Gatekeeping and networking arrangements: Dutch distributors in the film distribution business

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Abstract

Gatekeeping studies in the cultural industries increasingly draw attention to transnational networks, revealing that decision-making is decentralised through gatekeepers operating from different levels in the marketplace. This brings into focus a new line of enquiry revolving around the nature of such relationships. This paper situates an analysis of transnational gatekeeping and networking arrangements within the longstanding tradition of neo-institutional and Bourdieusian theory. Through a typology of the search and selection strategies developed by distributors in the Dutch film market, it explores their decision-making practices, demonstrating how institutional factors, taste judgements and networking arrangements work together in specific transnational contexts. This reveals that networking arrangements serve the purpose of information sharing, but, more specifically, also act as a social influence through which decision-making is evaluated and confirmed. It therefore becomes clear that reliance on transnational networks adds significant weight to decision-making processes.

Keywords

Gatekeeping, Transnational Networks, Film distribution, Independent film.

1. Introduction

Cultural flow, the access producers have to markets and the range of cultural goods available to consumers is heavily circumscribed by the gatekeeping arrangements that have developed in the cultural industries. Recent empirical investigations have thrown up new theoretical concerns about the study of such gatekeeping arrangements (Kuipers 2012; Franssen & Kuipers, 2013; Friedman, 2014). Such accounts draw attention to relationships between gatekeepers mediating at different levels in the marketplace, demonstrating that different types of gatekeepers fulfil quite specific roles as part of wider transnational networks. In the literary industry, for instance, gatekeepers such as scouts, agents and acquisition editors decentralise decision-making amongst each other, and their activities are by no means confined to particular national contexts (Thompson, 2010; Franssen & Kuipers, 2013).

While this shift in focus to decentralised decision-making points to processes such as cooperation, personalised relationships and social reliance, the arrangements between gatekeepers operating at different levels have not yet been studied in sufficient depth. This brings into focus a new line of enquiry in which work routines and selection strategies are considered in the context of transnational gatekeeping networks. How exactly do gatekeepers make use of networking arrangements? What sort of arrangements do they maintain with each other? How does that affect decision-making? And what influence do gatekeeping networks have on widely held assumptions about institutional logics and taste preferences?

This paper draws on a case-specific analysis of Dutch distributors in the film industry. Those distributors acquire distribution rights for films to be released in the Dutch market. The focus is firmly on films released in cinemas, which is usually the first release window, before films are introduced in other exploitation markets, such as the physical video market (e.g. DVD/Blu-ray), the online video market and the television market. The collective decision-making of distribution professionals is critical to which films are shown in Dutch cinemas. Given that the majority of the films screened in the Netherlands and other European film markets are international rather than national productions (Focus, 2014), this calls for a deeper understanding of the film acquisition process, thereby opening up a new perspective on gatekeeping and networking arrangements in the film industry beyond national borders.

The paper starts with a discussion that situates gatekeeping activity within a transnational context, drawing on aspects of neo-institutional and Bourdieusian theory. This provides a perspective from which to understand actual distribution operations in the Netherlands, and how they compare with other European markets. The empirical analysis combines quantitative with qualitative methods to develop a typology of Dutch distributors and their search and selection strategies: what they let through the gate, and what they bar. This analysis draws attention to institutional factors and taste preferences, but extends to networking arrangements between Dutch distributors and other type of gatekeepers such as sales agents and scouts. It will become clear that networking arrangements are critical to the decision-making processes adopted by the distributors; while those arrangements serve the purpose of information sharing (Godart & Mears, 2009; Foster et al., 2011), they are also yet another way in which decision-making is evaluated and confirmed. Further, this analysis generates a deeper understanding of the concept "gatekeeping networks" (Franssen & Kuipers, 2013), and I argue that such networks bring along privileges and social pressures which in some contexts take the form of social forces through which decision-making is structured.

2. Gatekeeping and networking arrangements

Gatekeeping studies have consistently addressed matters such as overabundance, competition, and ambiguity about the nature and quality of cultural products as the prevailing obstacles to decision-making. Such accounts have drawn particularly on the longstanding tradition of neo-institutional theory (DiMaggio & Powell, 1983, 1991) and Bourdieusian theory (Bourdieu, 1993, 1984). Both traditions acknowledge the influence of field structures, and the inherent pressures and forces they bring along, as the starting point of analysis. What they reveal is that the prevailing logics within such organisational fields structure professional practice and actions.

Integrating such theoretical frameworks within gatekeeping studies has brought into focus institutional logics and taste preferences as the principal subjects worthy of study, often in response to the uncertain nature of the cultural industries. Beyond their commonality in approach, however, neo-institutional analysis is primarily concerned with issues surrounding institutional logics and Bourdieusian analysis with issues surrounding taste judgements. This paper follows in the tradition of those gatekeeping studies that combine aspects of both perspectives to deepen thinking about decision-making (Kuipers 2012; Franssen & Kuipers 2013, Friedman, 2014).

The neo-institutional perspective has developed as a sub-discipline within organisation studies, and is frequently employed to demonstrate that gatekeepers rely on institutional strategies and resources to cope with uncertainties. Organisational fields, DiMaggio and Powell (1983:148, 1991) note, "constitute a recognised area of institutional life", in which organisations socially construct shared logics and understandings, as reflected in rules, beliefs, and conventions. Such institutionalised logics bring stability and durability to rapidly changing business environments (Bielby & Harrington, 2008). Thus, gatekeeping studies have pointed to rhetorical strategies designed to legitimise decision-making (Bielby & Bielby, 1994), social relationships (Kawashima, 1999) and the reputation or status of organisations, a business strategy that is strongly associated with their engagement in previous productions.

