Politics and Programming Practices at Human Rights Film Festivals: A Study of Document Human Rights Film Festival

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Abstract

This thesis focuses on the function, programming practices, politics and activism of human rights film festivals, using Document Human Rights Film Festival in Glasgow as a case study. It is a study of how human rights film festivals, in general, and Document in particular, contribute to human rights culture through programming films and off-screen events. This thesis produces both a historical and a contemporary account of the human rights film festival landscape, illustrating the practices of networking and solidarity employed towards common human rights principles. The longitudinal study of Document traces the festival's development from its community-oriented origins to a professional arts organisation. This thesis argues that human rights are not fixed but interpreted and implemented in different ways. Using the theoretical framework of the cultural intermediary, it reveals how human rights film festivals evolved and interpreted human rights discourses and how they became the main entities through which human rights cinema is exhibited to the public.

This thesis reveals the influence of three main factors when analysing film festivals: temporality, locality and stakeholders. Therefore, this thesis examines the politics of space, time and the people who work to make festivals happen. It contributes to the developing field of film festival research in that it is (1) the first study of Document, (2) it adds to our understanding of the particular role of human rights film festivals and (3) it provides a new methodological framework for a collaborative, applied research of a film festival. Using qualitative and quantitative methods, including ethnography, this thesis offers a nuanced understanding of the function and operation of a festival within broader contexts of cultural policy and societal change. As such, this thesis produces the first and only history of Document, revealing how it created a niche for itself and how it constantly renewed its identity in order to maintain relevance. Exploring the festival's contemporary practices of programming, this study identifies ten primary curatorial criteria used in the selection of documentary films on human rights topics. This research also uncovers the creativity and the labour involved in this process, arguing that the precarity and the emotion provoked by watching images of suffering are important influencing factors. This thesis explores the role of off-screen events at the festival and the potential for encouraging activism. As this thesis argues, activism can take many forms and nuances, and Document enacts a form of cultural activism by using cinephilia strategically.

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Author's declaration

This thesis represents the original work of Alexandra-Maria Colta unless otherwise stated in the text. The research on which it was based was carried out at the University of Glasgow and the University of St Andrews under the supervision of David Archibald and Leshu Torchin, and at Document Human Rights Film Festival under the supervision of Maria Antonia Vélez-Serna, during the period October 2015 to June 2019.

Abbreviations

The following abbreviations are used frequently in this thesis.

ARCS – Applied Research Collaborative Studentship

CCA – Centre for Contemporary Arts

ECoC – European City of Culture

FHS – Film Hub Scotland

FFRN – Film Festival Research Network

FFS – Film Festival Studies

GRAMNet – Glasgow Refugee Asylum and Migration Network

HRFFs – Human Rights Film Festivals

HRFN – Human Rights Film Network

IDFA – International Documentary Film Festival Amsterdam

(I)NGO – (International) Non-governmental Organisations

RFN – Radical Film Network

SDI – Scottish Documentary Institute

SQIFF – Scottish Queer International Film Festival

SMHAFF – Scottish Mental Health Arts and Film Festival

UDHR – Universal Declaration of Human Rights

Introduction

As the credits of the closing film *I Am Breathing* (2013) rolled out, marking the end of Document Human Rights Film Festival's 11th edition in 2013, I remained glued to my chair, in the theatre of the Centre for Contemporary Arts in Glasgow. Besides me, in the room, around 100 other spectators did the same, either softly whispering or sighing following the screening of a feature documentary about the final months of a man dying of Motor Neurone Disease (MND), who wanted to have his experience recorded on camera. The film was emotional, entertaining and heartbreaking all at once. While watching this film, I felt empathy towards the protagonist and his family, and a great appreciation for the filmmakers who adopted a collaborative approach, by letting the protagonist have a voice and a say in how he was represented, despite his physical limitations. However, I could not help but wonder about the impact of watching such images of deep, profound suffering, feeling very much like a voyeur into this intimate story of pain, loss and death. I kept thinking about the decision-making behind the festival, how and why the programmers selected this film over others for the closing night screening and whether they considered, as I did, the potential emotional impact and ethical implications. As soon as the lights came back on, one of the directors, Scotland-based Emma Davie, and a representative of the MND Association in Scotland stood in front of the screen, in silence, allowing a much-needed break for the audience to step back from the story of the film into the reality of the cinema. Although the exact details have faded from my memory, the discussion expanded on the life of the protagonists beyond the film, the challenging, ethical considerations of the filmmakers who entered this private, tragic story with a recording camera and the hope for different outcomes in the future. The discussion also revealed the film's wider social implications, the campaigns around it that advocate for further research and potential cures, the numerous organisations that support the rights of people with disabilities and the need for awareness. Before the viral ice-bucket challenge became a global phenomenon[1] raising awareness of MND, this film, screened at this festival first introduced me to how the disease is experienced at a personal, profound level and how, through the act of seeing, change can occur.

Watching *I Am Breathing* and the experience of being a volunteer at Document in 2013 determined my interest in pursuing research of this festival and of others like it, with a particular focus on the ethical questions influencing programming. As such, my Master's

[1] The ice-bucket challenge became a viral campaign which spread through online platforms and was aimed at raising awareness and consequently funds for MND (also known as ALS or Lou Gehrig's Disease) in 2014 (Braiker, 2014).

dissertation, finalised in 2014 was the first academic study of Document, exploring its crucial role in Glasgow for the provision of unique opportunities to watch documentary films on human rights issues (Colta, 2017). In 2015, I was appointed a doctoral candidate as part of the Applied Research Collaborative Studentship (ARCS) to continue and expand my study of Document from a practice-led perspective and this thesis is a result of exploring the festival's history, its current practices of programming films and events as well as its position in the broader human rights film festival landscape.

Human rights film festivals have proliferated around the world since the 1980s (Grassilli, 2012), bringing experiences just like the one I described above to audiences, aiming to raise awareness, inspire and mobilise people to act. Through their growing importance, attested by the increased recognition of human rights institutions, filmmakers and audiences, they became a platform showcasing controversial, personal, observational films, ranging from the radical and oppositional to high-end Hollywood-aesthetic films. Scholars began to turn their attention to human rights film festivals, their practices, meanings and their development at the intersection of human rights, politics and cinephilia. They discovered human rights festivals' role as counterpublic spheres, challenging and opposing governments and the status quo (Wong, 2011). Others explored their history (Grassilli, 2012), their tendency to form networks of support and solidarity, the implications of witnessing (Torchin, 2012a), their activist function – producing an engaged and critical spectator (Tascón & Wils, 2017) as well as their capacity to either perpetuate or challenge the humanitarian gaze (Tascón, 2015). These texts reveal various discourses – human rights, cinema, activism – that festivals navigate and actively shape through their internal politics and through their programming approach to global issues. These texts also identify case studies from around the world, showing how such festivals work towards a common broad goal of raising awareness on human rights, using locally contextualised methods. There remains, however, space for further exploration of specific case studies, localised practices and their implications for the wider human rights media infrastructure and film festival circuit. There also remains a gap in the research of the subjective practices of programming and the myriad forms of activism that festivals present. Therefore, my thesis aims to partially fill this gap in knowledge by contributing with a close look at these programming practices through the example of Document. The festival's role in the local community and broader cultural landscape is analysed along with the ways in which it responds to developments in the international film festival circuit. My thesis also offers a historical approach to Document and to human rights film festivals more broadly, in an effort to trace their changing

organisational models, aims and functions in relation to their locality, temporality and stakeholders.

Case study – Document Human Rights Film Festival

Founded in 2003, Document is the longest running homegrown film festival in Glasgow dedicated to the screening of documentary films on human rights topics. The festival evolved over time in response to changes in policy, cultural landscape and human rights discourses and implementation. Each year, for three to four days in October, Document takes place at the Centre for Contemporary Arts (CCA) in Glasgow. Its main funder is Creative Scotland, an arm's length public body that distributes funding from the Scottish Government and the UK National Lottery. While the festival remains small in size and scope, it acquired legitimacy and cultural authority through its history of intellectually and emotionally stimulating programming. As I will go on to further explore in this thesis, the festival has a role as a 'carrier' of grassroots alternative film cultures and histories amidst organisational change.

Although the festival is mostly dominated by the medium of film, Document runs a variety of events alongside screenings. These include workshops, masterclasses, panel discussions, performances and exhibitions. Nevertheless, film screenings occupy the main festival programme and are organised based on the spectacular (opening and closing films) and on thematic sections (called 'strands') consisting of both feature and short films. The festival also has a competition section with films selected from several strands, jury deliberation and an award ceremony. This thesis will explore two crucial aspects of the festival: its evolution and the forces that shaped it. Firstly, the organisation went through frequent changes of staff since the co-founders stepped down in 2011 and 2012, respectively. This perpetuated a feeling of instability and inconsistency, while providing an opportunity for innovation and experimentation with each team. Secondly, the festival has been guided by a plurality of agendas and aims deriving from a variety of stakeholders. In addition to the film-going public (which is beyond the focus of this research), Document has also been shaped by board members, activists, academics and film industry professionals. These groups and the individuals within them hold different interpretations of where precisely the value of the festival lies and what they seek through their involvement.

Document is a significant case study for several reasons. Firstly, Document is the primary way in which Glasgow audiences encounter conceptions around human rights

cinema and its connection to activism. Throughout its 16-year history, it has matured, grown and developed alongside the emergence of a cultural scene offering a myriad of alternative, thematic film festivals[2] that contributed to the city's reputation as a vibrant, diverse, world-ranking cultural hub. The reasons and effects of this local proliferation are rarely questioned in the existing scholarship with a few notable exceptions (Dickson, 2014). Through a historical approach towards Document and the current practices of programming, this thesis seeks to expand on the understanding of the social, cultural, political and economic factors that led to the process of festivalisation[3] as well as the value that it generated throughout the years in Glasgow and beyond.

Secondly, Document navigates a complex range of discourses and provides an insight into organisational studies (the grassroots model and its sustainability), cultural policy (institutional frameworks and aims), human rights and visual culture, and film festival studies (circuits, programming, organisation). This thesis maps the interactions of these areas of study through the example of Document and shows the challenges and opportunities presented by a grassroots form of organisation that remains largely overlooked by scholarship. At the same time, this thesis navigates the tension arising from the Eurocentric perspective of film studies and in particular of festivals that engage with films about human suffering at a distance. As Document is located in Scotland, this thesis expands on the perspective of an organisation operating in the Global North,[4] in a liberal democratic country, while showing an international programme of films. Therefore, the issues of representation of other nations and issues on screen and their contextualisation as part of the festival are at the core of this study and determined a critical, self-reflexive and practice-led approach.

There is a lack of understanding how festival programmers create or adapt their discourse on human rights and documentary cinema, despite an increase in scholarship as outlined above. This thesis seeks to address this gap by providing a close and grounded view

[2] Glasgow Film Festival, Glasgow Short Film Festival, Glasgow Youth Film Festival, Africa in Motion, Take One Action, Scottish Mental Health Arts and Film Festival, Scottish Queer International Film Festival, FANS Youth Film Festival and many others.

[3] The term of 'festivalisation' is used here to describe the growing importance and popularity of festivals and their growing role in the public sphere (Cudny, 2016).

[4] In this thesis, I follow the established Global North and South divide in thinking about global differences, with the caveat that more nuance is needed, and this thesis also distinguishes between the West (the North American continent and Western Europe) and the 'Global East' (former post-communist countries in Eastern Europe and Eurasia that occupy an interstitial position between North and South) (Müller, 2018).

of Document and how the team produces the programmes, while exploring the role of a researcher embedded in a grassroots organisation as part of an academy-industry partnership.

Research context and questions

This research project aims to analyse Document's programming practices and to place them in conversation with the larger context of film festivals, exploring how the festival frames human rights discourses and how it operates in relation to both global media flows and local campaigning networks and movements. Given the multidisciplinary nature of this research, the project was conceived in a collaborative, participatory model, framed as an Applied Research Collaborative Studentship (ARCS). This model, first introduced in Scottish Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) in 2015, involved the partnership between academic and non-academic organisations, with the aim to produce valuable findings for both sides (SGSAH, 2018). This study was thus designed as a collaboration between the University of Glasgow, the University of St Andrews and Document and included a placement within the festival, to gain first-hand insight into the organisation and its practices. I applied for and was appointed as a doctoral candidate and I was given the opportunity to recalibrate and shape the aims and research questions of the project (this is presented in more detail in Chapter 2). For instance, I decided to look at the nature of the creative work and working conditions involved in organising, programming and delivering the festival and I attempted to engage critically with the process of producing a history of the festival in this industry-partnered framework.

The core question at the heart of this project is: what is Document's contribution to the cultural landscape and to human rights culture? I investigated this broad question considering the spatial and temporal dimensions that influenced Document's development, as well as the people involved in the festival (staff, board, collaborators), drawing on my own fieldwork and on the narratives produced by others who interacted with or observed the festival (press, ephemera). This question subsequently developed and out of it arose a series of other questions that can be grouped into two main categories: on organisation (models, relationships) and on programming (films and events).

The organisation and the field

1. What is the definition of human rights film festivals and what are their aims and functions?

2. How and why did human rights film festivals emerge and proliferate and what is their contribution to human rights culture and cinema?

3. How are discourses around human rights interpreted and articulated by human rights film festivals?

4. How did Document develop as an organisation and how was it influenced by cultural, socio-political and economic circumstances?

5. What is the relationship between Document and other (human rights) film festivals and networks and how does it shape the festival's approach to human rights?

6. How does Document define its identity (ethos, image and values) and how is this reflected in programming practices and the festival's relationships with other institutions?

The programming process of films and events

7. What defines a Document 'aesthetic' and approach in terms of films, human rights and activism?

8. What types of films are programmed at Document and what criteria drive programming decisions?

9. What are the roles and responsibilities of human rights film festival programmers?

10. What function do off-screen events have at human rights film festivals?

While some of these questions tangentially address the festival's audiences (especially questions 8 to 10 in relation to programming criteria, responsibilities and the role of off-screen events), this thesis does not include audience research. As this study is focused on the festival's organisation, taking its point of view and analysing its practices as they have been developed historically and during two recent editions, an analysis of the audience make-up, responses and behaviours is this beyond the scope of this research. It would require more time than the original studentship allowed in order to conduct such a research and produce an in-depth analysis that would advance the knowledge of the festival's role and interaction with audiences. This is also why in Chapters 5 and 6 where I do include some aspects related to audiences, I refrain from drawing conclusions or making assumptions beyond the limited overview during fieldwork observation.

Chapter breakdown

Chapter 1 offers a review of the current literature that has informed this project. It situates my interest in the organisation and programming of human rights film festivals and draws on inter-disciplinary fields of research: sociology, film festival studies, research on human rights media and activism. Firstly, this chapter provides the theoretical framework that will be the basis for the analysis of the roles, functions and practices of human rights film festivals. The sociological notion of cultural intermediary can be applied effectively to the study of film festivals and enables the investigation of their roles as gatekeepers and taste-makers of world cinema. The study of human rights film festivals adds another layer to this concept, as they are not only interested in economic gain or promoting artistic value, but actively pursue social change. As such, this chapter proposes considering human rights film festivals as specialised intermediaries which interpret discourses of the film festival circuits and human rights activism, taking into consideration local politics and international discourses and framing them for audiences. This framework contributes to the theory of film festivals, thus building on the existing scholarship on film festivals and activism (Tascón & Wils, 2017; Tascón, 2015; Iordanova & Torchin, 2012), which is explored in this chapter. Furthermore, I outline scholarship that discusses the historical development of the film festival circuit to explore how aims, functions and occupations evolved and how these were influenced by temporality, locality and stakeholders. These parameters are useful for positioning my own study of human rights film festivals and Document within this history. Secondly, I mention several studies of festivals from an organisational perspective and how they respond to changes in the local and international environment. Finally, I focus on programming and on the ethnography of film festivals, two key areas of interest to my thesis, illustrating the gap in knowledge, thereby emphasising the areas to which I will contribute with my research.

Chapter 2 outlines the methodology and research design used in this work and discusses the context in which the research project came to be. It provides the rationale and justification for my methodological choices and discusses the practice-led, self-reflexive perspective adopted. Ethnography represents my main approach and I argue that it is an effective method by which to understand the challenges, tensions and negotiations that are part of the programming process, and it is complemented by quantitative data and discourse analysis. Through the use of auto-ethnography and action research methods, my thesis further expands on the advantages, responsibilities and challenges of ethnomethodologies in film festival studies.

Chapter 3 begins with a definition of human rights film festivals, placing them in the activist film festival category, with aims ranging from increasing awareness on human rights to fostering social change. In order to provide a more nuanced understanding of these festivals' roles and functions, the chapter explores their historical development as specialised cultural intermediaries, mediating between human rights institutions, film festival discourses and local audiences. Any study of these festivals and of human rights discourses more broadly must take into consideration three factors: locality, temporality and people (stakeholders). These dimensions contextualise the identity and relevance of each festival in its respective territory. Considering these factors, this chapter produces a historical overview of the development of human rights film festivals, identifying three main phases corresponding to major shifts in the global political and economic landscape: The first phase (1985-1999) consisted of those festivals that appeared in Western countries and that negotiated activist agendas with film festival demands for artistic merit and novelty in terms of film selection. The second phase (2000-2009) witnessed the proliferation of human rights film festivals, especially across Europe, where they gained mainstream visibility and recognition by human rights institutions and the film industry and became embedded in soft power and in shaping a European identity. The third phase (2010-2018) was characterised by the emergence of new human rights film festivals that challenged Western human rights discourses as well as by their increasing role in funding and producing films. This chapter also examines the role of the Human Rights Film Network (HRFN), discussing its function as a network of cultural intermediaries and as a stakeholder and influencer in relation to individual member festivals, that has a significant role in defining and codifying human rights cinema on one side, and in collective action and solidarity on the other. Overall, this chapter further expands on the existing scholarship, including Grassilli's (2012) historical overview of human rights film festival development, and offers nuanced definitions and characteristics of human rights film festivals by looking at how their programming of human rights films and activism practices developed.

Chapter 4 provides a substantive and detailed chronicle of Document, exploring the narratives surrounding its creation, mission, aesthetic and practices. Despite the festival's longevity, its innovations and impact on filmmakers and film culture, its influence on theoretical debates and research and its role in providing a platform for the marginalised voices of refugees/asylum seekers, filmmakers and activists – Document has been largely absent from histories of Scottish film exhibition and cultural scenes. Nevertheless, the festival's achievements are significant in carving a niche, promoting the popularity of the festival format and continuing to survive despite financial and organisational challenges.

This chapter provides a phased approach to the festival's history and its evolving role as a specialised cultural intermediary, from the first phase (2003-2007) and the shaping of a 'bold and risky' identity, to the second phase (2008-2012), a period of growth, consolidation and professionalisation, and finally to the third phase (2013-2017) of crises and re-discovery. Throughout its history, the festival created an ongoing experience of cinema that is critical, collective, empowering, exploratory, heavy and urgent. The history of Document provides an instructive reminder that human rights cinema is not a static category but an endlessly changing and shape-shifting constellation of aesthetic approaches, histories, ideologies, institutions and practices.

Chapter 5 provides an in-depth exploration of the programming process of two Document editions, through personal observation and active participation. It focuses on the people involved in the decision-making process and how they articulated aesthetic judgements about the form and content of human rights cinema in relation to their personal tastes, the legacy of the festival and the audience. Firstly, this chapter argues that festivals are complex, multi-authored events which are experienced in myriad ways by their many participants and stakeholders. Secondly, programming is both a multi-staged creative and reflexive process, based on intuition, subjective tastes and reactions to the films viewed as well as a process of strategic thinking. Thirdly, this chapter argues that programming is a form of emotional and precarious labour, an aspect often overlooked by scholars as well as by funders. In the case of human rights film festivals, programmers must also deal with the emotional toll resulting from prolonged exposure to images of suffering and human rights violations. In addition to explaining the programming process at Document, this chapter highlights the main criteria used in programming the 2016 and 2017 editions. I identify ten primary curatorial values/criteria (focused on aesthetic, representational, ethical and pragmatic reasons) that emerged from programming notes, discussions and interviews. These values were driven by subjective, personal interests and ethics as well as by locality, temporality and stakeholders. These findings make a direct contribution to the study of human rights film festivals by revealing how programmers interpret and frame human rights cinema.

Chapter 6 focuses on the experience offered by the festival, the social space created and the encouragement of an active, critical viewer especially through off-screen activities. I argue that the off-screen events at Document offered a fertile space for critical discourse where activist modes of filmmaking and organising were legitimised. They also encouraged affective responses to the films and stories presented in the festival. At the same time, I argue

that in the past two editions, Document's approach to activism further narrowed, focusing on the power of documentaries as artful critiques of dominant media representation and mainstream culture. Nevertheless, I contend that the increased focus on cinephilia was deployed strategically to provide a form of cultural activism prompted by the curatorial values and tastes of the programmers. This chapter contributes to the scholarship on activist and human rights film festivals showing multiple ways in which activism and cinephilia can be mobilised to stimulate critical thinking, debate and action around human rights issues.

The **conclusion** summarises the main arguments and findings of this thesis, emphasising the contribution to the existing literature on human rights film festivals, in relation to the circuit (historical overview and current networking practices), the organisation (a grassroots, Do-It-Yourself festival resisting forms of institutionalisation), the programming of films (and the negotiation of tastes, beliefs and subjective dispositions) and of the programming of events (using cinephilia to provoke questions and critical thinking of not just the content of films but also the context in which they were screened). This study contributes to the ongoing developments in film festival studies by exploring an under-researched sub-circuit and a small, grassroots film festival. It also provides a theoretical contribution through the use of the cultural intermediary framework applied to the study of human rights film festivals and through methodological experimentation, illustrating how historical and quantitative analysis can be used to complement practice-led (auto)ethnography and action research. Finally, this thesis ends with a series of recommendations inspired by the findings, which will be shared with the festival team and board with the aim of generating discussions and potential improvements to the festival.

Chapter 1: Literature review and theoretical framework

This thesis is predominantly concerned with the organisation, politics and practices of programming human rights film festivals, drawing on inter-disciplinary fields of research: sociology, film festival studies, organisational studies and research on human rights and alternative media. This chapter begins by mapping out a field where these areas of research intersect, and it draws on the main theoretical approaches and methods that are relevant for the present study of human rights film festivals and their organisational and programming practices. Firstly, I outline the theoretical framework that is applied in this thesis to the study of film festivals, and in particular to the case study of Document. As such, I argue that the concept of 'cultural intermediary' is a useful lens through which to explore the historical development, the material practices and impacts of human rights film festivals in today's marketplace (Smith Maguire & Matthews, 2014). This concept also foregrounds the nature of the creative work performed by cultural intermediaries within broader discourses of the creative industries, focusing in particular on the notions of authorship and emotional labour (Hesmondhalgh & Baker, 2008; Hochschild, 1983). Secondly, this chapter examines three areas of research that advance the understanding of film festivals as specialised cultural intermediaries: (1) the historical development of festivals' roles and occupations within circuits; (2) programming practices and organisational structures, and (3) activist and human rights film festivals. This last thematic category includes an overview of relevant scholarship engaging with human rights discourses and practices. Although this thesis is based on an interdisciplinary study of an organisation that operates with human rights and cinema discourses, it is firmly positioned within film festival studies (henceforth called 'FFS'), a field of scholarship that is inherently interdisciplinary and continuously developing. Finally, this chapter argues for the potential of ethnographic research in the study of film festivals as cultural intermediaries, capturing the way in which people work, build relationships and creative practices. Adopting an ethnographic approach, this thesis contributes to FFS and cultural production more broadly by employing an insider perspective and by offering a nuanced understanding of the specialised cultural intermediaries who shape and circulate meanings around human rights discourses and cinema.

Theoretical framework: film festivals as cultural intermediaries

This thesis is concerned mainly with the practices and politics of programming human rights film festivals, by offering a grounded detailed view of Document. This chapter begins with

definitions of the concept of cultural intermediary and its main characteristics, followed by the theoretical aspects which are of specific relevance to this study and to FFS more broadly.

The key reading that informs the definition and the characteristics used in this thesis is *The Cultural Intermediaries Reader*, a collection of essays edited by Jennifer Smith Maguire and Julian Matthews (2014), which includes the key conceptual frameworks, methodological foundations and case studies that illuminate the roles and potential for research of cultural intermediaries. The book attempts to reconcile two main approaches to cultural intermediaries: research that examines the operation of cultural intermediaries in between production and consumption (Soar, 2000; du Gay, et al., 1997; Featherstone, 1991; Bourdieu, 1984) and cultural economy (Smith Maguire & Matthews, 2012; du Gay, 2004; Callon, et al., 2002; Nixon & du Gay, 2002). The Bourdieusian approach presents cultural intermediaries as tastemakers and 'need merchants' who are 'defining and defending (new class) group positions within society' (Smith Maguire, 2014, pp. 15-16). The cultural economy approach 'places more emphasis on […] technical and material elements', specifically 'market devices' rather than the class-cultural dispositions of its practitioners (Nixon, 2014, pp. 36-37). The latter suggests that cultural intermediaries are important agents in the cultural economy (Pratt & Jeffcutt, 2009). Some scholars moved beyond these two interpretations discussed in *The Reader* and suggested there might be a 'third interpretation' of cultural intermediation beyond the cultural economy narrative, which would benefit from more research (Perry, et al., 2015). Drawing on O'Connor (1999, p. 7), these scholars suggested that the study of cultural intermediaries could contribute to social change in the context of austerity, when 'the cultural hierarchies are much more fragmented and plural'. From this perspective, cultural intermediaries seek not only to intermediate between economic values and established cultural hierarchies, 'but to *transform* them' (Perry, et al., 2015, p. 736; original emphasis). This approach emphasises the political potential of cultural intermediaries to effect social change, revealing their ability to construct value and legitimacy for cultural goods. Through this lens, the voices of individual cultural workers are foregrounded, alongside their practices, often hidden and undervalued. I will engage with this third interpretation of cultural intermediaries in more detail through the case study of human rights film festivals and Document.

Firstly, it is worth considering how the term 'cultural intermediaries' evolved and what its main characteristics are. *The Reader* establishes a conceptual framework which expands on Pierre Bourdieu's seminal work *Distinction* (1984) that introduced the term of cultural intermediaries. The concept refers to the 'occupations involving presentation and

representation', and those 'institutions providing symbolic goods and services' (Bourdieu, 1984, p. 359). Bourdieu highlights occupations such as sales, marketing, advertising, public relations, fashion and decoration as examples of the work of cultural intermediaries or the 'new petit bourgeoisie'. Based on 1960s France, Bourdieu argues that the growth of these occupations was determined by class dynamics, which facilitated the appearance of cultural intermediaries who drew on their own cultural capital and dispositions in order to shape consumers' perceptions of and preferences for goods, practices and lifestyles (Smith Maguire & Matthews, 2014). As such, cultural intermediaries are defined by their work as taste-makers who attempt to construct elective affinities between goods and tastes and frame those goods to appeal to consumers (Smith Maguire, 2014). In this process, they construct what is perceived as valuable goods (or services, practices) and reveal how to acquire them to gain social standing. The work of cultural intermediaries incorporates the function of searching and selecting cultural goods, determining what products will eventually reach audiences (Foster, et al., 2011). For this reason, cultural intermediaries are also gatekeepers who use their social networks and expert knowledge to lend credibility and legitimacy to their choices.

In order to become taste-makers and gatekeepers, cultural intermediaries must demonstrate professional expertise within specific cultural fields (Smith Maguire & Matthews, 2014). This can be achieved through education, professionalisation and by establishing a degree of authority. According to Bourdieu, this implies that in the long term, cultural intermediaries struggle to establish and maintain their position within legitimate culture, while working towards canonising the 'not-yet-legitimate' (1984, p. 326). The ability of cultural intermediaries to undertake the construction of legitimacy rests on the personal dimension of the work. In other words, cultural intermediaries are tastemakers and legitimation authorities because of their accumulated cultural capital and subjective dispositions. Bourdieu emphasises the importance of 'good taste or physical charm' (ibid, p. 152), 'familiarity with the culture of the dominant class and a mastery of the signs and emblems of distinction and taste' (ibid, p. 141), 'aesthetic dispositions' and appropriate forms of 'self-presentation' (ibid, p. 362). This dimension draws attention to the subjective layers that underpin the production and reproduction of cultural goods. Finally, Bourdieu notes the 'affinity between the journalist, his paper and his readers' (ibid, p. 240), suggesting that the cultural intermediary is able to act as a surrogate consumer and is thus well placed to understand and direct the targeted audience.

Such definitions and characteristics acknowledge the varied work that can be analysed through this lens, with research exploring a variety of intermediary occupations involved in constructing meaning for various goods including advertising, branding, public relations and fashion (see Kelly; Moor; Hodges & Edwards in *The Reader*) and many others. This enumeration demonstrates how lucrative the concept of cultural intermediary is and how it can readily be applied to a large number of occupations. This continued expansion of the field, however, also raises questions concerning its conceptual parameters. For some scholars, this expansion of the field suggests a too-loosely wielded analytic category (Hesmondhalgh, 2006) and a call for better specificity (Smith Maguire & Matthews, 2012; du Gay, 2004; Nixon & du Gay, 2002). Nevertheless, film festivals fit neatly into this framework, which I therefore argue is a useful lens for researching as it prioritises 'issues of agency, negotiation and power' (Smith Maguire & Matthews, 2012, p. 551). Below, I explain why this theoretical framework is useful for the study of film festivals more broadly and in particular for the research of human rights film festivals and Document. I also identify some pathways towards a more critical enquiry of this concept in relation to human rights film festivals.

All of the characteristics of cultural intermediaries described above apply to film festivals. Marijke de Valck describes film festivals as 'sites of passage,' that occupy liminal spaces between production and consumption (2007, pp. 36-39). They are a transformative stage in the life of a film, from being selected from a pool of material to becoming a part of a festival's programme, reaching an audience often before theatrical release or commercial exploitation. Stringer conceptualised film festivals as 'specialised intermediaries' (Stringer, 2013, p. 64) who apply their knowledge and expertise to the legitimisation of films for further circulation or distribution. Moreover, Stringer describes festivals as 'a space of mediation, a cultural matrix within which the aims and activities of specific interest groups are negotiated, as well as a place for the establishment and maintenance of cross-cultural looking relations' (2001, p. 134). In the process of mediation, festivals also take into consideration other concerns determined by the spatial-temporal context in which they exist and their various stakeholders.

Other scholars have emphasised the intermediary function of festivals who decide where and how the film and the audience meet (Lim, 2019). Like distribution, a festival 'determines what films we see, and when and how we see them; and it also determines what films we do *not* see' (Lobato, 2012, p. 2; original emphasis). They therefore perform a gatekeeping and taste-making role (Loist, 2014). Through their selection and negotiation

practices, festivals not only ‘showcase cinema, but they actively build audiences and communities’ (Rastegar, 2012, p. 312). Tamara Falicov (2016) applies the term ‘cultural intermediary’ to festival funds and their increasing role in production determining which films will be successful in the festival circuit. In order to find funds and audiences for films (de Valck, 2012), festival workers draw on specialist knowledge, skills and networks to perform a range of activities, including selection, organisation, administration and marketing. These statements about the functions and roles of film festivals closely follow the characteristics of cultural intermediaries as defined by Bourdieu to describe groups of workers involved in the provision of symbolic goods and services.

Human rights film festivals perform the same gatekeeping role, by selecting films (fiction and/or documentary) and presenting them to audiences. They are the tastemakers in this field because through their selection and promotion practices they actively shape what is understood to be human rights cinema (Collins, 2017) and provide a framework for ‘impact’ activities. ‘Impact’ has become a frequently used term in relation to human rights film festivals to describe the activities organised beyond film screenings (such as Q&As, panel discussions, debates etc.) in an attempt to change attitudes or behaviours and mobilise towards action (Hudečková, 2018). I argue that this range of activities and goals adds another layer to the exploration of film festivals as cultural intermediaries. Human rights film festivals produce new meanings through their off-screen events, where they promote a form of activism, intermediating between human rights organisations and audiences. For this reason, I categorise them as specialised cultural intermediaries who distinguish themselves through the mediation and production of discourses, tastes and actions in relation to human rights cinema and activism. Human rights film festival workers balance their subjective dispositions and tastes with a consideration of ethics and expectations of the audience as well as of the human rights/activist community. They move beyond demonstrating aesthetic innovation or economic value (goals of many generalist film festivals). They actively challenge competition, hierarchy and self-interest in favour of practices of solidarity, self-responsibility and collective action. This approach provides an opportunity to explore the political potential of cultural intermediaries and how they can be agents of social change (Perry, et al., 2015).

This study of human rights film festivals explores how specialised cultural intermediaries occupy a strategically important role within the circuit of cultural reproduction. Human rights film festivals are driven by an internal aim to effect or address social change, which is based on the presence of other values and aspirations beyond the

commercial context. As cultural intermediaries, they demonstrate creativity in the production of festival programmes. Human rights film festivals can support less powerful groups (filmmakers or activists) and minority voices in challenging the status quo; they can promote participatory communication and lobby for policy change. Festivals such as Document are grassroots cultural intermediaries that do not aim to promote and implement creative industries agendas or state-sponsored flagship cultural projects, but that instead pursue inclusivity, participation and cultural activism.

This framework also focuses on the people that occupy these intermediary positions, their practices and how they articulate their kind of creative work in programming and organising human rights film festivals. However, more critical enquiry into the work of cultural intermediaries is needed to problematise its precarious nature versus the flexibility and autonomy it offers. Scholars have begun engaging with the 'negative effects that cultural workers experience' (Smith Maguire & Matthews, 2014, p. 5) including precarious employment (Cohen, 2012; Hesmondhalgh and Baker, 2011; McGuigan, 2010). However, this aspect requires further exploration, especially concerning the struggles surrounding the commercialisation and control of creative activity and the contested nature of constructing value and legitimacy for cultural goods. The issues of precariousness in cultural work and of moral values, brought together signify both the 'multiplication of precarious, unstable, insecure forms of living and, simultaneously, new forms of political struggle and solidarity that reach beyond the traditional models of the political party or trade union' (Gill & Pratt, 2008, p. 3). Studying human rights film festivals encourages critical inquiry into affect, temporality, subjectivity and solidarity, which shape cultural work. Furthermore, analysing programming practices at human rights film festivals reveals the struggles over competing notions of what constitutes good or beautiful work, relevant social issues and ethical approaches to constructing value and legitimacy. Cultural workers have different understandings of what constitutes value and whether their work has the potential to generate social change. This thesis engages critically with the theory of cultural intermediaries, taking into consideration the specific geographical and historical context and the people who conduct this work. There is a need for more in-depth studies of individual organisations and processes that 'pay attention to the ongoing structural trajectories of the capitalist economy, whilst attending to micro-structural assemblages, emergences and contingencies' (Taylor, 2015, p. 10). This would enable both introspection into the wider applicability of these narrative-based accounts, as well as greater insight into how, in individual organisations or contexts, values are negotiated, positions occupied, pressures managed, and communities supported – and the extent to which unintended consequences or outcomes might be created.

The remainder of this chapter engages with existing literature from film festival studies and human rights media studies that place film festivals historically to illustrate the evolution of their practices, aims and politics.

Film festival studies and the rise of specialised intermediaries

With over 6,000 film festivals in operation globally (Loist, 2016), a complex history that spans over seven decades and a burgeoning academic field, film festivals have become a phenomenon in their own right (Archibald & Miller, 2011). This phenomenon is essentially transnational (Iordanova, 2016), marked by great diversity, differentiation and hierarchical stratification (Loist, 2016). FFS developed significantly over the last 20 years, approaching festivals from a variety of perspectives. The Film Festival Research Network (FFRN) was launched in 2008 by festival researchers de Valck and Skadi Loist, aiming to 'make festival research more available, to connect its diverse aspects and to foster interdisciplinary exchange between researchers as well as festival professionals' (FFRN, 2017). The FFRN developed an online platform that is regularly updated with academic resources and announcements about thematic panels at international conferences, which attests to the growing scholarly interest in this field of study. This burgeoning, dynamic field is constantly revised and complemented by research that expands on existing theories, perspectives and interdisciplinary enquiry.

One of the aspects under continuous revision is the historical approach to film festivals and how it shapes scholars' understanding of this global phenomenon. To contextualise the development of human rights film festivals in relation to other festivals, film cultures and practices, it is useful to consider the evolution of the international film festival model and its practitioners. Comprehensive models of historiography on the general film festival circuit have been proposed by de Valck (2007) and Wong (2011) and later expanded in the edited volume *Film Festivals: History, Theory, Method, Practice* (de Valck, et al., 2016) and the special issue of the *New Review of Film and Television Studies* (Papadimitriou & Ruoff, 2016). Several other publications contribute to the ever-expanding historical approach of festivals in the Middle East (Iordanova & van de Peer, 2014), East Asia (Iordanova & Cheung, 2011; Stringer, 2016), Africa (Dovey, 2015), Australia (Stevens, 2016) and China (Berry & Robinson, 2017). These studies attempt to challenge the Eurocentric view of film festival studies, while emphasising the importance of spatial and temporal context in the understanding of film festival development in a certain region.

Thinking historically: the development of the film festival circuit

One of the conceptual tools and organising structures that have been used by scholars and practitioners to navigate this global phenomenon is the notion of the festival 'circuit', a complex, volatile and contingent term (Loist, 2016). It evolved gradually from a loose network managing competition between a handful of film festivals in Europe to an intricate global network with several parallel, sub and short circuits. The model and function of film festivals has changed over time, along with film culture and cultural policies at large. Festivals' ability to constantly adapt and renew has allowed the film festival model to survive, self-sustain and thrive to this day (de Valck, 2007). The historical approach also illuminates the professionalisation of festival workers and their ever-expanding roles as gatekeepers, taste-makers, mediators, entrepreneurs and active players in the film industry through the distribution of funds and an increasingly significant role in production (Falicov, 2016).

De Valck (2007) proposes three main phases in the development of the European film festival landscape, which she relates to major shifts in the circuit and industry. The first phase began in 1932 and was characterised by a variety of aims: to promote national cinemas, to become a platform for international diplomacy amidst the Cold War, to support the economy and regional film industries and to provide a platform for cinephile groups to view and discuss film (ibid). The second phase consisted of revolutionary-inspired changes post 1968 marked by the rise of political film festivals as well as by the increasing cultural authority of the festival programmer. The third phase began in the 1980s when the festival phenomenon underwent a sweeping professionalisation and institutionalisation, increasing its role in the production and marketing of films (ibid). Several other scholars (Loist, 2014, 2016; Saglier, 2016; Vallejo, 2014a; Wong, 2011) adopted this phased approach to the study of film festivals in order to illustrate the evolution of occupations and roles which attests to the growing importance of film festivals in the production of cultural value.

The first phase in the development of film festivals establishes the European roots of the film festival phenomenon which began with the Venice Film Festival in 1932. De Valck describes the festival as 'an *international* and *glamorous* event attended by an *elite* audience of film professionals and the *beau monde*' (de Valck, 2007, p. 23; original emphasis). This description presents the festival as a transformative space where films are shown in the context of a spectacle to a specific audience. This was a strategy used to create allure and to 'sell' a lifestyle and a way of consuming films building on the glamour of celebrities, the

distinction created by selecting avant-garde films and the competition among nations. Subsequently, Berlinale and Cannes further established the festival model as the 'Olympics of Film', creating a circuit where national cinemas competed against each other (ibid).

However, not all festivals that appeared in this first phase revolved around the same aims, nor promoted the same values and experiences. For instance, Kirsten Stevens (2016) offers an overview of the origins of the first Australian film festival founded in 1952 in Olinda, on the outskirts of Melbourne. This festival did not aim to replicate the model of the geopolitically motivated European festivals but was instead driven by the local environment and by the amateur filmmaking community (Stevens, 2016). This example illustrates how some of the earliest film festivals emerged as grassroots affairs, aimed at local audiences and communities, without funding or involvement from any industry or government body (ibid). At the same time, this organisational model proved to be precarious, chaotic and faced with a constant struggle to gain visibility and legitimacy on the international stage, challenges which are relevant to the study of human rights film festivals.

During this first phase of development, the proliferation of film festivals in Europe and beyond made film production communities concerned about awards inflation (de Valck, 2007). The International Federation of Film Producers Associations (FIAPF), an organisation founded in 1933 to represent the interests of film production communities worldwide (FIAPF, 2018), intervened to prevent this inflation and introduced an accreditation and classification system for festivals.[5] FIAPF sought to privilege and protect European interests against the US's cultural and economic domination (Saglier, 2016). However, since 1951, when FIAPF introduced the classification system, the organisation has held the monopoly on the regulation of film festivals and the rules governing the circulation of films (de Valck, 2007). This effectively created the 'A-list' festivals, a circuit organised temporally and geographically to facilitate the circulation of films and film professionals – producers, sales agents and distributors. Consequently, this system became an instrument for conferring status, legitimacy and cultural value to films and festivals, depending on their position in the circuit. The A-list festivals are expected to screen a large number of premieres and attract leading filmmakers, while also being sufficiently different from one another to provide the diversity required by the regulating body. Despite the attempt of FIAPF to limit the number of festivals in Europe, new ones continued to appear and grow (Wong, 2011).

[5] The categories include 'Competitive Film Festivals'. 'Competitive Specialised Film Festivals', 'Non-competitive Film Festivals' and 'Documentary and Short Film Festivals' among others (FIAPF, 2018).

This initial phase shows that festivals already became significant institutions embedded into the political and cultural spheres, operating on symbolic as well as economic capital. This also shows that the festival circuit is inherently hierarchical and has multiple stakeholders, such as the international film producers' community.

By the late 1960s, the tensions within the festival landscape as well as film culture more broadly erupted in a series of conflicts and revolutionary changes in the function and perception of festivals, which determined the second phase in the development of the international film festival circuit (de Valck, 2007). Cannes 1968 was one site of dissent and boycott, inspired by the political turmoil and the mass strikes of French workers and students. Several significant filmmakers at the time forced the festival's closure and demanded more attention to political films and filmmaking (Wong, 2011; de Valck, 2007). This created a ripple effect, which contributed to changes in the function and perception of festivals more broadly, as platforms for political and avant-garde filmmaking (Wong, 2011).

During the 1960s and 1970s, film festivals also showcased world cinema, which emerged from filmmakers embedded in anti-colonial struggles and revolutions in so-called Third World countries, anti-communist attempts at liberalisation in Central and Eastern Europe, and left-wing movements in the West and in Japan (de Valck, 2007). This development also contributed to the expansion of festivals further afar into Africa, Latin America and towards a variety of identity-based festivals: women's film festivals, indigenous, gay and lesbian, Black/African-American film festivals (Loist, 2016). During this phase, the bureaucratic practices, national agendas and colonial powers were questioned and contested. In this sense, de Valck argues that 'cultural value was no longer tied to the idea of film as national accomplishment, but generated for the films and their filmmakers themselves, as art and artists' (2007, p. 167). The role of the festival director became much more important in evaluating the artistic merits of films and in creating spaces and appetite for world cinema (Dovey, 2015). Festival directors, responsible with providing a supply of curated alternative content for specialised sections at European film festivals, demanded to look out towards other parts of the world. As such, productions from Latin America, Africa as well as Asia became more frequent in established European festivals (Stringer; 2016; Dovey, 2015). However, this shift perpetuated a relationship of hierarchy and inequality between the European centres and other non-Western countries, both in terms of film circulation as well as festival circuits. For instance, Saglier (2016) suggests that by framing indigenous world cinemas as 'discoveries', festivals extended the colonial perspective and further emphasised a Eurocentric point of view.

The third phase in the development of the film festival circuit started with the 1980s, when festivals proliferated and became more institutionalised and professionalised (de Valck, 2007). They were increasingly embedded in the creative industries discourse, which placed value on economic impact and the ability to contribute to the development of the creative class while elevating the public image of a city (Loist, 2016). This shift was supported by globalisation and neoliberalism, which increased the use of the language of markets, consumer choice, and individual autonomy to shift risk from governments and corporations onto individuals (Ong, 2006). For McGuigan (2004), a cultural policy informed by such language forces culture to be saturated with a market-oriented mentality that shuts out alternative ways of thinking and imagining as 'neoliberal globalisation has compounded the divergences and inequalities that uneven capitalist development had helped to produce' (ibid, p. 828).

The economic system and the proliferation of festivals increased the inequality between the ones that had to compete for audiences, private sponsors and an attractive space in the festival calendar. This led to shifts and clashes in regional circuits (see the example of festivals in the Czech Republic in Iordanova, 2006) and in specialised circuits (see more the documentary circuit in Vallejo, 2016). This economic system and increased competition also marked the emergence of another category of stakeholders: commercial sponsors who introduced new demands and agendas. In her analysis of the Hong Kong International Film Festival (HKIFF) as it was making the transition from being government funded to corporately funded through sponsorship, Ruby Cheung argues that the 'influx of commercial sponsorships that were introduced to replace public funding challenged the high art aspirations of the festival, turning it into a more populist film industry-driven market oriented event' (2009, p. 99). In this development phase, film festivals further developed their links with the film industry and became active players, developing training and funding for films, talent campuses, script writing labs and co-production markets (Loist, 2016).

During this phase of development, proliferation and globalisation contributed to, on the one hand, professionalisation and the standardisation of the circuit (de Valck, 2007) and, on the other hand, diversification and further networking. Julian Stringer highlights how festivals navigate the increasingly overcrowded festival ecosystem, by having to 'be similar to one another, but as novelty is also at a premium, the local and particular also becomes very valuable. Film festivals market both conceptual similarity and cultural difference' (Stringer, 2001, p. 139). Loist further argues that globalisation goes hand in hand with regionalisation, replacing the nation-state with the global city competing for funds and

economic gains for cultural development (Loist, 2016). Most of these historical accounts of the festival circuit focus on established film festivals (such as Cannes, Berlinale or Rotterdam International Film Festival in de Valck's 2007 monograph) that had industry and business-oriented aims and perpetuated the mainstream cultural policy discourse in Western Europe. However, during the same period, other developments occurred that questioned and challenged the relationship between festivals, audiences and public funding.

In Britain, the community arts movement, defined as 'created wholly or in part by community and arriving unfinished in the hands of the people' (Jeffers & Moriarty, 2017, p. 4), became wide-spread between the late 1960s and the 1980s and included a vital body of work and practices that attempted to 'rethink the artists' role in society' (Bishop, 2012, p. 163). Despite its scale and influence in the 1970s and 1980s, the movement remains largely unacknowledged and undocumented in film festival studies, with the exception of queer film festival studies, that have been analysed from this perspective (Richards, 2016; Loist, 2014; Zielinski, 2008; Rhyne, 2007). Several scholars attempted to address this gap and effectively argued for the importance and legacy of this movement more broadly (Lowndes, 2016; Jeffers & Moriarty, 2017). The echoes of the countercultural movements inspired by 1968 and the dissatisfaction with the demands of the cultural policy in the decades that followed, generated new movements in the art scene. They produced a radical shift in the thinking, making and delivering of art works with 'a distinctly anti-institutional and political agenda' (Hadley & Belfiore, 2018, p. 220). Community arts reacted to the perceived injustice of the limited opportunities available to practice the arts, due to a lack of resources imposed by the unequal distribution of social and cultural capital (Jeffers & Moriarty, 2017). Film festivals were part of this movement and contributed to the critique of cultural authority, particularly regarding the right to say what was, and was not, art (Kelly, 1985). While attention has been given to community film festivals in relation to specific social movements around sexual identity, race or gender, the wider landscape of community film festivals that foregrounded film art, cinephilia, experimental or video works remains largely outside the written histories on the festival circuit. My thesis aims to partially fill this gap by including grassroots festivals and the struggle for cultural diversity, participation and inclusion by challenging neoliberal policies.

Aida Vallejo adds a fourth phase that corresponds to the development of the film festival circuit in the late 2000s and throughout the 2010s. This phase reveals a saturation of the international circuit and a struggle for sustainability, aggravated by the financial crisis and the austerity measures after 2008 (Vallejo, 2014a). Although this did not lead to a drop

in the number of festivals, the reduction of financing forced many festivals to seek revenue from elsewhere – audiences, filmmakers by introducing or rising fees, such as ticket prices or submission fees (ibid). Film production also increased due to more accessible equipment, which made even more films readily available for screenings. While it may seem like there is more choice in terms of programming, more platforms for showcasing specialised events and content, festivals continued to be more similar to each other and use the same techniques. This situation was criticised by filmmaker and academic Mark Cousins (2012), who argues for a radical reconsideration of the festival form, breaking out of the festival torpor, and proposing an authored, distinctive identity, not afraid to take risks and show 'what the markets hide'. The massive proliferation of the festival model from the 1980s onwards, its fading relevance and potential negative effects on creativity and critical thinking entered the academic arena as well; some using terms such as 'festival epidemic' (Burgos, 2008) and 'festival apocalypse' (Stevens, 2011). Other scholars do not share the same concern with the oversaturated circuit. Thomas Elsaesser suggests rivalry has provided a means for development and innovation. He explains that 'competition raises standards, and adds value to the films presented' (2005, p. 86). For Elsaesser, the need to compete for films and funding has pushed festivals to establish themselves along standardised lines of internal organisation, which consequently further develops the field and the professionals working in it. The optimism over the benefits of competition is echoed by de Valck who observes: 'Maybe Armageddon will be the result of the film festival phenomenon, but thus far it has only led to a global, influential, standardized and stable festival network that attempts to bring more balance into a web of distorted commercial relationships' (2007, p. 81).

Overcrowding spatially and temporally not only raises questions about their sustainability, but also about their function and need in the location where they take place. In this thesis (especially in Chapters 3 and 4), I will examine the reasons behind the proliferation of the human rights film festival circuit, how and why it continued to grow and flourish, whether it serves the market or 'what the markets hide' and whether it really contributes to a democratisation of tastes (Elsaesser, 2005) or to the interests of capital.

There has been a recent surge in academic interest in this neoliberal shift in the creative industries more broadly (Flew & Cunningham, 2008; Hesmondhalgh and Pratt, 2005). However, in relation to film festivals this area remains underdeveloped, with a few notable exceptions. Several studies have engaged with film festivals as sites of struggle, negotiation and resistance against neoliberalism, providing examples of organisations or practices that challenge it. Ezra Winton (in Robbins & Saglier, 2015) illustrates how a film

series that he coordinates, Cinema Politica, takes an anti-capitalist stance by not having corporate sponsorship, outsourcing programming to local communities and by privileging radical and activist voices. Loist (2014) argues that depending on the location, some queer film festivals actively resist neoliberalism. She offers the example of festivals in Germany and Austria organised as politically (self-)conscious volunteer collectives that function outside the neoliberal structures of the creative industries. Ger Zielinski (2008) called queer film festivals sites of 'organised unruliness', an expression adopted by Sonia Tascón (2015) when discussing the activist function of film festivals. Based on this premise, festivals have a disruptive potential, but their subversive power remains limited, 'within the constrains set by some larger authority that permits it to take place' (ibid). Anthony Killick (2017), who has interrogated neoliberalism in relation to counter-hegemonic film festivals,[6] indicates that neoliberalism has the ability to hijack progressive and/or revolutionary moments. Drawing on Winlow et al. (2015), he argues that liberal democracies rooted in capitalism not only tolerate but also require and assimilate opposition in order to present the appearance of a properly functioning democracy. In other words, such a system allows subversive actions and resistance to happen within its boundaries. As such, even those festivals that challenge, criticise and aim to resist neoliberal policy, inevitably contribute to it, so they cannot exist completely outside these structures. At the same time, their subversive ethos can push them further towards the margins and challenge their very survival and sustainability. One of the consequences is that many of these festivals function in a very precarious state, that is not sustainable nor fair towards the staff in terms of employment conditions. Loist (2011) has raised the issue of festival labour and the hidden economies that allow these festivals to exist. The scholarship presented so far in this chapter reveals the contested histories and development of the international film festival circuit, the parallel, subversive movements and circuits and the changing functions and roles of festivals and their workers in the context of neoliberalism. These fundamental texts within FFS set the scene for this study and for understanding the particularities of human rights film festivals.

Film festivals: organisational fields and programming

The historical overview of film festivals presented above illustrates the evolution of the roles and functions of film festivals that exist 'at the crossroads of art and commerce, multiple artistic, cultural and organisational identities, and at the intersection of local creative clusters

[6] Killick (2017) defines counter-hegemonic festivals as those that try to develop forms of spatial and cultural resistance to the hegemony of neoliberalism. The festivals studied in his doctoral thesis include Workers Unite Film Festival in New York, Liverpool Radical Film Festival and the Subversive Film Festival in Croatia.

and global project networks' (Rüling & Pedersen, 2010, p. 322). Film festivals are rich settings for research engaged in symbolic acts and 'self-validating activities' (Elsaesser, 2005, p. 101) circulating films and creating frameworks in which these can be consumed. Several scholars proposed exploring festivals from an organisational studies perspective (Rüling & Pedersen, 2010; Rüling, 2009). This approach provides 'an opportunity to explore issues of stakeholder relations and strategic agency and the formation and institutionalization of festival identity through programming and accreditation' (Rüling & Pedersen, 2010, p. 321). As such, this perspective provides a useful insight into the study of creative authority, power and agency and the process of mediation and meaning-making. There are several scholars that take an organisational studies approach to film festivals which informed this thesis, including Rüling's (2009) study of festivals as field-configuring events, Gamson's (1996) and Richard's (2016) comparative studies of queer film festivals, Rhyne's (2007) historical and organisational approach to queer film festivals and Zimmermann and MacDonald's (2017) study of The Flaherty Seminars.

Discussing film festivals using the concept of the field-configuring event, Rüling (2009) described the evolution of Annecy International Animated Film Festival and Market and how it had been confronted with questions over how to respond to changes in the environment. Lampel & Meyer define the field-configuring event as a 'temporary social organization that encapsulates and shapes the development of professions, technologies, markets and industries' (2008, p. 1026). From this perspective, the film festival is a field-configuring event in that various stakeholders – journalists, filmmakers, audiences, programmers, distributors, and so on – assemble on a temporary basis to 'construct social networks, recognise accomplishments, share and interpret information and transact business' (ibid). Networking can create opportunities for social interaction including the construction of reputation and status. Rüling argues that while a film festival establishes its identity, the stakeholders jointly create a 'common meaning system by defining standards […] and by positioning the field in relation to entities outside of it' (2009, p. 51). This emergence of a field builds institutional identities to create 'dominant field norms and logics, and to the protection and reinforcement of field identity' (ibid). The field-configuring event framework is an important approach within FFS from an organisational perspective and an insight into how stakeholders influence and shape festivals. However, while it allows for a discussion of social networks and institutionalisation, it does not adequately address the role of film and the specific challenges faced by small, grassroots organisations. Such organisations often operate on unfixed identities and meanings, which complicate the notion of field identities.

A study that illustrates the challenges of researching film festivals through an organisational studies lens is Joshua Gamson's comparative examination of two lesbian and gay film festivals in New York (1996). These case studies provide an insight into how collective identity is shaped by the changes within the community as well as the changes in the organisational field in which they operate. Organisations respond to their institutional environments by elaborating 'rules and requirements to which individual organisations must conform if they are to receive support and legitimacy' (ibid, p. 238). In other words, organisations have to adapt and alter their structure or goals in order to survive or grow. Support and legitimacy can come from the relationship to sponsors and funders as well as from the community. Gamson illustrates how the two festivals had to adjust their programming strategies and organisational structures to respond to challenges in the field, including changes in the funding sector (where corporate interest grew while state funding decreased) and in the community. For instance, when funders required a certain level of diversity in the festival's leadership, staffing and artists in terms of gender, race, age, disability or sexual orientations, festivals adapted by opening up structurally and becoming more deliberate about seeking a racially diverse creative team (ibid.). Similarly, when the 'new queer cinema' became more recognised internationally, festivals had to reposition themselves into the art film world and constitute a niche that is 'marketable'. These examples provide an insight into the organisational challenges that festivals navigate and how they affect their programming, goals and modus operandi.

Zimmermann and MacDonald's (2017) comprehensive history of The Flaherty, a non-profit organisation with a yearly output of film screenings and discussions, operating in the US since 1960 reveals how the Seminar articulated the genre of 'independent film', how it developed as an institution and how its members (board and staff) responded to changes in the field. Looking at the institutional and programming history, complemented by recordings of discussions throughout the seven-decade history of The Flaherty Seminars, the authors produce a detailed chronicle acknowledging the turning points and the non-linear trajectory of the organisation. This leads Zimmermann to consider the struggle for meaning and identity as a driver for evolution and reform, concluding that 'Most everyone seems to disagree about what "the Flaherty" was, is, or should be. And these debates, for which there are no easy resolutions, are, in the end, most likely what keeps "the Flaherty" pulsing with life, thriving' (ibid, p. 289). This remark is particularly relevant to this thesis as it foregrounds an organisation's continuous search for an identity that is representative and adaptive. Furthermore, the way in which the history of the Flaherty was produced (the challenges of reconstructing an oral history by looking at the material and organisational

changes as well as recorded interactions) provides a framework for exploring Document's past narratives and changes.

While these studies reveal the complex discourses and agendas that festivals as organisations manage and negotiate, more research is needed of the subjective decision-making and programming strategies employed. These include programming criteria, internal decision-making process, personnel, information which tends to remain hidden and a 'mystery zone' (Stringer, 2003, p. 47). These can be uncovered through 'targeted spadework', in-depth research on the ground of festivals behind the scenes.

Programming/curating: definitions and practices

Scholars have pointed out the need for further research of programming as practice and as a profession. With festivals springing up all over the world in a variety of sizes, budgets, thematic specialisations and positions in the circuit, there is no consensus on general programming criteria, organisational structures and individual roles. In her monograph on curating African films and festivals, Lindiwe Dovey was surprised to find 'how little standardization one finds across their work. Despite the prominence given to programmers at festivals since the 1970s, the field remains extremely heterogeneous' (2015, p. 80). This is evident, firstly, in the terminology. Programming and curation are often used interchangeably in the existing scholarship, despite having distinct histories and political underpinnings.

De Valck (2007) suggests a difference between programming and scheduling according to the venue and the aims associated with film exhibition. The former is a cultural practice, which implies a committed handling of cinema as a form of cultural expression and artistic accomplishments. The latter is guided by business interests as primary motivators, with the example of multiplexes that schedule films according to strict formulae resulting from market research. As such, the main aim for programming is cultural value rather than commercial outcomes and it implies creativity and knowledge of cinema as an art form (ibid.).

Peter Bosma expands on this value of programming which he prefers to call 'curating', undertaken by 'custodians of cinema culture', with a mission to present a diverse selection of new releases, without ignoring films from the past (2015, p. 1). Bosma thus prefers to use 'film curator' when referring to the person who compiles a film programme,

borrowing the term from the art world, galleries and museums to describe a ‘more sophisticated level of cinematic knowledge than simply ‘programming’ specific screenings’ (ibid, p. 6). In Bosma’s interpretation, programming is associated with scheduling rather than curating requiring a range of different skills and responsibilities.

Dovey (2015) also suggests that despite being used interchangeably, ‘programming’ and ‘curating’ have different understandings and histories. Programming is the most prevalent term used by practitioners, a term she argues is borrowed from radio and television broadcasting discourse and is associated with mechanically reproduced material. For this reason, she prefers the word ‘curate’ to describe the process of shaping film festival content. The etymology and uses of this term throughout history denotes a different kind of ‘care’ towards the people and the presentation of their works (ibid.).

