research identifies and highlights institutional mechanisms and processes such as the festival organization and film festival programming, which scholars such as Lampel & Meyer (2008) and Anand & Watson (2004) purport that extant research has not paid enough attention to notions and aspects that constitute a recognized area of institutional life.

The research provides an opportunity that is of particular interest to the researcher, the institution of the film festival that emerges from a specific cultural and ecological context (Czach, 2004). It allows for the researcher as a cinephile to explore the crucial role film festival programming plays in an international film festival. This emboldens the researcher’s enthusiasm and excitement, to help capture his appreciation through social imagination for the cinematic muse and provide invaluable insights to help our understanding of film festivals. The research builds on discourse from scholarship and perspectives from film festival professionals to provide gleanings on several factors

that are primarily connected to the multidimensional nature of film festivals and their contribution to global film culture.

Film festivals are viewed as essential prerequisites to create an atmosphere for the appreciation of film as a *raison d'être* (Czach, 2010, p. 143) and represent specific cultural institutions linked to the idea of celebration. Film festival programming offers a framework that allows for film festival programmers to imagine and define a certain programme to generate the festival experience they want to conjure. Scholars such as DeValck & Loist, (2009) and Stringer (2008) point to the fact that film festival programming directly influences the constituency of audience – although no one can foresee what audience reaction and outcome a certain programme will have on reception of the festival event. Film festival programming encompasses a range of skills and tasks that helps to shape and define an identity for any given event. The sheer variety of interdependent practices carried out in its name suggests the complexities of this particular form of curatorship (Lee & Stringer, 2012, p. 302) is an important area and it is necessary to research such matters in-depth and detailed. By doing so, envision a way to highlight, promote and contextualize not only film, but programming the 'public' (DeValck & Loist, 2009; Lee & Stringer 2012).

According to scholars such as Genkova (2010), Fischer (2009) and DeValck (2007) there is need for more field research, critical theory and concepts elucidating this aspect of film festivals, even though film festival programming is an important area, little is understood of this interrogated process (Czach, 2004) and scholarly research that have been published to date is limited (Lee & Stringer, 2011; Fischer, 2009; DeValck, 2007). Undertaking research on film festivals, scholars can uncover information from sources that have never been assessed, that may be found in great amounts generated by the film festivals themselves in the forms of print and digital media sources by those

participating in the festival events, according to Fischer (2009). He further noted, building on Czach (2004) work espousing that the lack of information on this subject may result from film festivals being less inclined to publish work that is critical of their own operations. Hence, Fischer (2009) posits that “while information published by film festivals provide a wealth of details, there still remains no way of utilizing such information without entering into detailed and considered rationalization process as to why particular information used in a particular manner (p. 14).” This research is a contribution to the call for scholarly work by Rouff (2012), Lee and Stringer (2011), Fischer (2009), Czach (2004) and Stringer (2001) to explore and investigate specific approaches to film festivals and the processes viewed as essential renderings to create an atmosphere for the appreciation of film as art both for the audience and other stakeholders; and as a field-configuring event (Bossa, 2013; Vilhjálmsdóttir, 2011; Ruling, 2010).

1.1 The Aim and Objectives of the Research

The aim of the research underlying this scholarly thrust is the exploration of an international film festival and the role film festival programming plays in a field configuring context. The research objectives are to garner an understanding of the following questions within the context of the research:

1. To understand the role of film festival programming as an essential activity in the festival event and the processes that impact the curation of an international film festival that is field-configuring.
2. To explore how an international film festival acquire its identity and reputation as a field-configuring event.

1.2 Purpose of the Research

The purpose of this research is to explore the phenomenon of a film festival to understand the role of film festival programming as an essential activity in a non-competitive international film festival to understand the understated elements of the process and their impact on the festival experience within a field-configuring context. The research also gives consideration to the perspectives of film festival professionals as the vanguard who decides what will be selected as the moving image in the festival's organization of the festival event to reify its institutional logic; and to answer the following research questions: *(i) what is the role of programming and the processes that impact the film festival experience? And; (ii) how does an international film festival acquire its identity and reputation?*

The research is qualitative to advance our understanding of the understated elements of programming a non-competitive international film festival that is an audience-centered event. More broadly, the research investigates the multidimensional aspect of film festival programming through the contribution of an empirical study from a supply side perspective. It offers a more sophisticated and reflexive account (Watt, 2007) of practices and culture of a film festival that is a field-configuring event - the Toronto International Film Festival (TIFF). The research within the context of a non-competitive international film festival will be explored to give considerations through an in-depth and detailed approach to the uncovering emergent themes, elements and aspects of the research questions to shape the outcomes of the research. The research design employs a case study approach to help shape and define the research outcomes through pragmatic analysis and scholastic inquiry to provide a rich and rigorous account of the research setting and the questions that guide the research. The ensuing dialogues with film festival professionals provide perspectives that augment the scholastic insights from the related literature to highlight the understated programming

elements of a non-competitive international film festival that is audience-centered. Furthermore, the research gives consideration to the identity and reputation of a non-competitive international film festival and how this enables and emboldens its status giving a greater sense and meaning (Bosma, 2010; Nichols, 1994) while highlighting the multidimensional nature of the festival event within a field-configuring context (Bossa, 2013; Lee & Stringer, 2012; Rouff, 2012).

1.3 Research Questions

There are two main research questions, with each having several sub-questions:

1. What is the role of programming and the processes that impact the film festival experience?

- 1.1. Who has the overall vision for the edition of the festival being developed and its programming?
- 1.2. What are the processes involved in programming an international film festival that is non-competitive and audience-centred?
- 1.3. What are the key elements in the curation of the field-configuring film festival experience for a non-competitive international film festival?

2. How does an international film festival acquire its identity and reputation?

- 2.1. How do you curate the identity for an audience-centered international film festival and is this reflected in the programming and the festival experience?
- 2.2. What are the elements that foster the status and reputation of a non-competitive international film festival and how is this enhanced throughout the festival experience?
- 2.3. What are the key activities undertaken to foster collaboration (partnerships), information exchange (communication) and collective sensemaking (meaning) by TIFF as an audience-centred film festival?

1.4 The Significance of the Study

Amidst the proliferation of this global phenomenon – film festival – and the growing scholarly interests from various disciplines, film festival programming from the supply-side perspective has not received much attention in the scholarly discourse. The significance and original contribution of the research is its exploration in the growing field of film festival research through a specific investigation of a film festival and the role of programming in the development of a field-configuring film festival experience. Much of the literature on film festivals and in particular film festival programming deals with it from the lens of the filmmakers (Van Hemert, 2013; Rouff, 2012), film competition (DeValck & Soeteman, 2010), cinephilia (DeValck, 2007) and distribution and wholesale (Gideon, 2000).

This research highlights a non-competitive international film festival and film festival programming as a multidisciplinary and multidimensional phenomenon respectively, and explores how the latter impacts the festival experience and contribute perspectives and scholarly insights on the elements of the process. While the research examined a non-competitive film festival that is audience-centered, issues related to film festival programming are pertinent to other festivals the world over.

Additionally, this study stimulates further research by generating questions for exploration and may provide alternative approaches to dealing with the challenges associated with programming other international film festivals.

The research is of particular importance, given the proliferation of film festivals globally and as a significant contemporary phenomenon in global cultural industries, the research brings a unique perspective on film festival programming from both a practitioner and scholarly lens. It explores

the role of film festival programming; it's the impact on the festival event and the curation of the festival experience of an international film festival that is recognized in global film culture. The research as an empirical study provides theoretical perspective not just from film festival research, but also from institutional theory and field configuring events lens. The exploration of an international film festival from 'behind the scenes' and the crucial role film festival programming plays in an international film festival, and the way in which films reach its audience guides the research. Furthermore, the opportunity to understand contextually the descriptive and creative aspects of the process through the gleanings uncovered will provide invaluable insights for other audience-centered events, film festival professionals, scholastic researchers and cinephilia.

1.5 Conceptual Framework

The theoretical perspective for the research builds on a conceptual framework that incorporates institutional theory, field-configuring events and film festival research (Fig. 1). This is essential as this body of literature offers the system of concepts, assumptions and theories that inform the research (Robinson, 2011, p. 20 citing Miles & Huberman, 1994); given that film festivals are complex phenomena (DeValck, 2007) and complex multidimensional entities (Lee & Stringer, 2011) within global film culture. The following highlights provide gleanings to better understand the conceptual framework within the context of the research through the lens of institutional theory, field-configuring events and film festival research that is categorically defined for this scholarly undertaking.

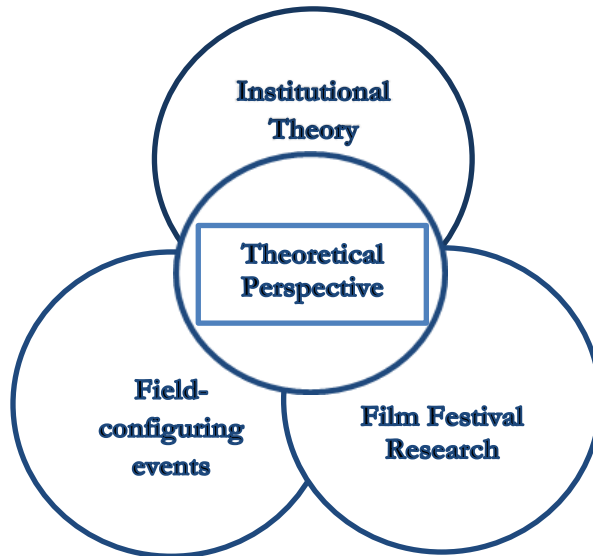


Figure 1: Conceptual Framework

Utilizing this scholarly lens the research uncovered insights to understand the roles and behaviour - actions (Van der Voet, 2014; Vilhjálmsdóttir, 2011; Nadavulakere, 2008) of film festival professionals within the context of institutional theory and situating the organizational field through concepts from field-configuring events (Lampel & Meyer, 2008; Lampel et al, 2005), given that the film festivals within global film culture are viewed as an organizational field and for this research film festival is contextualized as a FCE (Bossa, 2013, Vilhjálmsdóttir, 2011). Organizational fields evolve and change and FCEs play an important roles in that development (Lampel & Meyer, 2008) and film festivals contextually have proliferated and film festival research has evolved as a response to this growth as an area of scholarly interests and as an interdisciplinary field (see Table 1) that is explored both within the humanities as social sciences, mostly by film and media scholars, but also within disciplines such as business, anthropology, urban and tourism studies, history, gender studies, community and identity studies (DeValck & Loist, 2009; Iordanova & Rhyne, 2009).

Institutional theory emphasizes the importance of social and cultural aspects of the organizational environment *vis-à-vis* the tasks and technical aspects that are given consideration within the context of the festival organization. To understand film festivals from an organizational lens, institutional theory elucidates the inner workings (Van der Voet, 2014; Meyer, 2008; Nadavulakere, 2008). Within institutional theory, it is institutional logic that aids in our understanding of film festivals as phenomenon (Vilhjálmsson, 2011) given the continuous friction amongst emergent, experimental and artistic approaches versus commercial approaches due to the dynamism of the organizational field. Film festivals as organizations and events both thrive and struggle (Vilhjálmsson, 2011; Rüling 2009) to merge the different institutional logic of culture and art; and the institutional logic of commerce that are intertwined in film festivals' role in how films come to the festival and how they are programmed for exhibition platforms.

FCEs highlight the interconnected elements: shared cognition, common sense-making, and shared common knowledge. FCEs provide a platform for people from diverse social organizations to interact and take part in their roles as institutional intermediaries. They also provide strong settings for social interaction, collective sense making, and the construct of reputations and status in organizational fields (Lampel & Meyer, 2008; Rüling, 2009; Lampel, 2005). According to Lampel & Meyer (2008), in their research article *Guest editor's introduction - Field-configuring events as new technologies, industries, and markets*, expressed the view that:

... FCEs represent an important and understudied mechanism shaping the emergence and developmental trajectories of technologies, markets, industries and professions. We argue that theory and research addressing FCEs can augment our understanding of the emergence and transformation of these critical features of the world's social and economic landscape, contribute to organization management theory, and improve the quality of data that researchers bring to studying dynamics that drive collective social and economic change (p. 1024).

FCEs are microcosms of a nascent technology, industry, or market, in which activities are concentrated and intensified through direct proximity and finite temporal opportunity (Lampel and Meyer, 2008), such as for example, *South by Southwest (SXSW) Conference & Festivals* that celebrates the convergence of the interactive, film, and music industries. Scholars such as Bossa (2013), Vilhjálmsdóttir (2011), Røling (2009), Lampel & Meyer (2008) and Nadavulakere (2008) espoused that field-configuring event contextually can be situated with research about growth and evolution of institutional, organizational and professional fields.

Film festival research is a growing research discipline with proliferation of film festivals and their growing importance (Røling & Strandgaard-Pedersen, 2010), film and media scholars have been focusing attention on film festival events and establishing a field of study that is addressed or explored both within and outside of the humanities and social sciences. Film festival research is an interdisciplinary study and it employs a multidisciplinary approach (See Table 1) augmenting theoretical perspectives that explore interests in film festivals, as an emerging area of global research (Van Hemert, 2013; Røling & Strandgaard-Pedersen, 2010) that helps to provide a space for bridging research traditions between film and media studies, cultural and organizational studies (Jordanova & Rhyne, 2009; DeValck, 2007).

Film festival research provides a unique opportunity to engage in interactions with film festival professionals and other stakeholders, and it has the capacity to help in our understanding of the film festival phenomenon using multidisciplinary methods (De Valck & Loist, 2009; Koven, 2008; Stringer, 2001).

1.6 Supply-side Perspective

While studies on the supply-side of film festivals are rare compared with those examining how film festivals are defined, evaluated and experienced from a demand-side perspective that is not to say no attention at all has been paid to certain outcomes for film festival professionals from supply-side perspective. However, Fischer (2009) purports that “to date there is very little information that explores or seeks to understand those properties representative of basic film festival operation” (p.1) and the “cinematic practices otherwise marginalized or invisible within established film institutions” (Rastegar, 2012, p. 310) along with the discourses film festival professionals are engaged in and the process of programming the film festival to curate, create or shape mutually rewarding experiences for the audience as well, little is understood of the mechanics of the process (Manners, et al. 2015; Getz, 2012; Czach, 2004).

The role played by film festival programming in shaping the atmosphere and identity of the festival event is essential to the festival organization. The festival programmers actively give shape to this aspect of the festival event in how they mediate between selecting films and programming the kind and type of festival experience they want to frame (Rastegar, 2012; Czach, 2004) or engender “requires more critical attention than they have received from scholars thus far (2012, p. 12).

Considerations are given to how a film festival and film festival programming as a corollary provide important insights to the understated elements that help shape the festival experience that has always been an important aspect of the industry (Manners, et al 2015; Bosma, 2010; Czach, 2004). The factors and elements that impact the process to engender and enliven the film festival and the

festival experience from an organizational perspective are fundamental, given the “organizational complexity of the event” (Fischer, 2009, p. 42).

The film festival with its multiple activities and events are crucial to the overall success, given the demands of the various stakeholders. Giving context to an international film festival as a complex phenomenon (Rouff, 2012; Fischer, 2009; DeValck, 2007) and film festival organizers need to be aware of the ever-changing environment. Consideration ought to be given to the programming processes for the festival event and the manner in which it emboldens the institutional logic of the festival (Vilhjálmsdóttir, 2011). In exploring and understanding TIFFF, it is important that a pragmatic approach be taken throughout the research process; within the conceptual framework, theoretical perspective and methodological approaches that represent the organization from the lens of its value and merit: social, human, cultural and institutional, not economic.

The role film festival programming plays in the management of the festival event is intense and difficult, it requires common sense, imagination and experience (Manners, et al., 2015) to orchestrate a memorable festival experience. However, researchers have neglected the perspectives of film festival professionals and have focused on the demand side (audience perspectives), without giving consideration to the understated elements of organizing, programming and curating the festival experience from the supply-side. According to scholars such as Manners, et al. (2015), Rastegar (2012) and Lade and Jackson (2004), little research has been conducted specifically from the supply-side perspective to identify the factors that create a memorable experience for festival goers.

Therefore, the supply-side perspective definitively helps to frame this research in the exploration of the role of film festival programming. It assist in providing an understanding of the programming practices and the approaches film festival professionals undertake; and how they interpellate the

audience coming together to engender an experience that engages in cinematic storytelling for an international film festival and its significant milestone (Rastegar, 2012; Rouff, 2012).

By giving consideration to programming which is important for managing the film festival event from a supply-side perspective in particular, an understanding of what film festival professionals regard as crucial to the festival event, will contribute significantly to our collective understanding of how the festival experience is curated to be celebratory and memorable. Notwithstanding, the treatise outlined above to espouse the focus of the supply-side of film festivals, few researchers have actually explored what it means from the lens of the film festival professionals. To understand film festival programming and how it shapes both the kind and type of festival experience it became necessary to actively explore the research from the supply-side perspective (Manners et al, 2015; Rastegar, 2012; Kontogeorgopoulos & Chulikavit, 2010).

Film festivals do not just showcase cinema, they actively engage their audiences (Rastegar, 2012; Czach, 2004; Haslam, 2004) through “context of their programming and curatorial values” (Haslam, 2004, p. 50) that reify their institutional logic. Programming shapes the kind and type of festival event the organizers want to project with the understanding that the film festival reflects an essential sense of a particular time and place, given its temporality. In light of the aforementioned, it is through the festival experience that festival organizers “inflects and constructs the meanings” (Nichols, 1994, p. 1) that they want to contextualize within the festival event. The festival organizers rely on connecting individual affective responses to the organization of the festival event by “interpellating and giving consideration to different audiences in the collective experience” (Rastegar, 2012, p. 315) that they desire to project (audience-centered) and present (engaging, entertaining, educational, innovative and informative).

2. REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

This chapter provides an overview of the scholarly perspectives and journalistic insights that informs the conceptual framework through a rigorous review of contemporary literature in the fields of institutional theory, field-configuring events and film festival research that connects with the overarching aim of this research. Consideration is given to these three fields and how they are contextualized to the research within the contemporary framework of film festivals, film festival programming, identity and reputation to create a premise with which film festival professionals and the festival experience can be understood.

Furthermore, this chapter explores the three fields to frame the research to offer valuable conceptual and methodological insights. This is to understand the case under consideration thematically, within the realm of the study of film festivals, film festival programming and the perspectives of film festival professionals to offer insights that are transferable to film festival inquiry. The insights on film festivals in the context of the research through their programming, organizing and curating of the film festival event from the lens of institutional theory and field-configuring events provide gleanings into scholarship. These will give context to the analysis of the interviews with film festival professionals and shape the conceptual foundations and theoretical perspective of this research.

2.1 Institutional Theory

Institutional theory offers a deeper and more resilient aspect to social structure. It considers the processes by which structures, including schemas; rules, norms, and routines, become established as authoritative guidelines for social behaviour. Institutional theory allows for inquiry into how these elements are created, diffused, and adopted both over space and time. Furthermore, how they fall into decline and disuse or bring stability and order in social life where participants in institutional hierarchy inevitably will be influenced not just by consensus and conformity, but by conflict and change in social structures (Meyer, 2008; Nadavulakere, 2008; Scott, 2004).

Institutional theory emerged in the 1970s, focusing much attention on the key concept of the ‘actors’ within the organizational environments (Van der Voet, 2014; Meyer, 2008). The notion of the actor is defined as individual persons, nation states and the organizations created by persons and states. Emerging from this notion is social change; which allows for the continued use of Max Weber’s *Protestant Ethic* thesis as a justification for proper social analysis (Meyer, 2008, p. 789). The protestant ethic (phrase for work ethic), in sociological and institutional theory, attaches value to hard work, thrift, and efficiency in an actor’s worldly calling (professional endeavor), which, especially in the Calvinist view, were deemed signs of an individual’s election (actor’s professional pathway) or eternal salvation (Encyclopedia Britannica, 2016).

This new model of institutional theory has remained in force, making social science publications conventionally refer to people and groups as ‘actors’. According to Van der Voet (2014) and Meyer (2008), it incorporates models that deem people and groups as embedded in larger structures and cultures. The common element that emerges is “the idea that society is made up of interested purposive and often rational actors (Meyer, 2008, p. 790). Institutional theory embodies a tension in

the conceptualized actor-environment relation, inferring what is often viewed as stress between structure (i.e. the environment) and agency or the notion of the actor. Discord on the notion of actor emerges in the replication of debates in the old institutional theory about free will and determinism (Meyer, 2008, p. 790).

Institutional theory focuses on more cognitive and cultural explanations for organizational forms and legitimacy as dominant drivers of organizational action. According to Van der Voet (2014), it reinforces a perspective that forms a much-needed complement to the rational-adaptive theories that once dominated organizational science. This perspective was generally seen as a theory of stability, rather than as a theory of change. However, at the end of the 1980s, organizations experienced changes deemed noteworthy to important scholars. DiMaggio and Powell (1991), Anand and Petersen (2000), Scott (2001, 2004) and Ashworth, Boyne and Delbridge (2007) incorporated more attention to the role of agency by bringing about change and reintegrating aspects of the 'old' institutional perspective within the emergent theory preceding the 1980s (p. 1).

The purpose of institutional theory is to better account for cultural and legitimacy-based perspectives in organizational life. According to Meyer (2008) in the years that followed, the institutional perspective have emerged as mainstream and concepts such as rational myths (Meyer & Rowan, 1977), isomorphism (DiMaggio & Powell, 1983) and strategic responses (Oliver, 1991) have been applied in multiple disciplines in the social sciences. Contemporary institutional theory is characterized by a distinct vocabulary, as well as a high degree of specialized and detailed concepts and theories. Institutional theory argues that industry (or organizational) environments are socially constructed or institutionalized over time by motivated constituent organizations and actors inhabiting them. The theory conceptualizes organizational environments not in narrow terms such

as industry or market, but using a much broader term – organizational fields. The construct of organizational fields and legitimacy are central to institutional theory and will be further examined in the research (Cabon, 2012; Nadavulakere, 2008; DiMaggio & Powell, 1991).

The concept of organizational field is central to institutional theory, as purported by scholars such as Moeran and Strandgaard Pedersen (2009), Nadavulakere (2008), Scott (2001) and DiMaggio and Powell (1991), on the general notion that it defines a social space and identifies a number of nodes, points of observation or positions with mutual relations in the analysis of the field. Bourdieu (1992) defines organizational field as a configuration of relations between positions and as socially structured space in which agents struggle. Emerging from this perspective, the concept of organizational field primarily deals with the nature of relations among nodes within a social space, in the same vein as other concepts, such as industry systems and societal sectors. However, DiMaggio and Powell (1991) proposed to define an organizational field as consisting of ‘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 and products’ (p.143). The actors’ participation in the field is distinct in defining the field, focusing on the various actors constituting the recognized organizational field in the aggregate.

Further consideration is given to DiMaggio and Powell’s (1991) definition and the assumption that fields are socially constructed by the actors’ cognitive view of the environment that includes relational and cultural elements. The inference can be made that organizational fields identify communities of organizations that participate in the same meaning systems, are defined by similar symbolic processes, and are subject to common regulatory processes. According to Scott (2004), in his research *Cultural-products industries and urban economic development prospects for growth and market*

contestation in global context, the definition of organization field is, to a large extent, consistent with the application of a distinctive complex set of institutional rules (p.135). He further provided perspectives that strengthen DiMaggio and Powell's (1991) views on organizational fields, noting that it was primarily used in studies to set their framework of the study in question in the early years. However, later research explored the dynamics and mechanisms within the relatively untapped field which, except for a few studies such as by DiMaggio and Powell (1991), termed three mechanisms of isomorphism: 'coercive', 'normative' and 'mimetic' forces (Scott, 2004; DiMaggio, 1991; DiMaggio & Powell, 1991).

To help our understanding within the context of the research the focus is on institutional isomorphism. These are efforts by institutions to respond to pressure on communities to conform to the outside world, and other organisations. These constraining processes results from a similarity of the processes or structure of one organization to those of another, be it the result of imitation or independent development under similar constraints, it helps to provide insight on coercive, mimetic and normative forces, as espoused by Scott (2004) and DiMaggio and Powell (1991). A coercive isomorphism occurs when organizations yield to conformity pressures that are coercive in nature, such as governmental regulations or political directives. Imitative or mimetic isomorphism occurs when organizations imitate each other within their organizational fields. This type of imitative pressure is evident in nascent industries where there are greater risks of environmental uncertainties and legitimacy is not yet established. In these circumstances, organizations seek to band together by charting industry progression and employing mechanisms such as collective lobbying or forming industry associations. Normative isomorphism occurs when organizational fields become professionalized over time, achieve an obvious identity, and field boundaries become thick. Normative pressures to conform include establishing training and teaching institutions, creating

professional standards, forming social and professional networks, and sharing organizational personnel. Though institutional theory has clearly established the legitimizing role of socio-political processes within organizational fields, a substantial gap remains (Schübler et al., 2015; Nadavulakere, 2008; Di Maggio & Powell, 1991).

Here, actors are empowered and controlled by institutional contexts, and these contexts go far beyond a few norms or network structures. Furthermore, these contexts are not constructs established by the contemporary actors themselves, but are likely to have prior and exogenous historical origins. Institutions, in these conceptions are packages or programs of an expanded sort. Meyer (2008) asserts that a regime is a term employed in political science for the idea of organizational packages infused with cultural meaning (often from professions as ‘epistemic communities’). Furthermore, actors are not really well-bounded entities; they can emerge within the institutional context through a coherent mixture of cultural and organizational material from their environments. Scholars such as Meyer (2008), DiMaggio and Powell (1991) and Scott (2001) captured this idea by referring to societal sectors, or social fields, or arenas of action.

In her seminal research *International film festivals as field-configuring event*, Nadavulakere (2008) proposed that film festivals can be explored from the context of institutional theory, given the film festival’s emphasis on the social and cultural aspects of film festivals as organizations. She further noted that film festivals, as organizations constitute a recognized organizational field, which is a component of institutional theory. Notably, institutional research tends to emphasize the conflictual interplay between actors and power relations with regards to organizational field viewed as arenas of power relations. When these are applied at a field level, the dynamics amongst its stakeholders must be investigated at an organizational level. Within the context of the research, institutional theory

attempts to bring together the focus on both the cognitive and cultural elements within the organization that primarily focuses on actors. Within the context of the organizational field, it is the issues that emerge within organizations that impact how the field is formed, instead of markets and technologies. Therefore, enacting organizations as centers of debates in which competing interests negotiate over issues, how they are interpreted and subsequently, impact the organizational field (Nadavulakere, 2008; Scott, 2004; Scott, 2001).

There is a fundamental proposition that encapsulates institutional theory, which focuses on the organizational field stabilizing over time around shared interpretations of the field and its activities. Once this is achieved, the constituent and the field as a whole become legitimate or institutionalized. Nadavulakere (2008) defines legitimacy as a ‘generalized perception or assumption that the actions of an entity are desirable, proper, or appropriate within some socially constructed system of norms, values, beliefs and definitions’ (p. 9). Therefore, poignantly reinforcing DiMaggio and Powell (1991), seminal contributions to organizational fields include the three isomorphic mechanisms within institutional theory that impact the actors within the field to develop shared interpretation of the field and the activities that affirm the aforementioned legitimacy. Institutional theory helps to bring social processes to the forefront; processes that are imbued with power and politics. The move towards an agentic paradigm, under the rubric of ‘institutional work’, has much to say about concepts such as resistance and change. It also develops important links to ideas from social movement theory, which gives us insights into how new political and activist movements are born, or how intra-organizational perspectives focus on strategic change and its leadership.

2.2 Field-Configuring Events

The emergence of field-configuring events, from the Lampel and Meyer's (2008) perspective, is a 'confluence of interests' among colleagues who were engaged in empirical research at non-academic conferences, ceremonies and trade shows. They 'unexpectedly' found these events to be fertile settings for collecting rich data, which led to critical turning points in the emergence and development of the social, economic and technological structures they were studying. Furthermore, Lampel and Meyer (2008) noted that entering the events as participant observers gave them "unmatched opportunities to interact with practitioners in their own language and on their own turf - they opened a unique window on participants' social, occupational and organizational worlds" (p. 1025). The refinement of the concept of field-configuring events and adaptation was fostered from a collective endeavour of like-minded colleagues who Lampel and Meyer (2008) noted organized a symposium and a professional development with the Academy of Management conferences in 2003 and 2004, respectively.

Field-configuring events are defined by Lampel and Meyer (2008) as microcosms of nascent technology, industry, or market in which activities are concentrated and intensified through direct proximity and finite temporal opportunity. They provide a platform for people from diverse social organizations to interact and take action. According to Lampel and Meyer (2008), field-configuring events include trade shows, professional conferences, technology contests, governmental hearings, and business ceremonies that directly and indirectly affect the origination, gestation and constitution of new technologies, industries and markets. Field-configuring events are characterized by structuring mechanisms that are broadly anchored in organizational institutionalism and neo-institutionalism (Nadavulakere, 2008; Schübler et al., 2015)

The concept stresses the role of organizational field, intimating that cultural and creative industries are events, when organized and structured are different from the usual arrangements in markets, networks and hierarchies. The peculiar structuring mechanisms of film festivals make them both a product and driver of field evolution, facilitating activities such as information exchange, collective sense-making and the generation of social and reputational resources. Field-configuring events can enhance, reorient, or even undermine existing technologies, industries, or markets (Lampel & Meyer, 2008). Alternatively, they can become crucibles from which new technologies, industries, and markets emerge. It is in the recognition that field-configuring events have the ability to foster change, that they are perceived with “an eye towards influencing field evolution” (p.1026).

Researchers like Schübler et al. (2015) Lampel and Meyer (2008) and Ruling (2008), recognize that field-configuring events designed to shape field evolution may (or may not) have such intended outcomes, or are eclipsed by unplanned and unanticipated outcomes. Furthermore, unplanned field-configuring events can impact or influence field evolution and, as Lampel and Meyer (2008) inferred, may trigger emergent processes that redirect the field’s developmental trajectory.

Field-configuring events are further identified by the following factors that make them distinct:

- i. They assemble in one location actors from diverse geographies and organizations.
- ii. Their duration is limited, running from a few hours to a few days.
- iii. They provide unstructured opportunities for face-to-face social interaction among participants.
- iv. They feature and depend heavily on ceremonial and dramaturgical activities.
- v. They are occasions for information exchange and collective sense-making.

- vi. They generate social and reputational resources that can be deployed elsewhere and for other purposes (p. 1026-1027).

They incorporate ignored issues when examining events in an organizational field such as social networks, sense-making processes, and temporal organizations. They also direct scholarly interests towards the study of unique organizational phenomena like reputation regimes. Schübler et al. (2015), in their publication *Field-configuring events: Arenas for innovation and learning*, highlighted that these types of events and their impact upon organizations, networks and organizational fields have become an important focal point for research on events such as trade fairs, conferences and festivals, as well as in different disciplinary contexts such as management studies, organization studies and economic geography (p. 165).

Scholars, such as Schübler et al. (2015), Lampel (2011) and Lampel and Meyer (2008), suggested that early institutional theorists devoted little attention to the origins of fields, and have omitted a key element as a factor of their formation – human agency (see glossary). However, Lampel (2011), Lampel and Meyer (2008) and Meyer et al. (2005) posit that scholarly research is emerging with focus on institutions and fields, highlighting new inferences that organizational fields have begun as creative clusters involving individuals, groups and organizations that meet sporadically at first and then come into contact with increasing frequency. These contacts foster competitive and collaborative interactions (Lampel & Meyer, 2008); depending on the specific local circumstances and individual strategies, they can also trigger field evolution (p. 1027).

Lampel and Meyer (2008) and Meyer et al. (2005) opined that at some point in the evolution of a field, the density and intensity of participants' interactions reach critical thresholds at structural and

cognitive levels. At the structural level, the field begins to acquire macro structural features that reinforce field permanence. By contrast, at the cognitive level, field members gain awareness of the field in its totality and acquire identity as field members. The two levels reinforce each other, allowing field members to build cognitive representations of the collective as an interactive and evolving entity alongside, with representations of their own positions in this entity. Furthermore, they invest resources in the field with a view to future returns, ultimately increasing the field's institutional legitimacy (Lampel & Meyer, p. 1027).

Nadavulakere (2008) posited that studies examining the issue of organizational field evolution, especially in cultural fields, have found that some events shape the process by acting as purveyors of legitimacy; and research exploring events such as “international film festivals could serve a similar function” (p. 9). This research attempts to make a contribution to scholarly research on an international film festival that is viewed as cultural and creative event, the Toronto International Film Festival (TIFF) within the context of conceptual framework.

In response to the ground work laid by Lampel and Meyer (2008) on the concept of field-configuring events and their emergence in the organizational field, a few scholars, such as Anand and Jones (2008), Garud (2008), Nadavulakere (2008), Ruling (2008) Oliver and Montgomery (2008), have begun exploring these types of events in a number of industries and professions, and examples include: car racing (*Formula One*), film business (*Cannes International Film Festival* and *Oscar Awards*), business education (*Academy of Management*), research and development (*Nobel Prize*); publishing (*Booker Prize for Fiction* in the United Kingdom), architecture (*RIBA Sterling Prize for Architecture*); advertising (*The CASSIES in Canada*), performing arts (the Dora Award), beauty salons (*North American Hairstyling Awards* and *British Hairdressing Awards*), and canine competitions (*Top Dog Award*).

These instances of field-configuring events are mostly from institutionalized fields where the pathways are obvious, whether they be governance, business or finance. The same applies to emerging or developing fields, like digital marketing and web publishing (Nadavulakere, 2008; Anand & Jones, 2008, Anand & Watson 2004).

In highlighting the emergence of field-configuring events and their impact upon organizations, network and organizational fields, scholars such as Lampel and Meyer (2008), Schübler et al. (2015) and Ruling (2008), amongst others, have alluded to their ability to impact stakeholders and exert change in both developing fields and an event's local embeddedness, which is critical to its identity and scope. The following are selected perspectives from both the organizational and developing fields that elucidate the dual traits of events as both outcomes of a field and an input into field configurations (Schübler et al., 2015). Anand and Jones (2008) argue that award ceremonies foster interactions between disparate sets of field participants, and have the potential to configure and reconfigure organizational fields. According to Nadavulakere (2008), through the use of an archival analysis of the British fiction publishing field, it exemplified that the *Booker Prize for Fiction* configured the field of contemporary English-language literature by championing the distinctive category of postcolonial fiction. The key contribution of the research is to articulate the mechanisms through which field-configuring events shape organizational fields: enabling increased communication and interaction, providing sense of common interests, facilitating structures of dominance, and allowing transformation of capital.

Garud (2008), in his research *Conferences as venues for the configuration of emerging organizational fields: the case of the cochlear implants*, examined the role of conferences as field-configuring events in shaping the contours of emerging industries. Situating his study in the field of US cochlear implants, he

proposed that conferences such as *the XIII Otolaryngology*, the ASHA (*The American Speech Language Hearing Association*) Conference and the NIH (*The National Institute of Health*) Consensus, played pivotal roles in the development and commercialization of cochlear implants. The cochlear implant conferences acted as venues where firms enacted their technologies through processes such as information exchange, sensemaking, deliberation of competing industry technologies and product choices, and in the consensual adoption of a dominant recipe.

Anand and Watson (2004) studied the annual *Grammy Awards* ceremonies and identified several mechanisms by which tournament rituals and, by extension other competitive events contribute to the configuration of organizational fields. They identified four mechanisms in their study, which included attribution of reputation, the setting of priorities and standards via collective sensemaking and identity building, the (re)production (or contestation) of power and hierarchies, and the event's ability to create a space in which normal boundaries temporarily disappear and allow room for new forms of exchange (Lampel & Meyer, 2008; Nadavulakere, 2008; Ruling, 2008).

Ruling (2008), in his research entitled *Festivals as field-configuring events: The Annecy international animated film festival and market*, highlighted that a film festival can play an important role in the international connection and diffusion of economic and creative models and activities in the worldwide film industries. He further noted that a film festival can “create spaces in which industry actors meet and enable the development of reputation as well as the constitution and contestation of shared frames of reference” (2008, p. 2), along with their impact in the development of festival(s) and market(s) into a field-configuring event.

Scholars Oliver and Montgomery (2008), in their research *Using field configuring events for sensemaking: a cognitive network approach*, viewed field-configuring events as an arena for group sense-making. The researchers utilized a case study approach to conduct historical research on the legal field in the pre-state Israel, where they proposed that the 1944 Congress of Jewish Lawyers shaped the emergence of the Jewish legal profession. The research further highlighted that the congress acted as a cognitive network and fostered shared cognitive sense making over time. This led to changes in the organizations, such as growth in the Jewish legal profession, the presence of Jewish judges in Hebrew courts, and the establishment of an Israeli bar.

Lange et al. (2014), in their research *Geographies of field-configuring events*, situate field-configuring events as a heuristic concept and an approach that attempts to theorize and emphasize dynamic aspects of emerging and declining fields of economic action. They further deem them to be the social mechanisms that structure, maintain and configure the appearance of new products, industrial standards, and knowledge categories, all of which can be detected in institutional, organizational and professional fields (Lang et al., 2014; Bossa, 2013; Ruling & Pedersen, 2010; Ruling, 2008).

According to Lampel and Meyer (2008), field-configuring events offer the following methodological advantages:

- i. They facilitate the study of emergence, transformation and other dynamic processes that are otherwise difficult to capture with conventional methodologies. These conventional methodologies tend to produce static descriptions of historical events and structures, leaving researchers ill-equipped to investigate how intentions shape actions and

- individual beliefs that coalesce into collective cognitions, and how they solidify into social structures capable of reproducing themselves and enacting their environments.
- ii. They allow researchers to directly observe the sense-making and sense-giving processes that fuel field formation and transformation through the real-time collection of new data, the historical analysis of archival data, or a combination of both.
 - iii. They enable the routine generation of large quantities of accessible, rich and varied data. Field-configuring events are announced and publicized in advance, providing explicit and documented recordings by key insiders in public locations, and allow outsiders access to field-focused deliberations and decisions (p. 1030).

Field-configuring events present a unique methodological opportunity for researchers in cultural product markets and industries, where events play an important role in ascribing to shared meanings and valuating creative commodities. Lampel and Meyer (2008) asserted that the methodological orientation of research on field-configuring events reflect the dual nature of these events as both organization with structure and strategic goals, and as social microcosms that depend on the subjective interpretation of participants. They further assert that researchers that focus primarily on the structural and strategic aspects of field-configuring events generally adopt surveys and case study methodologies that are consistent with the events.

As an emerging concept within management studies, field-configuring events can be considered to be in their infancy. According to Schübler et al. (2015), there are two theoretical contributions to research on field-configuring events: (i) institutional change and (ii) the structuration of transnational fields. They identified variations among different events within a series that allowed for them to define the processes by which the temporal boundedness and interactional openness of field-

configuring events can lead to institutional change. They further highlight that there is a general understanding that field-configuring events conform to dominant field logics, while simultaneously leaving room for individual initiative and creativity that stems from the unpredictable interaction of participants (Schübler et al., 2015; Lampel & Meyer, 2008).

2.2.1 Field-Configuring Events: The Development of Field Change and Transformation

According to Lampel and Meyer (2008), field-configuring events (FCEs) are both the products and drivers of field evolution. They purported that it is at certain junctures in their development that fields generate FCEs as structuring mechanisms, and at others, field-configuring events trigger processes that drive field evolution. FCEs and field evolution therefore have a recursive relationship (Lampel & Meyer, 2008) and FCEs insert themselves into the evolution of fields. What does this mean for FCEs? It implies that the evolution of fields foment and insert themselves into the evolution of fields and “under certain conditions the field gives rise to FCEs, but once they come into being, they generate their own evolutionary pressures that further shapes the field’s cognitive, normative and social structures” (p. 1028).

Moeran and Strandgaard Pedersen (2009), in their book *Negotiating values in the creative industries: Fairs, festivals and competitive events*, assumed fields to be communities framed upon the actors’ functional, relational and cognitive criteria. The questions posited by the researchers are: how to consider the state of a field emergence? Are fields stable or, given the complex criteria on which they are built, do they vary over time and across societies? And, if they vary over time how are they transforming? These questions have raised the attention of many scholars such as Lampel and Meyer, (2008), Nadavulakere (2008), Ruling (2008) and Powell, (2007) arguing for models and patterns of

institutional change affecting a field. They made inference into the seminal work of DiMaggio and Powell (1983), which depicted a two-step model referring to a field life cycle. The first stage is field 'youth', in which changes driven by economic and competitive forces are likely to be implemented. The second stage is field 'maturity', where institutional isomorphism paves the way to field stability. Moeran and Strandgaard Pedersen (2009) building on the aforementioned perspective, determined that in effect, field change is "neither frequent nor routine because it is costly and difficult, it is likely to be episodic, highlighted by a brief period of crisis or critical intervention, and followed by longer periods of stability or path-dependent development" (p. 14).

Nadavulakere (2008) purported that, based on this view of field dynamics, new institutional theorists such as Scott (2004), Meyer et al. (2005) and Anand and Watson (2004) defined a few change factors at the field level. They opined that 'external shocks', provided by macroeconomic conditions, the state, or other organizations, may provoke change in an otherwise stable field. Within the context of her research, the dynamics among the actors in the field and the institutionalization forces, following from such shocks, shape the direction of change. According to Powell (2007) in his research, *The New institutionalism* identified three factors enhancing field change:

- The development of changes at the periphery of a field, that is, the innovations coming from marginal organizations in the field network; the ineffectiveness – or the effectiveness only in the short run – of isomorphic pressures to shape organizational choices.
- The failure of those institutions spreading normative and coercive isomorphism in implementing their prescriptions;

- 'The re-arrangement of field boundaries' due to deep political or legal upheavals, as fields are recomposed and either split into sub-fields or merge with other fields of similar blurred boundaries.

In line with those perspectives, Nadavulakere (2008) highlighted five processes resulting in profound transformations in fields: (1) changes in relations among existing organizations, (2) changes in boundaries of existing organizations, (3) the emergence of new populations, (4) changes in field boundaries, and (5) changes in governance structures.

This research into change and transformation of organizational fields and the insights from these studies have formed the foundations for recent interests within organizational sociology, in the study of the role gatherings, in congregations and in events within different industries (Lampel & Meyer, 2008; Meyer et al., 2005; Anand & Watson, 2004). Such gatherings and congregations may be termed differently in different fields and industry sectors - conferences, award ceremonies, trade shows, film festivals, technology contests, fairs and festivals, and so forth (Garud, 2008; Ruling, 2008; Oliver & Montgomery, 2008).

The field-configuring events as discussed earlier, evolved within the construct of the organizational fields. As Nadavulakere (2008) purports, the virtue of this unit of analysis is that it directs attention not just to the set of competing organizations, but to the totality of relevant actors. Therefore, organizational fields stabilize over time, around shared interpretations, and among various field participants. However, Anand and Peterson (2000) and Lampel and Meyer (2008) posit that extant research has not paid enough attention in identifying institutional mechanisms and processes through which an aggregation of organizations come to constitute a recognized area of institutional

life. Over the last two decades, researchers and academics have shown burgeoning interests in the field of film festival studies, which situates itself contextually as an aspect of the cultural and creative industries from an institutional perspective. Peterson and Anand (2004) view the cultural industries as a network of organizations, from creators and brokers, through the cultural product producers, distributors, and media outlets. Nevertheless, what is noteworthy with the cultural industries and their distinct difference from other industries is the non-utilitarian nature of their goods.