While such institutional logics bring along influences from *without*, Bourdieusian theory (1984, 1993) is more attentive to the habitus of decision-makers, which generates structural dispositions from *within*. Such dispositions involve aesthetic preferences deeply ingrained in professional practice, making explicit the relationship between personal and professional habitus (Bourdieu, 1984:171). Although scholarship has confirmed the pervasive role of taste preferences in relation to decision-making, Bourdieu's taste analogy has been criticised by some who argue that the habitus of decision-makers does not necessarily correspond with the aesthetics of the products with which they engage, and that decision-making is perhaps is more calculative and driven by audience preference by nature (Smith Maguire, 2008; Kuipers 2012; Friedman, 2014.).

A new strand of research has increasingly taken up the notion of institutional logics and taste preferences with discussions about gatekeepers working at the intersection of the national and the transnational level, demonstrating that decision-making is a process that unfolds in a transnational context (Havens, 2006; Bielby & Harrington, 2008; Godart & Mears, 2009; Kuipers 2012; Franssen & Kuipers, 2013; Friedman, 2014). Such accounts point to networking as another decisive process which should be taken into account while considering decision-making. Networking is also acknowledged within neo-institutional and Bourdieusian theory, but is here increasingly taken up as a process which serves its own function and which can be set alongside institutional logics and taste preferences. Networking, in this sense, involves social reliance and pressures between gatekeepers mediating at different levels in the marketplace.[1] Such relationships are forged and maintained at competitive events such as trade fairs and festivals, which bring together a large number of industry professionals engaged with the distribution of cultural products (Moeran & Pedersen, 2011). The role of networking at such events has been brought into focus in recent gatekeeping studies of the Edinburgh comedy festival (Friedman, 2014) and the MIPCOM television market in Cannes (Kuipers, 2012).

In this context, Franssen and Kuipers have introduced the concept "gatekeeping networks" to demonstrate that decision-making is a decentralised process. Indeed, this concept can be used descriptively to indicate how cultural products are classified and evaluated in relation to each

[1] I interchangeably refer to both 'networking' and 'networking arrangements' while attending to the process by which gatekeepers establish and then develop relationships.

other through organisational filters operating at different levels in the marketplace (Hirsch, 1972), but it makes sense to argue that the influence of such networks extends beyond just organisational functionality. This is a recurrent argument in studies analysing social influences in relation to decision-making. Godart and Mears (2009), for instance, argue that social networks help to shape aesthetic judgements, while Foster et al. (2011) and Havens (2011) note that engagement in specific networks is broadly indicative of the sort of search and selection strategies on which gatekeepers rely. Bringing networking to the fore as a social force with an immediate impact on decision-making invites thinking about how to make sense analytically of the concept of gatekeeping networks. To what extent do gatekeeping networks shape and structure decision-making and what influence do such networks have on institutional logics and taste preferences?

Behind this further conceptualisation of gatekeeping networks is also an argument about the role of networking itself. In particular, there is a need for greater clarity about how networking, institutional logics and taste preferences work together as aspects of the decision-making process in specific transnational contexts. Godart and Mears (2009:671), for instance, note: "For cultural producers, choices are a matter of strategic status considerations, even as they are expressed as a matter of personal taste." There is no doubt that uncertainties exist more in some contexts than in others, and personal taste judgements are more valuable in some contexts than in others, but what role does networking play in those contexts? Is networking more important in some contexts than in others? How exactly does networking relate to institutional logics and taste preferences?

3. Film distribution

Having established some vital theoretical considerations and lines of questioning, the paper will now look at the nature of the international film distribution business, in which Dutch distributors are relatively minor players. As will be clear, however, the transnational networks to which they belong are crucial to the decisions they make about which films to bring in to the Dutch market.

3.1 Films released in the Dutch market

The global marketplace for film distribution rights is organised into different distribution territories; within Europe, for instance, those territories include France, Scandinavia, Benelux and the UK. The Dutch market belongs to the Benelux distribution territory, and for the acquisition process for films this means that distribution rights are normally negotiated for the Benelux territory, and then subsequently divided among distributors in the Netherlands and those in Belgium and Luxembourg. Some distributors are active in both markets, while others focus on either the Dutch market or the Belgium and Luxembourg market.

Dutch distributors collectively select from a large number of feature films each year. Recent industry reports note that more than 6,000 films were produced worldwide in 2012 (Focus, 2014).[2] Dutch distributors select only a fraction of all those films produced in the global market, with between 325 and 425 films enjoying a theatrical release in Dutch cinemas.[3] Similar figures are seen in other small European markets, but larger markets such as the UK and Germany tend to release more films in cinemas, typically between 500 and 750 every year. In national film reports, such figures are often further broken down into separate categories – local or national films, independent films (European and non-European) and Hollywood studio films.

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[2] World film production increased from 5,845 films in 2010 to 6,098 in 2011 and 6,334 in 2012 (Focus, 2014).

[3] The number of theatrical releases in the Dutch market varies from 368 films in 2009, to 325 in 2010, 389 in 2011 and 406 in 2012 (Filmfonds, 2013).

The majority of films released in European markets are international productions, rather than domestic productions.[4] In the Netherlands, for instance, 368 films were released in 2009, of which 331 (90%) were international productions (Filmfonds, 2010). A relatively small proportion of these films (82) were distributed by one of the four Hollywood major distributors, as they will be referred to,[5] rather than one of the 13 so-called independent distributors.[6] This weight of international films in the Dutch market is by no means atypical when compared to other European markets. For instance, a larger and more influential European market such as the UK accounts for a higher number of 113 local UK-led productions in 2009, yet that is just 20% of the 575 films released (UK Film Council, 2010).