In relation to film festivals and other cultural institutions, Laura Marks (2004) argues for a more discernible difference between programming and curating. From this perspective, Marks defines ‘programming’ as an ongoing exhibition, largely objective, despite the individual personalities that determine the programme to some extent. Objectivity here does not relate to the decision-making regarding particular films, but rather to how programming an event as a whole is a reflection on the state of the field (ibid). In contrast, she argues that ‘curating’ refers to the organisation of thematic programmes that are driven by concepts and thus follow a subjective agenda. While both approaches are valid and practiced by film festivals, Cousins (2012) argues that curation, which he defines similarly to Marks, should be how festivals convey a distinctive vision. He argues that festivals should create a narrative, a form of storytelling around films and events, rather than operate on formulaic practices, attempting to survey the chosen field or theme.

Finally, Roya Rastegar (2016) talks about the curatorial potential of festival programming, by which she understands the selection of films that represent subjective tastes. Rastegar argues that the programming process consists of two stages: editing and curation. In the editing stage, programmers perform a quantitative evaluation of films, and narrow down or ‘edit out’ from the bulk of films received the ones that will be considered for selection. The curatorial part refers to decision-making, navigating the shortlist and choosing based on certain specific criteria, stakeholder negotiations and personal taste. This process, Rastegar argues, is when programmers take risks, negotiate, compromise and, as a result, actively contribute to shaping film culture (ibid).

These debates around programming and curation emphasise the creative potential and cultural value of the latter. They also indicate that curation, which used to be a practice restricted to the art world, museums and gallery spaces, became more wide-spread and characteristic of a variety of activities and professions. Winton (2016) suggests we live in 'an age of hyper-curation, yet so little attention and discussion is dedicated to the work of curating and the politics of programming'. At the same time, the rise in popularity of curation has implications for how the work of festivals is perceived and recognised. For instance, scholars argue that the definition of curation has become so open and flexible that the term can now be applied to almost anything (Williams, 2009). Shops curate merchandise, music festivals curate stages, blogs curate content.

> The word 'curate,' lofty and once rarely spoken outside exhibition corridors or British parishes, has become a fashionable code word among the aesthetically minded, who seem to paste it onto any activity that involves culling and selecting. … [A]mong designers, disc jockeys, club promoters, bloggers and thrift-store owners, curate is code for 'I have a discerning eye and great taste' (ibid).

This shift is also supported by neoliberalism and the focus on the self-realisation, adaptability and flexibility of 'creative entrepreneurs' (Ellmeier, 2003, p. 3). The popularity and over-use of the term affects its meaning, becoming another way of saying 'select' (Gardner in Dovey, 2015). This perspective downplays the creative work of curators, determined by the rise of professional alongside amateur curators and the inherent de-skilling and populism associated with this role (Balzer, 2015).

This debate is essential to understanding the practice and labour of film festival programmers. People entering the profession come from a range of disciplines and fields of work, they need a variety of skills to programme and organise festivals and most are not clearly defined or associated with these roles. Curators have to navigate the tensions between the ethical responsibility towards others (artists and audiences), towards themselves and the profession. Mark Haslam explores the values and ethical conundrums of programmers and curators and acknowledges that 'Curation is inherently a matter of personal taste and aesthetics' (2004, p. 56). He also argues that

> [T]his can become a problem when one's own tastes are exalted to the level of the absolute. Often along with this comes the attitude that because of this set of aesthetic parameters is now considered absolute, it doesn't need to be articulated, defined, or made explicit to others' (ibid, pp. 56-57).

Haslam argues that it is difficult to challenge and hold to account individual decision-making and groupthink in selection committees.

This issue can explain why practices of programming and the subjective, often difficult to articulate methods for evaluating, selecting films and framing them in a festival context are rarely divulged. Some scholars have engaged with the practices of programming, although this also proved challenging given the lack of consensus around general programming criteria that are applicable to all (or most) film festivals, regardless of size, budget, profile, position in the festival circuit or thematic orientation. Therefore, scholars have focused on the ways festivals define their theme or approach, which illustrates their creative and active role in shaping film culture. Contributions from academics such as Loist (2012) on queer programming strategies at LGBTQ film festivals, Dovey (2015) on African film programming, Armatage (2009) on programming women's film festivals and Córdova, (2012) on the indigenous film festival circuit illustrate the challenges of defining seemingly straightforward topics and the consequences of positioning in the film circuit through this lens.

One of the central issues that emerges from studies of programming festivals but is rarely explored in more detail is the question of ethics. This issue results from the superabundance of film and video produced, difficult to see and evaluate on objective standards (Marks, 2004). It also emerges from the manifold interpretations and deeply personal approach to standards for evaluating artistic quality, content and presentation. As Bosma suggests, programmers or curators navigate key questions such as 'Why is this particular film important?' 'Which criteria or norms did you use?' 'Why is this specific combination of films interesting?' which emphasise the need for more complex answers and guiding principles (2015, p. 44). Winton (2019) argues for more research into 'screen ethics', implying that programmers/curators investigate films' context of production, how they are exhibited and paired, how off-screen events are organised and the reciprocal relationship between makers, subjects and the audience. Winton's use of the term in relation to the study of the commodification at Hot Docs Film Festival in Toronto represents a useful framework for the analysis of programming patterns and underlying tendencies towards populist or radical approaches. My thesis brings an insight into the interplay of screen ethics in curatorial decisions and thus expands on these tendencies.

In addition to exploring programming practices, I also engage with the type of labour undertaken by programmers. As mentioned above, there is no consensus or standardisation

of the profession and the various tasks, skills and activities that programmers do remain hidden from the public eye and from academia. While several studies started to draw attention to the precarious, immaterial labour in the creative industries, less has been written about film festival work. In addition to Loist's (2011) article mentioned above, a small number of other scholars recognised and engaged with the affective and emotional labour of festival programming. Drawing on her own experience, Rastegar argues that programming for larger festivals is 'physically and emotionally taxing' (2016, p. 191). The work often involves intensive periods of film viewing in a vacuum, without other companions, often results in feelings of exhaustion, loneliness and insecurity (ibid). Apart from the rational, intellectual side of programming, the emotional also contributes to film choices, often in difficult to articulate reactions. For instance, seeing differently, being caught 'off-guard' by a story, a character or artistic approach are ways in which programmers articulate their judgements. Therefore, Rastegar's article emphasises the deeply personal and individual process of programming, an area of research that I also explore through the ethnographic, practice-led collaborative study of Document.

Liz Czach has also explored this aspect, which she calls 'affective labour' (2016). Reflecting on her own experience, she adds to the range of emotions that are activated in the programming process. She mentions the emotional, financial and physical toll that working in a precarious environment can have on cultural workers. Festival work in particular, she contends, is characterised by casual, temporary work, constant uncertainty and irregular working patterns, including intensive periods of watching films and rejecting the majority of them. This thesis also recognises the process of managing feelings when rejecting films. While this can be seen a position of powerful gatekeeping, it also involves being at the forefront of the negative repercussions of their decisions (ibid). My thesis adds to this recent body of work and expands on the emotional labour of festival workers, in particular considering the emotional toll of watching images of suffering.

Human rights media infrastructure and film festivals: mapping the middle[7]

Human rights film festivals have been included by scholars in the wider landscape of social concern (FFRN, 2017) or activist film festivals (Tascón & Wils, 2017; Iordanova & Torchin, 2012; Wong, 2011), a subcategory which also consists of identity-based festivals such as

[7] Sally Eagle Merry (2006) uses 'mapping the middle' to explore the role of intermediaries such as community leaders, nongovernmental organisations and activists who move across a gap between transnational ideas and local approaches to human rights.

LGBTQ and indigenous, as well as environmental or disability. Human rights film festivals are also part of the human rights communication infrastructure (McLagan, 2005), one of the specialised intermediaries between human rights discourses, institutions and audiences. Festivals ensure the exhibition and framing of films in a human rights issue-based context, using film as an advocacy tool for a range of audiences: cinema-going spectators, policy makers, film communities and activists. As such, these festivals navigate between several discourses, including the human rights discourse (its institutional and activist forms) and film festival circuit discourse (Wils, 2017, p. 125).

One of the first volumes dedicated to the study of these festivals through a variety of essays and case studies is *Film Festivals and Activism*, edited by Dina Iordanova and Leshu Torchin (2012). The contributions in this book by academics, festival directors, filmmakers and activists frame and map the field of human rights film festivals, their recent history, networks, institutional aspects and practices. This method produces a rich tapestry of issues and debates surrounding activist film festivals (how they facilitate the circulation of films and activist campaigns (Higgins, 2012), how different issues related to LGBTQ (Loist & Zielinski, 2012), indigenous rights (Córdova, 2012), human trafficking (Torchin, 2012c) are connected to activism).

Marigiulia Grassilli's (2012) contribution in this volume provides a brief historical account of human rights film festivals beginning in the US, with Vermont International Film Festival in 1985, followed by the first festival organised by the Human Rights Watch in New York, three years later. Since the 1990s, human rights film festivals have proliferated and expanded to Europe, as well as around the world, developing connections, regional and international networks such as the Human Rights Film Network (HRFN), founded in 2004. Grassilli also provides an overview of the on-going debates and negotiations of human rights discourse that film festivals contribute to through their programming. As such, a seemingly evident definition of human rights as universally recognised and inherent to all human beings becomes more complex as these rights are understood and applied differently within local contexts.

A more detailed breakdown of festivals' approach to human rights can be found in Matthea de Jong and Daan Bronkhorst's chapters in the second handbook produced by the HRFN (2015) and in the edited volume of *Activist Film Festivals* (Tascón & Wils, 2017). Drawing on Marie Bénédicte-Dembour's four schools of thought in human rights studies (2010), they mapped out how various film festivals fit either one or more of these

approaches. Dembour suggests there are at least four schools of thought that conceive human rights differently: the natural school, deliberative school, protest school and discourse school. The natural or principled school thinkers believe that human rights are entitlements that 'one possesses simply by being a human being' (ibid, p. 2), thus emphasising the idea of universality of rights. The deliberative school thinkers argue that human rights are political values that liberal societies choose to adopt (ibid, p. 3). The protest school considers human rights as a platform from which to articulate claims for the poor, unprivileged and oppressed. Finally, discourse scholars do not consider human rights as a given or as a solution to global issues, but they do recognise that the language surrounding human rights has become a powerful tool for expressing social and political claims (ibid, p. 4).

By exploring how several festivals define themselves in relation to human rights, de Jong and Bronkhorst (2017, 2015) provided a categorisation of human rights film festivals. This has never been attempted before, thus advancing the understanding of the diversity of these festivals. De Jong and Bronkhorst compiled this typology based on a survey, inviting other festival directors to position and define their festivals through this framework of human rights schools. While this method is useful and efficient, especially considering the proliferation and variety of human rights film festivals globally, it is limited in scope and detail. For instance, it does not explain why some festivals choose one approach over the other and how this is determined by the historical, geographical, political, economic landscape or by local audiences. It also assumes that what festivals say they do and what they actually do in practice is the same, which is not always the case. My thesis explores how human rights film festivals tend towards certain approaches to human rights (Chapter 3) and attempts to offer a more nuanced understanding of how different human rights schools of thought are articulated through the example of Document (Chapters 4-6).

Tascón (2015) engages critically with the universality of human rights and how festivals respond to and negotiate it by engaging with the historical development of human rights and the comparative study of two festivals (Festival Internacional de Cine por los Derechos Humanos in Buenos Aires, Argentina and the Human Rights Watch Film Festival in New York, USA). Her book engages with this issue in more depth, through the formulation of the 'humanitarian gaze'. She draws on Lilie Chouliaraki's theorisation of 'the humanitarian imaginary' (2013) to describe the way festivals create and manage a way of looking, of expecting to see humanitarian images. Tascón (2015) uses this framework to explain programming patterns at human rights film festivals, where the gaze is constructed to attract audiences based on an implied spectatorship that has a particular relationship to

images of suffering. The humanitarian gaze evokes a relationship of unequal power between who is watching and the watched. Tascón argues that human rights film festivals are part of a geopolitical power manifested through the gaze that may seek impoverishment and pity in others, self-realisation and confirmation of viewers' own goodness. The author adds the geographical direction in which the films turn and states that programming can take a 'looking out' perspective, in line with the idea(l) of universal human rights, framing a model of surveillance, of 'watching others' according to the local/domestic understandings of the concept. At the same time, the 'looking in' dimension refers to films through the places/nations in which the festival is located, revealing an act of watching and framing their own problems.

This conceptualisation of looking relations and positioning is significant in a number of ways. Firstly, it is helpful in framing film festivals through their programming patterns in terms of content and geographical reach. I use this framework in my thesis to explore the wider human rights film festival landscape as well as Document's programming approach in later chapters. At the same time, Tascón's application of this theory is based on an outsider study of the two festivals, surveying their brochures since the first edition. As such, it does not reveal the pragmatic and personal reasons of the programmers who decided these looking relations through the films they selected. Since my research is based on an insider approach, as active participant and observer of film selection, it develops the understanding of the humanitarian gaze through first-hand knowledge of the decision-making process.

Tascón as well as other scholars (Nash, 2018; Collins, 2017; Hamblin, 2016; Pócsik, 2008; Bronkhorst, 2003) explore the notion of human rights cinema, arguing that it is constructed as a genre by human rights film festivals. Human rights films, whether fiction or documentary, are expected to be 'realistic and historically accurate' (Hamblin, 2016, p. 39), imbued with evidentiary capacity and truthfulness (Bronkhorst, 2003; Collins, 2017), to have a compelling narrative with affective content, usually depicting 'sad, sentimental stories' (Nash, 2018, p. 394). Tascón raises the problem of truthfulness and conventions of documentary style which can be undermined or circumvented by filmmakers. She also suggests that human rights films from the Western world can perpetuate colonial representation of the 'Other' and images of suffering and of victimhood at a distance. Analysing narratives in feature length films shown at the Human Rights Watch Film Festival in London and at the Movies that Matter festival in Amsterdam in 2016 and 2017, Nash (2018) provides insight into approaches to the representation of victims. Drawing on Meyers (2011), Wilson & Brown (2009) and Hesford (2011), she notes that films focusing on the

'heroic' victim rather than the 'pathetic' one are more typical for human rights film festivals in the West. This thesis expands on the issues of truthfulness, representation of the subject and the filmmaker's approach arguing that these form a part of the festival's programming ethics and values.

While scholarship focusing on human rights films expanded over the last ten years, the process of programming remained relatively underexplored. There are notable contributions from professionals who draw on their practical experience to provide insights into the challenges and responsibilities of programming human rights film festivals, including Igor Blažević (2012) and his reflections on programming One World in Prague and Tyson Wils' (2017) chapter about the Human Rights Arts and Film Festival in Australia. These case studies mention some of the criteria used for programming such as the relevance of foundational acts such as the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (Wils, 2017), the responsibility to inform and educate, to show empowering characters instead of passive victims of abuses (Blažević, 2012), factual accuracy, testimonies as well as cinematic value (Torchin, 2012a). All of these criteria are shaped by each festival's programming team who operate in specific social, political and economic contexts. Knowledge about these complex negotiations behind film selection remains limited, as it is bounded by each case study. Nevertheless, these case studies provide useful insights into challenges faced by festivals beyond the West, with notable examples about FiSahara (Simanowitz & Santaolalla, 2012) and other festivals (FreedomFest in Malaysia, Freezone in Serbia, Docudays UA in Ukraine) from the HRFN (Kulhánková, et al., 2015). The variety of experiences and insights into organising these human rights film festivals offer a broader perspective of how human rights discourses, institutional practices and films circulate. The case study of Document brings yet another perspective of programming and shaping a particular understanding of human rights cinema – from a grassroots organisation deeply embedded into the local art scene and radical culture. As the literature in the field and this thesis show, human rights film festivals are diverse, dependent on their local contexts and apply various strategies for programming according to their organisation and stakeholders.

In addition to programming and defining human rights film festivals scholars explored the functions of such festivals to create opportunities for activism, social change, and critical spectatorship. Activism and social change have often been linked to human rights film festivals as one of their key aims, beyond showcasing films about human rights violations. As Igor Blažević suggests, the main distinction is 'not the films we screen, but what we 'do' with the films and the interpretive contexts we build for their screenings'

(Blažević, 2012, p. 112). These festivals seek to create a 'testimonial encounter' where festivalgoers 'take responsibility for what they have seen and become ready to respond' (Torchin, 2012a, pp. 2-3). This potential for action or subversion does not emerge automatically from exposure to human rights media, but rather through the activities that take place 'beyond the film' (Iordanova, 2012, pp. 15-16). Post-screening discussions, outreach and community building, education have been used as tools for human rights film festivals to encourage activism and social change (Tascón and Wils, 2017; Iordanova & Torchin, 2012).

Tascón (2017) proposes that one strategy for activism is to revisit the concept of the 'film act', as developed by radical Third Cinema filmmakers and thinkers during the 1960s and 1970s. This political and cinematic movement involved active audience participation in discussions inspired by the films and the relevant context. Other techniques such as Q&A sessions or panel discussions are also opportunities to 'provide basic information as well as social, historical, political and practical information for taking action' (Torchin, 2012a, p.8). As such, activism appears as the function that most human rights film festivals aim for. However, 'activism', 'social change' and 'human rights' are terms which are often used interchangeably, but rarely scrutinised and only viewed in a celebratory way. Torchin recognises that 'although for some it might seem that 'activist' becomes interchangeable with 'human rights'… the issues are much broader, as politics and industry also come into play' (2012a, p. 3). However, activism is not further defined as it is used in relation to the 'testimonial encounter' enabled by the shared experience of viewing films and participating in discussions in the space provided of the festival. This gathering and the 'off-screen' events create 'political opportunities' necessary to act in effective ways (Davies, 2018). In the introduction of their 2017 edited volume on activist film festivals, Tascón and Wils provide a definition of activism as an 'explicitly political action, which attempts to reach to the "heart" of the relations of power that contribute to the problem, and attempts to change the conditions of its creation' (2017, p. 6). This view of activism can also be problematic in relation to human rights discourse and to political activity. On the one hand, activism can assume a one-sided opinion and a didactic or militant approach to promoting its message. For this reason, Blažević indicates his reluctance to select a film that is 'activist', whose 'background betrays a certain ideology and certain values and which explicitly promotes and propagates certain solutions and approaches' (2012, p. 117). This point is important for film festivals that navigate the complex conceptual field of human rights, which holds a variety of meanings and interpretations according to local contexts (see Dembour's four schools of thought mentioned above). As such, I integrate this literature into my thesis to explore how

human rights film festivals negotiate activism and seek to avoid didacticism and forms of manipulation, even while they are directed towards positive change. On the other hand, existing scholarship rarely contests the changing nature of activism in relation to neoliberalism.

Drawing on Jane Gaines' essay 'Political Mimesis' (1999) alongside the comparative study of three festivals, Killick argues that discourses around 'activism' and 'social change' have been subject to a depoliticising process (2017). These terms have gradually lost their political edge, they became 'empty signifiers' as they are more and more entangled with consumerist discourse (ibid). According to the author, neoliberalism's ability to hijack progressive and revolutionary moments is visible in changes of terminology in line with capitalist incentives, such as 'lifestyle activism' or 'social entrepreneur'. These shifts have represented political activity through a series of commodities and consumer choices that change the narrative towards accommodating and naturalising neoliberalism (ibid). This view does not contradict activists' campaigns opportunities for real change that can be facilitated at festivals. However, this thesis argues, in the same vein with Killick's study, that activism needs critical engagement and qualification when discussed in relation to the wider neoliberal system, in order to explain how and where festivals oppose it.

As such, my research explores the concepts of activism and social change critically, in the context of human rights film festivals and focuses in particular on how Document negotiates and partly resists parameters defined by neoliberal policies or other festivals. It also proposes looking beyond issue-based activist tactics to viewing film festivals themselves as forms of cultural activism. Faye Ginsburg defines 'cultural activism' as the way in which 'cultural material is used and strategically deployed as a part of a broader project of political empowerment' (2008, p. 299). Other scholars (Buser & Arthurs, 2012; Verson, 2007) developed the term and practices that connect with other theoretical concepts of performativity (Berlant, 2011) and carnivalesque tactics (Bakhtin, 1984). This thesis argues that human rights film festivals can also deploy cinephilia and carnivalesque practices strategically to empower people to establish their own modes of cultural production and critical thinking. A few texts, such as Dovey's chapter on FiSahara International Film Festival in the Sahrawi refugee camp in Algeria (2015) and Paramaditha's article on Q! Film Festival in Indonesia (2018), emphasise instances of festivals channeling cultural activism. At FiSahara, activism is not necessarily linked to human rights issues, but to the creation of meaning and empowerment in a specific place amongst people who gathered live (Dovey, 2015). The Q! Festival in Indonesia similarly became a form of cultural activism through its

DIY ethos and by creating alternative spaces to provide the LGBTQ communities with access to a variety of art-house and independent films about queer representation (Paramaditha, 2018). Paramaditha also introduces the concept of 'strategic cinephilia' to describe the way in which festivals relate to a specific group through the media, cultural venues and shared keywords, an approach which is useful to apply to festivals that include cinephilia in their discourses. This approach broadens the understanding of how festivals encourage activism beyond issue-based campaigns or social movements.

Ethnographies of film festivals

The type of activism promoted by festivals, the film programme and the discourses surrounding human rights are the result of a range of decisions and negotiations that are rarely visible to the public. For this reason, I suggest that ethnography can provide useful tools to understand contemporary festival practices, including the subjective decision-making and selection of films.

Although ethnography has been used before in relation to film and television production (Born, 2004; Dornfeld, 1998), it was not until later that it was used for film festival studies. Stringer (2003) called for more ethnographic studies of film festivals, to provide more depth and detail of festivals as organisations. While FFS developed significantly since these studies in the early 2000s, not many used ethnographic methods in their approach, perhaps due to the 'insider dilemma' of the scholar. Involvement and immersion to experience the culture from within can potentially compromise the researcher's critical position (ibid). However, within the last ten years, ethnographic studies of film festivals expanded FFS with in-depth research of festivals and audiences (Dickson, 2014), state and politics (Lee, 2013), circulation of films and professionals (Vallejo, 2016; Dovey, 2015) and glamorous work (Mitchell, 2017). Other researchers as festival professionals used auto-ethnography to describe their own experience of programming as affective labour (Czach, 2016) and intuitive practice (Rastegar, 2016). These studies emphasise the necessity of reflexivity over the changing roles and positions of the researcher in relation to the object of study. With constant critical self-exploration and awareness of the researcher's own position and agendas, the benefits of insider knowledge outweigh the risks. Such benefits can include learning and speaking the same language as the research subjects, building relationships with them and discovering practices that remain hidden from the public eye. At the moment of writing this thesis, no ethnography of human rights film festivals was published and available for review. As such, this thesis applies ethnographic methods to the

study of film festivals for the in-depth exploration of meaning-making practices and narratives around programming human rights, documentary films and activism.

Conclusion

The festival phenomenon in its tumultuous expansion requires constant critical surveillance of its systemic transformations as well as an understanding of how and why it works at an individual, local level. This chapter outlined the scholarship focusing on the development of the international film festival circuit, which revealed a complex system of hierarchies, negotiations, inequalities and power struggles. The historical overview also foregrounded the role of the festival director and how it evolved from purveyor of national cinemas to gatekeeper and tastemaker of world cinema, then to entrepreneur and distributor of production funds. However, the existing scholarship also reveals a non-linear, uneven process with festivals operating on the margins of the circuit or beyond the parameters defined by other stakeholders or markets. Studying film festivals from an organisational perspective and exploring their material practices such as programming can be useful for discovering how festival workers articulate curation criteria, and how they respond to organisational change and challenges in the field. This type of research can be achieved through an ethnographic 'close look' at festival organisations and how they interact with global communication flows.

While scholarship about activist and human rights film festivals expanded on human rights films and spectatorship, more research is needed on the subjective decision-making practices behind film programming. A closer look at how programmers evaluate films, justify their choices and what factors influence them might reveal more insights about the mysterious and deeply personal act of programming. This approach also illuminates the profession and actual work of festival programmers, the fulfilling, enriching sides of it as well as the more negative aspects related to precariousness and the emotional toll of watching images of suffering.

This thesis suggests applying the theory of cultural intermediary, introduced by Bourdieu and developed by many other scholars over the past three decades, to the study of human rights film festivals. Through curation, these festivals perform a gatekeeping and taste-making role, actively shaping and defining what human rights cinema is and how it should be consumed. Festival programmes are the result of expert knowledge and symbolic meanings attached to films and discourses. The study of human rights film festivals through

this lens reveals another under-researched aspect of cultural intermediaries: their political potential in achieving social change. Human rights film festivals also reveal the presence of other values and aspirations beyond the art/commerce dichotomy. They demonstrate that solidarity, participatory practices and grassroots organising are integral to their activities and aims. An efficient method of approaching the field is through an ethnographic 'close look' into the organisation that also aims to reveal the wider web of meaning. Thus, I argue that such an approach is particularly useful given the relatively limited number of works on human rights film festivals, largely focused on discourse formation around human rights and the potential for mobilising audiences. Identified as a specialised niche, human rights film festivals have a unique set of stakeholders that often overlap and blur at the intersection of film industry and activism. Immersing in an organisation that combines both stakeholders and agendas from both circuits, I will configure a bottom-up investigation of the phenomenon of human rights film festivals and alternative-oriented organisations. Inextricably linked to its specific content, national framework, as well as the films and human rights infrastructure, the festival is a first point of entry within a wider landscape.

Chapter 2: Methodology – The Journey of Discovery

The previous chapter revealed promising areas of research which are not fully explored, namely the relationship between film festivals as organisations and their institutional context, their programming and meaning-making practices; the 'written' festival; the impact of festivals upon constituent communities; and the relationship between the festival and the wider film industry. This overview demonstrated that film festivals continuously adapt and change their identities to remain relevant in their local and temporal context. This chapter outlines the 'journey of discovery' (Denscombe, 2014) in establishing a methodology for the longitudinal study of Document in Glasgow within its locale as well as the wider human rights film festival landscape. Firstly, I explain how the project developed and changed. Then, I will describe in more detail the research strategy, focusing on the setting and the insider/outsider positioning of the researcher, and finally, I will go through the research design employed in this study, including data collection and analysis.

Project background

Although Document had never been the focus of academic research, its relationship to the University of Glasgow facilitated the emergence of this research project. This relationship started with the creation of the board (in 2007) that gradually admitted a growing number of academics across multiple disciplines (Mo Hume, Senior Lecturer in Politics; David Archibald, Senior Lecturer in Film Studies, University of Glasgow etc.). The interest in developing a research project about the festival, exploring its history and archives, as well as its current practices eventually materialised into this research project. It emerged from both the festival and the university, initiated by David Archibald and Maria Antonia Vélez-Serna (Researcher at the University of Glasgow before joining the University of Stirling in 2015 as Fellow), both academics and members of the board. They were joined in this initiative by Leshu Torchin (Senior Lecturer at the University of St Andrews) and together shaped a PhD programme proposing the ethnographic, longitudinal study of Document and its wider network, which received funding in 2015 under the Applied Research Collaborative Studentship (ARCS) framework. Concomitantly, my own research interests revolved around Document and film festivals more broadly, having just completed my Master's thesis on the topic. I was also interested in undertaking further research centred on the practices of festival programmers, understanding the process and influences on decision-making, the criteria used and the discourses that emerge. This research project encapsulated the practice-oriented approach to film festival programming, as well as the opportunity to further develop my

knowledge of Document. After being appointed as a PhD candidate on this project in October 2015, it became clear that the research itself would become a 'journey of discovery' (Denscombe, 2014) and learning the subject matter as well as methodological approach. Below, I expand on the research aims, some of the opportunities and challenges brought by the ARCS scheme and how these shaped the research strategy.

Research aims

The initial aims of the research project as laid out in the advert for this position were:

- To analyse Document's programming practices and place them in the wider context of global film festivals;
- To map out and identify interactions between Document, other film festivals and local organisations;
- To produce an analysis of Document that will illuminate the developments and forces that shape a human rights film festival and a conception of human rights;
- To develop a methodological approach for the further study of film festivals and film-related activism.

These general aims emphasised the main setting (Document), studied through interdisciplinary research approaches, mainly based on media ethnography, complemented by discourse analysis. This approach was also shaped by the ARCS scheme, which focuses on collaboration, strengthening partnerships between universities and the industry, opening up access to resources and expertise. This type of partnership has become more frequent in the higher education system and is considered part of universities' 'third mission' (beyond research and teaching), to adapt and codify academic research as transferable knowledge and information (Etzkowitz & Leydesdorff, 1997), a phenomenon that still requires more critical enquiry. Scholars who engaged with this issue (Ager, 2016) revealed the motivations behind the rising number of industry-partnered research projects as a drive for legitimacy and accountability. This collaborative approach represents one of the more 'measurable' forms of public engagement and research output, providing wider social and economic benefits (ibid). Film festivals are suitable entry points for the study of culturally significant, public-facing events that link a diverse assortment of individuals, communities, and practices.

Adopting a collaborative framework, this research project was designed to provide opportunities for a more 'hands on' approach. Furthermore, the notion of 'applied research'

was embedded in the project, meaning that not only would I have access to the organisation's resources, but I would actively participate in its activities. This included a placement which was also expected to deliver findings that would inform the festival's work. As such, the project had two outcomes: to contribute to the academic field with insightful, insider knowledge and to share relevant findings with the festival and provide information that supports its organisational development. This framework implied navigating two institutional agendas as well as my outsider/insider roles, further complicated by collaborative work. For this reason, early on I adopted a self-reflexive approach towards each stage of development of the research aims, questions, analysis as well as my own positionality.

Reflexivity, opportunities and challenges of collaborative applied research

One of the first challenges faced at the start of the PhD was to understand the ways in which ethnomethodologies can be applied to the study of cultural intermediaries such as Document, where much of their work takes place behind the scenes. As mentioned in the previous chapter, ethnography only recently began to be used as the main method in exploring and understanding film festivals. As I was new to ethnography, the research process involved a gradual familiarisation with the setting, the people, the rules and rituals. Adopting a self-reflexive stance, I partly reconfigured my research aims considering the collaborative aspect and the particularities of fieldwork.

Access is a key concern for festival studies, constantly negotiated and managed between practitioners and researchers. In the ARCS framework, access was embedded in the project and secured by contract with the festival team from the beginning. As a researcher, I was able to gather data from a variety of sources, such as internal documents (archival data, evaluation reports, funding applications, board minutes, box office statistics, audience data), films (online preview links), free screenings (I received a festival pass which permitted unobstructed access to each of the three editions during my research), events (board meetings, jury and stakeholder meetings) and research subjects (board members, coordinators, local and international collaborators). This wealth of potential data and resources was at times overwhelming and became a challenge for my research design and strategy. Similarly, it was increasingly difficult to decide what constitutes relevant data, as much of the information being collected consisted of snippets of conversation, anecdotes and notes on events. Nevertheless, I agree with scholars who argue that access even to the most mundane situations and ephemeral conversations can provide valuable resources to the

ethnography of film festivals (Dickson, 2017). These ‘fragments of experiences, voices, people, and occurrences’ build ‘an anthology of observation’ (ibid, p. 266) which helps produce ‘thick descriptions’ (Geertz, 1973). Providing detailed descriptions complemented by analysis of the festival organisational and programming practices aims to be a key intervention of this thesis to film festival scholarship and thus, this level of access and the variety of data and resources were essential in developing the ethnography.

Secondly, the industry-partnered research between two universities and the festival introduced another set of opportunities and challenges. On the one hand, this partnership increased my and the festival’s access to academic resources and to the wider postgraduate community at the Universities of Glasgow and St Andrews. Both universities have a sustained interest in and contribution to film festival studies (see the *Film Festival Yearbook* volumes; the *Film Festival Reader*; University of Glasgow’s contributions to the ‘Film Festival Dossier’ of *Screen* Journal edited by Archibald and Miller, 2011, among many others). In addition to research opportunities, the festival and my own placement within it have benefitted from this partnership. For instance, Torchin, one of my academic supervisors, joined an event I organised during Document 2016 (Critical Forum) as keynote speaker and panel member. Thus, she contributed with her knowledge and experience directly during fieldwork, an aspect that is described and analysed in more detail in Chapter 6. This collaboration extended beyond the 2016 edition, as Torchin moderated another event at Document 2017 (‘Truth and Power 1: The Control Room and Other Stories’), illuminating the value that emerges from collaboration facilitated by the social nature of film festivals. On the other hand, this partnership also presented potential ethical challenges for having two supervisors, Archibald and Vélez-Serna, involved in the festival as board members. Having an insider view and stake in the organisation could have caused a potential bias and control over how the festival is presented in this research. However, their position within the organisation was helpful in ensuring and maintaining access. Nevertheless, this potential but unmaterialised risk determined continuous dialogue and self-reflexivity and influenced the research strategy from observing the festival’s practices as a witness to a more active, participatory approach, and to diversifying the voices of research participants to invite more perspectives into the mix.

Moreover, the university/industry partnership of this project invited a broader reflection on the conditions of producing a history and critical study of a grassroots organisation. As discussed throughout the thesis, Document started as a grassroots community organisation, positioned at the fringes of mainstream cultural policy and

institutions, maintaining an independent and do-it-yourself ethos and practice. Conversely, universities, especially through industry-partnered research, are involved in discourses around the cultural economy for the regeneration of the post-industrial city (Ager, 2016). The focus on employability skills, entrepreneurial development and economic benefits is evident in the language describing ARCS projects (SGSAH, 2018). Thus, at times, the universities' agenda in relation to the cultural economy discourse can seem at odds with Document's ethos and approach. Therefore, my research, conducted in this framework, raised questions around the politics attached to the context in which knowledge about such an organisation is produced. More specifically, how does a research project coordinated by two universities fit into this ethos of grassroots action and alternative discourse? For studies of social or cultural phenomena to be critical, they must move up the causal chain from observation, interpretation and categorisation to a reflection on the conditions of production. In other words, should critical reflection also interrogate the way the institutional framework contributes to how history is written and for whom? These questions prompted continuous reflexivity of the ways in which I described and interpreted observations of the organisation and it was important for me to be aware and problematise the institutional framework. This meant also addressing my own positionality towards the research, having the financial stability and privilege offered by the PhD appointment to study an organisation which was, in many ways, precarious.[8] This aspect around working conditions and the labour involved in the process of organising and programming Document was added to the initial research aims.

Research strategy

Based on the challenges and opportunities outlined above, the research design was further developed as a case study, using an interpretive approach towards the mix of quantitative and qualitative methods associated with 'practice-led ethnography', autoethnography and action research, which were deployed gradually, as fieldwork progressed. This approach included a reflexive stance and consideration of my insider/outsider position. The original aims of this research project were reflected by questions 1-5 (see Introduction). However, the self-reflexive process and the framework of this research generated additional key aims that correspond to questions 6-10:

[8] It is also worth acknowledging that my research was also used as a potential advantage for the festival in attesting its legitimacy and reputation. For instance, my research was mentioned in funding applications submitted by Document as evidence to support the festival's role in the cultural landscape.

- To explore creative work and identify the working conditions of the people who run the festival;

- To engage critically with the production of the festival's history and the tension between mainstream and alternative entities and agendas;

- To analyse critically the taste making and gatekeeping functions of film festivals and the subjective dispositions of the people involved in this process;

- To analyse critically the impact of programming against the aims and objectives set out by the festival towards the audience.

Therefore, in this thesis I explore how festival workers interpret and evaluate films, how they encode these texts for consumption and activism as well as the intellectual and affective processes of their work. I attempt an integration, suggested by Marcus and Fischer, between an anthropology based on interpretive or symbolic perspective and a practice-oriented approach in order to focus on both 'form *and* content, on meaning in action' (1986, p. 85; original emphasis).

Some of the existing ethnographic studies of film festivals also incorporate participatory approaches during fieldwork, such as being a camera operator for the festival's blog (Mitchell, 2017) or contributing to writing an anniversary brochure (Lee, 2016) in order to reflect on working conditions and how people articulate the festival's identity and operations. My participation in the festival included direct involvement in the creative practices of programming and event management, with the aim of understanding and analysing the deeply subjective and collective processes of decision-making. These areas of activity are often driven by emotion which can be difficult to articulate. Therefore, I adopt some elements of practice-led ethnography that goes one step further than ethnographic research as it 'renders the familiar strange [...] turning a critical eye onto practices, dynamics, policies and meaning making within familiar cultures' (Goodley, et al., 2004, p. 57). It invites researchers to explore cultures and activities they might feel they already know well and become part of the meaning-making process.

There are a variety of terms that are used to try and label different forms of using practice within research, such as practice-as-research, practice-and-research and practice-based research (Skains, 2018). In this thesis, I follow Skains's definition of practice-led research that 'focuses on the nature of creative practice, leading to new knowledge of operational significance for that practice, in order to advance knowledge about or within practice' (ibid, p. 85). Undertaking programming responsibilities, I focused on the task and

range of activities as well as on the conditions in which programming takes place and how it operates. Practice-led ethnography takes into account cultural practices in a self-reflexive, inter-subjective way, 'wherein the situated and motivated position of the ethnographer him/herself is highlighted as an integral part of the production of knowledge' (Kwon, 2001, p. 76). The collaborative aspect is also pivotal for this research, as 'the informant and the ethnographer are producing some sort of common construct together' (Pinxten, 1997, p. 31). Therefore, my own practice alongside of that of the main research participants – the other members of the selection panel and the board – produced knowledge (festival operation and practices) and the finalised construct (programme).

In order to take a closer look at the cognitive and emotional processes that affect festival programming, I realised that I also needed to look inwards, at my own reactions and sensibilities in selecting films. For this reason, I was guided by autoethnography as a method for collecting data and for writing. Autoethnography 'seeks to describe and systematically analyse (*graphy*) personal experience (*auto*) in order to understand cultural experience (*ethno*)' (Ellis, et al., 2010; original emphasis). Therefore, my personal experience and participation in the programming process became an area to reflect on and explore critically to illuminate the instinctive, emotional aspects that underpin film selection.

Furthermore, autoethnography is a method that aims to connect the researcher's personal self to the broader cultural context (Holman Jones, 2005). Ellis, drawing on Holman Jones, argues that autoethnography treats research as a 'political, socially just and socially-conscious act' (Ellis, et al., 2010). Ethnography and autoethnography have been criticised for the close involvement of the researcher, perceived as a threat to her or his impartiality due to feelings of solidarity or obligation towards the other participants (Dornfeld, 1998). Being immersed in the organisation where I conducted my research into the programmers' point of view, I became positioned in the programmers' camp. Because of this and my professional background, I had feelings of respect and identification with the staff members and their work and realised the potential inhibition of my critical impulses. I shared their frustration with precarious working conditions perpetuated by a neoliberal system that values economic outcomes above everything else and felt critical of the direction in which the demands of the creative industries were moving, creating further inequalities. However, I considered that sharing these concerns could and should be made more explicit in my study and beyond. I thought that I could build on the findings gathered on the conditions of production and stimulate action toward addressing some of these issues. Therefore, in May 2018, during the Radical Film Network Scotland Festival 1968/2018, I organised an event

called ‘Labour of Love’, focusing on working conditions at film festivals in Scotland, an exploratory talk where festival organisers including Document were invited to share their experiences, frustrations and limitations shaped by the existing cultural climate.[9] While this initiative took place after my fieldwork had ended and thus is not analysed in more detail in this thesis, it is an example of action that followed practice-led ethnographic exploration.

Ethnography offers a great insight into human actors and their interactions, emotions and labour. At the same time, it raises the question: what should we, as researchers, do with our findings? If we come across inequalities or precarious situations, should we intervene or remain detached? My position is in agreement with the view outlined above, that research can and should contribute to social change, facilitated by collaboration with the research participants. As Pérez Gómez, et al. (2010) state, the task of researchers who gained knowledge is to move the issues, theories, practices, or conceptions forward, so there are always transformational elements.

Research design

Festivals are a ‘total social fact’ in which many dimensions are involved, including economic, political, religious or cultural aspects (Vallejo, 2017). Following the overview of the research aims and framework, how it changed influenced by the opportunities and challenges identified as well as by the research strategy adopted, this section will provide an overview of the research design utilised in this study. Given the historical and contemporary dimensions of the research and the practice-oriented approach, I had to combine fieldwork with desk-based research and reassess my position throughout each stage. The remainder of this chapter explains the research design, starting with an overview of the location and timetable for the fieldwork. Then, I outline the ethical considerations raised by the project, followed by a detailed account of data collection techniques. Finally, I elaborate on the strategies used for data analysis.

[9] This event was organised in partnership with the Scottish Trades Union Congress (STUC); festivals such as Africa in Motion, Glasgow Short Film Festival, Havana Film Festival Glasgow, Blueprint shorts programme among others participated in the discussion (STUC, 2018).

Fieldwork

According to anthropologist and organisational theorist Van Maanen, ethnographic research involves three constitutive and overlapping tasks: fieldwork, headwork and textwork. Fieldwork is a way of gathering research materials by

> subjecting the self – body, belief, personality, emotions, cognitions – to a set of contingencies that plan on others such that over time, usually a long time, one can more or less see, hear, feel and come to understand the kinds of responses others display (and withhold) in particular social situations. (Van Maanen, 2011, p. 219)

I explored Document mainly through this approach, focusing on the flow of information within and beyond the organisation as well as on the people that are part of it. As mentioned earlier in this chapter, Document provides a unique and interesting research setting to explore the festival's role as a network for the circulation of people, ideas and practices around documentary film and human rights.

Document is a relatively small festival, with a core staff of two to three part-time coordinators, several temporary employees around the festival dates, a board of approximately ten members and a Chair. The festival has an office at the CCA, but the board meetings are usually held at the University of Glasgow campus facilitated by Archibald who, when I started fieldwork in 2015, was the Chair. Fieldwork began on the eve of Cayley James' departure from the organisation as festival coordinator after the 2015 edition, and the appointment of a new team of coordinators – Eileen Daily, Sam Kenyon and Sean Welsh. The core staff changed each edition since then, with Daily and Welsh continuing in 2017 followed by Kenyon, Richard Warden and Sanne Jehoul in 2018. As such, fieldwork took place in the context of organisational change and the process of transition from one team of coordinators and programmers to another. This introduced several challenges, such as having to get to know and gain the trust of each team, finding my role within the new structure, explaining the nature of the partnership and my research and discovering their positions and expectations.

Frequent organisational change complicated the process of uncovering and understanding the regular practices, rituals, patterns, beliefs and systems in operation. As staff changed every year, fieldwork observation was hindered. Rather than the familiar, usual, everyday life of an organisation, I was studying the atypical, urgent and particular, starting again with each team. New staff had a relatively short handover before dealing with

deadlines, planning and organising. Therefore, they had less time for designing a strategy or developing as an organisation. With each change, it felt that my role and observations would also start afresh. Consequently, this affected the way I conducted fieldwork and the methods of collecting data. For this reason, the timeframe for fieldwork and placement within the festival, which was initially set out only for the 2016 edition, continued in 2017, following the festival's cycle of production.

The planning of the timing and places of fieldwork were influenced by this situation. Ethnographers speak about 'entering', 'leaving' and 'returning' to the field 'as if they pass through portals' (Chacko, 2004), as a process of exchanging one setting and identity for another. While the festival, the home and the office are distinct physical sites, the difference between personal and research time became more blurred throughout fieldwork. As this chapter describes in greater detail, some of the participant activities I performed took place at home or away from the main festival site. Consequently, the distinction between 'entering' and 'leaving' the field were not strictly delimited. Similarly, it was challenging to decide when to conclude fieldwork, as I continued to be involved in the festival beyond the end of 2017 and felt the urge to keep observing, collecting data and analysing important developments. From this perspective, festivals can pose multiple challenges such as how to capture, record, and analyse the rich qualitative and quantitative data they produce across a variety of time periods, phases of festival planning, production, and consumption (Jepson & Clarke, 2016). This type of fieldwork, with unclear boundaries resembles the nature of such organisations, which are in a permanent state of flux.

Another challenge arose from the blurred boundaries of the physical spaces of conducting fieldwork. Fieldwork in an organisation involves prolonged immersion in a specific physical space, observing and interacting with individuals as they go about their daily activities (Bryman, 1989). Document, as well as many other smaller film festivals, has an intermittent activity and much of the work takes place beyond an office or another physical site. As Van Maanen suggests, organisations are 'becoming more complicated, diffuse, and fragmented as organizational forms and managerial strategies shift in response to the […] VUCCA world – volatile, uncertain, chaotic, complex, and ambiguous' (2011, p. 225). Film festivals are shaped by place and time as well as the people who run them, thus having to adapt and survive in this VUCCA world. The development of digital platforms has changed the organisational processes. The films submitted by filmmakers can be accessed and viewed online. Most of the communication between festival organisers also takes place online, via email, text messages and chat platforms such as WhatsApp or Facebook. This

type of communication often replaces office work or face-to-face meetings due to convenience as well as working conditions. Most of the programmers involved in Document during fieldwork managed several jobs simultaneously, they had to become effective at multi-tasking and juggling their other activities. These arrangements further complicated the opportunities to observe and participate in the day to day activities of the organisation. This perspective challenges the notion of 'being there', immersed in the organisation and invites reflection on ethnographic work in the digital age – how can fieldwork be conducted in virtual worlds and can it hold the same authority and detail? Addressing the role of anthropology in the context of globalisation and deterritorialisation, Appadurai (1991) supports the idea that ethnographers have to reconsider the field beyond locality, 'the here' and 'the elsewhere'. Instead, space should rather be conceptualised as a 'political location'. This represents a shift from understanding space as being geographically bound towards embracing the openness of cultures in contemporary society, the presence of cyberspace and the impact of the Internet in organisational life (Wittel, 2000). However, the implications for ethnographic practice have not been fully analysed and methods need to be updated regarding the place of the researcher and the role played by these forms of communication and interaction, which can create invisible barriers to observation. These challenges and limitations led to the use of other methods in addition to fieldwork, which is why this thesis combines first-hand observation and participation with historical and textual analysis.

My study also involved exploring Document in the wider context of global film festivals, identifying and mapping out its interactions with local as well as international organisations and media flows. Therefore, the research design also included fieldwork in settings that provide an insight into the circulation of films, people and ideas among festivals. Multi-sited ethnography (Marcus, 1995) has been proposed as a tool for following cultural products, ideas, people and practices as they circulate in a global context. Studies adopting multi-sited ethnographic approaches in relation to film festivals are still relatively rare but they illuminate programming practices and industrial partnerships that remain obscured by national discourses of film production and distribution (Vallejo, 2017). Similarly, I conducted fieldwork at multiple sites, including a visit to International Documentary Film Festival Amsterdam (IDFA) for the HRFN annual meeting in November 2017 and to the One World Human Rights Film Festival in Bucharest, Romania in March 2017.

Data collection

While this study is primarily based on qualitative research, drawing on a plethora of data collecting opportunities – interviews, observation, documents and artefacts – it also utilises quantitative methods to complement and contextualise fieldwork. To this end, in order to elicit as rich a data set as possible this study utilises an 'ensemble' of research methods, including interviews, observation, field-diary, and document analysis.

Data Type	Details

Documents and ephemera	• **Internal documents**
	  ○ Funding applications and reports to Creative Scotland (previously Scottish Screen) and Glasgow City Council 2003-2018;
	  ○ Board minutes 2010-2018;
	  ○ HRFN minutes 2011-2017;
	  ○ Evaluation Day report 2009; Audience questionnaire 2010, 2011;
	  ○ Legal documents;
	  ○ Submissions mastersheet (full list of submitted films) 2016-2018.
	• **Official festival media and documents**
	  ○ Brochures (print & online) 2003-2018;
	  ○ Posters, flyers, programme notes 2016-2018;
	  ○ Press releases 2016-2018;
	  ○ Clips, recordings and photographs 2016-2018.
	• **Festival's website and social media accounts 2016-2018**
	  ○ Document website;
	  ○ Document Facebook, Twitter and Instagram.
	• **News/other media**
	  ○ Online publications The List, Skinny, The National, Herald Scotland;
	  ○ Personal blogs;
	  ○ Ephemera (promotional materials) of other organisations distributed during Document 2016-2018;
	  ○ HRFN website and social media account.

Interviews	• 11 formal semi-structured interviews, audio recorded and transcribed
	  ○ 3 group interviews (two with the same group);
	  ○ 9 out of 11 conducted in person and 2 by Skype.

Observation and participation	Fieldwork between January 2016 and April 2018 included a total of 280 hours (approximately) detailed below.
	I spent 150 hours observing and participating in Document and around 100 hours for viewing submissions.
	• **Films**
	  ○ 11 films viewed in 2016;
	  ○ 11 films viewed in 2017;
	  ○ 3 films (co-presentations);
	  ○ 112 films viewed during the programming process 2016-2017.
	• **Events**
	  ○ 7 events (attendance and observation);
	  ○ 2 events (facilitation of the Critical Forum).
	• **Board meetings**
	  ○ 26 meetings, 2 hours each.
	• **Programming meetings**
	  ○ 8 meetings, approx. 2 hours each.

	Additionally, I spent 30 hours observing One World Romania and the HRFN annual meeting – related events. • 6 Films • 6 Events

Table 2.1. Types of data collected for this study

Desk research: materials, ephemera, statistics and databases

One of the concerns throughout my research was to not lose sight of the wider field of human rights film festivals and Document's position in the circuit. I began by exploring archival materials and the online presence of other human rights film festivals, and soon I realised that I needed quantitative data to fully understand the broader trends and contexts. Festival scholars have called for quantitative data (Armatage, 2009; de Valck, 2007; Stringer, 2003) to provide a balance between particularity and generalisation. Festivals frequently utilise figures in their internal reports as well as in their relationship with funders or other stakeholders, to evidence progress and growth. From a researcher perspective, numbers can be indicative of wider changes around festivals and cultural policies. For instance, Cheung (2009) uses the income and expenditure figures from the Hong Kong International Film Festival Society's annual reports to track the corporatisation of the festival. Armatage (2009) suggests she 'craved hard data' for her study of women's film festivals, arguing that archives, reports and other material documents are key to understanding the history and growth of ephemeral but significant events. Similar to other ethnographic studies of film festivals that aim to balance qualitative detail with quantifiable facts (Mitchell, 2017; Dickson, 2014), I also used existing hard data for a number of reasons. Firstly, it is an important aspect of festival operation, so it gave me an opportunity to learn and speak the organisational language. Secondly, putting together data extracted from the festival's history helped with the visualisation of changes and the contextualisation of the current practices which were investigated through fieldwork. In this process, I also generated data about the wider landscape and Document that complemented my subjective perceptions as well as the wider theoretical observations of film festival scholarship.

Many studies of activist and human rights film festivals begin by mentioning their proliferation and unequal geographical spread, without providing specific numbers. I updated the existing overview of the number of human rights film festivals in the world collected by Beatriz Tadeo Fuica (2012) in *Film Festivals and Activism*. This approach is necessary to uncover the human rights film festival landscape and to explore its geographic and temporal development. As such, similarly to Loist's (2014) mapping of LGBTQ film

festivals, I created a database of festivals that either have 'human rights films' in their title or as a main feature in their programme, adding the year and location where they were founded (Appendix I). I introduced the data on a world map generated by Google that visually represents festivals as different coloured pins according to the decade in which they were founded.[10] This map illustrates the density of festivals in Europe and North America as opposed to the Global South, which immediately draws attention to the political, social and economic contexts that enable this type of festival to exist and proliferate.

Although the development of the Internet made festivals from around the world more visible and easier to trace, it is possible that the database and map have omissions. Some festivals that were cancelled after a few editions or others that did not have the means to produce websites or have an online presence, have not been included in this database. However, I investigated several platforms – from a Google search on key words to specialised websites containing thousands of festivals (Film Freeway and Without a Box) and the HRFN database, which also contains an updated list of its 43-festival members. Thus, even if not exhaustive, the data compiled for this research is representative of the current human rights film festival landscape.

Another part of my research focused on the history and development of Document, detailed in Chapter 4. Drawing on the internal documents that I had access to (festival evaluation reports and funding applications), I produced a spreadsheet containing several data fields: income/expenditure, total number of films (highlighting Scottish productions) and audience numbers. Document staff struggled with archiving each edition, given the lack of funds and time. For five years, the organisation did not have a formal office where archive materials (brochures, press clippings, photos, films, forms and applications) could be stored. As such, most of these were scattered, distributed among staff members, a practice which becomes an impediment for the researcher in their attempt to reconstruct a thorough and detailed chronicle of the festival. Some of these materials were digitised and uploaded on cloud storage platforms such as Dropbox and Google Drive, which are free and accessible, but these archives had limited materials and lacked consistency. This meant that in order to provide an accurate overview, I had to find other sources. Interviews and oral history (detailed in another section in this chapter) were partly helpful, while also presenting their own challenges and lacking precision.

[10] The map can be accessed online at this link: https://goo.gl/C3r9sU.

As the main funding bodies that supported Document changed over time, the forms and type of information requested also differed from one year to the other. While I could collect data about the number of films and audience figures for each edition, the income/expenditure category was absent from some reports. However, the sources and amount of funding that Document received had changed little over the years until I started fieldwork, when it increased significantly compared to previous applications.[11] Therefore, the data gathered from the festival's 16-year history offered an insight into how the festival developed, and how its various components (funding, audience, programming) evolved (or remained unchanged) over time in response to internal reforms or to the wider festival circuit and cultural policy. The data was contextualised with the reasons behind each change and proved useful in understanding festival development in a clear-cut manner.

Finally, I collected quantitative data of the festival programming over the two editions in which I participated as a member of the selection panel. This was useful for identifying and comparing the different stages of programming based on the source the film came from (either from the open submissions, collaborations or sourced directly from filmmakers, distributors or other festivals) and the country of production. Programming has been called 'a numbers game' in both professional and academic circles due to the increase in quantity of films produced and the rejection of many which end up not being seen (Rastegar, 2016). This system perpetuates inequalities among filmmakers, countries of production and some topics over others, reinforcing the 'humanitarian gaze' (Tascón, 2015). I used quantitative methods to account for the amount and diversity of incoming films and themes and to compare it with the finalised programme. As will be further analysed in Chapter 5, having hard data together with the narrative of the decision-making process contributed to a holistic understanding of how Document constructed the programme. Although I fully anonymised the films' production details for this study, apart from those that ended up in the final selection, this represents unprecedented access into the various elements that make up a festival's programme.

This part of the research was beneficial to the organisation as well. While collecting internal documents to analyse the festival's development, I helped digitise some materials (such as the brochures of Document 1-4) and gather others which were scattered among former members. The brochures were used as a promotional tool in the eve of Document

[11] Document funding from Creative Scotland (previously called Screen Scotland) gradually increased from an average of £5,000 per edition to £15,000 in 2015, £25,000 in 2016 and 2017 and £31,500 in 2018. More details on funding can be found in Chapter 4.

2017, functioning as an online archive for the audience. I was also able to contribute alongside board members and the coordinators with some of this information to the funding application to Creative Scotland, particularly regarding the description of the organisation and its history.

Ephemera and archives

Beyond offering quantitative details, festival materials and ephemera offered rich material evidence of how the festival self-defined and addressed the public, the language used in describing films and the identity of the event itself. Daniel Dayan's (2000) influential chapter on Sundance made an important contribution by discussing the 'verbal architecture' and various 'scripts' performed by different publics in the space of the festival. This web of 'verbal architectures' is composed of those materials produced by and about festivals – catalogues, reviews, essays and their circulation that contribute to the definition and promotion of festivals:

> Observation and interviews were obviously helpful, the festival's most striking – and to me most unexpected feature concerned the role of print […] a Niagara of printed paper was spelling out meanings, offering captions, telling and retelling daily events until they reached a stable, paradigmatic form (ibid, p. 52).

Dayan focuses on the importance of printed texts, their production and their circulation, how they serve as unifiers, catalysts for the community and propositions for a shared experience. Focusing on such ephemeral written materials, Zielinski (2016) argues that, especially in the case of small, community-oriented film festivals, these may be the sole remaining material evidence and a testament to how the festival expresses its identity. The circulation of ephemera has a specific temporality, setting a rhythm as well as expectations (ibid). As such, the production and dissemination of ephemera follows the festival cycle and the constraints placed on them by other circuits and contexts it is part of. Therefore, while observing the festival event, I collected materials found at the venue, from programming notes distributed before a screening to flyers belonging to activists and NGOs and considered them as part of the discourse surrounding the festival.

Immersing in the field: insider and outsider

Given the nature of the research project, both observation and participation were particularly useful research tools. However, observation is a skilled practice in itself and the researcher does not always occupy the same 'observational role' throughout the fieldwork. Raymond

Gold (1958) proposed a typology of ethnographer roles when conducting observation that has influenced how subsequent researchers approached their position in the field (Dickson, 2017; Irvine, 2014). The most detached from the research setting is the complete observer, who does not take part. Conversely, the complete participant is fully immersed in the field, followed by the middling models of participant as observer and observer as participant, where the latter gives slightly more prominence to observation and the former to participation (Gold, 1958). Researchers may have to employ more than one mode depending upon the specific research aims and context, the '[r]eality of fieldwork is that involvement covers not only being an observer, but also being an actor, author, teller and writer' (Coffey in de Laine, 2000, p. 149).

Participant observation is a term often used by researchers who apply ethnomethodologies to their study of film festivals, which involves a more active stance in the field. The notion itself is problematic and oxymoronic because while 'participation implies emotional involvement; observation requires detachment' (Paul, 1953, p. 441). It involves immersing in the field to understand the world as it is seen by those acting within it (Brewer, 2000). As such, the participant observer has to perform a dual role, 'as part insider, part outsider […] to be simultaneously member and non-member, and to participate while also reflecting critically on what is observed' (ibid, p. 60). This position differs from 'observant participant', when the researcher takes an existing role to investigate a familiar or unfamiliar setting (ibid). I find this distinction important for this study of film festivals as it highlights the subtle differences between the various roles performed by a researcher within an organisation. The distinction between participant observer and observant participant implies a shift from a passive to a more active role (Moeran, 2009). While participant observation requires deep immersion and observation of the setting, observant participation means becoming part of the group/organisation and directly contributing to the setting. This shift represents a 'qualitative leap' for the fieldworker, which can lead to a more nuanced analysis of the organisation being studied (ibid). My role during fieldwork shifted within these parameters, from a passive observation-oriented role, to an active practice-led participation within the festival itself. Participant observation was an important part of my fieldwork and was oriented both internally (within the organisation) and externally (other events and interactions). On the one hand, I investigated the decision-making process in programming, the language (festival narratives, promotional rhetoric), exhibition practices and interactions at Document. On the other hand, I observed other settings beyond Document in order to be able to respond to research questions about the organisation and the broader landscape.

Participant observation

Since I began fieldwork at the end of 2015, I attended 26 board meetings. These were held monthly and lasted between two and three hours. They usually followed a standard agenda and minutes were taken on a volunteer basis by one of the attendees. The written records of these meetings began with the first initiatives of a board in 2008, but they were improved considerably when the board was formally constituted, to include more detail and accuracy. With a new team of coordinators starting their activity in early 2016, the board meetings provided an organisational framework in which the staff met regularly with the board for advice and discussions. At the same time, it provided a glimpse into the organisational structure and hierarchy, the internal circulation of ideas and responsibilities. As the next chapters will show, Document's development as an organisation took place gradually and introduced more hierarchy and formality into the grassroots model. By observing these meetings, I was able to identify the decision-makers, the dialogical process and the level of supervision of the board over the coordinators, as well as the points of contention and impasse. My participation in these meetings was minimal, as an occasional minute-taker and by giving a brief five-minute report of my research progress. I made a decision early into fieldwork to not get more involved in these discussions as I was not a member of the board, nor part of the coordination team. Also, given my position in the university as a PhD researcher, and having two board members as my supervisors, I wanted to maintain a more neutral position. All members gradually became aware of my position as researcher and overt observer. This allowed me to establish some level of critical distance towards this aspect of festival organisation. Even though I positioned myself as an insider, having access to these internal meetings, my non-participative behaviour emphasised my outsider role. This meant that there was still a degree of caution towards my recording and interpretation of the facts.