According to UNESCO (2009), cultural goods are viewed as non-material goods in the creative and cultural industries that are aesthetic or expressive, rather than having a clearly utilitarian function, and are protected by intellectual property. In most industries, the utility function of a product imparts definitive characteristics that help both producers and consumers to systematically compare different alternatives, and thereby shape agreeable standards of quality. Whereas most cultural goods are either a bundle of idiosyncratic attributes or experience-based, thereby impairing any systematic comparison between alternatives. This leads to contradictory interpretations and therefore produces uncertainty and ambiguity about explicit and relative standards of quality.

To circumvent this uncertainty and ambiguity about quality standards, participants within cultural industries depend on an ‘arbiter’ to certify, consecrate, or give value to cultural objects; and within the context of film festivals, it is the festival programmer. Studies examining the evolution and institutionalization of organizational fields are still sparse, especially for those fields within cultural industries that have positioned themselves as events or processes that shape an organizational field’s legitimacy, such as *the Billboard Charts* and the *Grammy Awards* (Anand & Peterson, 2004). Hence, this research identifies film festivals as an institutional mechanism that greatly influences the evolution of an organizational field (Rüling & Strandgaard-Pedersen, 2010; Nadavulakere, 2008).

Most organizational field studies have mainly focused on organizations having an explicit competitive emphasis, such as the *Billboard Charts* and *Grammy Awards* (Nadavulakere, 2008; Anand & Watson, 2004; Anand & Peterson, 2000). However, Anand and Watson (2004) identified an institutional mechanism that greatly influences the evolution of organizational fields: transorganizational structure. This is a hybrid entity between an organization and an organizational field and they exert considerable social power; and play a significant role when the organizational field is undergoing change and deinstitutionalization, and also legitimate organizations, generates status orderings, and create favorable reputations that increase their chances for survival. Furthermore, they act as market information regimes, thus bringing together the disparate cognition of various market participants (Anand & Watson, 2004).

According to Bossa (2013) and Anand and Watson (2004) for a field-configuring event to exist and enact its influence, there must first be common interests and issues that incite the participants of the event to create this meeting ground. The scholars further opined that it is transorganizational structures that shapes the field-configuring event and make the meetings and exchanges possible. Within the context of the research, the transorganizational structures are defined as those events that allow disparate constituents to become aware of their common concerns, join together, share information, coordinate their actions, shape and subvert agendas, and mutually influence field structuration. Transorganizational structures have not attracted enough attention from organization theorists; however the new concept of FCEs, proposed by Lampel and Meyer (2008), seeks to rectify the lack of attention paid to ‘events’ by organizational researchers. The adoption of this concept for my research provides a pathway to contribute to understanding cultural industries, particularly for film festivals.

2.3 Film Festival Research

Film festivals are a growing area of study that has been bolstered by work done by the *Film Festival Research Network* organized by Marijke de Valck and Skadi Loist (2012) in curating annotated bibliographic works that offers an elaborate overview of the themes, topics and approaches to film festivals given that they “have become an increasingly important area for film scholars” (Archibald & Miller, 2012, p. 249) in an expanding field of scholarship. Film festival research 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 (Vilhjálmsson, 2011, p. 7). However, while scholars have engaged in film festival research as from varying lens and aspects and as Fischer (2009) opined, “theorizing different kinds of spectatorship” (p. 313), the exploration of the phenomena thus far has been greatly limited to the film studies perspective, with only very few studies seeking to understand these festivals from an organizational perspective (Rüling & Strandgaard-Pedersen, 2009; Rüling, 2008), as field-configuring events (Bossa, 2013; Ruling, 2009; Nadavulakere, 2008) from the lens of film-festival programming and operations (Lee & Stringer, 2012; Rastegar, 2012; Fischer, 2009).

Scholars such as Archibald and Miller (2011) building on the work of Nichols (1994), De Valck and Loist (2009) , Fischer (2009), DeValck (2007) and Stringer (2001) espoused that “researchers have come to recognize that film festivals are not just an adjunct to other activities but a phenomenon in their own right” (2011, p. 249). Scholars and researchers have developed a series of theoretical approaches to this interdisciplinary field through multidisciplinary approaches (Lee & Stringer, 2012; Archibald & Miller, 2011). DeValck (2007) in her seminal work, *Film Festival: From European*

Geopolitics to Global Cinephilia purported that there is “been a blank spot of cinema scholarship for many years” (p. 179), despite film festivals occupying a central role in the global film culture since the first festival in Venice (1932), they have been historically understudied.

The recent work of academic researchers such as Cabon (2012), Cheung (2012), McGill (2011), Vilhjálmsdóttir (2011), Ruling & Strandgaard-Pedersen (2010), Fischer (2009), Iordanova (2009) and Fischer (2009) have contributed critical insights and perspectives to the film festival research, to counter the lens from which film festival were being viewed. Fischer (2009) recognized in his scholarly work that although there exist ‘countless’ articles penned from a non-academic perspective, such as festival reports by film critics or film journalists, there still remains “a historical vacuum with regards to the amount, quality and type of information available about such events” (p. 12). In light of the aforementioned, hence, the need for research that is capable of addressing the phenomenon in a suitably scholarly manner and fostering more scholarly interests to augment the prevalent view that is inferred and foster greater understanding.

Iordanova and Cheung (2010) and De Valck and Loist (2009) suggest that film festival research from the lens and context of organizational studies reframe interests in film aesthetics, art and the role of national and international festivals as sites of self-identification and community building. Film festivals are characterized as serving distinct groups with diverse interests and provide an entry point to glean perspectives distilled from sources written by both practitioners and scholars in the field. Furthermore, to understand that film festivals can be studied from a single as well as multidimensional perspective as highlighted in Table I.

Table I. Selected Summary of Film Festival Research – 1994-2016

Contributors	Film Festival Research Publications	Discipline
Bill Nichols (1994)	<p>Global Image Consumption in the Age of Late Capitalism</p> <p>This first study of the phenomenon thus focused on the event itself as it reveals the global networks of industrial actors and spectators in which festivals are embedded. The author explores the mobilize issues of spectatorship in film festivals to read global dynamics through the lens of semiotics and postcolonial studies. Nichols describe festivals as cosmopolitan networks that gather “a global cohort of film viewers” in a context that “adds a global overlay to more local meanings” of international films.</p>	Cinema Studies
Daniel Dayan (2000)	<p>Looking for Sundance: The Social Construction of a Film Festival</p> <p>The author introduced a second recurring theme in his study of the Sundance Film Festival: the engagement of distinctive groups with diverse interests. He described the festival as a set of divergent performances (by filmmakers, distributors, festival organizers, journalists, the audience etc.) and argues it is not limited to visual display, but above all a “verbal architecture” that is “made up of different versions, relaying different voices, relying on different sources of legitimacy” (p. 52).</p>	Anthropology
Julian Stringer (2001)	<p>Global Cities and International Film Festival Economy</p> <p>The author contends that film festivals are “significant on regional, national and pan-national levels” and work to situate “national film cultures into the world cinema system”. (2001, 134). By positioning his reflection within Immanuel Wallerstein’s concept of “world systems” (2000), Stringer aims to examine the power dynamics of what is then understood as the international film festival circuit, theorizing how these dynamics inform the formation of contemporary film studies.</p> <p>Stringer contributes to the burgeoning field a vision of how film festivals are embedded in the global cultural and financial flows that circulate and form nodes in urban media centers.</p>	American and Canadian Studies International Film Festival and Asian Cinema

Liz Czach (2004)	<p>Film Festivals, Programming and the Building of National Cinema</p> <p>The author's research interest is film festival programming that is a little understood or interrogated process. As Patricia Thomson recently noted in a Variety article, "Everyone knows that acceptance to a high-profile fest ratchets up the chances of a film's success. But few understand the mechanics of the selection process." How film festivals make their selections and the repercussions of these choices are complex yet underexamined phenomena. As film festivals around the world steadily proliferate, the question of how film festivals and programming mandates contribute to global film culture, to the life of film festival host cities, as well as to the success of individual films and filmmakers require serious consideration. High-profile international film festivals such as Cannes, Berlin, Venice, Toronto, and Sundance play a large role in national and international film culture, bringing concentrated attention from press, industry, and the public to indigenous and foreign films. While each of these festivals provides a platform for showcasing their international selections, highlighting indigenous filmmaking is also common in programs such as Perspektive Deutsches Kino at the Berlin Festival, American Showcase and American Spectrum at Sundance, or Perspective Canada at TIFF.</p>	English and Film Studies
Thomas Elsaesser (2005)	<p>Film Festival Networks: The New Topographies of Cinema in Europe</p> <p>The author theorizes film festival networks in a more systematic way than Nichols. Here, he focuses on European cinema to show the decline of the national framework and the necessity of moving towards a post-national perspective in order to understand the global distribution of films. He turns towards modern system theories, such as Niklas Luhmann's auto poetics, Manuel Castells' "spaces of flows", and Bruno Latour's "Actor Network Theory," as a way to translate the idea of a European film circuit into a system.</p>	Film Studies
Marijke De Valck (2007)	<p>Film Festivals: From European Geopolitics to Global Cinephilia</p> <p>In her seminal doctoral research, the author takes a cultural theory and media studies approach to a subject that most cinephiles experience at a more visceral level. This academic point of view is unique, particularly De Valck's use of Actor-</p>	Cultural Theory and Media Studies

	<p>Network Theory (ANT) to situate the film festival as a central node within a global network of numerous living and non-living actors in the film system. ANT enables us to think of the film festival as an agent that is part of a network, which both counters and complements Hollywood's hegemony. According to De Valck, in opposition to the vertical integration of the studio model, film festivals offer an alternative platform for marketing and negotiating. At the same time, they borrow Hollywood's red-carpet glamour and stars to grace their opening.</p>	
<p>Paolo Cherchi Usai, David Francis, Alexander Horwath, and Michael Loebenstein (2008)</p>	<p>Film Curatorship: Archives, Museums, and the Digital Marketplace</p> <p>The book neither offers a scholarly analysis, nor attempts to provide definitive answers to a complex situation involving aesthetic as well as technological, economic and political issues. As a collective text, a montage of dialogues, conversations and exchanges between four professionals representing three generations of film archivists and curators, this book calls for an open philosophical and ethical debate on fundamental questions the profession must come to terms with. What is curatorship, and what does it imply in the context of film preservation and presentation? Is there a concept of the "film artifact" that transcends the idea of film as "content" or "art" in the information age?</p>	<p>Film Studies</p>
<p>Alex Fischer (2009)</p>	<p>Conceptualising Basic Film Festival Operation: An Open System Paradigm</p> <p>The thesis advocates a four-phase model of basic film festival operation - the Open System Model (OSM) - that employs established theoretical foundations to designate resource importation as the primary phase of functional festival operation. Subsequent phases involve resource transformation, output, and environmental re-energization. The determining role of entropy and the necessity for a continual extraction of resources from the environment to assuage its effects are also identified. Eight importation-based strategies designed to increase the likelihood of resource acquisition are posited: co-operative alliances, date placement, geographic location, identifiable function, legitimising affiliations, participation-based incentives, resource control and sanctioning organisations. OSM is then used to examine specific open system conditions through five original case studies of extant film festivals: Denver</p>	<p>Film Festival Studies</p>

	International Film Festival, Insect Fear Film Festival, the Shoot Out, Hayden films Online Film Festival and Gold Coast Film Fantastic.	
Dina Iordanova & Ragan Rhyne (2009)	<p>Film Festival Yearbook on “The Festival Circuit</p> <p>The project represents a unique opportunity to study the multi-faceted phenomenon of film festivals. It focuses on both global networks and local practices and sheds new light on the artistic, economic and political issues that are currently reshaping the global cultural field. Bringing together academics and practitioners from an impressively wide range of professional and national origins, it embraces both empirical and theoretical analyses, thus providing striking new insights into a hugely significant cultural phenomenon.</p>	Film Studies
Richard Porton (2009)	<p>Dekalog 3: On Film Festivals</p> <p>This multifaceted collection of essays, memoirs, and impassioned polemics explores the decades-long debate over these controversial questions. Featuring a distinguished array of critics and programmers, the anthology begins with the first appearance in English of André Bazin's 1955 essay "The Festival Viewed as a Religious Order" and follows with essays examining the ongoing tension between market-oriented "business festivals" and festivals devoted to the needs of local audiences. Case studies assess the shifting fortunes of Asian film festivals, such as Hong Kong and Pusan, exemplary, cinephilic festivals, as in Vienna, Kino Otok, and Trieste, and one catastrophically mismanaged festival: Bangkok.</p>	Film Festival Studies
Clemens & Ruling (2010)	<p>Film Festival Research from an Organizational Studies Perspective</p> <p>The authors found that film festivals have received surprisingly little and scattered attention within organization and management studies. Film festivals have recently met a mounting interest among film and media scholars. This article provides an introduction to the growing literature on film festivals and argues for a threefold research agenda</p>	Organization and Management Studies

	<p>within organizational studies by looking at film festivals as arenas of emergence, analyzing the role of film festivals within the global film industries, and studying film festivals as organizations. By suggesting this research agenda the authors intent to draw the attention of organization and management scholars to a hitherto overlooked and potentially promising area of research for organization and management studies.</p>	
<p>Archibald & Miller (2011)</p>	<p>The Film Festival Dossier – Screen, Volume 52 (2), 1</p> <p>The authors edited and expanded the field of scholarship on film festivals, film distribution and exhibition, cultural policy formulation and media industries at national and international level and made it increasingly important to investigate the role played by annual festivals that exhibit films for both public and industry audience.</p>	<p>Film Festival Studies</p>
<p>Felicia Chan (2011)</p>	<p>The International Film Festival and the Making of National Cinema</p> <p>The author explores this phenomenon through the construction of national cinemas and processes of selection, distribution and exhibition that claim, rightly or wrongly, to speak for a 'body politic' – however that may be defined. Chan also references De Valck's critique of the 'dogma of discovery' that has guided most film festivals since the 1980s. Responding to wider shifts within the film industry, Chan writes that festivals "began to reconstitute what defined the avant-garde, the experimental and the alternative film", and pursues this by questioning how "film festival hierarchies" affect film selection and can consequently dictate the terms for exhibition, potential distribution and, therefore, production; as she frames it, they "feed the political economy of film production".</p>	<p>Film Festival Studies</p>
<p>Dina Iordanova & Stefanie Van de Peer (Eds) (2014)</p>	<p>Film Festivals and The Middle East</p> <p>The editors and their peers reflect upon the use of the colonial denomination Middle East rather than MENA (Middle East and North Africa) or Muslim World. They justify this framing as an ambitious act aimed at showing the diversity of the region and its relationship with its diasporic and exilic populations. The focus on a network woven around diversity, tensions, ruptures and inequalities suggests an underlying new conception of networks beyond the coherence that was once a given in the beginning years of film festival studies. This recent complexity opens up new avenues to study film festivals by including marginalized actors and involving methodologies that go beyond questioning success and management.</p>	<p>Film Studies</p>

<p>Marijke de Valck, Brendan Kredell and Skadi Loist (2016)</p>	<p>Film Festivals: History, Theory, Method, Practice</p> <p>The seminal publication presents a major addition to the literature on this topic, offering an authoritative and comprehensive introduction to the area. With a combination of chapters specifically examining history, theory, method and practice, it offers a clear structure and systematic approach for the study of film festivals. Offering a collection of essays written by an international range of established scholars, it discusses well-known film festivals in Europe, North America and Asia, but equally devotes attention to the diverse range of smaller and/or specialized events that take place around the globe. It provides essential knowledge on the origin and development of film festivals, discusses the use of theory to study festivals, explores the methods of ethnographic and archival research, and looks closely at the professional practice of programming and film funding.</p>	<p>Film Festival Studies</p>
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Film festivals provide a fascinating setting for organizational research (Rüling & Strandgaard-Pedersen, 2010, p. 318); the particular nature of film as a cultural product distinguishes them from theatre or art fairs. They serve as a form of cultural consumption in which culture is created, maintained, transformed and transmitted to others. Film festivals are different from other forms of consumption of similar genres, such as concerts, theatre performances or recorded music. What distinguishes film festivals from these other cultural events are that they usually involve multiplicities of production and consumption of culture, concentrated in time and space.

On the international festival circuit, mega events such as Cannes, Venice, Berlin, Toronto and Sundance provide a widely accepted model for what a film festival is commonly thought to be. In his PhD thesis titled *Regarding film festivals*, Stringer (2003) purported that film festival events invite films into competition and offer prizes. The festival functions are gathered around activities which range from the celebration of film through themed retrospectives and premieres, to much more blatant trade fairs at which production and distribution deals are struck. For instance, bigger festivals

like Cannes have a considerable amount of glamorous social activities, which generates great interest by the international mass media. Apart from Cannes, there are major festivals in Venice, Berlin, Toronto, Edinburgh, and Park City whilst the numbers of smaller festivals proliferate each year (Rüling & Strangaard-Pedersen, 2009; Stringer, 2003).

Stringer (2003) further noted that there is a real dearth of studies on film festivals and this is echoed in his treatise on the subject:

Just as it is true that to date no scholarly book exists on the subject of film festivals, the specialized academic journals continue to be slow to publish work on this topic. However, all commentators – academic, journalistic or otherwise – appear to agree on one point; namely that this is a topic that somehow deserves to be written about. (p. 14)

Stringer (2003) analyzes film festivals as events that exercise influence on, and attribute meaning to global film culture on multiple levels. The aim of Stringer's research is to reflect on both the overlapping and contradictory effects these levels have on the roles of the international film festival circuit in global film culture. He discusses five particular aspects of the phenomenon of film festivals: their institutional nature, their circulation of ideas concerning national cinemas, their establishment of city identities through globalized film festivals, festival film as a genre, and the constitution of film festival communities. In response to the dearth of scholarship in this field, Cheung (2012) noted that academics have recently begun to investigate the field with more rigour. It is only within the last decade that film festivals have emerged as a distinct field of study.

Furthermore, there is an emerging interest from scholars within, and outside of film festival research, that stems from different disciplines. One could interpret this as proof of the complexity of the phenomenon and the richness of film festivals as an object of study (see Table 1). These scholars have asserted their interests in film festival research by offering unique perspectives on the

phenomenon through their scholarly works. They help us to understand the interactions amongst multiple stakeholders, while systematically improving our perceptions of the creative and cultural industries. Furthermore, within the context of the global film culture (Dickson, 2014; Czach, 2004) these local and international events are at the intersection of art and commerce (DeValck, 2007) with multiple artistic, cultural and organizational identities.

DeValck (2007) and Harbord (2002) assert that since their inception in Venice in 1932, film festivals have entwined film culture with organization and materialization of national and regional space.

Harbord (2002) in her work *Film festivals: Media Events and the Spaces of Flow* identified four discourses operating within the boundaries of a film festival. Firstly, there are discourses of independent filmmakers and producers in catalogues, press releases, interviews and other sources. Secondly, there are discourses in media representations that provide a commentary of events, controversies and spectacles. Thirdly, there are discourses on business and sponsorship (including purchase, price and copyright) existing in the texts of legal transactions and contracts. Fourthly, there are discourses on tourism and service industries (p. 60).

Essentially, the aforementioned profoundly espouses that film festivals are not just sites for mixing goods and culture, but an exemplary instance of how cultural flows produce spaces. Harbord (2002) further noted that film festivals are governed by a temporal logic. The temporal logic is embedded in the stipulation that films screened at other film festivals will be automatically excluded from selection, regardless of whether or not they are in competition sections. This sets up the film festivals in competition with each other and has the potential of signifying hierarchical importance.

Though most of the film festivals fall into the competitive category, according to Chan (2011) and Jordanova (2011) they noted that there are a number of festivals that are non-competitive, notably Toronto, Sundance and Rotterdam that have succeeded because they have “managed to secure relative permanence in their supply chain” (Chan, 2011, p. 257) by setting up their own network with distributors, hence they are more interested in international premieres than demanding ‘first rights’. Therefore, the notion of temporal logic and concept of international premieres construct a hierarchy within the film festival network that enables film festivals to claim originality of the moment and restrict the circulation of premieres amongst film festivals (Chan, 2011; Jordanova, 2011; Harbord, 2002).

The emergence of film festival research as a field of study in its own right has coincided with a vast proliferation of film festivals. Jordanova and Rhyne (2009) noted that the “festival circuit seems to have grown nearly tenfold in the last three decades and festival research has struggled to keep pace” (p. 1). According to Follows (2013), there are currently 3,000 film festivals that are actively kept, with approximately 70% of them being held in North America. The increasing numbers of film festivals now provide for ‘the ease and ubiquity of online publication’ which means that ‘raw information’ from different film festivals can now be circulated in tremendous amounts without the researcher needing to gain actual physical access to an event. As a result, academic articles and publications devoted to film festivals have begun to emerge, studiously following their growth.

Furthermore, scholars such as Cheung (2012), Vilhjálmsdóttir (2011), De Valck and Loist (2010), Jordanova and Rhyne (2009), as well as Fischer (2009) and Stringer (2001), all noted that the focus of existing information stems from a non-academic perspective and “it is only through the continued development of both strands, that is both academic and non-academic, that the field will

continue to progress” (Iordanova & Rhyne, 2009, p. 1). However, the exploration of film festivals as an academic field of study that provides analysis and rigor in a scholarly manner needs further theorization of their broader relevance to our understanding and their dynamics in global film culture (Iordanova & Rhyne, 2009; Czach, 2004). This assertion emerged from a scholastic review of the press coverages on film festivals and their prolific presence from both a cultural and economic lens; as well as the failure to provide comparative and critical discussions to foster this theoretical interest.

Recently, essential contributions to scholarly research on film festivals have asserted that there is a growing body of theoretical interests in conducting research as well as a high receptivity and space for bridging research and traditions between film and media, cultural and organizational studies. As De Valck and Loist (2009) assert, film festival studies is indeed a “burgeoning field” (p. 179) and the research aims to make a scholarly contribution to the field of film festival research (De Valck & Loist, 2009; Iordanova 2009; Fischer, 2009).

2.3.1 Film Festivals and their Characteristics



Image 2 – Film Festival Poster

Film festivals are clearly about something beyond appreciation of cinema; they are forums for showcasing the best in films beyond the local perspective and reaching towards a global vantage point. Within global film culture, they represent the ultimate celebration of cinema, not only as a mass medium but also as collections of creative texts and engaged participants within contemporary context and “are dedicated to cinema as art” (DeValck & Soeteman, 2010, p. 293). Bauer (2007) opined that film festivals “are unifying agents acquainting us with historical and cultural traditions of other nations through film; they create a deeper awareness and appreciation of understanding amongst different people” (p. 5) and are unique in their blending of community, commerce, consumption, celebration, discussion and exchange (DeValck, 2007); with a professed commitment to the pursuit of “artistic excellence” (Elsaesser, 2005, p. 96). Film festivals not only act as conduits

for transfer of resources and information between filmmakers and a trans-national audience, but imply a status and prestige while doing so (DeValck & Soeteman, 2010; Bauer, 2007).

In garnering an understanding of the growing significance of film festivals and their impact on global film culture, it is important to highlight their distinctive characteristics, given their importance in contemporary society; and to shed light on how they facilitate interactions amongst interest groups and festival operations within the context of film festival programming for the research:

- i. Film festivals can be understood as temporary organizations in which values, both economic and aesthetic, are constructed to films, to forms and processes of filmmaking and stakeholders. They are temporal in nature, presented in annual cycles at predetermined dates, enabling each festival to acquire a calendar identity. For instance, Berlin (February), Cannes (May), Shanghai (June), Venice (August), Toronto (September) and Sundance (January). This temporal sequencing of festival dates allows the film and media professionals to travel from one festival to the next. The strings of consecutive venues constitute a film festival circuit in which films circulate and thereby connect different cinematic cultures. The film festival circuit acts as a hub for facilitating reciprocal global cultural flows of film (De Valck & Loist, 2009; Iordanova & Rhyne, 2009).
- ii. They are special meeting spaces for stakeholders, representing a wide range of interests and demands, organizational context and structure, and nature and type of event. There are four groups of stakeholders: general public, professionals, public and corporate partners. The general publics' include film buffs, cinephiles and tourists looking to savour multi-cultural cinematic works and engage in industry events. They are attracted to the quality and diversity

of films shown and the ambience, hospitality and experience at the film festival. The professionals attending the film festivals include directors, screenwriters, producers, distributors, broadcasters, journalists, buyer, programmers, actors and celebrities. The film professionals are interested in screening their works to a multicultural audience under the spotlight of the international media. Film festivals offer numerous opportunities for film professionals to launch films, discover new talent, access international markets, and spot new cinematic trends (Bosma, 2010; Nadavulakere, 2008).

- iii. Film festivals operate as not-for-profit or public organizations and very rarely are for profit, like for instance, New York's *Tribeca Film Festival*. Local municipalities and national agencies, for instance cultural ministries, actively support staging these international events. For example, TIFFF receives support from *Telefilm Canada*, the Government of Ontario and the City of Toronto (TIFF, 2015) and Rome's first international film festival was established in 2006 largely due to the efforts of its then Mayor, Walter Veltroni. The public agencies support film festivals for various reasons, including benefits to local economies, promotion of national films, and to encourage cultural diversity and innovation (McGill, 2011; Nadavulakere, 2008; Peranson, 2009).

- iv. They are classified according to their agendas – business, geopolitical or aesthetic. The classifications distinguish film festivals to focus their stakeholders and the resultant foregrounding of specific or related tasks given their model. For instance, film festivals with business agendas are *Cannes* (France), *Rotterdam* (The Netherlands), *Sundance* (USA) and *Toronto* (Canada), *Berlin* (Germany), *Venice* (Italy), *FESPACO* (Burkina Faso), *Sarajevo* (Bosnia and Herzegovina) and *Havana* (Cuba) have geopolitical agendas; festivals with

aesthetic agendas are *HOTDOCS* (Toronto), *Telluride* (USA) and *Pordenone* (Italy) (Iordanova, 2009; Peranson, 2009; De Valck, 2007).

- v. Place matters in the construction, production and representation of film festivals; they essentially have strong ties (cultural, social, economic and political) in specific regions, cities and countries. Festivals, at times, assume their names from the cities, regions and countries (for example, *Cannes*, *Berlin*, *Venice*, *Havana*, *Hong Kong*, *Montreal*, *Rotterdam*, *Shanghai*, *Toronto* and *Zanzibar*). In Stringer's (2001) examination of this practice, it is cities, not national film industries that locate film festivals as nodal points on the festival circuit. This highlights that cities compete with each other for cultural, tourism and seasonal events. Film festivals also depend on their local or regional spaces (De Valck & Loist, 2009; Elsaesser, 2005; Stringer, 2001).
- vi. There are two ideal models of film festivals - business and audience. The models are utilized to distinguish film festivals according to their stakeholders, focus and how specific tasks are featured. Business festivals are those with markets or *de facto* markets, are premiere oriented (world or international) and are the largest festivals in a country or region such as *Cannes*, *Berlin*, *Venice*, *Toronto* or *Pusan*. Audience festivals are those without markets, are not premiere oriented, and are more dominant in the film festival network such as Vancouver, Seattle, San Francisco, Vienna and Buenos Aires. However, Peranson (2008) noted that most festivals fit somewhere in the middle, combining elements of both types (Peranson, 2009).

Table 2. Two models for understanding film festivals (Peranson, 2009)

BUSINESS FESTIVAL	AUDIENCE FESTIVAL
High budget, operating revenue not primarily audience/ticket sales	Low budget, a good deal of operating revenue comes from attendance
Premiere oriented (world or international)	Not concerned with premieres
Major corporate sponsorship	Limited corporate sponsorship
Guests present for most of the films	Limited number of guests
Market/business presence	Little business presence
Large staff	Small staff
Film fund/third world investment	No investment in films
Retrospectives	Few retrospectives
Most films are submitted	Most films are seen at other festivals or solicited
Hollywood studio involvement	Little Hollywood studio involvement
Always expanding	Content remain the same size

- vii. Film festivals are programmed in relation to the festival’s ideals – fictions, documentaries, short films, human rights or environmental films. Programming aims to create an atmosphere for the appreciation of film as art and how it enters the festival’s film selection process to contribute to its distinct identity, but also to differentiate it from other competing festivals. The programming committee is appointed by the festival management, and consists of film professionals with varied cinematic expertise. This committee, in consultation with the festival’s artistic director, nominates all the films to be screened in the festival either through submissions by filmmakers, producers or directors, or based on the film festival’s regulations. They may also be solicited by programmers, or they may pass through screening committees (genres, regions and thematic), previewers or programmers. Even though programmers play a crucial role, they remain virtually anonymous like the referees in a peer

reviewed journal. Stringer (2003) suggests that film festivals do not reveal their institutional structure and obscure the way in which they are staffed. Programming is intimately connected to how film festivals showcase cinema and develop their ideal approach to building audience and engaging community. Film festival programming emerges essentially from the festival director's vision of global cinema, as well as the director's view of the mission for the country, region or city and the festival itself (Fischer, 2009; DeValck, 2007; Elsaesser, 2005).

- viii. Film festivals are attributed specific status and hierarchy – competitive, competitive specialized, non-competitive and documentary/short film – according to guidelines set by the Paris-based *International Federation of Film Producers Association* (FIAPF) (Table 3). Competitive film festivals are structured to give out awards based on identified categories within the film festival and are adjudicated by an international jury comprised of recognized industry players – artists, directors, producers, writers and programmers. The members of the jury vote by secret ballot, with decision-making dependent on an absolute majority of the votes. Examples of competitive film festivals include Berlin, Cannes, FESPACO, Locarno, Montreal and Venice. Competitive specialized film festivals are guided by identified genres within which the film festival distinctly specializes and may be confined to a particular region also. The genre(s) can be, but is/are not limited to, science-fiction, arts-oriented films, fantasy and horror, avant garde, francophone, ibero-american films and, first and second feature films. Examples of festivals that are competitive specialized include Antalya (Turkey), Cartagena (Colombia) Sofia (Bulgaria), Torino (Italy), Sydney (Australia), and Valencia (Spain). Non-competitive film festivals are not structured to give juried awards; therefore they give recognition to their films through a collective process. For example, TIFF's

Grolsch People's Choice Award is selected by the public, not a jury. Examples of non-competitive film festivals are Toronto (Canada) and Vienna (Austria). Documentary and short film festivals are recognized by their genre, whether they are animation, LGBT, human rights, environment or diasporic. They can be formatted as documentary or short film, and are screened at the festival events. Examples of documentary and short film festivals are Bilbao (Spain), Krakow (Poland) and St. Petersburg (Russia) (Chan, 2011; Ooi & Pedersen, 2009; Jordanova & Rhyne, 2009).

- ix. Film festivals are distribution networks for independent films; they provide an outlet for exhibition and market opportunities that allow for a direct economic spotlight for films. They serve as hubs for alternative film distribution systems, both inside the international film festival circuit and its connected film market. Interestingly, the film festival ecosystem of distribution is far more complex than other distribution networks. They are informed by several different layers on the film festival circuit to attract eminent filmmakers and offering greater access to distributors who are suited for the films being programmed. Examples of major international film festivals that provide direct distribution for films are Cannes (France), Sundance (USA), Toronto (Canada), Venice (Italy), Berlin (Germany), Rotterdam (Netherlands), New York (USA) and Telluride (USA) (Harbord, 2009; Jordanova & Rhyne, 2009; De Valck & Soeteman, 2010; DeValck, 2007).
- x. The major film festivals have accreditation delivered by FIAPF, that not only consecrates the festival itself, but also gives the producers, distributors and sales agents the guarantee that they will commit to festivals with a true international dimension, endowed with a strong and structured organization, involving industry professionals. However, for film professionals to

participate in film festival events, they must be accredited according to their professional activity, such as producer, director, programmer, medium, actor, distributor and writer. The accreditation through its stipulation provides a framework of protection between right holders and festivals for the presentation of screened films. According to FIAPF, accredited festivals have an obligation to facilitate film professionals and must adhere to specified guidelines such as, a maximum number of screenings, the obligation to request any additional screenings, the obligation to ask for the permission of the rights holders in case of cuts required by the censorship authorities, the right of withdrawal of the film in this case, the return of the print within a stipulated timeframe. Notably, only approximately 47 international film festivals are accredited by FIAPF (See Table 3.). Nonetheless, most other film festivals adhere to the guidelines provided by FIAPF in the respective editions of their festival (Ooi & Pedersen, 2010; Jordanova, 2010; Ruling & Pedersen, 2010).

- xi. The essence of film festivals are the screening of films. Film festivals owe a great deal of their prestige and influential position in the festival network to the success of the films they premiere, complemented by their market activities. The first screening of a film is called its premiere, and premiership is iconic to the prestige a film festival brings to consecrate it within the international film festival network. Hence, these festivals, whether they are competitive, competitive specialized, non-competitive or documentary and short films, vie for the honour to stage a film's first international screening. FIAPF provides guidelines for festivals to adhere to with regard to the release of films outside of their country of origin and at an international motion picture event or film festival. There are three types of premieres: world premieres – films screened for the first time to any audience including its country of origin; international premieres – films screened for the first time to an audience outside of

the country of origin; and international festival premieres – films screened for the first time in both competitive and non-competitive formats at an international film festival.

Premiership is an aspect of film festivals and their programming, which allows them to have opportunities to build reputation and prestige that do not merely come from the business model of blockbusters, but rather from the philosophy that great films deserve audiences (De Valck & Soeteman, 2010; De Valck & Loist, 2009; Iordanova & Rhyne, 2009).

- xii. Film festivals feature multiple sections throughout each edition, such as official selection, in-competition, out-of-competition, director's fortnight, film conversations, emerging filmmakers, and critics' week, to name a few. These sections are grouped into two subgroups: official and sidebars. Elsaesser (2005) argues that the proliferation of sections within film festivals is due to reasons such as their need to accommodate rebels and counter festivals, and special interests film categories (De Valck & Loist, 2009)

Table 3. FIAPF Accredited ‘A’ List of International Film Festivals – 1932 - 2013

Year	Name and Country	Status
1932	Venice International Film Festival (Italy)	Competitive
1935	Moscow International Film Festival (Russia)	Competitive
1939	Cannes International Film Festival (France)	Competitive
1946	Karlovy Vary International Film Festival (Czech)	Competitive
	Locarno International Film Festival (Switzerland)	Competitive
1951	Berlin International Film Festival – Berlinale (Germany)	Competitive
1952	The International Film Festival of India (India)	Competitive
1953	San Sebastian International Film Festival (Spain)	Competitive
1954	International Short Film festival Oberhausen (Germany)	Documentary & Short
	Sydney Film festival (Australia)	Competitive Specialized
	Mar del Plata International Film Festival (Argentina)	Competitive
1956	The Times BFI London Film Festival (England)	
1958	Bilbao International Festival of Documentary and Short Films (Spain)	Documentary & Short
1960	Viennale – Vienna International Film Festival (Austria)	Non-Competitive
1960	Cartagena International Film Festival (Colombia)	Competitive Specialized
1961	Krakow Film Festival Krakow (Poland)	Competitive
1962		
1963	Antalya Golden Orange International Film Festival (Turkey)	Competitive Specialized
	Gijón International Film Festival (Spain)	Competitive Specialized
1968	SITGES International Fantastic Film Festival of Catalonia (Spain)	Competitive Specialized
1970	Molodist - Kyiv International Film Festival (Ukraine)	Competitive Specialized
1976	Cairo International Film Festival (Egypt)	Competitive
	Toronto International Film Festival (Canada)	Non-Competitive
1977	Montreal World Film Festival (Canada)	Competitive
1982	Torino Film Festival (Italy)	Competitive Specialized
	Istanbul International Film Festival (Turkey)	Competitive Specialized
1983	Brussels International Fantastic Film Festival (Belgium)	Competitive Specialized
1985	Tokyo International Film Festival (Japan)	Competitive
	Warsaw Film Festival (Poland)	Competitive
	Cinema Jove International Film Festival (Spain)	Competitive

1986	Festival International du Film Francophone de Namur (Belgium)	Specialized Competitive Specialized
1989	International Film Festival Message To Man (Russia)	Documentary & Short
1990	Mumbai Film Festival (India)	Competitive Specialized
	Stockholm International Film Festival (Sweden)	Competitive Specialized
1991	Krakow Film Festival	Documentary & Short
	Courmayeur Noir In Festival (Italy)	Competitive Specialized
1992	Tampere Film Festival (Finland)	Documentary & Short
1993	Shanghai International Film Festival (China)	Competitive
1994	Minsk International Film Festival (Belarus)	Competitive Specialized
1995	Kolkata International Film Festival (India)	Competitive Specialized
	Sarajevo Film Festival (Bosnia)	Competitive Specialized
1996	International Film Festival of Kerala (India)	Competitive Specialized
	Busan International Film Festival (South Korea)	Competitive Specialized
1997	Sofia International Film Festival (Bulgaria)	
	Tallinn Black Nights Film Festival (Estonia)	Competitive
1998	Eurasia International Film Festival (Kazakhstan)	Competitive Specialized
2000	Jeonju International Film Festival (South Korea)	Competitive Specialized
2002	Transilvania International Film Festival Romania)	Competitive Specialized
2013	Filmfestival Kitzbühel (Austria)	Competitive Specialized

Sources: adapted from Ooi & Pedersen (2010; p. 322) and
www.fiapf.org and www.blog.filmfestivallife.com

Furthermore, film festivals are platforms for promoting the rich cinematic traditions, cohering communities around “nationalistic identities and shaping contemporary film culture through their activities” (Rastegar, 2012, p. 310). From a multidimensional perspective, film festivals through their characteristics are tasked to foster development trends (Lee & Stringer, 2012) and showcasing culturally relevant films to an international public with “their specific mission, agenda or programming focus” (Vilhjálmssdóttir, 2011, p. 18), while taking into considerations their stakeholders’ interests and support (Rhyne, 2009).

2.3.2 Historical Overview on Film Festivals

Despite the contemporary context, a historical perspective is needed to engender an appreciation of the phenomenon, its transnational formation in relation to its geopolitical, socioeconomic and cultural impacts in assisting and engaging communities in the circulation of the moving images (film) in a supranational sphere (Lee, 2013; Jordanova & Cheung, 2010; De Valck & Loist, 2009).

According to DeValck (2007), Europe is the cradle of the film festival phenomenon: born in the context of the particular geopolitical situation during the 1930s, leading up to World War II, and the new political order in the late 1940s and early 1950s in its wake. The world’s first major film festival was founded in Venice, Italy under the Fascist government in 1932. Though this first edition had hosted films from several countries, the way the Venice festival was organized gave rise to criticisms that films from Italy and Germany were favoured. According to Turan (2002), and supported by Mazdon (2007), the 1937 Jean Renoir film *La Grande Illusion* was denied the top prize because of its pacifist sentiments. The French thereafter proclaimed that “if you wanted something done right you

had to do it yourself’ (p.18), resulting in the birth of what we now know as the *Cannes Film Festival* (De Valck, 2007; Mazdon, 2007; Turan, 2002).

Cannes won out as the preferred site for the film festival after a competition with Biarritz on France’s Atlantic coast. The film festival in Cannes was originally scheduled to take place during the first three weeks of September 1939, but the festival was cancelled due to the German invasion of Poland on September 1, 1939. It did not take place again until 1946 (Turan, 2002, p. 18-19). Another early film festival is *the Moscow International Film Festival*. It was founded in 1935, and is the second oldest film festival in the world, after Venice. Only three film festivals were established prior to World War II (Table 1), while the other major international film festivals, such as *Locarno* (Switzerland), *Karlovy Vary* (Czech Republic), and *Berlin* (Germany) are viewed as post-war phenomena dating back to the late 1940s and early 1950s (Table 4).; With the emergence of film festivals in other parts of the world, a specialization into a variety of genres, such as short films and documentaries, soon began to occur among them. There is not an exact figure on how many international film festivals exist today, however the estimated number hovers around 3500-4000 worldwide, with daily fluctuations due to additions and cancellations (McGill 2011; Iordanova & Rhyne, 2009; De Valck, 2007; Mazdon, 2007; Turan, 2002).

Table 4. Overview of early film Festivals*

1932	Venice International Film Festival (Italy)
1935	Moscow International Film Festival (Russia)
1939	Cannes International Film Festival (France)
1946	Karlovy Vary International Film Festival (Czech)
	Locarno International Film Festival (Switzerland)
1951	Berlin International Film Festival – Berlinale (Germany)
1952	The International Film Festival of India (India)
1953	Donostia - San Sebastian International Film Festival (Spain)
1954	International Short Film festival Oberhausen (Germany)
	Sydney Film Festival (Australia)
	Mar del Plata International Film Festival (Argentina)
1956	The Times BFI London Film Festival (England)
1958	Bilbao International Festival of Documentary and Short Films (Spain)
<p>*This list is based on film festivals accredited by FIAPF (2008). This means, for example, that The Edinburgh International Film Festival in Scotland, established in 1947 and the longest continually running film festival in the world are not included as it is not accredited by FIAPF.</p>	

Source: adapted from Ooi & Pedersen (2010, p.322)

Harbord (2002) links the creation of European film festivals (as well as other post-war festivals) to the European post-war regeneration and rebuilding. She further stresses that the origins of such major film festivals are marked by two different discourses. Firstly, one is a broad historical project of rebuilding Europe, a rebuilding of the social infrastructure ravaged by World War II, and a consolidation of Europe as a significant player in the global economy. The second discourse emanates from film societies and guilds that are concerned with the definition of film as a form of art, with the aim of broadening categories of definition in contrast to the studio format of Hollywood film (p. 64). In addition to answering the need to articulate an alternative to the economic power of the Hollywood film industry, film festivals played a key role in legitimizing specific elements such as authorship, production, exhibition, cultural prestige and recognition. There is a strict ranking system that exists between A (top-rated) and B (second-rated) festivals, according to the guidelines elaborated by FIAPF. To further clarify this hierarchy, FIAPF attributes a specific status to some film festivals, such as ‘competitive’, ‘competitive specialized’, and ‘non-competitive’ (see Table 3). The three top European film festivals widely recognized as bringing substantial

consecrating power in the global film industry are Cannes, Venice, and Berlin (Mazdon, 2007; Harbord, 2002; Turan, 2002).

DeValck (2007) asserts that film festivals were historically established as a forum for showcasing the best films from national cinemas around the world, and it was associated with notions of European art house cinema (see glossary). The original approach to national cinema within the context of film festivals was thematically driven respectively, from a geopolitical, business and aesthetic perspectives. Of interest, scholars such as De Valck and Loist (2009) and Iordanova and Rhyne (2009) highlighted in their respective works *Film festival studies: An Overview of a burgeoning field* and *Film festival yearbook 1: The Festival circuit*, that a shift occurred in the business and aesthetic appeals, and programming emerged as a response to the proliferation of films that no longer could be associated with a fixed national identity nor viewed as a single entity. Instead, film festivals are now understood as a way for cities and towns to promote themselves (Elsaesser, 2005) so as “not to be left out of the game”(Stringer, 2001, p. 137) through an international cultural sector linked by common economy that is maintained through an integration of discursive and economic articulation of a discrete, yet evolving new cultural industry and juxtaposed in city and place branding (Capon, 2012; Ooi & Pedersen, 2010).

2.3.3 Film Festival Phenomenon

The scholarly discourse on film festivals as a phenomenon was historically anchored in Eurocentric vantage points (DeValck, 2007) as a platform of cultural nuance, juxtaposed in traditional trajectories that mediated the interests of governments in managing their subjects and resources. According to Vilhjálmsson (2011) they are interesting social phenomenon, within a contemporary context they have evolved as a commercial network that now imbues diversity in the film continuum from multidimensional perspectives. They are cultural platforms that provide cinephiles and moviegoers with opportunities to view films (a) from across the globe that they would not have otherwise been able to view and (b) from emerging, new and independent filmmakers (Peranson, 2009). Film festivals highlight trends and techniques being adopted by different countries, leading to a healthy competition that brings about improvements in standards of production. This work is increasingly cross-national and cross-cultural in nature, and a central challenge is ensuring that people from different backgrounds work together effectively (Rüling & Pedersen, 2010; De Valck & Loist, 2009; Bauer, 2007).