3.2 Hollywood studio distribution versus independent distribution

The weight of international films in European markets underpins broader academic discussions about national cinemas in the context of globalisation and the longstanding dominance of Hollywood companies within Europe. That is to say, although at least some national productions continue to generate high revenues in their local markets, the Hollywood studio productions usually dominate box-office charts.

The wealth of writing about Hollywood cinema has brought with it a number of insights into Hollywood's global operations (Wyatt, 1994; Neale & Smith, 1998; Maltby, 2003). Chief among these is their control over the distribution business achieved by establishing their own distribution offices in key film markets and by collaborating with other studios or independent companies in smaller or less established film markets. For instance, the six Hollywood studios work with their own distribution offices in the UK, but in smaller territories consisting of several countries, such as Benelux, they have established partnerships with each other, primarily to lower their overheads. Thus, while Warner Bros distributes its own studio films in the Dutch market through their local distribution office, it also distributes films for 20th Century Fox. In contrast, 20th Century Fox distributes the films of Warner Bros in the Belgium and Luxembourg market through their local distribution office in Belgium. Universal Pictures and Paramount have similar agreements in the Benelux distribution territory.[7]

Crucially, with such vertically integrated structures in place, the Hollywood studios are able to regulate and control decision-making about their own productions at every stage of its lifecycle. It is this remarkably effective business model that has been repeatedly set against what is known as the independent film business, which operates in a markedly different way to the major Hollywood companies (Finney, 2010:10).

The independent business structure brings together a range of companies working at various stages of a film's lifecycle. Most of them are small standalone companies working in film financing, production, distribution or exhibition, but some companies with more integrated operations belong to this business. Even the Hollywood studios participate in the market for independent films and compete for films on offer, to which they usually become attached as a co-producer in an early stage, and then coordinate distribution through their networks. The label 'independent business' is here thus understood in broad terms, involving a context in which producers establish collaborations with other companies to further support their films through

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[4] Because many films are co-productions between two or more producers from different countries, the country of origin of the leading producer defines how films are classified.

[5] They collectively release between 75 to 100 films in the Dutch market every year.

[6] Distributors in the Dutch market typically release between 10 and 30 films each year.

[7] The six major Hollywood studios include Warner Bros, Walt Disney Pictures, Universal Pictures International, Sony Pictures Releasing, 20th Century Fox and Paramount Pictures. Four Hollywood studios were operating from offices in the Netherlands in 2012: Warner Bros, Walt Disney Pictures, Universal Pictures International and Sony Pictures Releasing. Partnerships between the Hollywood studios are constantly changing.

subsequent stages, rather than all of those industrial functions being carried out and controlled by one single company.

Finney (2010:52) has brought into focus the transnational context in which such professional collaborations are established, demonstrating that the business gathers several times each year at sales markets organised as parts of film festivals in Cannes, Berlin and Los Angeles. In terms of distribution, they are key events for distributors engaged in the task of acquiring films for their consumer markets. Analysis of the film distribution business remains primarily descriptive and contextual, and little is known in academic circles about distribution arrangements within this transnational context. Consequently, it remains obscure how distributors operating within the independent film business search for and select foreign films and how they make use of their networks as part of this process. There is then still much to be done in terms of understanding the gatekeeping arrangements that operate at the intersection of transnational and national levels.

4. Methodology: a mixed method approach

While it is a fact that a good number of foreign films are released in the Dutch market by independent distributors, the main objective of this paper is to explore the process by which such films are acquired. Foster et al. (2011) and Friedman (2014) have demonstrated the effectiveness of mixed methods in creating a typology of buyers which captures their search and selection strategies, while Franssen and Kuipers (2013) have shown the utility of this approach in situating the acquisition operations of (nationally-oriented) buyers within a broader transnational context. Those studies draw on quantitative data to establish a preliminary understanding of a specific group of professionals and the type of product they engage with, and on qualitative data to bring into focus their work processes. It is this combination of methods that adds weight to the resulting typology and helps to avoid methodological inadequacies.

In keeping with this approach, the first section of the empirical analysis that follows involves *creating* a typology of Dutch film distributors through a quantitative examination of the films (national and international) released by them in the Dutch market in 2009 and 2010, which will be examined from the perspective of multiple correspondence analysis (MCA). This analysis casts light on the relative positioning in the market of Hollywood and independent distributors. The position of independent distributors here is particularly important. While they typically engage with medium-budget and low-budget films, there are exceptions. For instance, the distributor Independent Films acquired the rights of *The Twilight Saga: Eclipse* (2010), a major franchise film produced with a budget of $68 million (Box Office Mojo, 2015). There is then a great variety in the size and scope of this group of independent distributors, which thus needs to be further broken down into smaller segments. Film studies often distinguish between major and specialist independents (Wyatt, 1998; Tzioumakis, 2006), and this is a distinction I draw on here.

The second section of the empirical analysis involves *developing* this typology through a qualitative analysis of the search and selection strategies adopted by the various groups of distributors. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with senior executives of 14 distributors in the Netherlands, and with four senior executives of distributors in the UK, Denmark and Germany to make the study generalisable to other European markets.[8] The interviews typically lasted between one and two hours, yielding information about industry discourse, organisational structure, competition, networking and individual films. For instance, the explanation by the Dutch independent distributor Paradiso about how and at what stage they acquired the distribution rights for *The King's Speech* (2010) provides critical insight into their decision-making processes, while comparison with other interviews brought into focus broad similarities between competitors.