I adopted a similar detached position when I attended Document 14 and 15 and One World Romania in 2017 as an audience member. As Dickson suggested in relation to her research of festival audiences, being an '*audience insider* would mean distancing from the organisation by becoming a *festival outsider*' (2017, p. 267; original emphasis). To experience the festival from the audience's perspective and spectators' participation in the festival, I followed their cinema-going behaviour. Festival organisers or volunteers experience the event differently, running from one venue to the other, skipping films or viewing parts of them. As an audience member, I tried to navigate events as I would at any other festival, making choices about which event to attend, going in and out with the rest of

the attendees. In this instance, I was a covert observer as the audience were not aware of my researcher position. At the same time, I was not fully an outsider, as my access to the festival was granted by a festival accreditation and I knew the programme in advance. While this position offered an insight into the festival from the perspective of an audience member, this thesis does not analyse and study audiences in more detail. While observations around their behaviours and interactions with the festival are mentioned in the thesis (especially in Chapter 6), a deeper analysis is beyond the scope and framework of this research project.

The role of participant observation extended throughout my fieldwork. I observed the jury meetings of both Document 14 and 15, as the appointed members decided on the winning film and the process of reaching that decision. I also observed a meeting between Document's coordinators, the Chair of the board and a representative of Creative Scotland, the festival's main funder. In these situations, I was an overt observer and maintained a degree of confidentiality in my notes. These meetings were not recorded, and my notes only contained information about the decision-making process (in the case of the jury deliberation) and the points of interest for funding (in the Creative Scotland meeting). My main objective for these situations was to observe how the festival was narrated by the organisation and how it was perceived by others.

Finally, following Toby Lee's experience of immersing in the broader social and cultural field in which the Thessaloniki Film Festival unfolded (2008), I also took into account the current events, the political and social changes that took place in the city during my research. For instance, I attended other film festivals in Glasgow, which also collaborate with Document and take place mainly at the same venue in Glasgow, the CCA. I also joined the Radical Film Network (RFN)[12] Scotland and the Film Action Exhibitors (FAE) network for film exhibitors operating in Scotland. Document is part of both of these informal networks. Similar to the HRFN, these Scottish-based networks also offer support, share resources and opportunities, they are grassroots initiatives that aim to connect and build solidarity among marginalised or precarious organisations. The research questions (4 to 7) demanded a closer look at the local cultural landscape and networks and thus, attending these

[12] The RFN is an international network formed in London in 2013 by a group of academics, activists and filmmakers involved in radical film culture, interested in collective action and solidarity (www.radicalfilmnetwork.com). The Scotland arm of the network is an informal collective of people involved with radical moving image culture. Their first event, RFN Festival and Un-conference, took place in May 2016.

meetings and events provided an insight into the wider alternative film community in Glasgow, how people, funds and ideas circulate.

Observant participation

As mentioned earlier in this chapter, through the contractual partnership between the two universities and the festival, I had access to all aspects of the festival as well as being a co-opted member of the programming team and organiser of the student forum. What some anthropologists call a 'lucky break' that allows the researcher to make a meaningful contribution to the organisation they are studying, giving them further access and local knowledge (Moeran, 2009), I had readily available from the start. Nevertheless, these participatory roles still required negotiation and constant reflection over their aims and outcomes.

Regarding film viewing, I tried to watch as many as the other members of the panel (there were five of us in 2016 and four in 2017), so I would have a similar experience as them. In total for both editions, I watched as first or second viewer 112 films received through the open submissions. Between the submission deadline in May and the finalised programme in August, we had to watch a high number of films in a relatively brief period. In addition, the coordinators also researched and sourced films directly from filmmakers or distribution companies, which increased their viewing time. In the busiest months of this process, each of us in the selection panel watched at least ten films per week, which we then discussed in a programming meeting. As such, it involved many hours of viewing time, complemented by additional research and discussion. Additionally, the majority of the films depicted human rights violations, struggles, suffering and trauma. This aspect contributed to my understanding of the programming process as emotional labour and prompted further discussions with the rest of the team and theoretical development on the issue. I recorded observations during film viewing in a diary (See diary extract in Appendix H) and I used some of these reflections to feed into the conversations I had with the coordinators to understand and evaluate our contribution. I also provided a summary of the process and main programming questions and concerns to the new selection committee in 2018. This provided a direct knowledge exchange activity where findings of my research were shared with people working for the organisation to improve and develop its practices.

The second activity during my placement was to organise the student forum. This task, which I completed in 2016 and 2017, provided a different experience and insight into

festival work, which involved brainstorming, planning, seeking and managing funding, negotiating with guests and filmmakers, promotion, the delivery of the event and evaluation – some of the main activities deployed at a larger scale for the whole festival. In comparison with my programming contribution, this role involved more independent work and control, while still collaborating closely with the festival's coordinators. While the general idea for the outline of the event was mine, I collaborated closely with the coordinators to develop and organise it. I felt an increased responsibility and pressure as both agendas – of the academia and the festival became more entangled. On the one hand, I had to choose a topic that would be of interest to both the academic community and the wider festival audience. I wanted to use the opportunity to engage the public with some aspects and questions of my research, without making it academic-oriented. On the other hand, I was operating under the festival umbrella, which meant that the way I behaved and organised this event would have direct consequences for the festival's image and reputation. Aside from these tasks, I also had to record and take notes of the event that I could return to later for my research. Chapter 6 provides more detail on the specific challenges encountered in this experience that contributed to further understanding some of the particularities of organising events on sensitive, human rights issues.

In order to take a critical approach and analyse the process and outcome of the forum organised for both Document editions, I needed some distance from the event and the festival. I encountered similar problems as Dovey (2015), who also draws on her own professional experience in founding, directing and curating to inform her research interests of African film festivals. She felt it was 'difficult to achieve the necessary critical distance when evaluating one's own work, making it all too easy to adopt an inappropriately self-congratulatory tone' (ibid, p. 23). This challenge intensified, as I needed to repeat the narrative of success in reports submitted to funders and in highlighting the benefit for the wider audience. However, this made me reflect on the questions related to the role of festivals more broadly, such as: What makes a successful event? How to understand value and measure it? What were the aims of the event and were they achieved? I applied these questions to both of the events I organised as well as to the others organised by the festival. This approach allowed me to develop a critical evaluation of the live event as it is understood by my own and the coordinators' subjective practice. Similar to Winton & Turnin (2017) and Dovey (2015), I also argue that it is important to recognise our own role in the culture we are studying, how 'we (as researchers) may also bring about change, and be changed' (Dovey, 2015, p. 22).

Semi-structured interviews and group discussions

This thesis includes the voices of the people who, either in the past or during my fieldwork, were involved in the festival. As mentioned earlier in this chapter, I interacted with people within the organisation – the board and the new coordinators soon after my appointment started. However, I delayed formal interviews on the basis that I would have a more formulated and comprehensive line of enquiry following an observational period. Thus, I conducted the first interview in September 2016, at the end of the programming process for Document 14, after a few months of observation and participation as part of the selection panel. All interviews were audio-recorded, and each participant completed a consent form prior to the interview, which authorised me to tape our discussion. Interviews lasted an average of one hour each, nine were face-to-face and two were conducted by Skype. Given the focus on both the history and current practices of the festival, I interviewed a wide range of people who worked or collaborated with Document. The group of people interviewed increased during the research, as I received more recommendations or was prompted by developing research questions to extend the reach.

- Festival staff: Mona Rai (Document co-founder and Programme Coordinator 2003-2012), Paula Larkin (Document co-founder and Festival Coordinator 2003-2011), Cayley James (Assistant coordinator 2013-14; Document coordinator 2015), Eileen Daily (Coordinator at large Document 2015 and Document coordinator 2016-17), Sam Kenyon (Document coordinator 2016 and 2018) and Sean Welsh (Document coordinator 2016-17).

- Board members: Mo Hume (Document 2005-2012), Chris Bowman (former Document Technical Coordinator since 2003 and board member 2011-2018).

- Collaborators: Leigh French (Document Secretary 2003), Euan Sutherland (Document collaborator; Radical independent Bookfair).

- Other collaborators/networks: Andrea Kuhn (Director of Nuremberg International Human Rights Film Festival, Germany and Document jury member 2011, 2012), Dirk van der Straaten (Director of Movies that Matter, The Netherlands and chair of the Human Rights Film Network 2015-2018) and Alexandru Solomon (Director of One World Romania, 2008-2017).

These interviews provided a balanced configuration of voices and opinions. For instance, apart from Mo Hume, who was one of the first board members and the founder of the student forum, I did not interview others. The only exception was Chris Bowman, who has a role of board member after working with Document as Technical Coordinator and in the selection panel. Other former board members were hard to reach or their involvement

with Document was unclear based on existing records. Regarding current board members, I decided that their voices are sufficiently represented in this thesis. On the one hand, two of my supervisors who were also board members argued that there is no need for a formal interview since their opinions are reflected through their feedback for my thesis. On the other hand, I was able to observe the other board members' opinions in the monthly meetings, which were recorded in the minutes.

I opted for a semi-structured technique, as it allowed me to cover each point I wanted to address, but also let the conversation vary. Based around the different group categories (staff, board or external collaborators), I had a pre-determined set of questions focused on organisational narratives and human rights discourse, but I anticipated that my interviewees would also raise and add interesting topics that I had not considered before (a sample interview script can be found in Appendix G). The most extensive interviews were the group discussions with the coordinators of Document 14. I interviewed them as a group in September 2016, when the festival schedule was almost finalised, one month before the festival and once again, in the same format, over a month after the festival, in December 2016. While these interviews had some of the pre-established questions mentioned earlier, they also included a facilitated discussion based on sharing experiences of programming and the aims of the festival. The post-festival interview took a reflexive approach towards the outcomes of the festival as well as the programming process and the organisation as a whole. In both of these interviews, the coordinators entrusted me with their private opinions and responded with honesty. This may have been due to my participation alongside them in the programming process as we experienced the same difficulties. It could also be because they knew of my primary research agenda and supervision that I had from Vélez-Serna, who monitored the way the festival was presented in the thesis, making sure there were no inaccuracies.

While I did not opt for anonymity in any of the interviews (I discuss ethics later in this chapter), I offered each participant the opportunity to choose how they shared information, either on or off the record. There were a few instances when I was given information off the record, which I respected faithfully. I felt privileged that the interviewees felt confident in sharing sensitive matters with me and accepted that this is a reasonable request common in any organisational environment. I sometimes acted similarly even when 'off the record' was not mentioned, when I felt that interviewees were hesitating to say something that was definitely from the 'backstage' of the organisation. This approach allowed me to take part and understand some situations and opinions, even if they remained on a personal, private

level. This contributed to consolidating my position and trust within the team and gaining additional insider knowledge.

The interviews I conducted with Document collaborators contributed to my understanding of the festival's history as seen by others, less involved in the day to day running of the organisation. Leigh French and Euan Sutherland's connection to the art scenes in Glasgow and to Document allowed further contextualisation of the cultural, political and social landscape of the city. For this research, I also conducted interviews with people outside Document that had a temporary interaction with the festival (such as Andrea Kuhn) as well as with directors of other human rights film festivals (Alexandru Solomon) and networks (Dirk van der Straaten) that complemented my findings. I asked the interviewees the same questions related to the approach to human rights through cinema, as well as about their particular programming process. Their responses offered an opportunity to compare and contrast programming practices and highlight the main factors that influence them such as the increase of film availability, the experimentation with the documentary form and the wider political landscape.

Ethics

As a researcher based at the University of Glasgow, I adhered to the ethical procedures of the institution. As such, I formally submitted my ethics application in early January 2016, before any participation or interviews and it was approved on 10 March 2016.

The main ethical considerations outlined by the university's ethics committee that were applicable to my investigation were:

- Issues of confidentiality of verbal and material information provided by research subjects;

- Issues of consent and transparency of the purpose and potential uses of the research.

As part of my research, I engaged with human research subjects throughout my participant observation period in a variety of situations and contexts. In all instances when I was an audience insider, observing Document and other festivals from a distance, I seldom knew the identity of the people I was observing, so they remained anonymous. Likewise, in my interactions with other film professionals during the HRFN networking meetings, I did not have the opportunity to discuss my research, and therefore many of them were not aware

of my other role beyond that of festival delegate. Another instance where my role was not overt was the film viewing phase when those who submitted films were not aware of my research. In all of these situations, the participants and their work remained anonymous. Nevertheless, the questions of anonymity and confidentiality did require much thought in relation to the research subjects and the internal materials I had access to.

In terms of the semi-structured interviews, considering the size of the organisation and the content of the interviews, anonymity would have been redundant (Vallejo, 2017). Before the fieldwork and the interviews, I handed each participant a consent form (Appendix F) explaining the research project and how the information will be used and stored. By signing it, the participants agreed to have their identity known. As this research focuses on the people who run the organisation and on their meaning-making practices, interviews represent an opportunity to give them a voice in the complex 'web of significance' (Lee, 2016, p. 123) that surrounds a festival. At the same time, it was clear that their voice was analysed and interpreted through my own personal and academic filters (Chacko, 2004).

My observation of internal meetings was granted through consent forms signed by each participant. All board members and coordinators that attended these meetings were informed of my research methods and aims. As some board members left while others joined the organisation during my fieldwork, I recorded these changes and kept all new participants informed of my research and participant observation. On those rare occasions when I did not have consent forms with me, I asked for informed consent verbally, which was then recorded in the board minutes. I proceeded similarly with the HRFN annual meeting, which I attended in 2017. I sent an email to the HRFN's board members in advance, presenting my research project and my request to observe the meeting. They first asked the entire network for their agreement before accepting my attendance as researcher and Document delegate. At the meeting, I asked for consent from the members in attendance, which was granted verbally and recorded in the minutes. As a record of participants is public (on Facebook), I considered anonymity to be redundant in this case too.

Data analysis and writing

Data was collected, stored and analysed during and after fieldwork. This process contributed to making decisions about what should be observed and clarified. Finally, after putting together and 'tidying up' the quantitative and qualitative data gathered, the analysis process started with identifying patterns and stories or situations that emerged as significant for this

study. The main topics that reappeared in both historical enquiry and contemporary exploration focused on networking and human rights discourses, Document's identity and ethos, labour, programming practices and criteria, festival space and interaction. As such, my analysis and interpretation of the data grouped into these categories begins with an understanding of how social agents (staff, board, programmers) conceive of (interpret, evaluate) these textual forms (films) and the meanings they encode in and interpret when they put these texts together in a programme. I also looked at the work, communication and relationships these agents engage in, and how practice is shaped by and in turn shapes larger social structures.

I write from a position that creates a specific connection with Document that is engaged and personal. This thesis recognises the role of the emotion of the researcher as well as the emotion of research subjects in relation to the environment and to the self. As such, this study engages with thinking and feeling, arguing that both are part of a reflexive process that can bring a deeper intellectual understanding of a social group (Campbell, 2002). The thesis utilises stories and anecdotes, 'telling' and 'showing' how significant events and activities happened, sometimes representing others' experiences and other times presenting a first person, 'eyewitness account' (Ellis, et al., 2010).

Conclusion

Applied research collaborative studentships are relatively recent developments, promoting universities' 'third mission' – to engage with the industry and the public. This research project was created with the aim of providing reciprocal knowledge and opportunities for both the academic and non-academic partner. Festivals as multi-dimensional events are ideal partners for this research framework, providing access into previously hidden practices and discourses around cinema, human rights and film exhibition. My research adopted an ethnographic approach, focusing on the people who run the organisation and create meanings around films and programmes. Framed as a 'journey of discovery' the methodological framework for this kind of inter-disciplinary study of a festival's past and current practices requires flexibility and self-reflection. Through continuous interrogation of my position and through fieldwork experiences, I developed a multi-method approach, including quantitative and qualitative data collecting methods. Creating databases and using statistical analysis helped visualise the wider human rights film festival circuit and situate Document within the local context and the wider landscape. However, the main methods used revolved around

fieldwork, during which I adopted different roles as both insider and outsider, member and non-member of the organisation studied.

Benefitting from the contractual partnership, I began with participant observation, and gradually became more involved in the festival's practices, such as programming and organising events. These activities helped me gain insider knowledge as well as build trust and a more detailed understanding of festival work. They also required constant reflection and ethical considerations regarding anonymity, confidentiality and sensitivity. Similar to other festival scholars, I argue that, as researchers, we change and are changed by the practice we perform and study. This in turn raises questions of ethics and responsibility. I argue that ethnography can be complemented by action research, raising awareness of unfair or unrecognised practices and working with the organisation towards creating positive change. For this reason and as I hope is apparent in the chapters that follow, the collaborative partnership between academia and festivals can produce and transfer knowledge between universities and the industry, as well as potentially having a long-lasting practical legacy.

Chapter 3: Human Rights Film Festivals: Contexts, Networks and Movements

Document's first edition took place in 2003, a very prolific year for human rights film festivals worldwide. Festival du Film et Forum International sur les Droits Humains (FIFDH) in Geneva, Festival de Cine y Derechos Humanos Donostia in San Sebastian, FiSahara in the Sahrawi refugee camp, Freedom Film Festival in Kuala Lumpur among many others were founded that year. Also in 2003, seventeen human rights film festivals convened in Locarno and created the HRFN, which was officially launched in 2004 in Prague (Grassilli, 2012). Document became a HRFN member in 2008, the only UK representative in this international group of festivals. The network grew consistently and, by 2019, it had 43 festival members, two multilingual publications and a global reach. All of these developments point to the emergence of a phenomenon of human rights film festivals, which have spread and multiplied globally. With this proliferation, they enable the circulation of films and ideas around human rights topics and are active players in the film industry as well as the human rights infrastructure, as this chapter will illustrate.

Against this backdrop and in conversation with existing studies on this growing field (see Wils, 2017; Tascón, 2015, 2017; Grassilli, 2012), this chapter addresses the following questions:

- What is the definition of human rights film festivals and what are their aims and functions?
- How and why did human rights film festivals emerge and proliferate and what is their contribution to human rights culture and cinema?
- How are discourses around human rights interpreted and articulated by human rights film festivals?

As such, this chapter investigates the conditions that underpin the proliferation and professionalisation of human rights film festivals, the outcomes and consequences for human rights activism and the film industry. Firstly, the chapter provides definitions of human rights film festivals and of the human rights discourses shaped in the West, how they justified revolutionary moments and created a universal legal language. These discourses influenced the definition, aims and functions of human rights film festivals that started as an extension of the human rights communication infrastructure (McLagan, 2005). The second section of this chapter provides a historical overview of the development of human rights film festivals as they emerged and navigated temporality and locality. Drawing on quantitative data, this

overview is organised into three main phases, following human rights film festivals from their origins in Western countries and non-governmental organisations (1985-1999) to their proliferation, visibility and professionalisation (2000-2009) and to their expansion beyond Europe into other regions that challenged established Western human rights discourses. Finally, this chapter examines the work of the HRFN, through participant observation, interviews and document analysis. I discuss its function as a network of cultural intermediaries, a stakeholder and influencer for individual member festivals, which has a significant role in defining and codifying human rights cinema, collective action and solidarity.

Applying the concept of the cultural intermediary to human rights film festivals, this chapter argues that they emerged as specialised intermediaries that act as tastemakers and cultural authorities in constructing a definition of human rights cinema while performing various forms of activism. Even if these festivals share a thematic focus, they vary significantly in terms of human rights approach, film selection and organisational structure. Therefore, this chapter argues that just as human rights film festivals define human rights cinema through their role as cultural intermediaries, they are in turn defined and informed by three factors and by the interaction between these factors: locality, temporality and stakeholders.

Human rights film festivals as cultural intermediaries: origins and trajectories

As mentioned earlier in the thesis, from the 1970s onwards, there was a rise in the number of film festivals which emerged from social movements or causes that used the arts and culture as activist tools. Among these are human rights, LGBTQ, indigenous, disability, and environmental festivals. They are classified in the broader category of 'social concern' (FFRN, 2017) or activist film festivals (Tascón, 2016), with two main characteristics:

> Firstly, they are engaged in an effort to correct the record on a certain issue by highlighting lesser known aspects for the benefit of improved understanding. They are driven by intentionality, be it to increase awareness, to expose, to warn, to prevent and sometimes change the course of events. Secondly, they embody the belief that film is powerful enough to have an impact (Iordanova, 2012, p. 13).

Furthermore, activist film festivals are based on the 'belief that the exhibition of film can contribute to the advancement of social, political or developmental change' (Davies, 2017, p. 41) and they adopt programming strategies that aim 'to correct the record, to

enlighten, to mobilise' (Iordanova, 2012, p. 14). These definitions position activist festivals as spaces that facilitate film exhibition with the hope that they can inform and potentially mobilise audiences towards action.

Human rights film festivals occupy a specialised niche within activist film festivals, adopting a mission typical of the genus: 'to communicate and inspire justice' and use films as 'tools for a higher objective: raising awareness' (Grassilli, 2012, p. 37). They are platforms where films on human rights topics are shown alongside opportunities for debate and activism facilitated by human rights experts, non-governmental organisations (NGOs), activists, politicians, journalists and many others (Bronkhorst, 2003). Through their output, these festivals established and continue to develop the concept of 'Human Rights Cinema', a widely accepted category of film that brings together the aesthetic concerns of the filmmaker with those of the human rights activist (Collins, 2017). This constructed category holds significance especially in human rights or humanitarian organisations and consists of a variety of perspectives, narrative forms and approaches, which will be further discussed in this thesis. Through the proliferation of human rights film festivals and the circulation of such films in mainstream contexts (A-list film festivals, broadcasting), the culture of human rights is being redefined (Nash, 2018).

Human rights film festivals do more than present films to achieve the aims and goals mentioned above. As Blažević, founder and former director of One World Human Rights Film Festival in Prague suggests, the fundamental feature of human rights film festival lies in 'what we "do" with the films' (2012, p. 112). This statement is echoed by Maciej Nowicki, Festival Director of Watch Docs Human Rights Film Festival in Warsaw, who argues that 'human rights film festivals are about more than showing of the films. They are a form of social activism' (2011). From this perspective, film programming is but one of the methods of engaging audiences with human rights topics. Off-screen events, such as workshops, Q&A sessions and round table discussions are just as important as what happens on screen (Davies, 2017). Human rights film festivals create contextual frameworks through events and partnerships, contributing to a culture of human rights through education and familiarisation with concrete experiences (Blažević, 2012). The main method of achieving this goal is by providing a space where films and off-screen events can reach a public, as Sean Farnel, former director of programming at Hot Docs in Canada contends: 'The whole point of having this type of film festival is the transfer that takes place from the screen to the audience. This transfer hopefully inspires some form of action' (in Fischer, 2012, p. 229).

These definitions emphasise the manifold functions and approaches that human rights film festivals have. Firstly, they provide a platform where discourses around human rights are translated into concrete experiences through the language and conventions of film. Secondly, through exhibition and circulation, these festivals provide legitimacy and establish what is understood and perceived as human rights cinema. Finally, they cultivate a certain type/approach to human rights cinema by promoting these films and their makers to a local audience. This thesis proposes defining human rights film festivals as a specific type of cultural intermediary that is concerned with promoting shared values based on universal human rights and social justice, translating global discourses on human rights and activism into concrete, localised examples to be discussed and acted upon. Through this theoretical framework, one can explore the role of individual festivals as well as international networks such as the HRFN in producing and reproducing discourses, shaping perceptions of the social world and of human rights approaches.

A historical analysis of human rights film festivals reveals the formation of occupations – and their occupants, objects, institutions and markets – in line with long term, on-going shifts in cultural, economic and political structures. This historical overview contributes to an understanding of the intermediary role played by human rights film festivals in their local contexts. With this as a foundation, this thesis can articulate more comprehensively the material practices and impact of human rights film festivals.

Historicising human rights film festivals: human rights discourses

According to Tascón (2016), human rights film festivals are direct successors of the radical, political film festivals of the 1960s and 1970s. She argues that their emergence in the late 1980s indicates a broader shift of perspectives and ideologies: radical politics and dissent essentially disappeared with the fall of the Iron Curtain enabling the spread of neoliberalism and the seemingly universal language of human rights. This language carries its own historical baggage and is criticised for being a cultural product of the West (Saglier, 2016), a moral argument and tool for exercising power and justifying military intervention and a narrative that has pushed aside critically-edged politics (Brown, 2004). Human rights film festivals navigate these inherited meanings, emerging relatively late in the landscape, long after human rights discourses had been developed and articulated in philosophy, religion, law, politics and culture.

Human rights discourses originated in Western Europe and the United States in the 18th century to justify revolutions and the building of sovereign nation states (Moyn, 2018; Tascón, 2015). Human rights, in their modern form, have been shaped by documents emerging from the American and French revolutions that introduced two fundamental features: legalism and universalism (Tascón, 2015). The latter posits that rights are natural to the human condition, while the former addresses the legal language and enforcement of these universal rights and the moral authority to regulate between right and wrong (ibid). According to Tascón and others, these discourses hardly applied to all human beings, but for the privileged classes in Western cultures, who made their priorities the universal concerns of others (Douzinas, 2014). Only after the Second World War and the atrocities of the Holocaust did the modern rendering of human rights, embodied in legal language emerge. The foundational document in this sense was the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR), ratified in 1948 by 50 member-states of the United Nations (UN), as an attempt to establish a global understanding of human rights, negotiated and voted on by nation-states from all over the world. Despite having only 50 signatories, the UDHR became recognised as a fundamental and symbolic act that ushered in a new individual and group rights regime that dominates the globe (Ignatieff in Wils, 2017). The following decades witnessed a proliferation of legal texts and methods of enforcement, implementing international principles into domestic law. These universalised or abstracted principles become practice through the medium of the nation-state (Tascón, 2015). As such, a power dynamic emerged between international obligations and their local implementation that led to a heterogeneous application of these principles.

Despite the UDHR and other foundational acts that developed in the aftermath of the Second World War (Douzinas, 2001), Samuel Moyn argues that it was only in the 1970s that human rights became a movement, 'seemingly out of nowhere' (2010, p. 3). He suggests that especially in Western countries, people 'started to use the language of human rights to express and act on their hopes for a better world' and that it was in this period that 'social movements [first] adopted human rights as a slogan' (ibid, p. 121). This change developed alongside the spread of neoliberalism and the promotion of Western liberal views as 'a global framework for the achievement of freedom, identity and prosperity' (ibid, p. 9). Moyn's position has been criticised for neglecting a long history of struggles taking place over the past few hundred years that clearly involve human rights (Robin, 2011). However, it is relevant in the context of human rights activism and film festivals, where two main features led to their development as specialised cultural intermediaries. Firstly, the rise of International Nongovernmental Organisations (INGOs) shaped a model of activism that

required communication to as wide an audience as possible. Secondly, questions over INGOs' (mostly based in the Western nations of the Global North) legitimacy in the Global South (where they do much of their work), determined the need for intermediaries to translate and adapt discourses of universal human rights into local contexts (Ibhawoh, 2007).

INGOs gained momentum and legitimacy for their advocacy for specific issue-based causes in the late 1970s. They have been at the forefront of 'the human rights revolution' through their global involvement and networking strategies in promoting universal human rights, their enforcement and monitoring mechanisms (Ibhawoh, 2007). INGOs such as Amnesty International, which won the Nobel Peace Prize in 1977, and Helsinki Watch (renamed as Human Rights Watch), founded in 1978 in New York, were praised for their activism and impact. From the late 1970s onwards, human rights language entered the mainstream media and political discourse (Moyn, 2010). INGOs, with their mission to raise awareness of human rights issues at a global level, required new means of communication that addressed the masses. Therefore, they used media platforms and technologies to pull 'rights issues into new arenas of publicity' (McLagan, 2005, p. 225). Meg McLagan calls this development of interconnected institutions, social networks and practices an 'emergent rights-oriented communications infrastructure', which translates rights claims into issues and circulates them. By 'constructing issues', McLagan understands the process of presenting individual stories or abstracted notions of rights as rights issues, enabling them to engage a set of mechanisms that offer platforms for action. The organisations that provide this translation process exemplify the 'functional specialization', expertise and intermediation that occurred in activism and media over the past 20 years (ibid). These organisations are concerned with the production of human rights media, such as WITNESS,[13] as well as its consumption, especially through distribution and exhibition. Human rights film festivals are part of this infrastructure. On the one hand, they fill the traditional film festival core role as curators of films. On the other hand, this function is intertwined with a specialised role in constructing issues to support activism.

These specialised cultural intermediaries also have the important function of mediating between the local and a wider sense of belonging to humanity (Tascón, 2015). As discussed in this thesis, human rights have different interpretations and manifestations, 'as a

[13] WITNESS is a New York-based non-profit organization founded in 1992 by musician Peter Gabriel in conjunction with the Lawyers for Human Rights. Their mission is to provide access and training to video equipment to human rights activists around the world to produce media products for activist purposes (McLagan, 2005).

symbol for liberalism, capitalism or individualism by some and for development, social justice or peace by others' (Douzinas, 2014). This perspective challenges the concept of the universality of human rights and explains why the work and legitimacy of INGOs have been contested in the Global South. INGOs have been accused of adopting homogenising approaches to human rights that draw little from non-Western realities and yet focus disproportionately on developing countries (Ibhawoh, 2007). Tascón (2015) conceptualises this tension through a set of 'looking relations or the 'humanitarian gaze', whereby some organisations 'look out' at others' troubles from a distance or 'look in', framing and understanding their own. This humanitarian gaze can perpetuate the North-South power gap and cultural divide.

Human rights film festivals provide an opportunity to challenge the gaze and confront this gap. Nevertheless, whether the gaze is oriented towards others in the nation/region or across the globe, cultural intermediaries start from an identification with the local. Human rights film festivals are specialised intermediaries within the communication infrastructure, part of larger circuits of exchange of images and issues about human rights. Thus, film festivals adapt to the local history, perception of human rights and viewing traditions, while also bringing new visions and experimenting with the language of human rights. Through this creative approach, human rights film festivals expand on the definitions of human rights discourses and cinema.

Historicising human rights film festivals

There are over 127 human rights film festivals in the world, as represented by the map below[14] (Figure 3.1). The map compiles data from several listings and written sources (Fuica, 2012), online platforms (FilmFreeway, Withoutabox) and the HRFN. The HRFN in 2019 consisted of 43 festivals, but many others exist and continue to operate beyond the network. The data collected and represented on the map consists only of human rights film festivals, including documentary film festivals that have dedicated programming to human rights content. Many other festivals select human rights films or offer sections or awards on this topic (Porybná, 2009) but these are beyond the scope of this research.

[14] The complete list of all these 127 festivals in a spreadsheet containing key information on each festival can be found in Appendix I.

Figure 3.1. Human rights film festivals - global map

Doing a comprehensive survey online is a particularly challenging task given the fact that not all festivals use the term 'human rights' in their title for a variety of reasons, from marketing and commercial concerns to political and self-censorship reasons, such as to avoid drawing the government's attention. As such, this database contains those events that choose to define themselves as human rights film festivals, regardless of the title. Some festivals ceased to exist (these are marked with star pins on the map) and did not have a website or other platforms that recorded their existence.

The historical development of the human rights film festival circuit is rendered through colour-coding, each colour indicating a specific time period. Following Loist's mapping and statistical analysis of the development of LGBTQ film festivals (2014) and Langley's temporal bracketing approach (2010), I distinguish between three phases in the historical development of human rights film festivals, from the first recorded human rights film festival in 1985 until 2019, when my research was completed. The delineation into these phases was determined by observing patterns in the development of this phenomenon, correlated with specific political and social events and with trends in the film festival landscape more broadly. Some of these events took place on specific dates (the fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989 and subsequent regime changes of countries under the Iron Curtain; the EU enlargement of Central and Eastern European countries in 2004 and 2007; the financial crisis of 2008 and the Arab Spring of 2011). However, the delineation made in this chapter acknowledges that these events produced effects unequally and at different times around the world and thus a wider temporal bracketing is more effective to account for the discrepancies

between nations and their respective festivals. Furthermore, these phases reveal how the evolution of human rights film festivals corresponds with significant patterns in the historical development of the international film festival circuit, as outlined in Chapter 1.

The first phase (marked with blue pins on the map) reflects the emergence of the first human rights film festivals as organisations, driven by issue-based INGO activism and diversification towards the end of the decade (1985-1999). The second phase (green) was marked by the global proliferation of human rights film festivals and their convergence in the form of network-building with the launch of the HRFN (2000-2009). The third phase (red) is characterised by a reduced growth rate and further diversification, with the emergence of new festivals and the strengthening of collaborations and industry nodes of larger, more established organisations (2010-2019). While some film festival scholars such as Grassilli (2012) have engaged with human rights film festivals from a historical perspective, indicating Vermont International Film Festival (USA, 1985-) as the first of its kind, they have not traced their growth into specific phases or stages of development, as other studies film festivals have done (de Valck, 2007; Loist, 2014; Rhyne, 2009; Vallejo, 2014a). I adopt this mapping and historical phased approach to trace the development of human rights film festivals and identify key moments, institutions and outcomes of their growth.

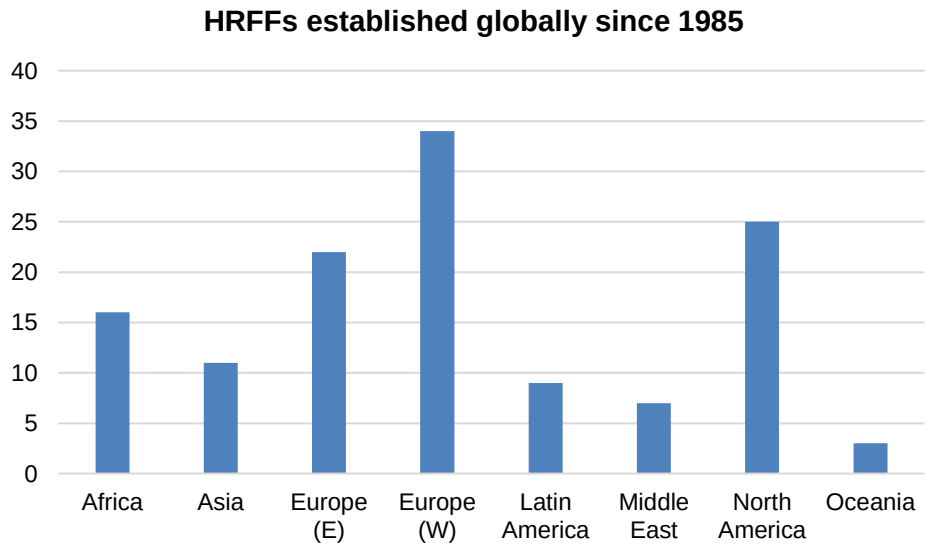


Figure 3.2. Number of human rights film festivals established globally since 1985 and their geographical spread.

The chart above (Figure 3.2) illustrates the geographical distribution of human rights film festivals. It clearly shows that Western countries have the highest number of human

rights film festivals, Western Europe leading with 34, followed by North America (including the US and Canada) with 25. This number contrasts the development of such festivals in Latin America (9) and Asia (11). The map and the chart indicate, firstly, that human rights film festivals have proliferated and, secondly, that they have developed unequally around the globe. Human rights film festivals appeared and continued to grow and develop based on several favourable conditions: the emergence of the human rights movement and the diversification of the film festival circuit. As other studies have shown (de Valck, 2007; Loist, 2014), these two areas are often inter-related. In practice, these conditions offered infrastructures and the opportunity to use existing resources and partnerships.

1. First phase (1985-1999)

Human rights film festivals are closely connected to the work and language of INGOs and activists. They appeared as tools in the service of broader human rights campaigns, providing another platform for the dissemination of Western discourses and ideologies. With time, they became specialised and professionalised cultural intermediaries, developing practices and strategies beyond INGO activism and increased their role as active players in the film industry. Human rights film festivals operate between two main discourses, the human rights and film festival ones but always from an identification with local relevance. For this reason, they negotiate two sometimes overlapping aims: promoting social change as well as cultivating tastes and the consumption of human rights cinema, filtered through the subjective decisions of the organisers and their approach to the local context.

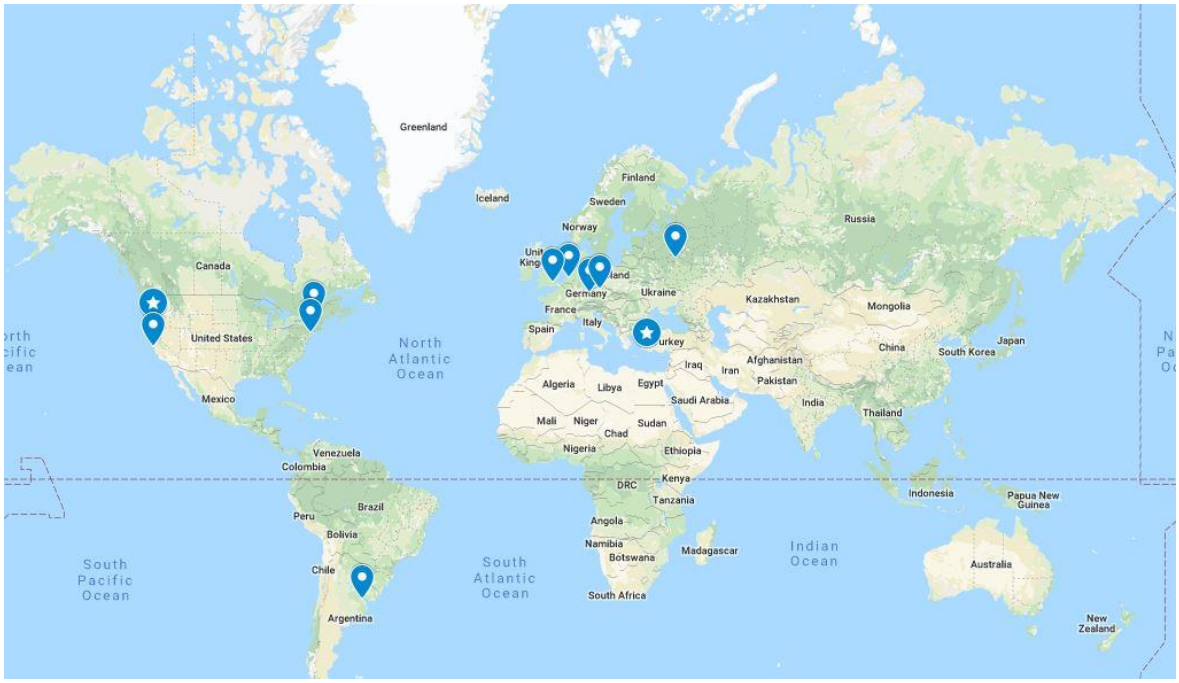


Figure 3.3. Global HRFFs, 1985-1999 (first phase)

The first to appear, Vermont International Film Festival (1985-), Human Rights Watch Film Festival (HRWFF, 1988-) and Amnesty International Film Festival (in Seattle in 1992-discontinued, and Amsterdam in 1995-), were launched by INGOs and individual activists to further their specific causes. The human rights film festival phenomenon thus started in the West (Figure 3.3), in some of the wealthiest states in the US. For instance, the HRWFF had its first edition in New York, an important city on the human rights movement map.[15] The festival was organised by leading figures from the Human Rights Watch (HRW) and by key players from the New York film community, presenting a programme of 'high-quality films that featured both historical and contemporary human rights stories' (Burres in Fischer, 2012, p. 202). This then placed the festival at the crossroads of a set of discursive dimensions (Tascón, 2015). The HRWFF 'highlighted issues that Human Rights Watch had either worked on or were currently investigating' (Burres in Fischer, 2012, p. 202), being therefore closely aligned with the parent organisation and with human rights institutional discourse more broadly (the first edition coincided with the tenth anniversary of the HRW and the 40th anniversary of the signing of the UDHR). The HRW mainly focused on Cold War politics, countries in the Soviet bloc and monitoring human rights violations there, adopting an approach of naming and shaming governments. This institutional framework influenced the practice of programming films for the festival, with a tendency to 'look out' at distant others (Tascón, 2015). For instance, every film goes through a process of vetting by human rights experts, members of HRW who assess the facts and if they are accurately presented (Biaggi in Segalov, 2016).

While the festival maintained this close relationship to the host organisation, it was also influenced by other factors that required change and adaptability. The pressure to find a space in the busy cultural calendar in New York, to be sustainable as an organisation while providing screenings for free, to diversify audiences and to concentrate on 'showing great works of cinematic art' (Burres in Fischer, 2012, p. 203). Therefore, in order to gain legitimacy as a '*bona fide* festival' (ibid, original emphasis), HRWFF selected films for their cinematic value and storytelling as well as content and relevance. Rather than focusing on monitoring issues and legal solutions advocated by the HRW, the festival turned to narrative and cinematic conventions for exploring human rights issues, hence offering a cultural activity rather than a strictly political or activist one. With time, the festival as well as the HRW expanded their thematic coverage and the act of 'watching others' to also 'look in' at domestic issues, especially criticising neoliberalism's effects on economic life (Tascón,

[15] New York hosts the headquarters of the United Nations, one of the most significant human rights institutions.

2015). If the HRWFF and its parent organisation focused initially on civil and political issues as part of their mission, they later included social and economic rights as part of their approach.

This example illustrates how HRWFF acted as a cultural intermediary between the international film industry and the local film audience, in a process shaped and informed by the INGO that launched it. The festival provided a cultural outlet for the parent organisation's messages, discourses and approach to human rights. At the same time, it also expanded its thematic coverage, the type of stories told and the attention given to cinematic quality. As such, the festival had to strike a balance between content and form, education and cinephilia, while becoming sustainable as an organisation, in the absence of government funding. This tension and the balance that results form one of the defining characteristics of human rights film festivals as specialised cultural intermediaries faced with this duality of purpose.

This tension is further illustrated by festivals that were not initiated by INGOs but that emerged from art cinema institutions, such as the Nuremberg International Human Rights Film Festival (NIHRFF, formerly known as Perspektive International Human Rights Film Festival Nuremberg, 1999-). The festival, founded by Filmhaus Nuremberg, a commercial arthouse cinema, had to respond to a different set of stakeholders and expectations in order to gain cultural value and legitimacy. According to Festival Director Andrea Kuhn, this independence from an NGO allowed for greater thematic freedom in selecting films and 'a rather open interpretation of what human rights films might entail' (Kuhn, 2009, p. 139). In programming practice, this meant moving away from an issue-based approach.

The festival was also founded as part of the wider aim of promoting Nuremberg on the human rights movement map, in an effort to overcome its historic association with Nazi Germany. In 1995, the City of Nuremberg established the Human Rights Office to achieve this goal by planning and coordinating human rights activities in the city. NIHRFF is mentioned on the Office's website as one of the activities connected to supporting human rights culture. Indeed, Kuhn contextualises the emergence of NIHRFF in light of the city's receipt of the 'City of Peace and Human Rights' title, awarded by UNESCO in 2000. This suggests that the festival's inception was facilitated by several conditions, including art-house film exhibition and human rights concerns promoted at a political level. Nevertheless, the organisational framework and support offered by Filmhaus Nuremberg enabled a

different programming approach to the HRWFF. Rather than going through a fact-checking and vetting process by human rights experts, NIHRFF selects films based on their artistic quality and builds overarching themes that emerge from the material itself. The festival's approach to human rights definitions and art cinema determined the inclusion of a variety of film forms and genres: documentary, fiction, experimental films (Kuhn, 2009). This programming strategy challenges the perception of human rights film festivals as focused on content not form and on 'information and testimony rather than art and entertainment' (Blažević, 2009, p. 15). Some human rights film festivals perceive their role as redefining what human rights cinema is (Kuhn, 2009), going beyond stereotypical images of the 'Other' and suffering at a distance, which can perpetuate feelings of sadness and regret. This approach, Kuhn suggests, can draw a broader public 'than "just" the human rights crowd' (ibid, p. 141). To achieve this goal, the festival positions and promotes itself as a showcase of cutting-edge films, which highlights its role as a cultural intermediary in Bourdieu's original conceptualisation referring to organisations' potential significance in strengthening bonds between public and institutions by 'occupations involving presentation and representation', such as marketing and promotion (Bourdieu, 1984, p. 359).

By the end of the 1990s, twelve human rights film festivals had been established (out of which two satellite festivals of HRW and Amnesty International) in several countries of the Global North, with the exception of The Festival Internacional de Cine Derechos Humanos (FICDH, 1997-) in Buenos Aires, Argentina. Their history illustrated through the examples presented above suggests that film festivals are a phenomenon of the West, originating from the human rights movement and communication infrastructure. These festivals can be understood as cultural intermediaries between the production and consumption of film, while promoting artistic approaches to legal human rights discourses. The founding bodies and initial aims determined a certain gaze – from Western, democratic countries 'looking out' to distant parts of the world where violations occur more frequently and practices typical of INGOs were adopted, such as naming and shaming. This relationship based on inequality and on the power that comes with watching others was not linear and festivals from the first phase began engaging with it more critically, diverging from their parent organisations' agendas. Furthermore, the tension of information and content versus art and entertainment also emerged as a defining feature of human rights film festivals.

2. Second phase (2000-2009)

The second phase in the historical development of human rights film festivals began with an influx of new festivals across Europe, the launch of the HRFN and an increase in festivals' importance and status as cultural intermediaries. Festivals took on a role in education by establishing partnerships with schools, in human rights activism, in international diplomacy and in policy-making through awards and collaborations with mainstream institutions. This proliferation was facilitated by exchange and the professionalisation of practices, as well as by a series of important political and social events including the EU enlargement of 2004 and 2007, which accelerated the circulation of Western human rights law and discourses. By focusing on festivals that emerged in Eastern Europe, this section illustrates how the concept of human rights is informed by local politics and how festivals overcome difficulties by adapting their language and learning tactics for survival.

Figure 3.4. Global HRFFs, 2000-2009 (second phase)

Over 60 new human rights film festivals appeared around the world between 2000 and 2009, the majority concentrated in Europe (Figure 3.4). Festivals in Western Europe continued to proliferate, diversify, gain mainstream reputation, consolidate their cultural authority and define human rights films and activism through their programme. One such example is the Festival du Film et Forum International sur les Droits Humains (FIFDH) launched in Geneva in 2003. The festival was positioned from the beginning as a key player in global human rights debates at the highest level, adopting practices that enable them to gain the attention of policy makers. The festival's location in Geneva, labelled as the 'international city of human rights' for hosting institutions such as the United Nations

Human Rights Council (UNHRC), suggests an alignment with the city's position on the human rights movement map. The festival takes place annually to coincide with the main session of the UN Human Rights Council in March and organises screenings and debates with diplomats, NGOs, philanthropists, journalists and decision makers, in addition to the general public. The main aim of this festival is to directly intervene in policy-making and to raise international awareness of human rights violations, denouncing them and debating them robustly (FIFDH, 2019). The FIFDH also pursues the involvement of celebrities, an approach used by A-list international film festivals as well as by UN agencies or larger NGOs to attract mainstream attention for activist causes (Iordanova, 2012). The festival's website includes news about the visits from Hollywood starts such as Angelina Jolie, Gael García Bernal, Juliette Binoche, William Hurt, human rights thinkers and Nobel prize laureates, such as Shirin Ebadi, Joseph Stiglitz, Tawakkol Karman, among others (FIFDH, 2019). Some of these personalities are also patrons, conferring legitimacy and cultural authority to a festival that showcases 'a world class selection of feature films', documentaries, high-profile debates and which boasts mainstream media partners and generous operating budgets.[16] This suggests that human rights film festivals have become important players in the human rights communication infrastructure, acting as cultural intermediaries between activists and activist filmmakers on one side and policy makers along with a more general audience on the other.

A significant example of a human rights film festival in Central and Eastern Europe is One World in Prague, which was launched in 1999 by a humanitarian organisation (People in Need) and grew exponentially during the 2000s into a truly international organisation. From its comparatively modest beginnings, when the festival showed 36 films to 3,000 people, sourced from other festivals (HRWFF and Amnesty International), One World became one of the largest human rights film festivals, established more than ten other festivals around the world and was awarded the UNESCO Honourable Mention for Peace Education in 2007 (UNESCO Press, 2007). This acclaim indirectly celebrated the post-communist country's perceived alignment with Western liberal ideals.

The award honoured one of the original roles of human rights film festivals: to provide an outlet for public education on human rights and social change. This mission was implemented by many other human rights film festivals during the second phase, as they

[16] In 2016, the FIFDH budget was 1.6 million CHF (over 1.2 million GBP) according to a festival press release (de Valck, 2017). This budget is significantly higher compared to Document in 2016, which operated on a 50,000 GBP budget.

developed partnerships with schools and educational institutions. The FIFDH, One World Prague, NIHRFF and the Australian-based Human Rights Arts and Film Festival (HRAFF, 2007-) among others introduced outreach programmes, which have become essential methods for teaching students (most projects are for children in primary school) about human rights, history and politics (Blažević, 2012; Muller, 2012). The role of human rights film festivals as cultural intermediaries was further enhanced by this practice, as they manage funds and partnerships with local educational institutions, teaching staff and pupils. Educating consumers is a key aim of those cultural intermediaries who are interested in socially engaged practices and non-economic values. The outreach educational programmes in turn helped festivals achieve growth, by bringing additional income, new staff members, year-round activities and by reaching a broader range of communities. These practices are also transferable and human rights film festivals exchanged inspiration and practical knowledge between each other (Muller, 2012). Some put their resources together and created a single, broader project such as the We Are Visual! Education and Audio-Visualisation of Human Rights (WAVE), a collaboration between MakeDox festival in Macedonia, NIHRFF and Document, which joined for a brief period in 2012-2013.

As part of their outreach programme, some of the more established human rights film festivals facilitated the emergence of new festivals elsewhere around the world, either by directly founding them or by providing financial, programming or networking support. Movies that Matter (rebranded in 2006 from Amnesty International Human Rights Film Festival Amsterdam) developed a Grants Programme that since 2007 has financially supported over 207 film events in 60 countries, including film festivals.[17] The funding programme supports first-time festivals and mobile cinema as well as specific impact sections in Africa, Asia, Latin America, the Middle East and Eastern Europe, especially in countries with 'limited resources and freedom of press' (Movies that Matter, 2019). As such, the festival acts not only as a benefactor, but also as a generator of new festivals. Through practices of selecting films with 'high cinematic quality' and through close partnership with human rights organisations, this funding scheme also perpetuates an idea of what a human rights film festival or screening should be like from a Western perspective.

One World Prague also supported the development of sister festivals worldwide through Czech cultural institutes, by sharing funding and with film packages. The

[17] These are some of the festivals that MtM supported through this programme: Bahrain Human Rights International Film Festival, The Seventh Eye is Yours, Bolivia, Addis Ababa in Ethiopia, AfricanBamba Human Rights Film and Arts Festival in Senegal and many others (Movies that Matter, 2019).

organisation launched and developed satellite events in ten countries in Central, Southeast and Eastern Europe, as well as in Africa (Dunia Moja in Kenya) and Central Asia (One World Kyrgyzstan). One of these festivals, One World Bucharest (2007-) that was launched by the Czech Centre in Bucharest, established itself as an independent organisation after three editions, keeping the brand name, but maintaining a very loose connection to the Prague festival. This proliferation of human rights film festivals was enabled by the circulation of funds from global foundations (like the Open Society Foundations (OSF) led by George Soros[18]), by NATO (North Atlantic Treaty Organisation) accession and by EU Enlargement.[19] This process prompted debate and renewed commitments to human rights initiatives at the European as well as at state-level, creating pressures on new and prospective entrants to adopt European/fundamental rights and values in order to be accepted to the Union. Human rights film festivals in Eastern Europe became arenas for negotiating European identity and values among socio-economic, cultural and political differences and for identifying opportunities as well as tensions brought by the opening of borders.

These international institutions had a significant impact on the development of human rights film festivals in Eastern Europe, aiming to create shared values and norms associated with liberal democracy and respect for human rights. Both NATO and the EU expanded after the end of the Cold War and accepted countries from the former Soviet bloc in the late 1990s and throughout the 2000s, initiatives received with optimism as well as criticism.[20] While an overview of the main political and ideological functions of these political and military unions is beyond the scope of this thesis, it is worth considering the impact they had on festivals and their role in promoting shared values, a European identity and a common foreign policy.

In order to be accepted as a member of NATO or the EU, candidates have to demonstrate a commitment to shared values, fundamental rights as well as the necessary institutional and economic development to support this transition. This process can last more

[18] OSF was founded in 1993 by business magnate and philanthropist George Soros, offering financial support to civil society organisations around the world, with the aim of advancing justice, education, democracy and independent media (OSF, 2018). The foundation and Soros' name have been linked to the development of a network of NGOs and institutions in former communist countries, such as the Central European University in Budapest.

[19] The Eastern Enlargement of the EU took place in three stages: in 2004 the Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Slovakia, Slovenia and two Mediterranean countries, Malta and Cyprus, followed in 2007 by Bulgaria and Romania (European Parliament, 2019) and Croatia in 2013.

[20] Critical examinations of NATO enlargement can be read in more detail in Zoltan Barany's study on *The Future of NATO Expansion: Four Case Studies* (2003) and the EU enlargement in *Politics in the European Union* (2014) by Ian Bache, et al..

than ten years and determines a long series of negotiations and reforms. For instance, Romania joined NATO in 2004 and the EU in 2007 (having formally applied for membership in 1995). In the 2000s, the country had to implement multiple reforms to prepare for the accession, including the consolidation of its democratic system, the institution of the rule of law, as well as recognition and respect for human rights and freedom of expression (Pridham, 2007). For example, Romania had to publicly acknowledge crimes of the past such as the Romanian Holocaust and to accept being monitored and sanctioned accordingly by international bodies (ibid). This sometimes clashed with systemic discrimination and public opinion set against Roma or sexual minorities. One World Romania often challenged these public opinions through their film selection that celebrated diversity and liberal values. The festival hosted special events and performances that addressed the country's pressing issues such as corruption or discrimination against the LGBTQ minority,[21] thus emphasising Western values and human rights protection that needed to be enforced. Despite sometimes taking a critical stance towards mainstream public opinion or the government, One World Romania became a significant organisation for the exhibition of human rights films that grew over the years and received support from local as well as foreign film funds.

Other countries in Eastern Europe faced more dramatic challenges in their endeavour to present human rights films in partnership with foreign institutions, which illustrates how local politics and opinions can interrupt the global discourse of human rights. For instance, public opinion in some Eastern European countries such as Serbia tends to view human rights discourse as a threat to national integrity imposed by foreign interests (Popovic, 2009). Marko Popovic, co-founder of the Free Zone film festival in Belgrade explains that human rights 'are seen as somebody's (and very often foreign) pure political agenda or only a name behind which are hidden imperial or at least dishonest intentions and political plans' (ibid, p. 187). This perception of human rights discourses was determined by the local history and the NATO bombing of Serbia in 1999 'in the name of human rights' (ibid). Consequently, the festival avoids using human rights in publicity materials as a tactic for survival and for attracting audiences. In Ukraine, the concept of human rights was also often used to express opposition to the government and that was illustrated on several occasions, during the so-

[21] As part of OWR 2015, the festival organized a tour around places in Bucharest that illustrated corruption in relation to illegal demolitions or degradation of historical buildings. In 2018, the festival organised special screenings of LGBTQ films to boycott the referendum to limit the definition of the family to heterosexual couples only.

called 'Orange Revolution'[22] in 2004 and the Euromaidan protests in 2014, which started from public protests that demanded closer European integration (Averchenko, et al., 2015). Consequently, Docudays UA, Ukraine's only human rights film festival faced a series of threats and limitations, such as power outages during screenings or cancellations (ibid).

These two festivals illuminate situations in which the EU and NATO were perceived by governments or the public opinion as oppositional and imperialistic. Because these entities used human rights discourse as justifications for extending spheres of influence or military intervention, this resulted in a mistrust of the language altogether and the intent behind it. The human rights film festivals in Ukraine and Serbia presented above provided platforms for human rights films and discourses as defined by Western liberal democracies, for which they faced threats and limitations. They adopted tactics of survival, such as avoiding the language of human rights from their publicity materials, organising private screenings and persisting despite clashes with the authorities. The challenges faced by these festivals highlight their role as cultural intermediaries and as unintended exponents of soft power, by showcasing a Western perspective on human rights to a local audience. They therefore also serve as a meeting place of sometimes opposing ideas where meanings of what human rights are and what it is to be European are negotiated.

3. Third phase (2010-2018)

The phase starting with 2010 also witnessed a growth of human rights film festivals around the world, though not at the same rate (Figure 3.6). Some regions saw festivals continue to multiply (in the USA, for instance) while others saw a reduction while building on existing organisations. This comparatively slower growth can be explained by a saturation of the market and the focus on dedicating festivals to local communities. It could also be influenced by the 2008 global financial crisis, which brought years of recession and austerity. The crisis severely affected many governments' cultural budgets, considerably reducing support (de Jong & Carrión, 2015). For this reason, some human rights film festivals struggled to survive or ceased to exist. The trend to collaborate and organise regional or international clusters of support continued as a tactic for survival, solidarity and protection against funding or political instability. Conversely, some festivals in Western and Eastern Europe continued to grow and became active players in the film industry, developing funding opportunities, ensuring distribution of films, enhancing their outreach and campaigning functions. This

[22] The Orange Revolution consisted of a series of protests following the 2004 presidential election, which was claimed to be rigged, leading to a second run-off (Wilson, 2009).

trend towards growth and collaboration further established a human rights film festival circuit, with festivals occupying hierarchical tiers similar to the broader international film festival circuit.

Figure 3.5. Global HRFFs, 2010-2018 (third phase)

Festivals in Eastern Europe gained further visibility and strengthened their position in the circuit by introducing film financing markets and services alongside their presentation of films and discussions. Festivals such as One World in Prague organise East Doc Platform, consisting of a range of industry events including pitching sessions for feature-length and interactive documentary projects in development and early production stage (One World, 2019). Discussion and masterclass events reflected the documentary landscape and touched on impact strategies and innovative filmmaking approaches (virtual reality) (ibid). Some of the films presented in this industry event circulated at human rights film festivals, despite not focusing exclusively on human rights topics.[23] Receiving funding and being included in this festival market act as a 'stamp of approval' for films and filmmakers and help shape the kind of films that are successful in the circuit (Falicov, 2016). This function of the festival further reinforces its role as a tastemaker of human rights film. In the absence of strict external criteria, this 'stamp of approval' alongside more traditional practices (programming) marks a film as belonging to the genre. By providing one of the largest industry events for documentary filmmaking in Central and Eastern Europe, One World

[23] For instance, *Over the Limit* (2017) was presented at East Doc Platform and was promoted as a documentary that focuses on the struggles and challenges faced by extreme training as an athlete.

Prague can be considered a second-tier[24] business festival that operates on the intersections between documentary and activism (de Valck, 2017).

On a slightly smaller scale, One World Romania also diversified its activities in this timeframe, during and beyond the festival. It began hosting an industry-type event with a difference: the Civil Society Pitch offers a platform for local issue-based NGOs to pitch stories or ideas to filmmakers, which can then form collaborations and generate new film projects. The international reach of the event is limited, as only Romania and neighbouring countries are eligible to participate, but the discussions and pitches are held in English. Furthermore, the workshop tutors represent international institutions such as the European Documentary Network (EDN), HBO Europe and the Balkan Documentary Centre, in an attempt to internationalise and to present the festival as a key player in the region. Additionally, the festival is part of a regional alternative distribution platform of documentary films (Kinedok), a national schools' programme, a cineclub and an archive project of documentary films from the communist era in Romania (Sahia Vintage). These side projects enable the festival to have a year-round presence and become more sustainable, but also illuminates its self-defined role as a 'facilitator' of human rights films and of their circulation.