Film festivals as a complex phenomenon, are viewed within the context of their relations to many aspects of social, political, cultural and economic life (DeValck, 2007; Turan, 2002). They have individual and communal identities that provide essential attraction and entertainment by offering access to the arts, increasing the amount of culture available, strengthening a community's identity, and enhancing well-being for residents and visitors alike. As complex phenomena, film festivals are nodal points (Iordanova, 2009) and derive their character from the foundation of the social systems in which the motivation occurs, and require various resources from diverse sources (McGill, 2011; Rhyne, 2009).

Film festivals are designed to engage in, and facilitate, the complex flows of national and international cinema to provide audiences, filmmakers and film critics around the world the opportunity to engage in what “may be considered the most significant cutting edge film of the time, films that may not otherwise find mainstream and high-end commercial exhibition” (Vilhjálmsson, 2011, p. 52). They function through the intersection of institutions and individuals on one hand, and are multiple and varied on the other hand and from “a global perspectives the notion of network allows us to understand how film festivals impact the industry” (Cabon, 2012, p.19) through their activities that are economic, social and symbolic, or a combination of both, that fosters their significance and relevance through their mission programming, socio-political agenda and/or constituents (De Valck, 2007).

The impact of film festivals on our understanding within the context of contemporary society is linked to the international film festival circuit and our knowledge of festival histories that focuses on the recognition of local, traditional, and contemporary culture. The impact of the film festival circuit on the integration of global popular culture and its transition from rituals and spectacles to the cultural development within the global economic system is a testament to their growing importance as a phenomenon. In an anecdotal and experimental way, they contribute to the notion of spaces of meaning for the cinephiles and film festival goers where the festival experience yields to systematic knowledge and cross-cultural understanding.

Nichols (1994) asserts that film festivals “as spaces of meaning, are forums for the experience of difference, mystery and wonder, and are a celebration of our capacity to understand what is not of our own making” (p. 19). Furthermore, he notes that, as tourists or film festival goers and

cinephiles, “we, too, seek to understand what others have made and to fathom the meaning it has for those who made it” (p.19). Therefore, film festivals act as places of global travel and exchange, contributing to social construction of values and status, and can be explored as catalysts for how communities can appropriately generate and facilitate ideas for the purposes of self-identification, developing a sense of community (Koven, 2008; Yamamoto, 2003; Nichols, 1994).

Film festivals represent an increasingly transnational film culture, where audiences, filmmakers, distributors, press, critics, and academics come together from all over the world to discover new films, network with one another, and debate about the past, present, and future of cinema. Films that are selected and screened at film festivals give exposure, support, and validation to the artists’ voices. They impact ideation, espouse creativity, inspire innovation and new strategies to distinguish festivals that programmers envision within a geographic locale. Jordanova and Rhyne (2009) assert that film festivals have grown not only in terms of sheer numbers, but also in its influence. With their emergence as a new cultural industry, film festivals are mainly administered through the institutional model of the non-profit organization and an economy of public and private subsidy (McGill, 2011). However, according to Porton (2009), there is a tension in which the institutional framework of film festivals both converges and conflicts with the cinephile agenda. He asserts that “any festival that matters has one crucial task, and that is to defend cinema” and he makes it clear that many festivals “fail to pay adequate reverence to the cinematic muse” (p. 4). Porton (2009) and Koehler (2009) concur that most major festivals are neither sites of unadulterated cinematic nirvana or mere hollow spectacles. They claim that film festivals, especially the most popular and therefore the most controversial events such as *Cannes* and *Toronto*, combine both elements.

Within the film festival continuum, the films that travel the film festival circuit have the opportunity, as cultural objects, to have a medium of discourse that is mediated by critics, programmers, and auteurs through the role they play, as well as opinions of media through reviews, awards, juries, and audiences that offer value-added recognition. It is important to consider the role of film festivals, as a phenomenon within this multidimensional context (Lee & Stringer, 2011), as it represents a hub for films not normally seen in a regular movie-going experience; and understanding its contribution to films that are screened throughout the programming processes. Film festivals as cultural platforms act as a nexus that merges individual and group experiences, granting the events their own particular identities, with the films screened as cultural manifestations being legitimized by the international circuit (; De Valck & Loist, 2009; Bauer, 2007; De Valck, 2007).

Film festivals utilize the art form of film as mechanism to attract visitors and increase economic incomes and livelihoods for cities, regions, and nations where they occur (Ooi & Strandgaard Pedersen, 2010; DeValck & Soeteman, 2010). According to Martinez-Ruiz, et al. (2011) and Richard and Wilson (2007), the explosion in festival numbers is multifaceted in cause, ranging from supply factors (such as cultural planning, tourism development, and civic re-positioning) and demand factors (such as serious leisure, lifestyle sampling, socialization needs, and the desire for creative and authentic experiences by some market segments). Richard and Wilson (2007) further highlighted that creativity has emerged as an additional positioning device, following the large number of cities using culture and film festivals as positioning mechanisms. As events, they are indispensable for the creation of symbolic, cultural and economic value. The film festival network offers opportunities for the translation of symbolic value into economic value. Film festivals act as outlets for the distribution and exhibition of films, and are viewed as trade fairs, tourist attractions, and a tool for destination marketing. The success indicators for film festivals are the stakeholders, the festival

network, and the ability to utilize those indicators as highlighted by the axes to safeguard a complex system, yet invaluable medium that generates not only economic, but also cultural value.

Film festivals as a phenomenon, depend on their locale or the space in which each event occurs to act as a catalyst, reinforcing its symbolic images and endowing the event with a stamp of authenticity that precludes the entry of potential competitors. Furthermore, as asserted by Iordanova and Rhyne (2009) and Bauer (2007), film festivals sustain livelihoods that inspire creativity, diversity, authenticity, and experimentation, and create value-added experiences by continuously redefining their positions on the film festival circuit. According to Iordanova & Rhyne (2009), they act as a medium contribute to the global cultural production for film, cinema and media. However, a symbiotic conundrum exists for film festivals: the challenge and opportunity of the film festival circuit is its dependency for survival on the presence of multiple agendas, programming and otherwise, even though this provides a safe foundation for the network system and guarantees film festivals' sustainability (Iordanova, 2009). Of interests, film festivals have implications for both their organizers and for the communities or regions that host them, given that they represent activities with multiple and varied economic, social, and cultural perspectives. Film festivals are key elements of the cultural industries (UNESCO, 2009) and are increasingly becoming important components of the modern economy and knowledge-based societies due to their impact on development.

In summary, film festivals as a phenomenon and a cultural platform, are embedded in the experience economy, event management and the film industry; their most important role is to translate cultural and artistic values into economic and social ones. The research exploration of the film festival phenomenon, while not exhaustive, provides a gleaning into its dynamism and multi-dimensionality, and builds on the conceptual framework to give trajectories into the emergence of the field of study.

2.3.4 The Film Festival Experience

Nichols (1994) asserts, in his essay *Discovering form, inferring meaning: New cinemas and the film festival circuit*, that the film festival is designed to serve as a window through which audiences may be able to glimpse for the first time important aspects of vital film culture (p. 16). The festival experience is a corollary of both the historical and cultural traditions of the film festivals and they give context and act as unifying agents for the festival program. The festival experience, therefore, provides an alternative site of exhibition, as a platform for the showcasing of cinema, and uniting stakeholders with their different agendas. The film festival provides a unique environment in which to screen films and serve a range of functions for filmmakers, industry and audience. Bosma (2010) asserts that “film festivals are a special biotope of travelling films and travelling spectators, concentrated in a limited period of time” (p. 2). The festival experience stands apart from everyday life, the sense of time and space is narrowed down to the festival grounds and the festival schedules, where the audiences are offered unusual and intense viewing experiences. The festival experience scholars such as Van Hemert (2013), Bosma (2010), Iordanova (2009) and Nichols (1994) opined is a collective exploration of the unknown, where exposure to the newest films or the exotic or forgotten cinema productions enlivens the film festival event. Film festivals are designed to engage in, what Quintin (2009) considers being, a “culture of the extraordinary” (p. 42). Building on Stringer’s (2001) perspective, Vilhjálmsdóttir (2011) agrees that, while festivals operate as closed locations, they are linked by a network of interrelated and interdependent events. These events attempt to reinforce their unique and exclusive characteristics by competing amongst each other, by espousing their exceptional offerings that separates them from other events (2001, p.137). However, it is the festival as a platform for presentation, promotion, and distribution of significant cinematic outputs (selected by a group of trustworthy experts - the programmers and directors – in film culture and history),

that gives credence to the festival and the festival experience (Bosma, 2010; Genkova, 2010; Koven, 2008).

The festival experience for cinephiles and film festival goers Nichols (1994) assert are simultaneously a very individualistic search for satisfaction and meanings, and a social gathering characterized by variety in the framework of assumptions and expectations, along with the distinguishing feature of subcultures. The festival experience contextually focuses on how the film festival inflects and constructs meaning around the experiences the audience ascribe to their encounters and the emergent understandings to the newest in a continuous succession of new cinemas. This emboldens how the film festival spotlight films and filmmakers through its programming, while simultaneously curating the audience that can recognize and appreciate such cinemas as distinct and valued entities (Bosma, 2010; Iordanova, 2010; Nichols, 1994).

Nichols (1994) views film festivals as new cinemas and the artistic choices that are essential to their function, while the festival experience is linked to what Bosma (2010) describes as the stringent and observant selection of which film is fit to be presented. The aforementioned is the core aspect of the programming that is directly linked to the profile of the film festival and the festival experience it desires to create. The programming agenda and the themes of the festival determine what Iordanova (2010) opines as ‘imagined community’ and experiences in which the filmmaker and audience will engage. She further notes that, film festivals create two aspects of an ‘imagined community’, specifically:

In the ‘live’ space of the festival, organizers and audiences form a community - an actual one, that congregates face to face for the purpose of fostering an ‘imagined community’ that comes live in the act of watching a film and imagining distant human beings becoming part of one’s own experiences (p.13).

Therefore, the festival experience has a discernible characteristic for each stakeholder: that of its extraordinary alterability. It is this alterability that presents a challenge for the festival programmer in the programming of each edition of the festival, which Bosma (2010) describes as “a more or less happy coincidence of circumstances” (p. 2). The artistic choices for the festival programmers and directors depend on the available harvest and the degree of freedom to gather this crop (films).

Rastegar (2012) shares a perspective as a corollary to the alterability of festival programming and the challenges that programmers might encounter in the securing of films. She further notes that “the compromises and considerations required of the selection process are tightly guarded because they are intertwined with interpersonal relationships and investments that are rarely articulated explicitly, even within the organization—let alone to the press, the public, or an inquisitive researcher” (p. 4).

Festival programming alterability, within this context, can be impacted by the rivalry amongst festivals, funding, and variable local cooperation to present an attractive program that is the essence of the festival experience on the film festival circuit. The film festival experience is an invitation to submerge ourselves in an experience of difference, entering strange worlds, hearing unfamiliar languages, or witnessing unusual styles. The emphasis of the festival experience is a climate of festivity; it is not solely for the edification, but also in the experience of the new and unexpected itself (Nichols, 1994).

Film festivals afford an ideal opportunity for stakeholders to enjoy the pleasures of film’s imaginary signifiers through the festival experience. Nichols (1994) asserts, “though imaginary, these signifiers and their pleasures are also real” (p.18). He further noted that there is a reverie in the fascination with the ‘strange’, an abiding pleasure in the recognition of differences that persists beyond the

moment, even though the festival-goer receives encouragement to make the strange familiar. Within the context of the festival experience, “the aim is to recover difference as similarity, through the discovery of a common humanity, a family of a human [beings], spanning time and space, culture and history, along with another form of pleasure that resides in the experience of strangeness itself” (Nichols, 1994, p. 17). The extent that this aspect of the festival experience does not reaffirm or collapse readily into the prevailing codes of hegemonic Hollywood cinema, places the international film festival within a transnational and well-nigh postmodern location. Within the context of the festival experience, Nichols (1994) claims “it is our participation in this realm that qualifies us as citizens of a global, but still far from a homogenous culture” (p. 17-18).

The aim of the festival organization and its programming in relation to the festival experience is to position the film festival as an influential factor in the global film industry, where the impetus is to give to independent films a platform. The challenge for curating the festival experience is in the acknowledgment of the complexities associated with the characterizations of international film styles, defining the act of making sense from new experiences and inferred meanings for the audiences. Accordingly, as opined by De Valck et al. (2016), “festivals take place in the here and now. They invite people to engage cinema in ways that are uniquely tied in with space and time of the festival event. Therefore, the festival experience should never be simply theorized; it beckons to be lived” (p. 9). These lived encounters are the means by which the audience goes beyond submergence into the moment of extraction of more disembodied critical knowledge. Hence, the film festival not only gives consideration to the festival experience, but engages in the allegorical challenge of providing an outlet for exhibition opportunities and exposure to varied audiences. In this way, they can witness the difference, the unfamiliar, and the strange as an aspect of the festival experience (De Valck et al., 2016; Bosma, 2010; Nichols, 1994).

2.3.5 Film Festival Programming

Film festival programming gives context to the film festival and is an important factor that impacts the festival experience through the demonstration of the variations of artistic intent (Fech, 2015, p. 115) with film, how it is nuanced and unfurls the festival institutional logic. It has been the essential tool for selecting films that are emerging, experimental, political or aesthetic (De Valck, 2007, p. 137) and assists in framing the meaning and reception, not just of the film itself, but the film festival.

From the rigid agenda-setting processes – submission, selection, and screening - to defining the film festival experience, programming is viewed as a mission with great and intricate responsibility that requires participatory involvement in film culture and society in response to the sudden proliferation of films that could no longer be associated with a fixed national identity. Film festival programming validates the world film production and prepares a wider audience to have the opportunity to witness the intricacies film journeys through as it enter the annals of history, with the possibility to even enter the film canons (Rouff, 2012; Genkova, 2010; Czach, 2004).

There is a paradigm shift that is evident in film festival programming De Valck (2007) asserts given a new generation of film festival leadership, which is exemplified by the festival organizations through the emergence of a spirit of cooperation with programmers, stakeholders, increased collaboration with other cultural institutions, corporate sponsors, and even with various competing film festivals. Collectively, they all contribute to the information exchange and collective sense-making (Lampel & Meyer, 2008) by building on the emergence of this phenomenon, the experience-driven economy, and global film culture.

Van Hemert (2013) asserts that it provides an outlet for contemporary films that have distinctly transnational characteristics, in light of this development beckons that festival programmers have had to alter their focus because film festivals have now become established as a forum for showcasing the best films that goes beyond national or regional cinemas to reflect the creative and cultural contribution. Genkova (2010) and DeValck (2007) purport that approaches to film festival programming, makes the role of the festival programmer as a selector, arbiter, and a tastemaker, central. Hence, film festival programming became a pivotal focus to ensure the festival's success and is viewed as the key element in the creation, orientation and the management of the film festival.

For a filmmaker, the positioning of their film within the programming of a festival can be a crucial factor in the filmmaker's or the film's success. Therefore, film festival programming becomes an aesthetic practice, and an essential part of film festival culture, that is fundamentally important to film festivals meeting the challenges of economic viability through art and the culture of innovation. It provides a social resource for both intellectual capital and creativity. Within a specific film festival, the importance of the distinct programming choices contribute significantly to its prominence, identity, agenda, and the festival experience.

According to Rouff (2012), film festivals, through their programming, have influenced the careers of filmmakers and this is a concrete demonstration of the role film festivals and their programming plays not only in the lives of individual directors, but also in generations and in various national cinemas. They provide an avenue to nurture and inspire filmmakers, programmers, critics, writers, and other film festivals. Film festival programming fosters creativity and generates awareness, not just about the quality of films, but also the competitive relationships among festivals, cities, and regions, to showcase the best films based on specialized themed and identity-driven agendas.

Essentially, festival programming does well to suggest a symbiotic and competitive relationship with film festivals and creativity, given that as cultural platforms within the realm of place they are outlets for inclusion. There is an implicit understanding that there is synergistic relations between place and the film festivals, with the conceived notions of having some relation to identity, rights, beliefs, that are keys to film festivals overall prestige and success. Furthermore, a city's [place's] cultural depth and richness Landry (2000) asserts might mean the heritage or the availability of contemporary artistic facilities, the capacity to network globally and keep abreast of trends in contemporary cinema – films and auteurs, fostering the ability to create imaginative partnerships that embolden their character and success.

Festival programming fosters a symbiotic yet competitive relationship with creativity, given that festivals are competing to showcase the best of the specialized themes, genres and identity-driven films as, value-added contributions that are key elements in a film festival's prestige and success. Hence, the activities a film goes through at a film festival are viewed by the festival programmers and directors as essential renderings to enhance the quality of the film festival experience. According to Cabon (2012) film festivals and their programming are “now framing artistic discourses” (p.23) with the aim of creating an atmosphere for the appreciation of film as art and how it enters the festival. The film, as the element, guides the film festival and reveals a variety of processes taking place around the festivals that not only occur during the event, but also before and after. Film festivals through their programming Fech (2015) purports are able to position their events as influential actors given “the standardization of the circuit “ (p. 116) in the global film industry, where the newest film productions are debuted as an aspect of their programming such as premieres, opening night, galas, featured film, and special presentations. The analysis of film as art within the film festival programming impacts the descriptive and creative aspects of the film.

DeValck (2007) purports that film festival programmers have the same function and status as biennale in the world of modern art, and a festival programmer could be compared to a curator; and are the vanguards who decide what will be selected for display on the international stage of promising potentials. Film festival programming is curated in relation to the film festival's ideals - fictions, documentaries, short films, human rights, or environmental films. Film festival programmers then envision the programming for the festival and ways to highlight, promote, and contextualize a film. They essentially envision the kind of festival experience that will emerge at the film festival. This aspect of the programming process can either be through submissions by filmmakers, producers, or directors, based on the film festival's regulations, or are solicited by programmers. Otherwise the films pass through screening committees that reflect genres, regions, and themes or previewers and programmers.

Genkova (2010) builds on DeValck (2007) scholarly work reinforcing that film festival programming became a discursive tool for presenting a mirror to society; one that is a reflection of the world, the creative contributions and critical commentaries of the new wave of filmmakers. Film festivals through film festival programming utilize their agenda-setting mechanism (DeValck, 2007; Cabon, 2012) that a as a tool for direct intervention and promotion of change with film. A single film is, therefore not just a product for passive entertainment, which makes the role of the programmer as a selector, arbiter, and tastemaker central to the film festival experience (Cabon, 2012; Genkova, 2010; De Valck, 2007).

The success of film festival programming clearly depends on the capacity to establish connections within the context and identity of the festival itself. The context of the festival can result in a cultural

paradigm shift in the attention, competition, awards, and providing exposure, support, and validation to the filmmakers in the program selection curated by festival programmers. Ideally, the festival programmer is the one whose work co-determines the context and defines the difference between a good program and an authoritative one, with the film selection process and the festival experience. Contextually, Bosma (2010) infers that programming film festivals does not infer the situation is perfect, given the false dichotomy that exists between the multiplex and the film festival world - blockbusters versus premieres, with the former being business and the latter art. From the perspective of Hollywood, film festivals no longer represent an art versus commerce opposition; rather, they are structured around the terms we now associate with globalization - space and place, mobility and ubiquity, and mapping and tracking.

Iordanova (2009) and De Valck (2007) noted that the degree to which festival programming influences film criticism, scholarship, canons, and genre formations are considerations that film festivals need to have “to position its programming content in relation to what its rivals are currently doing” (Lee & Stringer, 2012 p. 302) to highlight the event status, the sense of community, and the interaction with audience members, programmers and filmmakers. According to Genkova (2012), festival programming is guided by a selection process that is of aesthetic, thematic, political, intellectual, and cultural value. Hence, programmers play a critical role in the film selection process, given the power vested in their selection choices of inclusion and exclusion of films. This instrumental role impacts a film festival’s consecration of success or canonization as a sphere of innovation and creativity, space for meaning-making or cultural legitimization or a driving force into oblivion. This understanding reinforces the value of film festival programming, not just as a function, but more importantly as Haslam (2004) highlight it’s in the transmission of ideas and the exchanges in diverse cultural contexts and ideologies.

Hence, film festival programming requires strong institutional commitment, vision, and support as highlighted by Peranson (2009) who asserts that amidst the successes that emerge through programming, there is a virtual spectre haunting the film world in the form of declining attendances at art houses, given the digitization of films. Notwithstanding, audiences are willing to take a chance during film festivals to see films, especially in the case of TIFF with its growing audience. Peranson (2009) further noted that there exists a common preconception that an international film festival's priority is to show the very best of the year's output in world and art house cinema. No one festival is able to fulfill this lofty goal and it is nearly impossible for most festivals to even have this as a goal. Film festivals are dedicated to cinema as art, with the understanding that their programming does not follow the business model of blockbusters, but embodies a philosophy that great films deserve audiences (Bosma, 2010).

3. METHODOLOGY

This chapter builds on the perspectives that have been introduced to give context to the conceptual framework that was highlighted and reviewed with regard to their contribution to the research in the previous chapters. The methodological framework adopted and the research methods utilized to collect and analyze data to identify and understand the processes that underlie the various patterns are presented. The emphasis is mostly on the quality and depth of the information, rather than on its scope or breadth, as witnessed in quantitative research (Manners et al, 2015). The research builds on qualitative research methodologies, including case study research to provide a methodological focus (Creswell, 2003 and utilized research strategies that have a “reliance on theoretical propositions” and “developing a case description” (Yin, 2003, p. 109-114). The methodological approach to the theoretical perspectives against which the findings were analyzed, centered on institutional theory, field-configuring events and film festival research. The development of the case description (Yin, 2009) and the exemplary case design (Yin, 2009; Perry, 2004; Kuiken, 2000) was important in order to recognize the particular phenomenon contextually and to uncover the perspectives (voices) gleaned from the participants, who were encouraged to share their experiences and stories.

The research process allows for a combination of multiple methodological practices, empirical materials, perspectives and observers in a single study (Denzin & Lincoln, 2005, p. 5). This chapter also builds on the methodological practices of FCEs as highlighted by Lampel and Meyer (2008) where events play an important role in ascribing meaning and valuating creative commodities. The decision to select various methods for contextualization of the research was made to approach the research subjects and themes from different angles to obtain more comprehensive and reliable information without exclusively relying on evidence gained from the participants. An overview of

the research design and methodological rationale is followed by a discussion of data collection, management and data analysis, researcher's perspective and position, along with the potential limitations of the research. While true, it is not the intent of this type of inquiry to directly apply findings to other places, peoples and contexts (Creswell 2009). Rather, the value of qualitative research lies in its contextualized richness, its particularity. In combination with additional or other case studies, context specific qualitative research can be used to generate broader theory, and in some cases (with clear documentation of qualitative procedures) be repeated in new settings (Yin 2003).

3.1 Methodological Approach

The research explores the phenomenon of an international film festival, from the perspective of programming and the processes that impact the event itself, illustrating its potential for deepening our collective understanding. The methodological approach for the research is qualitative. According to Strauss and Corbin (1998), qualitative research is defined as “any type of research that produces findings not arrived at by statistical procedures or other means of quantification. Qualitative research refers to research about persons' lives, lived experiences, behaviors, emotions, and feelings as well as about organizational functioning, social movements, and cultural phenomena (p.10-11).”

More specifically, the research employs a qualitative case study approach to give a detailed understanding of the phenomenon under study – viz., a film festival. Merriam (1998) describe the qualitative case study method as “an intensive holistic description of a single instance, phenomenon, or social unit” (p. 27). According to Iordanova and Rhyne (2009) most scholarship of film festivals and in general has followed a model of case study research and there are significant reasons for the

use of this methodology; “the unique histories of festivals large and small have demanded consideration on the institutional level” (p. 1). Furthermore, scholars such as Robinson (2011), Merriam (2009), Smith and Xiao (2006), Agostinho (2005), and Patton (2002) purport that qualitative research designs are naturalistic because the research occurs in the real world, with emphasis on illuminating perspectives for the research to uncover interest in how people interpret their experiences, how they construct their worlds, and what meanings they attribute to their experiences.

Furthermore, Yin (2009), in his publication *Case study research: Design and methods*, defines a case study as “an empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context, especially when the boundaries between the phenomenon and context are not clearly evident and relies on multiple sources of evidence, with data needing to converge in a triangulating fashion” (p. 18). Hence, Yin (2009) and other scholars such as Berg (2007), Jensen & Rodgers (2001) and Langford (2001) support the learning value of a case study, highlighting that it is a process that provides instant recognition and understanding of a phenomenon or contemporary event, which includes film. Smith (2010) posited that the case study approach is an inclusive research paradigm covering the logic of research design, data collection and analysis. Hence, the case study approach is not merely a data collection tactic or a research design; it is a comprehensive research strategy that is most useful for the purposes of this research.

Building on Yin’s (2009) perspective, Flyvbjerg (2011) and Smith (2010) observed that the case study approach is particularly suited to research questions that require detailed understanding of social organizational processes because of the rich data within a specified context. Smith (2010) posited that this approach is an inclusive research paradigm covering the logic of research design, data

collection and analysis. The reason for the growth in popularity of case studies in several disciplines including tourism research is the potential to acquire rich understanding of relevant phenomena (Smith, 2010; Yin, 2009; Xiao & Smith, 2006) that could not be achieved through other methods. It employs a manner that provides a detailed description of and deeper insights into the phenomenon under study. Smith (2010) and Yin (2003) purport that the purpose of a case study is to understand a situation, not to change it. Building on the research design, the aforementioned highlights and confirm that case studies are strong approaches for research exploring processes, activities and events; and are well suited to the “examination of broad culture sharing behavior of individuals or groups” (Creswell, 2009, p. 201).

3.2 Research Design

The research follows an exemplary case design (Perry, 2004; Kuiken, 2000) that focuses the methodological process to give explicit attention to the phenomenon understudy that is significant and unusual. Going beyond exploration, it examines the relationships amongst a particular class or group, in this case – film festival programmers – that might be generalized according to Perry (2004) and Kuiken (2000).

This is ideal for this research, because it fosters the participants’ perspectives to be clearly presented within the context of their organization, their culture and their socialization. The exemplary case design allows the researcher to select a relevant group of participants and in the case of this research, senior film festival professionals that were interviewed. The research participants are considered homogenous, as Kuiken (2000) highlights, for they “warrant arbitrary, perhaps even random, selection of any member of the class for the case study” (p. 2). Participants were encouraged to share

their individual experiences and stories related to their learnings and reflections of the phenomenon being investigated.

According to Tieu and Juralve (2011), exemplary case design pays special attention to “the limits of the case, meaning the distinction between the phenomenon under study and its context” (p. 11) and allows the researcher to extract characteristics of events from real life such as managerial and organizational processes including participants, in this case, the festival programmers’ experience and the broader context of their professional insights, to provide context for data collection and analysis. The merit of the case study methodology to the research is in its ability to characteristically provide data that is of an interpretive, descriptive and exemplary nature (Yin, 2009; Xiao and Smith, 2006).

The researcher focused on understanding how participants make meaning of the phenomenon, in this case TIFF and its programming. The meanings were inductively interpreted by the researcher with descriptive outcomes (Merriam, 2009). With this in mind, the research explored the ways in which the participants viewed their experiences and realities within the context of the research setting – the film festival. The research sought to learn about the participants’ experiences and how they influenced the decision about the kind of festival programming that emerged and the impact it had on a kind and type of emergent festival experience they want to engender as the event for the festival under study. This approach to research can yield understanding of a complex issue or object and can extend experience or add strength to what is already known through previous research.

3.3 Research Methods

The research methodology is built on the understanding that a phenomenon cannot be researched thoroughly without a conceptual background and methodological practices. The study employed the following research methods - desk research (secondary research), interviews, and textual analysis (Fig. 2). The research methods are useful for investigating and understanding human behaviour and experience, which is crucial to the social context of the phenomenon – film festival. These methods are helpful to “elucidate human environments, individual experiences and social processes” and make possible an examination of “structures and processes on the one hand and of individuals and their experiences on the other” (Hay 2000, p. 2-5). Case study methodology is based on a constructivist paradigm, which is built upon the premise of a social construction of reality.

This paradigm recognizes the importance of the subjective human creation of meaning, but does not reject outright the notion of objectivity (Yin, 2009; Baxter & Jack, 2008). According to Dooley (2002), case study is a process of scholarly inquiry and exploration whose underlying purpose is the creation of new knowledge, understanding and meaning of our complex social world; and allows for the researcher to make a distinctive mark with the methods selected, given that they foster an in-depth and multifaceted approach to research.



Fig. 2: Methodological Approach

As a strategy, the methodological practices add rigor, breadth, complexity, richness, and depth to the inquiry being explored throughout the research (Yin, 2009; Smith, 2010). The methods allow the research to focus on the film festival event, the participants' perspectives and the research themes. Within the context of the research, they allow for more comprehensive and reliable information without reliance on a single source and builds credibility for the research in a distinctive way (Yin, 2009; Baxter & Jack, 2008).

3.3.1 Desk (Secondary) Research

This research is guided by the desire to explore festival programming, elements of the process, and the practice at an international film festival. As a researcher, it is important for me to understand the Toronto International Film Festival (TIFF) as an organization, including its structure, programming and history. This was deemed to be most appropriately achieved through a critical

review of relevant documents, including festival programmes, annual reports, festival magazines and marketing paraphernalia. According to scholars Linh Do (2016) and Dickson (2014), this entails collecting data that is available to the public and can be accessed without primary research (i.e. it includes information that other researchers have collected using primary research and other things like letters, memoranda, financial and statistical documents etc., none of which were created for the purpose of this research). It is a common research method that helps to guide and focus subsequent primary research, where the information already exists and is readily available from sources such as publications, digital media platforms, government agencies, libraries, archives, online databases, and the internet.

Through engagement with the research process, I had the opportunity to access the TIFF Film Reference Library located on-site for internal documents (archival data and annual reports) and also festival programmes and festival history from TIFF's inception in 1976. Additionally, I conducted secondary research on existing scholarship related to institutional theory, field configuring events, film festival, film festival programming and the film festival experience as highlighted in Chapter 2. The review of contemporary literature (academic and industry) continued throughout the course of the thesis, which allowed me to glean perspectives and commentary on film festivals from within the academy as more scholarship appeared on the subject throughout the research process.

Furthermore, desk (secondary) research also involved looking at existing materials on TIFF and articles on film festival events from a non-academic perspective. The advantages of this method are its non-intrusiveness and usefulness for making inferences about the film festival. However, while this method is useful to the research, according to Boaduo (2011) it is also important to avoid being misled by such documents and the lack of opportunity to probe answers.

3.3.2 Interviews

In-depth interviews allow the researcher to explore a range of opinions and perspectives, and gain deeper insights into the specific research questions. One aim of this data collection strategy is to provide a 'deeper' understanding of a phenomenon than what would otherwise be obtained from purely quantitative methods, such as questionnaires (Mack, et al, 2005). Interviews are, therefore, appropriate here because little is known about the phenomenon and detailed insights are required from individual participants. Interviews help to establish a ground of trust and confidence during the qualitative research process when exploring sensitive topics, where participants may not want to talk about such issues in a group environment.

The interview data garnered were used to gain an understanding of the participants' perspective on a range of issues including programming, its impact on the curation of the film festival experience, and how they contribute to the festival's identity and reputation that elevates it to the level of field-configuring. According to Fischer (2009) this aspect of film festival is rarely written about and he noted that:

it is found in the numerous interviews and testimonials given by film festival directors. This reliance on oral transmission reflects the hectic process of film festival operation. Film festival organizers are often too busy organizing film festivals to write about their experience. Yet they are willing to share anecdotal information through conversations and interviews (p. 22).

The information gleaned through this process contributed to the analysis of the phenomenon, thereby enhancing the quality of available data, their interpretation and analysis. This, in turn, enhanced the research reliability (Boaduo, 2011; Fischer, 2009; Gaskell, 2009). The interviews conducted were semi-structured and most lasted for approximately one hour except for three that

were an hour and a half each; resulting in over eleven hours of recorded dialogue. These interviews were conducted from November 2017 to June 2017, in order to gain a better insight into film festival programming that was intrinsic to the festival organization from the participants' perspective. The benefit of these semi-structured interviews was in their potential for flexibility, which was balanced by structure, as it allowed for the researcher to cover each point that needed to be addressed. It also ensured that as a researcher, I was not confined to a specific set or linearity of questions.

The semi-structured nature meant that the same initial questions were asked of all participants; however, an additional process of development and review took place to ensure they elicited responses are relevant to the research themes. This allowed the researcher the flexibility to probe deeper, if necessary, or go off-script, if the respondent raised a point that was worth pursuing (Robinson, 2011; Gillham, 2005); and were generally open-ended. By using this method, the motivations and interests of the participants who are involved with TIFFF's programming were obtained (see Appendix II for interview guides). This allowed the researcher to elicit information and contextualize the research by approaching participants through different lenses which led to a better understanding of the role of film festival programming and the processes involved in organizing a film festival (Robinson, 2011; Gaskell, 2009).

As a researcher, I did encounter challenges in conducting field research with the film festival organization. There was refusal to allow direct access to participants to be interviewed and enquiries about the line of questioning prior to any further meeting by a team member. I advised the team member concerned, that I had been granted permission to conduct the interviews by members of the senior management team and with several programming staff, prior to this preponderance of

uncooperative bureaucracy. The researcher did have an encounter, where he was advised that he had to reveal whom he had already interviewed in a coercive manner, and upon advising the staff member that there is a confidentiality agreement, there emerged an unrelenting insistence. I advised of the number of team members interviewed, and was told that I have enough participants and was prevented from conducting two additional interviews. This prevented the research from having access to 100% of the film festival programming team permanently employed by the festival organization. Notably, for the most part the participants I had already interviewed were very cooperative.

The nature and amount of interviews enabled the researcher to measure the outcome of social processes specific to individuals (Gaskell, 2009). The benefits of using the interview process is that, it provided an opportunity for analysis of distinct, common and recurring themes, insights, and ideas that the research utilized to garner key findings and perspectives (Stokes, 2003). According to Hartley (2004), data collection and analysis are developed together in an iterative process which is its strength, as it allows for theory development that is grounded in empirical evidence. Furthermore, along with analysis of documents, I could examine the participants' perspectives from different angles, getting more comprehensive and reliable information on the evidence gathered. To illustrate this point, the interviewees made a distinction between the editorial and curatorial perspectives with film festival programming.

3.3.3 Textual Analysis

Textual analysis posit a centrality to programming in the film festival and how it supports the research, the objectives and questions along with its relevance in a broader organizational context. This method was critical to inform my understanding of the way in which the festival's identities emerge and are shaped by key moments, trajectories and developments in its history and programming; and investigating how programmers construct identities and meaning for the films selected and nuanced in the festival. Lockyer (2008) purports that researchers in the fields of sociology, geography, history, linguistics, communications and media studies, and film, use textual analyses to assess texts in a range of cultural settings.



Image 3 – TIFF Festival Programmes

Accordingly, “texts [that] range from newspapers, television programs, and blogs, to architecture, fashion, and furniture are deconstructed to examine how they operate, the manner in which they are constructed, the ways in which meanings are produced, and the nature of those meanings” (p. 865). The festival is contextualized within its programming process to understand how the editorial and curatorial elements along with the varying activities that give shape to the festival events’ design, creativity and identity and help to examine the programming approaches to film selection, infuse meanings to situate the films for the festival event.

The researcher utilized textual analysis to augment the programmers' perspectives by analyzing the festival documents, programmes and other publications to contribute further understanding of the organization of the festival event by building on DeValck's (2007) assertion that film festival events "bring stakeholders together with a desire to experience film within a rich discursive context (p. 18)". Accordingly, McKee (2003) purports that textual analysis is useful in clarifying the purpose of this method and it "doesn't make claims about whether the texts are accurate or truthful or show reality, rather it seeks to understand the ways in which these forms of representation take the assumptions behind them and the kinds of sense-making about the world that they reveal" (p. 15). Furthermore, textual analysis is non-invasive, which is a desirable feature to understanding programming within the context of the research (Van Hemert, 2013). Critical reading of textual and visual material is frequently used as a methodology in tourism and geography, which has historically emphasized the importance of reading texts critically (Forbes, 2005).



Image 4 – TIFF 40th Anniversary Festival Style Magazine Cover

Texts, whether visual or linguistic, contain facts, ideas and metaphors. The deconstructing of texts explored revealed multiple meanings behind what was gleaned from the documents and the representations of participants' perspectives in relation to the research objectives. This method enabled the researcher to focus on specific aspects of the festival, its programming and the films selected and how they are exposed throughout the channels both traditional, popular and alternative distribution and the way it reaches the audience.

The use of multiple methods in the research – desk (secondary) research, interviews and textual analysis facilitates a triangulation of data. This allows for a cross-checking of facts and adds richness and complexity to the analysis of the phenomenon under study.

3.3.4 The Interview Guide

The interview guide was designed to create a dialogue-liked approach to uncover the major themes of the research and contribute by providing in-depth data through the key primary instrument - semi-structured interviews. A copy of the interview guide was provided in advanced to the interviewees via email for their perusal in preparation for the interviews. The interview questions were informed by the overarching research questions (Robinson, 2011) and the interview guide was designed to address the questions, the purpose of the study, and was informed by the conceptual framework and theoretical perspectives from the literature reviewed.

The interview guide was divided into three sections to focus and act as a checklist to ensure relevant questions and themes were articulated. The sections focused on how the film festival is *firstly*, organized; *secondly*, programmed and *thirdly*, curated and narrated based on their experience. The

second section focused on how the interviewees perceived the significant milestone of the festival understudy not just as a single event but as the culmination of its evolution, and the meanings they associated with the celebration of this milestone. The third section revolved around the interviewee's perception of the film festival, its identity and reputation as a field-configuring event within the context of partnerships, communication and meaning.

The idea was to situate the festival being explored within the context of its institutional logic – audience-centeredness in order to encourage participants to give context to the film festival as a global phenomenon within the key features of field-configuring events.

3.3.5 Pilot Interview

The interview guide was developed and piloted, which was “essential to identify potential challenges before the expensive, time-consuming full scale research was undertaken” (Adams & Cox, 2008, p. 25). The pilot interview guide that was developed incorporated interviews of both a senior management staff and a programmer and post-interview discussions to help identify how the questions were likely to be interpreted. This allowed the researcher to rectify any problems with the terminology or design (Deacon et al, 2007, p. 70); and to ensure that consideration was given to any research issues that occurred at that point and use them to improve the final version of the interview guide.

The aim of constructing the guide in the aforementioned manner was to ensure that the dialogue flowed conversationally, given that the interviewees had to narrate their shared experiences at TIFF

in ways that articulated their understanding of the significant milestone and the kind and type of experience they wanted for the 40th edition of the festival.

3.4 Data Collection

The data collected during this process give meaning and context to the research and answering the research questions. The data collection acts as a process that is concerned with gleaning insights and perspectives on the research questions and themes from the participants. Furthermore, it aids the researcher to illuminate the phenomenon under study and by providing an in-depth understanding, not just about the phenomenon, but also the participants' motivations and interests that have led to TIFF becoming a global film festival. Essentially, the research analysis and outcomes rely on the data collection methods during this phase of the research, and the relevance of the data to the research.

The primary source of data collection was open-ended face-to-face interviews with audio recordings (Patton, 2002) conducted at the TIFF Bell Lightbox in Toronto, Canada. Merriam (2009) espoused that interviews are important, and a widely used method, for data collection in qualitative research. According to Patton (2002, cited by Robinson, 2011, p. 86) there are three approaches to collecting qualitative data through open-ended interviews: (a) informal conversational interviews, (b) general guided interviews, and (c) standardized open-ended interview questions. The data collection process occurred between November 2016 and June 2017. Ten participants were interviewed from a group of 12 festival staff; due to staff changes the latter two team members became unavailable; namely programmers and senior management members of TIFF who are engaged in film festival programming and are permanently employed by the festival organization. An interview guide with

open-ended questions was used (See Appendix II), although the questions were not asked in the same manner or order with all of the interviewees, given the opportunity for interactive dialogue and personal insights. However, all relevant topics and themes identified for the research were covered.

The interviews with the senior management and programming staff (See Table 5 – List of Research Participants) were conducted in office locations that were private, where the interviewees felt comfortable, and that afforded both interviewees and the interviewer the opportunity to engage in ‘spirited’ dialogue that was non-threatening and relaxed, but also allowed for confidentiality and discretion. The objective in conducting the interview in that environment and manner was to engender collaboration, collegiality, and collective reflection (Kelly & Cherkowski, 2015; Robinson, 2011) within a professional atmosphere that allowed for the participants to be engaged and helpful. Conducting each interview in such an environment was important because of the nature of the questions that were personal, yet professional. Furthermore, Czach (2004) espoused that film festival programmers can help define and reflect the state of film canon, but can also challenge the status quo and what gets defined, given their curatorial responsibilities. She further highlighted, that “while film festival programming may be only one in a series of events that can lead a film becoming part of a canon, it can also work to define and redefine the concept of [the festival] itself” (p. 85).

To build trust and create an atmosphere that is amiable, I introduced myself to each interviewee using a slow conversational tone as well as polite and open manner. The interviews were scheduled for 45 minutes to an hour, with the majority of them exceeding the time scheduled, with a few exceptions. I invited them to ask questions about the research to develop a positive rapport and ask that the consent form be signed as a key aspect of the research ethics process and to ensure confidentiality of participants’ identity. It was critical to develop rapport and trust throughout the

interview process, to ensure the information would be rich, filled with the interviewees' insights, perceptions, and perspectives.

The interviews were tape recorded, transcribed, and coded for recurring and emergent themes throughout the data collection process. In addition to the interviews and desk research, textual analysis augmented the data collection process. These included festival publications (such as programs, news features, marketing paraphernalia and digital media) along with research publications from non-academic sources.

3.5 Researcher's Perspective and Position

Firstly, I have a responsibility to declare my position and perspective in the research process, and it is important to declare my role as a cinephile, a researcher and a person with sociological imagination. The experiences as a cinephile at a major international film festival have created a pathway that has illuminated opportunities for research and cultivating relationships over the years. In examining my position as a doctoral student researcher and a cinephile attending TIFF events for several years, the gleanings from my participation in TIFF creates opportunity for easier facilitation to formulate what I am passionate about and to see this as an opportunity to undertake it as a research project.

The accesses to information and insights of the film festival have shaped my role as a researcher, but also as an attendee at the festival. The experiences I have had at TIFF have enhanced my appreciation for the processes involved in curating not just a film festival, but a very successful one that has contributed significantly to configuring the field. Sociological imagination is the vivid

awareness of the relationship between personal experience and the wider society. It allows for us to situate our understanding that “everything depends on the lenses through which we view the world; by putting on new lenses we can see things that would otherwise remain invisible” (Wright Mills, 1959, as cited in Robinson, 2011, p. 97). Robinson (2011) further noted that we all write and speak from a particular place and time, from a history and a culture which is specific, and what we say is always ‘in context’ positioned from those lenses (p. 97).

Secondly, the challenges that I have experienced on this academic journey have taught me many lessons such as fortitude, forbearance and adaptable. Nonetheless, I am of the firm belief and realization that this topic has reignited the passion needed for studying film festivals at this level and pursuing it as a dissertation topic. My interests have always been in the creative and cultural industries, and there were times I have been frustrated in my attempt to choose a topic. The opportunity to have not just a glimmer, but hope that I can contribute a seminal piece of research to this field of study is humbling and my committee members’ guidance and patience is appreciated.