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[8] In terms of distributors based in the Netherlands, I conducted interviews with senior executives (in most cases the managing director) of two major Hollywood distributors, five major independents and seven specialist independents. Where the interviews were conducted in Dutch, the translations here are my own.

The independent distributors that were interviewed underlined the importance of attending film sales markets, where they negotiate deals with so-called sales agents. Such relations were consequently analysed through participant observation at one of the key sales markets, the European Film Market (EFM), organised simultaneously with the 2012 Berlin Film Festival. Such self-contained events are normally accessible only to industry professionals with market accreditation; attendance at the event thus added privileged business detail to the analysis.[9] Participating in this sales market was helpful in learning more about networking arrangements between distribution professionals. In this context, Havens' discussion of the organisation of exhibition space at television markets (2011) provides useful insight into how the reputations of sales companies are reflected in the spatial and physical arrangements on the market floor. Social hierarchies at the European Film Market were likewise clearly visible in such arrangements, adding richness to the analysis of the nature of transnational relationships, and demonstrating that similar arrangements are in place with other European distributors. The participant observation also involved three further interviews with sales agents and three follow-up interviews with Dutch distributors.

5. Distributors in the Dutch market

The focus of the empirical analysis here is on the acquisition process of foreign films by independent distributors, which make up the vast majority of films released in the Dutch market. For verification purposes, the quantitative analysis that follows also looks at the distribution of domestically produced Dutch films and films distributed by Hollywood distributors. Dutch productions are usually partly financed by Dutch funding bodies, for which they need the commitment of a Dutch distributor from a very early stage of development, which then guarantees that the film will be released in cinemas. Such films are generally handled by independent distributors who get involved in production partnerships through personal networks in the local Dutch market, rather than through more formal transnational distribution arrangements.

Within Europe, there are of course bigger and smaller film markets, and more and less established markets. The analysis that follows also tests widely held assumptions about the persistence of Hollywood's dominance in Europe by examining the relatively small but well-established Dutch market. If the market is well-established, it can also change in composition, with distributors appearing and disappearing. For this reason, the period of analysis is deliberately limited to distributors operating in the Netherlands in 2009 and 2010 and handling more than 10 films.

5.1 Correspondence analysis: data collection

The utility of relational analysis has been frequently acknowledged in culture studies as a means of analysing field structures, particularly from the perspective of correspondence analysis, principal component analysis and social network analysis. Correspondence analysis is often used to draw attention to objective rather than interpersonal relations, as demonstrated by De Nooy (2003). While empathizing with such a focus, this study develops a form of multiple correspondence analysis (MCA) to compare interrelations between and within a set of categorical variables, and project the strongest associations into a relational space of positions (Greenacre, 2007).[10] Including multiple variables in the analysis allows for an exploration of how distributors correspond to different categorical variables.

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9 I was able to register for market accreditation, which gave me the same access to events and activities as the distributors, including access to the official market buildings and the market screenings.

10 I used *Stata* software to perform the multiple correspondence analysis.

The Dutch Association of Film Distributors (NVF) provided a list of 884 theatrical releases in 2009 and 2010 in the Netherlands, each linked to a distributor and admission figures.[11] While analysing the dataset, 166 of those films were excluded because they were directly imported films distributed by foreign distribution companies not based in the Netherlands and not members of the NVF. A further 46 films were excluded because they were only booked for special or temporary events in cinemas and attracted very few visitors. For the remaining 672 films, additional information was collected from the Internet Movie Database (IMDb) to further enrich the analysis with variables such as country of production, language and awards.[12]

Each variable comprises three categories, and each category is mutually exclusive. For the variable admissions, the 672 films were ordered into *low*, *medium* and *high* admissions categories. Because the distribution of those admission figures was positively skewed, the cut-off points for these various categories were identified in a histogram, resulting in a large low admissions category of 477 films, a small medium category of 133 films and an even smaller high admissions category of 62 films (appendix A2). In terms of the production country, a distinction was made between *US-led productions*, *Dutch productions* and *productions produced in other countries*; a similar approach was applied to language, distinguishing between films shot in the *English language*, the *Dutch language* and *other languages*.[13]

Another useful variable for analysing films is awards, adding weight to a film's cultural recognition and commercial potential, and providing additional publicity that is valuable to distributors. For this variable, the categories were defined in terms of films that won *international awards* (Academy Awards (US), BAFTA Awards (UK), Golden Globes (US), AFI Awards (US) and Screen Actors Guild Awards (US)); films that won *festival awards* at one of the major European festivals (Cannes, Berlin and Venice) or North American festivals (Toronto and Sundance); and films that won *no awards*.[14][15][16]

5.2 Correspondence analysis: the relative positioning of Dutch distributors

Mapping all of these categorical variables against each other using MCA produces the graph below (figure 1), with the first (horizontal) dimension exhibiting a total variance of 56.1%.[17] This dimension largely structures the field by admissions, awards, production country and language, and confirms that distributors are clustered in different niches. In the case of admissions, for instance, distributors positioned on the left side of the graph attract the highest admissions numbers, while distributors on the right side attract relatively low admissions. The group with the highest admissions consists of the major Hollywood distributors, *Walt Disney Studios* (WDS),

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[11] This involves feature films and documentaries.
[12] *IMDb* is the largest online database with extensive information about individual films.
[13] Many films are co-productions between producers from two or more countries. I only used the first production country and language identified by IMDb.
[14] Appendix A3 provides an overview of all variables included in the MCA.
[15] I looked at various films with Oscar nominations in IMDb, and these five international awards appeared before other awards were shown in alphabetic order, indicating that IMDb classifies these awards as more significant than others. See for example the IMDb entry for the film *The Curious Case of Benjamin Button* (2008).
[16] If a film was nominated for both a festival award and an international award, I assigned the film to the *festival award* category because such films usually first benefit from industry buzz generated at festivals and are subsequently likely to be nominated for awards. I did not distinguish between various competition programmes (In Competition, Out of Competition etc.) or categories (i.e. Best Picture, Best Actor, Best Director etc.). Re-released of well-known 'classics' were assigned to the *no prize* category.
[17] Appendix B involves more specific details. I also performed multiple correspondence analysis separately for 2009 and 2010, and the analysis shows the same clusters of distributors for both years.