While festivals in Central and Eastern Europe continued to develop and professionalise during the 2010s, the political and cultural climate dramatically changed and prompted renewed interest in re-defining human rights and festivals' role and impact in the region. The Arab Spring[25] of 2011, the war in Syria and the Refugee Crisis in 2015 were significant global events that affected European countries differently. Following failed revolutionary movements, outbreaks of civil war and mass migration via dangerous routes, people from across Africa and the Middle East tried to enter and settle in Europe. This phenomenon generated resistance in many European countries from authorities, politicians and segments of the population. Greece, Italy, Croatia and Hungary among others, being on the migrant route towards Western Europe, were suddenly faced with an influx of migrants and with pressures on safeguarding EU borders. Consequently, they began blocking access

[24] The tier-system of festivals includes the first tier: A-list festivals with some of the oldest and most prestigious festivals such as Venice, Berlinale or Cannes. The second tier includes business-oriented film festivals, including large documentary or human rights film festivals such as IDFA, Sheffield Doc/Fest or One World in Prague. The third tier includes smaller, specialised festivals, such as Nuremberg International Human Rights Film Festival, One World Bucharest or Document (Higgins, 2012).

[25] The Arab Spring encapsulates the wave of protests, riots, foreign interventions and civil wars in North Africa and the Middle East, which began in 2010 in Tunisia with the Tunisian Revolution (Abulof, 2011).

and physically reinforcing borders, despite controversy and wide-spread criticism from human rights INGOs and activists. Verzio Human Rights Film Festival (2003-) is an active player in the Hungarian civil society landscape and became a vocal critic of the government's policies against refugees and asylum seekers. Many other human rights film festivals have taken a similar critical stance towards depicting the refugee crisis in Europe, 'looking in' at local politics and rights violations as well as 'looking out' at the places where the crisis unfolded, following migrant journeys across continents. Human rights film festivals as specialised cultural intermediaries have adopted practices of collaboration and networking to put issues on the human rights agenda and put pressure on governments to change their policy towards refugees and asylum seekers. Global urgent events therefore act as catalysts for these organisations to come together and join resources, challenging narratives and policies that they perceive as unjust and communicating this message to local audiences.

The global scale of these events is visible in the development of human rights film festivals in the Middle East and North Africa (MENA). The events and legacies of the Arab Spring generated a more acute need to provide local and regional platforms where human rights issues and films could be seen and discussed (Darwaza & Ehab, 2015). Karama (Dignity) Human Rights Film Festival (KHRFF, 2010-) in Aman, Jordan was launched just before the Arab Spring by three activists with filmmaking experience. The festival was perceived as a way to fill a gap in human rights culture in the region, providing an access point for local audiences to take part in a discussion that had been limited to policymaking. Karama was initiated to bring human rights issues closer to the public, focusing on the concepts of dignity and social justice (ibid).

The festival directors attribute the successful development of the festival to partnerships with local state-run institutions, such as the Royal Cultural Centre and the Ministry of Culture as well as to a careful programming strategy that avoids direct confrontations (Darwaza & Ehab, 2015). The partnership with the state allowed the festival to run securely and organise the screenings safely. In this case, the festival's strategy was to become accepted by the state and the broader public rather than taking a radical oppositional stance. Consequently, they intentionally avoided selecting films that outright confronted the social and religious practices that contradict universal discourses of human rights and values. Instead, the festival used films to gradually introduce controversial topics through international programming and only indirectly confront the system (ibid). This illustrates how universal human rights discourses are interrupted by the local context and how film

festivals create a dialogue between international perspectives and internal politics. For instance, in the aftermath of the Arab Spring, the festival had to pay closer attention to how it used the concept of human rights within their programming or publicity. While Western narratives generally presented revolutionary moments as brave attempts to overturn authoritarian regimes in the name of human rights and freedom, many local people perceived the events as 'fake attempts to install democracies', imposed by the West 'to achieve its political, social and cultural agendas' (ibid, p. 150). Similar to reactions from some countries in Eastern Europe in the previous decade, film festivals had to navigate local attitudes, behaviours and perceptions and the universalised Western definition of human rights was challenged. This illustrates the way the local context and stakeholders inform and influence a human rights film festival. The impact is mostly visible in programming choices and in the way the festival presents itself.

Karama in Aman developed as an organisation and began providing new opportunities for local film production and civil society organisations as well as collaborations with NGOs and emerging festivals in the region and beyond, such as the Women Festival in Jordan, Kelibia Film Festival in Tunisia and the Middle East Alternative Sound & Arts Festival (MEASAF) in Greece (Darwaza & Ehab, 2015). KHRFF became a hub in the area, establishing a number of namesake festivals such as Karama in Palestine (January 2014), Karama in Gaza (May 2015) and Karama in Mauritania (March 2015). Inspired by the HRFN since becoming a member, Karama also initiated the Arab Human Rights Film Network in 2011 (ANHAR, officially launched in 2015) with a strategy to promote human rights through film in the Arab region and to support new festivals. The network consists of festivals in Arab speaking countries in Africa (such as Human Screen Festival in Tunis, 2013-; Sudan Independent Film Festival in Khartoum, 2014-) and in the Middle East (Karama Beirut Human Rights Film Festival in Lebanon, 2016-; Red Carpet Human Rights Film Festival in the Gaza Strip, 2015-) (ANHAR, 2018). These festivals provide important perspectives on human rights discourses coming from the Global South, from those places where political, social and economic changes with a global impact occur. Karama in Jordan as well as other festivals in the region act as intermediaries between (and in partnership with) the state, local audiences and film industries and Western discourses of human rights. They adapt to the local context and adopt their own tactics for survival – programming that is mindful of religious and social sensibilities, and of the state – while interacting with festivals from the West. These festivals strive to put Arab countries and filmmaking on the human rights activism map and on the film festival circuit.

The 2010s witnessed the development of new human rights film festivals into territories where there had previously been a gap in the exhibition of human rights cinema, despite difficulties determined by the unfolding global financial crisis. They continued to professionalise and diversify their roles, becoming active players in the film industry. Some festivals such as One World in Prague and in Bucharest expanded their role as cultural intermediaries by organising market-oriented events that emulate business-type festivals, where financial and symbolic transactions occur alongside screenings and discussions. Through funding activities, human rights film festivals legitimise films as belonging to human rights cinema, contributing to their success in the circuit and consolidating festivals' roles as gatekeepers and tastemakers.

Global events such as the Arab Spring, the war in Syria and the refugee crisis challenged human rights discourses and a united European identity, to which festivals responded by 'looking in', criticising their governments and demanding change. In contrast, many festivals that appeared in the MENA countries worked closely with state institutions as tactics for survival and sustainability, while providing different perspectives on these events and why human rights discourses can be seen as problematic when coming from the West. Nevertheless, human rights film festivals in the Global North and South continued to collaborate and form clusters in the spirit of solidarity, sharing resources and practicing cultural exchange. These regional or international bodies support and amplify the voices of individual, sometimes struggling festivals that seek to promote human rights and social change and it is against this international backdrop that the study of the HRFN and of Document takes place.

International networks and the pursuit of solidarity – the HRFN

So far, this chapter presented how human rights film festivals developed as cultural intermediaries by creating a bridge between NGOs, local and international institutions, discourses and film industries on one side and specific audiences on the other, with the aim of promoting human rights and social justice. While economic considerations are important for these festivals' survival and sustainability, their main goal is to foster human rights culture. For this reason, these festivals tend to cooperate and to offer support in the spirit of a common goal rather than compete against each other. This is evident in how human rights film festivals became increasingly networked in regional and international clusters of support and solidarity. One World festivals, Movies that Matter Grants Programme and the ANHAR create opportunities for the circulation of films, guests, the exchange of ideas and

experiences. These initiatives, alongside awards and sections dedicated to human rights at generalist film festivals[26] create an alternative distribution network for films on human rights topics and provide some revenue (from screening fees) for filmmakers, accumulated through multiple screenings. This section focuses on the HRFN, arguing that it performs a cultural intermediary function by offering a platform for exchange and cooperation between festivals that encourages the distribution and consumption of films, while cultivating a shared understanding of human rights cinema and issues. Consequently, becoming a member of the network means acceding to the shared symbolic meanings and beliefs about the role of films and festivals, gaining legitimacy as a human rights film festival proper. While the HRFN is not situated between cultural production and consumption (not addressing audiences directly, but through its member festivals), it is involved in 'symbolic mediation' from a supporting role.

Figure 3.6. HRFN festival members, 2019.

The HRFN was established as an international non-hierarchical body with an informal organisational structure and a minimal budget. The network aims to formalise the niche by defining it, setting out some general aims and practices and by coordinating the calendar and global spread of festivals. Membership is open to any human rights film festival

[26] The HRFN introduced awards for human rights films at A-list film festivals such as Venice Film Festival, Italy, Mar del Plata Film Festival, Argentina and Berlinale, Berlin. Amnesty International Awards are presented at Rotterdam International Film Festival, The Netherlands, CPH: DOX, Denmark, Locarno International Film Festival, Switzerland or Indie Lisboa, Portugal, among others. Movies that Matter held a human rights award at IDFA in Amsterdam, which in 2017 was established as the Amsterdam Human Rights Award. A comprehensive list (from 2009) of human rights awards at other film festivals can be read in HRFN and One World first volume (Porybná, 2009).

that fits the criteria around human rights and human rights film as stated in the charter (discussed below). Only festivals that have held at least one edition and are recommended by other members are admitted, after approval by the board of coordinators and a decision by consensus from festival members (HRFN, 2018). A festival's acceptance also depends on its programme, how stable its organisation is, how ethical and transparent its funding is. Based on this process, the network gradually expanded to include 43 film festivals around the world (Figure 3.6). The network is growing at a rate of three festivals per year. Festivals in the Global North still dominate, but the network strives to become more representative and include festivals from the Global South. Consequently, their enlargement strategy seeks to challenge definitions and practices associated with human rights discourses and activism established from a Western perspective.

Defining rights, films and practices

The launch of the HRFN and the formulation of its charter summarising its principles, definitions and aims are key to understanding human rights film festivals as organisations that actively shape practices, programming approaches and the genre of human rights cinema. This charter summarises HRFN's approach to human rights definitions and cinema, formulated and signed by the 17 founding members and constantly updated. The charter addresses both the legal, political and social meanings of human rights discourse and the criteria for defining a human rights film and impact. Therefore, it can be considered a representative and authoritative voice for understanding the human rights film festival landscape.

The network draws on the UDHR and international law as the basis for its broad understanding of human rights, including political, civil, social, economic and cultural rights (HRFN, 2018). From these, some key areas of interest are highlighted, such as freedom of expression, basic needs such as food, water, work, housing, health and a clean environment. (Ibid.) Through this enumeration, the network also highlights the principle of universality, which states that 'Human rights cannot be annulled or diminished on basis of "tradition", "culture" or any other excuse' (ibid). In other words, the network follows the Western-driven conception of rights as universal rather than following the cultural relativism argument that foregrounds cultural differences. As this chapter has discussed in more detail, human rights discourses are sites for debate and exploration, and are constantly being negotiated at local, regional and global levels. However, the network's statement of principles attempts to provide a broad concept that suggests human rights film festivals function beyond national

borders and discourses and should aim at overcoming differences in favour of arguing for the same rights.

In addition to the definition of human rights discourse, the charter also articulates their understanding of 'the human rights film'. This part of the charter departs from legalistic-style texts, to resemble the film manifesto style of writing by addressing the historical, formal, theoretical and practical aspects of this type of cinema. It allows for a multiplicity of film genres within this type, including 'documentary, fiction, experimental or animation. They can be short, medium or feature length […] can be experimental through the use of "new media" or any other artistic and technological visual means' (HRFN, 2018). This definition falls into the 'discursive, imaginary utopia of one form or another' (MacKenzie, 2014, p. 31), by suggesting human rights cinema supersedes 'common notions of "left" or "right"' (HRFN, 2018). At the same time, this statement does not contradict the politically engaged film, representing the views of the few or of the many, the 'surreal provocation', opinion-based or the reporting of facts (ibid).

The contentious point in this section revolves around the 'truthfulness' of the human rights film and the relationship with aesthetic vision and storytelling. According to the charter,

> We believe that human rights films, whatever their format, contents or character, should be 'truthful'. That is, they should inform the viewers on human rights issues and aspirations, and should not intentionally misrepresent the facts or the views or words of those portrayed. They should not be so biased as to invoke hatred and discrimination against groups and individuals, or serve political or commercial interests only. They should be explorative of the issue rather than propagandistic, and not reproduce stereotypes (HRFN, 2018).

The HRFN insists on a commitment to the truthful and accurate depiction of people and situations. Bronkhorst, in his essay that preceded and traced the formulation of the HRFN charter, suggests that both fiction and documentary films 'can explore the border area of the struggle between reason and emotion. It is precisely in this area that lies the vitality of human rights activism' (2003, p. 13). Truth, from this perspective, refers to both the depiction of reality as well as the honesty with which it is delivered. Bronkhorst recognises that this idea(l) of truthfulness is further complicated by making and showing films for social change. This often implies a one-sided message, a clear division between right and wrong and a more didactic approach on how change can be achieved. This filmmaking perspective further entrenches the controversial boundary between a truthful film and a propagandistic

one and the effect they can have on the audience. For this reason, Bronkhorst excludes from human rights cinema those films made for campaigning purposes, by national or international NGOs. In his view, 'They are pieces of (good or bad) propaganda, public relations or education tools, in a similar vein as PR is used by political parties, corporations or other interest groups' (ibid, p. 9). From this perspective, the charter underlines the importance of festival programmers and their responsibility in navigating this commitment to truthfulness and sincerity to find 'ways to redress those violations' (HRFN, 2018). Such an emphasis is linked with a belief in the transformative potential of cinema: in exposing human rights violations, film has the power to instigate action for change. This illustrates another function of human rights film festivals that the HRFN seeks to emphasise, that of providing opportunities for activist films to reach their potential. Pairings with off-screen events such as Q&As, debates, panel discussions, forums are presented by the charter as common practices for impact, to further engage with audiences, advocacy groups and policymakers. This is another point on which human rights film festivals differ from each other, in how they understand, organise and implement activism.

These statements of rights, films and activities try to bring together film festivals from all over the world and unite them under a common set of principles. In turn, they can cooperate and act as a collective towards similar goals, including the distribution and promotion of human rights cinema, coordinating practical matters and protecting against interference and pressures that threaten festivals' curatorial independence (HRFN, 2018). Their practices towards achieving these aims however illuminate the advisory role of the network and the need to acknowledge and address the differences between festivals and their local contexts.

Practices of cooperation, safeguarding and strengthening the niche

The HRFN's website and charter cite a long list of aims, from the very practical, such as setting festival dates to the general, such as bringing forward the mission of human rights film festivals in promoting respect for human rights. I sought out to examine how these aims are realised in practice, how individual festivals benefit from these initiatives and how they negotiate their position in the network as well as in the film industry more broadly. Therefore, this final section of the chapter is informed by fieldwork at the HRFN annual meeting in 2017, taking a closer look at the network's current practices and actions.

The annual meeting is one of the few opportunities for representatives of all member festivals to meet. It takes place during IDFA in November, one of the most significant events in the festival calendar for human rights film festival programmers. The secretariat and general administration of the network are undertaken by Movies that Matter staff, due to geographical proximity and the organisational capacity to undertake this work on a voluntary basis. In addition to the meeting, the network also organises informal gatherings and the Brunch, an industry-type event where filmmakers have the opportunity to meet the HRFN members in attendance and pitch their films. These activities as well as the ideas, concerns and ephemera that are exchanged between festival representatives highlight the network's role as a meeting place, support network and influential stakeholder.

1. Building relationships

Fieldwork observation undertaken for this thesis evidences that relationship building is a key activity of individuals who organise and programme human rights film festivals. Through this practice of relationship building, by interacting and negotiating with filmmakers, other festivals, NGOs, funders and local authorities, festivals shape their own identity. Therefore, the HRFN provides opportunities for relationship building, through face-to-face interactions, dialogue and networking. For instance, the annual meeting that I attended began with short introductions from each festival representative, who described their festivals' most recent achievements and challenges. A few titles were brought up by several participants, indicating that those might also circulate further at their festivals. This informal conversation can inform programming decisions, sharing ideas about a 'good' human rights film that could draw audiences and acclaim. Through these events, the HRFN acts as a stakeholder and tastemaker for individual festivals, leading to a common language around human rights film. This example also reveals the role of the HRFN in offering access to the industry and to one of the most significant events for human rights festival programming. At IDFA, attendees are able to purchase industry passes, and members of the HRFN are offered one at a reduced price. As such, they gain unlimited access to both private and public screenings, workshops, distributors and producers' portfolio presentations, which provide a resource for selecting films, discovering new voices or companies and forging personal connections. Often documentaries that hold their world premiere at IDFA will go on to be selected at human rights film festivals. For instance, documentaries such as *Stranger in Paradise* (2016) and *Nowhere to Hide* (2016) that premiered at IDFA 2016 with positive reviews and awards, continued to circulate the following year at festivals such as One World, FIFDH, NIHRFF

and Document, among others. As this meeting takes place at IDFA, this festival gains a central position within the network and on the human rights film festival calendar.

Observing the HRFN annual meeting, it became evident that participants are keen to listen to each other, they have empathy towards their struggles or negative experiences and they develop respect for each other's opinions and achievements. Beyond films, other ideas and projects circulated and inspired cooperation. For instance, Isabelle Gattiker, General and Artistic Director of FIFDH in Geneva, announced that they prepared a short animation video to mark the 70th anniversary of the signing of the UDHR. She proposed to share this short film with any other member festival that wants to add it to their programme. Similarly, when Andrea Kuhn (NIHRFF) mentioned the movement initiated by festival workers in Germany who started to unite and discuss unfair working conditions, she sparked my own interest in addressing film festival labour. Consequently, when I organised an event on this topic in Glasgow, I was able to draw on this example and reach out to Kuhn for further support.

Another way in which the HRFN acts as a cultural intermediary is through the organisation of the brunch, an informal networking event that connects exhibitors (festivals) with distributors and producers. This represents one of the main opportunities where people making or distributing human rights themed films can meet festival members of the network in attendance and 'pitch' their productions. IDFA is one of the largest film festivals in the world, screening over 300 films per edition, having over 3,000 guests and 250,000 attendees each year (IDFA, 2018). For this reason, it can be overwhelming and impractical to attempt to participate at all the networking or screening opportunities. As such, the HRFN brunch targets the makers, distributors and exhibitors of human rights films, ensuring they have a chance to meet. I attended the brunch in November 2017 as representative of Document and as a (covert) researcher. The event was free and open to everyone, which allowed for a diverse mix of film professionals. The networking event offered a space for creating new relationships and for presenting one's own festival in terms of size, thematic approach, visibility and programming process. It was an opportunity to maintain or consolidate relationships, as programmers were quickly briefed by distributors, they already knew who then pitched the most interesting films in their portfolio. It also presented the chance to discover trends or common themes as well as how filmmakers articulate human rights topics through film and marketing language. The intense two-hour brunch concluded, for me, with a bag full of business cards, brochures, flyers and a list of films that I brought back to the festival programming team.

Figure 3.7. Andrea Kuhn launching the HRFN Brunch, Amsterdam 2017; source: HRFN

The annual meeting also provided an opportunity to circulate ephemera such as festival brochures and HRFN-led publications. Since 2009, a series of publications emerged from the network concerned with practical suggestions on programming, fundraising, production, marketing and evaluation. The first volume focused on One World festivals sharing their experiences, expertise and their 'comfort in the fact that, despite the common problems, there can also be common solutions' (Porybná, 2009, p. 6). The second volume (Kulhánková, et al., 2015) introduced many other case studies (festivals in Jordan, Malaysia, Burkina Faso, Sierra Leone and Guatemala among others) beyond One World and European festivals, with the aim to reflect the network's global reach. This publication was available at the annual meeting in 2017 and several members announced its translation into other languages (Spanish and Arabic). Firstly, this booklet reveals the different identities of festivals that make up the network and their local specificities. Secondly, its promotion and circulation among festivals and the public (through its free, online availability) suggests a shared identity and conceptualisation. In the introduction of the second volume, for instance, the author establishes a definition of human rights as 'universal moral rights, of a fundamental nature, held by individuals in their relations with the state' (Piekarczyk, 2015, p. 6). The booklet also suggests that festivals strive to achieve impact, understood as involvement in activist campaigns, putting pressure on authorities and education, 'consciousness raising and attitude shaping' (ibid). Therefore, the network, through its publications, provides a framework for what to expect of human rights film festivals and

how they operate established through similarity rather than difference. Through this 'relational work' (Moss, 2009) they are able to identify common issues encountered across multiple local projects, and can therefore support niche development and diffusion by sharing this knowledge more widely, helping subsequent projects to benefit from accumulated experience. These volumes also represent a codification of what a human rights film festival is understood to mean and they represent a guidebook that can be used across the industry to produce a coherent message and to implicitly coordinate the taste making function of festivals as cultural intermediaries.

2. Branching out, opening up

Another important function of the HRFN is to oversee and mediate the circuit and its temporal and geographical dimensions. Since its launch, the Network aimed to expand into other territories beyond Europe, to balance the unequal relationship of power and representation and to support organisations or activists who are struggling to operate independently and safely (van der Straaten, 2017 pers. comm., 20 November). One of the strategies implemented in this direction was to offer a reduced membership fee of £100 per year (50% discount) for festivals in developing countries.[27] Another example of financial support is the Travel Fund, which can cover travel costs for HRFN members to participate at the annual meeting. Finally, the Cooperation Fund is another grant for encouraging festivals to collaborate and build an exchange programme. These opportunities were initiated with the aim of bringing festivals together, whether by participating at the annual meeting or by developing joint projects. Document had accessed these opportunities and collaborated with Nuremberg International Human Rights Film Festival in Germany in 2011, with Pravo Ljudski in Bosnia and Herzegovina and became a part of the EU-funded education project We Are Visual! (WAVE). Therefore, the meetings and opportunities provided by the HRFN lead not only to connections with the film industry, but the development of individual festivals as organisations, through the sharing of knowledge and expertise.

This function is further supported by various training or education initiatives, such as the partnership with Cinema Human Rights and Advocacy (CHRA) and with Artist at Risk Connection (ARC). The CHRA is an organisation that provides training sessions and

[27] The network uses as a guideline a list of territories that are eligible to receive official development assistance (ODA). These are low and middle-income countries based on their gross national income per capita as published by the World Bank. Except for several countries from the former Soviet bloc in Eastern Europe, all are based in the Global South. The list is available from the Movies that Matter website (Movies that Matter, 2016).

events for young people to use, produce and distribute films that raise awareness of human rights abuses and promote change. A member of the CHRA attended the annual meeting in 2017 and presented professional development opportunities for members. The collaboration with ARC fulfils another aim of the network, to promote a favourable international environment for human rights filmmakers (HRFN, 2018). ARC is an international collaborative project committed to safeguarding the freedom to create art and ensure that artists everywhere can live and work without fear (ARC, 2018). Through this partnership, the network becomes part of wider social and political campaigns, such as the movement to 'Save Oleg Sentsov', a Ukrainian filmmaker and political prisoner held in Russia.[28]

These initiatives aim to professionalise the circuit and fulfil some of the network's aims, such as providing training opportunities and supporting filmmakers at risk. The annual meeting provides a space where training is provided and where, through exchange and dialogue, safer, more sustainable practices are fostered. While the HRFN's capacity is limited in global outreach and financial support, it manages to create and maintain connections between different organisations, actively mediating between training, production and consumption.

3. Campaigning for curatorial independence

Another important function of the HRFN is to defend the independence of member festivals from interference by governmental or non-governmental bodies and individuals (HRFN, 2018). Depending on the local context, censorship can affect festivals that are considered oppositional to government or mainstream thought or they can perform self-censorship themselves to avoid more extreme measures or the risk of being shut down. In such cases, the network seeks to gather support from its individual members and formulate a collective, international response to authorities that seek to limit freedom of expression. In this sense, the network acts in a similar manner to INGOs, trying to put pressure on public institutions and demand change. Meetings provide spaces where such initiatives are discussed, negotiated and formulated.

For instance, FreedomFilmFest (FFF), which was launched in 2003 in Malaysia by a local NGO, Pusat KOMAS (Community Communication Centre), intentionally avoided using the term human rights given its reputation as oppositional and anti-governmental (Har,

[28] The campaign includes a petition for his immediate release and is supported by hundreds of prominent individuals and human rights organisations.

2015). In 2013, one of the organisers, Lena Hendry, was charged with violating the Film Censorship Act of 2002 for screening *No Fire Zone: The Killing Fields in Sri Lanka* (2013) by Callum Macrae.[29] The documentary follows an investigation on the final weeks of the Sri Lankan Civil War in 2009 and shows war crimes and crimes against humanity committed by the Sri Lankan army against the Tamil population. Even though the screening was not shown to the general public, Hendry and a colleague of hers were arrested. It was the first time that a person was charged for exhibiting a human rights film in Malaysia. This issue was discussed at the HRFN annual meeting in 2015 where a general worry over creating a precedent for screening human rights films was expressed and a campaign of support and solidarity was devised. The network sent a joint letter, in addition to every member festival that each sent a letter to the Malaysian government or the embassies in their home countries (HRFN, 2018). Most festivals in the Network also released press statements and continued the campaign on their social media profiles, an initiative which was also communicated by the HRFN publicly. Hendry's case was not the first nor the last example of festivals encountering various forms of pressure and censorship from public institutions or officials. This is recognised by the network as a constant challenge for human rights festivals or filmmakers,[30] which consistently came up on the network's annual meeting agenda.

The annual meeting acts as a space where such concerns can be discussed and potentially lead to collective action. There are, however, claims or campaigns, which are not addressed or supported publicly by the network, if they are too sensitive or divisive among members. One such example is the Boycott, Divestment, Sanctions (BDS) movement promoting 'various forms of boycott against Israel for the oppression of Palestinians' (BDS Movement, 2018). Some festivals proposed this campaign since early 2017, but the network decided not to explicitly support it. In this sense, at the 2017 annual meeting, the members agreed on a statement that avoided any definitive stance towards one side or the other, emphasising instead their shared values towards the independence of their members from any governments (without singling out Israel) and, at the same time, the freedom of its members to support any campaigns. This issue was discussed extensively at the annual meeting, allowing space for arguments and comments from the attendees. Ultimately, they all agreed on a statement, which became the official HRFN position towards these

[29] A full report on Lena Hendry's case is available on Front Line Defenders' website (Front Line Defenders, 2018).

[30] Other filmmakers facing imprisonment or censorship for their work and that were supported by the HRFN include: Min Htin Ko Ko Gyi, filmmaker and the founder of the Myanmar Human Rights Human Dignity Film Festival, Chinese director Dhondup Wangchen, Syrian filmmaker, producer and festival director Orwa Nyrabia and several film professionals from Iran.

campaigns. The vague language reveals the challenges of gaining consensus within a group of people with different experiences of censorship, activism and oppression. In such cases, the network adopts a more neutral position to avoid direct political confrontations. This stance further emphasises the way human rights issues are understood and practiced differently around the world and that the network's ability to operate under one voice on controversial political matters is limited.

The HRFN, through its annual meeting, brunch and relationship with the wider film industry, is a key intermediary in bringing human rights film festivals together to cooperate and support each other. It provides access to a supply of documentaries and interpersonal connections, inspiration and occasionally funds for developing activities and opportunities for individual film festivals that are only starting out or facing financial difficulties. Most importantly, however, the HRFN provides an international network of support and solidarity that reacts collectively when the independence of festivals, filmmakers or activists is threatened. While the network sometimes adopts a more neutral stance, it represents an example of how film festivals can cooperate towards a shared goal beyond economic or material benefits, and how these festivals contribute to a human rights culture that is rooted in concrete experiences and that has a fundamentally educative role. Through their individual practices as well as through acting collectively, these festivals emphasise independent curation as a vehicle for freedom of expression, education and activism, creating a bridge between global and local issues and audiences. These practices and activities of the HRFN illustrate its second specialised function. The network is not only a tastemaker and a meeting place for cultural intermediaries, but also an activist for the freedom of speech and a forum for joint action.

Conclusion

This chapter addressed the research questions interrogating the way human rights film festivals define themselves and negotiate discourses of the film festival circuit and human rights activism, local politics and international cultural diplomacy. The historical overview revealed how human rights film festivals adapted their intermediary role to the specifics of place and time and the interests of the cultural workers that run them and the stakeholders that inform them. Consequently, they can mirror the goals and practices of activist INGOs or they can focus on cinematic quality and artistic excellence. They can become active players in the film industry or in international policymaking. Human rights film festivals are extremely heterogenous and yet they share a common goal – to advance social change – and

to work together to achieve this goal. Looking at the diversity of human rights film festivals, highly dependent on their local context, and the problematic, often controversial definitions around human rights discourses and human rights cinema (as proposed by the HRFN), the landscape seems fragmented, divisive and indecisive. The HRFN charter promotes the universality of rights but, in practice, often foreground issues that are permitted in their local context as a tactic for survival. Human rights cinema is, according to the network, defined by its commitment to truthfulness when in fact, there is no agreement between audiences, filmmakers, activists or festivals over what that entails. The proliferation of human rights film festivals also reveals an unequal development depending on wealth, history, tradition and local politics. These differences highlight the humanitarian gaze, the unequal power of monitoring others and imposing a certain vision of human rights. This chapter illustrated, in each section, how there can be no 'one size fits all' approach when analysing the landscape of human rights film festivals, and how there is a need for a nuanced understanding, deeply embedded in the politics of soft power. However, this chapter does emphasise those situations when despite diversity, festivals think and act as one: when it comes to advancing an awareness of human rights in general and when festivals themselves are at risk. This common goal brings festivals together in a network rather than a circuit, based on sharing, supporting each other's sustainability, political and curatorial independence. The proliferation of human rights film festivals, their threatened integrity and existence, leads to the recognition of their importance and impact. Their collaborative spirit enhances opportunities for the wider film community to continue to make, distribute and engage with human rights cinema.

At the same time, this chapter emphasised the limited political voice of the network and the still struggling and unstable status of some of these festivals. The formation of other international networks (such as the Radical Film Network of which Document is also part of) suggests a move towards a more radical, politically-engaged position towards human rights film festivals as cultural intermediaries between activist filmmakers and the audience. The chapter's focus on these specialised cultural intermediaries suggests that there is a need for more research into how they can challenge the status quo in the art world and in mainstream politics. This chapter then functions as a historical and institutional background to the study of Document. While cognisant of the singularity of one specific festival, it is in this broader context that the work of Document should be understood. In the following chapters, I turn to an examination of how Document functions in practice and how it negotiates the challenges and debates around human rights politics and cinema.

Chapter 4: Document's History and Development

This chapter continues with a historical approach, shifting the focus from the broader, international context to the local and specific example of Document. As such, it provides a substantive and detailed chronicle of this festival, exploring the narratives surrounding its creation, ethos and practices. Launched in 2003, Document was the only home-grown film festival in Glasgow and the only one in Scotland engaging with human rights documentary cinema. Despite its longevity and endurance in the city, its growing international profile and impact on local audiences and filmmakers, Document has been largely absent from histories of Scottish film exhibition. Nevertheless, the festival's achievements are significant in carving out a niche, boosting the popularity of the festival format and continuing to adapt and survive despite financial and organisational challenges.

This chapter addresses the following research questions:

- How did Document develop as an organisation and how was it influenced by cultural, socio-political and economic circumstances?
- How does Document define its identity (ethos, image and values) and how is this reflected in its programming practices and relationships with other institutions?
- What is the relationship between Document and other (human rights) film festivals and networks and how does it shape the festival's approach to human rights?

These questions opened up several areas of exploration of the festival's identity and ethos and how these are expressed through programming, organisational practices and personal memories. Drawing on interviews with the co-founders and key staff/board and archival material (brochures, press reviews, internal documents and reports), this chapter provides a phased history of the festival and its evolving role as a specialised cultural intermediary. Based on the model presented in the previous chapter, the historical overview of Document examines how it developed as a cultural intermediary, establishing its position between production and consumption and between art and activism, as well as how it was influenced by the locality, temporality and stakeholders. The overview starts with the conditions that led to the emergence of Document: the alternative art scenes in the 1990s and the highly politicised issues around migration and devolution in the early 2000s. Document's historical development is then detailed over three main phases, from (1) the shaping of a 'bold and

risky' identity (2003-2007) to (2) a period of growth, consolidation and professionalisation (2008-2012) and to (3) a time of organisational crises and re-discovery (2013-2017).

In the same vein as the previous chapter, this delineation into phases is determined by observing significant changes in Document's organisational structure and programming patterns, as well as in the wider social, cultural and political landscape. Document evolved from its roots in the Do-It-Yourself (DIY) Glasgow art scene towards a more sustainable model and programming practices through institutionalisation and internationalisation, a trajectory which can be observed in other community-centred festival organisations (see Loist 2014; Rüling, 2009; Reichel-Heldt, 2007). These are necessary strategies for such festivals to survive in the creative economy and adapt to the increasingly competitive festival landscape. As the historical overview in this chapter illustrates, every five years, Document evaluated and recalibrated its structure, aims and activities. As such, this history is divided into three five-year long phases that capture the essential changes in the festival and the cultural landscape more broadly. This overview provides an instructive reminder that festivals as organisations as well as human rights cinema as a constructed genre are endlessly changing and shape-shifting depending on aesthetic approaches, histories, ideologies, institutions and practices.

'Creating our own culture' – alternative film exhibition in Glasgow in the 1990s

This section speaks to the first research question of this chapter, exploring the conditions that led to the founding of Document and how it was established as an organisation. The festival's functioning model and ethos are rooted in Glasgow's alternative cultural scenes and grassroots politics. The sociological concept of cultural scenes is used in this chapter to define 'particular clusters of social and cultural activity', generated by the sociability around common interests that drive innovation and experimentation in the cultural life of cities (Straw, 2004, p. 412). Scenes, in Will Straw's definition, are 'spaces of assembly', and they 'perform the often invisible labour of pulling together cultural phenomena in ways which heighten their visibility and facilitate their circulation to other places' (2015, p. 478). The 1980s and 1990s in Glasgow witnessed the emergence of scenes that grew out of the self-realised countercultural initiatives against the changes in policy towards creative industries and the economisation of culture in the UK. Dissatisfied with the lack of infrastructure and opportunities brought by discourses of urban regeneration through culture, artists worked collaboratively, circumventing traditional gatekeepers (official museums, galleries) and connected with audiences directly. As such, they embraced a DIY approach, defined as 'the

urge to create new cultural form and transmit it to others on your own terms' (Spencer, 2005, p. 12). In Glasgow, the alternative art and music scenes received substantial academic attention, described as a vibrant and dynamic DIY movement inspired by the city's radical politics, sociability and cooperation among its members (Lowndes, 2016, 2010; Thompson, 2013; Hare, 2000). Comparatively little attention has been given to alternative film cultures, especially exhibition in Glasgow during this period. The alternative film exhibition in Glasgow emerged from a symbiotic relationship between the arts and music scenes, a relationship made concrete through the use of shared spaces and the transit of people between different practices.[31] Focusing on New Visions Experimental Film and Video Festival (henceforth called 'New Visions'), the direct precursor of Document, this section argues that festivals appeared as specialised intermediaries that filled a gap in the local cultural infrastructure, enhancing the consumption of DIY output. The growth and eventual downfall of New Visions within a decade reflect the struggles and achievements in carving a niche and cultivating an interest for experimental film and DIY practices. Consequently, the festival contributed to the development of professionals (curators and arts administrators) who were able to manage similar projects (like Document) and navigate a shifting landscape of cultural policy and funding.

Over the last century, Glasgow's profile has changed, from a world-leading centre of heavy industry to de-industrialisation leading to unemployment, inadequate housing and deep-seated poverty (Mooney, 2004). Glasgow entered the 1980s under a Labour-controlled council, which was expected to address the city's poor image and to boost the local economy (Colta & Vélez-Serna, 2019; Boyle, et al., 2008). Cultural policy was reshaped under the creative industries banner and encouraged to attract private investment alongside public support as one of the strategies for image-reconstruction. The ideology of urban regeneration fostered by cultural policy offered a second chance for de-industrialised cities. An emblematic moment in Glasgow's transformation was its nomination as European City of Culture (ECoC) in 1990.

ECoC epitomised the city's regeneration ambitions within the framework of the 'creative economy'. The previous cities to hold the title, created in 1985, had been Athens, Florence, Amsterdam, Berlin, and Paris; Glasgow was the first 'post-industrial' city nominated, and its tenure has since become a template for others (García, 2004; Mooney,

[31] This aspect is discussed in more detail in an article exploring alternative film exhibition and scenes in Glasgow in the 1990s (Colta & Vélez-Serna, 2019).

2004). The objectives of Glasgow's year as ECoC were to improve the city's image in order to attract inward investment and tourism, and even critics acknowledge that this worked (García, 2004). However, the benefits from this approach of urban regeneration and focus of investment were unequally distributed, and further exacerbated social injustice, as the militant writers' group Workers' City argued in the lead-up to 1990 (Mooney, 2004). Many local groups opposed the City of Culture events, as the Festival office allocated only 1% of their £15 million budget toward funding local community-oriented arts events (Lowndes, 2016). While the opposition was vocal and constant throughout this period, many artists and cultural workers – even some with radical politics – took the opportunities afforded to them by new funding streams (Lowndes, 2010). For instance, the Festivals Budget supported Sites/Positions, a 'series of works in non-gallery locations […] which brought together a challenging form with an issue based approach' (EventSpace, 1990). This event was organised by EventSpace, a volunteer-run organisation that two years later initiated New Visions.

Between these two approaches – using some of the resources and opportunities available in the mainstream and fervently criticising its policy – Glasgow's DIY, alternative scene was developing. There was a growing frustration among community organisations and artists who felt that these large-scale projects failed to build an infrastructure and provide regular support (Lowndes, 2010). Instead, a DIY mentality was fostered, with artists taking matters into their own hands and creating their own culture.

Sarah Lowndes identifies two main characteristics of DIY activities: (1) they have to be initiated by practitioners, without an oversight from state institutions or corporations, but as 'community-based alternatives to existing hierarchical power structures' and (2) they are not wholly commercial, being guided by non-profit motivations (2016, p. xiv). Glasgow has a rich history of activities and organisations of this kind, such as Transmission Gallery, Free University Network (FUN), *Variant* magazine, Women in Profile (which in 1991 evolved into Glasgow Women's Library) and EventSpace, which self-organised and established places where contradictions in communal, lived politics could be expressed. At the core of these movements was a desired social experience based on co-operation, collectivism and conviviality (ibid). Artists put their resources and experience together to 'keep busy' and build their own culture. As such, they fought to establish their own spaces for consumption of their work and direct interaction with audiences.

Festivals like New Visions emerged as a specialised intermediary operating in between production and consumption, creating a space for the exhibition of art, film and video and bring together various artists, venues and initiatives in Glasgow and abroad. It was founded by artist and *Variant* editor Malcolm Dickson and filmmaker Doug Aubrey in 1992 and had a biennial format until 1996. The festival maintained a DIY ethos, showcasing local, zero and low-budget filmmakers alongside international works that were not seen anywhere else in the city. Through its collaborations and partnerships, the festival also brought various artists and communities together, as exemplified through the choice of venues and spaces around the city. For instance, New Visions took place in traditional cinema venues (like the Glasgow Film Theatre) as well as independent exhibition spaces (Transmission Gallery), in pubs as well as outdoors. As such, it created a space where different art forms and mediums (video, visual art, technology and film) were exhibited together revealing cultural connections. The example of New Visions is significant in several ways. Firstly, it emphasises the emergence of a grassroots festival as a manifestation of different scenes, foregrounding film and video at a time of rapid technological change. Secondly, its organisational structure was based on the DIY ethos, drawing on collaboration and solidarity among people with similar interests, some of whom later worked with Document. Thirdly, it illuminated the conceptual understandings of cultural value and legitimacy at both a community-oriented, grassroots level as well as among public funders.

New Visions selected works based on an 'open scene' format that combined the 'different mediums of film, video and digital, without worrying about medium specific concerns' (Dickson quoted in van Oldenborgh, 1994, p. 7). This body of work was increasingly harder to define and categorise, which meant that the festival actively had to position itself and 'fight for a space' (ibid). Funding for the festival was given on a project basis and was constantly threatened firstly by the supposed competition with a similar festival, Edinburgh Fringe Film and Video Festival and secondly, by the difficulty of being defined and categorised. The Scottish Arts Council (SAC) and Scottish Film Council (SFC) gradually reduced their funding of New Visions and, together with the Glasgow and Edinburgh festivals commissioned two consultancies in 1997 assessing the possibility of a merger. The outcome of these two consultancies (undertaken by Liverpool-based Positive Solutions) was orientated towards developing a new organisation out of the two festivals. This organisation would have to focus on commissioning projects and extending at a national level, with greater expectations of 'value for money' and measurable outcomes (Moraes, 2016, p. 141). However, the plans for this organisation did not progress into action. Funding also ceased, leaving its participants without any support and creating a divide among

members of the scene (Vance, 2000). After a few one-off events in Glasgow in 1999 and 2000, New Visions became dormant and left a gap for film festivals regularly showcasing local, experimental film and video works.

Dispersal policy and devolution

The end of the decade saw other significant changes in the political, social and economic landscape in Scotland, which prompted a debate around a national identity and human rights. After the devolution referendum in 1997, Scotland established its own Parliament and executive bodies and could decide on several devolved key matters independently of Westminster. However, some policies such as those dealing with immigration were still decided at the UK level and imposed on its constituent territories. One statute, which contributed to social unrest and divisiveness, was the Immigration and Asylum Act that came into force in 2000. This new law introduced a dispersal policy aiming to relieve housing and social pressures in South East England and London that had the largest concentration of new arrivals, by imposing a compulsory dispersal throughout the UK (Stewart, 2009). This policy was criticised for separating individuals, breaking down communities, leaving them marginalised and vulnerable to exclusion, discrimination and concentration in socially deprived locations (cf. Stewart, 2009; Robinson, et al., 2003; Dawson, 2002). As Document co-founder Mona Rai remembers, many refugees and asylum seekers were expected to leave overnight and arrive in a new city where they did not know anyone (Rai, 2017, pers. comm., 23 March). Over 6,000 asylum seekers were resettled to Scotland, most of them in Glasgow, which by 2006 accounted for 15% of the entire asylum-seeking population in the UK (Lewis, 2006). Many were housed in the already declining high-rise buildings at the periphery. This chain of events was used as an image-making campaign by the City Council, which undertook this humanitarian approach of housing vulnerable people, while serving a very practical purpose: that of repopulating abandoned peripheral estates such as Sighthill (Bowman, 2017, pers. comm., 23 March). Without preparation and support, the general public opinion contended that asylum seekers were being ‘dropped’ into these areas which were already marked by poverty and difficult economic circumstances, inevitably leading to tensions.

From the point of view of a local tenants' association representative, ‘People in Sighthill are poor, neglected and uneducated and they were not prepared by the council or the Government for the arrival of so many asylum-seekers. They believe the refugees are getting a better deal’ (Braid, 2001). These tensions raised hate crime, which culminated with

the murder of Kurdish asylum seeker Firsat Yildiz in 2001. His death heightened racial tensions in Glasgow, with more than 1,200 asylum seekers marching on the City Chambers in George Square to demand answers to why he died (Herald Scotland, 2001). Rai remembers that event as a key moment for sparking debate and increasing visibility at a national level, in which media played an important part. Most of the reporting on the incident consisted of spreading rumours that further increased tensions (Bowman, 2017, pers. comm., 23 March). The press coverage of Yildiz's murder cast doubt on his true identity and on his status as an asylum seeker, while politicians used this issue to gain political capital (Braid, 2001). This event and its media coverage triggered a widespread debate on local issues – housing and the integration of refugees and asylum seekers, forcing Glasgow to change and re-define itself (Cashmore, 2004). The event determined concrete action, such as the founding of the Scottish Refugee Integration Forum developed by the Scottish Refugee Council in 2001 as well as that of the Community Development strategic plan, that raised visibility and promoted the voices and experiences of refugee and asylum seeking communities with their local councils as well as with the Scottish Government (Scottish Refugee Council, 2018). Document was in many ways 'ahead of its time' (Bowman, 2017, pers. comm., 23 March) by showcasing films and stories of refugees and asylum seekers with the aim of promoting their rights on the government agenda ahead of any significant policy measures or attitude changes.

In the early 2000s, Rai worked with several organisations such as the Roma Press Centre and the European Roma Rights Centre and travelled across Europe as a documentary photographer. She then joined Spirit Aid, a children's humanitarian charity in Glasgow, as a volunteer, through which she had access to refugee and asylum-seeking communities in the city and was able to hear the stories behind the headlines. Through her personal experience and given the animated, divisive environment, she thought of the potential of using film as a popular, accessible medium for sharing information contrasting the negative media narratives. She then contacted Paula Larkin, who at the time was working with *Variant*, and had the administrative experience of programming and coordinating New Visions. Thus, through the co-founders' backgrounds, Document can be seen to have emerged from a specific issue at the local level – the negative coverage and tensions associated with refugees and asylum seekers in Glasgow – as well as from Glasgow's DIY art scene. Its existence both re-defined and challenged these elements. In the next section, I focus on the institutional logics and material practices that define Document, illustrating how it began from a fragile organisation model, based on balancing DIY principles with mainstream institutions and objectives. I argue that it established itself as a specialised

cultural intermediary, providing a local platform for films and debates on human rights issues and a framework for education and cultivating a shared way of watching and reacting to this type of content. I also analyse Document's approach to human rights and documentary cinema, illustrating how the festival contributed to a process of re-defining and re-framing human rights discourses in relation to local issues. Tascón (2016) calls this process 'domestication'. By connecting to local human rights issues or interests, human rights discourses are re-interpreted beyond the legal, international realm into specific life-situations and people. With time, the practices and aesthetics of Document changed in order to become more sustainable in an increasingly crowded cultural landscape.

'Young, bold and risky' – Document between 2003 and 2007

Document was shaped into a human rights documentary film festival with an explicitly political edge due to the specific temporal and spatial conditions in which it appeared and the people who ran it. Within the first five years, Document emerged as a loose, non-hierarchical organisation rooted in the local DIY art scene and activist community. Through its approach to funding and programming films and events, the festival established its fiercely independent status creating a space for political filmmaking and radical thinking that aimed to connect with local audiences that might have considered human rights as something distant.

The first festival was formed as a collaboration between the two organisations (Spirit Aid and *Variant*) that provided the infrastructure, support and a framework for the festival. The first edition of Document was organised in three months by 'two wee lassies' as Rai nostalgically remembers, over the summer, from June to September. The gender aspect is significant considering the local cultural landscape where women working in the arts often felt excluded or marginalised (Lowndes, 2016). Although the festival had an institutional backdrop that offered visibility and an administrative framework through the collaboration with a magazine and a charity, the programming and coordination of the event were undertaken independently by the co-founders and a group of friends and volunteers. Many of them came from the same artist, activist and filmmaking circles, such as Chris Bowman, filmmaker (joined Document as Technical Coordinator and took many other roles over the years), Leigh French (who was at the time editor of *Variant*), Doug Aubrey (filmmaker, who coordinated New Visions in 1992 with Malcolm Dickson), Neill Patton (student at the University of Glasgow) among others whose support is recorded in the Document 1 brochure (see Appendix C for all the brochure covers). As such, the festival exemplified the DIY

practice of being initiated and organised by practitioners, who had already worked together on many other projects stemming from the same cultural scenes and communities.

Drawing on DIY and grassroots organisation models, Larkin and Rai sought to make Document an independent entity, separated from wider organisational structures and institutional agendas. Larkin and Rai wanted to have an organisation that is collaborative, non-hierarchical and based on democratic decision-making, developing the ability to learn, continuously improve and function based on an 'economy of means' (Lowndes, 2016, p. xiv). Based on this ethos, they kept the organisation small, with the two coordinators dividing the labour among themselves: Larkin oversaw fundraising, administrative work, the sourcing and outreach of films and guests from the local film community while Rai coordinated the programme, selected from the open submissions and sourced directly from filmmakers.

They also focused on non-profit aims, cultural diversity and the representation of minority voices: 'to screen a large and diverse selection of documentary films which will offer the viewer a broader understanding of issues not spoken about, ignored, or not registered on any platform' (Document, 2003). As such, they were not motivated by commercial interests, nor by achieving funding objectives, as Larkin remembers: 'we weren't doing it for the funders, but for discussion, raising awareness, to create our own culture' (Larkin, 2017, pers. comm., 5 June). This approach echoes the goals of other self-organised artist-led initiatives such as New Visions. For this reason, Document can be considered an activist platform in itself, aiming to provide a space of resistance to capitalism and to bring political and social change through film.

This activist purpose can be seen in how Larkin describes Document's mission, 'we did not do feasibility studies of the need of an international human rights film festival, we just did it. And I think that was important, it was direct action, it was about what was happening in Glasgow at that time' (2017, pers. comm., 5 June). The concept of 'direct action' foregrounds anti-oppression politics and social mobilisation. While the festival did not organise protests, the co-founders felt that through the film selection and debate opportunities, Document provided a similar critical point of view against mainstream discourse. As such, Larkin and Rai believed their festival's existence was fundamental to building critical thinking and expression, tolerance and respect for minorities' rights and cultures, which are fundamental aspects of a democratic society.

Funding and stakeholders

Document's anti-capitalist stance is further emphasised by how it was funded, and the amount of voluntary work invested and resilience developed by the people running it. The festival established itself as a cultural intermediary bringing a grassroots organisation and ethos into an institutional field of private and public stakeholders that allowed the organisation to survive and maintain its curatorial independence.

For the first two editions, Document took place in a commercial cinema, the UGC (now called Cineworld), in Glasgow's city centre. Through personal connections, the coordinators managed to secure in-kind two high-quality cinema screens at the venue's top floor, which enabled the festival to run. As a feature of their non-commercial aims, such grassroots organisations have to operate based on an 'economy of means' and an 'aesthetic of necessity' (Lowndes, 2016, p. xiv). Carrying out the festival was a daily struggle to find opportunities for partnerships, in-kind support and donations to be able to run events which required screening facilities, technical equipment and human expertise. The co-founders' activities required inventiveness, personal networks, persuasion generated by 'the proverbial shoestring budget' (James, 2013). This issue was acknowledged by Aubrey, whose review of Document 1 stems from personal experience of working in the alternative arts scene and from collaborating with Document:

> Mona Rai and Paula Larkin deserve much credit for pulling off such a significant event, despite being funded as much by giro as by the generosity of the nation's cultural institutions (with the notable exception of a few sympathetic sponsors, including commercial ones such as the UGC) (2004).

Thus, Document used a mix of private and public sponsorship, managing to raise small grants (around £5,000 per edition) provided by Scottish Screen and by the Scottish Asylum Seekers Consortium and support from other foundations and cultural institutes.[32] These were, of course, insufficient to organise the festival and support the staff. As such, they relied on other work or on the benefit system that Aubrey hints at in his review, mentioning the 'giro', a form of payment that was used in the distribution of benefits in the UK, especially during the rise in unemployment during the 1980s (Billings & Booth, 2010). Many scholars argue that alternative media is rarely economically sustainable, forcing cultural workers to

[32] Document had a long-lasting collaboration with the Goethe Institut in Glasgow, another relational legacy established by New Visions. The Institut offered small cash grants (such as £500) or paid for guests or film licenses. Other supporters of the festival included the Italian Cultural Institute and the Glasgow Mental Health Association (GMHA).

struggle to survive, to work on other jobs or rely on welfare (Pickard, 2006; Atton, 2002). Document, like other alternative arts organisations, relied heavily on volunteer work and in-kind donations. On the one hand, these sources of financing provided a lifeline, were in agreement with the festival's ethos and allowed Document to maintain its curatorial independence. On the other hand, they perpetuated a working environment characterised by uncertainty, irregularity and lack of recognition both for the staff and for the organisation itself.

This situation and the narrative of survival and growth despite hardship persisted throughout the years, eventually leading to the festival becoming 'a victim of its own success' (Document, 2006b). By 2006, the festival had grown organically in terms of programme output, but it was becoming increasingly difficult to manage. Furthermore, each member of the team was indispensable, meaning that their absence from planning an edition would push the organisation into chaos. For instance, while Larkin was on maternity leave during Document 4, the rest of the team struggled to secure more consistent funding. This incentivised the coordinators to develop resilience and to change the structure and operation of the festival, by appointing a board of directors to oversee the organisation's move towards a charity. This change will be further detailed in this chapter in the second historical phase of development. A comprehensive list of Document's board members and staff is available in Appendix A.

In another article about Document, which appeared as the opening statement on Document 4 brochure, Aubrey brought this issue to the fore once more:

> In dark times like these and in a shoestring country like Scotland especially, there is a need more than ever for the Document Human Rights Film Festival to be recognised as a significant cultural event and an artistic force for the good […] if we're not careful, the cultural agenda will not be created by but marketed for us as residents, audiences, and cultural producers alike, by a centralised elite (Document, 2006a).

This commentary emphasises Document's position as a significant initiative of the alternative arts scene that resisted neoliberalism and the market forces that dominate cultural policy discourses. It signifies the need to understand the cultural and symbolic value of a festival that is not commercially successful but that brings a direct benefit to local audiences. Aubrey's statement reiterates the frustrations associated with the language and objectives of the creative industries that support and promote cultural initiatives without consideration for community needs and interests. For this reason, he suggests the festival's role is urgent and

indispensable to a healthy, diverse cultural landscape that showcases minority voices and tastes. This role is supported by the form of organisation, the choice of funding and stakeholders, but also through programming strategies.

Programming process and human rights discourses

This section addresses the second research question of this chapter, tracing the festival's identity and ethos as expressed through programming practices. The programming process at Document was shaped by the subjective experiences, interests and possibilities of the co-founders, who also managed the film selection, partnerships, scheduling and promotion. In the first five years, this process consisted of an open call for submissions along with sourcing films from international and local filmmakers. The films selected were then grouped in strands and scheduled in a four-day festival. Larkin was able to draw on the experience of programming New Visions, she managed the open call and reached out to the network she had established after years of working with the video and filmmaking community in Scotland. This determined an open-scene strategy, programming all the films that they considered urgent, important for raising awareness and promoting human rights. As Larkin remembers, 'We were showing 35 mm films alongside campaign stuff on video, there was a diversity of productions. It wasn't production value that was important for the selection, it was the content of the work' (2017, pers. comm., 5 June). For this reason, the festival strategy was based on inclusion rather than exclusion, programming as many films as they could show during the four days of each edition. The number of single screen films increased from 40 films in 2003, to 70 in 2004, and then 90 in 2005 and 2006. According to Larkin, this programming freedom meant that 'We accepted the work at face value, what we considered needs a platform. Of course, we couldn't show every film, although we did attempt to do that' (ibid). The tendency to show (too) many films was noticed even from the first edition, as Aubrey commented it was 'over-programmed to the detriment of many great films' (Aubrey, 2004). The festival usually lasted for four days ending on a Sunday and consisted of two screens, in the UGC, followed by GFT and CCA which remained the main venue and 'festival hub' until 2018.[33]

[33] Due to a fire at the nearby Glasgow School of Art in June 2018, the CCA and other buildings in the area were closed for several months, including October. Therefore, the festival coordinators decided to postpone the festival to December 2018 and to change the venue to the Scottish Youth Theatre. The prolonged closure of the CCA affected many festivals and businesses operating from the venue, re-surfacing the discontent of the art community with the poor infrastructure and perceived lack of support from the City Council (Brooks, 2018).

This approach to programming meant that the final selection included new, unknown voices, experimental or amateur films alongside acclaimed, award-winning documentaries. Larkin and Rai actively sought to combine explicitly political documentaries with cinematically innovative ones, which required an active survey of the field. For instance, Document 1 showed *Prisoners of the Caucasus* (2002), a documentary about the war in Chechnya, that gained acclaim at prestigious film festivals (IDFA, Berlinale, One World Prague, among others). Despite being the first edition, Rai managed to source the film, to the surprise of international festivals and local audiences (Aubrey, 2004). Remembering that situation, Rai suggested she often subverted the expected rules or routes of films in the circuit: 'you never go through the normal protocol' (2017, pers. comm., 23 March). In programming, she often relied on direct communication with the filmmaker, skipping certain gatekeepers such as distributors, other festivals or film markets. The film's cinematic storytelling of war and its effects was praised by Aubrey in his review, who expressed that the festival was 'the last place in the world you'd expect to get a chance to see a film like *Prisoners of the Caucasus*' (2004). As such, Document offered the opportunity to view documentaries that otherwise might not have been screened. Rai and Larkin contend this was the main criteria for the selection process: giving a platform to non-mainstream, unknown filmmakers, those who 'are trying to get into the bigger documentary world' (Rai, 2017, pers. comm., 23 March). Furthermore, in the absence of other human rights themed documentary festival in Scotland, Document offered unique opportunities to see such films and stories on screen.

The content and human rights approach of *Prisoners* as well as other documentary films selected by Document were explicitly political, radical, oppositional and made relevant to local audiences by connecting to domestic issues or organisations. As Larkin remembers, central to Document's programming strategy was to show 'people fighting against oppression' (2017, pers. comm., 5 June). This criterion reflects the broader belief in oppositional documentary as a genre capable of producing 'political mimesis', in which emotional experience can move the spectator to political action (Gaines, 1999). In the midst of debates and local opposition surrounding the military intervention in Iraq in 2003, Document screened *We Interrupt This Empire* (2003), a collaborative documentary made by The San Francisco Video Activist Network on direct action following the USA invasion of Iraq. Also in 2003, Document entered into a partnership that would last more than a decade with local filmmaking collective, Camcorder Guerrillas. Based in Glasgow, it is the most prolific video-activist organisation in Scotland, producing over 20 short films in a ten year span on a variety of topics, including food scavenging, climate change and the treatment of

asylum seekers and refuges (Presence, 2013). Document 1 selected from Camcorder's output local responses to nuclearisation or war, programming *Faslane – The Very Big Blockade* (2003) and *Mayday* (2003). The festival continued to expand its network of partnerships with other emergent video-activist groups in Scotland such as Media Co-op, Plantation Productions and Digital Desperados. The overarching aim of these partnerships was to engage with domestic human rights-oriented action and to provide a framework to discuss global issues in relation to local ones.

These partnerships also facilitated the organisation of off-screen events during the festival, having local filmmakers and activists participate in discussions, workshops and campaigns. NGOs that joined the festival for several editions included Glasgow Refugee Action Group, Miscarriage of Justice Organisation (MOJO) and the Glasgow Girls.[34] Another initiative which was born at Document was the Radical Independent Bookfair (RiB), led by Euan Sutherland. His involvement in art and radical politics goes back to Glasgow's art scene in the 1990s, and since 2006, he had a regular presence at the festival. The RiB offered a collection of titles concerning radical politics, socialism, Marxism, films as well as ephemera (stickers, leaflets, newspapers) 'with which you can make a positive change in the world' (Document, 2006a). These additional events and organisations in the space and time of the festival could be categorised as 'off screen' opportunities for activism (Davies, 2017). For documentary as well as human rights film festivals, this is an essential feature and just as important as the film screening. Document, as the only home-grown film festival in Glasgow until 2005, was one of the few places where people of different backgrounds, political viewpoints and interests could meet. Larkin recalls that there was a possibility for cross-over and interaction between people from various walks of life, who at the festival gained access to radical literature, learning about mental health issues, expanding the possibilities for discussion and solidarity (2017, pers. comm., 5 June). These relationships and networks developed organically, due to sociability, mutual support and stimulating conversations in the space of the festival, which became a significant cultural intermediary and a vital part of Glasgow's cultural scene.