Thirdly, in my role as researcher and a cinephile, my perspective is enriched by the power of the moving image – film, and will contribute to the analysis and gleanings gained from this research. The expectation of feeling personally involved in every step of the research process is liberating, because every consideration and decision is based entirely on a love and appreciation for film festivals and the cinematic muse given the research objective. I believe it is a challenge that is very complex to handle, however it can be balanced with the research ethics and guidelines. This assisted in improving my practice as a researcher in the analysis of the festival and its programming through the conceptual framework for the research.

Fourthly, reflecting about the researcher's position in relation to the interviewees is also more than just an ethical consideration, as it takes into account the fact the researcher cannot help but influence the data that emerges from the interview (Ross, 2010). This is something that is particularly important when it is understood that the role as the researcher becomes a part of the interview process. As King (2004) noted:

The qualitative researcher believes that there can be no such thing as a 'relationship-free' interview. Indeed the relationship is part of the research process, not a distraction from it. The interviewee is seen as a 'participant' in the research, actively shaping the course of the interview rather than passively responding to the interviewer's pre-set questions (p. 21)

With the aforementioned, the personal interactions between the researcher and participants may also influence the interactions (e.g. the researcher may empathise with his participants and vice versa). This was taken into consideration, as it is incumbent upon the researcher to build a relationship based on trust, and collect, analyze, and display the evidence objectively (Robinson, 2011).

3.6 Site Selection

The site selected for the research was the TIFF Group's permanent headquarters, the TIFF Bell Lightbox, located in Toronto, Canada, which is important and central to this study's viability. It is important because the physical environment or setting needs to be comfortable and familiar for the participants (Robinson, 2011). According to Marshall and Rossman (1989, as cited by Robinson, 2011), specific principles for selecting a site include:

(a) entry is possible; (b) there is a high probability that a rich mix of many of the processes, people, programs, interactions, or structures that may be a part of the research question will be present; (c) the researcher can devise an appropriate role to maintain continuity of presence for as long as necessary; and (d) data quality and credibility of the study are reasonably assured by avoiding poor sampling decisions (p. 83).

3.7 Sample Selection

The researcher's objective was to uncover a detailed understanding of the film festival programming, so value was placed on the subjectivity of the participants and their unique characteristics as film professionals. As highlighted in the preceding section, the participants were selected based on their ability to provide unique insights, contributions, perspectives and understandings to the research topic. According to Robinson (2011), the sampling techniques were of equal importance to preserve credibility, a richness of information, and quality data. The participants are film festival professionals employed by the Toronto International Film Festival: programmers, the festival director and the senior management members. The participants were selected through a process of snowball sampling (Patton, 2002) as well as criterion-based sampling (Creswell, 2003). Snowball sampling involves identifying likely participants by asking knowledgeable people for referrals (Merriam, 2009; Patton, 2002). Criterion-based sampling involves selecting participants who meet a predetermined set of criteria, and is particularly effective when each participant has experienced the phenomenon (Creswell, 2003). Merriam (2009) also emphasized the usefulness of a criterion-based selection method to enhance discovery, understanding and insight on issues critical to the research. Because this is a qualitative study based on targeted individuals, there was no attempt to develop a proportional or statistically representative sample.

To build trust and create an atmosphere that is amiable, I introduced myself to each interviewee using a slow conversational tone as well as polite and open manner. The interviews with the interviewees were scheduled for forty-five minutes to an hour, with majority of them exceeding the time scheduled being an hour, with a few exceptions (See Table 5 – List of Research Participants). I invited them to ask questions about the research to develop a positive rapport. It was critical to

develop rapport and trust throughout the interview process, to ensure the information would be rich, filled with the interviewees' insights, perceptions, and perspectives. The interviews provided an opportunity for the interviewees to share gleanings on the themes and subjects from the questionnaire and issues they thought were relevant. The interviews were tape recorded, transcribed, and coded for recurring and emergent themes throughout the data collection process. In addition to the interviews and desk research, textual analysis augmented the data collection process for the research. These included festival publications (such as programs, news features, advertorials from popular and digital media) along with research publications from non-academic sources.

Table 5. List of Research Participants

Interviewees	Gender	Demographic Age Range	Designation	Years of Service	Geographic Area and Responsibilities
Interviewee A	Male	60 – 70	Senior Management & Programming	36	Western Europe, Italy, Poland and Gala Presentations
Interviewee B	Female	50 - 60	Senior Management & Programming	29	Ireland, The Netherlands and Special Presentations
Interviewee C	Male	50 – 60	Senior Management & Programming	21	South Asia, W. Europe, USA, Caribbean, Africa, Middle East, City to City, Lagos, Gala Presentations
Interviewee D	Female	30 – 40	Programming	11	Belgium, Turkey; Gala and Special Presentations
Interviewee E	Male	40 – 50	Programming	11	Canadian Film Programming and TIFF Cinematheque
Interviewee F	Female	30 - 40	Programming	8	Canadian Programming
Interviewee G	Male	30 – 40	Programming	6	TIFF Cinematheque
Interviewee H	Male	50 – 60	Programming	22	Canada, The Philippines, Nordic Region
Interviewee I	Female	40 – 60	Adult Learning & Programming	8	In Conversation With...
Interviewee J	Female	30 - 40	Programming	6	Film Circuit

3.8 Establishing Quality Control and Trustworthiness of Data

Establishing quality control and trustworthiness throughout the research process is important to ensure academic rigor. As a cinephile, it is not easy to remain unbiased, and so in conducting this research – documenting, handling, and analyzing the data, it helps to build theoretical sensitivity. This provides a unique opportunity to critique and improve on the data collection processes and that the resulting analyses represent the highest qualitative standards. These characteristics of the investigator are essential, given the need to be responsive and adaptable to changing circumstances throughout the research process (Strauss & Corbin, 1990; Guba & Lincoln, 1981). Qualitative research is subjective in nature, and specific strategies are employed to establish trustworthiness of the data such as triangulation, textual analysis, and member checks. Triangulation and member checks were employed to establish trustworthiness and quality (Robinson, 2011, Morse et al., 2004, Merriam 2002).

3.8.1 Triangulation

Denzin and Lincoln (2000) opined that triangulation is a multi-method approach that strengthens research and leads to credibility by providing a more rigorous account than using one method. For this qualitative research it involved utilizing multiple data sources, cross-checking the sources such as interviews and textual analysis (festival programmes, magazines) and collection procedures (field notes, transcripts) to compare among each other for corroboration and to evaluate the extent to which all evidence converges. It would not be uncommon, for example, to analyze transcribed interviews along with observational field notes and documents authored by the interviewees themselves.

This approach strengthened the research and led to credibility by providing a more detailed account of the phenomenon. The principle of triangulation is applied contextually by the use multiple data sources for example, interviews, secondary research, and textual analysis to increase trust in the validity of the study's findings. For instance, as themes and patterns emerged from the methods, whether interviews or texts, they were coded and compared amongst each other for corroboration. Perspectives from the scholarly literature also served as a valuable source of data for the study. Bekhet & Zauszniewski (2012) opined that methodological triangulation has been found to be beneficial in providing confirmation of findings, more comprehensive data, and increased validity to enhance understanding of the studied phenomenon.

3.8.2 Member Checking

Member checking or respondent validation provides the researcher with a technique that is essential to establish credibility (Lincoln & Guba, 1985), validity (Merriam, 2009) and trustworthiness throughout the data collection and analysis process. As interviews were transcribed, contact was made with the participants by telephone and email to share the researcher's understanding of the interviews (Robinson, 2011). Participants were provided with the transcription of the interviews to provide feedback to ensure accuracy, trustworthiness, and that their voices were honoured throughout the research process. This was vital to the research process to ensure coherence for the researcher and the participants.

3.9 Data Analysis and Management

The data analysis for this qualitative research incorporates an iterative and reflexive process (Stake, 2000) that begins as the data is being collected, rather than after it has ceased. The collection, analysis and reporting of the data are interrelated and this is done by employing thematic analysis that involves the identification of themes through an inductive approach (Robinson, 2011; Fereday & Muir-Cochrane, 2006). According to Henning et al. (2004), data analysis is a continuous, developing process in which the transcribed data is analyzed to help the researcher construct interpretive narratives to capture the complexity of the phenomenon. Analyzing the narratives from the interviews highlighted the how the participants' through their shared perspectives made sense of the case.

Thematic analysis according to Joffe (2012) “is a method for identifying and analyzing patterns of meaning in the dataset” (p. 1). It allows for the researcher to recognize important moments and encode them prior to a process of interpretation to capture the qualitative richness of the phenomenon. During the interview process as the researcher, I was able to observe, listen and make notes (crude analysis) of the initial impressions, tentative themes and trajectories as well as follow-up on from the subsequent interviews (Robinson, 2011; Merriam, 2002). The interviews were audio-recorded, with the permission of the interviewees and the researcher asking questions was highlighting the most salient constellation of meanings presented during the interviewing process (Joffe, 2012; Robinson, 2011).

Following the data collection from the interviewees, a more comprehensive process of data transcribing, coding and identification was undertaken, as outlined in the three main stages. This process described as a systematic step-by-step process below, incorporated a data driven inductive

approach (Boyatzis, 1998) to complement the research allowing for themes to emerge directly from the data.

Stage One - Transcribing

During this step, the data was organized and prepared for transcribing. Transcription is a very important part of the data analysis, particularly for accuracy, but also because the transcription process is interpretive (Robinson, 2011; Riessman, 2008; Creswell, 2007). Transcripts also have implications for the analysis and interpretation of the data. The recorded interviews and the crude analysis from the interviews were transcribed to get the actual perspectives and the words of the interviews (verbatim) to the best of the researcher's ability. According to Lincoln & Guba (1985) as cited by Robinson (2011) it is important to consider the natural language with the [group] culture as critical as it was expressed, given that it impinges upon the data, shaping them (p. 90).

The objective is to make it easier to relate the analytical insights, test them against new observations and the purpose of the study. Furthermore, it helps the researcher to obtain a deeper understanding of the film festival phenomenon by allowing the narratives from the interviewees be given specific focus through thematic analysis. According to Riessman (2008) the specific focus is on 'what is said, rather than how, to whom or for what purpose' for meaning making of the perspectives articulated within the context of the research. This process allowed the research to interpret directly and dissect the narratives that honour the voices of interviewees in constructing the case stories and create a profile of each interviewee.

Stage Two - Profiling

This process involves profiling the narratives of the interviewees based on their history and experience with the film festival. The information presented also relates to who the interviewees are, their gender, demographic age range, roles, years of service and areas of geographic responsibilities (See Table 5.) The profiles also include notes from my own personal impressions of each interviewee while collecting and interacting with the data. This is an iterative process and to guarantee confidentiality (Robinson, 2011; Patton 2002; Stake, 2000). The purpose of the profiles is to create case stories of each of the interviewees to provide an introduction and make the data analysis process more relatable and easier. To guarantee the interviewees confidentiality, they were assigned pseudonyms and this facilitated capturing the narratives and making sense of the data.

Step Three – Coding and Categorizing

After the detailed case stories that were prepared of each interviewee, the data from the transcribed interviews were carefully reviewed and a master copy was printed and filed. The interview transcripts or case stories were reviewed with regard to focusing on meaning and to discern from the data themes and codes to the research questions through an inductive reading of the full interviews (Washer & Joffe, 2006).

I started to utilize the information from the case stories as segue to tentatively identify themes and to allow for highlights that identify meanings and subthemes for the research. In reading through each interview transcript and utilizing my crude analysis as a guide, it assisted the researcher to separate the text into meaningful units. The data identified in meaningful units were then color

coded with highlighters, each reflecting the tentative themes identified in the interviewing process. It is generally understood that coding is key in qualitative data analysis and serves as a way to label, compile and organize the data thematically (Robinson, 2011; Gibbs, 2007). This increases the chance of developing an understanding of the way in which participants experience the phenomenon and report on those experiences (Fontana & Frey, 2005).

Following up on the identified themes, I assigned each theme a colour code and this served as tool for organizing segments of meaning units that were similar or related text. This was to ensure that all transcripts that were reviewed, the meaning units identified and matched were assigned to the corresponding colour coded themes. As a researcher, I made notes throughout the process to use as a data management guide when listing the themes that were found through specific interviewees or case stories. By utilizing the thematic analysis template it provided a clear trail of evidence for the credibility of the research (Robinson, 2011; Crabtree & Miller, 1999, Boyatzis, 1998). This process of identifying and organizing the data into meaning units, assisted in facilitating the data management for the next step of categorization of the data.

The process of reviewing the data through the case stories from the interviews, I highlighted and underlined key words, concepts and descriptions that gave context to the research. Emerging from that process, other themes, patterns and ideas, concepts, behaviours, nuanced language were noted. According to Joffe (2012) and Fereday & Muir-Cochrane (2006), this clearly demonstrates how the field research and the data collection feedback on the phenomenon in the process of interpretation in relation to assessing the narrative provide credibility to the process. There were narratives from the case stories that appeared unrelated and were placed in miscellaneous category for reviewing later on throughout the process. This aspect of the process allowed the researcher to analyze, sort

and categorize the initial organization of the themes and provided for sub-categories or amendments; and made provision for the assignment of new themes. This process was reviewed and repeated to ensure all the data were accounted for that they were organized, structured, coded and classified from the case stories and signifying how they are categorized for thematic relevance within the research framework.

Practical Example

While conducting the interviews with the interviewees, I took notes and realized that the interviewees made a clear distinction between the programming and curating. The interviews progressed; I realized and understood that it was important to the interviewees that I have an understanding of the two concepts. Throughout the transcription process, reading and reviewing the case stories several times I was able to assign the tentative themes to programming and curating respectively. The realization for this distinction emerged because programming and curating is used interchangeably in Europe, however for North America and in particular TIFF, they have distinct relevance. With that understanding, as a researcher I began going through the transcripts or case stories searching for related ideas and concepts which I highlighted in yellow for programming and green for curating. By the end of the review, other patterns and themes emerged which were noted separately. Afterward, the units related to the themes – programming and curating were reviewed and categorized for the research. Using the notes from the interviews and the other patterns and concepts which emerged from the initial case stories reviews, I repeated the process using other colored highlighters to assign other themes for example, those related to organizing. This was done several times leaving units of text that seemed to fit into a miscellaneous category. This miscellaneous category was then reviewed and some data were reclassified

Analysis of Documents

A thematic analysis was done to the festival documents that were relevant to the research.

Publications such as festival programmes, annual reports, documents and reports were included in the study to provide a more holistic view of the TIFFF 40th anniversary edition of the festival and how the interviewees interact with the phenomenon within the realms of organizing, programming and curating with context of global film culture and FCE. The process was similar to that of the interview data analysis; themes from the festival programmes, annual reports and publications were highlighted to show any relevance to the research questions or themes identified from the interviewees conducted.

The transcripts or case stories were reviewed and key concepts, words and descriptors were highlighted, similar to the colour coding for the themes and sub-themes. Categories were also applied within the context of the broader research themes that were identified (explicit or implicit), they were compared to the emergent themes from the interview data to see how they related to each other. Similar to the thematic analysis utilized for the data analysis processes from the transcript or the case stories, the festival documents were analyzed and significance to particular results and patterns were presented as solid descriptive data. They were then reviewed and compared to the literature on the broad themes, sub-themes and categories to create a more detailed understanding of the phenomenon from a holistic perspective (Robinson, 2011; Gibbs, 2007; Patton, 2002).

In summary, as the researcher for the data analysis and management, I undertook a thematic analysis where I read and reviewed the transcribed interviews or case stories; and coded and categorized them according to emergent themes, concepts and patterns. Furthermore, I thoroughly reviewed

and identified all the related data both interviewees' perspectives and documents to the themes, concepts and patterns. The opportunity the thematic analysis provided was to enable synergistic outlook amongst the broad themes for the research – organizing, programming and curating - that emerged from the interviewees' case stories. Thematic analysis according to Joffe (2012) and Braun & Clarke (2006) is a method in its own right. It is among the most systematic and transparent forms of analysis. This method facilitated a comprehensive overview of the interviewees' collective experience augmented by the festival documents and the textual analysis, which allowed for examination of corroborations as well as contradictions (Robinson, 201; Merriam, 2009) and documented them accordingly as highlighted in the next chapter.

3.10 Potential Limitations of the Research

The researcher acknowledges that film festivals are a relatively new area of study that is an emerging discipline (Lee & Stringer 2012; Fischer, 2009; Røling & Pedersen, 2010). De Valck and Loist (2009) purport that film festival research within an organizational studies context reframes interest in film aesthetics, art, and the role festivals play as sites of self-identification and community. Hence, the research is limited to the supply-side perspective. Film festivals are an emerging area of global research and film festival scholars have identified a number of key methodological challenges. These include:

The difficulty in obtaining the necessary material and information due to a lack of archives or access to festivals themselves; limitations of research due to language barriers and limited funding (especially for PhD candidates); problems around the position of the researcher as an insider/outsider to the field; and the advantages and limitations this positioning brings; research ethics; qualitative audience research that is missing in film festival studies; and the question of how to actually evaluate a film festival (from written form vs. knowledge and access to the films); and the differences between current vs. historical research (De Valck & Loist, 2009, p. 287-288).

The research depended on having access to participants and organizational documentation, and there were limitations around access due to confidentiality within the context of the organization. De Valck and Loist (2009) acknowledge this to be a particular challenge for the research on film festivals. They further noted that “fieldwork and interviews in their turn may be obstructed by festival staff who may not be willing to let one look behind the scenes, or who are simply too busy to collaborate” (p. 288). This was indeed the case for two of the staff. Furthermore, the length of time for the semi-structured interviews occasionally posed conflict with participants’ schedules, given the time and accessibility constraints to be physically present for an interview. Hence, alternative modalities were suggested to overcome this limitation, including the use of digital media platforms such as Skype, FaceTime or IMO.

The participants do not have an obligation to participate in the interviews, they received no compensation or incentives; and they were not compelled to provide factual information, even though the interview was confidential. As a matter of process, the researcher sought clarification and permission from the festival organization’s leadership to conduct the research. However, the participants were informed that this was an academic research and it was being undertaken independently. The aim was to build trust with participants, which in turn elicited open dialogues and honest information.

Having declared my positional perspective as a cinephile, I have personal biases that reflect my professional, cultural, and personal liminalities (spaces I occupy). Similarly, the participants’ perception of my role as a researcher and a cinephile were bound to influence their attitude towards me. A consequence is that it can affect the quantity and quality of the data generated. With this

awareness, I am acknowledging that the research process and my socio-cultural spaces are symbiotically linked. There is no detachment from my research interests, my sociological imagination, motives, feelings, and experiences.

The need to espouse and share them openly, in my role as a reflexive researcher and reflective practitioner is important, along with the narratives that emerged from the research process. This became important to the research, as opined by Watt (2007), because the researcher is the primary instrument of data collection and analysis, reflexivity is deemed essential, as it helps the researcher become more of the lens they use during the research process. This entails careful consideration of the phenomenon under study, as well as the ways a researcher's own assumptions and behaviour may be impacting the inquiry (p. 1).

As the researcher and primary research instrument (Robinson, 2011), it was impossible to remain unbiased, as I proceeded through to the next phase of the research process where I documented, handled, and analyzed the data. Indeed, the foundation of qualitative research recognizes and appreciates the influence of the researcher on the proposed participants, and vice versa (Merriam, 2009). With this, and the subjective nature of qualitative research in mind, the trustworthiness of the data becomes even more important (Robinson, 2011).

4. FINDINGS

This chapter highlights the results of the research by being structured into four areas. The first section of this chapter includes a brief description of TIFF and a summary profile of the participants interviewed. The second section highlights the event in relation to general insights and interpretations for framing the festival from a field-configuring perspective and understanding the role of film festivals and the elements that have contributed to the development of the festival into a global event.

The aforementioned is augmented by a focus on the major themes identified from the interviews; the themes include: (a) organizing the festival, (b) programming the festival, and (c) the curation of the festival experience that helps to shape and impact the festival edition under study. The third section of this chapter focuses on the results of the research findings in relation to the conceptual framework that comprises key theoretical perspectives on institutional theory, field-configuring events, and film festival research as discursive practice for the research in Chapter 1, with emphasis on the festival programming and film festival experience as gleaned from the relevant literature in Chapter 2. The fourth section of this chapter summarizes the research's overall key findings as they relate to the overarching research questions, the study's implications for organizing, programming and curating the film festival, followed by recommendations for future research.

The research conducted is focused on uncovering gleanings and understanding from a supply-side on film festival professionals' perspectives and evidenced by results of the data analysis and interpretation. This research is evidenced and informed by the themes that guided the research: (i) organizing the festival, (ii) programming the festival, (iii) curating the festival experience, and (iv)

other emergent sub-themes: (a) democratization of programming, (b) the plurality of voices, (c) the duality of programming - the coexistence of constituents, (d) the melding of the coincidence of circumstances, and (e) the mosaic of access, engagement, and meaning making. Documentations and publications related to the festival edition under study for this research were also collected and analyzed.

4.1 A Brief Description of the Toronto International Film Festival (TIFF)



Image 5 – 40th Toronto International Film Festival Poster

TIFF is the largest public film festival in the world and is an audience-centered event held annually in September and is heralded as one of the most influential and prestigious film events in the world (Cervenán (2017). TIFF attracts international auteurs and masters, films, global and local talents and assembles stakeholders and audiences annually for eleven days of discovery, creativity, connections, history, journey and experiences (Annual Report, 2015). TIFF was founded in 1976 as the *Festival of*

Festivals' by William 'Bill' Marshall, Hen Van der Kolk and Dusty Cohl and curated a collection of the best films from festivals around the world. The inaugural edition of the festival took place at the Windsor Arms Hotel, Yorkville in Toronto, and had an inaugural attendance of 35,000 people, with 127 films from 30 countries. The 40th anniversary edition of the festival featured over 530,000 public attendees; with 5,450 accredited industry delegates, 1,200 media accreditations, 397 films from 80 countries (TIFF Annual Report, 2015); making TIFF the number one international market for film professionals (tiff.net).

TIFF is one of only two non-competitive international feature film festivals accredited by FIAPF globally, the other being the Viennale – Vienna International Film Festival, Austria; and one of the two FIAPF accredited film festivals in North America, the other being the Montreal World Film Festival (See Table 3). In light of this status, TIFF is distinguished from other global film festival, given that it is not structured to around juried awards such as Cannes' *Palm D'Or*, Venice's *Golden Lion*, and Berlin's *Golden Bear* (Cervenán, 2017; Smith 2013), its films are selected by the public, not a jury with the *Grolsch People's Choice Award* (See Table 8) .

Furthermore, TIFF is a public film festival that is viewed as a destination event attracting film lovers, unlike its global counterparts that are industry-only events. Those film festivals are limited only to industry professionals and journalists, not the public. TIFF is renowned and valued for its audiences, providing them with an opportunity to interact with filmmakers and stars at red carpet events and post-screening Q&A sessions during the event. TIFF welcomes the public (See Glossary) - industry delegates, international press, film buyers and distributors from all over the world and still remain distinctly an audience-centered film fest festival. TIFF also host a parallel Industry conference - a festival-within-a-festival that provides curated networking opportunities by bringing together leading

international film professionals that are some of the most powerful and influential movers and shakers in the film world (TIFF Industry Guide).

TIFF is headquartered in the purpose built permanent home, the Bell Lightbox in the heart of Toronto's entertainment district that encompasses a combined exhibition space, cinemas and galleries that allows the organization to be at the intersection of cinema and visual art, while providing year-round programming for film (TIFF Annual Report, 2015). TIFF's vision is to lead the world in the creative and cultural discovery through the moving image; and is dedicated to presenting the best of international and Canadian cinema to transform the way people see the world through film.

4.2 Participants and Summary Profiles

The participants' overall descriptive profile is essential to understanding the research because it provides information on their background and offers a collective insight on their professional roles. There were ten participants who were interviewed for the research and including both individuals from executive management committee and the organizing committee for the festival within the organization, their years of service, and their professional and programmatic responsibilities in relation to the festival was of added value to the research. Collectively, the participants have approximately 160 years of cumulative professional experience in organizing, programming and curating film festivals on which the research builds (See Table 5).

4.3 General Overview and Presentations of Findings

This section will offer highlights on the resulting perspectives of the interviewees, the gleanings and meanings associated with them. The knowledge is important, as it offers the reader gleanings of TIFF in relation to the conceptual framework and interpretations of the festival event and its impact on global film culture. The summative insights are articulated to capture the essence of each theme that emerged from the data, as well as my gleanings and related observations associated with the themes and the overall interview experiences. Furthermore, this section demonstrates characteristically from the lens of the interviewees' perspective on the identified themes, the conceptual framework, the analysis and discussions that emerges to inform the research.

4.3.1 Constellation, Configuration and Consecration of TIFF as a Field-Configuring Event

The development of TIFF from its antecedents since the mid-1970s to the present moment reflects a constellation, configuration and consecration of social, cultural, industry and economic contexts, activities, events and developments in the global film industry. This section builds on the trajectories of the festival, with highlights from festival documents, articles and perspectives of participants to theoretically frame and orient the manner in which the main developments of the festival emerge from a field-configuring perspective. TIFF became one of the first film festivals to serve the multicultural nature of the city it calls home – Toronto; its film communities and promoting Canada as a distinct film market. This it does by providing industry sessions and a meeting place for filmmakers, producers and distributors; and this was espoused as “a framework from which to build the festival and dream” (Festival Program, 2015).

It is here that the concept of the field-configuring event takes on its full value as it serves as the central methodological tool for the analysis and discussion of TIFF as a FCE (Bossa, 2013; Lampel & Meyer, 2008). As such, TIFF is designed as a meeting ground for discussions and exchanges of ideas and concepts, undoubtedly, such a space of exchange and debate requires a form of structure. Before a field-configuring event can exist and enact its influence, there must first be common interests and issues that incite the founders of the event to create this meeting ground (Bossa, 2013; Lampel & Meyer, 2008) that “assemble stakeholders of the global film business” in one location (TIFF Annual Report, 2012; Ruling, 2009).

The opportunity to explore TIFF utilizing the concept of FCE lies in the explicit focus of the research to build on a framework by which the impact of programming can be better understood. This is approached from the lens of reinforcing the festival’s institutional logic (identity), programming reputation and impact as an organization by augmenting non-film methods (Bossa, 2013) to understand the dynamics unfolding among institutionally embedded actors (Lange et al., 2014) within the organizational field. Broadly defined, according to DiMaggio & Powell, (1983, p. 148) organization fields are “those organizations that, in the aggregate, constitute a recognized area of institutional life. Film festivals are a recognized area of institutional life and “they create spaces in which industry actors meet and enable the development of reputation as well as the constitution and contestation of shared frames of reference” (Ruling, 2009, p. 2). As a FCE, the festival emerge from being bound together in a particular industry context and provide a platform that allows disparate people to share their knowledge, which becomes indispensable to the evolution and progress of the field and its members (Schubler et al, 2015; Nadavulakere, 2008).

Table 6. Key Dates, Activities and Events that Highlights the linkage between TIFF and Field Configuring Event

Key Dates	Field-Configuring Activities and Events
2014	<p><u>TIFF Top Tiered Event for Premieres</u> TIFF is the leading international film festival in the top five global film festivals and the international film festival circuit to screen the highest portion of film premieres, and as such “it is an important event that crosses over between the North American and global industry interests.” TIFF is known as a destination festival, attracting film lovers and industry representatives from around the world which foreground its international stature, second only to <i>Cannes</i>. With over 50% of its films screening as world and international premieres, this ranks TIFF as one of the world’s leading international film festivals alongside Cannes, Venice, Montreal and Berlin. Having film premieres reinforces the festival’s relevance to industry actors and highlights their prestige and influential position, along with complementary market activities This was undoubtedly one of the greatest achievements of TIFF as a field-configuring event (Cervenak, 2017; DeValck, 2007)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ♣ generating social and reputational resources ♣ information exchange and collective sense-making
2014	<p><u>World’s Largest Audience-Centered Public Film Festival</u> TIFF became the world’s largest audience-centered film festival with over 530,000 attendees. The festival proved to be a receptive platform being a public film festival not only for films seeking critical acclaim, but those seeking to connect with new audiences or commercial markets. The festival institutional logic and characteristic, provided crucial leverage beyond the film festival circuit, because it did not have a formal juried competition, this emerged as a crucial positioning device to other notable festivals that were juried</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ♣ assembling in one location actors from diverse geographies and Organizations ♣ information exchange and collective sense-making
2014	<p><u>Festival Street</u> The inauguration of Festival Street initiative transformed a stretch of avenue into a Festival Village into a vibrant pedestrian promenade with free programming for the first four days of the 11-day event. Festival Street welcomed over 150,000 visitors, where interactive activities are enlivened at one of the extended patios, sampling delicious treats from an array of food trucks, and have fun with the many engaging partner activations such as free screenings, concerts an street parties.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ♣ provide unstructured opportunities for face-to-face social interactions among Participants ♣ information exchange and collective sense-making

2012

TIFF Industry Conference

TIFF is the highest ranking festival for industry delegates' attendance and acts as a meeting place for the North American and international film industry. This situates TIFF as an FCE as it embodies knowledge flows, information exchange and collective sense-making which are possible between large, small, established, and emerging sites of film production. TIFF also acts as a meeting place for many film producing regions that are at different stages of development, ranging from nascent to established. TIFF is a focal point which brings together the global film industry in a specific space and time. The industry conference organizers ensure that professionals are provided with the opportunities, tools, and information they need to successfully network and further their business and creative goals. TIFF provides its large and distinct industry audience, with their own screening schedule and venues, creates a dedicated space for industry insiders at the festival. The TIFF industry audience splits their time between press-and-industry screenings, industry-targeted festival programming, and a range of more- or less-official industry parties and networking venues. TIFF [the festival] "not only serve as a launching pad, but as a lifeboat" for the independent film world and the festival essentially acts as a "convention for the continent's film critics and show-biz specialists (Cervenán, 2017; Egbert, 2007)

- ♣ assembling in one location actors from diverse geographies and organizations
- ♣ information exchange and collective sense-making

2012

World's Largest Unofficial (*de facto*) Film Market

TIFF has become the second most important festival for buying and selling films on the world market and is dedicated to presenting the best of international and Canadian cinema to film lovers; and offers industry support and the chance to meet filmmakers from Canada and around the world. TIFF plays important roles in terms of fostering networking, learning and business transactions. , TIFF had the highest number of buyers in attendance amongst all the festivals. As well, TIFF "buyers are overwhelmingly attending the "festival from regions beyond the domestic market, with 95% [being] foreign buyers" The strong showing of field actors attending TIFF is the major feature which differentiates it from other prominent global film festivals that provides a platform for the emergence of new populations and being recognized as a FCE that is a key player and supplier of services or products (Cervenán, 2017, Rüling, 2009, Nadavulakere, 2008).

- ♣ assembling in one location actors from diverse geographies and organizations
- ♣ information exchange and collective sense-making

2010

TIFF Bell Lightbox

TIFF opens its new purpose-built headquarters and year round home, TIFF Bell Lightbox. This ground-breaking project with its footprint of 153,000 square feet over five floors and 1,300 cinema seats houses a three-story public atrium, five public cinemas, two galleries, three learning studios and a center for students and scholars, a bistro, a restaurant and a lounge. The TIFF Bell Lightbox is the first of its kind for a major global film festival to have a permanent headquarters. The festival's far reaching impact was solidified through this new headquarters, where events and activities, enacting and configuring its influence by bringing outstanding filmmaking talent and industry leaders from around the world, all right here in one location for the key events. This became a significant milestone in the festival's history and emerged as a key element for TIFF as an FCE and emboldens the festival's identity.

- ♣ generate social and reputational resources
- ♣ provide unstructured opportunities for face-to-face social interactions among participants
- ♣ information exchange and collective sense-making

2007

TIFF as a Global Media Juggernaut

TIFF's reputation as a global film festival was emboldened in 2007 when *Time* magazine noted that TIFF had "grown from its place as the most influential fall film festival to the most influential film festival, period." TIFF's media presence and symbolic imagery augmented by its fall schedule, which makes it the last global film festival event before awards season. The festival attracts international press to Toronto which potentially create global press coverage 'only second to Cannes' according to *The New York Times* (Dargis, 2010) and "a thriving year round [cultural] arts organization with global impact" (CBC, 2017). This emerged through strong partnerships and nurtured relationships that the festival organizers fostered over the years through an intentional outreach strategy that was applied to enhance a 'tenuous existence' and court the media to ensure access as strategic partners of the festival. The promotional and cultural capital of this enhanced the festival's reputation, and as the *National Post* opined, 'no other festival has the combination of the enthusiastic audiences, the industry presence and the media influence that Toronto has'. This emboldened opportunities to imbue excitement and convey powerful messaging about film as art, its audience and its programming that situates the festival as a media juggernaut reifying its identity, the host city and its film communities. According to Cervenán (2017) that "creates value for the host region, international visibility, film cachet, and cultural legitimacy...and vibrancy."

- ♣ generate social and reputational resources

2004	<p><u>Talent Lab</u> The Festival launches Talent Lab, an industry initiative for Canadian filmmakers, the first of its kind nationally. Establishing the Student Film Showcase (now known as the Student Shorts) and part of the Canada's Top Ten Film Festival, which features the year's top work by budding filmmakers across the country</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ♣ information exchange and collective sense-making
2001	<p><u>Canada's Top Ten Film Festival</u> TIFF is the only Canadian film festival to champion Canadian talent abroad and continues to lead in the evolution of Canadian filmmaking and storytelling in the digital era with the establishment of the CTTF in 2001. The festival established in 2015 a programming tour to build new audiences for Canadian filmmakers internationally for Canada's Top Ten Film Festival in London, New York City, Los Angeles, Beijing and Shanghai. TIFF through its transorganizational structure and organizers promote Canadian cinema through their expanded reach and programming as one of the most influential film events in the world. TIFF achieved something quite unique and significant in Canadian film history, by nurturing initiatives and talent in Canadian film industry and established itself as part of the city's film culture (Cay et al, 2014).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ♣ provide unstructured opportunities for face-to-face social interactions among participants ♣ information exchange and collective sense-making
1996	<p><u>Toronto International Film Festival</u> The renaming of the Festival of Festival to TIFF was distinctive and not only situated the festival as a part of the fabric of the city it called home, but during that period of globalization, nation states became effaced and replaced by global cities through which flows cultural and economic capital, and TIFF in effect positioned itself as key player in global film culture and a nodal point in the film festival circuit. TIFF's situated context positioned it as the gateway hub and a nodal point in the international film festival circuit. This amplified its mandate to bring films from every corner of the world to Toronto — and to our audiences across Canada and around the globe.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ♣ ceremonial and dramaturgical activities ♣ provide unstructured opportunities for face-to-face social interactions among participants ♣ duration is limited, running from a few hours to a few days

1995

Film Circuit

TIFF assumes management of Film Circuit, a film outreach programme that brings the best of Canadian and international films and artists to under-served communities across Canada. The Film Circuit became one of the most successful features of TIFF and its partnership with over 174 communities across Canada. The Film Circuit is the first programme of its kind nationally and has helped hundreds of Canadian films find new audiences across this country and around the globe. This has made TIFF the leading organization in the world that builds market and audience for Canadian cinema and helped the festival assumed a national presence. This initiative has reached over 330,000 people and build partnerships that are collaborative and inclusive aspects of the festival, in the way it offers alternative platforms to some of the best cinematic productions outside of the festival.

- ♣ generate social and reputational resources
- ♣ provide unstructured opportunities for face-to-face social interactions among participants
- ♣ information exchange and collective sense-making

1994

TIFF's Institutional Logic

The public is a driving force at the festival, which sets it apart from other big festivals. Starting from the position that it is an audience-centered festival, the audience is an active player. The festival institutional logic and characteristic, provided crucial leverage beyond the film festival circuit, because it did not have a formal juried competition, this emerged as a crucial positioning device to other notable festivals.

- ♣ provide unstructured opportunities for face-to-face social interactions among participants
- ♣ generate social and reputational resources

1990

Film Reference Library

TIFF began to play an important role as a repository of knowledge for the Canadian film industry in its development, with several decades of festival entries; this led to a smorgasbord and rich collection of films. the *Film Reference Library* was established and became one of the programming activities and according to the organizers, “the long-term goal was to exhibit these exceptional collection to the public and raise awareness of Canada’s rich film history and the need to preserve it for future scholars, filmmakers, journalists and anyone else wishing to learn from the past.” The film collection keeps growing, and TIFF has one of the leading film archives globally and the largest collection of Canadian English speaking films. For instance, embedded into the festival’s framework now, TIFF plays an active role in brokering film knowledge throughout the field.

- ♣ generate social and reputational resources

1978

People's Choice Award

TIFF is widely known for its **People's Choice Award** – the main award given during this non-juried public festival, which started in 1978, just two years after the festival's inaugural run. Over time, it has come to signify the predictive power of TIFF. This award supports claims surrounding the quality of TIFF's audience. Such claims are prevalent in popular and industry media, as the National Post reports, The Toronto festival differs from other high-profile film fests in that there is no slate of 'competition' films vying for a jury-awarded Golden Palm (Cannes), Bear (Berlin) or Lion (Venice). The audience award – with its promise of higher ticket sales and Oscar glory – is the *de facto* top prize at TIFF. The award grew in tandem with the festival. The reputation for picking winners continued and over the years many films that received **People's Choice Awards** became runaway hits and garnered Oscar nominations. TIFF is currently heralded as one of the most influential, [important] and prestigious film events in the world, with its reputation for predicting critical and market success of Canadian and international cinema . The **Grolsch People's Choice Award** proved to be an arbiter within the film circuit. And this trend of a film's success at the festival as precursor to the film carrying on to receive other accolades after been awarded the TIFF People's Choice Award and went on to win an Academy Award for Best Picture. More recently, every film nominated for an Oscar in the category of Best Foreign Language Film in 2013 had screened as part of the program at TIFF in the fall of 2012. The reputation for picking winners continued and over the years many films that received People's Choice Awards became runaway hits and garnered Oscar nominations (Cervenak, 2017, Turner, 2016, Festival Style, 2015, Enright, 2013).

- ♣ provide unstructured opportunities for face-to-face social interactions among Participants
- ♣ generate social and reputational resources
- ♣ information exchange and collective sense-making

4.3.1.1 Curating the Cinematic Muse - Situating the Festival's Institutional Logic

TIFF through the constellation of its development both within a historical and contemporary context, the festival event took shape around what was not said, but was always important. TIFFF “would be a non-competitive film festival where the audience would be privilegedand it would be an egalitarian event for film lovers, something for everyone – not everything for everyone, but something” (Festival Program, 2015). This situated the festival's institutional logic (identity) and how it was able to have a tremendous impact on the film culture in Canada and globally (Cay et al, 2014). Being an officially non-competitive film festival that did not contain an official trade market that was viewed as a publicity gesture than actual practice, however this was really important to the founders, the festival team and partners. TIFFF is one of the few festivals that really focused on the public in a significant way and its identity is reified as an inclusive audience-centered festival in a major North American city that's world-renowned.

The festival in the first decade grappled with and forged its identity as an event that brought together people and films that allowed it to make inroads into unknown territories through national cinema programmes (Festival Style, 2015). It gathered field actors (festival programmers) for the purpose of programming, screening films, meeting and exchanging at one particular location – the festival event. The event was designed to have greater control over the identity of the festival through its programming. To this end, it was to develop a sense of belonging for the cinephilic and film loving communities to glean film retrospectives and thematics in the place that's home to the festival. TIFFF had not changed its programming much since its inception into the 1990s, where the orientation was to bring the best films from other festivals globally to Toronto. The festival experienced growth, the organizers recognized that and as highlighted by *The Canadian Encyclopedia*,

“other festivals treated guests coldly; they strove to attract major Hollywood productions by emphasizing hospitality.” The organizers ultimately had the goal of creating a distinct identity for the festival that would distinguish it from other Canadian events of the same orientation. The intended outcome was to shape and provide exceptional moments to create cinematic tapestries that brought “the ideal of independent films, Canadian content and Hollywood glitz” (Festival Program, 2015).

To enact its influence as an FCE event, the organizers of TIFF began to assemble a team with varied interests in film and cinephilia who had embedded in their character the notion of film culture. This fostered the development of the festival’s image as an audience-centered event and make it a place where people “who were crazy about films would be able to watch films and think about films” (an interviewee), and provided audiences with the collective experience of public film screening and interaction with filmmakers and stars (Dillard, 2013). According to Bossa (2013) and Ruling (2008), this focus became the event’s institutional logic, the key element that drives and guides the festival as an FCE. The festival organizer’s prerogative was centered on developing that distinct identity for the festival, which emerged and became stronger throughout the years. It was harnessed by the festival’s transorganizational structure and the organizers’ willingness to promote Canadian cinema like no other festival and expand their reach and take the programming globally. Furthermore, the institutional logic provides “the organizing principles and practice guidelines for field participants, individually and collectively” (Bossa, 2013, p. 182).

This logic stands as the element that structured how the festival’s various actors acted within the event and the field, gave emphasis to the programming features of the festival, which implied a stronger orientation towards audience-centeredness. This challenge was rendered possible thanks to

shared cognitive sense-making amongst the field participants. Their ideas to promote a deliberate programming strategy, engendered a frame and that would orient the event as one that “give audiences the opportunity to enjoy the texture and subtle nuances that the filmmaker intended and that only film can relay” (TIFF Annual Report, 2015). This enabled the participants in their individual and collective roles within the setting of the festival and the field to provide audiences with a deeper and richer experience of film as art. TIFF as an FCE allowed them to promote ideas about the way work in the field ‘ought to be done’ and anchoring them to ‘moral ideologies’, and served as an opportunity that fostered shared cognitive sense-making (Schübler, et al, 2015; Bossa, 2013).

TIFF organizers’ understood that, cognitive sense-making enabled participants to share common knowledge and ideas in hope of influencing the field itself. This inextricably linked the festival organizers, the industry and the audience in a collective sense-making that served the purpose of reducing cognitive distance amongst the field participants. The festival created a platform for where field actors, instead of unrelated individual participants placed at the periphery, it provided a unified center that allowed for greater control and exchange of knowledge. Through this process Bossa (2013) opined that, “the professional group arrives at a unique, collective identity, which can serve as a potent force to alter the field” (p. 102). Therefore, these field actors have a direct impact on the field through their collaborative efforts with the resulting impact being the funding of film projects, the development of emerging filmmakers through master classes, conferences and Q&A sessions as well as the exhibition of the national films, most of which would most likely never be screened, if there was not a festival such as TIFF.

The constellation of TIFF's identity provided a platform that enabled the development and enhancement of the festival establishing various programming sections, which proved quite formidable (see Table 7). The festival's identity augmented its programming to become a more proactive player in the film festival circuit, by framing and orienting the multiplicity of activities. The aim was to situate its institutional logic to provide transformational experiences with the moving image for film lovers over the world.

TIFF is driven to promote Canadian cinema globally and to have a direct impact on global film culture with its mission 'to transform the way people see the world, through film'; along with the common goals for stakeholders to have transformative experiences. TIFF accomplished this, by allowing the organizing committee a certain degree of freedom in their decisions. This was designed to provide greater control over the identity of the festival, which it accomplished through its programming elements such as the democracy of programming and plurality of voices. These approaches greatly benefitted the festival as it established its autonomy that reinforced and maintained the notion of its identity. This emerged through some of the thematic highlights for instance, how it is structured around notions of - the duality of the festival organization, of milestones and celebration: access, diversity and the future and meaning making. These elements helped to reinforce the key concepts around national and international cinema which is a dynamic and vibrant aspect of the audience-centeredness, not only during the festival but throughout the year. The following excerpt from the Festival Program (2012) highlights the festival's institutional logic:

The art of viewing films consider the quality and variety in the experience, just as much as it considers the impact of the work itself. Without an audience, a film would be the proverbial one hand clapping; the tree falling in the forest. From filmmaker retrospectives to genre-driven programmes, TIFF's adept curation makes it possible for audiences to digest and explore a broad spectrum of cinematic visions by contextualizing the film experience in an accessible way.