Warner Bros (WB), *Universal Pictures International* (UPI) and *Sony Pictures Releasing* (SPR), which tallies with their comparatively high market share in the Dutch market (Filmfonds, 2010).

The second (vertical) dimension distinguishes between Dutch and international films. While all Dutch distributors acquire international films, it is the extent of their engagement with Dutch films and/or international films that affects their relative position. For example, Cinema Delicatessen (CD) takes a position at the top of the graph because it distributes relatively more Dutch productions than other distributors. Although the second dimension shows a total variance of 29.5%, this dimension is considered less significant to the analysis because CD is an outlier, where all the other distributors appear lower in the graph.

Using this analysis, it becomes clear that most of the distributors in the Dutch market fall into one of three broad groups (table 1).[18] The major Hollywood distributors (SPR, UPI, WB, WDS) form one such group, which appears on the left of the graph. Independent distributors are clearly separated into what will be referred to as a group of major independents (IF, AFD, BFD, EONE, PAR), in the centre of the graph, and a group of specialist independents, clustered on the right of the graph. This distinction between major and specialist independents is borrowed from scholarship considering the independent film business from a production perspective (Wyatt, 1998; Tzioumakis, 2006).

Hollywood majors	**Major independents**	**Specialist independents**
Sony Pictures Releasing (SPR)	Independent Films (IF)	Amstel Film (AMF)
Universal Pictures Int. (UPI)	A-Film Distribution (AFD)	Cinemien (CM)
Warner Bros (WB)	Benelux Film Distribution (BFD)	Cineart (CNA)
Walt Disney Studios (WDS)	Entertainment One (EONE)	Eye Film (EYE)
	Paradiso Entertainment (PAR)	Moonlight (ML)
		Twin Film (TWF)
		Wild Bunch (WBU)

Table 1. Three different types of distributors in particular are identified in the Dutch market

[18] Distributor Cinema Delicatessen (CD) does not fall into one of the three groups identified in the analysis. They specialise in documentaries and are aligned with the International Documentary Film Festival Amsterdam (IDFA). Further, their focus remains primarily on Dutch documentaries and most of their acquisition activities are taking place at IDFA, rather than at the key festivals for feature films.

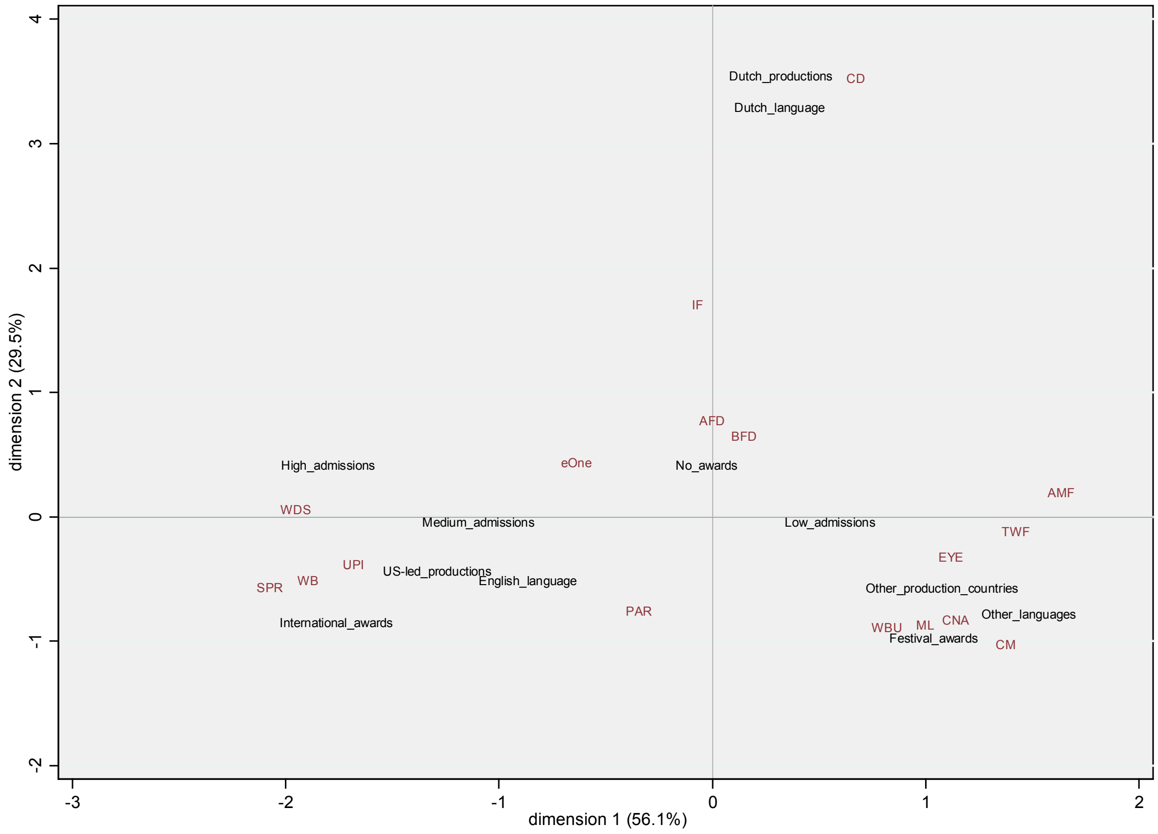

Figure 1. Multiple correspondence analysis of film distributors in the Dutch market (coordinates in standard normalisation). Letters in red indicate film distributors; words in black indicate categorical variables.