The films and events programmed were arranged in strands that functioned as new entities and conveyed new meanings around the films and issues presented. The way they were assembled reveals the programmers' message towards the audience and has broader

[34] The Glasgow Girls were a group of young girls and activists who in 2005, after the raid and detention of a 15-year-old pupil at Drumchapel High School in Glasgow, started a campaign against child detention, making an important contribution towards the change of policy in 2010 (Scottish Refugee Council, 2018).

political and cultural implications. For instance, the first two editions had several strands focused on geographical areas, which corresponded to the programmers' intent to show stories from the countries and regions where the refugees and asylum seekers in Glasgow came from. They hoped that this approach would be an opportunity for other Glaswegians to witness everyday life in these countries. As such, Document 1 and 2 presented films grouped by country or region, including Sri Lanka, Palestine and the Balkans as well as by ethnicity such as Kurdish or Roma. Strands focusing on Mental Health, Social Care and Young People as well as labour issues mostly consisted of Scottish or UK films, to emphasise local concerns and connect with specific communities (addressed through the films, but also the partners involved that would sponsor these strands). Thus, the festival promoted the idea that documentaries can bring people of different nationalities and cultures together towards a shared view of a common humanity (Document, 2003). This approach suggests that Document wanted to adopt both a 'looking in' as well as a 'looking out' view of human rights issues, exploring oppression and struggle in relation to cultural and social issues in Scotland and beyond. In addition to how the strands were constructed, it is worth observing that Document did not have a category of competition films, which foregrounded the festival's egalitarian approach towards films of varying production quality and content.

Gradually, the grouping of films into strands by country changed to become cross-themed, a strategy observed at other European human rights film festivals and implemented at Document 'to widen our appeal, reduce ghettoization and reflect the universality of many of the issues involved' (Document, 2005). Grouping films on different topics in a strand reflects the creativity of programming and the role of human rights film festivals to make connections between different rights, to create new interpretations and expand the meanings of these issues through films and discussions (Wils, 2017). As such, Document 3 and 4 had strands such as Palestine-Kurdistan and child labour, addressing several issues in a single framework. The changes to the structure of the programme meant that the festival sacrificed consistency in order to better react to global issues and successful strategies observed elsewhere.

Impact and reach

This effort towards improvement increased the festival's reputation locally, with audiences almost doubling from Document 1 (1,360 attendees) to Document 2 (2,836 attendees) as well as internationally. The number of films received through open submissions increased to over 200 in 2005 and 400 in 2006, meaning that the festival became more visible in the

circuit, attracting more filmmakers to apply. However, the main value that the festival brought was, according to the co-founders, the ability to provide an accessible and informal space where people could meet and exchange opinions. This aspect is highlighted in all reports submitted to the funders, suggesting that the festival provided opportunities for audiences to 'engage with other people, pick up information relating to all sorts of human rights issues, and express their opinions' (Document, 2003). Asylum seekers as well as unemployed people could attend the festival for free, and all audience members could participate in screenings and discussions. As Bowman remembers, at Document 'you could have a social activist from Sighthill or Castlemilk having a beer with a director from Japan or an academic from the Czech Republic' (2017, pers. comm., 23 March). The main impact of the festival was in adopting this unspoken practice to break down hierarchies and allow people to move across social groups and form connections. Refugees and asylum seekers also had a space where they could interact with fellow Glaswegians and international filmmakers, activists or academics.

The co-founders wanted to provoke debate and stimulate radical thinking through the festival. By building a reputation as a 'young, bold and risky' (Document, 2005) festival, they demonstrated that socially oriented cultural activities were welcomed and a needed addition to Glasgow's cultural landscape. The growing number of submissions and the larger audience, the increase in supporters, volunteers and projects that became associated with Document highlighted its cultural and political impact, which inspired the founding of many other festivals and activist events from 2007 onwards. Despite these achievements, the festival continued to struggle for funding and the need for financial support to help the organisation maintain its staff and provision of high-quality films and debates. This constant struggle challenged their organisational structure and programming process, which gradually changed over the following five years.

During the first stage of development, Document emerged as a grassroots organisation, borrowing practices and social networks from the DIY activities that existed before, brought together for a very specific purpose: to address and oppose negative media narratives around refugees and asylum seekers. It adopted a loose, non-hierarchical organisational structure which also represented a risk to its survival. It focused on programming a variety of films, forms and topics broadly related to human rights, foregrounding marginalised voices and people fighting against oppression. Five years on, it became clear that the partly DIY model was not sustainable and that it needed to change to support growth.

‘What’s changed?’ – Document between 2008 and 2012

The second phase of development from Document 6 until Document 10 addresses the second and third research questions mentioned at the start of the chapter, and analyses two inter-connected processes that shaped the festival’s programming practices and organisation, namely institutionalisation and internationalisation. These changes happened gradually and determined the need to re-define and re-position Document in a busier festival landscape, both locally and internationally. As Document grew organically, it had to negotiate its initial DIY ethos and organisational model while increasing interaction with established institutions. These interconnected processes led to the development of partnerships, the process of establishing a board towards the attainment of charity status (which would enable accessing new income streams), while attempting to maintain a DIY ethos and practice.

Institutionalisation – structures, tensions and concessions

Ever since Document 4, the need to change the organisation to become more sustainable and to have access to more funding became a key focus and triggered a process that took years to formulate in a way that remained faithful to their original principles. Despite continuing to develop its reputation, having passionate and committed co-founders and networks, it became increasingly difficult to manage Document and to support the people who worked for it each year. The entirety of the funding and sponsorship raised went into the running of each edition, and the process had to be restarted each year with no guarantee of success, contributing to uncertainty and frustration, captured in this statement in the funding application of Document 5 (2007):

> [W]e continue to present a world class event on a project to project basis and on a shoestring of a budget! This is not something that we are particularly proud of and continues to show that we just wouldn’t be here without the hard work and commitment of the coordinators, board members, the CCA, volunteers, collaborators, sponsors and advisers.

This struggle and the reliance on volunteer work reflect the broader implications of neoliberalism and a cultural policy system that, from the festival worker’s perspective did not seem to value alternative programming the same way it did the larger mainstream projects. The demand for growth, the development of audiences and social inclusion through culture that public funders sought was at odds with the support for the staff that could implement these aims in their activities. On the one hand, funders valued accessibility and the inclusion of varied audiences, which Document respected by keeping ticket prices low

(or free in some cases) and reaching out to marginalised social groups in Scotland. On the other hand, the funding provided was not sufficient to cover the costs of staff who could then work towards developing its publicity and outreach campaigns to attract these new audiences. Consequently, the festival operated in a contradictory manner. Despite being recognised as an important and empowering organisation providing spaces for excluded groups, it was unsustainable and could only have a limited impact.

In the context of alternative media, sustainability is defined as 'having the resources to acquire staff, technologies of production, and avenues of distribution, and to develop audiences' (Skinner, 2012, p. 26). Document struggled especially with resources for staff, visibility and reaching broader audiences, objectives which were increasingly difficult to achieve. Furthermore, for cultural intermediaries and grassroots organisations focused on activism, economic sustainability is as important as social sustainability (Jeppesen, 2016). Pickard argues that autonomous media activism is supported by 'enduring relationships and exchanges based on trust, legitimacy and ethical behavior' (2006, p. 316). Since its inception, Document relied on the networks built among people with similar beliefs and aims, and yet these relationships could have been threatened by dispersal due to instability or by organisational change. A potential influx of funds, championed by some activists for its potential to increase economic sustainability, could be interpreted by others as a threat to the sustainability of the network's autonomy, principles and practices. This suggests another contradiction, the fact that alternative activist groups need funds to survive economically, yet an infusion of capital or change in their structure can have a negative impact on their social sustainability. If Document moved in a direction which contradicted the anti-capitalist and grassroots values of the broader network that had supported it, it could mean sacrificing the relationships and solidarity built among its members. This is the context in which Document managed its shift towards becoming more formalised and professionalised in order to achieve sustainability.

The organisational change was driven by a mix of long-term goals: to develop professionally, to hold an archive and to gain legitimacy, with pragmatic considerations – to have a legal structure and to be able to access more funding. In order to achieve these goals, the co-founders explored different organisational models, opting for a company limited by guarantee (formally created in 2008), with the aim to gain charity status. This was the result of a series of internal negotiations and debates that made this a long and arduous process. Mo Hume, Senior Lecturer in Politics at the University of Glasgow, was one of the first to join what would become the Board of Directors and took an active part in organisational

change. She remembers that the initial discussions lasted for hours and were mostly spent trying to figure out what kind of organisation Document was and wanted to be. The introduction of the Document 6 programme seemed to re-establish the community and grassroots origins: ‘it’s a festival that has come out of community and reflects the concerns of community’ (Document, 2008a). Behind the scenes, the co-founders, volunteer staff and friends had debates over the implications of each organisational model, whether it was a community interest company, a charity, whether it should have a board and what oversight it would have. It was clear though that the organisation needed an institutional structure, a legal presence and more accountability. Some people who were not particularly drawn to this structure, but had been involved with Document, such as Doug Aubrey, Leigh French, Marie Oleson and Abigail Howkins (Autonomi Films) continued to offer their support without formalising their position, taking an advisory role instead. These reactions reveal some of the tensions that arose from the discussion around the social sustainability of the organisation and how a radical shift in the organisation affected these relationships.

Hume indicated that this process emphasised the tension between Document’s aims and the funding climate:

> Even trying to professionalise, that underpinning logic and vision of being a platform for human rights advocacy was never lost and everybody shared that vision. […] There was a mixture of pragmatic without ever losing sight of what the purpose of the festival was (2017, pers. comm., 26 September).

After five years of running the festival, the purpose and objectives of Document remained unchanged in both how the festival presented itself to external stakeholders as well as how it was perceived internally by newer members. Hume understood the festival’s purpose was ‘to showcase cutting-edge films around key human rights issues around the globe, using film as a medium for advocacy’. Her statement mirrors almost word for word what the coordinators wrote in the sixth brochure, that Document screens ‘innovative and often under-represented work’, showcasing ‘culturally significant human rights content as a means of promoting critical debate on some of the major issues of our times’ (Document, 2008a). The fact that this narrative lasted supports the idea of a continuing need for such a platform in Glasgow and the attempt to maintain a consistent identity.

The role of the board and its relationship with the staff took shape over the years. Hume suggests that the board should have a voluntary supervisory role, from a more distant position, and should provide strategic, regular oversight (Hume, 2017, pers. comm., 26

September). However, with Document, these boundaries were more difficult to establish. Because of the lack of sustainable funding, the board sometimes became involved in festival operation, complicating this relationship and their position. For example, in its first year, the board included members of staff (Rai, Larkin and Patton were also board members in 2007). Maintaining distance was difficult to ensure, considering that, at the beginning, almost all of the year-round staff were also part of the board. Most of those who joined afterwards had been involved with Document before, either by organising events or programming films, and were therefore personally invested in the festival. There were no established criteria for joining the board or public calls for admission, which meant that it mostly consisted of friends or personal acquaintances. Arguably, this approach perpetuated a closed model of organisation, where people from the same circles, with similar interests and views worked together. At Document, this was mostly perceived as a strength, where like-minded individuals joined forces, building solidarity and an efficient way of working towards the same goals. At the same time, this was arguably a limiting factor, restricting debate around the same politics, ideas and opportunities. Hume felt that after being part of the board for five years, it needed 'new blood', a fresh input and energy. Document's board attempted to have members from a variety of professions and backgrounds, such as filmmakers (Nick Higgins), activists and academics.

From 2011 onwards, the board composition became more strategic. One of the key areas that the board wanted to improve was to have a stronger relationship with universities, and in particular with the University of Glasgow. This was further consolidated after Hume stepped down as chair and Archibald and Vélez-Serna joined in 2011. Through board membership, Document aimed to open up connections to mainstream institutions such as universities, a strategy which was not seen as threatening to the grassroots origins and aims of the organisation. This development did formalise the organisational structure and practices, by introducing a hierarchy and regular board meetings, where staff would report to the board. The relationship between board and staff was based on the principles of collaboration and dialogue, mutual support and cooperation, where board members would bring their specific knowledge and contacts to the festival.

Another aspect of institutionalisation towards becoming more accountable to funders, filmmakers and audiences alike, on which the board insisted, was the introduction of a selection panel. Previously, Rai had been solely responsible with programming, viewing all of the films received through open submissions as well as the sourced ones, with help from Larkin and Patton. However, it was felt that this process needed to change for several

reasons: firstly, the number of submissions increased each year. Secondly, sharing this responsibility with a committee would make the process more democratic and diverse. Similar to the board constituency, the selection panel also consisted of filmmakers, students and activists as viewers and decision-makers. The process now involved a team committed to viewing submissions, where each film would be seen by at least two people. They would debate the films and raise common topics and themes that informed the strands and panels for the festival, over which Rai maintained an oversight. Some topics recurred in each edition such as refugee/asylum seekers issues, mental health or labour rights. This practice remained unchanged until the moment of writing this thesis in 2018, which suggests that it provided a necessary thematic balance as well as creative opportunities, in a format which was sustainable and valuable for all members involved in the panel.

Trying to achieve sustainability and professionalisation, Document also focused on external collaborations and partnerships. These were strategic opportunities to become a more significant cultural intermediary, by also being involved in commissioning films and facilitating the participation of NGOs and targeted groups (refugees/asylum seekers, schools etc.). Since the first editions, Larkin had targeted specific organisations to join the festival, Q&As or panel discussions with the aim to provide further information on certain topics that the films raised or opportunities for engagement beyond the festival and this effort increased from one edition to the next. Document 7 had a record number of collaborations, including with NGOs such as Amnesty International, the Scottish Refugee Council, Unity, No Borders Scotland, LGBTQ Youth, The Fostering Network and many others. Through these collaborations, the festival strengthened its ties with community organisations (such as organising a workshop on 'How to Organise') as well as with academia and public institutions. This represented a survival strategy and maintained the festival's reputation and local relevance. Document invited organisations to contribute not only with financial support or expertise, but also with their creativity. In a funding application for Document 8, the coordinators illustrate that intention, stating that organisations

> have creative input in helping determine the unique content and direction of the festival each year within its established structure. This is what helps the Document Festival to grow, to continually renew itself, and to remain pertinent and current in its concerns (2010).

This practice was also an opportunity to access funds and justify value to public bodies. For several years, Document applied for funding from Scottish Screen (an arm's length institution that distributes funds from the National Lottery and the Scottish Government) and

Glasgow City Council, thus having to fit their criteria that included objectives related to the film industry and audience development as well as social and economic impact. For instance, the Scottish Screen applications often required evidence as to how the festival addressed 'social inclusion' and 'cultural diversity'. To evidence this, Document presented their collaborations with community organisations and NGOs who often contributed to bringing people over to watch films or increase accessibility to the screenings. At Document 7, they worked closely with the Scottish Refugee Council, Glasgow Anti-Racist Alliance (GARA) and Street Level Photoworks to bring over 100 young people and their families to join the screenings and debates in the Young People's programme. GARA offered a buffet lunch in the CCA as a gesture towards creating a space that is welcoming and supportive (Document, 2009).

These examples demonstrate that Document continued to grow and establish its practices attempting to become more aligned with public institutions' criteria for funding. Through these collaborations, Document was also beginning to generate income and to actively contribute to the film industry, by commissioning films, such as the collaboration with Poverty Alliance for 'Making a Difference' project in 2010. Within a year, Document commissioned and produced three short films[35] covering stories of poverty in Scotland which were then screened at the Scottish Government and at Document 8. Their role as an intermediary between various groups was emphasised in the festival report: 'The screening at Document 8 launched our Poverty Awareness Day and brought together all the filmmakers involved in the project, politicians, community activists and professionals working in the field' (Document, 2010b).

The festival also became more reflective of its practices and interested in developing and improving them. As such, they commissioned external evaluation reports, exploring the festival's audience demographic and patterns of consumption (for Document 8 and Document 9), as well as the inner makeup of the organisation and its relation to funders (Document 7). While these reports provided useful information regarding their audience and operations, the staff felt ambivalent towards their findings and recommendations. These evaluations were constructed to follow indicators and questions that were seen as not applicable to Document. As Bowman remembers, 'it was a paradox, you have to fight a

[35] The three short documentaries commissioned for Poverty Awareness Day were collaborative projects aiming to raise awareness of poverty in Scotland from the perspectives of young, adult, and older people: *The Templehall Project* (2010); *Tae Sail On Them Is No Their Fate* (2010) and *You Always Think There's Nothing There* (2010). The films are available in the Document archive.

battle using their own weapons' (2017, pers. comm., 23 March), having to deal with questions that judged Document's value by its financial output, its ability to generate income and have large ticket-paying audiences. For Document staff, these questions seemed to address a different type of festival, creating a feeling that 'they did not really understand our model because we did not seem to make any money off it' (ibid). In other words, these initiatives emphasised the gap between what evaluators perceived as value – generating capital and constant growth – and what Document members at the time advocated. They believed that instead value emerged from the diversity of films and the discussions and interactions created in the space of the festival. Despite receiving more funding which allowed them to grow, the feeling that 'Document and the funding bodies tend to speak different languages' (ibid) and that the festival was still not sufficiently recognised at a local level persisted.

Ethical funding is a core value of Document, which was safeguarded by the board which limited the sources of income on some occasions. The board as well as the coordinators maintained the view that Document would not sacrifice its integrity and ethical principles in order to access more funding. The practice of fundraising and choosing partners had to be compatible with the organisation ethos and human rights approach. This stance was scrutinised in 2012, when the coordinators (Rai and Karol Piekarczyk) considered approaching the Israeli embassy to support three Israeli filmmakers to attend the festival. The minutes recorded that this idea was contested by the board and Archibald cited the precedent at Edinburgh International Film Festival in 2008, that was threatened with a boycott by prominent filmmakers (such as Ken Loach) for using Israeli funding (Archibald & Miller, 2011). For this reason, the board members argued that funding from the Israeli government would have had a negative impact on the festival's image. The meeting concluded with the consensus to reject any funding connected to the Israeli government. This example illustrates the tension between the board, concerned with the festival's image and the coordinators who also considered the practicalities of inviting guests and fundraising. The fact that the coordinators brought this issue to debate during the board meeting suggests that they also perceived this matter as a contentious one, especially given the context of the Israel-Palestine conflict, the sensitive nature of the films selected and the context of their exhibition.

Internationalisation

Internationally, in this time frame, Document built a reputation and developed its networks and activities beyond Scotland. While the festival had shown international films before, its collaboration with counterparts from abroad was minimal. This began to change in 2008, when Document became an official member of the HRFN. Membership granted access to the wider festival circuit, through participation at the annual meeting during IDFA, the brunch as well as through the exchange of stories of practices and challenges with other similar festivals. This internationalisation manifested itself in several ways: in the festival's own definitions of human rights as well as in the expansion of their international collaborations, promoting Scotland abroad.

Inspired by other festivals, Document continued its effort to make the programme more navigable and attractive through thematic clustering. For instance, Document 8 had dedicated days for films and discussions on topics such as women's rights or poverty. Document 9 was presented with an overarching theme, 'A Year of Protest', inspired by the Arab Spring (Document, 2011). At the 2010 edition, Document also introduced the Jury Award, as a strategy to encourage more international guests. The first jury consisted of professionals, both local such as Karen O'Hare (Screen Academy Scotland), Ian Goode

Figure 4.1. Document 10 Jury Award. Photo by Martin Coyne.

(Lecturer at the University of Glasgow), Jamie Dunn (Film Editor, The Skinny magazine) as well as international: Hanna Polak (film director) and the directors of two festivals from the HRFN – Andrea Kuhn (Nuremberg International Human Rights Film Festival in Germany) and Maciej Nowicki (Watch Docs International Human Rights Film Festival in Poland). Each year, Document commissioned an artist to create a trophy which was presented to the awarded filmmaker (Figure 4.1).

Previously, Document had focused on activist films and events without paying much attention to the 'glamorous' practices associated with award ceremonies. The open-scene approach that guided programming in its early days was incompatible with the hierarchy and the symbolic status entailed by awards. In Document's case, the award is not monetary, but a symbolic gesture conferred by peers – professionals in the documentary, film festival and academic fields. The films that the Document programming team proposed to the jury were a shortlist of what they considered the most innovative, creative, engaging and thematically important documentaries. At the same time, they tried to include new or unknown filmmakers in this shortlist, to carry on their original remit.

Membership in the HRFN generated a continuous series of opportunities, collaborations and exchanges that expanded Document's role internationally. In 2010, the team organised an exchange with the Pravo Ljudski Festival, an annual human rights documentary film festival in Sarajevo, which is also a HRFN member. The exchange was framed as a journey of discovery and transnational solidarity between 'Project Bosnia and Herzegovina' and 'Project Scotland' to inspire 'our festival audiences to open their homes for each other' (Document, 2010b).

The exchange with Nuremberg International Human Rights Film Festival lasted for several years, beginning with Andrea Kuhn's invitation to the jury, a role which she performed until 2012, culminating with a formal exchange in 2011 between the two festivals. This exchange consisted of traveling and bringing a film to each other's festival – the screening of *48* (2010) at Document and the screening of Glasgow-based filmmaker and photographer Chris Leslie's work in Nuremberg. These exchanges served several purposes: to promote both Document and a Scottish filmmaker abroad, as well as to promote Scotland's image. If in the beginning Document had tried to counter media narratives and raise awareness for policy makers, the changes at government level and public opinion regarding refugees and asylum seekers made Document more aligned with their aims. As such, Document was not presenting itself as an alternative voice, but rather as another voice

enabling positive change in the mainstream. In brochures and funding applications, Document was now maintaining 'a historically Scottish tradition of open democratic debate' (Document, 2008a). The Lord Provost of Glasgow City Council left a statement of support for Document 9, praising how both Document and Nuremberg festivals were 'platforms for human rights issues which nurture new filmmaking talent across Europe and beyond' (Document, 2011). Through its international relations and after years of advocacy, Document gained increased legitimacy and became more aligned with mainstream discourse. This helped establish Document as a significant cultural intermediary, capable of building international networks of solidarity. The team also hoped that this would lead to an increase in funding, becoming more sustainable as a year-round organisation.

The process of internationalisation also determined subtle changes in Document's human rights approach and how this was narrated to audiences in promotional materials. While the programming was still mostly guided by oppositional documentary practices and topics, it adopted a much broader definition of human rights, interrogating the language and how it was implemented. Instances of this perspective appeared in brochures: 'human rights, if it is to mean anything, it has to begin with personal ethics' (Document, 2008) or 'reflect on what human rights actually means' (Document, 2010a). These statements emphasise the perceived need of a re-interpretation of rights beyond their assumed universality, exploring instead their discursive power and value. For the programme, this translated into selecting an even more diverse range of documentary forms and styles, focusing on cinematic essays, animation, art exhibitions that experimented with and provoked different interpretations of human rights. At the same time, Document wanted to consolidate its position within an international network of festivals that value international discourses of human rights as conveyed in the UDHR and other treaties. For instance, Document 6 hosted a keynote discussion on the 60th anniversary of the UDHR with international academics (Arun Kudnani, Yassamine Mather), authors (Neil Davidson) and law practitioners (Aamar Anwar). The discussion focused on topical issues for the UK in 'the spirit of the Declaration', discussing issues of liberty and surveillance. This event was unique for Document, approaching legal discourses that foreground the universality of human rights from a Western perspective.

The second phase of development witnessed Document grow and become a site of negotiation of its grassroots origins, which were increasingly incompatible with the need for sustainability and expansion. Two inter-linked processes characterised this transition from a loosely functioning association to a more established organisation: institutionalisation and

internationalisation. Document standardised and formalised its practices for grant capture, in order to be more accountable as well as to become more attractive internationally and to gain legitimacy. While it remained faithful to its principles in programming films about the fight against injustice, the festival also began interrogating the concept of human rights, showcasing a range of different filmmaking styles that expanded and experimented with the topic.

'A process, not an institution' – Document between 2013 and 2018

The third and final phase of development that this chapter covers a period which partially overlapped with my fieldwork. This phase was also marked by organisational change, a re-orientation of programming and a set of challenges and opportunities which will be further detailed in Chapters 5 and 6. As such, in this section I explore the wider patterns of development, without focusing in detail on the process of programming films and events. During this five-year period, the festival continued its process of institutionalisation and internationalisation as a strategy for survival amidst change.

Several significant changes took place around Document's tenth anniversary edition. In 2011, the board collectively stepped down as they felt the festival needed a new direction. After Document 9 in 2011, Larkin resigned, followed by Rai and Piekarczyk in 2012, which left Document in a crisis. The new board members, Mark Langdon, Archibald, Vélez-Serna as well as the co-founders and Bowman who remained an active member, were faced with the question of whether Document could and should continue, and who would run it. These questions were prompted by the fact that the festival emerged from a specific set of conditions and scenes based on the personal efforts and interests of Rai and Larkin. Therefore, it was uncertain whether Document could preserve its identity under the leadership of others and whether there was still a place for it in an increasingly competitive festival calendar. This moment in the festival's history illuminated a series of aspects about the organisation, its hierarchical structure and ethos, which had consequences for the editions that followed. On the one hand, the grassroots origins and DIY ethos were re-affirmed by how the former coordinators saw the festival in light of staff change. For both Rai and Bowman 'Document is a process, not an institution', allowing for its mutability through the efforts of the people that run it, for its ability to develop organically and to learn from past mistakes and achievements. New staff could therefore perceive the festival's relevance and identity in a different way, through their own personal interests and understanding of the

cultural and political field in which it operates. Consequently, they could have a different approach and model the festival accordingly.

This rejection of leadership of a formalised structure was limited in practice. The board acted as an instrument of continuity that preserved the cultural memory of the festival as well as an instrument of control with power to appoint staff and to be a part of strategic decision-making. For instance, the board appointed the new coordinators when the previous teams stepped down, in 2013, 2016 and 2018. They also intervened and opposed some decisions which involved changing the coordinators' job titles.

The board appointed the new coordinators and established the ground rules on which they operated. Rai recommended Lindsay Reid, a graduate student of a Master programme in human rights to take the role of coordinator. Soon afterwards, she was joined by Cayley James, at the time MA student in Film Studies at the University of Glasgow, who was suggested by Archibald and started as a press and social media assistant. The new team had to adapt and learn by doing, without a formal handover, although benefitting from the board's support and guidance. This is when institutionalised practices – the supervisory role of the board, the programming process and the organisational operations such as writing funding applications became essential in informing the new team. The new staff members – Reid and James – found this entire process very challenging, trying to navigate a labyrinthic administrative system which they felt was not sustainable and 'survived out of sheer luck and people wanting to fund it and keep it going' (James, 2017, pers. comm., 26 July). Because funding had always been given on a yearly basis, the former coordinators did not have the time and support to formalise their practices or maintain archives, an aspect which was always discussed at board meetings, but never followed up with action. As such, the new team had to adapt and try to complement and develop their own practices. As James remembers, she felt a responsibility to continue the work that Larkin and Rai started, 'that came from a very honest place' and to preserve its organisational and programming ethos (2017, pers. comm., 26 July).

Reid and James understood the grassroots model and its aims to remain an independent horizontal organisation, but they also felt that this structure had changed and needed to become more visible. One of their first proposals was to change their job titles and drop 'coordinator' in favour of 'festival director', as they felt these better reflected what they did and helped them be on the same level as their counterparts at international festivals. As James suggests, adopting a different, perhaps more accurate title did not discount the

festival's philosophy, which already had a level of hierarchy through the board. Nevertheless, this change was opposed by the board and continued to be a point of disagreement between them and the coordinators. This discussion also highlighted another difference between the founders and the new coordinators: Rai and Larkin started the festival as their activist project, while the new team inherited and approached it as an arts institution, which implied using another language and practices. Through the institutionalisation process, Document became a professional arts organisation that gave people an opportunity to gain necessary skills for various standardised jobs that are common in any type of festival, such as programming, event management, hospitality services, marketing and publicity. Therefore, Document had changed significantly from its initial organisational model.

Nevertheless, the main mission and aims of the festival were safeguarded and further developed. James' vision of Document was similar to its original mission: 'Document was established to provide a safe and welcoming space to discuss pertinent human rights issues from around the world, to create a local narrative about a global situation' (2017, pers. comm., 26 July). Reid and James' aim was to build on the existing legacy and to continue focusing on films about stories of empowerment, while also expanding on the cinematic approach of human rights cinema, by 'pushing the form and into more poetic documentaries' (ibid). Therefore, they wanted to put together documentary stories and formats that explore the human rights theme creatively, to foreground 'the conversation between current events, politics, human rights and moving image' (ibid). At the same time, they wanted to streamline the programme and make it more accessible by drastically reducing the number of films shown. In contrast to the open-scene format adopted before, the 'new' Document carefully curated an average of 30 films per edition, without aiming to cover a 'checklist' of issues or filmmakers but focusing on a few themes instead. Additionally, they provided other opportunities for entertainment in the space of the festival, such as concerts or exhibitions, hoping that Document offered 'something for everyone' (Document, 2014). This strategy continued after Reid's and James' departure. The shorter programme and the focus on a few, key areas or themes emphasised the importance of the 'curator' or 'programmer' in shaping a certain distinct view and perspective of the human rights and documentary fields each year. While this shift and the process of curating the festival since 2016 onwards is the focus of the next chapter, it is worth investigating the changes and negotiations leading up to the way Document currently operates.

The festival landscape in Glasgow had changed significantly since Document started in 2003, with the emergence of an increasingly large number of thematic festivals with

related topics. Glasgow Film Festival, a generalist, audience-oriented festival appeared shortly after Document, in 2005. It was followed by Africa in Motion! in 2006 in Edinburgh and Glasgow, the Scottish Mental Health Arts and Film Festival (SMHAFF), Take One Action in 2007, Glitch and the Scottish Queer International Film Festival (SQIFF) in 2015. While these festivals did not have a human rights theme, they did overlap with some of the topics that Document covered such as LGBTQ issues, mental health, social change or documentaries from the African continent. Therefore, Document devised a strategy of collaboration rather than competition, which was key to their survival and innovation. As James remembers, 'Document was almost too good at sharing' (2017, pers. comm., 26 July), organising co-presentations at each other's' festivals. These co-presentations replaced the NGO collaborations, proving once again the shift away from issue-based activism towards cultural activism. This strategy highlights the role of the curator as an intermediary between filmmakers and audiences, deciding on the criteria for choosing a film over another.

This proliferation of thematic festivals built a collective platform for screening films that would otherwise not receive theatrical distribution. It also indicated that the funding environment had become more supportive of film exhibition and niche programming. In contrast to the New Visions example of the 1990s, when two festivals around the same topic and in relative proximity were considered too many and forced to merge or terminate, the new climate suggested otherwise. There seemed to be enough space for festivals to co-exist and contribute to local film culture. However, a competition for space in the calendar and for funding was taking shape, regardless. Most of the festivals mentioned above took place around the same time, between September and November each year. Their main venue was the CCA, which was essentially hosting a different festival each weekend between these months. Furthermore, all of these festivals were mainly funded by Creative Scotland through the Open Project Fund. This proliferation of festivals is indicative of neoliberal developments in cultural policy. This period sees cultural policy being driven by the creative industry where culture and economy coalesce for the purpose of organisational development. Document, as well as the other festivals become forms of consumer value, embedded in the discourse of the creative city that New Visions and the DIY activity in the 1990s challenged. With relatively low costs, these festivals brought a seemingly endless supply of films, professionals, events, entertainment to be consumed while fulfilling funders' agendas – cultural diversity, audience development, social inclusion (Creative Scotland, 2018). Even though grants for individual festivals increased (Document had received £15,000 in 2015 and £25,000 in 2016 and 2017), they were not given on a long-term basis. Document had to reapply each year and continued to allocate most of the costs towards programming,

constantly developing and innovating its output rather than towards its staff, further evidencing its roots as a volunteer-run festival. As Document and many of these other festivals did not consider corporate sponsorship an option, and as public funding remained limited, they continued to function on a shoestring budget and face organisational change or staff exhaustion as a consequence.

Having to reposition itself in a busier festival landscape, since 2013, the new coordinators took other measures that pushed the festival towards further internationalisation. Given the curatorial approach based on a limited number of themes, the festival relied increasingly on films sourced directly from filmmakers or other festivals that fit within those themes rather than from the open submissions. This meant higher costs for license fees, travel to international festivals and a limited number of Scottish productions in the programme. This was a dramatic change from the first editions, when Document had an average of 15-20 local films[36] per edition, to only one in 2015 and none from 2016 onwards. The reasons for this drop are manifold. For instance, there were less films made in Scotland submitted to Document since 2016 when I started fieldwork and participation in the selection panel. The proliferation of human rights film festivals globally of varying prestige and significance for the industry (see Chapter 3) may have also contributed to how filmmakers planned their strategy for international circulation.

The coordinators also argued for a change of the festival's visual identity (logo, brochure), that had not been consistent over the years and was viewed as not sufficiently attractive in the current festival landscape. They opted for a logo (Figure 4.2) that is internationally known as the human rights graphic symbol.[37] The brochure format was changed to an A5 booklet, using more colourful covers than previous brochures and a structure based on dates and strands. The choice of this logo emphasises the internationalising drive to become more recognisable in the circuit and to local audiences. More space in the brochure was given to descriptions of strands, which did not previously have a place in the programme. Usually taking up to one page, these descriptions provided

DOCUMENT

Figure 4.2. Document logo

[36] In this thesis, local films are understood as those films that are mainly produced in Scotland.

[37] The logo designed by Predrag Stakic contains a symbol in the shape of a hand doubling as a bird. It was introduced in 2011 as the universal logo for human rights following an international design contest (Human Rights Logo, 2011).

a sense of the issues covered, how they link to current events and what the argument that the programmers put forward through them is. As will be further detailed in Chapter 5, the coordinators believed that this new approach made the programme more accessible by foregrounding specific strands and topics as well as more attractive and engaging.

The Document team led by Reid and James aimed to make the organisation more stable through developing year-round activities. As such, in 2014 and early in 2015, they organised a tour of selected films across other cities apart from Glasgow (Edinburgh, St Andrews, Inverness and others), expanded on collaborations with other festivals and with the newly formed Scottish branch of the Radical Film Network. James' view was that Document should maintain a year-round presence and expand its network of collaborations. She suggested that Document should be part of building a community of like-minded people that 'work together towards the greater good as opposed to competing for audiences' (James, 2017, pers. comm., 26 July). To be able to accomplish that, the organisation needed to change, to develop a long-term strategy and plan to carry through sustainable growth. However, as James' remembers, 'strategy has never been Document's strong suit', due to the DIY ethos and form of organisation and this issue had been accentuated by frequent organisational change.

After James' departure, each edition was organised by new teams, which increased uncertainty and threatened the festival's continuity and identity-building efforts. This constant staff turnover emphasises the difficulty of maintaining a team in a precarious working environment, a feature common to film festivals more broadly (Loist, 2011). This aspect also challenged the relationship between board and staff, the lack of formalised roles and responsibilities, as well as the lack of clarity over who holds control in the organisation.

The teams that coordinated Document since 2016 were interested in course-adjustment, in establishing a clearer identity in terms of aesthetic vision and approach to human rights. They were also interested in making the organisation more robust, formalised and transferable from one team to the other. In their view, which will be further explored in Chapter 5, the festival had to focus on documentary form as much as on content and to explore the context of producing and screening a film, providing the audience with opportunities for introspection and critical thinking. This perspective also reflected broader changes in the aims of public funders. If in the past funders such as Creative Scotland requested evidence of how festivals fostered social inclusion and accessibility, from 2016 onwards they asked more specifically about the artistic contribution and creative idea of the

project. This suggests a shift in priorities and the festival changed alongside them, in an attempt to both innovate and remain relevant. Each coordinating team had curatorial independence from the board and had been given the freedom to manage the funds and income received towards supporting their own vision and creative statement through programming. While discussions, deliberations and suggestions from the board were part of the programming process, the final selection and decision over programming were made by the coordinators. At the same time, the new teams wanted to streamline the festival and admitted that growth might not be the only path towards sustainability. In fact, scaling down was seen as a strategy for offering more significant opportunities for engaging with films and discussion as well as fairer working conditions for the staff. This concern echoed earlier struggles of the co-founders, who were preoccupied with the rights of those attending the festival as well as those who run it.

Conclusion

This chapter set out to investigate the conditions and origins of Document, how and why it emerged as a documentary film festival specialised in human rights and how it evolved, in terms of approach of human rights cinema, activism and organisation structure. These lines of enquiry prompted a historical approach to the development of this grassroots organisation. While no official archive was available, internal documents, interviews and press materials provided rich sources for producing a chronicle of the festival. This institutional history contributes to the overarching argument that human rights film festivals are specialised cultural intermediaries that are shaped by their locality, temporality and stakeholders. As such, the study of Document's history demonstrates how it emerged from a specific set of conditions and scenes, as a culmination of past efforts towards supporting alternative film exhibition and socially engaged cinema and activities to respond to the negative media portrayal of refugees and asylum seekers in Scotland. The festival emerged as a grassroots organisation with a DIY ethos that encapsulated the co-founders' drive to create a non-hierarchical, dialogical and independent space where marginalised voices would be foregrounded. The phased approach to the festival's history illuminates how changes in cultural policy, in the festival ecosystem both locally and internationally as well as in staffing took the organisation in different directions. The concept of human rights was used as a framework to articulate the violations against and claims made by marginalised and oppressed people, at home or abroad. The definition and interpretations of this concept focused on an oppositional stance and radical approaches, but with time and inspired by other similar festivals, Document also began to engage with Western human rights

discourses. As the festival grew and developed, its grassroots, DIY model became unsustainable for development and grant capture. Similar to other festivals that began within the community (see Richards, 2017), Document had to change, institutionalise and professionalise to survive. This process generates on-going debates and negotiations with every new team that joins the festival. In order to preserve its original aims, Document had to adapt to the increasingly busy festival landscape and competitive funding opportunities by implementing standardised practices of programming and management as well as collaboration with external partners. Since 2015, most of these partners were other festivals in Glasgow, illustrating the changing landscape as well as the shift towards professional arts institutions rather than activists. While the festival programme may look very different from the first edition in 2003, some features endured, which indicates the continuous relevance of this human rights film festival in Scotland, a festival that is faced with its own search for a renewed identity: to reposition itself and affirm its unique characteristics in the context of proliferating festivals locally and around the world.

Chapter 5: The critical eye – curatorial ethics and emotional labour

One of the traditions at Document is to announce the jury award before the final screening. In 2018, the international jury (Michelle Aaron, Jose Miguel Beltran, Azadeh Emadi, Jennifer McCarey and Suki Sangha) decided that the award should go to *Revenir* (2018), a collaborative documentary made by David Fedele and Kumut Imesh, the former a professional filmmaker from Australia and the latter a refugee from the Ivory Coast, living in France. The film focuses on Imesh's attempt to retrace the journey he took in 2004, when he was forced to flee his country due to his political activism. Feeling it is his duty to tell the story of forced migration from the perspective of a refugee, he decides to go back to his native country and embark on the same route he had taken to reach Europe, this time with a camera in his hand. As such, the film's main aim is to provide a counternarrative to the stories of migration told in the mainstream media, an aspect revealed by the synopsis: 'For years, the stories of West African migrants have been told through the lenses of foreign journalists wanting to highlight the plight of those forced to flee from their homes. Now there is a story told from the inside' (Fedele & Imesh, 2018). A few minutes into the film, we find out that it is Imesh's first time using a camera and making a film. While the small, digital camera does not render the highest video or sound quality, it becomes a powerful tool in recording the protagonist's journey and a weapon in the eyes of authorities who capture Imesh while crossing the Saharan desert. The last 20 minutes of the film feature a black screen after the protagonist was detained and his camera confiscated. In the background, he discusses with Fedele about how to regain his freedom and whether the footage is enough to make a film despite not being able to complete his journey. This made the co-directors promote *Revenir* as 'a film about making a film', a raw, honest and intimate story that reveals the universal human struggle for freedom and dignity (ibid).

This film was one of the five films selected from the open submissions at Document and was praised by the jury:

> We want to commend the film *Revenir* and especially Kumut Imesh for his extraordinarily brave, honest and interrogative approach to his journey, past and present. At a time when we may feel our media is saturated with horrific tales of displaced people's ordeals and public debate seems obsessed only with these people's legitimacy, this film, and specifically Kumut's manner and intuitive filmmaking ability, provided a fresh and much needed point of view on these events. His inherent ability to connect the human experience of others created the same connection for the audience. We wish the filmmakers every success in the future (Jury statement in Document, 2018a).

This comment foregrounded the importance of representation and of having a protagonist who has a lived experience of the subject matter. It also values the bravery and intuitiveness in making a film that connected with the audience, not necessarily though quality of form, but through a strong personal content and through transparency. While Document 2018 is not included in fieldwork undertaken for this thesis, the example provides an insight into broader festival functions and practices. The festival, through its programming and bestowing of awards, adds value and legitimacy to films. Being part of a human rights film festival, such films are evaluated and interpreted by programmers and the jury based not only on artistic merit but also on aspects of representation, ethics and truth-value. These deliberations are at the core of the process of programming; it is here that the team's subjective dispositions, tastes, ethics, creativity and assumptions about the audience are negotiated and articulated. Such articulations are rarely divulged to the public and are only made visible through statements in promotional materials such as brochures and the press. This chapter addresses the following research questions:

- What defines a Document 'aesthetic' and approach in terms of films, human rights and activism?
- What types of films are programmed by Document and what criteria drive programming decisions?
- What are the roles and responsibilities of human rights film festival programmers?

This chapter analyses this process and reveals how the deliberative and interpretative acts around documentary and human rights cinema were made during the process of programming two editions of Document, in 2016 and 2017. This chapter argues firstly, that programming is a form of collective authorship where vision and responsibility are shared unequally amongst participants. The programmers act as gatekeepers and tastemakers of human rights/documentary cinema, shaped by subjective dispositions, internalised, un-defined approach to human rights and various sensitivities to documentary film aesthetics and expectations. By analysing the programming process through practice-led enquiry and auto-ethnography, I identify ten primary curatorial values/criteria (focused on aesthetic, representational, ethical and pragmatic reasons) that emerged from programming notes, discussions and interviews, which determined the focus and vision of Document 2016 and 2017. Although driven by subjective, personal interests and ethics as well as by locality, temporality and stakeholders, these values can be readily applied to other film festivals as well (especially human rights or activist ones). Secondly, this chapter argues that

programming is a form of emotional labour, as the programmers manage and supress their feelings (Hochschild, 1983) in order to carry out their work. Feelings of anxiety and frustration were caused by the number of films to be viewed in the submissions stage, the exposure to images of suffering typical of human rights films as well as by the financial precarity caused by unpaid labour and the uncertainty regarding funding. Finally, this chapter adds to the overarching argument that human rights film festivals, through their curatorial practices, actively create and shape a localised perspective of human rights cinema presented to the audience as authentic and relevant.

The programming process at Document: timeline and phases

Programming is the main activity of film festivals, which, ever since the shifts in the international film festival circuit in the late 1960s became a decisive factor in the circulation of world cinema. While the process lacks standardisation and can vary significantly from one festival to the other depending on size, budget, locality, profile or position in the festival circuit, there are several general programming stages and practices which apply to most festivals. Programming at Document follows such established practices in how the team source films and manage the organisational framework, while distinguishing from others by the organic, ad-hoc way it establishes criteria and achieves the final selection. These aspects of film programming and curation are presented in more detail below.

Films for Document are sourced via three main routes: through an open call for submissions from filmmakers and distributors, by identifying films that have been screened at other film festivals and from partners and board members. During the first, pre-selection phase, the programmers collect films, apply for funding and establish a team to view and evaluate films. After narrowing them down to a shortlist, the second phase begins, when the coordinators make the final selection of films based on specific criteria, organise these films into thematic strands and on a schedule covering the three festival days. Finally, the coordinators write the programme brochure addressed to the public. The timing of these activities is visualised in the table below (Figure 5.1) and explored in more detail in the sections that follow.

Figure 5.1. Operational timeline (programming) for Document 2016 and 2017.

'We've opened the floodgates': pre-selection

Pre-selection is the longest phase in the programming process and involves a range of activities and tasks. It is when programmers act as gatekeepers and mediators, as 'auteur, critic, historian' (Ruoff, 2012, p. 7) as well as 'supervisor, administrator and human resource director' (Mitchell, 2017, p. 314). At this stage, they were guided by a set of both practical and ethical questions: how to manage an abundance of films? How to build a team that can undertake the task of viewing films? Who is funding the festival and what impact that has on the programming process? The programmers addressed these questions throughout the programming notes, meetings and the interviews that I subsequently conducted.

The process of programming Document 2016 began in January, with the launching of the open call for submissions. This was one of James' last actions as a coordinator of the festival before her departure. The practice of open submissions means that the festival invites filmmakers, producers and distributors from around the world to send their films, which will then be considered for selection. A brief summary of the announcement was described on Document's Facebook page as: 'We've opened the floodgates! Submissions are now a go. We'll be accepting documentaries of every stripe as long as they directly engage with a pertinent human rights issue' (Document, 2016b). This description is intentionally ambiguous, to encourage a diversity of voices and perspectives around human rights. The 'floodgates' metaphor is pertinent in capturing the expectations around submission numbers. Digital technologies have made film production more accessible, and the internet provided opportunities for filmmakers all over the world to make and share their work, which created an influx of films to festivals. Festivals like Sundance can receive tens of thousands of submissions in one year (Rastegar, 2016); human rights ones receive less – several hundreds, which can still make this process increasingly difficult to manage, as John Biaggi, the former

director of Human Rights Watch Film Festival put it ‘we used to get inundated with submissions when we had a broad open call for films’ (Cinema Without Borders, 2009). This statement highlights the sheer volume of submissions, which transformed programming into a numbers game, where too many films are rejected and never get a chance to be seen (Rastegar, 2016). Festivals struggle to filter through these productions and connect films with audiences, requiring new organisational practices (Mitchell, 2017).

Despite this development across different film festival circuits, Document’s practice of open submissions has remained unchanged since its first edition and was inherited by the new team of coordinators who started in their roles in March 2016. The call for submissions was publicised on the festival’s website, circulated online via its social media channels and promoted by the HRFN. The application pack consisted of a brief description of guidelines for eligibility and an online form for the technical details of the film and the viewing link. The conditions for entry were minimal: short and feature length documentaries that directly engage with current human rights issues around the world. No other requirements of premiere status, exclusivity, format or length were mentioned, suggesting an open approach. The deadline was set for the 1st of May, leaving a four-month period for submitting films. In order to participate, submitters were encouraged to fill in a form with more details: synopsis, production information, such as length, language, country and director. This initial announcement contained the first conditions for selection at Document. It also revealed the accessibility of this process, which can be virtually instantaneous, as the form and the link to the film could be filled online, free of charge, from anywhere in the world. The data introduced by filmmakers was recorded automatically via the festival’s email and then directly transferred onto an online spreadsheet which was managed by the programmers.

On the one hand, the open submissions practice provided Document with a large pool of films, stories and perspectives they could choose from. The lack of specific criteria and submission fees opened up the possibility of receiving a variety of films depending on the submitters’ personal interpretation of the call. On the other hand, this meant that the programmers had to watch hundreds of hours of films, out of which fewer were selected each year. The responsibility of watching all the submitted films and evaluating them based on fair criteria is one of the unspoken rules of programming, based on an implicit understanding between the filmmaker/distributor and the festival. This commitment was shared by the Document programmers, who made sure that each submitted film was seen by at least two viewers, for a balance of opinions and tastes. At the same time, this responsibility and the volume of work expected illuminates one of the least attractive facets of being a

programmer and acting as a filter between production and consumption. Programmers have the power and responsibility to act as intermediaries between filmmakers and audiences, having to filter through films. This is not always an enjoyable activity, as one curator suggests: 'We watch the bad stuff so you don't have to!' (Moodley in Dovey, 2015, p. 84). This aspect foregrounds the taste and subjectivity of the programmers as notions of 'good' and 'bad' are entirely determined at the individual's level. Further in this chapter I problematise these notions and break down their meaning in relation to how programmers justify these remarks, by looking at the arguments and reasons that lie behind them.

Within a five-month period, Document received 222 submissions in 2016 and 236 in 2017, including short and feature length films. Based on the main country of production, I grouped the films by region to discover their geographical distribution, which revealed striking results (Figures 5.2 and 5.3).

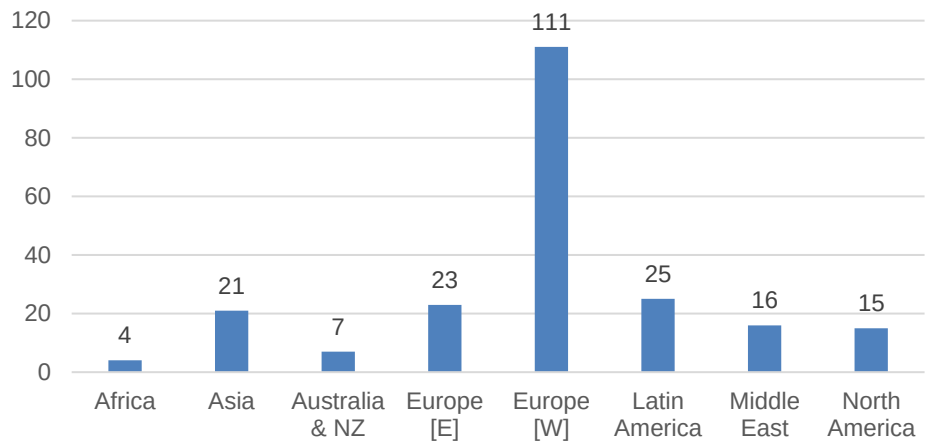


Figure 5.2. Number of submitted films by continent and category (2016).

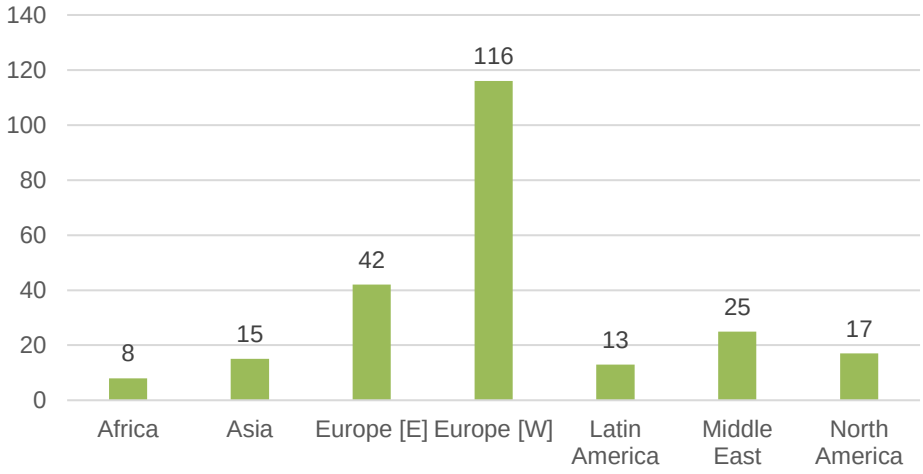


Figure 5.3. Number of submitted films by continent and category (2017).

Both charts reveal how Western Europe dominated the submissions section for both editions. In 2016, 134 films out of a total of 222 (which added up to 60%) and in 2017, 158 out of 236 (67%) were European productions. The fewest submissions came from the African continent (four films in 2016 and eight in 2017) and Oceania (seven in 2016 and none in 2017). One of the possible reasons for this disparity is that Document is a European festival and its profile and reputation were built in this context, through its membership of the HRFN and through collaborations with other European festivals. The data also reflects how human rights discourse as a Western construct grasped mainstream media attention, including film. This disparity is further emphasised when the output of the respective film industries is taken into account. While a recent study (Follows, 2015) shows that the top five feature production nations are India, China, Japan, USA and the UK, in Document's submissions, these regions are among the least represented. The countries that lead with the most submissions from within Europe are Spain (in 2016) and Germany (in 2017) either as sole or main countries of production. The UK (including submissions from Scotland) was represented by 12 films in 2016 and 26 in 2017, which adds up to less than 10% of the total number of submissions.

At the same time, most of these productions from Western Europe focused on issues and areas on other continents. For instance, half of the films submitted from the UK in 2016 and 2017 revolved around other places such as the Calais refugee camp in France, the Gaza Strip, Lesbos in Greece, Syria, North Korea and Indonesia. These places are also strongly connected with the subject matter, such as migration, refugees and asylum seekers and war, which were the most prevalent themes in both years. These themes dominated the political, social and cultural spheres, especially in Europe during this time, which is reflected in the submissions, evidencing how documentary filmmakers responded to current events. At the same time, this focus on presenting human rights issues at a distance enforces the humanitarian gaze, discussed in Chapters 1 and 3.

As outlined previously, the representation of subjects in human rights cinema has been discussed by scholars (Nash, 2018; Tascón, 2012, 2015; Torchin, 2012a) who argue that festivals can either perpetuate or subvert images of victimhood and the humanitarian gaze. Films by Western filmmakers or producers about people and situations at a distance can reinforce a Western perspective, stereotypes or a relationship of unequal power based on humanitarianism and 'Others' as figures of victimhood and pity (Tascón, 2015). Human rights festival programmers are often faced with this issue and try to address it through the programme. However, this is limited by what they receive and what they have access to. As

Loist (2012) suggests, one of the main questions for programmers is whether the films they want are available. One way to challenge the gaze and to shrink the gap between viewer and on-screen subject is by focusing on local issues. However, if such films do not arrive through open submissions, this possibility to subvert the gaze is more limited. Document programmers felt a responsibility to navigate this issue and to provide a more balanced programme geographically. However, this approach was strongly dependent on funding, as many films that had already travelled and gained acclaim throughout the festival circuit required a screening fee.

'Good news Tuesday!': programming and funding

Document coordinators had to adapt to a competitive, uncertain source of public funding that covered the majority of their costs, including programming. They did this firstly by working assiduously on a funding application, which required evidence-based arguments for the festival's merit and legitimacy in the city's cultural landscape and secondly by managing uncertainty on a personal as well as creative level. Creative Scotland is the main funder of Document, covering on average 60% of the total festival budget each year. In 2016 and 2017, Document applied for £25,000 from Creative Scotland, which covered artistic/creative costs, organisational costs and marketing. The funding was part of the Open Project Fund,[38] which runs throughout the year, supporting both individuals and organisations from a broad spectrum of cultural activity. As such, it is extremely competitive and there is no set amount of film exhibition projects that are supported.

The application is one of the first narratives that contains information on the festival's aims and programme, as it has to be submitted months in advance of the festival dates. The Open Project funding programme has an average turnaround of eight to twelve weeks. In both years, the coordinators submitted the application at the start of June hoping to receive a final answer by August. When the long-awaited answer came in and brought the announcement that the award was granted, one of Document's coordinators in 2016 sent an email to the festival's board with the title 'Good news Tuesday!' (Kenyon, 2016, pers. comm., 30 August), marking the day in which the team found out that they could transform their plan into reality.

[38] In 2018, Screen Scotland was launched within Creative Scotland to support film-related projects, including film festivals through the Film Festivals Fund (Screen Scotland, 2019).

On Document's operational timeline, this meant that throughout the pre-selection (January - May) as well as the selection phase (June - August), the festival coordinators did not know for certain if the funds would be awarded, if they would be paid for their work and consequently, if they would be able to cover screening fees for any of the films selected. This uncertainty lingered on the coordinators' minds, although ultimately it did not influence their decision-making process. The coordinators mentioned feelings of anxiety thinking about their own sustainability as well as that of the festival's, aspects which illustrate how festival work can be seen as a form of precarious and emotional labour.

In completing the application, the coordinators provided evidence of the merits, legitimacy, cultural authority and practical possibilities to undertake their work. They responded to four main criteria: (1) artistic and creative quality; (2) reaching people; (3) effective project management and (4) financial management (Creative Scotland, 2018). The requirement for an 'artistic and creative idea' was especially challenging at this stage of the operational timeline, as the coordinators had to talk about the programme without having watched a significant part of the submissions and without having yet decided on themes or strands. They therefore had to determine some elements of the programme that would have to be in the festival before going through the rest of the films. The language used by the coordinators as well as the first programming choices were kept somewhat vague, focusing on the broader vision and referencing the festival's collective authorship:

> We will be presenting a carefully curated programme of documentaries from around the world, contextualised through local collaborations and partnerships. We will frame the festival with a series of discussion events elaborating on the themes and aesthetics of the work screened and facilitating an open forum for festival-goers to learn and debate (Document, 2016c).

The application further emphasised partnerships and engagement with local organisations such as the Glasgow Human Rights Film Network, Glasgow Refugee, Migration and Asylum Network (GRAMNet) and the Scottish Documentary Institute (SDI). These organisations are briefly described in the application, which is also used as evidence for the festival's ability to build and maintain networks and associate with organisations that bring additional value to the programme.

As part of the section of the application focused on the organisation's biography, the coordinators emphasised Document's legacy as a 'key platform for Scottish and international documentary filmmakers, and a crucial space for the visibility of documentary film as an art form and social practice' that is 'recognised at home and abroad' (Document, 2016c). The

section further emphasised the festival's local perspective, suggesting that 'Document functions as a hub for local community organisations involved in advocacy and awareness raising on Human Rights issues'. As such, the festival drew on its internationalisation and institutionalisation practices, its track record in collaborations and in showcasing acclaimed films to convey its cultural value. The application stated the festival's aim to build on that legacy while 'laying the foundations for a more sustainable model of management', indicating the need for more predictable and substantial funding than in previous years. Furthermore, the additional funding was meant to support the general creative vision of the festival focusing on 'the formal qualities of documentary film and the many modes of practice within its framework'. The implied point here is that curated content might require including more critically acclaimed films, which might raise the screening fees. Finally, the additional funding was useful to enable the festival to extend its professional development aim, and the ability to 'offer mentoring to anyone who wants to be involved over the festival period and help any such individuals to develop their skills and interests along the same lines as the core team'. The funding application illustrates that the coordinators respond to funding requirements by expressing their commitment to creativity and innovation as well as to the inherited achievements and legacy.

Submissions panel and the viewing process

This stage of the programming process emphasises the role of programmers as team leaders who share the responsibility and the creative vision with other contributors. Programming is a form of collaborative authorship whereby a team of people (submission viewers, fellow colleagues and stakeholders) use their skills, knowledge and subjective dispositions to interpret and evaluate films. From this perspective, lead programmer(s) are not the sole artistic decision-maker but cede some control to other members of the extended team, who have a stake in the project or who have been recruited for this purpose.

During this pre-selection phase are the members of the submissions panel. Depending on the size, profile and funding, the process of programming can be very different from one festival to the other. For example, the first phase of film selection at many international film festivals (including human rights ones such as Movies that Matter) is handled with the help of screeners.[39] Programmers then look at the films' ratings and watch

[39] 'Screeners' is a term often used by professionals in the field to describe people, usually volunteers who review the submitted films based on a rating system established by the programmers of the festival. According to the festival's audience or thematic orientation, the screeners can be selected from specific communities or backgrounds, in an effort to accommodate a diversity of voices.

the ones that were given the highest marks. With this system, it is easier to navigate large numbers of submissions while simultaneously offering people from the targeted audience community the opportunity to contribute by expressing their own views and tastes (Loist, 2014). At smaller festivals, this initial screening step may be skipped, and films can be watched by one team of programmers, which includes the coordinators. This was also the case for Document 2016 and 2017.