TIFF achieved something quite unique and significant in Canadian film history, establishing itself as part of the city's film culture and mosaic. This can be attributed to the interplay between organizational growth and cultural impact on Toronto's cinephiles, spectators and nurturing initiatives in the Canadian film industry (Cay et al, 2014). These developments embolden the festival's institutional logic, the key element that drives and guides the field-configuring event as highlighted from the Festival Program (2013):

...TIFF attracts widespread attention as the leading public film festival in the world. With an attendance of ... the most sophisticated, enthusiastic, and loyal audience around. That audience ... flocked to see ... international superstars, [emerging], and homegrown talent present their work. Toronto filmgoers want to see good movies and they value diversity.

Crucial to the formation of the festival's institutional logic was its transorganizational structure throughout the third and fourth decades. The festival undertook a major project that fostered the establishment of a mechanism to generate support and funding from private and public partners. This effort assisted in the evolution of how TIFF promotes film both from a national and international perspective. The festival's leadership and organizing committees facilitated the establishment of a permanent home - TIFF Bell Lightbox, which became a reality in 2010, making it one of the three festivals globally with a permanent home. The accomplishment of this major project provided a space that united audiences so they can enjoy a multitude of different experiences under one roof. The festival's engagement with its audience "is now more dispersed and potentially more democratic and considerably more fun" (Festival Programme, 2015). This reinforced TIFF's commitment to transforming the way audience sees the world through film, emboldening the festival's identity. In furtherance, it fortified the establishment of its institutional logic and reified it as noted by Cervenán (2017) highlighting that the festival became a meeting place for discerning

cinemastes to watch films together. This was a pivotal moment in the festival's history with the accomplishment of the TIFF Bell Lightbox which "became a significant tool for civic engagement, a robust showcase for global artists, and in part, the intellectual underpinning of the festival for cinema and the visual arts" as highlighted in the Festival Programme (2015). This is a profound milestone in the festival's development trajectory and emerged as a key element for TIFF as an FCE. This has contributed and emboldened the vision of its audience-centeredness, enhancing its approach to curating and programming "the film experience to become more culturally holistic and collaborative" (Festival Program, 2015) as a public film festival..

4.3.1.2 The Sequel to the Experience – TIFF's Programming

TIFF in contributing to configuring of the field in relation to its audience-centeredness and being one of the two FIAPF accredited non-competitive film festivals in the world, it provides space for thematic or regional films (DeValck, et al 2016; Genkova, 2010) through its programming that brings people together from different continents and cultural traditions. This emerged without contemporary communication media and creating the possibility of seeing films, meeting and exchanging at one particular location was essential in order to develop information exchange, collective sense-making and social interactions amongst participants (Bossa, 2013; Lampel & Meyer, 2008; Ruling, 2008). This was illustrated in TIFF's Annual Report (2011):

For a cultural organization like TIFF, it all starts with the programming; [we] have always strived to present the best of the world to Canada, and the best of Canadian filmmaking to the world. And just as the organization has grown in size and reputation, so has the Canadian film industry [and] we strive to make international cinema accessible to any filmgoer, and we fill our theatres with films from all over the world.

The aforementioned illustrates the context for the constellation of films at the festival, amidst the fact that it is a large-scale global event as highlighted by an interviewee, “it's never easy to put this festival together. But the advantage that we have now, four decades on, is that people understand the success.” For TIFF, this highlights that there are complexities and challenges associated with the tasks for the festival event and its institutional logic as highlighted by an interviewee, “... to develop a public festival that puts a spotlight on the city, film workers here...and really focus on the public in a significant way, is the shared vision of cinema, its richness and diversity” that makes it possible.

The focus on the public helped to position the festival and this was an early indicator that the festival was an ideal testing ground for audience reception towards films; and the profile of the festival grew in the 1980s. It began to feature retrospectives of filmmakers, genres (horror, science fiction) and themes (films about women, by women) and they became a staple and provided exceptional moments. The festival event was augmented by tributes to Hollywood stars and its growing reputation for international art house cinema. This led to the introduction of mainstream cinema, that also became a precursor to some of the big hits (see Table 6) [films] that eventually would go on to win the *Academy Award* nominations, cause stirs and change the game. The festival screens nearly four hundred features and shorts every September; and with over four decades of catalytic experience, this included scores of award-winning, artistically groundbreaking and phenomenally popular titles (Festival Style, 2015). According to Turner (2016) the festival highlight “films that have been particularly integral to the festival’s growth, and that have shown how it leads the conversation as it launches landmark cinematic works into the global consciousness.”

The film selection and programming for the festival grew from the first and second decades, where they screened the best films from other festivals, to developing a strong orientation on thematic and genres. This TIFF was able to do, by focusing on new developments in the film industry, especially the growing importance of art house and independent films at home and abroad, as illustrated below:

The late 1980s and early 1990s were also years when aboriginal voices and stories began to emerge with increasing confidence and clarity around the world and Canada's First Nations were at the forefront. In international cinema, a search for new meaning opened way for ...filmmakers rose to prominence in the creative explosions that ignited [Festival Programme, 2015].

The festival's audience grew and tributes to film stars became a key feature and the attendance of Hollywood stars grew as the festival grew in scale and stature, the receptions became fancier and more exclusive. These initiatives, events, and activities went on to become an international hit after generating positive buzz at the festival (Canadian Encyclopedia, 2017; TIFF, 2016). This was undoubtedly one of the greatest achievements of TIFF as highlighted by Brian D. Johnson in the *First Decade, 1976-1986*: "the dream festival, the ideal balance of indie breakthroughs, Canadian content and Hollywood glitz." The festival gathered films and industry members (field actors) from all over globe in an attempt to promote films from different regions of the world, a task which had been reserved in prior years to the Big Three (*Cannes, Berlin* and *Venice*). This highlighted for TIFF the makings of a field-configuring event, which was a defining moment in 1984 with "the presentation of the largest retrospective of Canadian films ever mounted in Canadian cinematic history (TIFF Festival Programme, 2015).

TIFF organizers worked steadfastly at both the quality of their programming by bringing the best national and international films to the festival; and the growing celebrity interests. This aided in the

festival cementing its programming and positioning itself as an alternative venue to screen some of the best offerings of the annual cinema productions; augmented by consistent investment and promotion of festival. According to Cooper (2012) the *Festival of Festivals*:

.....had slowly but surely become respected enough to establish itself as a place filmmakers may want to showcase their latest project. Icons like Jean-Luc Godard and Martin Scorsese would actually show up to attend a retrospective of their work and celebrated actors like Julie Christie, Warren Beatty and Jack Nicholson drew more attention to the Festival not only for their presence at screenings and on red carpets but for the grist they provided the local gossip mill.

The festival organizers capitalized on both the quality of their programming and the growing lure of Hollywood studios; and in 1994, the decision was made to replace the name *Festival of Festivals* with *Toronto International Film Festival*. The name change allowed TIFF to firmly establish itself alongside other major, leading film festivals, such as *Sundance Film Festival* and *Cannes Film Festival* (Hall, 2016). With the name change TIFF not only situated itself as a part of the fabric of the city it called home. This occurred during a period of globalization, where nation states became effaced and replaced by global cities through which flows cultural and economic capital. TIFF in effect positioned itself as key player in global film culture and a nodal point in the film festival circuit (Iordanova, 2009). According to Stringer (2001), he argues that global-scale festivals such as Cannes, Berlin and Toronto are caught between national and global cultural systems; they compete with other global festivals, often situated in other global cities, and attempt to differentiate themselves through their self-conscious affiliation to a particular place or region. TIFF situated context positioned it as the gateway hub with the goal of bringing films from every corner of the world to Toronto — and to our audiences across Canada and around the globe (Annual Report, 2016).

Building on its institutional logic and its programming, given its non-competitive status, they all proved to be a formidable characteristic for the festival to assert its positioning and reputation to become known for its film submissions. The festival proved to be a receptive platform as a public film festival not only for films seeking critical acclaim, but those seeking to connect with new audiences or commercial markets. The festival institutional logic and characteristic, provided crucial leverage beyond the film festival circuit, because it did not have a formal juried competition. This emerged as a crucial positioning device to other notable festivals that were juried such as Cannes, Venice, Berlin and Sundance. Amidst the absence of juried awards, TIFF's *Grosch People's Choice Award* proved to be an arbiter within the film festival circuit (See Table 6), and according to Cervenán (2017) "TIFF is currently heralded as one of the most influential and prestigious film events in the world" (p. 15).

TIFF began to play an important role as a repository of knowledge for the Canadian film industry in its development, with several decades of festival entries; this led to a smorgasbord and rich collection of films. In 1990 the *Film Reference Library* was established and became one of the programming activities and according to the organizers, "the long-term goal was to exhibit these exceptional collection to the public and raise awareness of Canada's rich film history and the need to preserve it for future scholars, filmmakers, journalists and anyone else wishing to learn from the past." TIFF has one of the leading film archives globally and the largest collection of Canadian English speaking films and the film collection keeps growing. For instance, embedded into the festival's framework now, TIFF plays an active role in brokering film knowledge throughout the field. This has been important from the early years of the festival; through its programming it provided a unique opportunity to bring together filmmakers from all over the world. To illustrate

this, TIFFF in 2012 hosted the largest aboriginal film series ever compiled globally. The following excerpt gives highlight to the groundbreaking role:

The Toronto International Film Festival will host the *First Peoples Cinema: 1,500 Nations, One Tradition*. The film series includes 27 features and more than 30 shorts from native filmmakers around the world, with a particular focus on Canada, the United States, New Zealand and Australia. The series aims to trace the history, development and evolution of First Peoples in cinema — *from Nanook of the North to Atanarjuat: The Fast Runner*. A film series like this repositions a lot of that thinking even for our own people and gives us a broader understanding of the power of cinema and how First Peoples throughout the world have engaged with it basically throughout its entire history. Many of the works also offer commentary on the long, complex history of the onscreen representation of First Peoples by addressing — and dispelling — stereotyped portrayals. And perhaps most important [aspect is], the program is driven by a sense of will and perseverance. (TIFF Film Archives; The National Post, 2012).

An interviewee noted that, this event was seminal not just for TIFFF but for the city, the country and the world:

“It’s a great opportunity to have a greater understanding of that history — what it meant to [indigenous peoples] and what it means to us going forward. I think we are in a golden age of First Peoples cinema around the world, and I think it’s a chance to celebrate that. The value of this is to introduce people to a new way of thinking about cinema and [to] a new cinema in and of itself.

The aforementioned event spurred both national and international response to the program, which was overwhelming and with requests for a travelling global film exhibit. This led to global film festivals such as Berlin, Sydney and Sundance making major announcements to include indigenous programming in their offerings. Some of TIFFF festival organizers and programmers are regularly solicited to organize film programmes and retrospectives all over the world; and accordingly positioning TIFFF as a global festival for field learning. This is a key feature the festival as an FCE with its brokering role that is a blueprint and a model, which now remains particularly important as new companies, countries and regions seek to join the global film festival circuit

The expansion of TIFF to include programmed activities throughout the year reinforced the festival's intention to maintain a prominent agenda both within Toronto itself, and also in the wider Canadian film industry. TIFF's critical and popular support of established and emerging Canadian talent has fostered a 'crucially critical, public and industry interest' in Canadian films. No other festival have done the relational work and networking to build and leverage strong partnerships and nurtured relationships like TIFF in an effort to strengthen its position. This effort expanded the scope of its programming not just as a hub for Canadian films, but most importantly to create a festival that have a *bonafide* global appeal. The following excerpt highlights, the outcome of this endeavour:

The Festival's programming echoes that openness, consistently delivering impressive avant-garde works and compelling documentaries, edgy genre fare, and star-driven blockbusters — often acting as a launch pad to success for its hottest titles (Annual Report, 2013).

The duality of programming that co-exists during the festival of multiple actors with potentially competing logics distinguishes the festival, unlike any other, given that it is able to act in different domains with its stakeholder. For example, the parallel industry conference and the festival event that allows the competing logics to find balance for a festival that positioned itself as an audience-centered event. According to Anand and Watson (2004), festivals serve as a place in which hierarchy, power and competing logics are at the same time reproduced and contested. The festival organization relies on multiple stakeholders with their particular interests and agendas and has to find ways to create an event that responds to different stakeholders' interest.

Through its programming TIFF have evolved as the festival that clearly augments the duality of its programming by counterbalancing the numerous dramaturgical with curated activities. It encompasses numerous receptions, exhibitions, and parties (unstructured elements), an unofficial

marketplace with opportunities for film buyers (structured elements), and an industry conference which is a hub for information exchange and collective sensemaking for accredited delegates (actors, producers and filmmakers) and its audience. The following excerpt from TIFF Annual Report (2012) illustrates how the festival undertake the seemingly difficult tasks of balancing competing logics, “attaining these milestones, and the many others that TIFF marked, comes from making the audience the focus of all that we do. Staying true to that focus helps create the most memorable experiences and inspires the richness and diversity in our programming.”

The festival is characterized as an audience-centered event amidst the preceding treatise, and is enviably positioned as a precursor for the awards season as *NOW Magazine* proclaimed the festival “has been regarded as Oscar’s launching pad for a couple of decades now, and with good reason: its position at the start of the fall movie season naturally appeals to studios looking to roll out their prestigious fare in front of the assembled entertainment media.” The festival’s now prominent reputation has persuaded a shift in the attitude of the major studios, which have come to see the value of film festivals in a very strategic way (Cay et al., 2014).

The festival organizers optimized on leveraging industry knowledge through its programming that generated social and reputational resources through its film selections with its prized audience engagement prize - the *Grosch People's Choice Awards* - with its prestige to generate *Oscar* buzz (See Table 6). TIFF, while maintaining and protecting its distinctiveness, also plays an important role between art and commerce within the context of the festival being ‘unofficial market’ and being a media juggernaut, second only to *Cannes* according to *The New York Times* (Dargis, 2010). TIFF is recognized for contributing to the discovery of new films, projects and technologies not just

nationally, but internationally through its multiplicities of programmes; see the following excerpt from Festival Programme (2016)

“...[the festival] like Toronto, is a kaleidoscope of diverse people, cultures, and stories woven into moving images that have the ability to transform, unite, and move us. The form these stories take continues to evolve – shape-shifting through a multitude of mediums and platforms. Expanding beyond the frame and living within it, cinema offers endless perspectives. The Festival continues to bring you the evolution of storytelling as it travels from film and installations to television and new media, and now into virtual reality.

TIFF according to Liam Lacey of the *Globe and Mail*, it is "the most important film festival in the world — the largest, the most influential, the most inclusive." The festival offers programming that reflects "... carefully curated retrospectives, contemporary new releases, our dynamic national outreach programme [Film Circuit] and specialized programmes in fulfilling its mandate to provide transformative experiences to a wide range of audiences" (Festival Program, 2013). TIFF's institutional logic was strengthened through its programming and curatorial endeavours. The festival organizers were able to create a festival that many would have considered to be the foremost premiere international film festival. One that embodies the essence of paying homage to the cinematic muse, by bringing stakeholders of the global film business and *avante-garde* programming to create exceptional experiences as highlighted below:

We love programming for people who love film. Our audience favorites reflect a sophistication and commitment to cutting-edge cinema that drives our curatorial outlook. That, alongside a loyal attendance for our various programmes, lets us know that audiences appreciate the difference between seeing a film and engaging with cinema — fueling our ongoing efforts to create the ultimate visitor experience (Festival Program, 2013).

In 2007, *Time Magazine's* Rebecca Keegan noted that TIFF had “grown from its place as the most influential fall film festival to the most influence film festival, period.” While this is no easy task for the festival organizers, it was however, this was made possible due partially to the results of the festival’s ability and reputation for generating *Oscar* buzz (See Table 6). This helped to underscore its place as a festival for the public, first and foremost, with its biggest focus being with films that will catch the eye of both critics and moviegoers — crowd-pleasers with awards potential, which often play well with *Oscar* voters later on (Vox.com).

TIFF is now known as a destination festival, attracting film lovers and industry representatives from around the world for the annual eleven day event in September. This was undoubtedly one of the greatest achievements of TIFF as a field-configuring event. The festival was able to gather films and industry members (field actors) from all over Canada and the world in an attempt to promote the national cinema to the world and bringing international films to a wide range of audience, which cemented its global stature as the world’s leading audience-centered film festival (Cay et al, 2014; Cooper, 2012; CBS News, 2009).

4.3.1.3 TIFF from Infancy to Global Impact - Growth and Industry Consecration

TIFF's positioning as an important international film festival in the global film circuit, builds on the aforementioned aspects, that of its institutional logic and exceptional programming.

Situating the festival's development and growth trajectories, its emergence as the most important film festival in Canada, becoming a nodal point in North America, the foremost audience-centered public film festival in the world; and one of the most important events on the global film calendar, these foreground its international stature, second only to *Cannes* (Stringer, 2003).

Throughout its development, TIFF emphasized and exemplified the role of recurring events for processes of knowledge acquisition, collective sensemaking, idea generation and the exploration of market changes and industry developments as purported by Bossa (2013) and Nadavulakere (2008). The festival also served as a support system through which Canadian cinema could be nurtured for favourable and viable consumption in the industry and amongst audiences. According to Cay et al (2014), the festival provided an important boost for Canadian film industry and served as a platform to cultivate the growth of Canadian talents with its programmes and initiatives. For instance, not only did the festival programmed the largest Canadian film retrospective, it included Canadian films in other programmes such as the *Canadian Top Ten*, *Emerging Filmmakers Competition* and *Cinematheque* that signalled to Canadian filmmakers they could stand alongside their international peers (The Canadian Encyclopedia, 2017). The programmes proved TIFF to be notable player in the industry and established a wave of exceptional artistic talents like directors such as Xavier Dolan, Denis Villeneuve, Atom Egoyan, Ron Mann and Bruce McDonald to name a few. TIFF now curates the largest collection of English-language Canadian film-related artefacts in the world, a treasured resource for researchers, scholars, and film lovers (TIFF Annual Report, 2016).

Furthermore, TIFF in broadening its national focus, the festival's leadership and organizers focused on developing and curating events that strengthened the organizational and industry components of the festival. This allowed for the generation of both social and reputational resources throughout the festival events and beyond, such the Film Circuit programme. The establishment of the Film Circuit programme in the mid-90s extended the festival well beyond Toronto throughout the country and highlighted the programme "helped the festival assumed a national presence" (TIFF Annual Report, 2015).

The Film Circuit brings films to 173 locations in 157 communities across Canada, supporting the projection, promotion, and celebration of Canadian and international cinema. According to TIFF's Annual Report (2015), this initiative reached over 330,000 people and build collaborative partnerships that fostered inclusiveness for the festival. This was accomplished by providing opportunities to established and emerging filmmakers to showcase their works by offering an alternative platform outside of the festival to show some of the best cinematic productions beyond the festival.

The festival's situated context - Toronto - and being positioned in September firmly established TIFF's stature as a prestigious *Oscar* launching pad, cemented its reputation (See Table 7) over the years. Of importance, international film critic Roger Ebert was quoted by the *National Post* as cited by the *Canadian Encyclopedia*, "although Cannes is still larger, Toronto is more useful and more important" (Canadian Encyclopedia, 2017). TIFF grew to become a gateway in North America and the foremost English-speaking place for international cinema as highlighted by an interviewee:

The festival became the perfect launch place in North America for movies that were artistically driven in the eyes of the studios and filmmakers who had Oscar ambitions, and of course most of them did. We started to get the premiere of those films, with the premieres come the talents, with the talents come the media in the end, because they want the interviews....the Oscar films are bought and sold and the major studio heads are all here, a lot of business [started] happening.

According to Cervenán (2017), TIFF counts as a top-tier event amongst a cadre of core international film festivals on the circuit and “over 50% of its films screening as world and international premieres (a figure that has been generally consistent over time) which ranks TIFF in the top five international film festivals alongside Cannes, Venice, Montreal and Berlin” (p. 53). Having film premieres reinforces the festival’s relevance to industry actors and highlights their prestige and influential position, along with complementary market activities (DeValck, 2007). This underscores the relative importance of the festival, its programming with its formidable numbers of film premieres, amidst the fact that the *Grosh People’s Choice Award* is non-juried. Most notably, according to FIAPF, TIFF is the leading international film festival in the top five global film festivals and the international film festival circuit to screen the highest portion of film premieres, and as such “it is an important event that crosses over between the North American and global industry interests” (Cervenán, 2017, p. 53).

TIFF with its audience-centered programming have strategically created spaces, activities and events for industry luminaries, professionals and actors, by establishing a parallel industry festival. This aspect of the festival is industry-driven and is focused on business activities, rather than solely on film programming and creates an unofficial market or *de facto* market for films (e.g. acquisitions, sales, presales, distribution rights, etc.) at TIFF. This complements the audience festival, while festival organizers promote business meetings and industry workshops; general industry activity

coincides with the programming and curated networking opportunities that brings leading luminaries the world over to TIFF (see the duality of programming). According to Roger Ebert, the international film critic as cited by Cervenán (2017), noted that TIFF [the festival] “not only serve as a launching pad, but as a lifeboat” for the independent film world and the festival essentially acts as a “convention for the continent’s film critics and show-biz specialists [...] a great small film can open here and emerge as a winner (p. 20).”

The festival’s far reaching impact grew through the events and activities, enacting and configuring its influence by bringing “outstanding filmmaking talent and industry leaders from around the world, all right here in one location for the key events” (tiff.net). This was fostered through strong partnerships and strategic collaborations. With the introduction of innovative, creative and informative forums for stakeholders with common interests and agenda, this fostered a smorgasbord of offerings. They provided a comprehensive learning opportunity for the global film industry stakeholders to know more about films within the context of the festival through the industry conference. See the excerpt below:

The programme...feature[s] creative insights from outstanding filmmaking talent, while major industry leaders will debate topical subjects, including diversity and gender inclusion. In crafting the sessions, our programming team has recognized that providing access to opportunities and enabling a greater understanding of evolving investment models is essential for the artistic and financial sustainability of the industry (www.tiff.net).

TIFF by building on its strategic programming structure, the festival have been able to position its industry events that can be viewed as having profound transformation and effect on field dynamics that aggregate to form vital planks in global value constructions (Cervenán, 2017; Nadavulakere, 2008). As an FCE, TIFF’s contribution to strengthening international cinema have led to the

festival being recognized as field learning event and the festival organization as a global centre for film culture (TIFF Annual Report, 2015). TIFF is clearly positioned as the leading audience-centered festival event in terms of reputation, expertise, programming and organization globally.

According to DeValck et al (2016), there are approximately 6,000 film festivals operating around the world, and TIFF have grown in scope and industry relevance to become the world's leading audience-centered film festival and "stands out as an important, core event" (Cervenán, 2017, p.12) within the competitive international film festival circuit (Jordanova, 2009; Stringer, 2001). The festival's leadership readily share their expertise and knowledge through programming initiatives and participation in other events, strengthening of the festival organization's mandate and reputation as an FCE to 'generate social and reputational resources' to global stakeholders.

According to Lampel and Meyer (2008) they opined that FCEs can be situated in context with research about growth and evolution of institutional, organizational and professional fields. Furthermore, the influence an event has on the field itself can be described as having either a weak or strong mandate, *The Canadian Encyclopedia* in the following excerpt highlight TIFF's organizational mandate:

The departments at the festival have grown as the annual event has expanded, going from a small staff to an organization that employs [more than] 300 people annually across 33 departments [and up to 1000 during the festival event]. Roles within the organization are divided into various departments, including: Programming, which leads film selections by vetting submissions and soliciting films; Development, which secures sponsorship; Front-of-House, which coordinates the logistics of each screening; and Communications, which handles publicity and media relations.

Today, TIFF has grown to become the world's most important public film festival with over 530,000 people in attendance for the festival edition (TIFF Festival Report, 2015) understudy and

compared to the other global film festivals, TIFF had the highest number of buyers in attendance amongst all the festivals. As well, TIFF “buyers are overwhelmingly attending the “festival from regions beyond the domestic market, with 95% [being] foreign buyers” (Cervenán, 2017, p. 51-53). The strong showing of field actors attending TIFF is the major feature which differentiates it from other prominent global film festivals that provides a platform for the emergence of new populations (Nadavulakere, 2008) and being recognized as a FCE that is a key player and supplier of services or products (Rüling, 2009).

Another key feature for TIFF is its media presence and symbolic imagery augmented by its fall schedule, which makes it the last global film festival event before awards season. The festival attracts international press to Toronto which potentially create global press coverage ‘only second to Cannes’ according to The New York Times (Dargis, 2010) and “a thriving year round [cultural] arts organization with global impact” (CBC, 2017). This emerged through strong partnerships and nurtured relationships that the festival organizers fostered over the years through an intentional outreach strategy. The festival organizers were intentional and applied this technique to enhance a ‘tenuous existence’ and court the media to ensure access as strategic partners of the festival and provided a platform for diverse voices. The promotional and cultural capital of this enhanced the festival’s reputation, and as the *National Post* opined, ‘no other festival has the combination of the enthusiastic audiences, the industry presence and the media influence that Toronto has.’ This emboldened opportunities to imbue excitement and convey powerful messaging about film as art, its audience and its programming that situates the festival as a media juggernaut reifying its identity, the host city and its film communities. According to Cervenán (2017) that “creates value for the host region, international visibility, film cachet, and cultural legitimacy...and vibrancy” (p. 150).

The consecration of TIFF's reputation as a global film festival was emboldened in 2007 when *Time* magazine noted that TIFF had "grown from its place as the most influential fall film festival to the most influential film festival, period" (Canadian Encyclopedia, 2017). This is partially the result of TIFF's ability and reputation for generating 'Oscar buzz' (See Table 6.) as highlighted for instance by the *New York Times* that "TIFF commands a ton of respect from the film industry [and] generate[s] attention...[at] the beginning of the buildup to Oscar season"; and as a festival that is in touch with the tastes of the global marketplace as noted by an interviewee, "TIFF ... has it all: passionate filmmakers, a star-studded cast, a rapturous audience reception [and] fervent media coverage." These key characteristics have emboldened the festival's mandate and consecrating it in the annals of the film festival circuit and global film culture. The festival has been able to increasingly broaden its role, increase its significance and extending mechanisms through its organizing, programming and curating that sustain its stakeholders to mechanisms to ensure acceptance of a particular cultural discourse, to a means of generating local pride, reputation and status (Cervenán, 2017; TIFF, 2016).

According to Ruling (2009) and Lampel and Meyer (2008) noted that the influence a field-configuring event has on a field depends on the event and the field itself. Within the context of FCEs in relation to the global film industry: TIFF as an international film festival it is noted, between the festival and the TIFF Bell Lightbox a combined \$200 million economic effect bolsters the local economy". The festival organizers, they have been able to uniquely blended community, commerce, consumption, celebration, discussion and exchange in the pursuit of artistic excellence and as highlighted in the following excerpt from Festival Style (2015):

Over the course of its 40 years, TIFF has transformed the way the world sees our city. But, more than that, it has helped to shape it. We've gone from spectators to trendsetters, from audience to influencers, from voyeurs to voyagers. For the last four decades, it's been more than a film festival, more than an icon on King [Street] West. It's been a signpost on the path

to self-discovery. It has helped us find our own voice – and now that we’ve found it, it gives us the means to inspire the world.

TIFF is host to an array of events and spectacles (both structured and unstructured) that are negotiated by stakeholders in novel and unexpected constellations for the purpose of collective sense-making as highlighted by an interviewee:

We have a variety of different tastes and I think we have been very good about listening to the different voices, artistic and the populist, a blend of those two things make the festival. The structure of Toronto blends the artistic and populist and I think for the public of course, [they are]...looking for that blend.

TIFF through its growth, activities and events have influenced the international film festival circuit and this contextually can be viewed as field-configuring, which is encapsulated in a constellation, configuring and consecrating manner. The impact and value it creates as a cultural organization and temporal event respectively, are fostered through its anchoring and support of knowledge sharing, industry learning and its institutional logic, attributes in programming and curation within the organizational field of film festivals (Lange et al., 2014; Bossa 2013; Nadavulakere, 2008). These attributes have emboldened TIFF’s international reputation and situates the City of Toronto as cosmopolitan centre and urban mecca for film culture and cultural dynamism (Cervenán, 2017).

The exploration of TIFF as a field-configuring event and its importance in the international film festival circuit has created an indelible cultural legacy not just for Canada, but also for global film culture. The ensuing sub-sections are explored through the lens of the interviewees to augment our collective understanding of TIFF and the festival edition under study by highlighting how the festival through its organizing, programming and curating strategies, embolden its agenda, audience, identity

and reputation; and situates it in a scholarly manner in its commitment to provide a unique cinematic experience for film lovers the world over.

Table 7 – Selected Films That Changed the Game for Toronto International Film Festival

Films	Editorial Feature	Programme Presentation, Country & Awards
<i>Cousin Cousine (1976)</i>	This French film stepped in as the first Opening Night Gala for the <i>Festival of Festivals</i> when Hal Ashby's Woody Guthrie biopic <i>Bound of Glory</i> became unavailable at the last minute. No matter, as director Jean-Charles Tacchella's romcom – which landed multiple Academy Award nominations – charmed its audience of 750 plus at the Ontario Place Cinesphere and established the Fest's international flavour out of the gate.	Opening Night (France)
<i>In Praise of Older Women (1978)</i>	Censors demanded cuts to this Canadian production about a Hungarian man's sexual awakening, but producer Robert Lantos and Festival co-founder Bill Marshall insisted on running it uncut. This spiked interests in its premiere at Elgin Theatre, where organizers had erroneously sent out twice as many invitations as there were seats. A riot was avoided by directing overflow patrons to a screening at the New Yorker. The film couldn't have asked for better publicity.	World Premiere (Canada)
<i>Chariots of Fire (1981)</i>	As much an underdog as Eric Liddell and Harold Abrahams, the Scottish and Jewish sprinters it portrays, this indie British drama about the lead-up to the 1924 Summer Olympics was elevated by Vangelis' memorable synthesized score. Festival audiences made it an instant sensation, handing it the People's Choice Award after an emotional screening attended by Liddell's three daughters and widow. The movie went on to win four Academy Awards.	International Premiere & Gala Presentation (United Kingdom) <i>People's Choice Award</i> <i>Academy Awards Winner</i> including Best Picture, Best Original Screenplay and Best Original Score

<i>Diva (1981)</i>	<p>Although <i>Diva</i> initially made little impact in its French homeland, the Festival gave the gala treatment to Jean-Jacques Beineix's stylish thriller about an opera-loving postman being pursued by Taiwanese bootleggers and a pair of local thugs, and the Toronto audience responded with standing ovation. United Artists Classics scooped up US rights, and the film became a cult classic, proving what a powerful platform the Festival could be for foreign indie fare.</p>	International Premiere & Gala Presentation (France)
<i>The Big Chill (1983)</i>	<p>Lawrence Kasdan's pop song-laden gabfest about '60s college friends who reunite for a funeral showed the public and industry that the Festival could premiere Hollywood's hottest releases and bring in top-calibre stars like William Hurt, Glenn Close and Kevin Kline. The debut of this eventual People's Choice Award winner was so fondly remembered that most of the cast returned for a sold-out anniversary presentation and Q&A 30 years later.</p>	North American Premiere & Gala Presentation (United States of America) - <i>People's Choice Award</i>
<i>The Decline of the American Empire (1986)</i>	<p>The Festival knew what it had with Denys Arcand's comedy-drama about a saucy get together of male and female friends in what could be called "<i>The Big Chill Quebecois style</i>" Organizers selected it for the prestigious Opening Night Gala on its way to winning the <i>People's Choice Award</i> and <i>Academy Award</i> nomination for Best Foreign Language Film, proving that national talent was world-class.</p>	Opening Night Gala (United States of America) - <i>People's Choice Award</i>
<i>Roger & Me (1989)</i>	<p>Michael Moore became a lightning rod for controversy after making a splash with his first documentary, about the devastating impact of GM plant closures in his hometown of Flint, Michigan and his fruitless pursuit of GM chair Roger B. Smith for comment. The doc came out of left field to grab</p>	International Premiere (United States of America) – <i>People's Choice Award</i>

	<p>the <i>People's Choice Award</i> and become a rare non-fiction box-office hit, bringing a renewed sense of social activism to the multiplex.</p>	
<p><i>The Crying Game (1992)</i></p>	<p>Neil Jordan's drama about an IRA soldier who falls in love with a prisoner's mysterious girlfriend became a phenomenon on this side of the pond – starting with it TIFF gala. Distributor Miramax implored reviewers to not reveal its shocking twist, which set curiosity amongst Festival-goers ablaze and became the marketing approach for the movie's later release. Its huge success led to Miramax being bought by Disney, affirming that indie film could lead to big business.</p>	<p>North American Premiere & Gala Presentation (United Kingdom) – <i>Academy Award</i> for Best Screen Play and Best Film Editing</p>
<p><i>American Beauty (1999)</i></p>	<p>This drama about a bored office worker who fantasizes about an affair with his daughter's best friend shook up middle-class sensibilities and marked the cinematic debut of theatre director Sam Mendes. Its <i>People's Choice Award</i> proved bellwether for the movie's five <i>Academy Awards</i>, including Best Picture, US\$356 million worldwide box office take (US\$510 million today's funds). Hollywood studios were now looking at Toronto as a launch pad for Oscar campaigns.</p>	<p>International Premiere (United States of America) – <i>People's Choice Award</i> and <i>Academy Award</i> for Best Picture, Best Director, Best Original Screenplay, Best Cinematography</p>
<p><i>Crouching Tiger Hidden Dragon (2000)</i></p>	<p>Although tailored for a Western audience, Ang Lee's gravity-defying action film about the chase to recover a warrior's sword in Qing Dynasty China defied all expectations in these parts. The international coproduction – in Mandarin with English subtitles – rode the momentum of its Festival Gala and <i>People's Choice Award</i> to smash the record for the highest grossing foreign language film in North America (US\$128 million or US\$173 million today) and won four Academy Awards.</p>	<p>World Premiere & Gala Presentation (China, Hong Kong, United States of America) – <i>People's Choice Award</i> and <i>Academy Award</i> for Best Foreign Language.</p>

<i>Slumdog Millionaire (2008)</i>	<p>Director Danny Boyle was not optimistic about his gritty underdog drama about a teen from Mumbai slums who shocks all of India with his success on <i>Who Wants to Be a Millionaire?</i> The studios were cold on it, and he believed it was headed straight to video. Then it screened to enthusiastic press and local audiences, who made it a surprise <i>People's Choice Award</i> winner. Eight Oscars and US\$378 million in worldwide ticket sales later....</p>	<p>World Premiere & Special Presentation (United Kingdom and India) <i>People's Choice Award</i> and <i>Academy Award</i> for Best Director, Best Adapted Screenplay Best Cinematography, Best Editing, Best Original Score, Best Original Song, Best Sound Editing and Best Sound Mixing.</p>
<i>The King's Speech (2010)</i>	<p>The Film about England's King George VI ascension to the throne and the subsequent speech therapy he underwent to correct a stutter, charmed festival goers and was awarded the <i>People's Choice Award</i> and went on to receive twelve nominations for the Academy Awards for Best Picture, becoming one of the most critically lauded films.</p>	<p>World Premiere & Gala Presentation (United Kingdom) <i>People's Choice Award</i> and <i>Academy Award</i> for Best Picture, Best Actor (by an actor in Leading Role), Best Achievement in Directing, Best Writing, Best Original Screenplay, Best Support Actor (Male), Best Support Actor (Female), Best Cinematography, Best Achievement in Costume Design, Best Original Score, Best Sound Mixing, Best Music Written for a Motion Picture, Best Achievement in Art Direction.</p>
<i>Twelve Years a Slave (2013)</i>	<p>This adaptation of the memoir of Solomon Northup, a free African-American in 1840s New York State who is kidnapped and sold into a life of slavery, moved TIFF's international press attendees, who dispatched glowing reviews for director Steve McQueen's artful and unflinching account of a shameful period in history. Toronto audiences, meanwhile bestowed upon this film the <i>People's Choice Award</i>, which again proved to be an accurate predictor of the Academy Award for Best Picture.</p>	<p>International Premiere & Gala Presentation (United States of America and the United Kingdom) – <i>People's Choice Award</i> and <i>Academy Award</i> for Best Picture, Best Adapted Screenplay and Best Support Actress.</p>

Room (2015)

Based on the Booker-shortlisted bestseller by Irish-Canadian novelist Emma Donoghue, *Room* is a tale of survival and endurance that is by turns harrowing, suspenseful and wondrous. Recounting the story of a mother and child escaping from the captivity which they have been held for several years. This visionary drama explores the trauma of being stolen from the world – and the marvel of discovering it for the first time.

Canadian Premiere & Special Presentation (Ireland and Canada) – *People's Choice Award* and *Academy Award* for Best Actress

Source: Festival Style 2015 and The Canadian Press

4.3.2 Perspectives on Organizing the Festival

The festival's organization is viewed as an open system with a highly integrated nature of related activities and relationships that's key to organizing a film festival. The interviewees had a clear understanding of their roles and responsibilities for the festival, with insights about the strategic and operational expectations. The festival organization is viewed as a series of 'live events' within the context of film festival studies (Iordanova, 2009). The film festival has flexible patterns of organization that allows for the achievement of specific results. With the multiplicity of stakeholders from the 'live events' and activities have different starting points within the festival itself, hence resources are organized in a manner to enliven the festival experience. Bossa (2013) and Anand and Jones (2008) opined that film festivals are primary examples of transorganizational structures through the various committees that organize the event and the interest groups that represent the field.

The Toronto International Film Festival (TIFF) from its inception, the executive management committee and organising committee which officially hosts the event every year has shaped the festival event. The overall responsibility for organizing the film festival and its curatorial vision are led by, the Artistic Director and members of the organizing committee. They have nurtured the efforts that have helped to shape the festival event into one of the largest and most powerful non-competitive festivals on the international film festival circuit.

4.3.2.1 The Duality of the Festival Organization

There was a clear understanding of the duality of the festival organization amongst all of the interviewees; and they were able to distinguish between the transorganizational structures of the festival organization. Hence, there was consistency in responses with organizing the festival and programming the festival from the interviewees who had responsibilities for this aspect of the festival, along with curating the festival experience. The interviewees highlighted that there are two aspects to programming; the editorial and the curatorial. The editorial aspect focuses on the film submissions and the film selection processes of the festival, and the curatorial aspect focuses on the accessibility, technologies and platforms for filmmaking styles and storytelling practices by shining a light on representative films in the programming line-up for the festival.

The challenge for the organizers of TIFF, after forty years of discovery, stories, and standing ovations, was how to capture the spirit of the past the, present and the future. Furthermore, how to bring stakeholders closer to understanding the significance of the milestone and embrace the event in the moment, as was articulated by an interviewee:

We had a lot of discussions in the years before and when we hit 40.... we had debates about just how much we should acknowledge it too. You don't want to get caught up in celebrating your own existence, history; and so we wanted it not to be too crazy, like a big blowout party, but to really be a kind of an acknowledgement of a milestone.

The organization of the festival was aimed at embodying the milestone, and the organizers understood that it is in the celebration of that moment that brings stakeholders closer to an understanding of what the film festival is all about. So the organizers became very aware that the event had to offer a unique combination of its historical and cultural traditions. What was foremost

for the organizers was to create a deeper awareness and an understanding amongst the stakeholders by creating a compelling festival experience and that celebrated their support for the festival. These interests and concerns became the driving force behind the organizing committee objectives on how to shape the identity of the festival, its institutional logic according to scholars Bossa (2013), Lampel and Meyer (2008) and Anand and Jones (2004) the gathering of the stakeholders – ‘field actors’ with their multiple interests and agendas. Essentially, the transorganizational structure of the event was underscored by the interviewees as a hallmark of the festival and that has helped to shape the event into the powerful meeting ground it is today. The way the festival engages the audience and connects the art of appreciating film through shared cognition is a notable aspect and is a key characteristic of TIFF as a field-configuring event.

An interviewee in reflecting on the 40th anniversary edition noted that, “it allowed us to obviously rethink bits of the past, and it was the first major anniversary we celebrated as an institution as opposed to being a film festival.” TIFF, like its counterparts in Venice, Berlin, and Cannes is an essential part of the film festival circuit and global film culture. However, of interest to the organizers, in viewing this milestone as a key marker in the festival’s history, they had to contend with what were the most important things on which to focus the celebrations and the festival’s impact. Collectively, the consensus for them was the audience. They deemed the audience as the key element to the success of the festival. Hence, it is the organizing committee’s task to design the festival event and ensure they have greater control on the identity of the festival through its programming. The organizing committee the interviewees purported, oversees the intricate process of negotiation that was partly attributable to the well-organised distribution and balancing roles of its members that shaped the festival event and the experience.

The transorganizational structure is one of TIFFF's strongest features, even though the organizing committee was in charge of envisioning the festival identity, the programming team is also responsible for helping to shape the festival event. Film festivals possess 'a unique potential to set agendas and to intervene in the public sphere and engender a festival experience that simply should not be theorized, it beckons to be lived in the moment' (De Valck et al., 2016) and that was the critical task for the organizers with the 40th anniversary festival event. They wanted to recognize and honour the history of TIFFF, which meant, according to the interviewees, acknowledging the people who founded the festival, the audience that supported them from the very beginning, and ensuring that both were honoured. An interviewee noted that it meant exploring what kind of events that they needed to do and purported:

We wanted to reflect on how we've evolved over 40 years and so that meant trying to also show what the festival in the organization has become. First of all, not just to focus on the festival, because it's grown from that to a lot more over the years and new things have come up; new technologies and new audiences so we just wanted to focus on that. Then also we wanted to point to the future of TIFFF; and so we wanted to make sure it wasn't a look back, but also an acknowledgment of where we are now."

The festival's organization is guided by the vision of TIFFF "*transforming the way people see the world, through film*" and to capture the spirit of the milestone, with a campaign that focused on '*Defining Moments since 1976*'. The interviewees who had responsibility for the organization of the festival expressed that it was a seminal and exciting milestone for the festival; and in acknowledging it they essentially focused on what they wanted the festival to be about:

...explosive moments that open your eyes, hearts and minds to change you in some way. Moments that transform the way you see the world. These significant flashes can spring from anywhere: a long-admired filmmaker's candid Q&A, a friendship struck in a rush line, a chance encounter, a film that leaves you breathless.

The festival event provided an opportunity for the organizers to reflect and assess what they have accomplished as they eagerly planned to encapsulate the past, the present and the future of the film festival. The audience-centeredness of the festival was foregrounded in their minds, given the myriad of activities that are undertaken during the event. The organizers' primary goal was to recognize, celebrate, and honour the founders of the festival and acknowledge the contributions of the festival's partners – audience, supporters, donors, sponsors, government, industry, the media, and the volunteers – who have all contributed to the achievement of this significant milestone.

The interviewees underscored their commitment to the vision and the value of the relationships that have championed TIFF from its humble beginnings; from when it commenced as the *Festival of Festivals* to its current international presence. Although it is important to build on the campaign theme for the festival, *'Defining moments since 1976'*, the executive management committee and programming team are focused on constantly looking for new ways to innovate and how to broaden the festival's presence. Furthermore, to embolden the festival's identity that is shaped by a common desire to allow Canadian and international film culture to be established as key features of the festival event and its audience centeredness. This identity for the festival is reinforced throughout the years becoming stronger as the festival grew and focused on national, regional and international film selections. This helped to foster and shape the central element to the institutional logic of the event – the audience – through compelling engagement throughout the festival event. The organizing committee is guided by the Artistic Director's willingness to promote a collection of cinema like no other festival before, through open access, diversity and inclusion in the festival programming, which will be highlighted in the next section.