The major independent distributors position themselves in the middle ground between the Hollywood majors and more specialist independent distributors (AMF, CM, CNA, EYE, ML, TWF, WBU). They deal primarily with so-called mid-range or crossover films, which are modest productions in relation to Hollywood mainstream films, but big-budget productions compared to the majority of films that circulate through the independent business or that are made primarily for small national markets. Such films do not exclusively correspond to what the American trade press refer to as the mainstream market, on the one hand, or the specialised art-house market on the other (Higson, 2003:89). However, the Hollywood distributors and specialist independents, situated at opposed ends of the field, represent this fundamental division. While films distributed by Hollywood distributors correspond to typical characteristics of Hollywood mainstream cinema (they tend to be US-led productions, shot in the English language, and often winning international awards), the specialist independent distributors are clustered in a niche that is characterised by an emphasis on non-English language films with relatively low admissions and a strong reliance on film festival prizes. Such films are small-scale specialty films, designed to circulate in the art-house market and appeal to niche audiences (Higson, 2003:90).[19]

While this distinction between three types of distributors in the Dutch market might not be surprising in itself, it confirms broad assumptions about film production and distribution in Europe (Higson, 2003; Finney, 2010). Such consistency was useful to the subsequent qualitative analysis. Thus, insights gleaned from interviews with distributors were situated in the context of their relative position-taking and the market niche from which they operate, which helped in the interpretation of the subjective and personal opinions of interviewees.

[19] Appendix C provides an overview of the number of films distributed by the various types of distributors.

From interviews with Dutch executives of major Hollywood distributors, it became clear that they operate as part of vertically integrated structures, and that distribution strategies for individual films are developed and coordinated by their superiors, working at transnational and global levels, as described in section 3.2. Rather than developing search and selection strategies, Dutch executives are therefore predominantly concerned simply with releasing films. It is worth noting that such decisions are still made in close collaboration with their superiors. In fact, some of the independent distributors interviewed criticised the limited capacity of Hollywood distributors to engage with film acquisition.

The following sections of the paper analyse search and selection processes, for which the focus shifts to independent distributors only. Concurring with the observations of Kuipers (2012), Franssen and Kuipers (2013) and Friedman (2014) in other fields of cultural activity, this brings into focus film sales markets as important events for distributors engaged in the task of filtering out which film projects they see as of low interest, classifying and evaluating projects in relation to others, and acquiring selected films. Thousands of film projects enter the sales markets every year with the objective of attaining sales. They are introduced to distributors at different stages of production, with some films being able to secure distribution deals before the production process has formally started. The development and production context of films is therefore inextricably connected to distribution operations. The typology outlined above is further developed through a consideration of how these interconnections work differently for major and specialist independents in the Dutch market and the gatekeeping and networking arrangements they entail.[20]

6. Film acquisition: the major independents

The major independent distributors confirmed in interviews that they deal primarily with mid-range films. They stressed that the reputation of such films within the sales markets is not to be compared with the vast majority of smaller low-budget films on offer, arguing that the mid-range films are considered high-profile projects. This speaks to the way such films are introduced to distributors, usually already from the very moment that the film's 'package' is put together. This involves sales agents promoting key elements such as the script, production budget, (co)-production partners, leading actors and the director(s) (Finney, 2010). *The King's Speech* (2010), for instance, was directed by the up and coming filmmaker Tom Hooper on a budget of close to $15 million, involving well-known actors such as Colin Firth, Geoffrey Rush and Helena Bonham Carter (Unwin, 2013). It is the cumulative value of those elements that establishes the comparative status of films and their attractiveness to distributors.

6.1 Institutional logics and taste judgements

Major independents usually commit to films at an early stage of production, often called the pre-production stage, or thereafter as the film formally moves into production (i.e. the production stage). The context of the film is rather uncertain at this point as the first rough-cut or finished version is yet to be developed. However, because they stand out from smaller films, the competition amongst Dutch distributors for the distribution rights of high-profile mid-range films is fierce, sometimes resulting in a 'bidding war', as one major independent noted: "Distribution has become so competitive, it is so crazy that you have to buy things at script stage, otherwise you do not have a business, you cannot survive". While major independents feel the need to acquire films at this point, institutional factors are important in legitimising their decision-making.