After receiving over 220 submissions through the open call, it became evident that the coordinators needed a larger team of submission viewers to divide the work. As such, they also took on the role of human resource managers and recruiters by inviting other programmers to join the team. This is an essential part of the curatorial process, 'building a programming team that is highly attuned to their own and each other's weaknesses, tastes, and proclivities when watching films' (Rastegar, 2016, p. 190). This process highlights, on the one hand, the collaborative nature of programming, the importance of group dynamics and, on the other hand, the importance of having a very clear awareness of one's self and of the others in the team.

The submissions panel was established internally, mostly through word of mouth and personal recommendations. The coordinators asked for suggestions at board meetings and looked for friends, acquaintances and colleagues who would be able to fulfil these tasks. I joined the selection panel as part of my placement, negotiating my position as both programmer and researcher alongside the coordinators. I was soon joined by Kate Coventry and Yasmine Sefraoui in 2016 and again by Coventry in 2017. Apart from the coordinators, who managed the process and programmed alongside us, the rest of the panellists worked on a voluntary basis. This created another level of precariousness for the programmers and the organisation. Programmers provide time and labour for little or no economic benefit, seeking instead the cultural and social capital as well as the cultural activism of this activity. Some undertake this work as an addition to their professional experience in the field and for the recognition of being involved in a festival that has built legitimacy and reputation in the festival circuit. Other contributors to the programming process used this opportunity to enhance their academic impact requirements or to raise their chances of gaining funding or building networks. Regardless of their personal motivations, they shared in the 'gatekeeping' role, having the authority to decide what was selected during the festival.

It is not always clear how a programmer should approach this activity. For both Document 2016 and 2017 we did not start with a pre-established set of criteria or human

rights definitions. Moreover, some of us did not have prior experience participating in programming this festival, and as such we had varying levels of understanding of what makes a 'Document film'. This was in part a deliberate decision made by the coordinators who were interested in discovering and creating a vision based on what affects them individually. This highlights the subjective, instinctive vision of the programmers and their creative process of curating that partly relies on inspiration and gut feeling. In the absence of consultations with experts or other groups, this instinctive practice became the main filtering method for Document, shaping a collective, subjective vision.

Both Coventry and Sefraoui were acquaintances of the coordinators and had experience in working in film and event management. Daily, Kenyon and Welsh also have an educational and professional background in film exhibition and art. As such, this panel mostly consisted of young professionals with curatorial experience in independent film and art, a key difference from former Document selection teams that also included filmmakers and activists. Furthermore, we were white (even if of different nationalities) and with a university education, which confirms the broader statistics regarding diversity in the arts in the UK.[40] More importantly, we did not have educational, professional or lived experience of violations of fundamental human rights. This aspect becomes a critical factor in programming and in its cultural value through promoting different ideas and voices. On the one hand, this composition of the panel can result in groupthink and a shared sense of aesthetics that rejects difference (Haslam, 2004). As such, a team with so much in common and with a limited knowledge of lived experience of human rights can perpetuate the Western gaze and the idea of 'White as intrinsically beautiful, Black as ugly, West as good, and East as evil' (Taylor in Rastegar, 2016, p. 184). From my observations, I contend that the similarities determined by shared backgrounds and affiliations between the members of the selection panel were helpful in achieving the objectives of highly curated content and a streamlined programme. For a festival the size of Document, with a limited number of films and topics to cover, the shared ideology and professional experiences facilitated an efficient decision-making process and allowed the programmers to innovate and take risks with the types of films selected while maintaining the same curatorial vision.

As Document cannot and does not want to provide a survey of human rights topics and films, it has to focus on a few, selected themes and perspectives, which might be easier

[40] A report made by Creative Scotland on equality and diversity in the arts revealed that 71% of the respondents are degree educated (2017).

to achieve with a team with similar interests and professional backgrounds. This does not mean that the submissions panel would not benefit from more diversity in terms of ethnicity, race, languages spoken or backgrounds (see further discussion in Chapter 6 and Appendix E). The make up of the submissions panel prompted questions over who ascribes value and who makes decisions about what to include in the festival and what to exclude and contributes to the construction of knowledge of and access to human rights cinema. This concern became even more predominant when the programmers actively looked for films from other sources and expressed their authorial vision.

Sourcing films and collaborations

While the open submissions provided numerous films to choose from, it was also limited in terms of geographical and thematic reach and filmmaking perspectives. A few months into the programming process, as the viewing of submissions was in progress and the team met regularly, ideas around the programme focused and an approach to human rights/documentary cinema started to crystallise. This approach was summarised as follows:

> [Document] is a human rights documentary film festival, so there has to be a spread and scope of issue-based films, generally raising awareness, shedding light on things that do not get a mainstream airing. On the other hand, we are also an exclusively documentary film festival so there has to be a strong thread of critiquing documentary and moving image in general, as well as reception and what it means to watch a documentary (Kenyon, 2016, pers. comm., 12 September).

For this reason, the coordinators actively searched for films that innovated in terms of content (untold, less-known issues), documentary form and in terms of presenting a reflexive approach of the filmmaker. As such, the coordinators looked at the most recent editions of several other festivals, including IDFA, Sheffield Doc/Fest, One World Prague, Frames of Representation as well as A-list ones such as Berlinale, Locarno. These festivals were relevant to the team in terms of documentary and human rights film output, and they also took place before Document in the festival calendar. With Locarno in August, followed by IDFA in November, then Berlinale in February, One World in March, Frames of Representation in April and Sheffield Doc/Fest in June, they offered an overview of the latest film releases just in time to be considered for Document. After surveying these festivals, the coordinators compiled a list of films that they thought would be interesting to view, then contacted the distributors or the producers to obtain access to the material. In 2017, the coordinators visited One World in Prague and I attended One World in Bucharest. These visits were useful opportunities to not only view films but also observe their reception. These

factors can influence the decision-making process. For instance, I watched several documentaries at One World in Bucharest that I considered for sourcing. However, one documentary in particular drew my attention: *Normal Autistic Film* (2016). After viewing it, participating in the Q&A with the director and, a few days later, learning that it had received the jury award, I strongly advocated for this film to be screened at Document. After deliberation with the coordinators, it was selected in the final programme. Similarly, Document 2017 showed eleven films that were also screened at One World in Prague earlier that year, which demonstrates the accumulated value of sourced films gained through exhibition at other festivals.

These sourced films, just like the submissions, were also evaluated based on criteria which developed organically from team dynamics and dialogue. Therefore, not all of the sourced films made it into the final programme. Nevertheless, because these films were sought with a more defined purpose or interest, they were used as standards for evaluation and for thematic focus. As Kenyon recalls, sourcing films allowed ‘a bit more control over the programming and strands’ (2016, pers. comm., 12 September), This provided a framework through which to evaluate other films and notice thematic clusters with films from other sources (such as submissions and collaborations).

The tendency towards carefully sourced content to emphasise the ideas and subjective concerns of the coordinators increased gradually with each edition. Through this practice, the coordinators sought more control over the programme and its framing into strands that adhere to an overarching vision. This illustrates the curatorial potential of festival programming, defined as driven by a subjective agenda and creating ‘a dialectic between the field of film and video and the curators’ ideas’ (Marks, 2004, p. 36). The curators’ subjectivity and a thematic approach are factors of distinction that can attract the audience. As such, Document increased its taste making role as the coordinators’ ideas and ways of seeing constructed the programme and the way in which it can be consumed.

Selection

The programmers’ role as gatekeepers, tastemakers and mediators reached the highest point during the selection phase. While the programmers made a series of decisions prior to this stage (first viewing of submissions, sourcing films from other festivals to reach a shortlist), this is the stage in which the final programme is established based on a shared vision of criteria and ethical approach as well as pragmatic constraints (funding, venues, film

availability). Once the films gathered from the sources mentioned above are viewed, the funding and venue are confirmed, the coordinators take a leading role in deciding how the films are scheduled and clustered in thematic strands. This process occurred in less than a month, a much shorter time frame than the previous phase, in which ethical, creative and authorial concerns were negotiated and articulated internally.

Before the analysis of the curatorial values and the brochure narrative, it is worth exploring the final programme and the composition of each strand for the 2016 and 2017 editions. The final programme of Document 14 (Figure 5.4) consisted of a total of 39 films, with 16 films from the submissions section (41%), 17 sourced films (44%) and 6 films (15%) presented in partnership with festivals and organisations such as Africa in Motion, Glitch and SDI. The films were divided into six strands and nine other films presented outside any strand, as they did not fit thematically with any of them.

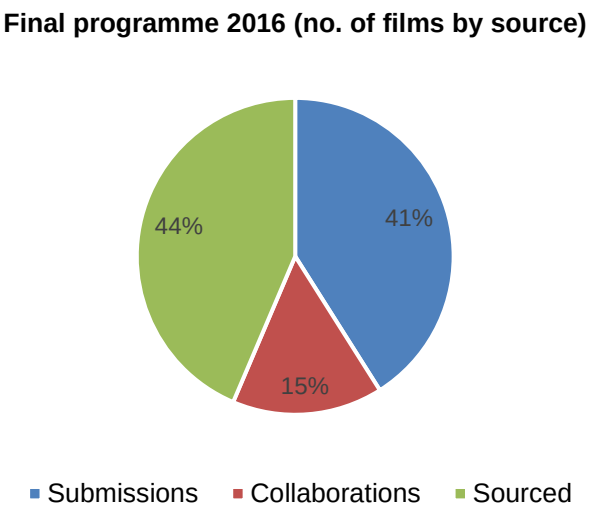


Figure 5.4. Final programme 2016

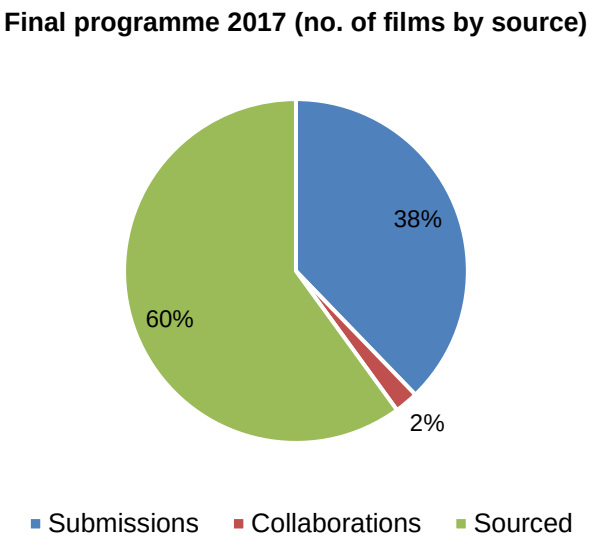


Figure 5.5. Final programme 2017

In 2017, the number of films slightly increased to 45 titles, including shorts and feature films (Figure 5.5). The proportion of films from the sourced section grew significantly, with 27 films (60%), followed by 17 submissions (38%) and 1 film suggested by collaborators (2%). While the festival continued to present co-screenings in partnership with other festivals, such as the screening of *Butterflies* (2016) with SQIFF, these collaborations were established after selecting the film, which had been submitted to Document.

The charts above suggest an increase in sourced films, which are sought with a clearer purpose to fit the curatorial vision of the festival coordinators. At the same time, this vision is shared with a team of viewers and partners (Africa in Motion, GRAMNet, SQIFF, SMHAFF, SDI, LUX Scotland). In addition to sharing their vision with the stakeholders, we also considered audiences and how they could be developed or engaged more significantly. During this stage of selection, we often discussed and made assumptions about audience expectations and tastes, seeking to both match and challenge them. As such, the process of taste-making and the focus on innovation was approached reflexively by the programmers, constantly interrogating the ethical implications of their choices. These questions and dilemmas are rarely visible to the public, except for the written statements in the brochure and other promotional materials that the festival uses to address the audience. In the remainder of this chapter, I reveal and analyse the main curatorial values and ethical concerns raised in the selection process and how they were presented in the festival brochure.

Curatorial values: selection criteria and ethical dilemmas

‘In terms of criteria, the idea is that it’s open and that there aren’t any criteria.’

‘It doesn’t just have to be a good film, well-made or on an interesting topic; it has to have something extra.’

‘We shouldn’t be afraid to screen things that people might not enjoy.’

‘Going to the cinema should be a provocation. You should be asking yourself: Why am I watching this film in this way?’

As mentioned throughout this chapter, Document programmers did not operate on objective pre-determined criteria for the evaluation of films and all discussions and deliberations should be understood in a particular historical and discursive context. As such, the criteria, ethical questions and values presented in this section emerged from the written comments, the conversations around films and interviews, but they were never codified as such and the individual importance placed on each of them changed every year. Nevertheless, there were several recurring issues that transpired around ‘form versus content’, ‘truth-value’, ‘looking in versus looking out’, ‘representation’ and ‘ethics’. Some of these issues are common to all human rights film festivals as specialised intermediaries, which are concerned with the truthfulness of the films presented as well as their cinematic quality (Blažević, 2012; Bronkhorst, 2003) and how they present the ‘face of suffering’ (Tascón, 2012). In addition to these issues, I explore other criteria that Document programmers mentioned throughout the selection process, determined by the specific locality, temporality and stakeholders as well as by the subjective dispositions of the team members.

The quotes at the top of this section are extracted from interviews with the coordinators, as they described the process of establishing criteria for selection. These comments hint at the difficulty of evaluating and interpreting films in the absence of clearly formulated criteria, the challenges of articulating, justifying and defending choices that can be controversial. Throughout my involvement in the submissions panel, I often encountered such ambiguous descriptions from others and from myself, in the programming notes that I produced. This issue is not restricted to the practices of film festivals but to the art world more broadly. Howard S. Becker (1982) reflected on these difficult-to-articulate processes and the vague language associated with them in the editorial work of artists and their decision-making activity. Becker described the difficulty of understanding these choices:

> Artists make the choices with reference to the organization they work in; that, at least, is the assumption of the analysis that follows. It is not easy to find out about these matters and thus prove the assumption, because artists find it difficult to verbalize the general principles on which they make their choices, or even to give any reason at all. They often resort to such non-communicative statements as 'it sounds better that way', 'it looked good to me', or 'it works'.
>
> That inarticulateness frustrates the researcher. But every art's practitioners use words whose meaning they cannot define exactly which are nonetheless intelligible to all knowledgeable members of their world (1982, p. 199).

During my placement and participation in the programming process, I encountered formulations similar to those that Becker cites. The programming notes contained these sometimes ambiguous, sometimes very detailed pieces of writing. Some comments were very brief, such as 'this is no good or it is kind of bread and butter or 'it just didn't do it for me' that only vaguely indicated whether a film was fit for the festival. Other remarks that denoted uncertainty such as 'interesting, moving story; not good enough', 'fine; can't see it at Document' or 'this is great' show that evaluation of films is often expressed through vague or minimal verbalisations.

Other times, the programme notes from the submissions sheet were very detailed and made comments drawing on several criteria. These were useful resources to understand the primary curatorial values of the programming team as a whole. While the programmers claim that the process began without any criteria and without a definition of human rights approach, some of the programming notes reflect an internalised sense of the organisational aims (of Document), of human rights discourses and documentary cinema in relation to the festival. The programmers often mentioned aspects that could broadly be included in three main categories: aesthetic (form), political (content) and emotional (reaction). These evaluation categories are similar to Bosma's standards in film criticism (2015) and were helpful for coding data. However, these three dimensions are too vague to capture the specific criteria that contribute to the understanding of the festival's identity. The findings for this chapter suggest that there are ten main criteria applied to the programming of Document in 2016 and 2017, which have been formulated as questions that illuminate the programmers' values and responsibilities towards the artists (filmmakers), the audience and to the organisational field (Document and human rights film festivals).

Key curatorial questions

1. Is the film 'well-made'?

Many comments and discussions during the selection process revolved around the films' formal qualities, understood as craftsmanship and artistic innovation (Bosma, 2015), a fact which emphasises the role of the programmers as cultural intermediaries who navigate questions of taste and aesthetics. Several comments praised 'well-made' films, with objectively high production values in all aspects of cinematography, editing or sound design. One of the important formal elements that emerged as a deal-breaker was the use of sound and, in particular, the music score. The programmers often criticised the use of library music or the overuse of themes/motifs that manipulate the way a story is delivered and experienced. The criticism in this case goes both ways: first, that music is used improperly and in a prescriptive way, forcing feelings or responses from the viewer and second, using non-diegetic music in a documentary raises questions over the perceived truthfulness of the film. Both Welsh and Kenyon expressed their frustration with overused sound and its effect on the commitment towards what they call 'cinematic truth', understood in this case as a depiction that is honest and accurate to the specific moment and situations captured.

> Why can't the filmmaker have made a less prescriptive choice in their music? Why didn't they trust the material they've got? Why did they feel they have to direct us in a way that doesn't amplify or punctuate the emotion that they're trying to get by? It gets in the way, it muddles it, it doesn't allow you to think for yourself, beyond what you're actually seeing (Kenyon, 2016, pers. comm., 12 September).

The cinematography and overarching style were significant considerations in the evaluation process, without being exalted to the level of the absolute (Haslam, 2004). Films were praised for being 'smartly shot and composed', 'beautifully shot' and 'visually striking'. The level of innovation in terms of camerawork or editing could enhance the chances of a film being selected, especially those that had a 'poetic and contemplative' style (which determined the selection of several films such as *Siberia in a Summer Dress* (2015), *Behemoth* (2015)) or adopting conventions from other film genres such as science-fiction (*We Come as Friends* (2014)). *69 Minutes of 86 Days* (2017), the closing film selected at Document 2017, was distinguished from others on the same topic (refugees on the migratory route in Europe) especially through the camerawork. The entire film was shot through a steady camera lowered at the eye-level of a three-year old girl, who was the protagonist. However, not all films that adopted an innovative approach, either in terms of artistic vision or filmic method, were selected. Some films were considered 'over-stylised'; they could

have good production values and ‘big-budget, dramatic recreations’ but were ‘unremarkable’, not having a clear reason behind filmmaking choices. Therefore, the level of craftsmanship and artistic innovation had to hold significance and be strongly connected to the content.

The symbiotic relationship between form and content also meant that the quality of the camerawork was not always a decisive factor. The use of old, amateur video footage was seen as frustrating in some cases, while in other films it was considered very effective. An example of effective use of amateur footage was the feature documentary *Flotel Europa* (2015), which was selected at Document 2016. The film is made by editing together video footage from VHS tapes that refugees from Bosnia and Herzegovina recorded during their temporary stay in the early 1990s on a ship in the port of Copenhagen, Denmark. The footage from these tapes shows the filmmaker’s daily life when he was young, together with his family, friends and other refugees while living on the ship for several years. Other films had an amateur style because they were filmed by the protagonists themselves. For instance, the short film *Bunkers* (2016) selected at the same festival edition includes images taken by asylum seekers inside a detention centre, and contains images shot with a phone, vertical framing and shaky movements (Figure 5.6). In these cases, the amateur style is aligned with the content and aim of the film used to reconstruct an archive (in the case of *Flotel Europa*) or to capture life inside a detention centre, which might not be accessible to a film crew (such as in *Bunkers*). These choices reflect the conventions and expectations of human rights documentary films adopting a ‘rough style’ aesthetic to depict real situations and convey urgency and authenticity. By selecting such films, Document programmers conformed to an established aesthetic of human rights cinema as constructed by human rights film festivals.

Figure 5.6. Still image from *Bunkers* (2016) selected at Document 2016.

The ‘rough-style’ aesthetic as well as artistic innovation connected with a political intention and suggestive content formed what was understood by Document programmers as cinematic quality, which was often set against a ‘TV-style aesthetic’ of ‘American films’. These terms were used to criticise films which, despite having objectively good production values, were too conventional in terms of visual approach, directorial vision or political content. The elements that determined the films’ rejection for this reason referred to ‘bland talking-heads’, ‘campaign films’ and didactic voice-over narration that not only provided less engaging perspectives of the topic, but also offered a prescriptive, superficial or unidirectional view. The programmers were vigilant to such films, but these could be difficult to notice as the production values and authoritative stance could be misleading. As such, this further complicated the selection process, as these quality standards can obscure problematic or simplified content. On this issue, Welsh commented: ‘it is harder to tell a terrible film now that it has been in the past because of the quality of documentaries’ (2016, pers. comm., 12 September). This criticism of mainstream, well-produced but bland documentaries is rooted in the commodification of culture and of human rights discourses at the cost of political and artistic edge, which is echoed by other festival professionals such as Sean Farnel who contends that ‘commodification of goodness’ in documentary

> [H]as totally impacted the filmmaking, because there are a lot of filmmakers willing to take the money to produce that goodness, but this has stifled the politics: the films are tame, they are pep-rally films made for everyone to agree on an issue, a kind of propaganda—sure a good propaganda, supporting things that we all love—but it’s really doing a lot of damage to the form (in Winton, 2013, p. 171).

Similarly, Document programmers noticed an increase in documentaries that are well-made but too politically and aesthetically dry. Some festivals select such films for mass appeal and a populist approach to delight audiences rather than challenging their views (Winton, 2012; Killick, 2017). However, Document programmers used the criterion of artistic innovation and craftsmanship to provide different views and aesthetics, to challenge and provoke the audience. This highlights another point of conflict in value judgements and the role of the cultural intermediary, whose main responsibility is to understand and respond to audience’s tastes and needs. If these are not met, the festival’s legitimacy and cultural authority are challenged. Document’s programmers managed this conflict by programming a variety of documentary forms to fulfil different tastes, introducing another criterion which will be discussed below.

The question whether a film is 'well-made' became an important decision-making factor for Document in its role as a cultural intermediary. This criterion raises several issues for the festival which can be relevant to human rights film festival programming more broadly: good production values and innovation are important aspects of documentary films on human rights topics if they support and do not attempt to overshadow the topic itself. Documentaries of good technical quality are increasingly easy to produce and submit to festivals, but content is not always explored critically or in-depth. For this reason, content is sometimes considered above form, hence the prevalence of 'rough-style' aesthetics in human rights cinema.

2. Does the film add variety to the programme through form and/or structure?

Early in the selection process, the coordinators sought to provide a coherent programme that interrogated the documentary form and its efficacy. This implied an openness to alternative aesthetics and interventions in the genre that forgo a standard definition or convention. As such, a preference for an 'atypical angle' or 'interesting structure', 'experimental' or metaphorical perspectives emerged in our discussions and comments around films. This criterion became important especially when we had to judge films on similar topics. Prevalent themes such as migration, refugee/asylum seekers, and workers' rights in the context of de-industrialisation or austerity appeared in multiple films from which we had to compare and select. The films that stood out for us provided a different approach either through an original vision, formal innovation or presentation of the subject matter through an unexpected perspective.

Document 2016 in particular focused on poetic documentaries in an attempt to highlight the value embedded in the original view of the director, using various techniques to present a political/human rights issue. The opening film of Document 2016, *Kings of Nowhere* (2015) and the jury award winner, *Tempestad* (2016) adopted a poetic style, one of Kenyon's personal preferences. He argued for this approach in the films' style as well as for the festival structure, which he believed could potentially provide more opportunities for the audience to think critically and reflect on each topic. This approach therefore reinforced the coordinators' hope that Document, as a cultural intermediary, is a tastemaker able to shape and challenge tastes and expectations in relation to human rights and documentary form.

Other types of documentary that provided variety to the programme involved fictionalisation or theatricalisation methods such as re-enactment, scripted content and the use of actors. For instance, *La Commune (Paris 1871)* by Peter Watkins (2000) is defined as a historical drama as it uses re-enactment in the style of a documentary to depict Parisian workers in their attempt to build a revolutionary socialist republic in the late 19th century France. *Out on the Street* (2015) was selected because of the experimental approach to real events through re-enactment. The documentary played on the borderline between reality and fiction by filming a group of nine actors playing workers gathered at an abandoned factory, performing confrontations of everyday life at the workplace. This concept was used to provide a different perspective on the backlash towards the de-industrialisation in Egypt and this experimental approach was the main reason that convinced the programmers to select the film, stating in the programming notes that: 'I enjoyed this a lot. The central conceit of having the workers perform their reality works fantastically well. It allows the film to bloom out into a wider meditation around the structures of corruption/oppression that are mirrored around the world'. Despite constructing a situation with actors playing real people and situations, this was seen by the programmers as an innovative approach to the struggles and claims made by the film's protagonists.

Another example of using fictional characters in real situations and interactions was depicted in *Stranger in Paradise* (2016), which was selected because its innovative structure and approach to the refugee crisis. The feature documentary is divided into three parts, with a prologue and epilogue, that showcase three different scenarios of the encounter between Europeans (in this case representing the immigration system in the Netherlands) and refugees. Set in a classroom somewhere in Southern Europe, the protagonist (actor Valentin Dhaenens) interacts with real refugees who recently arrived and are looking for asylum. In the first scenario, the actor adopts a right-wing discourse focusing on the refugees as a 'burden', addressing the incompatibilities of their traditions or religion with Western liberal democratic values. In the second scenario, the same protagonist adopts a left-wing, progressive discourse, emphasising the positive contributions that refugees make in the societies they integrate in, their vulnerability and the Europeans' responsibility to provide support. Finally, in the third scenario, the protagonist takes a more neutral stance, following the rules and procedures of the immigration policy in the Netherlands, re-enacting the assessments, questions and the decisions of the immigration advisers. As such, this film provides a unique approach of the refugee crisis through the European perspective, by playing with the structure and the method of delivering the story.

The Other Side (2015) was another film selected at Document 2016 for how it played with the structure and documentary conventions. Labelled as a 'docu-fiction hybrid', the film is based on scripted situations played by real people. The director collaborated with members of the community he portrayed (drug addicts and ex-special forces soldiers in the USA) to write the script and provide a fictional plotline. By focusing on marginalised and often vilified communities (some of the most shocking scenes in the film involve a heavily pregnant woman injecting drugs and militia members that express their racist views), the film chooses to focus on 'perpetrators' (Nash, 2018). As such, this approach further challenges the expectation of human rights films as foregrounding victims or empowered activists, emphasising the rights and the humanity of those that are perceived as 'the enemy'. Document presented several other films on 'perpetrators', including *We were Rebels* (2014) and *Erase and Forget* (2017). This approach continues the legacy and programming tradition of Document that also screened *The Act of Killing* (2012) in 2013, a typical example of documentary showing the perpetrators' side (Nash, 2018).

One of the important criteria for Document was to show human rights and documentary cinema through a variety of angles and perspectives. Their focus has therefore turned to more experimental works breaking the boundaries of the documentary genre (using fiction, re-enactment, theatricalization) and the expected human rights 'subjects' by also focusing on the perpetrators, the outcasts, people who are racists or murderers and who do not show signs of redemption. This approach raises numerous ethical questions over the content of the festival and its role as a specialised cultural intermediary. Firstly, the expectation for truthfulness and reality in documentary films is challenged by the use of fiction, and thus invites reflection on Document's position as a documentary film festival. Secondly, the focus on 'perpetrators' raises the issue of whether such figures should have a platform – such as the one offered by the festival – where their views and actions are disseminated. There are no straightforward answers to these concerns, an aspect which Document programmers thought about and sought to balance by offering a variety of thematic choices, another criterion which is explored below.

3. Does the film address Document's thematic interests?

While Document's inception was inspired by the local refugee/asylum seekers' struggle for rights and integration, the festival covered a broad range of topics, including mental health, women's rights, workers' rights, and freedom of expression among many others. The programmers felt the responsibility to respect this thematic tradition, while avoiding to 'tick

every box, address every issue' (Kenyon, 2016, pers. comm., 12 September). This criterion emphasises the programmers' understanding of human rights, a notion which was never explicitly defined among participants, as mentioned earlier in this chapter. Therefore, this shared, internalised definition was often expressed in the programming notes with vague comments such as 'I'm not sure what the human rights angle is, unless we're jumping through a few hoops' or 'Not sure I see the human rights angle'. These statements suggested a refusal to define human rights, as they did not attempt to narrow down to a specific issue or claim. In this implicit understanding of human rights, a certain hierarchy surfaced subtly, but visibly. For example, some of the comments argued that 'this is important', emphasising the relevance of the topic or the issues presented in the current political and social global context. Some of these topics included: Palestine/Israel, human trafficking, the refugee crisis, genocide or healthcare. In other words, a variety of topics were considered important because they fulfilled the traditional Document approach to human rights topics as well as the programmers' views of human rights more broadly. Some of the strands focused on such themes, such as the focus on the refugee crisis (the strand called 'No One is Illegal: Citizens and Non-Citizens' at Document 2016 and 'Nowhere to Hide: Responsibility for the global refugee crisis' in 2017), women's rights ('Jin, Jiyan, Azadi: Freedom of the Body and the Mind' in 2017) and anti-capitalism/workers' rights ('Communal Luxury: Post-capitalism and the End of Labour' in 2016). Films on other traditional thematic interests of Document also appeared in the programmes of the 2016 and 2017 editions, outwith specific strands. For instance, the 2017 festival included an 'Outliers' section which included LGBTQ issues (*Butterflies* (2016)), mental health (*Normal Autistic Film* (2016)), disability (*Why is Mr W. Laughing?* (2017), 2016)), protest and direct action (*The Memory of the 25th Hour* (2017)).

The programmers also preferred films that approached multiple themes, those that start from a specific issue or subject and then 'bloom out' into broader philosophical, ideological or political topics. This thematic multiplicity was considered a positive feature: 'I think that's when really good documentary for me comes in, when it blooms out from just a recollection of events back to facts and goes deeper into understanding what puts something together' (Kenyon, 2016, pers. comm., 12 September). One example that fits this criterion from my viewing activity was *Dreaming of Denmark* (2015), a documentary about a teenager who fled Afghanistan for Denmark, and as he turns 18, must secure his refugee status. The filmmaker follows the protagonist as he travels across Europe to find a place where he could apply for asylum. However, the second half of the film reveals how this journey and the uncertainty over his status and future in Europe affect the protagonist's mental health and reveals broader issues of isolation faced with the immigration process as

a young adult. This intersection of themes within individual films reflects the concept of human rights itself, able to generate and inspire work from the intimate and specific to the universal. By selecting such films, Document sought to create a dialogue between films and themes, which when viewed together, provide various insights into human rights discourses and cinema.

However, the central strands in Document 2016 and 2017 foregrounded the curatorial ideas of the coordinators, which moved beyond specific human rights-related issues. For instance, the 2016 festival introduced the 'New Mexican Documentary' and the 'Marlon Riggs: Freaky Free' strands. Both focused on values that addressed an audience of cinephiles, whether it was the discovery of a new wave of cinema (three poetic documentaries by Mexican filmmakers) or a director retrospective (Marlon Riggs, USA-based gay rights activist). These strands occupied prime-time slots in the programme (the Friday-Sunday evenings, after 8pm) and the largest venue (the CCA Theatre, 150 seats), which shows that the programmers prioritised these works over others and tried to secure the largest audiences for them. This prompted discussion and reflection among the programmers, questioning their gatekeeping role by foregrounding some topics over others and they considered whether this shift in curation and scheduling would affect the audience's and the other stakeholders' (the Document board, funders) expectations. This question guided the selection process and revealed the programmers' approach to human rights in relation to urgency, topical relevance and multiplicity of perspectives and stories as well as. However, rather than focusing on a broad range of topics, the programmers created a few thematic strands in which they balanced their own interests and interpretations with the festival's legacy.

4. Is the film ethically made?

The filmmaker's ethical approach to the subject, to the participants and to the profession itself is a primary concern for Document programmers. This criterion involves an evaluation of the film's context of production (funding, crew, the place and time when it was produced) as well as of the claims made and the message promoted by the filmmaker.

One of the programmers emphasised the importance of evaluating the context: 'Not only do I look at the synopsis before I watch it, but I look up who's made it and try and figure out where they're from and where they've made the film from. If they're making the film under certain circumstances, it adds elements to the way you're thinking about it'

(Kenyon, 2016, pers. comm., 12 September). This approach contributes to 'screen ethics', which considers the broader context, the web of relations in which a film is made and whose voices are represented (Winton, 2019). The programmers granted additional value and admiration to those filmmakers who tried to reveal human rights violations despite risking censorship or marginalisation. For instance, Document 2017 focused on the cancellation of the Beijing Independent Film Festival (BIFF) by the government and other Chinese filmmakers who faced censorship for their views and art. The coordinators programmed some of their works because of their context, the difficult conditions in which they were made and the obstacles to their circulation. The programme included *A Filmless Festival* (2015), which documents the events during and after the cancelled BIFF, and *The VaChina Monologues* (2013), a film that was part of the cancelled festival.

Looking at the context of how the film was produced also helps identify the filmmaker's relationship to the subject, their honesty, critical approach, commitment to presenting real stories and avoiding stereotypes. These elements emerged often in the programming notes and were considered fundamental to a film's selection. The involvement of the filmmaker in the stories presented was the subject of many debates amongst us, trying to evaluate their intentions against the claims made and the reactions of the subject. On the one hand, negative comments made by the programmers focused on the level of intrusion of the filmmaker, which was at times considered 'narcissistic' or 'forced', directing or intervening too much in the action. This aspect affected the film's authenticity, the claims to represent reality and perpetuated clichés and stereotypes. On the other hand, the director's intrusion in the film or assumed privilege were considered appropriate if they were part of the overall meaning of the film or if they were important in getting the message across. One comment in the programming notes suggested: 'There's an interesting amount of intrusion from the filmmaker – it's not obnoxious and clearly deliberate – the director even includes the slate in one scene', thereby marking the nuance and reflexivity required in evaluating the filmmaker's purpose and involvement.

For films viewed as covering a sensitive subject matter, the presence of the filmmaker in front of the camera was an advantage. For instance, Document 2017 screened *Left on Purpose* (2015), a documentary about Mayer Vishner, an anti-war activist of the 1960s. The film focuses on the man during his old age, as he battles addiction, depression and considers suicide. As the film progresses, the filmmaker becomes more involved in the story and in trying to stop Vishner from taking his own life. The tension that looms over the entire film (and is indeed expressed throughout) is the fear that the camera becomes an enabler, capable of pushing the protagonist closer to suicide or being complicit to a tragedy in the making. The ethical debate and the filmmaker's role in the protagonist's life are central not only to the film, but to the programmers as well. This invited reflection on the potential impact on audiences, which raised further ethical issues about presenting the subject as a vulnerable figure, influenced by the presence of the camera and the attention provided by subsequent visibility. Evaluating this film and others like it for Document prompted an exercise in self-reflexion by the programmers and a conclusion was reached that there would be a need for providing additional space where these ethics can be discussed, questioned and analysed with the audience (issues which will be discussed in more detail in Chapter 6).

Figure 5.7. Still image from *Left on Purpose* (2015) selected at Document 2017.

Programmers share both power and anxiety over interpreting the ethics of films on sensitive issues such as suicide and mental health. The intervention of the filmmaker into the film must be justified by the content and overall message and should emphasise their honesty and critical approach to the subject matter.

5. Does the filmmaker have a personal connection or lived experience to the subject matter?

Strongly connected to the previous criterion, another concern of the programming team at Document revolved around the issue of representation and the aim to promote voices that

have a close personal connection or lived experience of the subject or the human rights issues depicted. This was seen as a crucial element to avoid 'the white saviour' trope (Kennedy, et al., 2017) and stereotypes of other cultures or images of the 'Other'. From this perspective, some of the films in which the director had a close, personal connection with the people or the region on which the documentary focused were considered advantageous. As such, they could secure unprecedented levels of access, capture intimacy and previously untold stories, such as the opening film of Document 2017, *Gulîstan, Land of Roses* (2016). The film focused on Kurdish women fighters for the PKK (Kurdistan's Workers Party) at the height of the war with ISIS in the Middle East. While the filmmaker was born in Turkey and immigrated to Canada, her family is Kurdish and local guerrilla fighters were part of her memories as a child. She also developed personal connections with some of the fighters that also appear in the film and as such, was able to follow their military activities and intimate lives beyond the battlefield. Other examples of films where the filmmaker is embedded in the culture and community that they portray were *Xenos* (2013) and *A Man Returned* (2016) by Mahdi Fleifel, a Danish-Palestinian film director who focuses on the lives of Palestinian men living as migrants in other parts of the world. Having a similar background and being part of a diaspora, he is able to create relationships based on trust and intimacy with the films' subjects.

However, the highest level of representation and empowerment was when the protagonist was also the filmmaker. Marlon Riggs' work as a gay rights activist, poet, educator and filmmaker active in the 1980s and 1990s in the USA was the central retrospective of Document 2016. He approached intersectionality from a very intimate, nuanced perspective because he was part of the gay community and as he lived with AIDS. The festival also showed films made by non-professional filmmakers who participated in the process of making a film and telling their story. *Nowhere to Hide* (2016) was partly filmed by Nori Sharif, a nurse in Iraq, as he and his family experienced the aftermath of the departure of American troops from the country and the subsequent threat of ISIS. Similarly, Jia Zhitan, a participant in a local Villagers Documentary Project in China is also credited as the director of the film *I Want to be a People's Representative* (2014) that follows his attempt to run in the local elections and how he sought an explanation for his disqualification from the election. These films were selected for Document because of their authenticity and their veracity conferred by the filmmaker as protagonist or as a member of the community, using the camera as a tool for self-representation.

6. Does the film offer a 'looking in' perspective?

The Document programming team was mindful of Western representation of distant others and their suffering, actively seeking films made by the protagonists or by people close to the community. Another way to avoid the distance between the audience and the story on screen and the unequal power relationship brought by it (or what Tascón (2015) calls a 'looking out' perspective) was to choose films that adopt a 'looking in' perspective. This focus on domestic issues encourages an active, critical spectator who can relate more directly to the local context rather than a passive, ironic audience faced with viewing suffering at a distance (Tascón, 2015; Chouliaraki, 2013). This criterion was driven by the aspect of locality, emphasising the importance of showing films about local issues. Films about Scotland, the UK or European issues were considered important for their potential to attract local audiences and for providing more opportunities for identification and mobilisation towards action (defined as 'domestication' by Tascón (2016)). While international films concerning topics such as workers' rights were relevant locally, especially considering Glasgow's post-industrial legacy, the coordinators felt these needed to be counterbalanced by local films. For this reason, Daily stated that they tried to 'make sure the focus is on ourselves, as well as faraway places' (2016, pers. comm., 12 September). This objective was difficult to achieve as UK productions amounted to only 10% of the total submissions and half of those were about other places in the world (see section about the submissions process above). As such, the coordinators programmed *Limpiadores* (2015), a short film following migrants from Latin America living in London that was submitted in 2016. They also sourced a film, *The Hard Stop* (2015), which focused on police brutality in the UK. According to Kenyon, this film was 'one of the only British films we found that deal so directly with issues of racism and police brutality in our own country. We know so much about great work elsewhere, but not in our own country' (2016, pers. comm., 12 September). In 2017, the coordinators also sourced *Accidental Anarchist* (2017), a film about a British diplomat turned anarchist, produced by a Glasgow-based company, Hopscotch Films. The criterion of 'looking in' films was extended to include topics related to European issues, also relevant to a UK audience. As such, films focused on the reaction of European nations to the refugee crisis were also considered of local interest. For this reason, *Stranger in Paradise* (described above at question number 2) was selected because it provided a Western European perspective on the crisis. These reveal the responsibility felt by the programmers as cultural intermediaries, to provide films of local interest and identification to audiences so they can become more critical and take action.

7. Does the film offer positive/hopeful stories?

Human rights films are perceived as presenting 'sad, sentimental stories' (Nash, 2018), trauma, images of suffering or stirring testimonies of people who are victims of human rights violations. These stories can have a strong emotional impact on the viewer, generating fatigue, feelings of powerlessness, frustration, guilt, pity or de-sensitisation to the point of indifference. This emotional impact can either keep the viewer invested in the story or make the film unwatchable. The Document programmers suggested that 'the emotional is what carries you along' (Daily, 2016, pers. comm., 12 September), that can either create empathy, solidarity and identification (Bosma, 2015) or dishearten viewers. The programmers felt they had a responsibility to be a filtering wall between the filmmakers and the audience, limiting the amount of films that depict trauma and suffering. The programming notes revealed countless instances of films that were 'distressing', 'sad', or 'unwatchable' for showing graphic images of violence, torture, badly injured people or dead bodies. As one of the programmers' unwritten rules and responsibilities is to watch the film in full and make a rational judgement, averting our eyes or choosing not to see (Juhasz, 2016) and consequently letting a film remain unseen, would mean losing our credibility as programmers. This situation emphasises the impact of watching images of suffering as a programmer, the obligation to keep watching despite affecting content. This is another facet of emotional labour specific to programming human rights film festivals. One of the programmers evoked the act of supressing feelings: 'You have to engage less with emotions than as an audience member' in order to be able to 'allow yourself to react to films' (Daily, 2016, pers. comm., 12 September). In other words, programmers have to be able to compartmentalise and manage feelings, to anticipate and understand emotional impact and potential avenues for mobilisation, without being overwhelmed by it.

At the same time, being exposed to such images can create awareness of urgent, real life situations and encourage a sense of responsibility for our acts of looking (Juhasz, 2019). Thus, this conflict between competing ideas determined a critical reflection over our responsibility as programmers to show such images, considering the aims of the screening (To inform? To mobilise towards action?) and potential reactions to them.

One of the films that prompted such debates was the mid-length documentary *50 Feet from Syria* (2015), screened at Document 2016. The film followed a Syrian-born USA-based orthopaedist who goes back to his homeland to help treating war victims in a hospital at the border between Syria and Turkey. At one point in the film, scenes with children injured

and crying made for a particularly difficult watch (Figure 5.8). When I viewed it, I had to pause at the start of these scenes, and resume watching later, preparing myself for the rest. These images were the reason why I and the second viewer (Welsh) were not sure whether it would be appropriate for the festival programme. Ultimately, this film made it to the final selection after a 'tentative yes' because it reflected the horrors of the war in Syria as well as the fact that it avoided using those images to preach one solution or message. By focusing on the doctor, his heroic actions motivated by a sense of moral duty to his homeland, the film focused on an empowered figure who tries to help.

Figure 5.8. Still image from *50 Feet from Syria* (2015), screened at Document 2016.

In fact, films that portrayed stories with 'heroic victims' (Nash, 2018) who have agency, are able to overcome their situation and to realise their goals despite obstacles and struggles were seen as positive and received with enthusiasm by the programmers. This type of film can make the viewer/spectator feel inspired, empowered and empathetic towards the film's subjects (Ibid.). Furthermore, films that had humour or comedy elements were rare, but provoked excitement and interest. 'Humor in human rights is a powerful tool' (Biaggi in Swimelar, 2010, p. 1071). It can create interest in a 'serious topic' (ibid, p. 1073) and trigger responses more easily. As these films were scarce in the submissions, the coordinators sought such examples elsewhere. For instance, Document 2017 screened *Kim Jong-Il's Comedy Club* (2009), a mockumentary following a journalist and two comedians on their visit to North Korea to 'make the country smile'. The film was programmed on a Friday at 10pm as a 'late night cult classic', emphasising its crowd-pleasing qualities – to provide an enjoyable experience for a Friday night out. Nevertheless, the place of human rights films between discourses of art and entertainment and of sobriety (Nichols, 2001) is an uneasy one and the programmers constantly discussed and negotiated this issue. On the one hand, the

art/entertainment value can be 'seen as something quite frivolous' (Daily, 2016, pers. comm., 18 November) for films dealing with 'serious' human rights issues. On the other hand, they can provide much needed breathing space after inevitable exposure to images of suffering.

Most human rights films present 'sad and sentimental stories', depicting images of suffering and trauma associated with human rights violations. Document programmers, driven by their responsibility as tastemakers, wanted to challenge this perception by offering alternatives: 'heroic victims', empowered protagonists and elements of humour can be powerful tools to create empathy rather than apathy for the viewer and convey new beliefs and perceptions about human rights films. The entertainment and crowd-pleasing effects are however always in tension with the 'serious' nature of human rights issues that require urgent intervention.

8. Is the film relevant in the current political climate?

What was perceived as urgent was often linked to current issues in the political landscape. The criterion of actuality is strongly connected to the dimension of temporality that influences film festivals as cultural intermediaries. This aspect does not necessarily refer to the years in which the films were produced, but the events of local or international relevance that took place during Document's programming process. The programmers sought to capture the 'zeitgeist' as it emerged from filmmakers and by confronting with the top stories in the mainstream media. As mentioned above, the refugee crisis had been a central public topic since 2015, maintained as such by developments in policy, integration and grassroots initiatives. Therefore, both Document 2016 and 2017 created strands with films that discuss these issues from different perspectives. Similarly, after the 2016 USA elections, the new 'Trump world' order and his frequent attacks on the press[41] and questioning of truth and accuracy determined the programmers to create a strand challenging this topic ('Truth and Power: Control Room and Other Stories'). This strand included films from different time periods, from the 1990s (*Spin* (1995)), 2000s (*Control Room* (2004), *Kim Jong-Il's Comedy Club*) to the 2010s (*A Filmless Festival*, *I Want to be a People's Representative* and *The VaChina Monologues*).

Additionally, the programmers also looked for stories behind the headlines that uncovered urgent and significant issues for some parts of the world that rarely make the news

[41] Donald Trump and his administration have repeatedly attacked some media outlets for spreading 'fake news' (BBC News, 2017).

in the UK. Examples include *Grab and Run* (2017), a film about the practice of bridal kidnappings in Kyrgyzstan or *Kings of Nowhere* (2015), about the last three families that stayed in a Mexican village flooded after the construction of a dam. This criterion was also a strategic move towards attracting a wider audience seeking active involvement with issues they already knew or were aware of.

The programmers also selected archive or historical films (*The Battle of Chile* (1975-79)) and retrospectives (Marlon Riggs in 2016 and Trinh T. Minh-ha in 2017) to create a dialogue between the past and the present political climate, further expanding the festival's conceptual reach and relevance.

9. Can this film secure funding?

Another secondary pragmatic criterion in the evaluation and selection of films referred to the potential opportunities to apply for funding with a certain film or strand. This was not a decisive factor, but it generated discussions and decisions for selecting some films over others. For instance, the Marlon Riggs retrospective was supported by the British Film Institute (BFI) Black Star programme. Defined as 'UK's biggest ever season of film and television dedicated to celebrating the range, versatility and power of black actors', this project supported the distribution and exhibition of black talent in the UK, throughout October-December 2016 (BFI, 2016). Document was awarded a £1,500 grant in July 2016 for the retrospective, which provided a boost of support and an opportunity to screen Riggs' work in Glasgow. As such, the ability to attract funding for specific screenings was an important albeit secondary factor in film selection.

10. Would the film go well with a specific venue/context?

Finally, another criterion for programming Document was the exhibition value and whether the film could have an event built around it. Dickson defines exhibition value as:

> the combined features and conditions of film/event presentation at film festivals: the films availability within its territorial context, its prospective paratextual elements, the meanings of its exhibition venue outside festival time, its ability to be localised, and the various rhetorical categories relatable to its exhibition ('scarcity', 'discovery', 'limitedness', 'handpicked' and 'first-timeness') (2014, p. 148).

Exhibition value refers to the contextual factors that can increase the value of screening a film in a particular setting or occasion – either through its premiere status, in relation to

locality during or beyond the festival dates. For Document and other human rights film festivals, this is usually not a primary concern for programming and can be challenging considering these festivals' position in the circuit. However, the potential to organise an event based on the film, to match a specific venue's profile or to plan an activity inspired by the film were considered by the programmers. For instance, in 2016 the coordinators wanted to organise a screening before the main festival where they also offered food to audiences. As such, they expressed an interest in finding a film that includes food in some way. Other films were selected with the format of their screening in mind (such as *The Battle of Chile*, a trilogy presented as an interrupted screening) or with a particular venue (an interrupted screening of *Grab and Run* at Glasgow Women's Library).

These ten criteria, extracted from programming notes, diary extracts, interviews and discussions, reveal the difficulty of evaluating and articulating the merits of the films viewed in relation to the dimensions of temporality, locality and stakeholders. These evaluation tools showed how the programming team functions based on an un-defined Document aesthetic which develops through the personal, subjective interests of the programmers and their understanding of human rights discourses and cinema. This process also encouraged us to be reflexive and to consider our own social position, to understand how taste is formed and how it is affected by internal bias and by our own personal context. The programming process for Document involved an exploration of ethics, both on a personal level as well as for each film, especially in relation to representation, 'truthfulness' and treatment of actuality. As such, the film selection was a balancing act where these criteria were evaluated against pragmatic possibilities. The final selection can be thus understood as a balancing act and a form of argument made by the programmers to support their choices. The argument is made visible to the public through promotion conventions included in the brochure.

Presentation: the argument of programming

This section offers an analysis of how the programmers presented their selection in the official Document programme. My aim in this section is to illustrate how the ten factors analysed above were integrated into the festival's literature. The brochures, which contain the festival schedule, film synopses and introductions written and edited by the festival coordinators offer significant insight into the curatorial values, the institution's aims and ethos, how the people in the organisation view themselves and how they imagine audiences view them (Stringer, 2003). The brochures produced for the 2016 and 2017 festivals also

emphasised the curatorial shift towards a handful of ideas and concepts that brought together films of different themes and forms.

Opening statements

An important element of the brochure is the editorial or programmers' note, usually written on the first page. This text sets out the tone, reiterates some of the criteria used in programming the festival and presents the theme(s) and key highlights of the programme.

The opening statement of the 2016 brochure emphasised the first two criteria: the film's artistic merit, innovation and the variety of documentary forms. The text began with 'Year on year we look to foreground the most innovative and challenging documentary film around the world' and continued with a more detailed description: 'We examine the creative, experimental and affective techniques filmmakers develop' (Document, 2016a). Within this enumeration, the 'poetics of documentary form' was foregrounded, highlighting the curatorial, taste making role of the coordinators. These statements about film form were complemented by an overview of themes situating them in a 'global landscape' and in a 'contemporary context of social networks, grassroots organising and the emergence of genuinely intersectional political movements like Black Lives Matter'. As such, the text hinted at the eighth criterion mentioned in the previous section, referencing an example of key movements in the current political landscape that this programme addresses. However, aspects of locality or 'looking in' were not mentioned, as the thematic overview only touched on 'the "invisible war" engulfing Mexico to the often-untold story of neo-imperialism in the African Continent'. Thus, the opening statement included only two out of five strands, choosing those about distant places, in an attempt to position the festival in conversation with broader, global concerns. Similarly, temporality was expanded to connect the present (Black Lives Matter[42]) to the past (Marlon Riggs retrospective). As such, the festival presented itself as a bridge between two worlds, where historical and contemporary struggles and artistic works meet.

All these elements point to an overarching argument/aim: Document as a platform where a variety of film types and techniques, themes and stories reflecting on the past and the present, encouraged individual critical thinking about the context and reason for watching these particular images. The role of the festival as a cultural intermediary was thus

[42] Black Lives Matter is an international activist movement, originating in the African-American community, that campaigns against violence and systemic racism towards black people (Friedersdorf, 2017).

illuminated, bringing a specific selection of films to an audience, which was invited to adopt a certain spectating position – that of introspection over the act of watching and witnessing. The opening statement suggested that cinema – seen in this particular context of the festival – had the ability to encourage 'us to look differently' and to 'think differently about ourselves, our relationship to each other and to the world'. This statement focused on individual rather than collective action, which was in line with the focus on poetic documentary and a highly contemplative, personal approach to filmmaking.

The 2017 brochure reiterated the responsibility to be self-reflexive and develop critical thinking, which the festival attempted to instil in the audience through the film selection. This idea was realised through a Judith Butler quotation printed alongside the opening statement: 'As we interpret ourselves differently, we also live ourselves differently'. The main argument of this edition was similar to the previous one in that it promoted the festival as a platform for critical thinking around the role of documentary films and the act of watching. This idea was emphasised through a series of rhetorical questions, creating a sense of dialogue between the coordinators and the audience reading this material:

> How are we changed by the things we see? Is it a question of how far we allow ourselves to be changed? What is our responsibility to the things we witness? Are we, as viewers, often remote and removed, excused this responsibility? And how then do we trust what we are shown? (Document, 2017)

By using 'we', the coordinators highlighted their role as viewers and surrogate audience members, sharing the responsibility of watching and evaluating images. This statement was further emphasised by the thematic focus of the festival, interrogating the notion of 'truth' in relation to films, politicians and the news more broadly. The curatorial shift towards ideas and concepts beyond traditional discourses of human rights was also emphasised. In fact, the term of human rights did not even appear in the text, not even in the festival's name, which is simply signed as 'Document Film Festival'. This could suggest a preoccupation of the coordinators to further expand on Document's role and identity beyond the human rights category.

The 2017 brochure emphasised other criteria than the 2016 one, highlighting the fourth and fifth curatorial values. As such, the focus on the ethics of filmmaking was mentioned in the statement: 'it's important to ask questions of every storyteller, especially those who insist they're delivering "truth"' (Document, 2017). By focusing on 'those speaking truth to power and those with the power to manage what we hear and see', the

brochure highlighted the film's protagonists, either those who are given a voice in films or those who are making films themselves. This aspect (the fifth curatorial value) was further emphasised in the brochure, as the festival defined its role as 'a nexus for marginalised voices and a platform, an amplifier even, for points of view struggling to find voice [sic]'. This claim was further supported by the selection, which consisted of several films in which the protagonist was also the filmmaker.

Like the 2016 festival, the 2017 brochure also positioned itself between the past and the present: 'we look to the past to try to make sense of the tumultuous, inscrutable now'. The text made several references to locality and temporality, mentioning the refugee crisis and a war-torn land (the Middle East). They were framed in a way which indicated the attempt to challenge the humanitarian gaze and reverse the power structures and leading role in promoting justice and equality. For instance, a distant place (the Middle East, and especially through Kurdish communities and fighters) was promoted as a blueprint for gender equality that can inspire the Western world, while the Western world was criticised for its poor management of the refugee crisis. This final statement hinted at the sixth criterion, and the responsibility to challenge stereotypes about other cultures and myths of the White saviour through films.

The opening statements in the 2016 and 2017 brochures illustrated how the coordinators articulated different criteria used in programming to build their main argument and explain it to the audience. While the first brochure focused on documentary forms and poetics and the second foregrounded ethics and representation issues, both texts promoted the argument that documentary – in all its forms – had to be interrogated, in terms of the claims made and in the context in which it is seen. Rather than promoting collective action or a clear definition of human rights, Document's brochures indicated that critical thinking and potential change should start with the individual. This suggestion was, however, complemented by some of the films selected that emphasised the merits of collective action and solidarity.

From ideas to words: the programme's brochures

The rest of the brochure consisted of the introductions to each strand and short synopses of the films. These texts further expanded on the arguments made in the opening statements and revealed the priorities of the programmers. In addition to revealing the films' content, the synopses also emphasised several other aspects related to the form, directors and

depiction of suffering that aimed to address a cinephile audience and thus to expand the regular, 'human rights crowd' (Kuhn, 2009). These were established through colourful language that embellished and amplified these qualities.

Given the specific focus on the poetics of documentary established in the 2016 introductory text, this aspect was foregrounded in several instances. For example, the opening film *Kings of Nowhere* was presented as 'a haunting and lyrical gem', *Tempestad* offered a 'poetic rendering of Mexico's invisible war' and *Behemoth* represented 'a poetic protest against the destructive social and environmental effects of industrialisation in China' (Document, 2016a). Other descriptions also addressed the experimental form: *We Come as Friends* is 'a modern, dizzying science fiction-like odyssey into the heart of Africa', *La Commune's* director 'employs experimental cinematic techniques' and *Then Then Then* was 'A hypnotic and unsettling blend of archival footage and music'. With these remarks, 6 of the total 38 films were framed within this context. The poetic mode of documentary was also presented as a statement of quality or persuasive commentary, by using words such as 'gem' or 'hypnotic'. By placing these films into this category, the programmers highlighted the creativity and originality of the field and the diverse forms in which difficult issues can be represented on screen.

While most films were presented by focusing on the story and topic, some descriptions contained non-diegetic information about the production, directors or awards/other festivals. For instance, both the opening and closing films of Document 2016 presented the directors as 'multi-award-winning Mexican director Betzabe Garcia' (*Kings of Nowhere*) or 'multiple-award-winning photographer Maya Goded' (*Plaza de la Soledad*). Drawing on these directors' prestige in their field, the programme notes aimed to increase the chances of attracting audiences by using the status of the filmmakers that implicitly is a guarantee of quality. Other instances when directors were mentioned in relation to their previous films are used either to highlight their unique vision (*We Come as Friends:* 'The director of Darwin's Nightmare (2004) takes us on this voyage in his tiny, self-made flying machine of tin and canvas') or referencing previous relationship with Document ('From the director of Document 2015's *9999*, *CATCH-19to25* is a personal reflection').

Similar to the 2016 edition, the coordinators programmed another retrospective in 2017 of the Vietnamese artist and filmmaker Trinh T. Minh-ha. While most of her work was exhibited in a gallery space (The Pipe Factory), she also had one film screened during the main festival (*Forgetting Vietnam* (2016)). Her acclaim was emphasised in the brochure,

which praised her experimental and influential filmmaking style, evoking her 'influential' work and career.

Finally, another recurring aspect in the films' descriptions addressed the pervasiveness of images of suffering, confirming expectations about the genre and attempting to prepare the viewer. As such, the brochure contained several disclaimers or evocative words that expressed these qualities. For instance, using terms as 'unsettling' (*Then Then Then* (2016)), 'brutal', 'dehumanising' (*50 Feet from Syria*), or expressions such as 'tender and disturbing' (*The Other Side*), 'affectionate yet honest' (Marlon Riggs shorts), 'brutally honest depictions' (*Dreaming of Denmark*), the brochure reflected the emotional investment that these films required for a full viewing experience. Conversely, the brochure also noted those films that presented 'optimism' and 'hope' (*69 Minutes of 86 Days*). This balance between images of suffering and stories of hope reveals the programmers' concern with how these films will be received. As such, they tried to be accurate in the descriptions, to mentally prepare the viewer by revealing their own reactions to the films.

Conclusion

This chapter explored the programming process for Document 2016 and 2017, from the early stages that began with the call for submissions until the publishing of brochures. Through fieldwork observation and active participation during both years, I was able to address some of the central research questions set out in the beginning of this chapter: to gain an understanding of the often-unspoken criteria, values and factors that influenced programming; what kinds of films were selected based on these criteria and to understand the programmers' roles and responsibilities. There are three main findings in this chapter which are presented below.

Firstly, I argued that programming is a form of collective authorship where vision and responsibility are shared unequally amongst participants. The programmers act as gatekeepers and tastemakers of human rights/documentary cinema, shaped by their subjective dispositions, internalised, un-defined understanding of human rights and various sensitivities to documentary film aesthetics and expectations.

Secondly, I identified ten primary curatorial values/criteria that emerged from programming notes, discussions and interviews, which determined the focus and vision of Document 2016 and 2017. These values were driven by subjective, personal interests and

ethics as well as by locality, temporality and stakeholders. The main criteria focused on artistic innovation and providing a variety of documentary forms; on an ethical relationship of the filmmaker to the subject and on self-representation; on local relevance and a 'looking in' perspective; on providing counternarratives to images of suffering. Other pragmatic criteria were identified in relation to funding opportunities, exhibition value and current political events. These criteria were partly highlighted in the festival brochures, which is where the programmers first address the audience directly and justify their choices.