The interviewees all felt that the focus of the organization of the festival is its ongoing emphasis on the stakeholders and in particular the audience, the industry, and the media, as well as the experience they wanted them to have. There are the issues of perception of the reputation and the significance of TIFFF as an event in global film culture, programming film, and curating the festival experience for a discerning audience. They felt that there was need to celebrate the milestone by creating access, with increased capacity in their learning and outreach programs, and welcoming a diverse range of communities to special free programming across the city during the event and the year. As highlighted by one interviewee:

We decided to do more for the audiences and letting people know we were 40 years old and letting people know that the City of Toronto kept us going for those forty years and so it ended up being I think more focused range of programming designed around diversity, access and the future as well.

4.3.2.2 Milestones and Celebration: Access, Diversity and the Future

The consensus amongst interviewees was that initiatives around access, diversity and the future in organizing the festival underscored TIFFF's commitment to making film accessible to everyone. They all understood that anniversaries are important and the 40th anniversary was seen as a coming of age for the festival. However, they did not want to get caught up celebrating their own history, instead, they wanted to see it as a time for reflection and an opportunity to look forward to the future for both TIFFF and for film. Furthermore, to create meaningful ways to continue engaging people around the world through the transformative power of the moving image.

The organization of the festival is a strategic task that is not without its challenges, and the need to give consideration to the multiple stakeholders was of importance. This was foremost for the festival organization as highlighted by an interviewee:

What I've learned is that you can't program to just one constituency, you can't direct the organization just to the needs and wants of one group. It is a matter of balance all the time and sometimes that's the hardest part of the job. Sometimes the wants and needs of different stakeholders are opposing and we have to keep that in mind as well.

For the organizing committee, this was to ensure that they clearly established and maintained the long-standing relationships through the achievement of three main goals: anchoring both the audience's and industry's agendas in the celebrations of the festival landscape; through transformational programming and organization; and by paying homage to its audience-centeredness.

Within the context and celebration of the significant milestone, there was an emboldened spirit of cooperation in the organization of the festival to celebrate the past, present and the future. The organizing committee built on a framework that was designed for the festival in the early years as a meeting ground to promote Canada as a distinct film market, meeting the needs of the Toronto film community; and a meeting place for discussions and exchanges of ideas for producers and distributors (TIFF Festival Programme, 2015). Even though this was highlighted in the curatorial focus of the event, a festival of the magnitude of TIFF faces several challenges: constantly looking for new ways to innovate, ensure appropriate programming that guarantees the future of the festival, and protect that space for the audience. Several interviewees highlighted that they understood the relevance of the festival organization within the context of the film festival landscape; and the contending changes in how cinema is viewed as a collective experience. The festival organization

undertook the launch of two new programmes - *Platform* and *Primetime* – during this milestone, to reflect their response and understanding the nuanced perspectives around emerging trends and change in film culture.

The interviewees all highlighted that the organizing of the festival can be viewed within the context of the phenomenon as a living entity with multiple stakeholders. In light of that, consideration is given to the curatorial vision for the festival, but moreso, emphasis on how the festival is programmed. The festival event, the experience and how it is curated by the organizers allows for the achievement of specific results for the multiple stakeholders. This was achieved by optimizing the resources, talents and balancing alternative goals and demands within a temporal spatial setting. As Bossa (2013) opined such a space of exchange and debate requires a form of structure, before a field-configuring event can exist and enact its influence, there must first be common interests and issues.

Accordingly, the organizers focused on ensuring that in organizing the festival, the vision is actualized in the kind of festival event that they wanted to emerge. They wanted a kind and type of festival that had the ability to enliven the identity and serve its purpose of gathering multiple stakeholders to encourage a common goal. The objectives for the festival organizers was to further strengthen the identity of the festival and reinforces its status and reputation as an audience centered non-competitive international film festival. Hence, the launch of initiatives and activities throughout the event that would foster ‘joint cognition’ and ‘shared sense-making’ throughout the festival experience, that amplified its institutional logic. The ability of TIFFF to bring a variety of ‘actors’ into a space that are linked together by a common objective or goal is characteristic of a field-configuring

event (Bossa 2013; Lampel & Meyer, 2008, Meyer, 2008,) and it emboldens the collective festival experience.

4.3.3 Perspectives on Programming the Festival

The programming is guided by the curatorial vision of the festival and with TIFFF's celebration of the significant milestone this was a seminal task to capture the essence of its institutional logic - audience centeredness. The organizers reflected on how the festival evolved over the years and that meant showcasing the journey, while pointing to the future, and acknowledging where they are now.

The programming philosophy that guides how films are selected for the festival builds on the mission – *transforming the way people see the world through film* by curating a platform that showcases the best films from national cinemas around the world. According to DeValck (2007), the original approach to festival programming was cinema that focused on the country of origin, and has now shifted to thematically driven programming. This shift in festival programming emerged from the proliferation of films that would no longer be associated with a fixed national identity. These approaches to programming have led to diverse rules of engagement in the process of selecting and presenting of films.

Notably, while film programming within a theoretical context is understood from the lens of watching, selecting, and presenting films, this is an aspect of the festival that have helped to shape the festival event and the festival experience. The overarching role for this aspect of the festival is guided by the festival's Artistic Director and the team of programmers. They select films, mostly in sections and regions of the world, with team members being allotted slots and genres for film selection. Augmenting this approach to festival programming, one interviewee noted:

We have the opportunity to go really deep into certain regions of the world, that other festivals don't have the opportunity, and that also means we get to show that mix of the best of the year and the best of the new upcoming films, that really defines the programming character of the festival.

TIFF's programming strategy from its inception is to programme the best of films from the best festivals, and it has evolved to promoting both national and international cinema. Stringer (2003) opined that the global-scale festivals, such as Cannes, Berlin or Toronto, are caught between promoting national and the global cinema. Inherent to TIFF is the effort to expand its global reach and to remain unique and relevant through its audience-centeredness. Contextually, TIFF's programming strategy is often contextualized within the self-conscious affiliation to the City of Toronto and its multicultural mosaic. TIFF's differentiation an interviewee espoused lies in the awareness that through its global reach and its intimate connection to the City of Toronto, the audience have a place where they have access to different experiences and movie tastes; and can screen films and art from all over the world being at the festival.

The exploration of the programming of the festival emerges from both the editorial and the curatorial aspects. The former being shaped from the perspective of the interviewees, and is contextualized from the lens of the democratization of programming, the plurality of voices, and the duality of programming. The editorial aspect of the analysis is from the lens of programming to honour the *raison d'être* of the film festival - to screen films - that augments TIFF's vision of transforming the way people see the world, through film. The following subsections provide insights on the festival programming and their influence on the festival's identity as a non-competitive festival and the field-configuring festival experience.

4.3.3.1 Democratization of Programming

The emergence of counterpoints to programming in the literature was evident with how the interviewees approached this aspect of the festival and the key role it plays in how the festival is spotlighted in the minds of its constituents. Hence, the focus in this section are the gleanings from the festival organizers, their programming models or approaches, given that in general there is no universally consecrated model of programming. However, within the context of TIFF, a team of programmers with various interests are assembled and segmented into areas of expertise either by genre or geography. The interviewees referred to programming the festival from regional perspectives instead of a subjective perspective, which usually guides the selection process in film programming such as aesthetics, thematic, intellectual and cultural value.

The interviewees highlighted that programming the festival is executed with the diversity of the audience at heart, and how that emboldens and enlivens the editorial vision for the festival. An interviewee noted that:

The programming is to ensure the future of the festival and to make sure that there was a wide programming for the populist or people who love that kind of stuff, for corporate sponsors who want to see pretty accessible material as well as the artistic hardcore.

The growth of the festival brings with it, demands from the constituents, such as requesting changes in aspects of the festival [not only editorial programming, but also curatorial] and the need to be cognizant of that. This ensures the constituents are kept in harmony, a challenge that seems to emerge often, according to the interviewees.

They clearly understood that the festival programming is guided by their audience, and they know how to intimately connect the dots in selecting films to generate a burst of excitement and heightened emotions, yet always engaging their community of stakeholders. TIFF's approach to festival programming, is done regionally to bring perspectives to the festival that connects both at an individual and collective level with the diversity that is inherent with their audience and the City of Toronto. Notably, an interviewee explained the approach utilized by TIFF for successful festival programming:

one must first of all hire a team that understands those ranges of wants and needs; and to give each person the ability to fully pursue their own mission, but to understand it is a bunch of different missions, but it is my job to try to balance.

To program a festival like TIFF with its multiple stakeholders and myriad of activities, the programming team plays an instrumental role in the success of a film festival as a creative cultural event. The programming for the festival is structured into particular regions of the world. For each region, programmers familiar with it are dedicated to guide the choices or selections. As one participant explained, "they are the experts in what's going on in the region. That's historically how it's been done." Alluding to the aforementioned quote, the programming for the festival emboldens a democratized approach, along with the Artistic Director's vision for the festival. This was emphatically expressed by an interviewee who highlighted that:

We have always had, I think, very strong programmers and one significant difference between us and many other festivals is that the programmers actually have individual authority to select films. Many other festivals have the programmers recommending films up to an Artistic Director who makes the final decision. We organize ourselves differently, long time ago, more democratically, so that our ...programmers each have a number of individual slots they can program; five or ten or twenty slots you can fill. It is your [their] decision to fill in terms of what films you [they] invite.

The way in which the programming emerges is from the individual programmers who form the collective team; what makes them distinctly different from other festivals, is the relative autonomy in their film selections. This was the consensus amongst the interviewees who highlighted that, they have an inherent responsibility to ensure that the film selections in their respective programming regions represents cinematic and thematic originality, and this was their collective understanding (See Table 7 & 8). This allowed for incredible insights into how important the programming approach is to the festival and its seminal contribution to enriching the festival experience. An interviewee further underscored that:

We have the opportunity to really go deep into certain regions of the world, that other festivals don't have the opportunity to do, and that also means we get to show the best of the year and best of the new upcoming [films], that I think really defines the programming character of our festival. Again, I think the fact that we can even do that is having the public audience that the press and industry wants to see these films, with, because they feel they are tastemakers in a way.

Underscoring how the democratized approach to programming is a key feature of the festival programming process, an interviewee highlighted:

the Artistic Director and the Director wouldn't see every movie, I don't think, [and] I can't imagine they would. You sort of rely on the programmers; there are over 300 movies in the festival, you know, so it is hard to see all of those in the sort of compress time."

There was consensus amongst the interviewees, which highlighted that behind-the-scenes people are involved in researching, selecting, and presenting films for the festival. Notably, there are a lot of negotiations taking place for the films which are rarely transparent; and are practiced differently from how they are narrated and get selected through the programming process. The films come to the festival in a variety of ways, as follows:

- **Unsolicited or blind submissions** – films that programmers do not know about but are considered ‘cold calls’, come to the festival through their *‘Without a Box’* submission platform. These are specialty films (documentaries, short, features, genres) from different parts of the world that are screened by a team of pre-screener with geographical knowledge of the region. The film is assessed against certain criteria and questions in the review process, and then recommended by the reviewer to an actual programmer.
- **Solicited submissions** – films where programmers know the people associated with them (filmmaker, producer or studios) and where these films are solicited through engagement and discussions with members of the films project team. Then a decision is made and these films are directly watched by members of the programming team based on specified regions or genres.
- **Advocated submissions** – films that are procured by the festival through its team of programmers and that usually have an agent associated with them, who champions their submission.
- **Regional submissions** – films that are submitted through national film boards and promotions agencies that are directly watched by members of the programming team based on the regions and the genres.

The interviewees involved in the film-selection process, have underscored the importance of the relationships that they have individually cultivated and collectively nurtured as a film festival and a cultural organization. More so, the relationships across industry and media, or with filmmakers and programmers, helped to fuel the programming for the festival and reinforce their commitment to provide unique experiences from around the world that are second to none. This was of importance to the interviewees and their referencing the launch of two new programmes for the 40th

anniversary milestone: (a) *Platform*, with a focus on directors' cinema from around the world, with its renowned jurist adjudicating and (b) *Primetime*, a programme dedicated to presenting the best in international long-form television and digital programming. It was clear that the distinction between organizing and programming the festival are explored throughout the research which is understood and clearly articulated by the interviewees with direct and indirect responsibilities.

4.3.3.2 The Plurality of Voices

Building the perspectives on programming and how films are selected for the festival, this emergent theme was consistently articulated by the interviewees with regard to how they programmed the festival. Their perspectives on diversity, taste, and the love for what they do, seeks to honour the audience's trust that is bestowed upon them as programmers - the vanguards of film as art.

Furthermore, how film enters the festival as cultural, intellectual, social, and economic resources, enriching the festival experience and the democracy of programming. This perspective for TIFF as a non-competitive film festival brings to mind the understated elements of programming a festival that maintain its recognition and status; as shared by an interviewee who noted that, "it is the programming team that really bring themselves to this place and just do this."

The programming process the interviewees highlighted is also driven by the plurality of voices, which is essential to how the festival connects the programmers to be mindful of their responsibilities to the audience. As Czach (2004) noted, programming is also about taste-making and value judgments. Through the plurality of voices, TIFF as a festival organization undertakes to make new discoveries available to its audience. The festival programming is enriched by this emergent concept as a finding of the research, it contributes to the insights that inform and provide context

for the discourse with the interviewees. The plurality of voices is underscored by the following perspective from the interviews:

I mean definitely [idiosyncrasies come into play]. I think so and that's great the other great thing about our programming team is that we all come from such diverse backgrounds. Some people have PhDs in Cinema Studies and some people haven't even graduated from university let alone gone to film school. So I think one of our beloved programmers from an audience [programming] perspective....her background is an actress herself and helping with screenwriting. You know neither [there are couple members of the team that do not] have degrees in cinema. You know largely we both studied films in various contexts, I think he started like being self-taught, he was a former critic. [One of our programmers] who is our documentary programmer didn't go to university, so I think that it gives this great diverse range of taste, range of background and perspective that everybody can bring when they look at our films. You know of course, everybody has this sort of baseline knowledge of the history of cinema and craft of filmmaking.

The plurality of voices builds on the programming for diversity and inclusiveness, without compromising artistic considerations, but acting as an impactful guide. It is considered an essential feature of the approach the interviewees bring to the programming process as articulated by an interviewee:

We are in a place where the audience has a place like Toronto and come from all over the world; and have all sorts of different experiences and movie tastes, but they also have access to all of that. It is not just, they come from different places, but it also means you can consume movies and art from all those places sitting in Toronto. So I think, you just want to have you know, people that are attuned and are going to have different perspectives to provide all sort of things and I think in the end you have a team of people who program with me and the programming is sort of a reflection of that. There are some bits of us and there is a bit of the wider world, there is a bit of you know, what happens in movies and elsewhere around the world and how that sort of filters through here.

The interviewees understood that their audience has different tastes and that they are thus endowed with a public trust to educate, inspire, and amplify the plurality of voices that is necessary for the

functioning of the democracy of programming. Another interviewee noted that, the people who come to work at TIFF, in programming in particular, shared the vision of cinema, its richness, and its diversity, and brought with them their areas of interest to the process, because they are “into the nook and crannies of films, not just contemporary commercials.”

With programming, there was consensus amongst the interviewees, who shared that taste does matter, both from the audience and their own perspectives, and it does emerge as a larger part of the approach to programming. It was notably emphasized by the interviewees that their roles included finding the best artists in cinema from around the world and bring them to the audience, as highlighted in the excerpts below:

I think it is a blend of a larger programming team, we have a variety of different tastes and I think we have been very good about listening to the different voices, the artistic and the populist, a blend of those two things make the festival as it has become. I think some other festivals are artistic in their orientation, but the structures of Toronto blends the artistic and the populist and I think for the public of course, the public is looking for that blend of course, the large publics and we are trying to hit that sweet spot of course, the general populous is looking for something mainstream, populist but also with a bit of an edge.

It does...and I think anybody who says no is lying or not admitting, or doesn't know that it is happening. But of course, it is happening. It is a subjective job, we are not robots that know, that have ticking boxes to know whether it is a good or a bad movie.

Taste does matter. The individual tastes of these programmers that we largely rely on... for instance something is being proposed as a Special Presentation or a Gala or Platform where it needs to sort of escalate up the chain.... But largely there is taste that is defining their selection and so we can all sort of see the cinematic craft merits of a film as a sort of baseline standard, within that it, is going to be the individual's taste that ... brings that selection, that like confirms what that selection is. So audiences are already seeing a filter of tastes, when they're looking at something but then of course, you layer their taste on top of that, in terms of like what they might choose [to watch].

Not everyone is going to love every movie you show. You pick the wrong movie for opening night is subjective, I can't tell you, but we got to be fine with listening. But the issues around access, how the audience experiences the festival that's to me the stuff you pay attention to issues around that. There are thousands of movies that are released in a year; no festival is perfect, because people have different taste.

I have brought who I am to the role and this has allowed me to have an appreciation of the plurality of voices and my role in selecting films for the festival. Artistic excellence guides how we select films for the festivals. What are the films that speak to us and resonate with our *raison d'être*. Tastes do matter personally and the audience is foremost in your mind in that regard; the festival is an audience-centred one and the aim is to bring balance at the same time while, stretching your audience and educating them from multiple view points, cultural backgrounds and baggage. We bring who we are to work and this impacts the type of films that we select to reflect what the festival is all about, both within the Canadian and international context.

So when I came here [to TIFF], I was already a hardcore cinephile, hardcore cinephile tastes, but I was also interested in other genres, I was interested in ...I was kind of curious about everything.

The perspectives of the interviewees in their respective roles for the festival fostered developing a kind of film programming that meant having a vision that blends both the traditional and contemporary approaches. This is undertaken, while maintaining the standards with which they want to define the festival program. The shared notion of how taste impacts the festival programming builds on Czach's (2004) perspective that taste and diversity matter in the programming process and "as we increase the diversity of our offerings, more people will see themselves and their communities represented on our screens and realize that they are welcome at our festival – their voices, their spirituality, their values, their customs, their ideas and expertise, their energies are all welcome" (p. 84). The interviewees in the aforementioned excerpts did express that tastes matter in the programming of the festival, and while it can have further implications for the discourse and analysis, it is beyond the realm of this paper. However, how the interviewees select the films is inherently an aspect of influence to successfully develop and sustain a culture of programming. To this end, they are able to hear different voices echoing the same message throughout the

organization and into its future, which is contextualized by the autonomy, the individual tastes, their diversity and the appreciation for what they do.

4.3.3.3 The Duality of Programming: The Coexistence of Constituents

The interviewees highlighted that the audience is the key element to the success of the festival; however the audience is not the only constituent that the festival serves. With that acknowledgment and for the purpose of the research consideration is given to the press and industry as the other constituents or publics in the festival. While it was acknowledged that the model of programming adapted for press and industry stakeholders (publics) as a global film festival, given its nature and scope it is to ensure that “outstanding filmmaking talent and industry leader from around the world are right here” (www.tiff.net). The interviewees have an innate responsibility to ensure that the industry side of the film programming coexists with that of the audience-centered programming to enhance the status and reputation of the festival.

TIFF within the context of its role as a festival organization, the interviewees underscored the important responsibility they had in film selection: those films needed audiences to have cultural value and capital, hence the duality in programming. TIFF executed this responsibility by developing and implementing a parallel festival for industry within the festival infrastructure, even though they are not an official market. However, this is a key feature at the major film festivals in the world and the following highlights the festival’s outlook:

The programme will feature creative insights from outstanding filmmaking talent, while major industry leaders will debate topical subjects, including diversity and gender inclusion. “In crafting the sessions, our programming team has recognized that providing access to opportunities and enabling a greater understanding of evolving investment models is essential for the

artistic and financial sustainability of the industry (www.tiff.net)

Another key highlight from the interviewees about the festival was about TIFF's brand capital and how the fourth element of the constituents - corporate partners are demanding more of the festival through sponsorship placement and promotion throughout the festival. This was emphasized by an interviewee who further noted "you have to be careful that stakeholders are kept in harmony, that one does not get out of balance with the other."

While there is a parallel festival that happens with the audience centered festival for the other constituents (publics), namely the press and industry are in attendance. This event is programmed to ensure every film gets one press and industry screening throughout the duration of the festival in addition to the audience screening. The industry festival was as a result of the growth of the festival and it emerging as a nodal point in the film festival circuit. An interviewee noted "to be honest, there was a certain time when we could not deal with industry and the media; we basically could not serve more than one at a time." The duality of programming became a key feature of the festival due to the creation of the infrastructure to respond to the growth of the festival, with the same films selected being shown in separate screenings that created a win-win for TIFF as a festival. As highlighted below by an interviewee:

I think that is still the lure of Toronto, filmmakers still want the industry and they immediately see it with the industry and with the public and they know the public can influence them. If they get a fantastic response to a film, they know that the journalist is going to write about that, it is going to affect that critical outcome, the audiences love this, and of course the buyers in the room are going to want to buy the film, because the Toronto audience loves that.

Hence, the democracy of programming and the plurality of voices that were mentioned in the previous sections synergistically emerged as key sub themes. The need of each constituent and their demands on the festival is different, however their coexistence contributes to the success of the festival and how it is experienced. The audience drives the public programming, but it also drives the business side of the event. It is access to those audiences that the press and industry (publics) are after and that makes the festival unique in being able to deliver to the three (3) key constituents: the audience, the press, and the industry. This was reiterated by an interviewee who noted that “the industry wants to be in the room when there is a screening with the public [audience], even though there is press and industry screenings.” There is a reciprocal understanding that each constituent wants to experience the festival in a state of coexistence and the interviewees have that collective responsibility. This was highlighted by an interviewee who espoused that:

so my job is to try to first of all, to hire a team that understands those range of wants and needs and to give each person the ability to fully pursue their own mission, right, but to understand it's a bunch of different missions, but it is my job to try to balance.

The industry, as highlighted by interviewees, comes to TIFF to buy and sell movies, so they have a responsibility to ensure there is a good environment that fosters this by programming great films with artistic and cultural value. Within the context of the festival and how each constituent experiences it, given the programming approach utilized by the festival, the interviewees emphasized that it is necessary to ensure balance. Of note, however, while the press and industry screening is useful for film buyers, one interviewee noted “if you want to see how movies play, you have to be in the public screenings.”

There is a clear understanding of TIFFF's role as a leading film festival and how it has emerged as a major hub for movie houses and collaborative endeavours for festival programming, both internationally and locally. The growth of TIFFF is symbiotically linked in large part with the relationships the interviewees have built; and how they have factored into the festival from both a programming and curatorial perspectives to enhance the festival experience.

The ability of TIFFF to provide the most diverse, enriching film experiences, representing different global regions, film genres, and media formats through its festival programming approaches, underscores the dedication to celebrating and promoting both TIFFF programming and film culture on an international scale. The focus builds on the genesis of the early days of the festival, with the objective of creating a festival that would be considered to represent and reinforce its identity as one of the world's leading audience centered international film festival. Van Hemert (2013) noted that the focus on programming positioned the festival as an influential player in the global film industry, and as such the festival began to play a distinctive role in the making of auteurs and shaping of film history.

Scholars such as Bossa (2013), Van Hemert (2013) and Nadavulakere (2008) noted for a festival to achieve this global recognition through the festival's intense participation and action in the field of film production and distribution. Furthermore, through the event's programming and through extensive networking with other international film festivals and industry members, TIFFF has achieved its goal of shaping global film culture. By espousing from a national to a transnational sphere, artistic excellence and becoming one of the leading film festivals in audience engagement and enrichment through curated film programming. Furthermore, the capacity of TIFFF through its programming to connect the disparate parts of world's film industry is no easy feat; with the vast

differences in language, culture, politics and economic development in the regions of the world. This is undoubtedly one of the greatest achievements of TIFFF as a field-configuring event. The festival is able to gather films and industry members (field actors) from all over the world in an attempt to promote both national and international cinema, a task which it has been able to accomplish through its mission of transforming the way people see the world, through film.

4.3.3.4 Film as Text within the Festival – TIFFF 2015 Festival Programming Premieres

The festival is really much about the celebration of film as art and programming the films selected by actively framing them in a specific way (Van Hemert, 2013, p. 63) through different sections in the festival such as *Gala Presentation, Masters, Platform, Special Presentation, In Conversation.., Discovery, Primetime, Contemporary World Cinema, TIFFF Docs, City to City, Wavelengths, Shortcuts, TIFFF Cinematheque, Vanguard* and *Midnight Madness*. In exploring the festival programme, Festival Style (2015) highlights that “it is always jam-packed with must see films (p. 92) and the programming agenda combines a strong presence of auteur and more commercial films. This is done in order to facilitate the inclusion of emerging and experimental to entertain and engage film lovers the world over and the opportunity to ask questions of visiting filmmakers when the lights go up (Festival Programme, 2015). The researcher in highlighting film as texts (See Tables 7 & 8) within the context of the research, approaches it from the lens of the key characteristics of a film festival – the screening of films, and in particular, the programming of premieres (world premiere, international or north american).

Furthermore, building on how they are presented at the festival as gala presentations that highlight ‘movie stars, red-carpet premieres and major audience interests’ by understanding how the film

enters the festival through the film selection process; and how they are perceived within the broader framework of programming. According to Palis (2015) the kind of written texts at film festivals are meticulously written in special publications (festival programmes, monographs, special issues) as useful documents that archive as well as document the very social practice involved in film selection and film curatorship (p. 39).

The analysis of the films selected, contextually the premieres at the festival understudy, allows us an understanding of how each film is chosen and are accorded critical capital (Czach, 2004). The films are an essential part of the film festivals and have the power to make personal transformation and experiential shifts, and by learning about them through text, we learn not only about the film, but also about the festival itself. The texts are often the only means of exhibition and promotion for films before they gain notoriety. Koehler (2009) emphasizes that the festival as text have two important functions, firstly “as a permanent record of a topic explored in the festival’s edition” and secondly as “a means of furthering film history by a non-academic route” (p. 93).

The film as text helps us to explore how they are given context within the festival by the film festival programmers and how they construct identities, tastes, bring disparate voices together and infuse the sensibilities of the films selected. According to Palis (2015), much of the scholarship that traced the earliest beginnings of international film festivals rely on the existence of these tangible written documents that serve to document and illuminate endless deliberations and discussions pertaining to the selection of films that are mounted for exhibition. He further noted that “the texts also serve to highlight the putative power relations embedded in any cultural activity such as mounting a film festival” (2015, p. 40). This editorial aspect of the festival programming done by the film

programmers and curators are often viewed as scholarly materials given their familiarity with the various film genres and the themes the films are grouped and presented in.

Scholars such as Van Hemert (2013) and DeValck (2007) purports that, the festival event through programming, conjures how it desires to highlight a film and the ways in which they want it to be experienced within the festival as a “rich discursive context” (2007, p. 19). This is applied to each element (editorial and curatorial) of programming and the festival experience, then impacts “how the film is framed and received” (2013, p. 34). TIFF for the opening night of the festival presented Jean-Marc Vallée’s *Demolition* (See Table 7) that gave prominence to a homegrown talent and highlighted the following in the Festival Programme (2015):

Over the years, the Festival has been proud to present Jean- Marc Vallée’s feature films including *Blacklist*, *C.R.A.Z.Y.*, *Café de Flore*, *The Young Victoria*, *Dallas Buyers* and *Wild*,” Vallée has a tradition of presenting strong characters who are on journeys to self-discovery and redemption, and he is the only filmmaker in our history to present both an Opening Night and a Closing Night film at the Festival..... This film tells the story of a man who deals with loss in unexpected ways, and is brought to life on screen through sensitive and commanding performances by [Jake]Gyllenhaal, [Naomi] Watts, Chris Cooper and newcomer Judah Lewis.

The aforementioned excerpt foregrounds the multidimensional context of a film, how the festival desires to exhibit both the filmmaker and the film for the festival through text within the festival framework. Of interests, Harbord (2009) infers that this “marks the festival as an unfolding event whose details are unknowable in advance, affords the singularity to the experience: to see a film here and now will be unlike any other time of viewing” (p. 44).

Furthermore, these films as new discoveries being selected for the festival, the text assist in how the discourses framed around these works and construct them as representative of a particular national consciousness. For example, the festival brings auteurs and the next generation of creators from around the world, and provides a platform to ignite the careers of filmmakers, by “bringing a freshness to film language” (Chan, 2011, p. 255). Through film texts, film festival programmers augment how films are showcased and spotlighted within global film culture and the thematics of the festival itself. Thereby, giving shape to how they want the film to be experienced at the festival and indirectly as Rhyne (2009) opined, can wield enormous power on how you should think about the film, how its programmed to engage different kind of audiences - cinephile, film lovers, industry and the press.

TIFF through its editorial programming element of film as text provides a comprehensive listing of selected films to provide support and guidance to stakeholders whom they want to attend the festival from different regions of the world. Hence, film texts help festival programmers to be more strategic about film choices and preparation in how the festival can help bring the films to the world (Festival Program, 2015).

Table 8 – Selected Films for the 40th Annual Toronto International Film Festival

Film, Director and Region	Editorial Feature	Programme Presentation & Sections
<i>Demolition</i> by Jean-Marc Vallée (Canada)	The tale of a successful investment banker (Jake Gyllenhaal) who struggles after losing his wife in a tragic car crash. Despite pressure from his father-in-law to pull it together, he continues to unravel, and what begins as a complaint letter to a vending machine company turns into a series of letters revealing startling personal admissions.	Opening Night & Gala Presentation
<i>Beeba Boys</i> by Deep Mehta (Canada)	The film looks at a violent and adrenaline-charged Indo-Canadian gang war, mixing guns, bhangra beats, bespoke suits, cocaine and betrayal, as gang boss Jeet Johar and his loyal crew try to take over the Vancouver drug and arms scene from an old-style crime syndicate.	World Premiere & Gala Presentation
<i>The Dressmaker</i> by Jocelyn Moorhouse (Australia)	Based on the best-selling novel by Rosalie Ham, the film is a comedy-drama set in 1950s Australia. After many years working as a dressmaker in exclusive Parisian fashion houses, misfit Tilly Dunnage returns home to a tiny, middle-of-nowhere town to right the wrongs of the past (Kate Winslet, Liam Hemsworth, Judy Davis and Hugo Weaving).	World Premiere & Gala Presentation
<i>Downriver</i> by Grant Scicluna (Australia)	A moody thriller awash in grim secrets and slowly surfacing revelations. James (Reef Ireland) has just been released from prison after serving time for drowning a little boy when he himself was just a child. The boy's body was never found, and James, guilt-ridden and still haunted by questions about what really happened that day, returns to the rural community where the crime took place and undertakes a quest to	International Premiere & Discovery

	find the body. This first feature...exhibits a formal elegance and maturity we would normally expect from a fully developed auteur.	
<i>Disorder</i> by Alice Winocour (France/Belgium)	Vincent (Matthias Schoenaerts) is a French Special Forces soldier just returned from Afghanistan. Though suffering from PTSD, he takes on a job protecting the wife of a rich Lebanese businessman (Diane Kruger) at their home in Maryland. While the former soldier seems to descend into paranoia, it turns out his concerns might not be unfounded after all.	North American Premiere & Gala Presentation
<i>Freeheld</i> by Peter Sollett (United States of America)	Based on the Oscar-winning documentary <i>Freeheld</i> is a true love story of Laurel Hester and Stacie Andree and their fight for justice. A decorated New Jersey police detective, Hester is diagnosed with cancer and plans to leave her pension to her domestic partner. The government however, has other ideas (Julianne Moore, Ellen Page, Michael Shannon and Steve Carell).	World Premiere
<i>Nie Yinniang (The Assassin)</i> by Hou Hsiao-hsien (Taiwan)	A beautiful assassin (<i>Shu Qi</i>) is sent to kill the powerful lord who was once her betrothed, in this assumptuous martial arts, where the assassin whose lethal effectiveness has become compromised by her troubled conscience. That internal struggle becomes even more fraught when she is sent by her master to murder the governor of the independent province of Weibo, Lord Tian (Chang Chen).	North American Premiere & Masters
<i>Les Chevaliers Blancs (The White Knights)</i> by Joachim LaFosse (France/Belgium)	This is a true story of the rise and fall of London's most notorious gangsters, Reggie and Ronnie Kray (both portrayed by Tom Hardy). The classic crime thriller takes the audiences into the secret history of the 1960s and the extraordinary events that guaranteed the eternal infamy of the Kray twins.	World Premiere & Platform

<i>The Hard Stop</i> by George Amponsah (United Kingdom)	This timely documentary explores the life and death of Mark Duggan, whose killing at the hands of the London Metropolitan Police sparked the Tottenham riots of 2011 that made headlines around the globe, but, as so often happens, the issue soon dropped from the news reports.	World Premiere & City to City: London
<i>The Martian</i> by Ridley Scott (United States of America)	Mars astronaut Mark Watney is presumed lost after a fierce storm. But he survives, stranded and alone on the hostile planet. With meagre supplies, he must draw upon his ingenuity and spirit to subsist and find a way to signal to Earth that he's still alive. (Matt Damon, Jessica Chastain, Kristen Wiig, Jeff Daniels, Michael Pena, Kate Mara, Chiwetel Ejiofor and Donald Glover).	World Premiere & Gala Presentation
<i>The Danish Girl</i> by Tom Hooper (United Kingdom)	Sumptuously photographed film set in Copenhagen in the 1920s and focuses almost entirely on a free-spirited Danish artist Lili Elbe, who became known as one of the first recipients of gender reassignment surgery.	North American Premiere & Special Presentation
<i>Sector IX B</i> by Mathieu Kleyebe Abonnenc (France/Senegal)	Betty (Betty Tchomanga) is a young anthropologist who is working on the Dakar-Djibouti mission, her research taking her from the IFAN Museum in Dakar to the Musée de l'Homme in Paris. Seeking to push the limits of her discipline, she reconstructs the medical prescription box given to the original expedition members and takes the drugs herself. In the grip of the narcotics' psychedelic side effects, Betty becomes haunted by a recently discovered family archive. Reflecting on identity, cultural appropriation, the transference of memory through objects, and subjectivity vs. objective classification.	North American Premiere & Wavelengths

<p><i>Yakuza Apocalypse</i> by Takashi Miike (Japan)</p>	<p>Japanese cinematic extremist Takashi Miike returns to his gonzo roots with this mind melter that finds room for vampires, gangsters, earthquakes, volcanoes, martial arts, and even a yakuza knitting circle. Kamiura (Lilly Franky) is not your typical yakuza boss; he's a kindly man who dotes on the locals in his 'hood' and extends life-saving loans to small businesses in order to keep the big corporations out. But when a Django-esque gunslinger in 17th century Spanish garb comes to town, Kamiura is exposed for what he truly is: a vampire!</p>	<p>North American Premiere & Midnight Madness</p>
<p><i>September of Shiraz</i> by Wayne Blair (United States of America/Iran)</p>	<p>This film is an adaptation of the critically acclaimed debut novel by Iranian American author Dalia Sofer, about a secular Jewish family caught up in the maelstrom of the 1979 Iranian Revolution. (Adrien Brody, Salma Hayek)</p>	<p>World Premiere & Gala Presentation</p>

Source: Festival Program 2015

4.3.4 Perspectives on Curating the Festival Experience

The festival experience is situated in the unique environment that the film festival provides for its stakeholders. The environment is not only about screening films, but about how people are invited to engage with the dynamism of cinema and how that emerges within the space and time of the festival event. The interviewees opined that

TIFF is always on the lookout for new ways to increase festival attendance by engaging the audience and boosting awareness. This is fundamental to their understanding in curating the festival, that by building a strong and engaged film community around the festival, as well be a part of the global conversation around film.

This concept of curating the festival experience focuses on the other aspect of the festival programming. It builds on the broader outlook of the festival organization. This was aptly expressed by an interviewee:

You know we have a stated mission, which is to transform the way people see the world through film. I think that transformation can happen in many different ways, and in many different directions. Our mission is to try to use this artform that we love to take people to new places. There is a kind of aim to transform; we feel that through film you can expand your worldview. You can connect with people, you can see the world in a way that almost no other artform can.

The interviewees' perspectives are derived to understand how they facilitate the creation of a framework that is uniquely linked to the space and time of the festival event. Of interest is how the needs of stakeholders are balanced to create the experiences that pay homage to the cinematic muse. TIFF with its multiplicity of stakeholders, their agendas and ideas are given consideration in the curation of the festival experience as highlighted in the previous section with the plurality of voices and the duality of programming. Notably, for the organizers the stakeholders' interests provide insights on how the interactions amongst field participants (Bossa, 2013; Lampel & Meyer, 2008;

Meyer, 2008) will emerge within the spatial context of the festival event. The objective of the curatorial aspect of the festival the interviewees noted is to foster engagement and interactions as articulated in the following excerpt:

By showcasing or sparking discussions around TIFFF films or by sharing industry-related content, TIFFF engages its passionate community, attracts new audiences, sparks new conversations, and keeps the festival top of mind throughout the year. For example, TIFFF programmers are always searching for great films around the world as potential feature films. This makes for great, rich content to share with film advocates and among their community (www.tiff.net).

The interviewees' perspectives are captured through the following: melding the coincidence of circumstances and the mosaic of access, engagement, and meaning-making.

4.3.4.1 Melding the Coincidence of Circumstances

The curatorial vision for the festival is a melding of constituents, which includes the public, industry, press, and corporate partners. It provides an opportunity for engagement in the culture of the extraordinary (Quintin, 2009) over a given space and time, which is considered the lure of the festival. Building on the culture of the extraordinary, each stakeholder brings a different expectation to the festival and has a sense of what he or she wants. As one interviewee noted, the stakeholders are at the festival to see the best works and the most important people. However, the melding of the stakeholders is always a balancing act for the curatorial aspect of the festival, given that each has differing expectations. This is foremost in the minds of the organizers as noted by an interviewee, they are aware that each one of those constituents is demanding a small slice, parts of the festival, a certain portion of the seats. Being mindful of that curating the festival experience implies maintaining balance and harmony.

The melding of circumstances augment the aspiration of the organizers of the festival in curating the kind of inclusive festival that delivers an audience, press, industry and a compelling reason to come to the festival. The articulation of that vision helps to shape the context within which the stunning artform of the moving image, which is central to the event, is the premise upon which they are able to provide richness to the festival experience. The interviewees had a collective understanding of how essential this is to their function, as expressed below:

Conceptually, how we want people to think of the festival and experience is programming and it is not strictly film programming in a sense; but it is more about the vibe we want to create and present. We try to create spaces that are conducive to making connections, having people meet, having a playful element to them. TIFF on a whole can be seen as a very serious cultural institution, which it definitely is, but we always want to maintain an element of fun to what we are doing.

The festival organizers aimed to attract the most vibrant talents, given that the focus was not just the screening of films, but with the actors in attendance. There is documentation around the films that gave context to material for both archival purposes and for those stakeholders who needed a deeper engagement beyond the films. One of the key features in the curation of the festival experience is the post-screening Question and Answer (Q&A) segment, which is designed for the audience to engage with film professionals, including, but not limited to, filmmakers, actors and directors. The interviewees noted that, the audiences are engaging and the organizers want them to be a part of those conversations such as *Q&As* and *In Conversation*....and this emerges through curating great content to enhance the festival experience. This feature of the curation provides both filmmakers and audiences an opportunity to build a social and cultural understanding within the ecological context from which the films emerge. This aspect of the festival gives credence to the festival experience and reinforces the character of the festival and an imagined community (Jordanova &

Cheung, 2010) that experiences the festival in that space and time. The following perspective from an interviewee underscored this:

The audience drives the public programming and they also drives the business side of the event. Because it is access those audiences that the press and industry are after. We are very unique in that way, because some of the other top-tier festivals, you know, can be or is [the one that comes to mind for most people] purely an industry event. So we feel like we owe our audience everything, because it is their generous and warm response, along with their knowledge of cinema that has really allowed us to build it to what we have become.

The interviewees highlighted that the audience at the festival are very curious and film literate, which makes for an interesting encounter for industry and the press, given the diversity of the festival's host city. "*The industry wants to be in the room when there is a screening with the public, even though there is press and industry screenings*" noted an interviewee. That plays a role in how the curation takes place to engender the type of festival where audience, industry, and press interact, and that is where a lot of the energy is placed to curate the festival experience. There was consensus amongst the interviewees that a filmmaker coming to the festival wants all those three to be present – press, industry and the audience. TIFFF has to capacity to bring those elements together through curating engagement to transform the experience for stakeholders as highlighted by an interviewee:

knowing it has those transformative moments on screen with the films, those transformative moments on stage, interviews and the talks; it has those transformative moments on the street with the various art installations and other moments of engagement. When the festival is able to curate and deliver all three things, it brings the vision to life and that makes the festival compelling.

4.3.4.2 The Mosaic of Access, Engagement and Meaning Making

The aim of the festival curation is to create wide-open access by curating experiences and activations for the multitude of voices; and programming during the festival so that constituents have access to the activities and activations. Through this approach, the organizers are able to contribute to increasing the knowledge of cinema through free programming and activations that brings excitement to the non-film-screening aspect of the festival experience, such as Festival Street. This is a pedestrian-friendly corridor that features live music, screenings, food trucks, patios, virtual reality (VR) experiences, and installations by corporate partners to interact with festival goers, film lovers, and cinephiles.

Notably, the aforementioned builds on the vision and mission of the festival and how the festival brings to the fore 'live moments' for corporate partners who want engagement with the audience. The fourth element of the festival - corporate partners – comes to the festival organization for the same reasons: those curatorial goals of access and engagement with the audience, even though there is a profit motive at the heart of the corporate partnerships. As noted by an interviewee, “they want to reach eyeballs, they want to reach hearts and minds, and develop customers.” The curatorial team translates this aspect of the festival to the fourth element by articulating what defining moments mean in the festival experience. They work together in the spirit of collaboration to ensure that there is something special that happens at the festival that reveals how defining moments are shared throughout the film festival event. A powerful example was illuminated with a world-renowned major corporate partner that helped the festival enhance its inclusiveness and transformational outlook, by bringing both actors and filmmakers together from various parts of the world:

We do engage with our audience to try and help them transform themselves

and you are in for that, you know what I mean. And we've had some great experiences where this works well. Apple came on board and we had a series of photographs and videos of the artists who were in town, and we made sure it was everybody; it was not just Ryan Gosling and Nicole Kidman, but also our filmmakers from Nigeria. All got these incredible portraits done and they were pushed out around the world through our channels. All the filmmakers, all the actors who came in that were part of what they did and it helped us fulfill our mission to be inclusive, to be international, and to be as global as we can.

The festival, as an interviewee noted:

It is clearly about serving as a lightbox that shines out beyond the appreciation of cinema. It provides thoughtful curation that utilizes the festival's spotlight to showcase both local and global ambassadors as subject experts through conversations and engagement that bring a global vantage point.

Within the context of the programming framework, the festival organizers pay respect to those who have contributed to the world of cinema, film culture and, industry by hosting *In Conversation With...* This is a series of on-stage conversations and intimate discussions that are moderated by an industry expert and interspersed with highlights and a Q&A segment. The program provides the audience with a rare opportunity to hear, share, and engage with industry luminaries and celebrities. This represents the ultimate collaboration and celebration of cinema, through partnerships and programming that creates a medium for engagement with stakeholders within the framework of the film festival event. As highlighted by an interviewee:

We are at a beautiful moment right now, where like humanitarian efforts seem to be merging with the popular idea. A few years ago it was hard for me to sell that idea, now everyone is interested. We are in this pretty crucial moment, it isn't new, but anyone who's been paying attention to all the imbalances it's not new, but to people who haven't, and this is new.