The elements of a film's package work together in synergy with factors such as status, reputation and trust. In line with neo-institutional and Bourdieusian analysis, those factors can be

[20] Differences between major and specialist independents should be understood in relational terms.

identified as common business strategies (Bielby & Bielby, 1994; Kawashima, 1999; Bourdieu, 2008). Firstly, major independents emphasised that the status of (co-)production partners is important to the value of projects. Do the leading producers have the required knowledge and experience, and are they capable of managing a mid-budget production from script to completion? What sort of films do they typically engage with? Secondly, the reputation of well-known film stars and other high profile creative talent is vital to the promotion of films and the process of attracting a broader audience (Wyatt, 1994). Thirdly, the major independents note that business relations do not emerge in a vacuum; they are reliant on partnerships with gatekeepers such as sales agents and scouts to filter film projects against each other and to be able to acquire distribution rights. Such partnerships are built on trust and routine; as one major independent noted: "You do yourself a disservice if you create enemies in this business. The agent you upset in one negotiation is the person who could offer you the next big movie in a subsequent negotiation." The relative strength of the values such factors collectively signify is what sets high-profile films apart from others at the sales markets. That is, films produced against a budget higher than £5 million are usually supported by a well-established producer and/or sales agent and typically involve well-known actors.

This emphasis on institutional factors tends to overshadow the impact of taste judgements in relation to decision-making, particularly how personal and professional preferences compare to another (Bourdieu, 1993; Smith Maguire, 2008; Kuipers, 2012). Given the decision-making context for high-profile films, predicting the quality and marketability of films on the basis of personal taste at this stage is difficult, if not impossible. However, that is not to suggest that taste judgements are to be dismissed at this point, but rather to indicate that taste is guided primarily by professional habitus, in accordance with the company's broader objectives, because it is too early in the process for major independents to get an accurate impression of the finished film. Professional habitus, in this sense, is used to identify films in development and assess if they are thought appropriate to fit in a particular distribution catalogue. For instance, major independents note that film genre and subject matter are important factors in building a comprehensive identity through a slate of films that strengthens uniformity.

Crucially, the inability to rely on personal taste at this stage is balanced by a strong reliance on networking. That is to say, while relationships with sales agents and scouts are used as organisational filters through which film projects are identified and classified, the impact of those relationships extends further, bringing along privileges and social pressures. To borrow a phrase from Havens (2011), they are best understood as 'personalised relationships', close and long-standing relationships which add a personal touch to the decision-making process. For instance, one major independent noted: "I maintain long-term relationships with many sales agents. They are not just colleagues, they are friends. They know my taste and I know what type of films they represent and the producers with which they work." In this way, reliance on personalised relationships becomes an alternative to personal taste, adding weight to the decision-making process of major independents.

6.2 Networking arrangements with sales agents and scouts

Major independents note that they rely heavily on the expertise of sales agents in their networked decision-making process. Sales agents are usually the first to commit to high-profile projects, which they subsequently introduce and promote to distributors with the objective of attaining international sales. They filter out a large number of productions, as demonstrated by one major independent:

> There is a great number of scripts introduced to the business every year, but many of them remain ideas. Only a relatively small selection of projects secure approval for moving into production, which is often dependent on the financing. The sales agents will consequently make a selection out of those projects and sell the distribution rights to us.

While this first selection through sales agents helps to filter out a large number of films, major independents create another filter by maintaining relationships only with a selected group of bigger sales agents that take similar positions to themselves - that is, they operate in a network with identifiable organisations (Franssen & Kuipers, 2013; Friedman, 2014). Their mutual interest in the same sort of high-profile films strengthens long-term relations, as one major independent argued: "I attend the sales markets in Berlin, Cannes and Los Angeles every year, where I organise meetings with about 10 to 20 sales companies, who collectively represent about 100 films." While another major independent said: "I tend to meet with the same group of sales agents at the sales markets." Relationships with sales agents are thus important in organising the gatekeeping process (Hirsch, 1972).

Such long-term relations bring along privileges which inevitably influence decision-making (Godart & Mears, 2009; Foster et al. 2011). The importance of such privileges should, firstly, be understood in the context of the hectic state of film sales markets (Moeran & Pedersen, 2011), circumscribed by fierce competition for the most attractive projects on offer. In their attempt to secure film rights, some major independents meet with sales agents before the film sales markets formally start.

> Some distributors travel around before the start of festival markets because the competition amongst Dutch distributors is incredibly fierce. There are distributors flying to America before the Berlin Festival to meet with sales agents. They make efforts to acquire film rights beforehand, and this often means that those rights are not available anymore to us at the market in Berlin.

While such pre-arrangements do occasionally take place, competition remains fierce within the film sales markets themselves. Projects are formally introduced and promoted to distributors at sales markets, in direct competition with other films. They are important events where the film business comes together, creating an all-important 'industry buzz' and word-of-mouth reputation (Bielby, 2011). This, in turn, affects the acquisition process of major independents in the sense that they need to anticipate change at sales markets, as demonstrated by another major independent:

> In essence, everything changes at the sales market. There is the priority list, there are options, and there are alternatives. Although you buy only few titles, your shortlist includes many more titles. You are constantly considering: OK, I want this and this, but I cannot get this and this. While you realise later that your selected film has been sold and the second option is too expensive, so you need to look for alternatives. I walk around at these markets with about 30 to 40 films in mind.

Personal relationships with sales agents are first and foremost important in securing the distribution rights of films on the priority list. For instance, distributors who have been involved with the previous films of a particular director are usually first approached to become attached to the next film, demonstrating the importance of reciprocity. But personal relationships also matter when making decisions about films that attract industry attention during the market, for which the competition increases.

Relying on close and long-standing relationships with sales agents is equally important to what Godart and Mears (2009:679) refer to as "information sharing". Major independents use their networking arrangements with sales agents to acquire a better sense of film projects. Decision-making is particularly challenging in relation to films at an early stage of development, at the point that not all elements of a film's package are yet in place. Major independents rely on information sharing with sales agents to obtain in-depth and advanced information about the state of projects. For instance, they obtain more details about the involvement of creative talent such as the leading actors, the director(s) and creative producers. Further, they find out about the financing of the film and the likelihood that the film will receive a so-called 'green-light' to move into production, for which the commitment of other foreign distributors is usually required.