Finally, this chapter illustrated several instances where programming was a form of emotional labour. The programmers had to manage and supress their feelings in order to present a positive image of the festival. Feelings of anxiety, frustration, financial precarity were determined by the abundance of films to view in the submissions process, the uncertainty related to funding and unpaid labour as well as the impact of prolonged exposure to images of suffering, typical of films with a human rights topic.

The findings presented in this chapter contribute to the study of film festivals as cultural intermediaries that, through programming, showcase new, aesthetically innovative content (Loist, 2014), which is established through subjective and instinctual practices. Additionally, this chapter contributes to the study of human rights film festivals that also navigate questions of ethics, representation and truthfulness in establishing their own visions of human rights cinema that is presented in a certain way to a local audience. This chapter adds to the overarching argument that human rights film festivals, through their curatorial practices, actively create and shape a localised perspective of human rights cinema presented to the audience – indirectly, through the brochure and directly, at the event – as authentic and relevant.

Chapter 6 – Reception: between activism and cinephilia

Human rights film festivals' main mission is to encourage active spectatorship, awareness and to create opportunities for action beyond the film (Iordanova, 2012). While the films selected have a central role in communicating information on human rights topics and cinema, the festival also communicates through its off-screen practices. These frame and contextualise the themes and issues expressed through filmic conventions. This chapter explores the events, activities, spaces, and audiences brought together during the live festival, to understand their function and how they contribute to fostering human rights activism. Drawing on fieldwork, participation, third party observations (press) and an analysis of ephemera (social media and promotional materials), this chapter focuses on the festival as a specialised cultural intermediary that brings together discourses on documentary film, ethics and impact. As such, it argues that activism and impact at human rights film festivals can be achieved through different methods, connected to each festival's locality, temporality and stakeholders. This chapter illustrates how by using cinephilia strategically, complemented by forms of traditional activism that brought distant human rights into the local context, the festival built affective connections between audience members, the films and their protagonists. Through the example of Document 2016 and 2017,[43] this chapter offers a nuanced understanding of cultural activism beyond the vagueness of 'social impact' and of the tools and methods that can be used to facilitate critical spectatorship, including revisiting the 'film act' of Third Cinema.[44]

Film festivals, cinephilia and activism

As mentioned in previous chapters, human rights film festivals are often spaces where cinephilia and activism co-exist in a relationship of tension and balance. Cinephilia seems to be a given feature of any film festival that aims to 'promise a unique, unrepeatable experience' and provide rare opportunities to view films that are not widely distributed (Czach, 2010, p. 141). This can be characterised by a preference for independent art house films ('festival film'), the organisation of programmes around themes or strands dedicated to retrospectives or significant auteurs or discoveries, the presentation of awards, formal and informal film education. Many of these practices can be observed at Document

[43] First-hand impressions and a review of Document 2017 were published in Alphaville journal (Colta, 2017)) and on Film Hub North website (Ager, 2017).

[44] Third Cinema was a Latin-American film movement established in the late 1960s and 1970s which decries neocolonialism, the capitalist system, and the Hollywood model of cinema as mere entertainment to make money Tascón (2015) investigates this movement in relation to human rights film festivals and activism.

(retrospectives, opening and closing film, award ceremony) as a result of the programming practices in place and the intent of the programmers to address specialised audiences. As discussed in the previous chapter, one of the programmers' aims was to provoke reflection through poetic modes of documentary and to attract a specialised audience through strands dedicated to acclaimed filmmakers.

This tendency towards cinephilia is often set in a state of tension with that towards activism and from this negotiation the festival's discourse emerges as analysed in the previous chapter. This negotiated discourse therefore distances itself from a traditional understanding of explicit political action or intervention that attempts to change the conditions of human rights violations (Tascón, 2017). At human rights film festivals, films are used as tools to indirectly create opportunities for activism and for social change, which can take many shapes or forms, from awareness and tolerance to mobilisation towards action. Activism and its different facets and levels of engagement are only beginning to be explored in the context of festivals. Winton and Turnin propose an enumeration of several ways in which documentary films interact with activism:

> as vehicles for learning about and engaging with communities, as well as building communities themselves; as methods of empowering various constituencies; as instruments for political campaigns or content for social movement media; as collaborative, creative projects involving skill-sharing with communities or as participatory video projects; as agit-prop interventions in the public sphere; as NGO-driven visual culture oriented towards the dissemination of "sensible politics" (McLagan and McKee 2012); as educational public service; as personal statements and testimonies that take on status quo discourses and dominant narratives; as critiques of dominant media representations; and as artful invectives against dominant, mainstream culture and commercially situated media (2017, pp. 83-84).

These examples are useful as they define some of the forms of activism that festivals adopt through the programming of films and events. Human rights film festivals' mission gravitates around raising public awareness and advocating for change (Blažević, 2012), being part of or the driver of wider social movements (Davies, 2018). This is often implemented through the support of and in collaboration with non-governmental organisations or communities, aligning with local campaigns and global movements, often at the cost of, or beyond cinephilia (Winton & Turnin, 2017). However, as discussed throughout this thesis, there is a need for more critical engagement with the commodification of politics and activist discourse in documentary films. The concept of 'festival activism' is seldom approached in the relevant scholarship from a critical, anti-capitalist perspective, and spectatorship is rarely problematised as a mode of consumption (Winton, 2013). The

relationship between activism and cinephilia, taken as symbiotic rather than oppositional in the space of a festival, is also rarely discussed (Paramaditha, 2018). The case study of Document provides an insight into the how both activism and cinephilia are used together strategically and can be understood under the umbrella term of cultural activism that is dependent on their temporality, locality and stakeholders.

The term 'cultural activism' has been defined in several ways, but in this chapter I follow several approaches, including Verson's, who suggests that it is a type of organising where 'art, activism, performance and politics meet, mingle and interact' (Verson, 2007, p. 172). More specifically, cultural activism encapsulates 'those radical and creative practices that are critical and politicized in relation to dominant power relations and their spatial constitution' (Pinder, 2008, p. 731). In relation to cultural activism, these can be defined as 'carnivalesque tactics', borrowing the term from Mikhail Bakhtin (1984) to describe methods that disrupt and challenge hegemonic hierarchy through humour, masquerades, and performance (Fitz-Henry, 2016). In their research focusing on cultural activism, Michael Buser and Jane Arthurs suggest that the term

> is defined as a set of creative practices and activities which challenge dominant interpretations and constructions of the world while presenting alternative socio-political and spatial imaginaries in ways which challenge relationships between art, politics, participation and spectatorship (2013, p. 2).

This definition foregrounds alternative forms of protest and activism that bypass traditional ones such as the movements of the 1970s and 1980s around race, immigration, feminism and women's rights and other identity-based activism, which displayed both creative and political elements (Cohen, 1993). Cultural activism is placed by scholars in the lineage of the 20th century avant-garde movements and commonly framed by diverse concerns around social and environmental justice, authoritarianism, capitalism, consumption, globalisation and the pursuit of reinvigorated lived experience (Buser & Arthurs, 2013). Having argued in the previous chapter that programming is a creative practice, it therefore can be included in the various cultural forms that this type of activism entails. Furthermore, poetry and performance in some off-screen events were used as carnivalesque tactics to connect with broader social and political movements. A key feature is therefore the focus on art and culture rather than issues or rights claims that have historically been at the core of how human rights film festivals shape their thematic approach or off-screen activities. This does not exclude other forms of traditional activism from Document, which did take place as I explain later in this chapter. It is, however, a closer

interpretation of how the festival positioned itself in relation to activism, human rights issues and the artistic merits of the documentary films selected.

Activism at human rights film festivals is achieved through a harmonious association of film choices and 'off-screen' events. I adopt the same terminology as Davies (2017), who suggests that this is an accessible term used by those who engage in the day-to-day work of organising film festivals or screenings. This term includes social gatherings, staged publicity-oriented events as well as workshops, round table discussions and other opportunities for the exchange of information and knowledge on social movements, campaigns or solidarity. 'Festival spaces are structured contact zones that facilitate experience, feeling and expression among and between attendees, and can be designed to nurture some forms of communication and social action while discouraging others' (Winton & Turnin, 2017, p. 88). These interactions and spaces are conceptualised by the authors as 'affective architectures' to describe the coming together of a community and the opportunities for sharing experience, feelings and responses to films and events. At human rights film festivals, this affective architecture can be designed to translate art works and mediated reality (through documentary) into concrete social action. These festivals therefore fulfil the role as cultural intermediaries by communicating both the cinematic discourse and their activist message through curation and off-screen events. An analysis of these off-screen events in tandem with that of a festival's programming practices, is essential in determining its discourse, agenda, function and impact.

> An *effective cinema of action* will only flourish within an *affective screening space of political possibility.* Festival spaces are structured contact zones that facilitate experience, feeling and expression among and between attendees, and can be designed to nurture some forms of communication and social action while discouraging others*"* (Winton & Turnin, 2017, p. 89; original emphasis).

This statement recognises the role of emotions as instruments for action and how these are transmitted through the festival space as much as through the film texts. Further in this chapter I explore the various ways in which this affective architecture is controlled, subverted and put to use to promote cultural activism. I focus on exhibition practices at Document such as Q&A sessions, community outreach events, interrupted screenings, panel discussions and the Critical Forum which I organised in 2016 and 2017. These events brought together different forms of activism and cinephilia, and both aspects were used as incentives for critical spectatorship.

‘Festivalising’ spaces: venues, ephemera and outreach

Film festivals often use different spaces beyond the main hub or cinema, to add to the experiential layer of the place or facilities available. By bringing a certain content and branding to those locations, festivals add new meanings and address specific publics through the programming of films and off-screen events. In this section, I discuss how several spaces in Glasgow became ‘festivalised’ or transformed through Document’s variety of visual and written discourses. This chapter therefore focuses first on the festival’s outreach initiatives throughout Glasgow before exploring at greater length the main venue, the CCA. I also draw on print and publicity materials, their strategic use and role as part of the festival discourse.

This analysis was inspired by Dayan’s notion of ‘verbal architectures’ (Dayan, 2000) and Zielinski’s interpretation of festival ephemera (2016). Both of these texts argue that the festival is a social construction, with different meanings and scripts performed by the groups attending the event. Defined as materials oriented to those at/outside the event (such as flyers, posters) (ibid), ephemera was one of the vehicles through which activist messages circulated in the space of the festival. Their presence together with other promotional materials indicates the symbiosis between different messages and aims. Throughout its history, Document facilitated the presence of NGOs and activists to display and promote their work, often through printed materials that were easily distributed and available to festival audiences. Their presence significantly diminished over time, suggesting a different approach from the coordinators towards engaging with other film festivals and film and art-oriented organisations. In 2016, the Radical independent Bookfair’s (RiB) final instalment offered an opportunity to engage with political ephemera, such as radical memorabilia (flyers, posters, stickers etc.).

The busiest time for film exhibition in Glasgow is between September and November each year, with five thematic festivals (Document, Take One Action, SQIFF, SMHAFF, Africa in Motion), with sometimes overlapping topics and venues running almost back to back. Therefore, releasing promotional materials such as brochures or flyers at the same time with other festivals may not have the same visibility and impact. One of the reasons why Document 2016 postponed its promotion campaign until two weeks before the event was because of the ‘buzz’ around other festivals such as SQIFF and Take One Action. Like Dayan, during my fieldwork observations at Document 2016, I was struck by the volume of printed and online narratives released, and by the rhythm at which they were presented, which intensified during the festival days. Most of these festivals expanded to other venues

beyond the main hub, that became temporary festivalised spaces, branded with materials to bear their identity markers. As such, festivals disrupt quotidian spaces and their temporalities, repurpose venues for film screenings and other events. This feature of interrupting the flow of everyday life is one of the forms that cultural activism can take to foster open and participatory activist encounters (Buser & Arthurs, 2013). Both the decisions around ephemera and the use of alternative spaces highlight the way in which factors of locality and temporality inform festival decision-makers. These dimensions serve as limiting factors for festivals' output as cultural intermediaries. These restrictions and the decisions taken as a consequence also serve to distinguish human rights film festivals and to help them create a unique identity, even in a busy festival season such as that during which Document takes place.

The commitment to engage communities and diverse audiences to participate in the festival became a strategic point for funders as well. By supporting festivals, institutions such as Creative Scotland, the main funder of Document and other specialised festivals in Glasgow, nurture 'this commitment to programme diversity, and dedicated community engagement, [that] has routinely attracted diverse audiences' (Creative Scotland, 2017, p. 13). Similarly, Film Hub Scotland (FHS), part of the BFI Film Audience Network, supports film exhibitors that 'expand film choice, increase and broaden audiences and enhance opportunities for audiences to engage with and learn about film' (FHS, 2019). Therefore, to access more funding and to fulfil their organisational objectives, many thematic film festivals increased their outreach activities throughout the year and beyond the main art house cinema hub. Africa in Motion, initially taking place in Edinburgh since 2006, expanded to Glasgow in 2012 to ensure that the festival has an inclusive and widely accessible space (Atkinson, 2018). With the largest BAME (Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic) population in Scotland and home to dispersed refugees and asylum seekers, Glasgow provided a better opportunity to connect with the African diaspora that the festival was targeting. They also adopted a 'people-centred, place-based approach' (ibid, p. 9), programming a variety of pop-up events in venues beyond the cinema, such as community centres, bars, church halls, universities, libraries, art schools and restaurants. This example reinforces the fact that film festivals are also influenced by their stakeholders and in the case of funders, by their strategic objectives. Decisions to adapt to the aims of stakeholders can then impact locality as a defining factor of a festival. Document also programmed films and events in a diverse range of venues throughout its history (see Chapter 4) and continued to do so in 2016 and 2017 (Figure 6.1), aiming to 'broaden both the scope of debate around human rights in the city and the parameters for documentary exhibition' (Document, 2017).

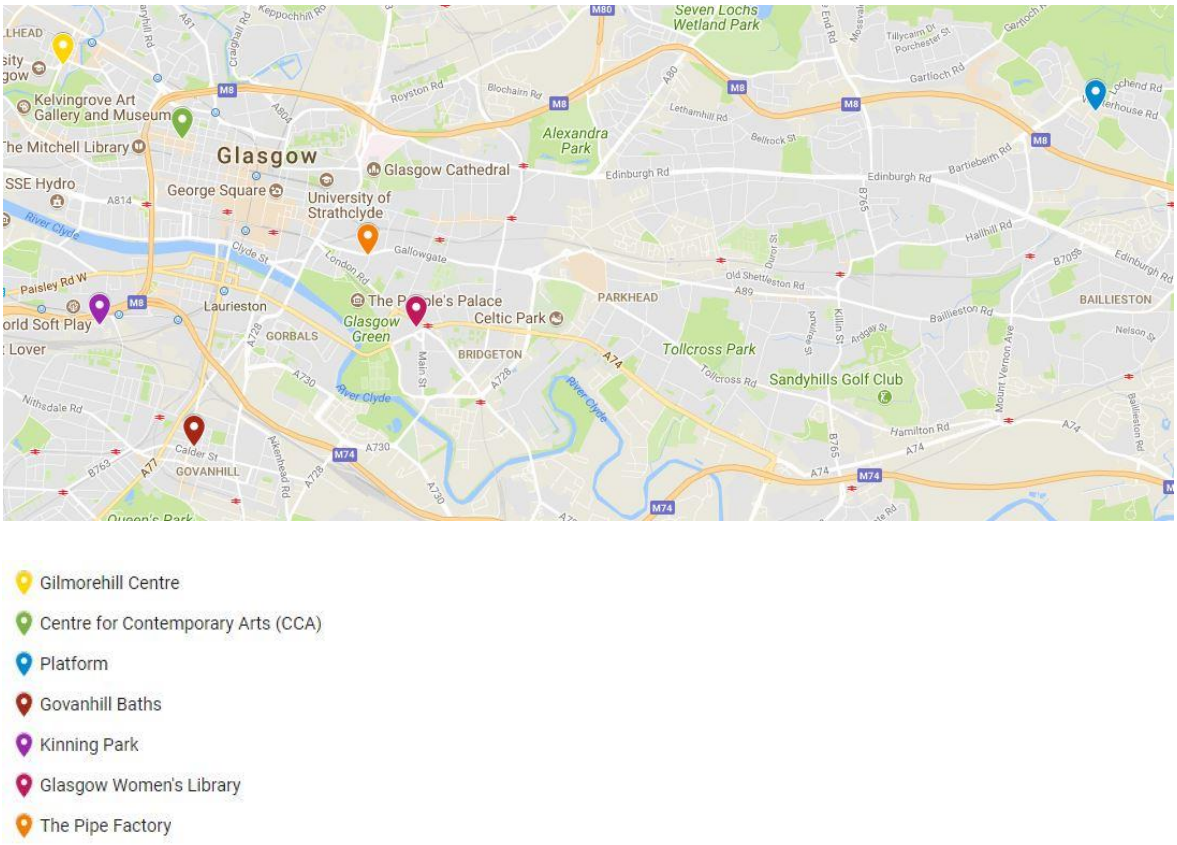


Figure 6.1. Display of venues used by Document 2016 and 2017 on the Glasgow map.

Document's main venue was the CCA (green pin on the map), but it included other institutions and areas such as the Gilmorehill Centre (yellow pin) at the University of Glasgow, East End (Platform at Easterhouse, blue pin) and in the Southside (Govanhill Baths, red pin). In 2017, they added other venues to the list: Kinning Park (purple pin), the Pipe Factory (orange pin) and Glasgow Women's Library (GWL; pink pin). Apart from the cinema at Gilmorehill Centre, the other venues are not specifically designed for screening purposes. Therefore, similar to Africa in Motion, Document organised pop-up film events in community spaces (Kinning Park, Govanhill Baths), cross-arts venues (Platform), libraries (GWL) and gallery spaces (Pipe Factory). Each space has its own history, profile and regular audience, which shaped the selection of films, the expectations and interactions.

Gilmorehill Centre is the building that hosts the Film and Television Studies department at the University of Glasgow. A former church, the building also benefits from an amphitheatre and a fully equipped cinema space – Andrew Stewart Cinema. The cinema space usually hosts lectures for Film and Television students and sometimes events dedicated to the wider public.[45] Document's connections with the University of Glasgow are

[45] Other events organised there include Africa in Motion, among others.

manifold, are driven by mutual support and collaboration between academia and the professional environment. During 2016 and 2017, the cinema at the University became a space for showing innovative, experimental and archive documentary. In 2016, Archibald programmed *La Commune (Paris 1871)* and in 2017, Archibald, Vélez-Serna and Martin Farias organised and facilitated the interrupted screening of *The Battle of Chile* trilogy. Both of these films have an extensive length (each over four hours long), black and white imagery, adopt an experimental approach and are archival/historic films. The choice of venue was appropriate for this type of screening as it offered a more secluded experience. While the festival hub at the CCA was 'buzzing' with people entering and leaving screenings, a café and restaurant and volunteers, the cinema at Gilmorehill Centre provided a more intimate space. With only one fifteen-minute break halfway through *La Commune (Paris 1871)*, the screening was prefigured as a task of endurance. Given the film school context, it was also framed in a film education and cinephilia discourse, promoting the British filmmaker Peter Watkins and emphasising the unique cinematic experience, 'an extremely rare opportunity' to see the film on the big screen (Document, 2016a). This choice of film, the place and the way it was presented, invited primarily a highly specialised and trained audience, engaging with activism mainly though their love and knowledge of cinema. Rather than trying to fit in as many films as possible in a limited, short time, this screening of Watkins' work emphasised the critical viewing of cinema as an intellectual art form. In this instance, Document was similar to the mission and 'poetic activism' of The Flaherty Seminars, that since 1955, advocated for 'cinema as an intellectual and almost mystical activity', serving an educational, cinephiliac and non-commercial purpose (Zimmermann, 2012, p. 177). It is therefore no surprise that The Flaherty programmed Watkins' work to unsettle audience expectations about documentary exhibition and temporality[46] (Zimmermann & MacDonald, 2017, p. 155).

Govanhill Baths and Platform are community-oriented organisations but have been used as temporary spaces for festivals and other artistic events. For instance, Govanhill Baths presents itself as the 'community hub based in the heart of Govanhill' (2018). The building, a former community pool in Glasgow's Southside, has a history of direct action.[47] The

[46] The Flaherty Seminars programmed *The Journey* (1987), Watkins' documentary that has a running time of over 14 hours and is considered the longest non-experimental film ever made. As such, it was rarely seen in a public setting, especially at film festivals, with the exception of The Flaherty, Toronto Film Festival in 1987 and Mexico City International Festival of Contemporary Cinema in 2007 (Zimmermann & MacDonald, 2017).

[47] Camcorder Guerrillas produced a short documentary on the story of community action against the closure of the Govanhill Baths (*United We Will Swim… Again*, 2015).

pressure to close it in 2001 was fervently opposed by locals who occupied the building and protested against its closure. The building is currently owned by a charity committed to attract funds, restore the building and reopen its doors to cultural projects and communities. Govanhill is cited as one of the most deprived areas of Glasgow, home of many minority ethnic groups as well as the setting of a vibrant cultural scene (Adams & McKay, 2016). Document 2016 held a preview event, two days before the opening gala, consisting of a free meal and drinks followed by the screening of *Dreaming of Denmark*. This film was chosen for this venue as it explored the story of an asylum seeker from Afghanistan navigating the asylum process in Europe. As such, the coordinators hoped it would create a bridge between the attendees and the protagonist's experience of struggling to make a new home in a foreign and hostile environment. The meal and beverages offered an opportunity for networking and another occasion for gathering. Approximately 20 people attended the event, mostly friends and family of the coordinators and active collaborators of the festival, such as current and former board members. The low attendance and lack of participation from and interaction with the local community can be viewed as a missed opportunity and as an informative experience for the future. At this stage however, there was no analysis of the causes that led to this and of the changes that could be made going forward.

As the venue is also associated with protest, in 2017 the programmers selected *The Memory of the 25th Hour*. The documentary follows ten years of community collective action against a naval base construction in South Korea. Similarly, the coordinators chose this film as an opportunity to create a link between the experience of direct action in Glasgow and the same effort on a different continent. However, in the absence of a post-screening discussion, this connection remained at a superficial level. The screening was also once again marked by low attendance and low participation form the local community.

Platform was another outreach festival venue in 2016 and 2017. It is located further away from the city centre, in Easterhouse, an area named 'one of the worst places to live in the UK' due to poor housing, poverty and crime (Shedden, 2016). Platform is a cross-arts venue in the building complex called The Bridge, offering 'cutting edge performance, music, visual arts and participation' (2018). The venue presents itself as strongly connected to its local community and aims to bring together artists and cultural partners to the location. Given the negative reputation of this neighbourhood, Platform strives to provide a safe and engaging space for the arts and an example of urban regeneration through culture. For this reason, the event programmed in this space in 2016 was the illustrated talk given by Chris Leslie whose photography and filmmaking projects revolve around Glasgow's most

deprived areas, urban decay and demolitions, as well as instances of grassroots organisation and public regeneration initiatives (Figure 6.2). The event was quickly sold out (free tickets, which had to be booked in advance), as Leslie's reputation and topic for the talk were of interest to locals.

Figure 6.2. Chris Leslie illustrated talk, Document 2016. Photo by Alexandra-Maria Colta.

However, in 2017, the coordinators adopted another strategy to try and gather wider audiences. They programmed the documentary *Nowhere to Hide*, about a nurse and his family through five years of dramatic change in Iraq. The film was promoted around cinephilia, foregrounding its award-winning festival trajectory and acclaim. The venue offered for the screening of this film the largest room, the Auditorium, with a capacity of 210 seats, much larger than the Studio, which was where the Chris Leslie talk took place. However, the strategy did not work as well as they hoped, having a very low attendance of only six people. The contrast between the two years in terms of attendance suggests that this venue and its potential audience is more responsive to events that address local issues rather than cinephilia. This appears to have not been recognised at the time by the programming team. This aspect further emphasises that cultural activism is realised through the screening of certain films in particular contexts with particular audiences, which might not be realised in other circumstances (Dovey, 2015). This link once again illustrates how locality informs and influences a festival. In order to serve its function as a cultural intermediary and as a source of cultural activism, a human rights film festival needs to attract and connect with the local audience. This requirement, in turn, influences decisions around what to screen, how to screen it, how to promote the screening.

The coordinators described this process of pairing events with specific venues as a balancing act, one that requires knowledge of each setting's history and community as well as some degree of risk-taking. The screening of *Radio Kobanî* (2016) at the Kinning Park Complex offered an opportunity to further expand into the Southside and connect with another community centre. The empty gallery space at the Pipe Factory East of the city centre was also used to balance cinema and art by showcasing several early works by Vietnamese director Trinh T. Minh-ha. Presented as an installation, the event consisted of a mobile screen and projector installed in the all-brick space, a few chairs and a makeshift bar (Figure 6.3). It also included a talk by Philippa Lovatt, lecturer at the University of St Andrews and the projection of two films (*Reassemblage* (1982) and *Surname Viet, Given Name Nam* (1989)).

Figure 6.3. Woman, Native, Other | Trinh T. Minh-ha Retrospective, Document 2017. Photo by Alexandra-Maria Colta.

These partnerships and venues highlighted Document's strategy to expand and outreach to other audiences and communities by the choice of venue. In this case, each space was an anchor point for gathering participants with similar interests and for disseminating films on human rights issues considered of relevance to them. Furthermore, all these events were free, some of them included meals or a reception to enhance the opportunities for attendance and participation. By bringing people together and being exposed to these films and discussions, in these particular venues, the festival aimed to create critically engaged publics, beyond the city centre and outwith the main festival dates. As such, these non-cinema spaces were transformed into pop-up events that included film, discussions, trying to provide content tailored to each venue's history and interests. As shown above, this aspect

was not always fulfilled, emphasising the contrast that can emerge between an imagined audience and the real one, during the event itself. Likewise, the possibility for change or longer-lasting effect in these areas in relation to cinema attendance or activism was limited. These events take place once a year and provide brief interventions. As such, there is limited impact beyond them, in the absence of follow-ups or on-going involvement. This issue raises the question of who benefits from these initiatives and what they actually bring to the local communities. It is worthwhile interrogating this aspect and whether a more inclusive approach is required, for instance by including members of the community in the programming process itself (Atkinson, 2018). Such a step would raise questions of whether representation is important as part of programming, whether decision-making would become more difficult and how this community-oriented approach would be organised. For Document and other small film festivals, it would potentially present a challenge, as limited resources would be stretched further in an attempt to form and maintain community partnerships and work processes.

The CCA has been the main Document hub since 2005. Since 2008, the venue developed an ‘open source’ approach, offering organisations and individuals space in the building to programme their own events. With an increasing number of organisations and partners interested in using the space for free, the number of events grew accordingly. In the year of 2016/2017, the CCA worked with 253 partners and 26 festivals (CCA, 2018). With the proliferation of thematic film festivals, most with small budgets and specialised content, the CCA became a central hub. From fieldnotes and conversations with members of the public who also visited the CCA during its busiest months, the venue appeared to host an on-going festival of specialised content. On the one hand, this potentially increases the visibility of the venue and its events. On the other hand, it can hinder each individual festival’s promotion strategy and their distinguishable profile. Nevertheless, as the temporary closure of the CCA due to the 2018 Glasgow School of Art fire demonstrated, it has become a central and difficult to replace venue for the provision of small, independent community arts, including film exhibition.

The CCA is a cross-arts venue with several versatile spaces which can be adapted/changed according to artistic needs. The Cinema, at the ground level, seats 74 people in dark-red comfortable chairs (Figure 6.5). The Theatre, one level up, can seat twice as many people, with foldable chairs that can be easily moved in another configuration. These are the main spaces that provide cinema-screening quality; thus, it is where the films were shown, and Q&A sessions took place. The other two smaller rooms, the Creative Lab and the Club Room can seat up to 60 people in a theatre layout and have projection facilities. Here is where most of the panel discussions and the Critical Forum were organised. At the top floor resides Intermedia Gallery, an independent gallery funded by the Glasgow City Council, that curates work separately from the CCA. This gallery can also be used by the festival, depending on availability. During the festival, Document utilised all these spaces: the foyer held festival materials, brochures, the box office and guest lists, while volunteers and the coordinators greeted audience members. The use of the festival image throughout the building signified the 'takeover' of the space by Document.

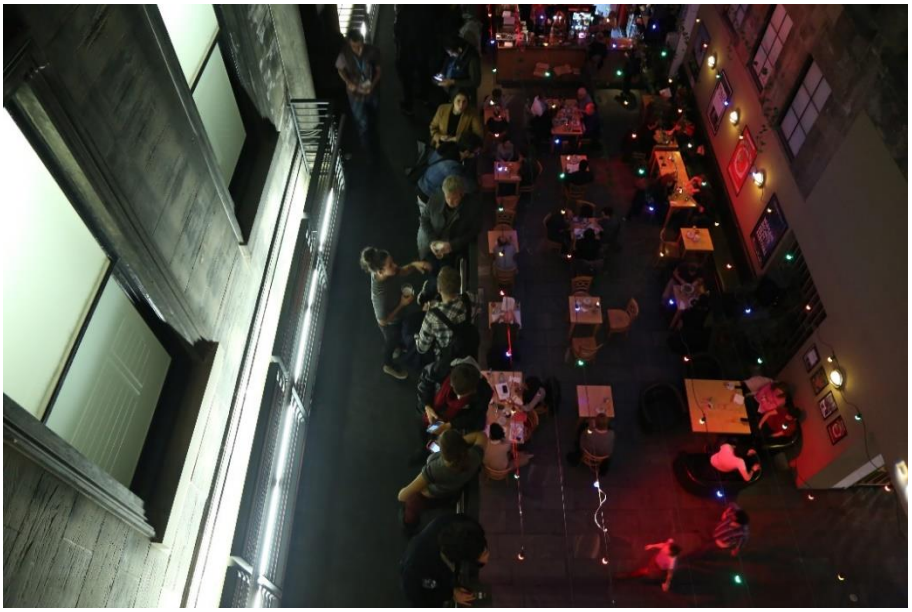


Figure 6.4. The CCA café on the ground floor and the entryway to the Theatre on the first floor, during Document 2017. Photo by Stuart Crawford.

Performing the festival – poetic activism

Soon after the film selection was finalised, it became apparent that the focus on poetic documentary and the viewing context extended to the events and to the form of activism encouraged as well. Document advocated for a more poetic documentary cinema that invites reflection and critical thinking and, similar to The Flaherty in its first decades, that celebrates cinema as 'both an art form and intellectual endeavour' (Zimmermann, 2012, p. 176). The

focus on intellectual viewing and a complex learning experience from the makers themselves was illustrated by the masterclasses and illustrated talks organised during the festival. For instance, the masterclasses which took place at Document 2016 (led by George Amponsah and Dionne Walker, director and producer of *The Hard Stop*) and at Document 2017 (Andrea Luka Zimmermann and Ameenah Ayub Allen, director and producer of *Erase and Forget*), foregrounded the opportunity to discuss and to learn more about the process of filmmaking. The film screenings were followed by Q&A sessions, but the detailed discussions on the process, production and editing of these films took place during these masterclasses. The very term positions the directors as 'masters' of their craft, emphasising the centrality of engaging with film as a work of art. At the 2016 masterclass, supported by the SDI, the director and producer talked about the challenges and responsibilities of making a film on a sensitive subject matter, the tragic story of Mark Duggan who was shot and killed by police in Tottenham in 2011, an event which led to several days of violent riots (Gyamfi, 2016). The aim of these masterclasses was to unravel the process of making cinematic films and to reveal the work, the ethics and responsibility of the crewmembers towards the subject. They also positioned Document as a platform where film professionals can meet audience members and where independent, cinematic documentary cinema is celebrated.

As such, these events also provided a learning experience from experts who shared their knowledge and practical experience, potentially inspiring others to make their own work. While these masterclasses did not focus on a specific human rights issue but on how the films themselves were made, they offered opportunities for activism by informing and gathering a group of people with a common interest in the film and/or filmmaking. As Torchin suggests, the 'activism of a festival is [located] in its sites for discussion exchange, networking […] and promotion of the work being done' (2012c, p. 99). Through these masterclasses, Document offered a space for critical discourse on modes of doing – using fictional elements, re-enactment, archive footage – to explore human rights, direct action and power. By focusing on artistic production, the festivals legitimised these modes of doing and transformed 'contact zones into spaces of action' (Winton & Turnin, 2017, p. 94). This type of event highlights the spectators' opportunity to interpret and appropriate the messages and techniques learned, in a way that transcends the passive/active dichotomy, a central characteristic of cultural activism (Buser & Arthurs, 2012, p. 6).

This approach towards exploring the process of filmmaking was not restricted to masterclasses. Questions related to this process also came up in post-screening Q&A sessions and the coordinators programmed other panel discussions around the topic, placing

it in the spotlight. Panel discussions are usually longer than Q&As and generally involve a moderator and several speakers. As mentioned in the previous chapter, the panels at Document were linked with key films, which acted as recommended viewing before the discussion events. This further complicated the scheduling process, while offering opportunities to continue the debates around specific films in a more detailed, informed manner. At the festival in 2017 this became a central characteristic, by dedicating an entire panel on filmmaking: 'The Ethics of the Documentary Filmmaker'. The panel consisted of two film directors, Andrea Luka Zimmermann *(Erase and Forget)* and Justin Schein *(Left on Purpose)*. They were joined by producer and at the time SMHAFF film curator, Richard Warden. The discussion was moderated by Miren Manias-Muñoz, Document board member and academic at the University of Edinburgh. Both filmmakers encountered ethical issues in the work selected at Document. The panellists discussed both films in relation to their ethical concerns and the impact of showing them in a festival context, involving the audience in a conversation about spectatorship and ethics. The focus of this dialogue was exactly what the coordinators wanted to achieve through the programming of films and events when inviting the audience to look and think differently.

The topic of the panel was extremely popular, with audience members queuing up, some even having to be denied entry as the venue was at capacity. This popularity indicated that this type of discussion was of great interest to the audience that included a mix of activists, academics, filmmakers, wanting to learn more about the ethics of making documentary films. By putting these speakers in a panel together, with their experience of dealing with complex sensitive issues while trying to make or screen a cinematic film, the need for critical discussion of the politics, art and craft of filmmaking was emphasised. Rather than being focused on the human rights issue or impact of the film in changing lives or situations, the discussion revolved around the process of making the films, how the presence of the camera affected the stories being told, thus treating the films as works of art, their vision and style being put forward for interpretation and critical enquiry. This in itself provided a form of cultural activism, of empowering audiences to consider the films' message in relation to the conditions of production. As Raymond Williams suggests, works of art require 'active readings' in order to become 'present' in one's life, and 'the making of art […] is always a formative process, within a specific present' (1977, p. 129). The panel discussion on ethics at Document 2017 provided an insight into this formative process and the tools to make sense of the stories told through film. Other points raised at the panel debated the responsibility towards their subjects as well as the importance of self-care and the mental health of the filmmaker. Warden addressed the responsibility of the programmer

to the filmmaker and their mental health, especially by inviting them to festivals and making them re-live difficult experiences or face criticism during the screening and discussions. This reflection on the purpose and impact of such events presented an opportunity for the audience to engage with their own position as spectators witnessing suffering. Therefore, through this off-screen event, the festival communicated a message about 'looking out' and the humanitarian gaze, revealing once more the cumulative and complementary value that screenings and such events have.

'Looking for Truth': The Critical Forum

This reflective stance was encouraged at the Critical Forum, which I organised in 2016. This is one of the examples of the practice-led research I pursued and of my method of working through fieldwork-related questions by using the tools available as an active participant in the festival's team. The Critical Forum replaced the formerly known student forum in an attempt to appeal to a wider audience by not labelling itself as an event dedicated solely to students. During my time on the selection panel, one of the key questions and challenges that often came up was considering the responsibility of programmers to showcase documentaries that are honest, that do not intentionally misrepresent or misinform and that do not overwhelm the viewer with a focus on relentless suffering. At an initial glance, I discovered several instances where film festivals had been sites of controversy for problematic films. This is one of the instances of how festival work can generate a negative affect (Czach, 2016) by facing stressful, harsh criticism. This aspect is often overlooked in the space of the festival when in the rush of the event itself, there is limited time for critical engagement with the work and motivations behind each film selection.

For instance, The Montréal International Documentary Festival (RIDM) faced a backlash after screening the controversial experimental documentary *Of the North* (2015). The film has drawn significant criticism and was deemed racist by the Inuit community for promoting negative stereotypes (Walsh, 2015). The film sparked controversy among the filmmaking community in Canada and determined other festivals such as the Quebec film festival Rendez-Vous du Cinéma Québécois (RVCQ), that had initially selected the film, to withdraw it to avoid criticism (CBC News, 2016). While this decision was applauded by some filmmakers, activists and audiences, it raised important questions about the role and responsibility of a film festival. For instance, Stephen Agluvak Puskas, producer of an Inuit radio show, commented: 'I think a bigger discussion that's not being talked about is the ethics behind these film festivals that show these films […] I really want film festivals to be held

accountable for what they show' (ibid). This opinion echoes some voices asking for film festivals curators and tastemakers to be held accountable for the films they screen. Such an accountability would imply a shift from a passive stance, such as that of RVCQ that withdrew the film upon facing criticism to a more active pre-emptive stance, considering the ethics of a film as part of the programming process.

The issue of ethics and responsibility of documentary festivals was also raised in a *New York Times* article, focusing on the increased pressure on programmers and a perceived push towards self-censorship (Ryzik, 2016). In the article, several programmers from Toronto International Film Festival to Doc NYC and True/False Film Fest, as well as academics such as Patricia Aufderheide reflect on situations where they had to deal with problematic documentaries with hidden agendas, questionable ethics and accuracy. The main debate revolves around the responsibility of the programmers, whether they should fact-check each film before selecting it and, if found problematic, whether they should show it as an opportunity for debate or whether they should perform self-censorship and not show it at all. The article draws on several examples, including the documentary *Vaxxed: From Cover-Up to Catastrophe* (2016) that re-asserted the long-discredited link between autism and vaccines, which was pulled from the Tribeca Film Festival. While some of the festival representatives, such as Robert De Niro, defended the selection of this film at Tribeca for its potential to create debate and unpick both sides of the argument, the increasing pressure from the medical community among others, contributed to the festival's decision to perform self-censorship. In the New York Times article, most programmers indicate that faced with these situations, they put their faith in the filmmakers, acknowledging that documentary is a subjective form, representing the director's vision of 'truth' (Ryzik, 2016). As such, they prefer to show problematic documentaries and let the audience discuss and decide on the accuracy and problems of each film, feeling that self-censorship in this case could become a slippery slope into limiting their freedom of expression. This stance contrasts with the view taken by members of the Inuit community in relation to RVCQ's decision to withdraw *Of the North*. This view also has the potential to interrogate the role of the festival as cultural intermediary, as expert and tastemaker of human rights film that could therefore be expected to contextualise problematic issues for the audience.

With these articles and examples in mind, I decided to investigate this further as part of my placement. Therefore, I sought to use the Critical Forum as an opportunity to bring different groups together – the festival team, the academia, the audience – to discuss the various issues regarding controversy, self-censorship and accuracy in the context of a

documentary film festival. As such, the first step was to propose the idea to the coordinators, who welcomed it and made suggestions regarding a film that could be paired with the discussion. The film was *A Brilliant Genocide* (2016) focusing on the genocide of the Acholi people in Norther Uganda by Museveni's government. The film claims to expose the slow-motion genocide and the 'international conspiracy of silence' that surrounds the issue and to provide more context around the rebel group called the Lord's Resistance Army led by Joseph Kony (*A Brilliant Genocide*, 2016). This latter aspect convinced us to choose this film as part of the Critical Forum due to the association with *Kony 2012* (2012), a short documentary and campaign aiming to 'make Ugandan warlord Joseph Kony the most infamous person in the world' (Cauterucci, 2016). The film was freely available on YouTube and Vimeo and gathered up to 100 million views, becoming the most watched viral video in web history at the time (ibid). The campaign and film were made by a US-based charity, Invisible Children, which faced criticism for a perceived lack of accuracy, the condescending tone, cliché imagery and sentimentalism (Bradshaw, 2012). As such, even though *A Brilliant Genocide* took a different approach, it was selected because of its activism centred on raising awareness for Western audiences of the situation in Uganda and the association with *Kony 2012*, which sparked significant media attention and controversy. As such, it combined the topical and urgent issue of genocide with a controversial media campaign. This pairing inspired other choices such as the key note, for which I invited Torchin, who has extensive knowledge about documentary films and activism and who wrote about *Kony 2012*, the film and the campaign (Torchin, 2016). In addition to the keynote, I also organised a panel discussion, focusing on the ethics and responsibility of the documentary filmmaker and festival programmer. Torchin was joined in the panel by Sean Welsh, one of Document's coordinators; Finn Daniels-Yeomans, a PhD student at the University of Glasgow studying African documentary films and Basharat Khan, a Glasgow-based filmmaker. Initially I sought to invite the director or a representative of the film. As Ebony Butler was based in Australia, she could not attend the event in Glasgow. She recommended several other participants in the film, but they were based abroad and proved difficult to reach. However, I felt it was necessary to have a filmmaker in the panel who had similar experience with making documentaries on sensitive and controversial topics. I thought this reduced the risk of focusing too narrowly on the film to the detriment of the topic for debate. As such, Basharat Khan, who had directed several films around national identity and politics in Scotland (*Albert Drive TV* (2013), *A View from Here* (2014)) and Palestine (*Fragments of Gaza* (In Production)), accepted my invitation. Similar to how the strands and other panels were shaped, the forum was also configured to address a specific issue that emerged from

my personal research interest. The panel composition and the title (‘Looking for Truth: Programming Documentary Film Festivals’) narrowed down the focus towards the practice of film and festival professionals rather than the content of the film.

The event was funded by the Glasgow Human Rights Network and the College of Arts (Collaborative Research Award) at the University of Glasgow, strengthening the relationship between the festival and academia. The screening took place at the CCA’s Cinema, followed by a keynote and panel discussion in the Clubroom. The analysis of this event below provides an insight into ‘affective architectures’, how controversial and sensitive topics can engage with the emotional and political, provoke debates and a process of ‘collective active “reading” of a film in a shared material space’ (Winton & Turnin, 2017).

Figure 6.5. Critical Forum Panel Discussion at Document 2016. From left to right: Leshu Torchin, Finn Daniels-Yeomans, Sean Welsh, Basharat Khan and Alexandra-Maria Colta. Photo by Kathi Kamleitner.

The keynote created the context for the discussion, shedding light on key instruments of the *Kony 2012* campaign and on the broader implications. Torchin set the premise for the debate by highlighting the different, sometimes opposing views of the importance of images that make visible instances of suffering and genocide. She also discussed the tendency to simplify and dramatise real events to generate viewers/audiences and how the backlash to *Kony 2012* was in many ways effective, helping raise awareness on the issue, while promoting a form of slacktivism.[48] Many of these issues were picked up and developed by the speakers during the panel. Apart from a comment from the audience praising the screening of the film for showing the situation in Uganda, the rest of the discussion focused

[48] ‘Slacktivism’ is used pejoratively to describe ‘feel good’ measures in support of an issue or social cause (Carr, 2012).

on the divided responsibility issue among the programmers, the filmmakers and the audience, especially around the notion of 'truth'.

The capacity of documentary to deepen its audience's understanding of human rights issues and the assumption that they are grounded in truthfulness were focal points of the debate. This link between human rights cinema and the supposition that it is realistic and historically accurate was acknowledged and contested by the panellists. On the one hand, the panellists agreed that documentaries are about the real world and that there are some topics which imply a truth that is not relative. For instance, Torchin argued that documentaries

> are related to the world that we live in. We can't spiral off into total relativism where everybody has their own truth, especially when we're looking at human rights violations […] There are all these perspectives, but someone still shot that gun and someone still died from that bullet.

As such, films are imbued with an evidentiary capacity that makes human rights violations visible, that positions them as an indirect mode of witnessing (Hamblin, 2016). The idea of witnessing is one of the fundamental concepts of human rights activism, inextricably linked to the idea that seeing is believing (Torchin, 2012b). The forum film used these techniques, by making the topic clear from the opening credits – genocide – a term which has inherent meanings and connotations that prefigure a type of discourse – victim's testimonies and images that offer visible evidence of a truth that is not relative. As Torchin argued, some facts and actions cannot be relativised or interpreted in a different light. Genocide can be considered one of them, implying a clear understanding of who the victim is, who the oppressor is and, consequently, a sense of urgency – universally, genocide must be stopped. This aspect contributes to the debate surrounding human rights' universal applicability and interpretation versus local cultural considerations and thus illustrates how film festivals are spaces where such issues are discussed and challenged. *A Brilliant Genocide* has several testimonies of experts and victims, all calling for change while suggesting and presenting different ways of taking action.

At the same time, the film uses elements of dramatisation and animation, which involve the director's intervention complementing the testimonial encounter. Regarding this aspect, the panellists argued that documentary film should be viewed as a form of storytelling that presents the subjective perspective of the filmmaker in relation to the reality they are observing. The dramatisation of the topic and of human subjects, through sound design,

editing and animation, is used to combine the making of ethical arguments with emotional persuasion (McLagan, 2003). This suggests that information and facts are shaped and filtered through the filmmaker's vision about images of suffering and moral arguments. For this reason, at the event, Torchin suggested that rather than revealing 'pure truth, we should see documentaries as doorways and portals to more stories and other ways of looking at the world'. The other panellists intervened to argue that the multitude of media platforms available only increased the difficulty of separating facts from the personal opinions and vision of the filmmaker. Khan shared his own experience of making documentaries on sensitive topics and practical concerns. For instance, he argued that most documentary filmmakers work on their own or in small teams, with zero or low budgets, which limits their capacity to do extensive research or hire experts. Secondly, in interview situations, subjects can respond very differently to the same questions, or can be influenced by the presence of the camera in what and how they tell their story. Finally, he agreed that filmmaking is a form of storytelling that, 'at the end of the day, you will come with a specific perspective that you want to explore and tell, which you should be allowed to do'.

This point was further interrogated and even contested by some members of the audience, illustrating the potential for constructive disagreement in the space of such an event. For instance, an academic in social sciences argued that the word 'story' is improperly associated with documentary, as it implies fabrication. The panellists defended their arguments by focusing on the importance of acknowledging that each film goes through a process of narrativisation and that stories are powerful tools to create emotional engagement.

> Welsh: By using the term 'storytelling' it's one way of making audiences aware there's a way of presenting this information and it isn't the truth. That's why the event is called 'looking for truth'.
>
> Khan: I think here is where you have a duty to the audience to explore how storytelling or a structure leads you through the film's journey.

These opinions emphasised the importance of creating a space for the audience to express their concerns and criticisms of the films screened and to 'interrogate the production of these images rather than treat them as neutral testimony' (Hamblin, 2016, p. 40). By the end of the panel, the panellists concluded that films and festivals are forms of storytelling that create meanings and narratives around facts and that explore the real world from a variety of perspectives. The use of emotion and a subjective perspective humanise abstract concepts associated with human rights language. They also suggested that problematic or controversial films should be selected rather than censored, for the opportunity to create

critical and engaged spectators. However, this can be seen as in opposition with the idea that programmers have a responsibility to avoid misinformation or propaganda that was discussed at network-level in Chapter 3 and in the Document programming process in Chapter 5. While controversial or challenging films (in form and/or content) are often selected at human rights film festivals to engage audiences in debate and critical thinking, programmers should, to the best of their knowledge, filter through inaccuracies and consider the potential harm of the choices they make. The use of Q&A sessions and discussion around a film can reduce the risk of conveying misinformation and helps audience members contextualise a topic. However, the risk is always present, and each festival can decide whether to pursue a proactive or reactive approach to controversial issues and whether to heavily curate and frame discussions in a certain way or allow the audience to form relatively unmediated opinions and assumptions. Careful consideration should be given to the inherent label of 'truthfulness' attached to a film once it is screened at a festival such as Document. This assumption reduces the scope for the audience to form a completely unmediated opinion on the film or the topic and issues conveyed. It must also be noted that Q&A sessions and panel discussions are generally attended by fewer members of the audience than the screenings themselves, thus reducing the scope for any contextualisation. The discussion during the Critical Forum therefore provided an insight into the challenges and the important role of programmers in navigating truth versus inaccuracies in the documentary form. While off-screen events can prove invaluable in the process of placing films in context, they can also be used as extensions of the films themselves, projecting the filmmakers' discourse into other mediums of communication and knowledge sharing. This latter application of off-screen events was also utilised by Document in 2016, which this chapter will now analyse.

Poetic activism: the Marlon Riggs retrospective

The Marlon Riggs retrospective at Document 2016 focused on the personal, subjective perspective over aspects of identity and life as a black, gay man living with AIDS in the US during the 1980s and 1990s. The strand consisted of two feature films and several shorts that combined music, poetry, spoken word and archival footage to explore the diversity of black queer lives, feelings and attitudes. Riggs' work was described as a kind of poetic activism (Medialectic, 2015) by incorporating different art forms and methods of expression to counter hegemonic representation and the perception of black queer Americans by mainstream society and media. His films often engage with performativity to underscore the problematic pursuit of identity and race claims (Johnson, 2003). To complement the screenings and to provide an entertaining side to the festival, the coordinators invited several

UK artists and performers to respond creatively to Riggs' work. Evan Ifekoya and Jay Bernard, two UK-based artists who attended Document 2016, reacted to this retrospective though multimedia presentations that played with audience expectations through acts of re-interpretation and re-working of the festival space. Riggs' work and the performance of the two artists engaged with cultural activism, using creative practice to subvert expectations about documentary and to challenge images and ideas about race and sexual identity (The 8th Floor, 2017). They used spoken word, video and music to adapt and creatively interrogate Riggs' work using current specific social and political movements, opening up the possibility for cultural activism.

Both performances took place in CCA's Theatre after screenings of Riggs' films. Jay Bernard, BFI Flare (London LGBTQ Film Festival) programmer and writer spoke from a CCA branded stand spotlighted in the middle of the stage, with the rest of the room unlit. Bernard started his performance by putting the spectators in a potentially uncomfortable situation: 'You're now trapped, there's no way out, we're going to be together talking about the work of Marlon Riggs and also poetics as it operates in the social space'. In this particular context, in a cross-arts venue in Glasgow, the room was quiet, apart from Bernard's spoken words and projected clips. The audience listened and remained quiet and seated throughout. Bernard's speech became more passionate, expressed through his body language, rhythm and tone of voice as he identified himself as part of a counter-hegemonic group and movement ('This lecture shows I am nothing if not a glitch, queer millennial of the internet age'):

> I attended the first Black Lives Matter march. It was a moment under the tunnel at Kottbusser Tor when everyone started singing. It was not a loud procession at that point, but the lowness of the tunnel made the voices reverberate and we heard ourselves in a new way. Our voices were contoured by the world around us. It was no longer Black Lives Matter but the sound at the heart of the march, a single sound we were making.

Looking at the language and culture of protests and racism, he distinguishes between mainstream white and subaltern black publics, between 'white lives matter'[49] versus the Black Lives Matter movement that has a stake, urgency and demands space and visibility.

While Bernard's talk often drew on Marlon Riggs' films to set up a connection between the two, Evan Ifekoya's performance seemed to be less linked with the retrospective

[49] 'White lives matter' is an activist group that started as a reaction to Black Lives Matter movement and was often associated with alt-right, white nationalist protesters (Stack, 2016).

and more with a personal story embedded in the performance itself. Ifekoya's performance used many elements that enact the carnivalesque, implementing symbols, clothing, lighting and dance to turn the event into 'temporary carnivals in their demand for public space' (Duncombe, 2007, p. 68). Her performative work was based on archives of blackness, sociality and inheritance as they diffract through queer nightlife and trauma (Document, 2016a). The venue was decorated to evoke a nightclub atmosphere. Each attendee received a Juicy Fruit chewing gum at the entrance before taking a seat. The rows in front of the room were removed leaving a gap between the rest of the chairs and the stage area. While people were arriving, a YouTube video of electronic band Orbital's track *Halcyon On and On* (1993) played in the background. The table set at the centre of the stage had various props: a glittery cover, a scented candle, a red band with the inscriptions 'Lo personal es politico' ('The personal is political')[50], a blue siren light and many other things not discernible from a distance. Ifekoya entered the room, dressed in a white long jacket, wearing a pair of white framed glasses; surveyed the room and took a chewing gum herself. When she talked into a microphone, she added a voice effect and projected colourful lights. Like in Jay Bernard's performance, the audience was compliant, everyone sat in silence and watched the event unfold. In this sense, the performance did not radically subvert or challenge the public. This was evident in several moments of Ifekoya's performance when she interrupted the talk by projecting on the screen 'Feel free to use this moment to dance', turned the music louder and starting dancing herself (Figure 6.6).

Figure 6.6. Evan Ifekoya performance, Document 2016. Photo by Alexandra-Maria Colta.

[50] This statement is phrase used as a rallying slogan of the student movement of second wave feminism from the late 1960s. It was popularised by an essay by feminist Carol Hanisch (2006).

Gradually, the empty space between the chairs and stage was filled with people who, one by one, transformed it into a temporary dancing floor. Friends or strangers, they started dancing together, as the projection suggested. As an audience member at this event, I felt conflicted, not knowing how to act, torn between my wish to remain seated and by the collective action to stand up and join on the dance floor. One of the features of cultural activism is to create a time and space for conviviality, alliance building, by breaking the social conditioning of apathy and complacency (Verson, 2007, p. 176). The physical room of the cinema became a space where strangers, regardless of background, age, race or identity, shared a space and the action of dancing. In the case of those who did not participate, their reaction could be understood as 'performative silence', a form of engagement meant to 'interrupt normative strategies of affective orchestration' (Berlant, 2011, pp. 229, 238). There were two performative acts by the audience in the room: one by those who were participating as the speaker suggested, and the other by those including myself, who were not participating the same way. This performance showed the ways attendees can interact, change and occupy the space given beyond the regular cinema layout. The event also revealed how dependent a festival is on the background and interests of its audience and how the audience itself acts and reacts in a heterogeneous manner that cannot be anticipated beforehand.

These events and performances responding to Marlon Riggs' form of poetic activism were powerful forms of cultural activism that facilitated an active and critical spectator. Both events challenged audience preconceptions and expectations and offered an opportunity for them to consider their role as passive viewers versus active participants. As filmmaker Joshua Oppenheimer, director of *The Act of Killing* (2013) and *The Look of Silence* (2014), argues, documentary films can offer dissenting versions of dominant narratives:

> The aim of art is to help us gaze unflinchingly at truths we fundamentally already know, but have been too afraid to acknowledge, and perhaps too afraid even to remember. This makes radical activism possible, but it is not the same as either activist journalism or activism itself. By forcing people to contemplate our most painful truths, nonfiction film opens the space for us to address our most frightening problems. Film festivals should focus on works of *poetic power* that are truly disquieting, and open a space for radical action (in Winton & Turnin, 2017, p. 97; my emphasis).

In this text, Oppenheimer advocates for a type of activism that engages with the form and poetics of art that turns the gaze inwardly, to people's own biases and fears. Through these various events that engage art and politics, the poetic and the performative, Document

similarly attempted to move spectators beyond the screening room and to encourage them towards participation rather than passive observation.

‘Traditional’ activism: the film act

As Igor Blažević, founder of One World in Prague argues, human rights film festivals distinguish themselves through their focus ‘on information and testimony rather than art and entertainment; their aim is awareness building and education’ (2009, p. 15). These festivals therefore have the potential to achieve a traditional activist function by facilitating a ‘testimonial encounter’ where the audience is positioned as witnesses ‘who take responsibility for what they have seen and become ready to respond’ (Torchin, 2012a, pp. 2, 3). While some off-screen events used various art forms to interpret and engage with films and social movements in a poetic manner, as explained above, others were driven by a specific issue, concrete action and the encounter with activists or survivors of human rights violations. Document 2016 and 2017 also experimented with other formats such as interrupted screenings, seeking to establish a space for active participation and involvement with the film’s themes. Such events aspired to move towards ‘the film act’, facilitating breaks in the film for discussion and critical analysis (Solanas & Getino 1969 manifesto in Tascón, 2015, p. 66).

One of the strategies of enabling activism at a film festival is through supporting and showcasing the role of human rights defenders. They are the ‘real heroes’ of films, as empowered figures that act against injustice (Žilnik in de Cuir, 2012). These figures and their achievements serve as examples that can encourage audience involvement and participation. As outlined in Chapter 5, these personal stories also help spectators become invested in the person on screen. At Document 2016, there were several occasions when direct activism was encouraged through the discussion or through the ephemera provided in the space of the festival. For instance, Matthew Waites, Senior Lecturer in Sociology at the University of Glasgow proposed a documentary and a discussion event in partnership with the Glasgow Human Rights Network around LGBTQ activism in Jamaica. The film, *The Abominable Crime* (2013), is a feature documentary focusing on the stories of two gay Jamaicans facing violence and homophobia, having to leave their country in order to survive. One of the protagonists, Maurice Tomlinson, a lawyer and activist, moved to Canada and continued his activism both internationally and in his home country. He was guest speaker at the panel discussion afterwards, moderated by Waites at the Creative Lab, representing the film and the Canadian HIV/AIDS Legal Network. The space was decorated with

materials and ephemera that emphasised the event's topic: a Jamaican flag covered the table where the two speakers sat, to the left-hand side there was a roll-up with the organisation that Tomlinson represented and spread around the room there were several files which he distributed to attendees (Figure 6.7). During the discussion, Tomlinson provided further information on the legal, social, political and religious context in Jamaica as well as his personal ties, struggles and emotions throughout his journey and activism. The subjective, personal dimension and the range of emotions in the process of rights assertion and recognition can cultivate and nurture a sense of solidarity and action.

Figure 6.7. Maurice Tomlinson: In Conversation, Document 2016. Photo on Document's Facebook page.

One of the main arguments he made during the panel was that his activism was motivated by survival rather than international recognition. He described himself as a 'human rights entrepreneur', whose profession it is to put his knowledge, resources and experience towards the long process of changing mentalities and the law. Responding to questions from the moderator and members of the audience, he expressed many of his feelings while involved in this process and his own story of migration and dealing with homophobia. By mentioning ubiquitous experiences of frustration, hope, love, isolation, he fostered affective connections (Winton & Turnin, 2017) with the attendees. At the same time, Tomlinson also challenged the understanding of activism from a Western perspective, that does not always comprehend the local contexts. For instance, he emphasised that the very concept of human rights is not widely used or mainstream in Jamaica. As a highly religious society, Tomlinson argued that it is believed that divinity is above any legal system.

As such, his and other organisation's activism for LGBTQ rights follows different strategies, such as creating visibility first, before challenging the law or the media. While some members of the audience had questions around the filmmaking process, most of the conversation during the panel discussion revolved around the content of the film and the issues raised in relation to LGBTQ rights in Jamaica. The questions from the audience highlighted this focus, by asking about the protagonist's personal life and dealing with challenges as well as asking for advice about ways to help which do not perpetuate a Western gaze. To this latter comment, Tomlinson provided a response that included several ways in which to act:

> Acknowledge that a lot of the homophobia in the Global South came from the Global North, the law and the religion. Also that you have issue of homophobia here. Respect our local leaders, they may be bastards, but they're our bastards, we elected them and if you respect them you respect our democratic process, confront them as you'd like to be confronted. If you don't do it right, it's going to come across as neo-colonial. Respect our work, we don't need to be saved, engage with us, ask us how can you help. […] Engage with positives, the benefits of inclusion; sometimes you also have to engage with cash.