The interviewee's perspective underscored some issues that were at the forefront of the festival, such as the underrepresentation of women in filmmaking, child soldiers, and intersectionality of politics. Giving context to those issues within the festival event, by framing conversations that create participation, engagement and meaning for those participants in the emergent festival experience, Accordingly, Nichols (1994) opined that the festival is designed to serve as a window through which the audiences may be able to glimpse for the first time important aspects of the film culture. He further noted that, programmers through the festival event are able to focus on how the festival experience inflects [verbalizes] and construct meanings. This the audience does, by ascribing meaning to the events in a continuous succession of collective exploration and celebration of the unknown. The interviewees noted that the curatorial considerations of the festival can provide an outlet for the exhibition of films, the engagement of audiences, and a place of exchange for industry. They help to engender an atmosphere, while at the same time maintaining harmony and being able to provide transformational experiences. This emerges in the following excerpt:

The balance is how do I do right by my internal colleagues and how do I use that moment to be more than one thing. So even if we needed to bring this academy award winning scriptwriter to let us talk about you as a human being and [explore] it is like what are some of the causes you are interested in, what are the things that you are worried about; and how do we inform the audience as well.

The film festival provides an outlet for the exploration of meaning-making through various event settings, activities, and programming. The notion of how the curators build on this engagement through the festival experience to enrich and enliven the festival event is by recognizing and appreciating that the distinct and valued perspectives. These all are aspects of the currency that the festival brings to the moment, the space, and time in which the 'live' event occurs. This underscores the important role film festivals play in interviewees' learning ecology and the collective sense-

making processes, whereby individuals and groups interact to create social reality, which becomes organizational reality (Cabon, 2012; Vilhjálmsdóttir, 2011; Nadavulakere, 2008).

Interestingly, this aspect of the curation does shine the spotlight on what it means to be thoughtful in relation to the audience and curation. The recognition is to constantly be mindful, despite programmers and festival directors having blind spots. Films can open up people's minds, engage the audience, and add to the conversation:

To me it's two things that may seem a bit opposite but they are connected. One is wide-open access, so that's why things [activations] like *Festival Street* have been important; and also our *Cinematheque* programming during the festival where we are showing classics from world cinema, often newly struck titles from archival prints. The price is free, so everybody has access to that and that is a way to kind of increase your knowledge of cinema; and see some of the classics in a festival context with that excitement and there's no charge for it at all.

This reinforces within the context of the festival experience, as Nichols (1994) espoused, that the aim is to “recover differences and similarities through the discovery of a common humanity, a family of a human, spanning time and space, culture and history, along with other forms of pleasure that reside in the strangeness of the experience itself.”

The organizers' emphasis on understanding the significance of the experience of the festival to its constituents, and the purpose of providing the audiences with opportunities to enjoy films in a communal space is essential to their curation. However, the business side, although not always talked about, is thoughtfully augmented into the festival atmosphere. Film festivals do act as a distribution mechanism and allow for the recognition of the uniqueness of different cultures and specific filmmakers, while affirming the underlying qualities of an international cultural exchange (De Valck & Loist, 2009).

The cosmopolitan feel to TIFF and its celebration of film are essential. Nonetheless, organizers keep in mind the business side of the festival (from sponsors proposing their products and services for activations [presentations] on *Festival Street*, David Pecaut Square, or Roy Thomson Hall, to facilitating the industry conference) as corollary to the overall festival experience. For instance, the interviewees noted that the TIFF Industry Conference provides an opportunity to meet some of the most influential and interesting people in the film business. It allows them to make connections and explore common issues with those crucial decision-makers who have unique insights.

However, as a non-competitive international film festival with an unofficial market, TIFF is still able to curate one of its strongest features within the festival environment; ‘buying and selling’ films and still affirm their identity. The organizers facilitate the industry delegates from around the world that love and admire the festival for its experience, which allows for business to be done conspicuously (unofficial market). This creates and fosters a platform for them to see great films with an exceptionally film literature audience. This is a key strength of the festival and an FCE feature that amplifies the festival experience and what it offers from a curatorial perspective, see the highlights below from an interviewee:

I think it is very organically like business is happening alongside this festival, conscious decision to not just structure the business into it as an official market capacity has really allowed us to keep that character, to keep that audience focused and you know all the business happens, but it happens naturally and organically. When talking about a vision for the whole event and in creating the whole event that is one of the pieces that always come to mind.

Hence, the balance for which the organizers strive, in the curatorial aspect of the festival, is to maintain an atmosphere that is relaxed elegance and relaxed business, which they believe is essential to its identity and the festival experience.

The process of curating the festival experience is to foster meaning-making and the creation that emerges from film festivals as they bring together varied experiences with the multiple constituents and their divergent sets of values and interests. The curation of the festival experience accentuates the dynamism of the festival. It is in the festival experience, the celebration of the milestone and the evolution of the festival (both within a historical and contemporary contexts) contribute to its status and reputation as one of the world's leading film festivals.

The curation of the festival experience according to Bossa (2013) fosters the institutional logic of the festival to “enable participants to promote ideas about the way work in the field ‘ought to be done’ and anchoring them to moral ideologies” and they also “serve as opportunities that enable shared cognitive sense-making” (p. 102). Thus, cognitive sense-making enables a group to share common knowledge and ideas in hopes of influencing the field itself through what Bossa (2013) terms “the organizing principles and practice guidelines for field participants - individually and collectively”. This logic, he further asserts, “stands as the element that structures how the various actors act within the event and the field. This is rendered possible thanks to shared cognitive sense-making within the field-configuring event’s participants that the curation of the festival experience captures for the festival understudy, as expressed below:

TIFF is a global platform that celebrates and gives so many amazing voices the ability to share their stories. The diversity of the programming, the energy of the crowds, the future that many of our directors, writers, producers, and other creative cats go on to have is an on-going source of inspiration for our next generation of filmmakers to submit to TIFF. From Barry Jenkins to David Cronenberg premiering some of their most affecting, works; each year the festival evolves and inspires burgeoning and established filmmakers to premiere their films at the festival (www.tiff.net | www.notable.com)

While film festivals play a vital role for filmmakers and their genre of films, there are other key stakeholders for whom, without the festival, there would be no film. Hence, the curatorial aspect of festival programming fosters impact for the film festival and aid in representing a significant facet of creating an atmosphere for the appreciation of film and the variety of events that helps to pay homage to the cinematic muse. This essentially makes the curation of the festival experience a key feature of the festival with the numerous events that are organized with the sole objective of facilitating these actors to interact with other industry members and exchange projects, ideas, films and opinions. Through its various sidebars, galas, conferences, markets, enumerable banquets and parties, according to Bossa (2013) “it becomes the ultimate network of ‘actors’” (p.102); this is an internal and intrinsic feature of a film festival such as TIFF.

Through the festival’s ability to gather this pool of industry members, TIFF answers to one of the most important requirements of the field configuring event characteristic, that of assembling in one location actors from diverse geographies and organizations. In fact, with the number of participants for TIFF, it represents one of the best, if not the best example of how field-configuring events are structured as spaces for interactions between various ‘field actors’ (Bossa, 2013; Lampel & Meyer, 2008; Ruling, 2008).



Image 6 – TIFF's Festival Street

5. DISCUSSIONS, ANALYSES AND IMPLICATIONS

The responses from the interviewees uncovered multiple perspectives on the themes for the research and their contributions are representative of the conceptual underpinnings highlighted. In this section I present a discussion of the key findings as they relate to major research questions with gleanings from the related literature.

5.1 Question One

What is the role of programming and the elements that impact the film festival experience?

The exploration of programming within the context of the research emerges from the understanding that film festivals as phenomena occupy a special place in almost all cultures. According to Rastegar (2012) film festival professionals shape the atmosphere and identity of the festivals by utilizing programming to mediate between the films that are selected for the festival and the audience. This they did, by framing the conditions within which audiences come together, and “how they see and engage with the screen cultures” (p. 313). Thereby, reinforcing the crucial role programming plays as a discursive tool (DeValck, 2007; Genkova, 2010); that is an essential aspect of the film festival and is fundamentally important to its institutional logic. It enables the festival to meet the challenge of credibility as a viable cultural and social medium that enhances the prestige of film festival programmers ‘as guardians of cinema as art’ (Bosma, 2010; DeValck, 2007).

Programming, as opined by Genkova (2010), “involves research, selection, presentation and contextualization of a selection of films, selected by an individual or group according to the scope of

the [festival] institution the programmer is associated with or according to the theme of the programme at hand” (p. 14). At the heart of the festival experience and its dynamism, is film festival programming and the elements that foster meaning, give impetus to films, and augment the audience’s imagination, ultimately giving character to the festival (De Valck & Soeteman; Nichols, 1994). According to scholars such as Lee and Stringer (2012), Genkova (2010) and Iordanova (2009), film festival programming is a multifaceted as well as a dynamic element in the film festival phenomenon. It encompasses a range of skills and tasks that help shape and define the specific identity of the film festival event.

Programming for film festivals is done in relation to the festival's curatorial vision, mission, and *raison d’etre* (Czach, 2004) - fictions, documentaries, short films, animation, human rights, or environmental films. Institutional theory is useful in understanding how film festivals as organizations, are shaped by the dynamics amongst stakeholders. It does so, by helping highlighting the issues that emerge with competing interests amongst the stakeholder and the activities that bring legitimacy to film festivals as institutions. Scholars, such as Bossa (2013), Nadavulakere (2008) and DiMaggio and Powell (1991), opined that emphasis on the importance of the social and cultural aspects of film festivals as organizations is key to their emergence. They infer that the issues that arises within the festival organization are interpreted, negotiated, and impact organizational fields.

Film festival programming is given consideration in the context of the festival edition being explored. According to scholars such as Rastegar (2012) and Lee and Stringer (2012), programming is viewed as a negotiated outcome of a multilayered acknowledgement of the surrounding environment and key stakeholders. TIFFF attracts various stakeholders, each with their own approach to valuing film and De Valck (et al., 2016) highlighted that:

...critics judge films based on their technical and narrative mastery, often referencing an established historical canon of cinema. Distributors hunt for films that will attract large audiences and turn a profit in the marketplace and agents look for new directional acting talent to represent (p. 183).

For the filmmaker, the festival and its programming are keys to success and exposure. To engender that reality and get the exposure, some filmmakers and their teams they look to national film boards and agencies that provide marketing and communication services that put the filmmaker in contact with film festival organizers. The findings highlighted however, that it is through the crucial role that programming plays that connections are made with filmmakers, audiences and industry professionals. This reinforces the power of programming and its discursive function that can impact the life of a film and the career of a filmmaker.

The film festival experience and programming are intimately connected to the issue of reception, and its influence on how festivals showcase cinema; it is essentially how it accomplishes building an audience and engaging the community. Film festivals, through reception and programming, utilize culture as a platform and as a strategy to navigate social and political issues (such as environmental, segregation, access, and inequality). Hence, film festivals like TIFF contextually both as an organization and as a festival, embodies the dynamism amongst the stakeholders giving considerations to the local, national and international spheres in which competing interests negotiate over competing interests and issues within the event itself. The festival organizers are very aware of this, and posited that there is the need to have a huge sense of accountability and responsibility to their stakeholders. To this end, the festival organizers curate the festival to serve as an event that explores how they can optimally create an experience through programming practices for the stakeholders. This gives impetus to the cultural and social aspects of the film festival as organizations, within the context of institutional theory (Meyer, 2008, Nadavulakere, 2008).

They allow for TIFFF to identify communities of organization and to help create meaning through the programming processes and the interplay amongst stakeholders. While scholars have begun to explore the economic and creative dimensions of film festivals, programming is an important area about which little scholarly research has yet been published (Bossa, 2013; Lee & Stringer, 2012; De Valck et al., 2016). Film festival programming is an understated element of film festivals, within the context of the festival understudy – a non-competitive international film festival.

Czach (2004) as opined that it can be appreciated, that festival programming plays an important role in determining a film's success as well as the festival's reputation. Hence, the programming process that is envisioned for the festival by the organizers and programmers is focused on the creation of pathways to highlight, promote, and contextualize a film (see Tables 6 & 7). It is essential to the kind and type of festival event that they want to engender to foster the festival experience that will emerge. It is film programming that plays a key role in facilitating film as art within the film festival which impacts the descriptive and creative aspects of the film, and also frames the meaning and the reception of the film itself as highlighted in Table 6.

This aspect of the programming as opined by Rastegar (2012) and De Valck (2009) is done through a programming expert who actively engages in film selections. This programming expert brings focus to the context and identity of the festival by giving considerations to the artistic and creative contributions of the films submitted through programming process. According to Grunwell & Ha (2008), what filmmakers look for in a festival is reputation, press coverage, awards, networking, film screenings, views by film distributors, and secure distribution. For filmmakers, the impact of having their film selected, screened and securely distributed are value-added features that complement the competitions, awards, prizes, and the overall festival experience. Hence, TIFFF (through the

democracy to programming, plurality of voices, and the duality of programming) provides an opportunity and a platform to showcase works from more diverse filmmakers, underrepresented groups, and regions of the world, which are key elements to the festival experience.

According to Genkova (2010) there are no universally practiced or uniformly accepted programming models, however a festival will follow a model that is tailored and works for their purpose and scope. Notably, the findings suggest that programming has evolved as the core aspect of a film festival's presentation of the best in cinematic productions, distribution, and exhibition through the edition of the event under consideration. The programming decision-making mechanism of TIFFF is a participatory process that involves an "ensemble of programmers with various interests segmented into areas of expertise by either genre or geography" (p. 24-25).

The programming ensemble plays a crucial role in the success of the film festival as a creative cultural organization and as a field-configuring event. The process is further guided by the approaches that encompasses submissions by filmmakers, producers or directors, based on the film festival's regulations; or be solicited by programmers; or the films pass through screening committees (genres, regions and thematic) previewers or programmers. Contextually, TIFFF as highlighted in analysis of programming utilizes the aforementioned approaches, amongst others, in its film selection process to program the festival.

The findings of the research highlights that the showcasing of films selected by the programming team is either thematic or aesthetic and then presented in clusters or subsections (see Table 8). From the lens of film festival research, festival programming aims to make a distinction in the annual global film production by adding value and cultural capital through competition (*Platform*),

prizes (*Best Canadian Feature Film*) and awards (*Grosch People's Choice Award*) that are key features of the film festival event (See Table 6) and the festival experience. The idea that film festival programming provides a mechanism for individuals from diverse social organizations to interact and take actions within the framework of the festival itself, infers that characteristically TIFFF is a field-configuring event. The findings of this research support the viewpoint that the structuring mechanisms (transorganizational structure) of film festival programming facilitate information exchange, collective sense-making, and the generation of social and reputational resources (Lampel & Meyer, 2008) for filmmakers (both at the festival and beyond), as exemplified by films in the forthcoming paragraph and TIFFF's Film Circuit.

Within the context of films submitted to TIFFF, the programmers are tasked with identifying, selecting, writing profiles and screening them for the programme and the audiences. The related programming activities while done autonomously by the programmers, contribute to the collective sense-making to foster exposure and validate the artistic voices for the films in the festival. The strength of TIFFF's lies in the festival organization and their mosaic of programmers, through which it engenders and enriches the festival experience that emerges for its cinephilic audience, cineaste guests and adoring fans. This allows for the festival being situated in Toronto to give recognition to the city that has "always been the best place for cinephiles to connect with the stars they love" (Festival Style, 2016, p. 57).

Furthermore, engendering the festival's ability to be focused and "dedicated to presenting the best of international and Canadian cinema and creating transformational experiences for film lovers" (www.tiff.net). Here the programmers have a platform for "providing a transformative cinematic

experience” (Festival Programme, 2012) which remains central to the festival identity (Lee & Stringer, 2012) and resonate with its global audience.

The findings of the research espouse that programming as a key component of film festivals. However, it is the programmers who identify and give voices, and share storytelling practices by shining a light on representative films in the festival line-up (De Valck et al., 2016). Through their curatorial endeavours that would not necessarily appeal to the Hollywood mainstream and industry professionals, TIFFF provides an alternative platform for those films, such as (see Table 7) include *12 Years A Slave* (2013), from the United States of America (USA), *Slumdog Millionaire* (2008), from India, and *Precious* (2009) from USA. In a demonstrable manner, TIFFF’s use of the democratization of programming to build audiences for certain kind of works that may not be big budgeted blockbusters (as highlighted earlier); and provides multiple platforms to showcase them. From the perspectives of the interviewees, the practice that is modeled by TIFFF as a non-competitive film festival are the democratization of programming and plurality of voices approaches to become more diverse and inclusive.

Within the context of the film festival studies and interviewees’ perspectives, the programming process contributes significantly to the building of audiences and communities with shared backgrounds and affiliations, as well as between the festival and its multiplicity of stakeholders. The benefits of programming is its duality, where programmers have the responsibility of programming both for the audience and industry stakeholders, thereby creating parallel festivals to enhance the event’s ability to gather audiences around role resources that are cultural, social, and capital. The findings suggest that through the programming process, the festival organization is able to influence the setting of priorities and standards. This emerges through programming events and creating

spaces for meaningful exchange and discourse for stakeholders during the festival event, thereby giving contextual relevance to their experiences.

The findings from the literature reviewed and the interviewees support that TIFF's duality of programming - the coexistence of constituents and through its curatorial influence - is able to deliver experiences to the different stakeholders within the broader festival event. Thereby enriching the festival experience within the structures of the curatorial framework of the festival itself, and serving primarily as a networking hub and space for social interactions amongst stakeholders (De Valck et al., 2016; Rastegar, 2012).

The findings highlight that through its festival programming mechanism, TIFF is able to facilitate the development of modes of storytelling and cinematic styles which reorients (a) how space is created in the festival, (b) how they actively give shape to film culture, and (c) the festival experiences. With reference to the literature reviewed and the perspectives from the interviewees, the following emerges as the key elements that impact the festival experience: thoughtful curation, strong partnerships, and nurtured relationships (De Valck et al., 2016; Rastegar, 2012; Rouff, 2012).

5.1.1 Thoughtful Curation

With the sheer number of stakeholders and the complexities associated with organizing, programming and curating the festival event, thoughtful curation plays an instrumental role in the success of TIFFF as a cultural organization. Thoughtful curation is an aesthetic practice that focuses on programming moments for interaction and engagement that are non-committal, where there is fluidity and observation. In delivering the multiplicity of activities (Lee & Stringer, 2012, Genkova, 2010) for the festival, the team of festival programmers and staff work in relation to a number of factors that thematically impact the festival organization, film festival programming, and the experience as a collective whole. As opined by scholars Lee & Springer (2012), “if a festival wishes to remain up to date and relevant, it needs to position its programming content in relation to what its rivals are currently doing.” Of interest however, TIFFF is the only non-competitive film festival in the world’s top five film festivals and the only one that is audience-centered, so it does not follow the conventional approach to its programming or overall festival curation.

Notably, the audience remains a key element for TIFFF’s success, while balancing the wants and needs of other stakeholders and curating a festival environment that harmoniously creates engagement, excitement and experiences. However, within the context of the global film festival circuit and given the number of films being made, the programmers have a crucial role to play in identifying, as highlighted by De Valck et al. (2016), the groundswells of filmmaking styles and storytelling practices: shining a light on representative films in the programming line-up for the festival.

In planning for the significant milestone, TIFF as a festival organization in creating ‘*defining moments*’ throughout the festival, the findings highlighted that it is the strength of their mission - *transforming the way people see the world, through film* - that gives them guardianship over the festival event. The festival through the key aspects of its audience-centeredness, plurality of voices, melding of the coincidence of circumstances and the mosaic of access, engagement and meaning making, enriches the festival experience.

Building on its mission in particular, the idea that the festival wants to transform the way people see the world through film, happens through information, interaction, engagement, education, entertainment and fun. This is reified throughout the 11-day festival event, but also year-round through generation of social and reputation resources (Lampel & Meyer, 2008) such as the Film Circuit. Furthermore, this is done also by focusing the spotlight to showcase both homegrown talent (*Canadian Top Ten*), global ambassadors (*In Conversation With...*), subject experts (*Masters*), people with whom the festival works (*City to City*) and those who work for the festival (*TIFF Cinematheque*), they are able to creatively curate the programming that honoured the history, emboldens discovery, and embraces the new and emerging opportunities in film culture and world cinema.

The launch of *Platform* (the new juried section that spotlights the next generation of cinema visionaries) and *Primetime* (serial storytelling: television in its artistic renaissance) during the 40th anniversary edition of the festival. The renewal of *Festival Street* a pedestrian promenade featuring curated art works across multiple disciplines, pop-up performances, a music main stage, food trucks and relaxed seating areas, adjacent to the TIFF Bell Lightbox that was accessible to the general public and festival goers. The aforementioned are examples of enhancing the festival experience through thoughtful curation. The festival programmers definitively shaped the atmosphere and

identity of the festival by mediating between the editorial and curatorial aspects of the festival (DeValck et al, 2016; Rouff, 2012). The value that thoughtful curation of the festival brings to the festival experience, lies not only in the films that are selected (while important and at the heart of the festival event itself), but in the context within which stakeholders come together, engage, and create meaning in the 'liveliness of the moment' (Quintin, 2009).

De Valck et al. (2016) and Czach (2004) highlighted that while a myriad of films are being made by people who are historically marginalized within the global film industry, they may be selected for thematic or identity-based festivals such as LGBTQ, gender or ethnic festivals. However, the industry based film festivals are not selecting these films in proportion to their rate of production. The findings highlighted from the interviewees an understanding of the challenges and realization that it is a matter of balancing the demands of the stakeholders while programming films for the festival. The festival's mission is all-encompassing in the curatorial process as referenced earlier in the subsection - the mosaic of access, engagement and meaning making; and being a non-competitive film festival it gives the organizers more latitude to respond the challenges. However, there are limitations imposed by notions of taste and aesthetics operating within the curatorial process, in addition to practices of film festivals, as opined by Rastegar (2012) that require more critical attention that goes beyond the scope of this research.

The perspectives of the interviewees and the findings of the research highlighted that the organizers embraced the 40th anniversary edition of the festival as a *'Defining moment since 1976'* through thoughtful curation that was committed to the discovery of the new, rethinking of the old, and providing the opportunity to sense where the tide is turning in world cinema. The festival is organized to highlight the editorial and curatorial aspects that were designed around diversity, access

and the future to enrich the festival experience. The festival organizers' sensibilities were at a fever pitch through the fundamental belief that doing more for the audience and giving context to the central artform provided richness to the festival experience. The aforementioned elements emboldened the festival's mandate to be more inclusive, international and to have a global impact and amplify the festival experience.

5.1.2 Strong Partnerships and Nurtured Relationships

The curatorial decisions for the festival are inextricably linked to its audience-centeredness and, building on that, the partnership investments and relationships forged by festival organizers. For TIFF to foster its continued successes and maintain its formidable presence in the film industry, with its strategic niche that sets it apart from other festivals, the interviewees articulated that strong partnerships and nurtured relationships are essential. The festival, as a cultural organization with its audience-centered agenda, is approached from the stakeholder element in the events with the multiplicity of stakeholders and the multiple events contextually culminates into the festival event and the resulting festival experience. Stakeholder relations need to be managed to ensure that the festival is anchored within the audience-centered festival landscape (the festival's institutional logic). Film festivals depend on stakeholders and the need to manage their relations is a crucial aspect to the successful functioning of the event (DeValck & Loist, 2009), given the various demands, expectations and the impact on the planning, management and execution of the festival and the event experience (Nichols, 1994).

Contextually, TIFF utilizes its most prominent feature for the festival event to secure partners and intentionally expand the partnerships into relationships for the festival organization – the audience.

This is enhanced through the stakeholder elements with their own agendas, given the various demands, expectations, and impact on the planning, management, and execution of the film festival and the emergent festival experience (De Valck & Loist, 2009; Nichols, 1994).

The temporal organizational context of the festival and its structure, with the multiplicity of events, makes the festival a very special meeting space for stakeholders, representing a wide range of interests and demands, and the nature and type of festival experience that emerges. The festival organizers have to ensure that, as partnerships grows with the number of constituents that come to the festival looking for more ‘real estate’ (public, media, industry, and corporate) that the audience is not left out. The festival organizers concurred that it is their responsibility and job to ‘fight to protect that space for the public [audience]’, as they are the lifeblood of the organization.

Nonetheless, stakeholders have come to understand the importance of the audience in a really important way. According to scholars such as Bossa (2013), Nadavulakere (2008), Lampel and Meyer (2008) and Meyer (2008) espouse that when competing actors in organizational fields are able to collectively understand interpretations (collective sensemaking) amongst field participants in a recognized area of an institution’s life this is a characteristic of a field-configuring event.

The interviewees recognized that it is through the strong partnerships and nurtured relationships that the festival’s achievement is possible. TIFF’s team, in the curation of the festival and the attendant experience, understands the fundamentals of relationship building and the emergent outcomes. Notably, be it with the media, industry, filmmakers, corporate partners or the audience, each serves a range of different functions in the festival event and the experience. Highlighting the festival’s connected relationship to the audience, an interviewee espoused that “it is part of the

pledge and commitment to the audience that they get to see films early in their lifecycle, while ensuring that they are meaningful and interesting.”

Furthermore, the programming process involves balancing relationships to ensure that through the plurality of voices, the selected films augment the audience expectations and what is being represented in the festival from their perspective. TIFF values the relationships with filmmakers (who make the films the festival screens), the industry partners (who have championed the festival from its humble beginnings) and the volunteers (who give tirelessly and comprise much of the public face of the festival organization). The interviewees espoused that the democratization of programming fosters and engenders the process as to why relationships are important. They underscore the reasons the team spends a lot of time travelling to meet filmmakers and industry partners. The aim is to learn of film projects in the making, being completed, and made available for screening from different regions of the world during the festival.

According to scholars such as Bossa (2013) and Lampel and Meyer (2008) they opined that at the cognitive level field members gain awareness of the field in its totality, and acquire identity as field members of a given social or professional group. This results in the numerous actors who play a vital role in the circulation of films on the global market gaining knowledge of the various films from around the world, including up-and-coming national cinemas. The importance of TIFF is emboldened in the distribution and networking of film knowledge, through the networks created by the assembling of various field actors which represents a critical nodal point within the film festival circuit and an icon in global film culture. This also reinforces that the strong partnerships and nurtured relationships cannot be underestimated, for they are immeasurable to the festival’s global

presence and identity. The organizers emphasized that they also develop working relationships with other film festival partners that are key factors in the success of the festival.

One of the benefits that emerge from the strong partnerships and nurtured relationships for TIFF is the establishment of a key feature of the festival experience, the unofficial marketplace which is a central component in its role as a field-configuring event within global film culture. Bossa (2013) and Ruling (2009) opined that both conceptual threads converge through film culture and film knowledge, creating distribution platform within the festival event. For TIFF, through this convergence it has evolved from a festival showcasing films to its audiences and now to industry actors over the years, thus, creating a platform for information exchange and collective sensemaking through a more collaborative role. TIFF's active participation in global film distribution, has cemented its role as a crucial nodal point for international films in global film culture as a field-configuring event.

This aspect of the curation is centred on a network of interrelated and interdependent partners, relationships, actions, and activities, despite that, screening films remains at the heart of the curatorial team's primary function. In the analysis of this key element, Nichols (1994) asserts that, the film festival affords the stakeholders the ideal opportunity 'to enjoy the pleasures of the film's imaginary signifiers and the reverie in the fascination of the strange, the differences that persist beyond the moment', and even though the festival takes place in the here and now. Within the concept of field-configuring events as opined by Schübler (et al, 2015), Bossa (2013) and Lampel & Meyer (2008), the elements of strong partnerships and nurtured relationships help us to understand that film festival are unique events. They blend community, discussions, and exchange in the pursuit of artistic excellence, aiming to acquire new or deeper knowledge within the context of the festival

experience (See Table 6). These elements are essential to the film festivals, given that they can shape or subvert agendas and mutually influence the curation of the film festival that defines the events and impacts the type of festival experience that emerges. Furthermore, they embolden and enrich the festival's reputation and status, thereby reinforcing its consecrating power as the only non-competitive international film festival situated in the world's top five global film festivals (Cabon, 2012; Ruling & Pedersen, 2010; Ruling, 2009).



Image 7 – Entrance to TIFF Bell Lightbox

5.2 Question Two

How does an international film festival acquire its identity and reputation?

From a multidimensional perspective, film festivals are tasked to foster developmental trends and promote the rich cinematic traditions and cultural identities. They do so by reporting on contemporary film culture and showcasing culturally relevant films to an international public that allows for the recognition of the uniqueness of different cultures, interests of the distributors and the other stakeholders. As a complex phenomenon (De Valck, 2007), they help to validate the film industry through their contribution to global film culture. Beyond the appreciation of cinema, film festivals are a forum for espousing the best in films, not just from a local perspective, but a global vantage point. Within a contemporary context, they represent the ultimate celebration of cinema, both as a mass medium and as a collection of creative texts that engaged participants within a larger global framework (Chan, 2011; De Valck & Loist, 2009).

TIFF's success as one of the world's leading international film festivals is heavily weighted towards two intertwined phenomena: the claim to being the world's biggest audience centered festival and the audience's film savviness. According to Grunwell & Ha (2008), for a film festival to be successful, it is important to establish a presence in the film industry and develop a strategic niche that sets it apart from others. The findings highlighted that what defines the festival more than anything else is the audience. This became a key element in the curation of the festival's identity, its measurable success, and a significant selling point in its venerable ability to deliver film-literate audiences to filmmakers, producers, distributors and sponsors.

Richard & Wilson (2007) opined that creativity has emerged as an additional positioning device, following the large number of cities using culture to position themselves. Film festivals like TIFF utilize film as the central artform – film; contextualizing it and providing richness to the festival experience through the democratization of programming and the plurality of voices that are brought to the festival event. These become indispensable for the creation of symbolic, cultural, and economic values, not just to the City of Toronto, but to the nation and beyond. The findings highlighted that the organizers and programmers of the festival bring perspectives to a diverse audience, and the world to the event. Furthermore, through the festival and its situated context – the City of Toronto; stakeholders come from all over the world with their different expectations, experiences, movie tastes to access and experience the year’s best production of film and more. The festival presented approximately 400 films from over 80 countries, with an audience of over 530,000 in attendance at the event. This was done with the understanding that the audience and the publics (other stakeholders) can consume movies and arthouse films from all those places sitting in Toronto as part of the festival experience according to interviewees.

According to Bossa (2013) and Genkova (2010), a film festival becomes a key player in the film festival circuit by its growing influence and diverse rules of engagement in the process. TIFF espouses that, with its seminal milestone, its consecrating power and film literature audience. Furthermore, its wide dissemination, attendance, and influence go beyond the selection and the presentation of films, to the promotion, valorisation, funding and distribution of films in North America and beyond. In relation to the latter, TIFF emerged as the second most important festival for buying and selling films on the world market (See Table 6), which amplifies its consecrating power, reputation and status as one of the world’s leading film festival (Cervenán, 2017; Cay et al., 2014; Bossa, 2013; Van Hemert, 2013)

The festival through its programming elements: democracy of programming, plurality of voices and strong partnerships and nurtured relationships that were highlighted previously, has impacted the status and reputation of the festival. As opined by an interviewee:

We have had many more films that are bold and that have created media mayhem and news features to organizational [festival] programming, for example *Canadian Top Ten*, *Vanguard*, *Midnight Madness* and our *Rising Star Mentorship Program*.

However, this would not have been possible for TIFF in its role as a leading film festival, emerging as a hub for movie houses and collaborative endeavours for festival programming internationally and locally without a key element – the media. According to DeValck (2007) who opined that the various members of the media are indispensable to film festivals, because media coverage constitutes a tangible link between the local and global festival landscape. In turn, this generates what De Valck (2007) and Rhyne (2009) both termed the ‘written festival’ is what shapes the global perception of the festival event. The partnership with the media is one of TIFF’s greatest strength as an interviewee highlighted:

The growth of TIFF is built on the partnership with the media helping us getting the word out and keeping real people in the know with what is happening. Since, 1989, we have developed I think a great relationship with the media, real people and this has changed the experience for us in terms of our programming.

TIFF’s global reach is rivalled only by Cannes within the film festival circuit, as it relates to global media coverage of film festivals. This does have a massive effect on global film culture and the international film festival circuit, within the context of the media coverage as a field-configuring event. Bossa (2013) noted that the film critics, journalists, radio and television hosts and bloggers who attend the event are all intrinsic ‘actors’ who play a crucial role within the field of global film

culture. Their interactions, their networking and their various publications, contribute to the festival event's ability to generate field norms and logics as well as grant prestige and value.

However, the media through their reviews, festival reports and interviews, they become the purveyors for the festival through their constructs and interpretation of the festival event. Bossa (2013) opined that through their contribution, the field norms and logics established by the festival are transmitted across the world. He further noted that, 'they make sense of what is happening' definitely resonates with the field-configuring event's collective sense-making and shared cognition processes as highlighted below:

Not only do the various reports and reviews transmit news on what films are 'hot at the moment', trade papers, and tabloids to a lesser extent, allow other field actors, such as cinephiles or other filmmakers, to be aware of diverse film projects and new technologies in the works. They share information which, in turn, reduces cognitive distance between the various actors of the field. Consequently, the various media bodies play a crucial role in the field-configuring event's role within global film culture. The link between the media and the film festival is multifaceted (p. 105).

TIFF measures the media coverage on the festival to gauge impact and impressions; and utilize the feedback they get from the media, industry partners, filmmakers and the audience, as highlighted by an interviewee "while this is subjective, the reviews are important to better help us make improvements to the festival." They share information which, in turn, reduces cognitive distance between the various actors of the field. Consequently, the various media partners play a crucial role in the festival event and the enhancement of TIFF's status and reputation within the global film culture. The most prominent role that the media plays in this relationship is in the redistribution of cultural prestige and value, first bestowed by the festival's audience and then the media. Jointly, the

two actors contribute to global cultural prestige through what many film festival theorists term the ‘value adding process’ (Bossa, 2013; Rhyne, 2009; DeValck, 2007).

The highlights of the findings build on the audience centeredness of the festival that drives the audience and industry programming. Importantly, it is access to the audiences that publics - press, industry, filmmakers and corporate partners - are after. The festival event in a very unique way built its identity, status, reputation and function around its audience-centeredness as a festival organization. The following sub themes - culture of engagement, the alchemy of art and the notions of identity and the festival experience - are key elements that emerged from the findings to foster the identity and reputation of the festival:

5.2.1 The Culture of Engagement

This element reinforces the festival’s programming imperative - the audience. The festival organizers in foregrounding the audience utilize the culture of engagement to build the vibe they want to create and present to the audience, situating them as the final arbiter of taste for the films selected for the festival event as manifested through the *Grolsch People’s Choice Award*. By offering the audience greater access to genres of film, filmmakers and industry luminaries, the programmers curate engagement through the activities that are designed to be interactive such as the *Q&As*, *In Conversation Series...* and *Festival Street* that enlivens the festival’s identity and reputation as one of the world’s leading international film festival.

According to DeValck et al. (2016) and Grunwell & Ha (2008), by the incorporating the stakeholders’ interests and the host community, film festivals can build successful strategies that

provide an excellent opportunity to heighten interests in the festival event. TIFFF, through a culture of engagement, exemplifies the aforementioned by curating and creating spaces that are conducive to making connections, having people meet, having a playful element to them that is celebratory, educating and engaging. They achieved this, through their film and non-film programming efforts such as, celebrity gazing, activations, scheduling, and providing a relaxed business environment which is key to the festival identity and reputation (De Valck et al., 2016; Fischer, 2009; Rhyne, 2009; Grunwell & Ha, 2008).

The culture of engagement becomes a key issue in programming, because it is intimately connected to how the festival collaborates and engages the audience. The festival organizers bring a sense of thought in curating and programming incredibly powerful films where there is a really deep resonance with the audience and the filmmakers. Through activities such as the pre or post screening *Q&A* sessions or receptions of a film's talent, becomes a highly anticipated feature that emboldens the festival's identity as being very audience-centred. The festival organizers imagine and curate the film festival events as a platform for telling really unique stories about the various films to its audience, so that everyone can envision and sense a kind of imagined connection. Through this element, the organizers bolster the festival's identity by creating a context for film where the audience can engage with the artform; as an interviewee opined:

It has the illusion of actual reality and when you watch movies people fall into that world and it is a real world; and the big screen, the surround sounds kind of contribute to that transporting yourself. And it can sometimes mimic reality, which few other artforms do and it allows you to dream.

The festival, through the culture of engagement, emboldens its audience-centered identity and offers a framework that engages the audience and utilizes the artform of film to take the audience to new places through heightened expectations. According to scholars and curators such as Grunwell & Ha

(2008), Rouff (2012) and Stringer (2008), one could even go so far as to say that programming means not (only) programming films but ‘programming the public’. They point to the fact that programming directly influences the constituency of the audience – although no one can foresee what audience reaction and outcome a certain program will have. Within the context of the programming and engagement aspects of the festival, the organizers articulate this perspective:

Making sure that storytelling is the driving force behind our programming decisions, the way we engage our audiences and how we imagine the experiences we build around the films we share with the world helps keep the community connection strong and growing. ... This always-on approach has enabled us to take the stories from the screen and weave us into people’s everyday lives in an authentic way (tiff.net).

For TIFF, cinema becomes ‘live’ through the culture of engagement, and allows for a particular type of communal interaction that cannot be easily replicated in the multiplex, given the audience-centeredness of the festival. The ability of the festival to assemble various actors in a limited time space, provide a strong setting for social interaction and collective sense-making according to Bossa (2013), Vilhjálmsdóttir, 2011 and Rūling (2009) and play an important role in its construction of reputation and status (Moodley, 2013; Rouff, 2012; Grunwell & Ha, 2008; Stringer, 2008).

5.2.2 The Alchemy of Art

The study findings provided some valuable insights regarding the artform of film itself and the festival's identity. According to the interviewees, the power of film affects the very way we see the world and hopefully transmit that to the audience through the presentation standards that helps TIFF represent and present the art in the best way possible. The alchemy of the art emerges from art as the engine of empathy, and TIFF's identity as an audience-centered film festival gives context to this most important artform. The organizers, in developing an identity as an audience-centered festival, gave consideration to examining films in a serious kind of way. They also advocated uncovering the richness of cinema from archival and screening perspectives. As opined by an interviewee:

The festival began to afford both cinephilia and the audience that opportunity and the vision of film as the central art of the twentieth century, the most important artform, which attracted the most vibrant talent. As an important element, the artform allows the festival to connect with people and provide a space where they can see the world through other people's eyes; in a way cinema can that almost no other artform can.

For the festival to be culturally relevant against the backdrop of Toronto, as one of the most diverse cities in the world, the festival organizers had the aspirations to create a kind of inclusive festival. The discussions about the vision of the festival amongst the interviewees and how the festival can bring transformative moments focused on the film as the artform and provide a platform for the audience to see the best work and the most important people within a contemporary context. As opined by one of the interviewees:

I think to articulate the vision was to take the stunning artform, this central artform and contextualize it, and provide a richness of experience not just with the film screening, but with the actor in attendance and documentation written around the film.

According to scholars such as De Valck (2007) and Iordanova & Rhyne (2009), a major global film festival in the film festival circuit like TIFF occupies an increasingly important space, given its ability to build on the aspiration to create a multidimensional film festival with people who have a passionate connection to film through collective sensemaking.

Furthermore, creating a *raison d'être* that is compelling for the event, where it can deliver an audience, media, industry, and filmmakers, Toronto was deemed an absolutely perfectly positioned festival from the starting point. With a film literate audience that has the ability to identify films that become very popular and very meaningful in the global film culture, as manifested through the *Grolsch People's Choice Award* winners and their Oscar glories (See Table 7) such as *Room* (2015), *The Imitation Game* (2014) and *12 Years A Slave* (2013) as highlighted by the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation in the following excerpt:

At 40, Toronto has developed a reputation as a valuable, real-world testing ground for movies, with a raft of eventual Oscar winners having begun their stratospheric rise at TIFF — several after having earned the festival's top prize: the People's Choice Award.

This ultimately influences film criticism, scholarship, canons, and genre formations, all central to the process of creation, orientation, and management of the festival's identity and reputation. Bosma (2010) and Cabon (2012) echo that film festivals are regarded as institutions from a sociological perspective in the art world, where the newest film productions are presented as essential renderings that provide audiences with opportunities to see films that would otherwise not be viewed or become commercial success. Therefore, the alchemy of art emboldens TIFF's audience-centered identity and its reputation, utilizing film as an agent of change through the mobilization of the moving image (Cabon, 2012; Bosma, 2010; De Valck & Loist, 2009).

5.2.3 The Notions of Identity and the Festival Experience



Image 8 - Festival Street, King St. W. and John St.

The festival's identity situates itself in the notion of the multiplicities of the festival experience. This finding helps us to understand the film festival from the perspectives of being an alternative distribution and exhibition network, a platform for storytelling and a public sphere that connect stakeholders, that is inherent to TIFF's identity, reputation and successes as manifested through the festival experience. Using the lens of film festival studies and concepts of field-configuring events, TIFF institutional logic plays an important role as a cultural organization that provides a platform for the audience-centered context. However, given the multiplicity of events within the festival that intersects art, commerce, technology, culture, and identity within the global film industry, its organization, curation and programming create spaces for stakeholders to meet and develop shared frames of reference. Mezias et al. (2008) and Rüling (2008) claim this happens through the development of hybrid events as highlighted in the duality of programming and melding the coincidences of circumstances. According to scholars such as Genkova (2010) and Peranson (2009),

international film festivals like TIFF combine elements of both business and audience, creating a hybrid identity. Film festivals in their quest to be “omnivorous – they seem to want to do everything” according to Genkova (2010, p. 14).

The interviewees openly referenced that the festival is a hybrid of both the business and audience model. However, in relation to the programming of the film festival, it is programmers, curators, and organizers who have the ability to showcase and extend the art, using the festival as a hub and always listening to the audience’s wants. This gives the festival its identity with its multiple constituents and strengthening the festival experience through its programming (Rastegar, 2012; Stringer 2003). Building on the notions of the festival’s identity, reputation and experience, interviewees collectively ensure that the relevance of the festival, within historical and contemporary contexts, is understood, which changes the collective experience of how cinema is viewed. The programmers, therefore, shape the events and the festival experience to ensure that it is a platform for powerful storytelling; new ideas, engagement, and diversity in programming which are key features for its audience.

The festival’s identity as an audience-centered film festival is reinforced through the organization, programming and curation of the festival experience and the growth of the festival is still situated in the context that it is a public festival, TIFF is one of the few festivals that really focus on the audience in a significant way as highlighted through the elements of – thoughtful curation and the mosaic of access, engagement and meaning-making. The organizational elements that have been created over space and time for the festival, gives context to this seminal milestone. The ‘*Defining moments*’ that were curated, emboldened the notion of the multiplicities of identity within the realm of institutional theory as a result of the festival activities and reinforces its institutional logic as an

audience-centered film festival. From the lens and context of FCEs, this underscored by TIFF's mission, "*transforming the way people see the world through film*" (tiff.net) that influenced how programmers, curators, and organizers collaborated in order to bring consensus and conformity to legitimizing TIFF's identity as an audience centered (Peranson, 2009) film festival. This is groundbreaking and evolutionary in its genome and biotope; and reinforces TIFF's reputation as one of the world's leading film festivals (Cabon, 2012; Bosma, 2010).

The importance of TIFF establishing a presence in the global film industry and developing a strategic niche that distinguishes the festival apart from others, contributes to the film festival's success. The functioning of TIFF as an alternative distribution site is also an aspect of its reputation and its cataclysmic impact in traditional distribution in the global film industry, which the organizers optimize to create a buzz around films to help their box office theatrical release. The articulation of festival events for TIFF engenders a cosmopolitan experience in the international film festival circuit and in the creative economy that have inherently positioned the festival as a nodal point in the global film culture.