Therefore, the festival offered a 'performative platform' (Torchin, 2012a, p. 7) to activists, offering insight, awareness of the local context and information on further action. Of course, it is difficult to measure if any significant change or action did take place after the screening, but the attendance and the discussion created at the panel encouraged a Western public to question their gaze, their knowledge of other parts of the world, their affective responses and the possibilities for action.

Similarly, in 2017, the panel discussion focusing on gender equality ('Jin, Jiyan, Azadi – Gender Equality in Kurdish Society' translated as 'Women, Life, Freedom') also foregrounded a Glasgow Girls activist – Roza Salih – who provided opportunities for further activism, by promoting a local event related to the issues discussed in the panel. As advertised in the flyer disseminated during the panel discussion, the entry fee would add to the fund that aims to build a school in Kobane, in Northern Syria. These events, through their ephemera and verbalisation during panels, configured Document as a space that provides options for traditional forms of activism, whether they are in the form of solidarity, donations or participation in protests.

Third Cinema

Another strategy aimed at engaging audiences and enacting a form of activism was inspired by the exhibition practices of the Third Cinema movement. The movement, proposed by Pino Solanas and Octavio Getino in their 1969 manifesto 'Toward a Third Cinema' ('Hacia un tercer cine'), calls for an exhibition situation where the film is subordinate to the space and to the audience members as active participants – what they call the 'film-act'. One of the main features of the 'film act' is the demand of involvement in the film and 'in the world beyond' (Tascón, 2017, p. 31). Films were not considered closed circuits, but 'open-ended', organic and living texts that form part of life as lived 'by the principal protagonists of life' (Solanas & Getino, 1969). Solanas and Getino sought out films that promoted 'the active involvement and subsequent political participation of the viewer' (Chanan, 1997, p. 378). Films and their viewers were to be indispensable to each other, bonded through a mutual need: social change.

Therefore, one of the tools of the film act was the interrupted screening, when a film was intentionally stopped several times leaving space for discussion between participants. Document 2017 included two such events, inspired by an academic who proposed this format during the RFN Festival Scotland in May 2016.[51] Both events were organised at collaborating venues, such as the Gilmorehill Centre for the screening of *The Battle of Chile* trilogy and the Glasgow Women's Library (GWL) screening of *Grab and Run*.

The choice to present Guzmán's film in this format was determined by several reasons. Firstly, he was considered one of the key figures of the Third Cinema movement, with an approach that blended the aesthetics of direct cinema (mobile framing, reframing, focus shifts, and movements within the image) with voice-over narration representing authored discourse (Marzano, 2009). Secondly, the trilogy and the discussion with breaks added up to almost six hours, which similar to the selection of Watkins' documentary in 2016, involved a prolonged viewing experience. As such, these interruptions were also of a practical manner, offering the opportunity to engage with the film during its screening rather than at the end. Each part was stopped halfway through for about ten minutes, followed by a 15-20-minute break between each part. During these interruptions, one of the moderators, Martin Farias (University of Edinburgh), offered some background information and showed clips of the film's production. Vélez-Serna, who co-facilitated the event, contributed with

[51] Elena Boschi, Lecturer in Film and Television Studies, Edge Hill University.

suggestions for discussion around the formal elements of filmmaking – the camerawork, editing – prompting the audience to discuss and reflect on these as well as the content of the films. The format therefore offered moments in which the audience members could engage in conversations around the issues raised as well as the formal elements employed by the filmmaker. What the audience saw on screen was framed, contextualised and opened for debate. This served a dual function: it illustrated how festivals as cultural intermediaries and expert tastemakers curate films and, through off-screen activities, add value to a screening. Also, by 'establishing dialogue and solidarity among those present' (Davies, 2017, p. 48), it served an aim in line with that of the Third Cinema movement.

The second interrupted screening organised in partnership with GWL used the documentary film *Grab and Run*, which was stopped twice for ten minutes each. The all-women spectators were greeted by refreshments, were invited to move around the room in the venue's space and to discuss in groups during each break. In the groups I was in, the conversations revolved around the shock of discovering more about the practice of kidnapping presented in the film. There was a consensus among the audience denouncing this practice and the tradition that perpetuates it despite being outlawed since the Soviet era. During the breaks, we had an opportunity to meet and talk about our own backgrounds, traditions and experiences related to the film's topic. This is a recurring aspect of interrupted screenings, the 'openness' of the film text and its capacity for awareness-building:

> One of the aims of such films is to provide the occasion for people to find themselves and speak of about their own problems. The projection becomes a place where people talk out and develop their awareness (Ivens in Chanan, 1997, p. 373).

However, this documentary was not made with this intention or with exhibition format in mind and thus challenged the idea of openness of the film act. At times, the breaks seemed disruptive by fragmenting the flow of the film and the viewing experience. Also, the film in this context did not raise debate as all audience members appeared to be in agreement. Nevertheless, bringing in private, personal experiences and opinions related to the film's topic opened up the possibility of multiple interpretations and of awareness-building, as 'a plurality of equally legitimate readings offered to the contemplation of the receiver' (ibid). In the case of the interrupted screening of *Grab and Run*, the context was not of particular significance. In many ways, the event perpetuated rather than challenged the humanitarian gaze, by focusing on the pain and suffering of others, far away from the place where the festival was located, geographically and ideologically. The discussion centred on the

position of women as victims, confirming expectations about that part of the world and re-establishing Western values as the only acceptable system. Therefore, the capacity for a Third Cinema practice in the space of a Western film festival is determined by the film selected, by the questions it raises and by the political position it requires from the viewers. Nevertheless, this film, presented in the interrupted screening format, managed to engage audience members in reflective conversations and produce affect. As film scholars and documentary activists Liz Miller and Thomas Waugh argue, 'mobilizing affect is the currency of documentary and a critical first step in raising awareness of political realities, but screening a political doc is not enough' (2014, p. 41). When a moving documentary produces affect, that force of transformation can subside to the realm of inaction and pity if it is 'not accompanied by some kind of deeper reflection' (ibid). The discussions surrounding *Grab and Run* mobilised our affect, from shock, to anger and compassion, but also a feeling of responsibility, by reflecting on our own backgrounds and instances of inequality and thinking of ways to denounce them. The event ended without a conclusion for future solidarity but opened up an enquiry into our own privilege and responsibility.

Conclusion

This chapter mapped out the variety of off-screen events that took place at Document 2016 and 2017 aiming to identify how they engaged with and attempted to balance cinephilia and human rights activism. Rather than viewing them solely as opposing tendencies, this chapter proposes considering them in symbiosis, as factors negotiated by a festival and that serve as sources for its discourse and identity. The chapter looks at Document's cultural activism, realised through the contextualisation of its screenings using off-screen events and places it as part of the festival's function as a cultural intermediary. Document organised events ranging from Q&As to masterclasses, panel discussions and interrupted screenings, offering different forms of activism: poetic, performative and traditional, blending art with politics and action.

By analysing Document's attempts at expanding and organising screenings in other venues, this chapter offers an insight into how locality informs a festival and how festivals attempt to adapt their discourse and output in order to connect with local audiences. As identified in previous chapters, including emotions in the conversation is instrumental for understanding the ways in which these forms of activism are enacted in the space of the live festival, the arguments and the modes of address between the festival staff, the guests and the audience.

Conclusion

This thesis concludes with the key finding that human rights film festivals are specialised cultural intermediaries that actively shape and define human rights cinema. These festivals are fundamental organisations in film culture that offer a platform to marginalised voices, artistic experimentation and human rights topics as opportunities for activism and social change. By exploring, at length, one event through its changes, tribulations and accomplishments, I provided a lens through which to interrogate and think about the wider landscape. Histories of grassroots festivals and of how they navigate the creative industries, the precarious nature of creative work and an increasingly competitive festival landscape are rarely recorded by archives or explored by scholars. Nevertheless, these organisations have an impact on the local cultural landscape, they familiarise and provoke audiences with curated content aimed towards social change. This thesis argues that such grassroots initiatives fuel the diversity of the local cultural field. Document Human Rights Film Festival is the first and longest-running local film festival in Glasgow, specialised in documentary films and human rights topics. Studying this festival contextualises historical practices of programming and organising and illuminates the challenges of capturing the subjective and ethical considerations involved in film selection. This thesis seeks to contribute to the field of film festival studies through conceptual and methodological interventions, described below.

While this thesis is driven by a specific case study, its findings can be applied more broadly to the study of film festivals as organisations, the process of programming and how it is influenced by temporality, locality and by the people involved. Below are the research questions that guided the 'journey of discovery' of this thesis along with the main findings.

Not just yet another kind of thematic film festival

1. What is the definition of human rights film festivals and what are their aims and functions?

2. How and why did human rights film festivals emerge and proliferate and what is their contribution to human rights culture and cinema?

3. How are discourses around human rights interpreted and articulated by human rights film festivals?

This thesis suggested that human rights film festivals emerged from a variety of favourable conditions. As the festival circuit expanded, embracing more diverse thematic

content and links to wider social, political or cultural movements, human rights film festivals carved out their niche. The rise of the human rights movement (Moyn, 2010) gained through film a new boost to its ability to popularise and raise individual awareness. Through film, human rights discourses gained more popularity and new meanings associated with the notions of truth and relativity. This thesis produced a historical overview of the emergence and proliferation of human rights film festivals as specialised cultural intermediaries, from their INGO origins to their recognition as exhibitors of high-quality cinema and as active players in the industry influencing films through funding films and through wielding a 'stamp of approval'. This thesis showed that human rights film festivals developed unequally around the world, with a significantly higher concentration in the Global North. This aspect contributed to a further reinforcement of the humanitarian gaze, focusing on human suffering and on distant human rights violations. Nevertheless, this thesis also demonstrated that these festivals operate differently from the wider festival circuit, by becoming increasingly networked, collaborative, reliant on solidarity and on the exchange of resources and knowledge rather than competition. The HRFN attests to the effort to bring together, on an equal level, festivals of different sizes and approaches towards human rights, establishing common goals and opportunities. Ultimately, this relationship contributes to ensuring the freedom of expression and the artistic independence of the member festivals, all those who are at risk of (self-)censorship. As individual festivals and as part of international networks, human rights film festivals actively shape and define human rights cinema and methods for engaging the audience in conversation and potential action.

Creating our own culture

4. How did Document develop as an organisation and how was it influenced by cultural, socio-political and economic circumstances?

5. What is the relationship between Document and other (human rights) film festivals and networks and how does it shape the festival's approach to human rights?

6. How does Document define its identity (ethos, image and values) and how is this reflected in programming practices and the festival's relationships with other institutions?

As mentioned in the introduction, this thesis is the only academic study of Document, providing a substantive and detailed chronicle of the festival, its roots in the DIY art scene in Glasgow, its challenges and accomplishments as a small, grassroots, independent organisation. In the absence of comprehensive archives and due to frequent institutional

change, its history risks being forgotten. Though localised, the festival had wider implications for cultural policy and social and political changes during the past 16 years. This history reveals the inherent limitations of the grassroots model and the need to change and become more professionalised and internationalised in order to survive. The festival also remained a form of resistance against the demands and practices of the creative economy. Instead, Document promoted cultural activism through the celebration of difference, the representation of minority tastes and values, through participatory practices and the formation of emerging curators, filmmakers and artists.

Document changed significantly over the years, it developed from an open-scene format to a carefully curated programme, based on artistic vision and the questioning of human rights discourses. Document's evolution illustrates the strategies employed for survival in an increasingly busy festival calendar and its adaptability to changing opinions and policies. The historical approach to Document provides an original contribution to the existing scholarship by illustrating how a human rights film festival started from grassroots community action, developed and changed in order to survive and maintain relevance. The local context, people and challenges offer a unique case study that illuminates the broader relationships between community activism, cultural policy, human rights, art and politics.

Emotion and the ethics of programming

7. What defines a Document 'aesthetic' and approach in terms of films, human rights and activism?

8. What types of films are programmed at Document and what criteria drive programming decisions?

This thesis provided a detailed analysis of the programming process at Document. After two years of observation and participation in the selection team, I gained first-hand knowledge of the gatekeeping, taste-making and activist functions of a human rights film festival. One of the central findings of fieldwork demonstrates that programming is a form of collective authorship where control and responsibility are shared unequally among participants. In the case of Document and other small film festivals, the programmer(s) take on the role of the team leader rather than sole artistic director and recruit, organise and involve others in the process of interpreting and creating meanings around human rights and documentary cinema. This position complements recent research on film festivals highlighting their collaborative and participatory nature.

Another finding that emerged during fieldwork revolves around ten curatorial values/criteria that influenced the programming process of Document. These criteria were influenced by ethical questions around the production of value, the evaluation of quality and the responsibility towards the audience. By identifying and applying these ten criteria to the study of the programming at Document, this chapter revealed the manifold dilemmas around human rights and documentary cinema that shaped the festival's approach. These curatorial criteria can be extrapolated and used more broadly to analyse other thematic film festivals. The questions around ethics, representation, artistic approach, production value and topic-specificity are relevant to other programmers interested in screen ethics (Winton, 2019). For this reason, this thesis contributes to the study of film festivals by providing a framework for the analysis and understanding of programming practices.

Finally, this thesis suggests that programming is a form of emotional labour, as the programmers manage and supress their feelings in order to carry out their work. The abundance of films to be viewed, the uncertainty relating to funding, the amount of unpaid labour and the exposure to images of suffering cause anxiety, frustration and precarity. Acknowledging this side of the programming process illuminates other factors that influence programmers beyond the availability of films, space and audience tastes. This thesis is one of the few academic studies that addresses film festival labour and that, in turn, contributes to research on creative work in the cultural industries.

Affective architectures and cultural activism

9. What are the roles and responsibilities of human rights film festival programmers?

10. What function do off-screen events have at human rights film festivals?

This thesis investigated the off-screen events at Document 2016 and 2017 and their role in providing opportunities for critical engagement and activism. Based on the programmers' focus on poetic documentary and on the craft and ethics of filmmaking, I argued that Document developed a form of cultural activism. Through the range of events – Q&As, panel discussions, workshops, interrupted screenings – the festival attempted to challenge the audience to respond critically to both the form and the content of the films. As such, this thesis argued that activism at a human rights film festival can take many different forms and that cinephilia can be deployed strategically for this purpose. The Critical Forum events which I organised as part of my placement within the festival, revealed that practice-

as-research initiatives can open up research questions for public debate, such as the discussion around the responsibility of festival programmers to represent the 'truth' versus subjective storytelling. While some observations of audience reactions and behaviours during the festival were made, these did not end up as a focus of the thesis. As the framework for fieldwork was directed towards the festival team and their practices, this did not allow for in-depth audience analysis and thus the observations made in the field were insufficient to draw significant conclusions. There is scope for more audience research in the study of human rights film festivals, but this is beyond the scope of this research.

This thesis concludes with the argument that human rights film festivals are embedded in the political and cultural fabric of societies, and that they filter through controversial, manipulative and realistic films with a sense of shared responsibility and ethics. I also argued that there are a number of types of approaches to human rights and activism, beyond issue-based action and discourse. This has the potential to shape future research of specialised festivals and to provide a more nuanced understanding of the ways in which festivals support human rights culture. Human rights cinema, categorised as a new genre by the film festivals that circulate it, can also be considered for its artistic merit, innovation and for its commitment to ethics and representation. This finding suggests that human rights films are important cultural artefacts that festivals promote and disseminate to create important conversations around filmmaking and film viewing. Finally, this study further elaborates on the concept of cultural intermediaries, situated between production and consumption, between economic and social demands. The extensive body of research on the topic can benefit from the inclusion of film festivals within this framework, as it has the potential to illuminate the complexities behind subjective decision and meaning-making activities.

Methodological intervention and avenues for further research

In this thesis, I used a combination of methods, from analysing quantitative data in producing an overview of the human rights film festival circuit and of Document's history, to conducting (auto)ethnography and practice-led research. This type of project required flexibility and adaptability to changes in the organisation (frequent staff turnaround), (self)reflexivity and ethical considerations of my positionality and representation of the subjective decision-making process in programming and in producing a history of a grassroots organisation. The use of several methods for gathering and analysing data has

provided a rich and comprehensive tapestry of how an organisation works in relation to the broader picture of local and international policies, other festivals, institutions and audiences.

A core contribution and achievement of this thesis was to illustrate how a research project under the pioneering ARCS framework can develop and function between (and with the input of) both academia and the industry. This thesis provided an insight into navigating both an insider and an outsider position, shifting from a passive, observational role to an active, participatory position in the output of the festival. I argued that researchers have a responsibility to the participants in how they represent their experiences and work as well as in how they react to findings during fieldwork. This thesis also illustrated another side of ethnographic research, that of taking action in the case of discovering unfair or unjust situations in the field. This research project illuminated the precarious working conditions of festival workers and the emotional toll of watching images of suffering due to the content of the films and thus took initiative to raise awareness of these issues through academic channels[52] as well as through organising public debates on the topic.[53] Finally, this study contributes to initiatives that aim to modernise ethnography and the traditional understanding of fieldwork, by exploring online communication, digitally stored archives and multiple sites.

Given the collaborative approach, the findings resulted in this thesis also have a social impact as they are shared with the festival team with the aim of provoking discussion and generating ideas and potential solutions to some of the problems faced moving forward. Both the content of this thesis as well as a list of recommendations (Appendix E) are intended to benefit the organisation and its practices.

This research could be expanded in several other directions. Firstly, the study of human rights film festivals could be developed internationally, and more research of individual festivals in this circuit or a comparative analysis could provide insight into the specificities of temporality, locality and stakeholders which in turn could illuminate how definitions of human rights discourses and cinema are enacted in other parts of the world. Secondly, there is scope for and value in further study of programming from an insider, participatory position that can contribute to an understanding of criteria and develop critical

[52] The topic of action in ethnographic research was discussed in my contribution to the workshop on 'Ethnomethodologies: Everything you always wanted to know but never dared to ask' during NECS 2018.

[53] The event 'Labour of Love: Festivals Speak Out on Working Conditions' organised on 5 May 2018 as part of the RFN 68/18 Festival Scotland; more about this in Chapter 2.

thinking around what audiences are exposed to in terms of specialised cinema and activism. As mentioned above, more research of audiences and how they respond to and interact with the programme would be useful for scholarship as well as for festival organisations. Thirdly, while this thesis touches on precarious, emotional labour and the work of festival programmers, this issue needs more investigation to uncover the ways in which it affects organisations and the selection process. Finally, other potential areas for development would be the studies of the circulation of films on human rights at festivals and cinemas around the world and further investigation and theorisation of the typology, truth-claims, aesthetics, distribution and exhibition of this genre of cinema.

Appendix A: People involved in Document Human Rights Film Festival (2003-2018)

This list attempts to provide a record of the people that were involved with Document in core team and/or support positions. However, this list may be incomplete, and some names may have been unintentionally omitted due to lack of archival material.

Core staff		
Name	**Role(s)**	**Duration of involvement**
Bowman, Chris	Technical coordinator; Programme editor	2003-2014
Daily, Eileen	Coordinator at large; Document co-coordinator; Festival coordinator	2015-2017
French, Leigh	Secretary	2003
James, Cayley	Marketing Assistant; Assistant coordinator; Festival coordinator	2013-2015
Jehoul, Sanne	Festival producer	2018
Kenyon, Sam	Festival coordinator; Programme producer	2016 & 2018
Larkin, Paula	Co-founder; Festival coordinator	2003-2011
Patton, Neill	Collaborations coordinator; Programme coordinator (sections)	2005-2012
Rai, Mona	Co-founder; Festival/programme coordinator	2003-2012
Reid, Lindsay	Festival/programme coordinator	2013-2014
Warden, Richard	Festival producer	2018
Welsh, Sean	Festival coordinator; Festival producer	2016-2017
Piekarczyk, Karol	Festival/programme coordinator	2012
Macleod, Christine	Administrator	2012
McCarter, Kirsty	Assistant festival coordinator	2011
O'Hare, Karen	Assistant programme coordinator	2011
Shäfer, Christina	Assistant programme coordinator	2010

Board members / Advisory committee	
Name	**Duration of involvement**
Allison, Katherine	2017-2018
Archibald, David	2011-2018
Blackstock, Bill	2017-2018
Bowman, Chris	2014-2018
Cameron, Paul	2011
French, Leigh	2004-2008

Henderson, Kate	2009-2011
Higgins, Nick	2009-2011
Howkins, Abigail	2008
Hume, Mo	2007-2011
Kohner, Poppy	2016-2018
Langdon, Mark	2012-2018
Larkin, Paula	2011-2018
Mackinnon, Gillian	2013
Manias, Miren	2017-2018
McInally, Jane	2008-2009
McKechnie, Kier	2012
McKerrell, Nick	2014-2018
O'Neill, Geraldine	2012
Oleson, Marie	2007-2008
Owens, Mhairi	2008-2012
Patton, Neill	2011
Pearson, Beth	2014-2015
Rai, Mona	2012-2018
Shaarawi, Sara	2018
Turbine, Vikki	2016-2017
Vélez-Serna, Maria Antonia	2011-2018
Wright, Helen	2016-2018

Appendix B: Document History Overview – Timeline

2003-2007

Document is co-founded by Mona Rai and Paula Larkin and launched in September 2003 at UGC before moving to the CCA in 2005 (and changing the festival dates to October);

Document is constituted as an association and as a collaboration between Spirit Aid and *Variant* magazine;

Organised by two coordinators and a committee of advisors;

The festival lasts for four days each year;

In 2007 the board is formally established and includes both advisers as well as staff members.

2008-2012

In 2008, Document becomes a public company limited by guarantee and joins the Human Rights Film Network;

2009 – Record number of collaborations with local NGOs and other institutions and organisations;

2010 – The introduction of a selection panel for viewing submissions; three short films part of 'Making a Difference' project commissioned by Poverty Alliance are shown at Document and the festival (Document 8) is extended to six days instead of four;

2011 – Festival exchange with Nuremberg International Human Rights Film Festival; expanding to other festival venues (GFT, GMAC in addition to CCA); introducing music and exhibition strands, education and outreach programmes and jury awards;

2012 – Ten year anniversary of Document celebrated with nine festival days; most of the board collectively steps down; the co-founders also step down and enter the board.

2013-2018

2013 – New team coordinated by Lindsay Reid with the assistance of Cayley James; new board chaired by David Archibald; Document becomes a partner in the We Are Visual! (WAVE) project;

2014 and 2015 – Document tour in Scotland; increase of music acts during the festival;

Festival length shortened to four days and three days respectively (2016 onwards);

2015 – Full visual identity makeover; Document receives £15,000 from Creative Scotland; Cayley James becomes the Festival Coordinator joined by Eileen Daily as coordinator at large;

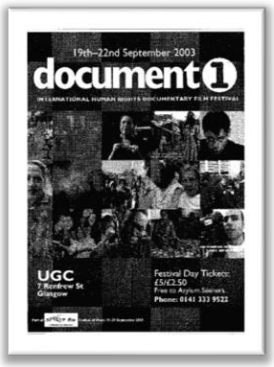
Increase in partnerships with other film festivals in Glasgow rather than NGOs/activists; Document becomes a member of the Radical Film Network;

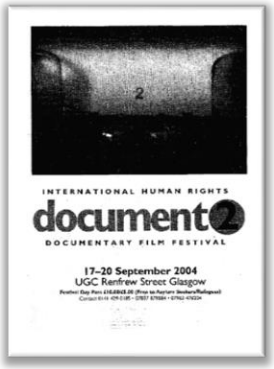
2016 – New team of three coordinators: Eileen Daily, Sam Kenyon and Sean Welsh; Document receives £25,000 grant from Creative Scotland (the largest support ever received from public funders); programming focus on poetic documentaries, thematic strands;

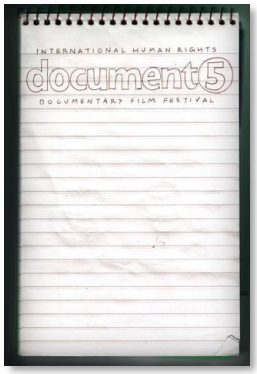
2017 – Sam Kenyon steps down; Eileen Daily and Sean Welsh continue as coordinators;

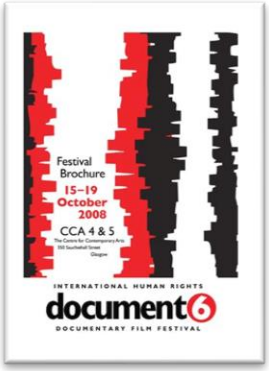
2018 – Daily and Welsh step down; Sam Kenyon comes back as Programme Producer, followed by Sanne Jehoul as Festival Co-Producer and Richard Warden as Festival Producer; Document 16 takes place at Scottish Youth Theatre in December due to the temporary closure of the CCA.

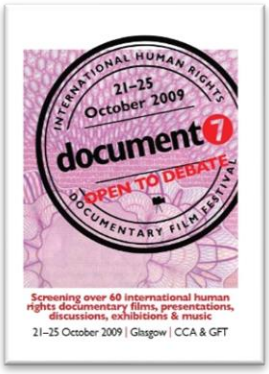
Appendix C: Document Brochure Covers 2003-2018

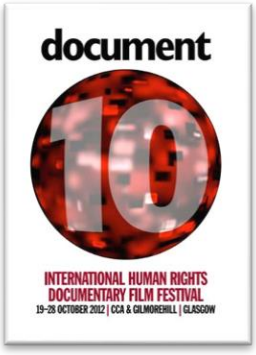


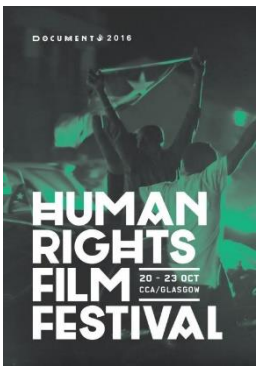


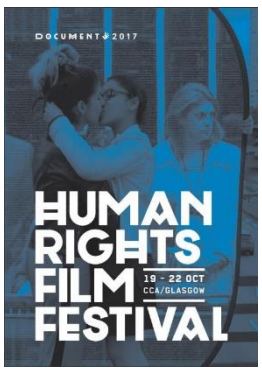












Appendix D: Document Programme and Venues (2016-2017)

	CCA THEATRE	CCA CINEMA	INTERMEDIA	EVENTS
FRIDAY	13:10 When We Talk about KGB *p12*	13:00 A Brilliant Genocide *p18*		12:00 La Commune *p27*
	15:00 Angry Buddha *p18*	15:30 Libya in Motion *p19*	15:00 Shorts Double Bill *p30*	15:00 Critcal Forum: A Brillant Genocide *p33*
	17:00 GRAMNet: Flotel Europa *p23*	17:30 Next Stop: Utopia *p28*	16:00 Catch 19-25 *p30*	
	19:00 Xenos/A Man Returned *p24*		17:00 Then Then Then *p31*	
	20:30 Tempestad *p21*	20:00 The Hard Stop *p9*		
SATURDAY	12:00 The Abominable Crime *p8*	13:00 Marlon Riggs Shorts *p14*		13:30 Maurice Tomlinson: In Conversation *p34*
	14:00 Remote Control *p11*	15:00 Out on the Street *p28*	15:00 50 Feet from Syria *p31*	
	15:30 Marlon Riggs: Tongues Untied *p14*		16:00 Limpiadores *p32*	16:00 No One is Illegal: Panel Discussion *p22*
	17:45 Kiki *p10*	17:00 We Come as Friends *p18*	17:00 Shireen of Al-Walaja *p32*	18:30 Glasgow Glam Rock Dialogues: 3 - Commune *p26*
	21:00 Evan Ifekoya: Let the Rhythm.. *p16*	20:00 Behemoth *p27*		
SUNDAY	12:30 Reykjavik Rising *p11*	12:00 We Were Rebels *p19*		13:30 Paul Maheke: Decolonial Love, Eventually? *p15*
	14:30 Fest of Duty *p19*	14:15 GRAMNet Shorts *p25*		14:00 We Come As Friends: Panel Discussion *p17*
	16:30 Jay Bernard: The State and the Sound *p16*	16:15 Dreaming of Denmark *p23*		16:30 Activist Filmmaking Workshop *p34*
	17:30 Marlon Riggs: Black Is... Black Ain't *p15*	18:10 The Other Side *p10*		
	20:00 Plaza de la Soledad *p17*			

Document 2016 Brochure – Festival Programme

	CCA THEATRE	CCA CINEMA	INTERMEDIA	EVENTS
FRIDAY	12:00 CRITICAL FORUM *p36*	14:00 No Man Is An Island *p26*		12:00 Battle of Chile *p9*
	18:00 Machines *p10*	16:00 Dil Leyla *p16*		
	20:00 Stranger In Paradise *p20*	18:00 Prison Sisters *p16*		
		20:00 Why Is Mr W Laughing? *p13*		
		22:00 Kim Jong-Il's Comedy Club *p20*		
SATURDAY	11:30 SPIN *p21*	*GWL* 12:00 Grab and Run *p15*	13:00 Children of War *p27*	
	12:30 Resistance is Life *p17*	*SMHAFF* 14:30 We'll Be Alright + Discussion *p13*	14:00 Girl's Club *p27*	*PANEL* 14:00 Jin, Jiyan, Azadi *p14*
	14:30 A Filmless Festival *p19*	16:30 Forgetting Vietnam *p15*	15:00 Home *p28*	*PANEL* 16:00 The Control Room *p18*
	16:00 SQIFF: Butterflies *p8*	18:30 The VaChina Monologues *p15*	16:00 There are no Syrian refugees in Turkey *p28*	
	18:00 LUX: Erase and Forget *p10*	20:00 I Want To Be A People's Representative *p19*		
	20:00 Rat Film *p10*		17:00 Paper, Horse, and Birds *p29*	
SUNDAY	*GRAMNet screening:* 12:20 Chauka Please Tell us the Time *p25*	12:00 Plastic China *p12*	13:00 Muñecas Bravas *p29*	*SUPERLUX workshop* 12:00 Erase and Forget *p37*
	14:00 We Are Humanity *p23*	13:40 Accidental Anarchist *p8*	14:00 Ne Pas Perdre Le Nord *p30*	*PANEL* 14:00 Nowhere to Hide *p24*
	16:00 Control Room *p21*	16:00 Left on Purpose *p23*	15:00 Green Screen Gringo / Radio Ghetto Relay *p30*	*PANEL* 17:30 Ethics of Documentary Filmmaker *p22*
	17:30 Eldorado XXI *p9*	*autism-friendly screening* 18:00 Normal Autistic Film *p11*	16:00 Schrodinger's Shoreditch *p32*	
	Closing Gala 20:00 69 Minutes of 86 Days *p7*		17:00 Rebalda *p31*	

Document 2017 Brochure – Festival Programme

Appendix E: Recommendations for Document

Upon the submission of this thesis, the following suggestions and recommendations have been shared with the festival's current staff and board members. This is part of the knowledge exchange process, which took place throughout my studentship and is aimed at highlighting areas of potential improvement for the organisation, as follows.

Organisational model and sustainability

1. Job roles/titles and process of recruitment

The findings in this thesis indicate that there is some uncertainty about the roles and responsibilities of staff, board members and additional positions such as Secretary, Treasurer and Chair. The level of involvement of board members into the organisation and the planning of the festival remains vague, which can cause some problems and uncertainty over hierarchy and decision-making. As such, this thesis suggests organising a facilitated discussion on this matter leading to a re-write of the roles and responsibilities of board and staff, the type of involvement needed for each member as well as the formal process of joining or leaving the organisation.

Secondly, this thesis has shown that the process of recruitment of staff and board members creates a closed type of organisation that can limit diversity and access for different people. This can be changed by opening up the process of recruitment publicly or by collaborating more closely with other organisations to assist in this process.

2. Funding

This thesis also showed that while public funding has increased over the years, Document staff still struggled to maintain a leaving wage salary for its employees, achieve sustainability and long-term support. This maintains precarious working conditions and high turnover of staff as well as limitations for growth and professionalisation. This thesis suggests appointing a member of staff that coordinates the fundraising process, including actively seeking alternative sources of funding. Unless more sustainable funding is achieved, scaling down the festival output could also be an option (such as reducing the number of films or events organised, the programming process or the duration of the festival) although that might be detrimental to the festival's development and growth in the long term.

Closely related to funding and continuity, this thesis suggests that a work routine, regular meetings and office work could improve the festival's workflow and efficiency.

3. Long-term strategy and legacy

Document does not have a long-term strategy that clearly defines the festival's mission, values, aims and objectives. While this has been a consequence of the grassroots form of organisation and frequent staff turnover, establishing one would be beneficial for the organisation and its continued professionalisation. The staff could organise a facilitated discussion with the current and former board members, assess the festival's history and current strengths, weaknesses and practices to create a strategy led by clearly defined ethos and aims. This would help the organisation achieve continuity even if members of staff or board change and encourage the team to convey the festival's uniqueness and role in the current cultural landscape.

The festival could also benefit from an archive, having a system in place, which allows for the collection and preservation of relevant materials that uses both physical and virtual space efficiently.

The programming process (films and events)

4. Film submissions

The increasing number of films received each year through open submissions contributes to the staff feeling overwhelmed by the material, which requires long working hours and even more exposure to images of suffering. This pressure can be alleviated by implementing alternative ways of dealing with submissions: opening a shorter window for receiving submissions, introducing more criteria for selection, a fee, limiting access or visibility of the call for submissions or removing this possibility altogether. However, this thesis has found that having open submissions is one of the core values and practices of the organisation and can provide access to a variety of films and voices. As such, this thesis recommends keeping submissions and if they continue to be overwhelming for staff, alternative methods for limitations should be discussed.

5. Sourcing local films

During its most recent editions, Document had fewer local films and filmmakers selected in the programme. However, this could be a good strategy to attract local audiences and to

support the local filmmaking community. This thesis suggests that more effort should be put into actively seeking and sourcing films or organising events for and with local filmmakers and producers.

6. Defining and developing selection criteria

This thesis has articulated ten main criteria/values for programming. However, these can change from one programming team to the other or can remain undisclosed to the submissions panel or to the rest of the organisation more broadly. This thesis suggests that articulating them and defining them internally can bring additional transparency and accountability over the decision-making process and can help new team members make programming decisions.

7. Evaluation and monitoring

The team would also benefit from a more robust monitoring and evaluation process, including audience monitoring and feedback as well as from guests and stakeholders.

Appendix F: Ethics Consent Form for Fieldwork Participants

CONSENT TO THE USE OF DATA
University of Glasgow, College of Arts Research Ethics Committee

I understand that Alexandra-Maria Colta is collecting data in the form of field notes (as observer and participant) for use in an academic research project at the University of Glasgow.

The project looks at the politics, programming strategies and working practices of Document International Human Rights Film Festival in Glasgow. It examines the partnerships and interactions with international film festivals, networks and local community organisations and campaign groups. Engaging with the organisation's operations, it attempts to gain a better understanding of the festival's contribution to the discourse of human rights and the way it is mobilised locally and internationally by festivals, activists, filmmakers and NGOs.

The main methods used are discourse analysis of festival materials such as programmes, publicity materials and board minutes, as well as ethnographic research based on observation and participation, including the organisation of a student-led event (as co-opted member) in the 2016 and 2017 festival programming team, secured by the collaborative doctoral partnership.

I give my consent to the use of data for this purpose on the understanding that:

- The material will be treated as confidential and kept in secure storage at all times.
- The material will be retained in secure storage for use in future academic research
- The material may be used in future publications, both print and online.

Signed by the contributor:_____ Date:
Name: _____

Researcher's name and email contact: Alexandra-Maria Colta; a.colta.1@research.gla.ac.uk

Supervisor's name and email contact: Dr David Archibald; David.Archibald@glasgow.ac.uk

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Appendix G: Semi-structured Interview Sample

Group interview with the coordinators before and after the festival

Roles and organisation

1. Describe your role as a programmer.

2. How did you work together as a team? How did you establish the submissions team?

3. What is your approach to the festival's ethos and organisational structure?

4. What do you understand by a 'Document film'?

Programming process

1. How did you approach the submissions? How did you source other films?

2. What criteria did you use to make decisions?

3. How do you define/understand human rights in relation to programming Document?

4. What influenced you when watching films?

5. How did you go about watching films that depicted suffering?

Reception: audiences, stakeholders

1. Did the audience influence the programming and scheduling of films and events? How?

2. What is the responsibility of the festival programmer in relation to audiences and stakeholders?

3. How did you evaluate the festival that you worked on and what have you learned from each experience?

Appendix H: Fieldwork Journal – Extract

21 July 2016, Submissions Viewing

Yesterday was raining heavily, so I stayed at home with the purpose of watching films. I began at about 11 am with *Dreaming of Denmark*. I liked it from the very first scene: a wide panoramic shot of what must be some mountains covered in fir trees in Denmark. The film follows the protagonist, a teenager from Afghanistan living in an asylum seekers' centre for minors in Denmark. He is about to turn 18 and be kicked out of the centre or deported to his home country. While watching the film, I was very aware of what had just happened a few days ago in Germany when a 17-year old Afghan refugee who launched an axe attack on a train. This comes after several other terrorist incidents in France, Germany and other parts of Western Europe. It feels like whenever I open the TV, I hear about a new atrocity happening and this has definitely affected my film viewing, especially those films that focus on asylum seekers or refugees living in Europe. I am trying to find different stories than those told in the media, to move beyond this constant state of threat and scaremongering.

I finished watching the documentary and I put a 'Yes' in the programming notes, followed by my comments supporting this choice. Looking back, I think the film's topic, the way the protagonist was represented in the film, in a very close, intimate way, the manifold layers that the film subtly interweaved and the fact that this film was selected at other human rights film festivals that I know and trust contributed to my decision. I also did more research on the director and I noticed that he made another film focusing on the same centre for minors and thus had developed a relationship of trust with the staff and the inhabitants, which added confidence into the film's accuracy and ethical approach.

Later on, I watched three more films, which I marked with a 'No' and a 'Maybe'. The last one I watched late at night, before going to bed. It was slightly shorter than the others, with a 25-minute running time. However, the subject matter (modern day slavery and sex work) made it a difficult watch and I stayed up late to do more research on the claims made in the film. I explored the context around the film's story and the situation in the region that the film was set in (Latin America) to help evaluate the film. In the end, I was undecided, so I marked this film with a 'Maybe' after writing my comments, hoping that after a second viewing and discussion, we will be able to decide.

Appendix I: List of Global Human Rights Film Festivals

This list consists of 127 human rights film festivals. The festivals marked with '*' have been cancelled or are not in operation at the time of this study.

Start	Name	Location	Region	Website	HRFN membership (2019)
1985	Vermont International Film Festival	Burlington, USA	North America	www.vtiff.org	HRFN member
1988	Human Rights Watch	New York, USA	North America	www.hrw.org/iff/	Former HRFN member
1992	Amnesty International Film Festival*	Seattle, USA	North America	www.amnestyusa.org/filmfest	Former HRFN member
1995	Amnesty International Film Festival (succeeded by Movies that Matter in 2006)	Amsterdam, The Netherlands	Europe (W)	www.amnestynl.org/filmfest	HRFN member and founder
1995	Stalker Human Rights Film Festival	Moscow, Russia	Europe (E)	www.stalkerfest.org	Former HRFN member and founder
1996	Human Rights Watch	London, UK	Europe (W)	www.hrw.org/iff/	
1996	Seoul Human Rights Film festival	Seoul, South Korea	Asia	www.hrffseoul.org/en	HRFN member
1997	1001 Documentary Film Festival*	Istanbul, Turkey	Middle East	www.1001documentary.net	HRFN member
1997	Festival Internacional de Cine de Derechos Humanos	Buenos Aires, Argentina	Latin America	www.imd.org.ar	HRFN member
1998	United Nations Association Film Festival	Stanford, USA	North America	www.unaff.org	
1999	Nuremberg International Human Rights Film Festival (former Perspektive)	Nuremberg, Germany	Europe (W)	www.en.nihrff.de	HRFN member
1999	One World International Human Rights Documentary Film Festival	Prague, Czech Republic	Europe (E)	www.oneworld.cz	HRFN member
2000	Media that Matter	New York, USA	North America	www.mediathatmattersfest.org	
2000	One World Slovakia	Bratislava, Slovakia	Europe (E)	www.jedensvet.sk	
2001	Amnesty International Film Festival Victoria*	Victoria, Canada	North America	www.amnestyfilmsvictoria.ca	

2001	DITSHWANELO Human Rights Film Festival*	Francistown, Botswana	Africa	www.facebook.com/ditshwanelobotswana	
2001	Human Rights Nights	Bologna, Italy	Europe (W)	www.humanrightsnights.org	HRFN member
2001	Watch Docs Film Festival	Warsaw, Poland	Europe (E)	www.watchdocs.pl	HRFN member
2002	Festival on Human Rights – VIVISECTfest*	Novi Sad, Serbia	Europe (E)	www.vivisectfest.org	
2003	CLAM Catalonia Social Film Festival	Navarcles, Spain	Europe (W)	www.clamfestival.org	
2003	Document - International Human Rights Documentary Film Festival	Glasgow, UK	Europe (W)	www.documentfilmfestival.org	HRFN member
2003	Festival de Cine y Derechos Humanos Donostia	San Sebastian, Spain	Europe (W)	www.cineyderechoshumanos.com	HRFN member
2003	Festival du Film et Forum International sur les Droits Humains	Geneva, Switzerland	Europe (W)	www.fifdh.org	HRFN member
2003	Festival Internacional del Cine Pobre	Gibara, Cuba; La Paz, Mexico	Latin America	www.cinepobre.org	
2003	Festival International du Film des Droits de l'Homme	Paris, France	Europe (W)	www.alliance-cine.org	HRFN member
2003	FiSahara (Western Sahara International Film Festival)	Tindouf refugee camps, Algeria/Western Sahara	Africa	www.festivalsahara.org	HRFN member
2003	Freedom Film Festival	Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia	Asia	www.freedomfilm.my/festival/	HRFN member
2003	Global Peace Film Festival	Orlando, USA	North America	www.peacefilmfest.org	
2003	Human Rights Film Festival	Zagreb, Croatia	Europe (E)	www.humanrightsfestival.org	
2003	Oxford Brookes University Human Rights Film Festival	Oxford, UK	Europe (W)	www.oxfordhumanrightsfestival.net	
2003	Tri Continental Film Festival*	Johannesburg, Cape Town, South Africa	Africa	www.tcff.org.za	Former HRFN member
2004	Artivist Film Festival*	Los Angeles, USA	North America	www.facebook.com/ARTIVISTFilmFestivals	
2004	Ciné Droit Libre; Festival International de Film sur les Droits Humains et la liberté d'expression	Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso	Africa	www.cinedroitlibre.bf	HRFN member
2004	DocuDays UA	Kiev, Ukraine	Europe (E)	www.docudays.org.ua	HRFN member
2004	Festival des Libertés	Brussels, Belgium	Europe (W)	www.festivaldeslibertes.be	HRFN member
2004	Patois: New Orleans Human Rights Film Festival	New Orleans, USA	North America	www.facebook.com/patoisfilmfest	
2004	One World Berlin	Berlin, Germany	Europe (W)	www.oneworld-berlin.de	
2004	Peru International Short Film Festival, FENACO	Lima, Peru	Latin America	www.facebook.com/festivalcineperu	

2004	Reel Awareness Film Festival Amnesty International	Toronto, Canada	North America	www.amnesty. ca/node/66550	
2004	Verzio International Human Rights Documentary Film Festival	Budapest, Hungary	Europe (E)	www.verzio.org	HRFN member
2005	Active Vista Film and Media Lab	Manila, Philippines	Asia	www.activevista.ph	
2005	Festival Internacional de Cine de los Derechos Humanos 'El séptimo ojo es tuyo'	Sucre, Bolivia	Latin America	www.festivalcinebolivia.org	HRFN member
2005	Free Zone, Belgrade Human Rights Film Festival	Belgrade, Serbia	Europe (E)	www.freezonebelgrade.org	HRFN member
2005	Human Rights Film Festival	Wellington, New Zealand	Oceania	www.humanrightsfilmfest.net.nz	
2005	International Human Rights Film Festival Albania	Tirana, Albania	Europe (E)	www.ihrffa.net	HRFN member
2005	ReFrame's REELKids Peterborough International Film Festival*	Petersborough, Canada	North America	www.reelkids.ca	
2005	Resistance International Film Festival	Tehran, Iran	Middle East	www.resistancefest.com	
2006	A Film for Peace Festival/Un film per la pace festival	Medea, italy	Europe (W)	www.unfilmperlapace.it	
2006	Guth Gafa International Documentary Film Festival	Donegal Gaeltacht, Ireland	Europe (W)	www.guthgafa.com	
2006	Montreal Human Rights Film Festival*	Montreal, Canada	North America	www.ffdpm.com	
2006	Pravo Ljudski Film Festival	Sarajevo, Bosnia and Herzegovina	Europe (E)	www.pravoljudski.org	Former HRFN member
2006	UNHCR Refugee Film Festival	Tokyo, Japan	Asia	www.unhcr.refugeefilm.org	Former HRFN member
2007	Ad Hoc: Nepatogus Kinas/Ad Hoc: Inconvenient Films	Vilnius, Lithuania	Europe (E)	www.inconvenientfilms.lt	HRFN member
2007	Addis International Film Festival	Addis Ababa, Ethiopia	Africa	www.addisfilmfestival.org	HRFN member
2007	Festival International de Films des Droits de l'Homme au Togo*	Kara, Togo	Africa	https://bit.ly/2FrmrcY	
2007	Festival International de Films des Droits de l'Homme de Bangui*	Bangui, Central African Republic	Africa	www.festival-droitsdelhomme.org/bangui	
2007	Human Rights Arts and Film Festival	Melbourne, Australia	Oceania	www.hraff.org.au	HRFN member
2007	Nationality: Human*	Tbilisi, Georgia	Europe (E)	www.ge.boell.org/en	

2007	New York Roma/Gypsy Human Rights Film Festival	New York, USA	North America	www.gypsyfilms.org	
2007	One World Brussels	Brussels, Belgium	Europe (W)	www.oneworld.cz/brussels	
2007	One World Kyrgyzstan (Bir Duino Kyrgyzstan)	Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan	Asia	www.birduino.kg/en	
2007	Steps: International Rights Film Festival	Kharkov, Ukraine	Europe (E)	www.cetalife.com.ua/eng	
2007	Take One Action Film Festivals	Edinburgh, Glasgow, UK	Europe (W)	www.takeoneaction.org.uk	
2008	Bahrain Human Rights International Film Festival	Manama, Bahrain	Middle East	www.irhal.com/Bahrain	
2008	Cairo Human Rights Film Festivals*	Cairo, Egypt	Africa	www.cairofilm.org	
2008	Dunia Moja (One World)*	Nairobi, Kenya	Africa	www.duniamoja.or.ke	
2008	Festival del cinema dei Diritti Umani di Napoli	Naples, Italy	Europe (W)	www.cinenapolidiritti.it	HRFN member
2008	One World Romania	Bucharest, Romania	Europe (E)	www.oneworld.ro	
2008	Persistence Resistance	New Delhi, India	Asia	www.facebook.com/persistenceresistance	
2008	this human world - International Human Rights Film Festival (renamed to Human International Documentary Film Festival)	Vienna, Austria	Europe (W)	www.thishumanworld.com	Former HRFN member
2009	Human Rights Human Wrongs Documentary Film Festival	Oslo, Norway	Europe (W)	www.hrhw.no	HRFN member
2009	Nepal Human Rights Film Festival	Kathmandu , Nepal	Asia	www.hrfilms.org	HRFN member
2009	Rencontres mediteraneennes cinema et droits de l'homme	Rabat, Morocco	Africa	www.rmcdh.ma	
2010	Activist Film Festival*	Brisbane, Australia	Oceania	www.colmanridgepresents.com.au/activist-film-festival	
2010	Fast Forward Human Rights Film Festival	Podgorica, Berane, Kotor, Montenegro	Europe (E)	www.ubrzaj.me	HRFN member
2010	Humans Fest: International Human Rights and Film Festival of Valencia	Valencia, Spain	Europe (W)	www.festivalinternacionalcineyderechoshumanos.com	HRFN member
2010	Karama Human Rights Film Festival	Amman, Jordan	Middle East	www.karamafestival.org	HRFN member; ANHAR member
2010	Muestra de Cine Internacional Memoria Verdad Justicia / International Film Festival Memory Truth Justice	Guatemala-City, Guatemala	Latin America	www.iskacine.com	HRFN member

2010	PNG Human Rights Film Festival (PNG HRFF)	Port Moresby, Papua - New Guinea	Africa	www.facebook.com/PNGHRFF	HRFN member
2011	Afghanistan Human Rights Film Festival*	Kabul, Afghanistan	Asia	www.ahrfestival.org	
2011	Ciné Droit Libre Abidjan	Abidjan, Ivory Coast	Africa	www.facebook.com/ciCDL	HRFN member
2012	AfricanBamba Human Rights Film and Arts Festival	Dakar, Senegal	Africa	www.africanbamba.org	HRFN member
2012	Impugning Impunity: ALBA's Human Rights Documentary	New York, USA	North America	www.iiff-docs.com	
2012	Human Rights Film Festival	Toronto, Canada	North America	www.hrff.ca	
2012	Opin Yu Yi	Freetown, Sierra Leone	Africa	www.opinyuyi.org	HRFN member
2013	Human Rights Film Festival	Chisinau, Moldova	Europe (E)	www.idom.md	
2013	Human Rights Film Festival Barcelona/Paris/NY	Barcelona, Spain	Europe (W)	www.festivaldecineyderechoshumanos.com	
2013	Human Rights Human Dignity International Film Festival	Yangon, Myanmar	Asia	www.facebook.com/HRHDIFF	HRFN member
2013	Human Screen	Tunis, Tunisia	Africa	www.facebook.com/pg/Human.Screen.Festival	ANHAR member
2013	Justice on Trial Film Festival	Los Angeles, USA	North America	www.justiceontrialfilmfestival.net	
2013	Tenemos que Ver	Montevideo, Uruguay	Latin America	www.tenemosquever.org.uy	HRFN member
2014	Censurados Film Festival	Lima, Peru	Latin America	www.censuradosfilmfestival.org	HRFN member
2014	Equality Festival	Kyiv, Ukraine	Europe (E)	www.equalityfest.in.ua	
2014	Sofia Biting Docs	Sofia, Bulgaria	Europe (E)	www.sofiabitingdocs.com	
2014	Solidarity Tel Aviv Human Rights Film Festival	Tel Aviv, Israel	Middle East	www.solidaritytlv.org	
2014	Sudan Independent Film Festival	Khartoum, Sudan	Africa	www.siff-sd.com	
2015	Au Cinéma pour les droits humains	Paca, France	Europe (W)	www.au-cinema-pour-les-droits-humains.fr	
2015	Human Rights Film Festival Zurich	Zurich, Switzerland	Europe (W)	www.humanrightsfilmfestival.ch	
2015	Festival internacional de cine por los derechos humanos	Bogota, Colombia	Latin America	www.cineporlosderechoshumanos.co	
2015	Red Carpet Human Rights Film Festival	Gaza City, Palestine	Middle East	www.facebook.com/redcarpetfestival	HRFN member
2015	Screening Rights Film Festival	Birmingham, UK	Europe (W)	www.screeningrights.com	
2015	York Human Rights Film Festival	York, UK	Europe (W)	www.yorkhumanrights.org	

2016	ACT Human Rights Film Festival	Fort Collins, USA	North America	www.actfilmfest.colostate.edu	HRFN member
2016	Chesnok Human Rights Documentary Film Festival	Tiraspol, Moldova	Europe (E)	www.chesnok.co	HRFN member
2016	Cinèphile*	Pitampura, India	Asia	www.facebook.com/vips.cinephile	
2016	Conscious Good Humanitarian Film Festival in support of the UN*	Boulder, USA	North America	www.consciousgood.com	
2016	Diritti a Todi – Human Rights International Film Festival	Todi, Italy	Europe (W)	www.dirittiatodi.it	
2016	FEMART Festival	Prishtina, Kosovo	Europe (E)	www.femart-ks.com	
2016	Festival de Cine y Derechos Humanos Madrid	Madrid, Spain	Europe (W)	www.fcdhm.com	
2016	Global Cinema Film Festival of Boston	Boston, USA	North America	www.worldwidecinemaframes.com	
2016	Human District International Film Festival of Human Rights	Belgrade, Serbia	Europe (E)	www.humandistrictfest.rs	
2016	Karama Beirut Human Rights Film Festival	Beirut, Lebanon	Middle East	www.karamabeirut.com	HRFN member; ANHAR member
2016	Select Respect Film Festival	Thessaloniki, Greece	Europe (W)	www.selectrespect.org	
2016	The Nazra Palestine Short Film Festival	Venice, Italy	Europe (W)	www.nazrashortfilmfestival.com	
2016	Truth Be Told: Justice Through My Eyes	Richmond, USA	North America	www.rysecenter.org/blog/tbt2017reg	
2016	The Swedish Human Rights Film Festival	Lund, Sweden	Europe (W)	www.humanrightsfilmfestival.se	
2016	Unspoken Human Rights Film Festival	Utica, USA	North America	www.facebook.com/IAmUnspoken	
2017	1905 Hong Kong Human Rights Film Festival	Hong Kong, Taiwan, China	Asia	www.1905hrff.net	
2017	Grecanica International Film Festival	Melito di Porto Salvo, Italy	Europe (W)	www.grecanicafilmfestival.com	
2017	New Haven International Film Festival	Bethel, USA	North America	www.newhavenfilmfestival.com	
2017	North Dakota Human Rights Film & Arts Festival	Fargo, USA	North America	www.human-family.org	
2017	Respect Belfast Human Rights Film Festival	Belfast, UK	Europe (W)	www.respectfilmfest.com	
2017	The Human Rights and Social Justice Film Festival	Washington, USA	North America	www.uchange.tv	
2018	Human Rights Film Festival	Berlin, Germany	Europe (W)	www.humanrightsfilmfestivalberlin.com	
2018	Stop motion OUR FEST	Buenos Aires, Argentina	Latin America	www.stopmotionourfest.com	
2018	The First Annual North Jersey Human Rights Film Festival	Ridgewood, USA	North America	www.uuridgewood.org/film-festival	
2018	West Side Mountains Doc Fest	Athens, Greece; travelling	Europe (W)	www.cantomed.eu	

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I Am Breathing. 2013. Directed by Emma Davie, Morag McKinnon. UK: Scottish Documentary Institute, Danish Documentary Production.

I Want to be a People's Representative. 2014. Directed by Jia Zhitan. China: Cinema on the Edge.

Journey (Resan). 1987. [Film] Directed by Peter Watkins. Australia, Canada, Denmark, Finland, Italy, Japan, New Zealand, Soviet Union, Sweden, Norway: Abrahamsbergskyrkan; Artister for Fred.

Kim Jong-Il's Comedy Club / The Red Chapel. 2009. Directed by Mads Brügger. Denmark: Danmarks Radio, Zentropa Productions.

Kings of Nowhere. 2015. Directed by Betzabé García. Mexico: Venado Films; Ruta 66 Cine.

Kony 2012. 2012. Directed by Jason Russell. USA: Invisible Children.

La Commune (Paris 1871). 2000. Directed by Peter Watkins. France: 13 Productions; La Sept-Arte; Le Musée d'Orsay.

Left on Purpose. 2015. Directed by Justin Schein, David Mehlman. USA: Shadowbox Films Inc..

Limpiadores. 2015. Directed by Fernando Mitjáns. UK, Colombia, Brazil: Royal Anthropological Institute.

Machines. 2017. Directed by Rahul Jain. India, Germany, Finland: Pallas Film.

Mayday. 2003. UK: Camcorder Guerrillas.

No Fire Zone: The Killing Fields in Sri Lanka. 2013. Directed by Callum Macrae. UK: Outsider Films, Channel 4 Television Corporation, ITN Productions.

Normal Autistic Film. 2016. Directed by Miroslav Janek. Czech Republic: Mimesis Film.

Nowhere to Hide. 2016. Directed by Zaradasht Ahmed. Norway, Sweden, Finland, Netherlands, USA, Iraq: Ten Thousand Images, Mantaray Film.

Of the North. 2015. Directed by Dominic Gagnon. Canada: Vidéographe.

Out on the Street. 2015. Directed by Jasmina Metwaly, Philip Rizk. Egypt: Seen Films.

Over the Limit. 2017. Directed by Marta Prus. Poland: Chimney Poland; TVP; Ventana Film.

Prisoners of the Caucasus. 2002. Directed by Yury Khashchavatski. Germany, Poland: Besta Film.

Radio Kobanî. 2016. Directed by Reber Dosky. The Netherlands: Diepteschерpte.

Reassemblage. 1982. Directed by Trinh T. Minh-ha. Senegal.

Revenir (To Return). 2018. Directed by David Fedele, Kumut Imesh. Australia, Ivory Coast.

Siberia in a Summer Dress. 2015. Directed by Bogdan Stefan. Canada.

Stranger in Paradise. 2016. Directed by Guido Hendrikx. Netherlands: Zeppers Film & TV.

Surname Viet, Given Name Nam. 1989. Directed by Trinh T. Minh-ha. USA.

Tae Sail On Them Is No Their Fate. 2010. Directed by Pat Adams, Eamon Boyle, Lisa Garnham, Betty MacLean, Alex Scullion, Ann Vance. UK: Poverty Alliance, Document.

Tempestad. 2016. Directed by Tatiana Huezo. Mexico: Pimienta Films, Bambú Audiovisual, Cactus Film & Video.

The Act of Killing. 2012. Directed by Joshua Oppenheimer. UK, Denmark, Norway: Final Cut for Real, Piraya Film A/S, Novaya Zemlya.

The Battle of Chile. 1975-79. Directed by Patricio Guzmán. Venezuela, France, Cuba: Icarus Films.

The Hard Stop. 2015. Directed by George Amponsah. UK: Ga Films.

The Look of Silence. 2014. Directed by Joshua Oppenheimer. Denmark, Indonesia, Finland, Norway, UK, Israel, France, USA, Germany, Netherlands: Anonymous, Britdoc Foundation, Final Cut for Real.

The Memory of the 25th Hour. 2017. Directed by Sungeun Kim. South Korea: Sungeun Kim, Re-Lab Berlin e.V, Freie Universität Berlin.

The Other Side. 2015. Directed by Roberto Minervini. France, Italy: Agat Films & Cie, Okta Film, Arte France Cinéma.

The Templehall Project. 2010. Directed by Jamie Clunie, Leigh Clunie, Chevonne Leggat Harry Brown. UK: Poverty Alliance, Document.

The VaChina Monologues. 2013. Directed by Popo Fan. China: The Beaver Club, Queer Comrades.

Then Then Then. 2016. Directed by Daniel Schioler. Canada.

United We Will Swim… Again. 2015. Directed by Frances Higson. UK: Camcorder Guerrillas.

Vaxxed: From Cover-Up to Catastrophe. 2016. Directed by Andrew Wakefield. USA: Autism Media Channel, Del Bigtree Production.

We Come as Friends. 2014. Directed by Hubert Sauper. France, Austria: Adelante Films.

We Interrupt This Empire. 2003. USA: The San Francisco Video Activist Network.

We were Rebels. 2014. Directed by Florian Schewe, Katharina von Schroeder. Germany: Perfect Shot Films.

Why is Mr W. Laughing? 2017. Directed by Jana Papenbroock. Germany: Royal Anthropological Institute.

Xenos. 2013. Directed by Mahdi Fleifel. UK, Greece, Denmark: Nakba Filmworks.

You Always Think There's Nothing There. 2010. Directed by The Damn Rebel Bitches & Chris Bowman. UK: Poverty Alliance, Document.