Furthermore, it provides a hub for film distribution and related services, as well as the cultivation of an unofficial market for film professionals in a global and transnational economy. Therefore, the festival's unofficial market acts as nexus for international cultural exchange and focal points for the global cultural industries. Arguably, the film festival prestige, status and power in the film festival circuit (Iordanova, 2009; Iordanova & Rhyne, 2009) results from what one of the interviewees highlighted as "we have the Toronto audience as our secret weapon. They are the best film-literate audience in the world", augmented by the success of their (unofficial) market activities, status and reputation in global film culture. With the understanding from the research on art cinema, world

cinema and independent cinema, they increasingly depend on the nodes (Iordanova, 2015) of the international film festival network for financing, sales, distribution, promotion, and audience, which TIFF offers reinforcing its reputation as one of the world's leading film festival (Cervenán, 2017).

The operations of film festivals have been constantly expanding from exhibition to distribution. Similarly, they have expanded from sales to networking to assist independent, emerging, and established filmmakers without theatrical release, to raise their cultural capital (screening of films) through the value-added process in curating the festival experience. This is achieved through galas, premieres, special presentations, media, the art of films, and written festivals (programs and marketing paraphernalia, digital media), enabling films to transition from the alternative distribution network - from the film festival circuit to theatrical distribution. The findings suggest that TIFF is an unofficial market for films, unlike Cannes Film Festival which is an official market for films. However, it has been able to attract excellent filmmakers and distributors; and as an alternative distribution network offers even greater access to distributors. This has bolstered the festival's influence and reputation amongst distributors, filmmakers and their films being screened at the festival; resulting in the possibility that a film's cultural capital enhances in value once selected by programmers. This impact inherently makes the festival successful and enhances its status and reputation as one of the leading global film festivals (Iordanova & Rhyne, 2009; Peranson, 2008; Bauer, 2007; De Valck, 2007).

TIFF's festival programming is an essential part of the festival identity and organizational culture, and is fundamentally important in maintaining the status and reputation of the festival. The challenge however, is that the unconventional approach to the festival programming does impact the collective sense-making, and brings viability to the festival through the art of film and the culture of

innovation. The positioning of TIFFF on the international film festival circuit is enviable, given its timing on the global film festival calendar. The festival acts as a precursor to the awards season in Hollywood and its media tear sheets gives it credibility and embolden its reputation that its award recipients are serious contenders for Hollywood's coveted prizes during awards season. This has led to film festival's credibility as a cultural and economic medium, imbued with a heightened shared cognition that enhances its status, reputation, and prestige as a guardian of cinema as art in a global context and amplifies it as an FCE (De Valck & Soeteman, 2010; De Valck & Loist, 2009).

5.3 Research Implications for Policy and Practice

The research does contribute to our understanding of the role programming plays in a major international film festival and its impact on the festival's identity, reputation and experience; and the considerations given in the context of a FCE. From the research findings, I highlight some key implications for film festivals, film professionals and practice that proffer consideration and interest given the study. The research highlights that programming is undeniably a key element in an international film festival, however, there is no broad understanding of the collective impact it plays in situating the festival event and the power to shape the image and outcome of the festival experience:

The research demonstrates that organizing an international film festival programme is more than just selecting films; it also includes curating the festival event, exhibition and the emergent experience for the stakeholders. The duality of the festival organization is not often understood for the value it brings to an international film festival and how organizers optimize resources and responsibilities to strengthen the identity and the event experience. Greater consideration should be given to this aspect of international film festivals programming by modelling approaches to provide further insights to film professionals. This is to foster the development and appreciation for the institutional logic, alchemy of the art augmented by the notions of identity to ensure that the films selected, have long term cultural capital with regards to filmmaking styles, storytelling and cinematic excellence that can anchor them in the annals of film history.

Furthermore, considering that the festival understudy contextually was situated around a milestone, the organizing of the event from an institutional perspective highlighted an even greater dependence

on their stakeholders to engender success and enrich the festival experience. However, not negating milestones, while the data is exemplary in nature, it provide inferences, but nonetheless there is need for further consideration to understand the importance of stakeholder relations and management, the interconnectedness within a global film festival (Capon, 2012). How it impacts the institution of the festival itself, which is operated by people in need of funding and functioning according to certain mechanisms (McGill, 2011). Stakeholder relations is a critical aspect to the successful functioning of the festival event; given the various demands, expectations and the impact on the planning, management and execution of the event; this does have implication for the festival organization.

The impact of programming within the context of the festival was explored and the findings highlighted unconventional and conventional approaches. Scholars such as DeValck et al (2016), Rastegar (2012), Genkova (2010), and Czach (2004) highlight concerns with film selections and the programming processes, and acknowledge the key roles programmers play. However, even though the research examined programming, there are implications for consideration as it relates the practice of film selection, programming styles and tastes (DeValck, et al, 2016; Genkova, 2010) for international film festivals. Furthermore, consideration to the subjective forces guiding the film selections made by programmers and the decisions on inclusion and exclusion of film entries are highlighted here. To this end, the manner in which a film enters an international film festival does impact both the life of a film and the filmmaker, and have implications for the film festivals and film professionals.

According to DeValck et al (2016) there is no way of systematically tracking, categorizing, cataloguing and archiving all the films made every year, the thousands of films that are not selected

for film festivals. Within the context of the research, the situated framework and infrastructure provided by international film festivals, those films that do not get selected, effectively are lost and the wonderment is - will those stories (films) ever be told? This research extends DeValck et al's (2016) research on the treatise of "*Seeing Differently: The Curatorial Potential of Film Festival Programming*", which should give juxtapositions to gleanings on films not selected, that I consider 'uncut' and the lost and wonderment around those films. In other words, examination of whether the films that do not make the cut for international film festivals, do they find other platforms? Furthermore, the research made a brief inference, though that has a differing effect, further studies should consider this as an area research. A possible suggestion is to understand the criterion around the determining effects of selected films and non-selected films.

The research findings and the insights garnered from TIFF espouses a curatorial style that incorporates unconventional and conventional approaches that augment its institutional logic (audience-centeredness). Such cinematic approaches can foster models and create possibilities for film festivals, not just from a homogenous perspective, but embracing differences by creating multiple platforms and experiences for storytelling within the cinematic muse. The curatorial practices are key features of the international film festivals that incorporate a myriad of activities that takes place before and during the festival event where stakeholders interact, engage, segregate, and celebrate. Though the findings highlight that the curatorial elements are important, consideration to receptions, audiences and exhibition, building on Rouff (2012) treatise on film festivals role "as crucial exhibition circuits" would lend or provide insights into how they impact the overall festival event. While significant perspectives about festival was gleaned from film festival professionals and their voices are given recognition in this research, the significance of the harnessing information on curatorial elements, the analysis of the spatial aspects of film reception, exhibition and public sphere

of festival events are important mediums to understand film festival event are promising areas for future research.

Interestingly, the challenge uncovered from the festival understudy, is that there was no clarity around how exhibition would be harnessed and this presents opportunity for further refining and distinction within the festival settings or management for film professionals. This element does have an influence on film festivals and how they make discoveries [films] and make them [or the non-film elements that are part of retrospectives] available to their audiences. Such activities create hubs for international film festivals, which can serve as sites for public construction and exhibition for culturally important film projects.

There are lots of opportunity for conducting further research within the constructed sphere of film festivals, to collaborate with researchers and explore a film festival's primary and most general function – that of renouncing and then announcing culture; to periodically renew the life stream of a community by creating new energy (Koven, 2008, p. 65-66). Giving consideration to these areas and their effectiveness with the proliferation of film festivals and how they give sanction to the institutional or historical contexts of the culture, society, or region where the festival takes place are important. Scholars and practitioners need to better understand how this is determined, how films are displayed, and how stakeholders utilize the curated sphere (reception, screening and exhibition) to engage in unique opportunities, numerous exchanges, and mean-making to espouse cultural legitimacy.

5.4 Recommendations for Future Research

The findings of the research point to credible insights gleaned of an international film festival that can also act as catalyst for future research in four key areas. There is clearly a need for further research in the development of the understated aspects of the film festivals as highlighted by the following areas - festival as organization, an alternative distribution network, as spaces for meaning-making, and spheres of impact for cities, culture, and innovation through the gleanings below:

5.4.1 Festivals as Organization

Film festival studies and the management of film festivals, from the perspectives of programming, overshadows the opportunity for developing approaches to further explore film festivals as organization that seeks to move beyond the single event to a more active role within their respective environment, such as TIFF, with its 365 days a year programming. The impact of the growth of film festivals and their need to manage multiple stakeholder relations, establishing and maintaining festival events on industry and audience agendas and anchoring the demands in the festival landscape, are important strategic tasks for festivals as organizations. Furthermore, film festivals play key roles as cultural phenomena (Rastegar, 2012) and in the development of a clear profile, prestige, and network within the film industry. They have the ability not just to attract stars, but critics and cinephiles that are essential to establish a presence and a strategic niche (Cay et al., 2014).

Festivals as organizations are subjected to pressure based on the insights into their agendas, whether they are business or audience festivals, and exist within geopolitical or aesthetic landscapes (DeValck & Loist, 2009; Peranson, 2008). They engage with each other in competition for scarce resources

(including films, attendees, media attention, and funding) while giving consideration to political actors and other stakeholders who are in constant struggle for power (Vilhjálmsson, 2011; De Valck, 2007). This constitutes an area for further research and provides context that can direct scholars and researchers to better understand and clarify how film festivals constitute a bridge between the local and international dynamics as events within an organizational setting. The research proposition on festivals as organization, while not exhaustive, given the limitations of this research, have implications for film festivals in relations to organizational knowledge, network professionals, memberships, and temporary collaborations, as well as volunteer and stakeholder management.

The suggestion for further research is to give recognition to these issues that are fundamental to the sustainability of the 'liveness' of the film festival. The aim is to conjure the type that is organic and authentic, while establishing identity, sharing knowledge and engender commercial success that translates into value-added impact in the film festival experience (De Valck et al, 2009; Nichols 1994).

5.4.2 Film Festivals as Alternative Distribution Network

In referencing, De Valck (2007), the 'dogma of discovery' resulted in public attention being a crucial element and film festivals attracted new audiences of cinephiles (as opposed to film professionals). The attraction of film festivals lies in the discovery of new cinemas, combining regional distinctiveness and a universal appeal, providing an outlet for the audience to experience the new and unexpected (Cabon, 2012; Iordanova, 2009). In light of that fact, the role film festivals play goes beyond the distribution and exhibition of films. De Valck (2007) purports that film festivals are 'gateways to cultural legitimization'. They increase the cultural values of films by transforming symbolic value into economic value, for instance through awards and premieres. Cabon (2012) notes that distribution and exhibition are not discrepant; the right theatrical distribution of films is often acquired during the audience of the film festival. TIFF acts as an alternative exhibition venue through its programming for emerging filmmakers (Van Hemert, 2013; Burgess, 2012).

The growth of film festivals and their positioning as alternative exhibition sites has resulted in the institutionalization of a non-profit distribution system in which festival exposure constitutes a substitute for commercial distribution. Researchers, such as Burgess (2012) and De Valck (2007), opined that while this formulation is simultaneously insightful and highly problematic, it captures and conceals the economic ramifications of the festival's symbiotic relationship with the commercial sector, while it also becomes a precarious substitute for filmmakers who risk being trapped in a subsidized network that offers limited financial returns.

Amidst the film festival's role of being an alternative distribution network, Iordanova (2009) and Fischer (2009) highlight the core business of film festivals is to screen films. Many festivals within

the international film festival network (such as Cannes, Berlin and Toronto), owe a great deal of their prestigious and influential position in the festival's network to the success of their marketing activities and services to the industry. Film festivals provide art cinema, world cinema, and independent cinema outlets for marketing, promotion, and distribution, which are all increasingly dependent on the nodes of the festival network (Jordanova & Rhyne, 2009; De Valck & Loist, 2009). Film festivals are not simply exhibitors, generating revenue on concession stands and throwing a print on a screen, they are there to create a living environment where the experience of seeing a film matters. They are marketing partners and audience builders, platforms from which filmmakers can and should be outlets to launch integrated campaigns and create ancillary distribution strategies (Toti, 2014; Hall, 2013; Vilhjálmsson, 2011).

Film festivals as alternative distribution networks, play a vital role for filmmakers and their genre of films, as well as other key stakeholders for whom without the festival there would be no film. Their impact on film festivals and the circulation of film with regional distinctiveness goes beyond the realm of this research; however as an issue consideration is given for further scholarly research within the context of the film festival circuit (Jordanova, 2015).

5.4.3 Film Festival as Spaces of Meaning-Making

Film festivals are media through which community-based identities emerged through interest groups (stakeholders) given its form, function and the meanings that are contained within; and around its intersections with art, culture, innovation and identity, power (Rüling & Pedersen, 2010; Harbord, 2009). The process of meaning-making and creation emerges from film festivals bringing together varied experiences with their multiple constituents and their divergent sets of values and interests. As film festivals contend with constant changes as cultural, political, economic and social institutions within the context of the global film festival phenomenon, their value is inherently rooted in the collective experiences and the creation of intangible symbolic values for the communities of stakeholders (Vilhjálmsdóttir, 2011; Bauer, 2007). Festivals are places of power and power relations that are characterized by the often hidden relationships amongst multiple stakeholders; the events encapsulate and shape a market, industry, technology, or the development of a profession. They are spaces for networking, decision making, deal making, distribution, and exchange, amongst many other possibilities; in their construct, they rely upon intricate mechanisms of inclusion and exclusion (Rüling & Strandgaard Pedersen, 2010; Peranson, 2008).

As temporary or permanent organizations, film festivals can be understood, as De Valck (2007) opined, as 'sites of passages' which act as places of global travel and exchange, contributing to the social construction of value and status, and providing arenas of contesting prevailing field structures (Rüling, 2009). Within their nexus of multiple events, film festivals contribute to providing participants with a sense of an emerging agenda within a particular field - by defining or redefining values. Festivals thus play an important role in field participants learning and collective sense-making

processes, whereby interest-groups interactively create social reality, which becomes organizational reality (Capon, 2012; Vilhjálmssdóttir, 2011; Ruling & Pedersen, 2010).

The dynamism of film festivals lies in the event experience and how its evolution and proliferation (both within a historical and contemporary contexts) contribute to cognitive norms or structures (Vilhjálmssdóttir, 2011; Ruling & Strandgaard Pedersen, 2010). This is achieved through reproduction, creation, and contestation of values and categories within the industry, which provides context for research about the evolution of institutional, organizational, and professional meaning-making.

5.4.4 Festivals as Spheres of Impact for Cities, Culture and Innovation

Issues emerging within the context of this research have been discussed earlier in the literature review. However, as film festivals continue to proliferate, new dimensions become focal points, including discussion of the impact on the city or region, its identity, its cultural character, industry as well as the construction and use of space (Capon, 2012; De Valck & Loist, 2009).

The film festival phenomenon is defined by its location and understood to be, as purported by De Valck (2007), 'sites of passage (Capon, 2012; De Valck & Loist, 2009)'. The place serves as a film festival's catalyst, reinforcing its symbolic images, endowing it with a stamp of authenticity that precludes the entry of potential competitors. The relationship between festivals and place are both reciprocal and dynamic; in particular, place-specific resources such as infrastructure, creative professionals, and place-based images imbue festivals with distinct aesthetic qualities such as Berlin, Cannes, Sundance, Toronto, and Hong Kong (Chan, 2011; Jordanova, 2009).

Film festivals have the potential to connect localities with global hubs that coordinate communication within the network of film festivals and nodes that have strategic functions to build a series of locally-based activities and organizations around the key functions of the festival. Festivals and the space they occupy can be considered within a continuum of time and place-specificity as well as the significance festivals can play in contemporary culture that can be harnessed for socio-economic benefits and film as a tool of engagement for innovation, cultural reproduction, and communication (Capon, 2012; Richards, 2008, DeValck, 2007).

Film festivals, in bolstering innovation through local filmmakers, impact ideation, espouse creativity, and inspire new strategies that their activities can foster. Examples include, creating a market which connects local and regional filmmakers with producers to whom they would not have access; offering media exposure and competitive environments in which they are able to distinguish themselves from filmmakers worldwide; or having access to funding like TIFF's Wavelength and Vanguard programs (Hemert, 2013; Capon, 2012, De Valck, 2007).

The research suggests that these are perspectives and approaches identified that can engender a greater understanding of international film festivals and their interconnectedness. The decision to opt for a specific angle and lens will allow for scholars and researchers to bring into sharp focus particular research themes and explore collectively or individually how they relate to film festivals from the elements of organizing, programming, curating and from a field-configuring event perspective. The understanding of film festivals from their context, classification, agenda, roles and processes can provide fascinating settings for research, with film as the distinguishing cultural

product and adapting the concept of FCEs as a lens to assist in exploring the facets of impact, growth and organizational influence or related interests.

Film festivals as events do contribute to the international film festival circuit as an organizational field by how they impact processes that can result in profound transformation at a local, national and international level (Bossa, 2013; Vilhjálmsdóttir, 2011). Giving further consideration to the themes, they can help facilitate new or deepen existing knowledge and provide comprehensive insights on the evolution of film festivals as organization, platforms of innovation, cultural events and spectacles, impact on place and space that are negotiated by actors in novel and unexpected constellations. The concept of FCEs offer film festival research an outlet to learn more about the international film festival network by exploring pathways that have effected change and transformation through collaborations and configuring processes. Thus providing a foundation upon which to contribute to a body of knowledge through juxtaposing elements of global film culture, the international film festival network (DeValck & Loist, 2009) and their attendant identities, priorities, reputation and contestation of power and hierarchies as considerations (Bossa, 2013; Vilhjálmsdóttir, 2011).

5.5 Concluding Thoughts

The realms of the research on the film festival phenomenon and, in particular, from the supply side perspective of an international film festival provide insights and understandings on the multidimensional nature of film festivals and contemporary society. The unique opportunities for engagement with a community of stakeholders, from a local perspective but with a global lens, given the seminal milestone of the festival understudy; provided a medium and exploratory lens to transform our understanding of the moving image and its powerful role within the film festival continuum.

They are several aspects in the research that have contributed to the emergence and influence of TIFF as a premiere global film festival, and have legitimize its presence and fostered the attributes of a field-configuring experience that is second to none. The strategic focus of the festival on its audience provides a context to understand the efforts undertaken to ensure the balance of growth, identity and relevance; while honouring the festival's history to create a memorable festival experience. The findings indicated that there are complexities associated with international film festivals and situating them as FCEs can build on theories or facilitate theorizing either as a reflective practice or as rational problem solving.

The research reflects key gleanings, perspectives and approaches that can contribute not only to our understanding of international film festivals and their interconnectedness in relations to our cultures and societies, but also to how meaningful distinctions can be made about how an event is comprehended. From the lens of festival practitioners, the research highlighted how an international film festival is organized, programmed and curated to reveal elements of the process to

create a festival experience that gratifies the competing stakeholder demands, while reifying its institutional logic in a dynamic manner, as well as to further understand them as multidimensional phenomena.

The contribution of the research is in its examination of an international film festival and the relevance to TIFF as an institution; and seeks to answer questions such as: *What is the role of programming and the elements that impact the film festival experience? How does an international film festival acquire its identity and reputation?* The specific contributions and the broader societal relevance to the body of knowledge, is that it advances from the supply side perspective the conceptualization of an international film festival as a FCE and examines the intangible elements such as programming processes. The crucial role it places in the festival event and emergent experience; and shares important perspectives that are critical to successfully foreground the festival. Secondly, the research proposed, explored and highlighted a theoretical framework that is useful in situating an international film festival within broader operational retrospectives of its historical and contemporary perspectives. It is hoped that the analysis proffered will help in our understanding of how to navigate the professional or expert based insights to determine and highlight responsibilities associated with the scope and development of identity, status and reputation.

Notably, the key contribution of the research is to highlight how an international film festival as an FCE navigates and develops the capacity to balance competing demands through programming to foster its emergence and influence as global cultural arts organization. The festival's impact on global film culture both on a national and international level, not just institutional, but within a complex hierarchy of stakeholders, networks and field-configuring mechanisms, was highlighted aid in our understanding of its transorganizational nature.

What lies ahead is further refinement of theoretical perspectives for film festival research. This direction will engender the exploration of film festivals growth, giving context to emergent issues and contributing to the related literature by foregrounding research interests through methodologies and framework that support the field. The development of the research frameworks will incorporate internal and external partnerships that will enable scholars and researchers to transform ideation into research possibilities. These pathways are given consideration, which results from the context of the research on TIFF, being at the intersection of culture and commerce, fostering strategies and processes to explore behind the scenes of the cinematic muse of a field-configuring film festival.

The research overall has been one that highlights the complex relationships that impacts the festival programming and the emergent festival experience. Furthermore, it underscores the importance of stakeholders as a collective to an international film festival and how astounding it is to be able to glean and understand them in a sacrosanct manner. The relevance of TIFF's impact on programming and the power of film within the realms of global film culture is profound and it thrives on its unique, yet hybrid status and relationships. However, the challenge for the festival is how to navigate and leverage its collective capital to strengthen engagement in a non-traditional sense with digital disruption in order to build on its credibility to be an innovative player that continues to exemplify audience engagement and experiences that gratifies the social imagination. Evidenced by an unwavering mandate to transform the way people see the world through film; TIFF by virtue of its organizational presence, is focused on being the leader in the global film culture continuum as the world's foremost audience-centred international film festival (tiff.net).

TIFF's culture of programming has played an important role in helping the festival to maintain, embolden and reinforce its identity and position as an event that optimizes thoughtful curation, strong partnerships and the alchemy of the art to enliven the festival experience. However, as a conception, all the elements play a critical role in providing profundities that are multidimensional, layered, subjective and complex to the festival itself. TIFF has grown to become arguably the world's most important publicly attended film festival, with over 530,000 attendees for the 40th anniversary festival edition and that is an indication that it will continue to be a key node in the global film culture.

Furthermore, through its identity and reputation it has exemplified and fostered a paradigmatic shift in programming through its institutional logic (audience-centeredness), collective sensemaking, partnerships, and the festival experience in global film culture. Notably, from its humble beginnings in 1976 to this seminal milestone; TIFF still is not just about movie stars, even though they get a lot of attention. It is still about the love of cinema, film as art and paying homage to the cinematic muse, which you don't find that at many other international film festivals.

The research explored themes relating to an international film festival and it does offer insights that can contribute to film festival research, the industry, film professionals and academic scholars. While the focus of the research is on programming, nonetheless it brings attention or provokes many questions that can be given consideration for future scholastic inquiry. I do hope that this research will be of merit to future scholars and practitioners.

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Websites:

www.brittanica.com

www.thecanadianencyclopedia.ca

www.thecanadianpress.ca

www.cbc.ca

<https://catalog.flatworldknowledge.com/>

www.cfccreates.com (The Canadian Film Centre)

www.globeandmail.com

www.indiewire.com

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<http://www.managementstudyguide.com/desk-research.htm>

www.nationalpost.com

www.notable.com

www.nowtoronto.com

www.nytimes.com

www.thestar.com

www.thefts.ca (The Toronto Film Scene)

www.tiff.net (Toronto International Film Festival)

www.tjff.com (Toronto Jewish Film Festival)

<http://www.sponsorship.com/>

<https://variety.com>

www.vox.com

7.0 Appendices

Appendix I – Ethics Clearance

Appendix II – Draft Interview Questions/Guide

Appendix III – Sample Information Letter

Appendix IV – Sample Consent Letter

Appendix V – Sample Email Recruitment Transcript

Appendix VI – Sample Research Participant’s Thank You Transcript

Appendix I - Ethics Clearance

ORE Ethics Application System <OHRAC@uwaterloo.ca>

Reply all

Fri 11/25/2016, 3:41 PM

stesmith@uoguelph.ca;

Hugh Simmonds

Dear Researcher:

The recommended revisions/additional information requested in the ethics review of your application for the study:

Title: The Role of Programming in the Film Festival Experience: Curating the Cinematic Muse: An Examination of the 40th Annual Toronto International Film Festival
ORE #: 21848

Faculty Supervisor: Stephen Smith (stesmith@uoguelph.ca)

Student Investigator: Hugh Anthony Simmonds (hasimmon@uwaterloo.ca)

have been reviewed and are considered acceptable. A University of Waterloo Research Ethics Committee is pleased to inform you this study has been given ethics clearance.

A signed copy of the notification of ethics clearance will be sent to the Principal Investigator (or Faculty Supervisor in the case of student research). Ethics approval to start this research is effective as of the date of this email. The above named study is to be conducted in accordance with the submitted application (Form 101/101A) and the most recent approved versions of all supporting materials.

University of Waterloo Research Ethics Committees operate in compliance with the institution's guidelines for research with human participants, the Tri-Council Policy Statement for the Ethical Conduct for Research Involving Humans (TCPS, 2nd edition), Internalization Conference on Harmonization: Good Clinical Practice (ICH-GCP), the Ontario Personal Health Information Protection Act (PHIPA), and the applicable laws and regulations of the province of Ontario. Both Committees are registered with the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services under the Federal Wide Assurance, FWA00021410, and IRB registration number IRB00002419 (Human Research Ethics Committee) and IRB00007409 (Clinical Research Ethics Committee).

Renewal: Multi-year research must be renewed at least once every 12 months unless a more frequent review has otherwise been specified by the Research Ethics Committee on the signed notification of ethics clearance. Studies will only be renewed if the renewal report is received and approved before the expiry date (Form 105 - <https://uwaterloo.ca/research/office-research-ethics/research-human-participants/renewals>). Failure to submit renewal reports by the expiry date will result in the investigators being notified ethics clearance has been suspended and Research Finance being notified the ethics clearance is no longer valid.

Modification: Amendments to this study are to be submitted through a modification request (Form 104 - <https://uwaterloo.ca/research/office-research-ethics/research-human-participants/modifications>) and may only be implemented once the proposed changes have received ethics clearance.

Adverse event: Events that adversely affect a study participant must be reported as soon as possible, but no later than 24 hours following the event, by contacting the Chief Ethics Officer. Submission of an adverse event form (Form 106 - <https://uwaterloo.ca/research/office-research-ethics/research-human-participants/report-problems>) is to follow the next business day.

Deviation: Unanticipated deviations from the approved study protocol or approved documentation or procedures are to be reported within 7 days of the occurrence using a protocol deviation form (Form 107 - <https://uwaterloo.ca/research/office-research-ethics/research-human-participants/report-problems>).

Incidental finding: Anticipated or unanticipated incidental findings are to be reported as soon as possible by contacting the Chief Ethics Officer. Submission of the incidental findings form (Form 108 - <https://uwaterloo.ca/research/office-research-ethics/research-human-participants/report-problems>) is to follow within 3 days of learning of the finding. Participants may not be contacted regarding incidental findings until after approval has been received from a Research Ethics Committee to contact participants to disclose these findings.

Study closure: Report the end of this study using a study closure report (Form 105 - <https://uwaterloo.ca/research/office-research-ethics/research-human-participants/renewals>).

You are responsible for obtaining any additional institutional approvals that might be required to complete this study.

Best wishes for success with this study.

Nick Caric
Research Ethics Advisor
Office of Research Ethics
East Campus 5 (EC5), 3rd Floor
519.888.4567 ext. 30321
ncaric@uwaterloo.ca

Sign up for our listserv at <http://uwaterloo.us10.list-manage.com/subscribe?u=734de426ca7ee1226a168b091&id=46fdbcf2>

December 2016

INTERVIEW GUIDE

I would like to thank you for your participation in this study entitled 'The Role of Programming in the Film Festival Experience: Curating the Cinematic Muse: An Examination of the 40th Annual Toronto International Film Festival'. As a reminder, the purpose of this study, is to examine TIFF from a supply-side perspective to better understand the role of programming as an essential activity and its impact on the event experience. The research provides an opportunity for conceptualizing an international film festival as a field-configuring event.

1. What is the role of programming and the elements that impact the film festival experience?

1.1 Who has the overall responsibility for the edition of the festival being developed and the programming?

1.2. What are the processes involved in programming an international film festival?

1.3. What are the key elements in the curation of the festival experience for a non-competitive international film festival?

2. How does an international film festival acquire its identity and reputation?

2.1. How do you curate the identity for an audience-centered international film festival?

2.2. What are the elements that foster the recognition, status and reputation of a non-competitive international film festival and how is this enhanced throughout the festival experience?

2.3. What are the key activities undertaken to foster partnership, communication and meaning by TIFF as an audience-centred film festival?

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ORE #21848

January 2017

Dear Participant:

This letter is an invitation to consider participating in a study I am conducting as part of my Doctor of Philosophy degree in the Department of Recreation and Leisure Studies at the University of Waterloo under the supervision of Professor Stephen L. J. Smith. I would like to provide you with more information about this project and what your involvement would entail if you decide to take part.

Over the years, film festivals have played a significant role in the cultural industries worldwide; and research over the past two decades suggests that there is a proliferation of film festivals that are viewed as arbiters of the global film culture. The goal is to garner an understanding of an international film festival both as a phenomenon and emergent field-configuring event within a contemporary context. Film festival programming is an essential activity in the curation of the festival, which is an area in that little scholarly research has been done. The research seeks to understand the role of programming in an international film festival and its mediating role in shaping the festival as a place for global exchange and enacting the kind of festival experience that emerges. The purpose of this study, therefore, is to examine an international film festival from a supply-side perspective with summative insights and understanding of its programming as an essential activity and its impact on the event experience. The research provides an opportunity for conceptualizing an international film festival as a field-configuring event with focus and discourse on the less encompassing areas of programming and curation of the festival experience.

This study will focus on and engage in the understated aspects of an international film festival from an organizational perspective; with gleanings on the vision, the organization, programming and the festival experience. It is important to understand the festival organization with its dynamism, unique values, structures, cultural and ecological context such as the one with which you are currently involved. Therefore, I would like to include you as one of the participants to be involved in my study. I believe that because you are actively involved in the operational, management and leadership of your organization, you are best suited to speak to the various areas of research interest, such as visioning, organizing and programming the film festival; along with curating the festival experience.

TIFF leadership is aware of this study and has given support for its operational staff to participate. However, your participation is voluntary and whether you participate (or not) will in no way affect your employment or position at TIFF. It will involve an interview of approximately 45-60 minutes in length to take place in a mutually agreed upon location. You may decline to answer any of the interview questions if you so wish. Further, you may decide to withdraw from this study at any time without any negative consequences by advising the researcher. With your permission, the interview will be audio recorded to facilitate collection of information, and later transcribed for analysis. If you do not want to be audio recorded I will take notes during the interview on my laptop and/or notepad. Shortly after the interview has been completed, I will send you a copy of the transcript to give you an opportunity to confirm the accuracy of our conversation and to add or clarify any points that you wish. All information you provide is considered completely confidential. Your name will not appear in any thesis or report resulting from this study, however, with your permission anonymous quotations may be used. Even though we will keep your participation confidential and use anonymous quotations, it could be possible for those inside the organization to identify you by the words you use or stories you tell. Please keep this in mind when deciding what to share during the interview. Data collected during this study will be retained for seven years in a locked office cabinet in my supervisor's office. Electronic data security will be utilized for highly

sensitive data collected and will be securely encrypted on the electronic device or media and will be password-protected, according to guidelines of the Department of Recreation and Leisure Studies. Only researchers associated with this project will have access. There are no known or anticipated risks to you as a participant in this study. You will be given a \$20 Starbucks gift card in appreciation for your participation. The amount received is taxable. It is your responsibility to report this amount for income tax purposes.

This study has been reviewed and received ethics clearance through a University of Waterloo Research Ethics Committee (ORE #21848). If you have any questions for the Committee contact the Chief Ethics Officer, Office of Research Ethics, at 1-519-888-4567, ext. 36005 or ore-ceo@uwaterloo.ca.

If you have any questions regarding this study, or would like additional information to assist you in reaching a decision about participation, please contact me at 416.371.6192 or by email at hasimmon@uwaterloo.ca. You can also contact my supervisor, Professor **Stephen L. J. Smith** at 1.519.824.4120, ext. 56319 or email stesmith@uoguelph.ca.

I hope that the results of my study will be of benefit to your organizations that is directly involved in the study, other organizations that are not directly involved in the study, as well as to the broader research community.

I very much look forward to speaking with you and thank you in advance for your assistance in this project.

Yours Sincerely,



Hugh Anthony Simmonds

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ORE #21848

CONSENT FORM

By signing this consent form, you are not waiving your legal rights or releasing the investigator(s) or involved institution(s) from their legal and professional responsibilities.

I have read the information presented in the information letter about a study being conducted by **Hugh Anthony Simmonds** of the Department of Recreation and Leisure Studies at the University of Waterloo. I have had the opportunity to ask any questions related to this study, to receive satisfactory answers to my questions, and any additional details I wanted.

I am aware that I have the option of allowing my interview to be audio recorded to ensure an accurate recording of my responses.

I am also aware that excerpts from the interview may be included in the thesis and/or publications to come from this research, with the understanding that the quotations will be anonymous.

I am aware that all identifying characteristics, such as occupation and ethnic background, will be changed.

I was informed that I may withdraw my consent at any time without penalty by advising the researcher.

This study has been reviewed and received ethics clearance through a University of Waterloo Research Ethics Committee (ORE #21848). If you have any questions for the Committee contact the Chief Ethics Officer, Office of Research Ethics, at 1-519-888-4567, ext. 36005 or ore-ceo@uwaterloo.ca.

With full knowledge of all foregoing, I agree, of my own free will, to participate in this study.

YES NO

I agree to have my interview audio recorded.

YES NO

I agree to the use of anonymous quotations in any thesis or publication that comes of this research.

YES NO

Participant Name: _____ (Please print)

Participant Signature: _____

Witness Name: _____ (Please print)

Witness Signature: _____

Date: _____

Appendix V – Email Recruitment Transcript

**UNIVERSITY OF
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200 University Avenue West, Waterloo, ON, Canada N2L 3G1
519-888-4567 | uwaterloo.ca

December 2016

ORE #21848

Hello _____,

My name is **Hugh Anthony Simmonds** and I am a PhD student in the Department of Recreation and Leisure Studies at the University of Waterloo, working under the supervision of **Professor Stephen L. J. Smith conducting research on film festivals. This invitation is being sent because a colleague at TIFF thought you might be interested in this research and provided your email address to contact you.** Hence, I am making contact with you for my proposed research on the Toronto International Film Festival (TIFF) The research involves gleaning an understanding of the role of programming in an international film festival. I am currently seeking volunteers from the Toronto International Film Festival as participants in this study.

You are being invited to participate in an interview for the study on TIFF. Participation in this study will focus on **and engage in the understated aspects of an international film festival from an organizational perspective; with gleanings on the vision, the organization, programming and the festival experience.**

Participation in this study would take approximately **45-60 minutes** of your time. In appreciation of your time commitment, you will receive a complimentary Starbucks gift card. I would like to assure you that the study has been reviewed and received ethics clearance through a University of Waterloo Research Ethics Committee. **I invite you to read the attached information letter for more details about the research.**

However, the final decision about participation is yours. **Please be advised that the person who provided your contact information will not be told whether or not you participated in the in study.**

The following time slots are available to participate in this study.

(Proposed List of Available Time to be provided)

If you are interested in participating, please contact me at hasimmon@uwaterloo.ca and list your top three choices for when you would like to participate from the list above. I will then send a confirmation email indicating that you have been signed up for one of those times. , and provide you with further information concerning the location of the study. If you have to cancel your appointment, please email me at hasimmon@uwaterloo.ca .

Sincerely,

Hugh Anthony Simmonds

Appendix VI – Research Participant Thank You Transcript

**UNIVERSITY OF
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200 University Avenue West, Waterloo, ON, Canada N2L 3G1
519-888-4567 | uwaterloo.ca

ORE #21848

November 2016

Dear _____

I would like to thank you for your participation in this study entitled 'The Role of Programming in the Film Festival Experience: Curating the Cinematic Muse: An Examination of the 40th Annual Toronto International Film Festival'. As a reminder, the purpose of this study, therefore, is to examine TIFF from a supply-side perspective to better understand the role of programming as an essential activity and its impact on the film festival experience. The research provides an opportunity for conceptualizing an international film festival as a field-configuring event.

The data collected during interviews will contribute to a better understanding of the film festival by focussing the discourse on the less-encompassing areas of programming and curation of the film festival experience.

This study has been reviewed and received ethics clearance through a University of Waterloo Research Ethics Committee (ORE #: 21848) and is conducted under the supervision of Professor Stephen L.J. Smith. If you have questions for the Committee contact the Chief Ethics Officer, Office of Research Ethics, at 1-519-888-4567 ext. 36005 or ore-ceo@uwaterloo.ca.

For all other questions contact Hugh Anthony Simmonds, please contact me at 416.371.6192 or by email at hasimmon@uwaterloo.ca.

Please remember that your participation will be kept confidential and any quotes used will be anonymous. Once all the data are collected and analyzed for this project, I plan on sharing this information with the research community through seminars, conferences, presentations, and journal articles. If you are interested in receiving more information regarding the results of this study, or would like a summary of the results, please provide your email address, and when the study is completed by the anticipated date November 2017, I will send you the information. In the meantime, if you have any questions about the study, please do not hesitate to contact me by email or telephone as noted below.

Sincerely

Hugh Anthony Simmonds
University of Waterloo
Department of Recreation and Leisure Studies
Contact Telephone Number: 416.371.6192
UW Email Address: hasimmon@uwaterloo.ca

8.0 GLOSSARY OF TERMS

Actor: The notion of the actor is defined as individual persons, nation states and the organizations created by persons and state within the context of institutional theory (Bossa, 2013; Nadavulakere, 2008; Anand & Jones, 2004).

Audience: is the cinematic tourists that travel to a film festival for cultural understandings to grasp the meaning or things as those who present them would and step outside their inescapable status as outsiders and diagnosticians to attain a more intimate, more authentic form of experience (Nichols, 1994).

Auteur: is essentially an acclaimed filmmaker whose films are said to bear the distinct signature or mark of the director (Van Hemert, 2013).

Auteur cinema: a reflection of a director's artistic, aesthetic and creative personality in the film that is produced, which is influenced by arthouses in France's cinematic heritage (Van Hemert, 2013).

Cinephile: an individual who is fond of motion pictures and is knowledgeable about cinema (Stringer, 2008; Czach, 2004).

Cinephilia: is "a particular way of loving movies: eclectic, voracious, attuned to the importance of film as a force in everyday life, impassioned, if a little

sentimental, indiscriminating in its pursuit of a new movie high—a form of addiction that hoped never to be sated (Morrison, 2005).

Critical capital is “the value that a film accrues through its success in the festival circuit” (Czach, 2004).

Curating: a process or aesthetic practice where the collection and acquisitions of an organization’s collection and interpretation of heritage material. The practice involves maintaining, cataloguing and developing the collections in identified areas of film, television and special collections (Klippel 2008).

Curator: the expert that mediates between a film collection and the audience by selecting films into a comprehensive program; and is a specialist in the field of film and television history and practice (Genkova, 2010; Cherchi Usai, 2008).

Exemplary Case Design: focuses on the results that are expected to generalize to a set of comparable case that exhaust a particular class or group. The relations between the particular case selected for study and the class (group) to which generalization might be expected should – but are not often – articulated (Perry, 2004; Kuiken, 2000).

Exemplary Case Study: focuses the methodological procedures of the case under consideration and gives explicit attention to a case that is significant and unusual. The interest is general and of importance, contributing to theory and practice in a detailed manner. It is grounded in the assumption that the researcher’s objectives

include the generalization of relationships observed in the case study.

Characteristically, it allows alternative propositions and analysis of evidence to avert one-sided focus of the case under consideration (Perry, 2004; Kuiken, 2000).

Field-configuring events: are microcosms of a nascent technology, industry, or market, in which activities are concentrated and intensified through direct proximity and finite temporal opportunity. They provide a platform for people from diverse social organizations to interact and take actions in their roles as institutional intermediaries and provide strong settings for social interaction and collective sense making. They play an important role in the construction of reputation and status in organizational fields (Lampel & Meyer, 2008; Lampel et al, 2005).

Film curating: the art of interpreting the aesthetics, history, and technology of cinema through the selective collection, preservation, and documentation of films and their exhibition in archival presentations (Genkova, 2010; Haslam, 2004).

Film festival: an organized, extended presentation of films in one or more movie theatres or screening venues, usually in a single location. The films may be recent and, depending upon the focus of the individual festival, can include international or local releases. Sometimes there is a focus on a specific film-maker or genre

or subject matter (e.g., human rights, gay and lesbian film festivals). Film festivals are typically annual events (Cabon, 2012; Fischer, 2009).

Film Festival Experience: The festival experience stands apart from everyday life. The sense of time and space is narrowed down to the festival grounds and festival schedules. The visitors are offered unusual and intense viewing experiences, including a collective exploration and celebration of the newest films, or the exotic or forgotten cinema productions (Bosma, 2010).

Film festival research: is an interdisciplinary field of study, combining principles from the humanities, social sciences, organizational studies, and art, with the aim of investigating the role of national and international festivals as sites of self-identification and community (Van Hemert, 2013; De Valck & Loist, 2009; Czach, 2004; Stringer, 2003).

Film programming: This involves researching, selecting, presenting and contextualizing films that have been selected by an individual or a group based on a defined scope or theme (DeGreef, 2013; Genkova, 2010).

Heuristic concept: is a rule or a method that comes from experience and help in our thinking through things, like the process of elimination or the process of trial and error (Chow, 2011).

Human agency Bandura (1989) defined human agency as the human capability to exert influence over one's functioning and the course of events by one's action. He further asserts that through cognitive self-guidance, humans can visualize futures that act on the present; construct, evaluate, and modify alternative courses of action to gain valued outcomes; and override environmental influences.

Institutional theory: offers a deeper and more resilient aspect to social structure. It considers the processes by which structures, including schemas; rules, norms, and routines, become established as authoritative guidelines for social behaviour (Nadavulakere, 2008; Anand and Peterson, 2000).

Institutional logic: is the socially constructed, historical patterns of cultural symbols and material practices, including assumptions, values, and beliefs, by which individuals and organizations provide meaning to their daily activity, organize time and space, and reproduce their lives and experiences (Thornton et al., 2012).

Institutional theory: offers a deeper and more resilient aspect to social structure. It considers the processes by which structures, including schemas; rules, norms, and routine, become established as authoritative guidelines for social behaviour (Bossa, 2013; Nadavulakere, 2008 and Anand & Peterson, 2004).

Organizational field: constitutes a recognized area of institutional life: key suppliers, resource and product consumers, regulatory agencies, and other organizations that produce similar services and products (DiMaggio & Powell, 1983).

Public: the sphere of private people coming together as a conceptual and discursive forum for rational debate over private matters that have public relevance, mostly about commodity exchange and social labor within the context of film festival, for example: industry delegates, international press, film buyers and distributors from all over the world (De Valck et al, 2016).

Programming: a fundamentally important activity for the film festival that must balance economic viability with artistic and cultural innovation, providing a social resource for intellectual capital and creativity (Rodriquez-Isaza, 2010; Durmaz et al., 2008; De Valck & Loist, 2009).

Programmer: The vanguard who decides what will be selected as the moving image (film) to curate the festival experience. They are viewed as gatekeepers, arbiters of taste with enormous responsibility and power over films cultural value and capital (Bossa, 2010; Genkova, 2010; Czach, 2004).

Sociological imagination: is the vivid awareness of the relationship between personal experience and the broader society (C. Wright Mills, 1959).

Thematic analysis: a method for identifying and analysing patterns of meaning in a dataset. It illustrates which themes are important in the description of the phenomenon under study (Hoffe, 2011; Braun & Clarke, 2006; Daly *et al.*, 1997).

Transorganizational structures: emerge in events that allow disparate constituents to become aware of their common concerns, join together, share information, coordinate their actions, shape and subvert agendas, and mutually influence field structuration (Anand & Watson, 2004) .