Those privileges established through socially constructed relationships with sales agents are important for gaining a competitive advantage and helping to make well-informed decisions. Major independents rely on institutional logics and professional taste judgements at this (early) stage of production, but their networking arrangements with sales agents bring along a personal touch which is more emotionally charged, as one major independent explained:

> Your network relations are critical. The hectic environment of the sales market affects your decision-making. Sales agents introduce films at strategic moments, often just before the start of sales markets, so that you need to make decisions as soon as the market starts, in the heat of the moment. Emotion, therefore, becomes an important part of the process.

Thus decisions are to some extent instinctively guided by emotional engagement with sales agents. Networking arrangements, in this sense, take on the form of a social force that should be seen separately from institutional logics and taste judgements. Major independents acknowledge the importance of institutional factors such as status and reputation, but their actual decision-making is as much influenced by networking arrangements (Godart & Mears, 2009). Those personalised networking arrangements, in practice, add weight to their decision-making.

Some major independents also make use of the expertise of acquisition scouts to follow new projects in circulation. As with the type of scouts identified by Franssen and Kuipers (2013) in the publishing industry, their function involves mediating with producers and sales agents, and collecting information about projects from the very early stages of development (sometimes even from the screenwriting stage). They look at the state of the production and distribution context at this (early) stage, especially the creative talent and financiers that become attached, and report their findings to distributors. Thus they act primarily as consultants to distributors rather than becoming personally attached to film projects.

They present their scouting reports to those distributors, involving a summary of the script (usually three or four pages) and information about the (co)-producers and creative talent committed to the project. Somewhat surprisingly, major independents could not specify what characteristics of the script are particularly valuable. Thus, they emphasised that movies are unique and appeal to different audiences, and that they are only able to come to a genuine understanding of a project by placing their assessment of the script in the project's wider business context, and relating the script to other elements in the film's package, as one major independent demonstrated:

> Look, the script is completely analysed. What I get is a synopsis of about four pages and information about the cast, the producers and other business people involved. She also gives her own opinion, involving some general comments about the business context and its commercial potential.

Networking arrangements with scouts thus help in acquiring confidential and privileged information, which in turn could make a difference given the uncertain context of films at this early stage of production. As with sales agents, the role of the scouts extends further than just filtering out projects, taking the form of yet another social influence that helps develop professional assessments of films, which confirms Godart and Mears' (2009) argument that social networks influence decision-making. In fact, this analysis of major independents demonstrates that decision-making is largely based on such social influences.

7. Film acquisition: the specialist independents

The other main group of Dutch distributors engaged with the acquisition of films at sales markets is the specialist independents, who look primarily for art-house or specialist films which are usually acquired after production is completed. The Polish/Danish co-production *Ida* (2013) is a good example of such film, made without the involvement of high-profile film actors on a relatively small budget of close to $2 million, while distribution deals were being closed after the finished film was introduced through the festival circuit (Husum, 2014). Specialist independents thus focus on films that have not yet been acquired by one of the major independents at an earlier stage, and are therefore obliged to choose from a more limited selection of films. On the other hand, there are still always a great many small-scale art-house films on offer.

Gatekeeping arrangements with sales agents and scouts remain important organisational filters through which films are introduced and promoted to specialist independents. Scouting reports, for instance, are able to include more comprehensive information about the package and the script by the time films are being prepared for a festival release. Further, unlike major independents, they typically engage in more extensive and diverse networks, and maintain relationships primarily with the smaller sales agents, including those that have not yet established a reputable or trustworthy name in the industry. In some cases, this means that they work together with sales agents for the first time.

While observing such smaller sales agents at the Berlin sales market, it became clear that they participate in a different way than the bigger sales agents; only a few small sales companies can afford the luxury of hiring an individual or shared stand at the market, [21] and most of them participate as part of booths coordinated by national film agencies, the so-called umbrella stands, which confirms Havens' argument that social hierarchies are reflected in spatial and physical arrangements (2011). It is also worth noting in this respect that some producers do not find a sales agent for the representation of their films, and so personally participate in umbrella stands to introduce films to distributors.

Specialist independents, then, emphasised that such relationships are usually kept at arm's length while maintaining closer relationships with only few sales companies. In this respect, this analysis shows broad similarities with the study by Foster et al. (2011), in which differences are discerned between types of talent buyers in the music industry, revealing how the context in which they operate structures the nature of their networking arrangements. Thus, those looking for original bands maintain relations at arm's length with many different bands, while those looking for bands playing familiar music maintain close relationships with a small number of bands. Such networks are equally noticeable in the film industry, with major and specialist independents engaging with films in different ways (table 2).

	Major independents	**Specialist independents**
Film acquisition stage	The focus is primarily on mid-range or crossover films acquired at the pre-production or production stage	The focus is primarily on small art-house films acquired after being screened at festivals
The acquisition context	The film's potential is hard to predict at this stage	The film's potential is easier to predict
The search and selection process	Close and personalised relationships with a selected group of bigger sales agents	Arm's length relationships with a large number of sales agents
Decision-making	Largely based on institutional factors and networking with sales agents	Largely based on taste judgements

Table 2. Differences between major and specialist independents

While such arm's length relations between specialist independents and sales agents remain more 'professional' than 'personal' in nature, this inevitably affects the decision-making process. Specialist independents enjoy the privilege of watching finished films at festivals, where the

[21] A shared stand involves no more than two sales companies.

emphasis shifts to the importance of taste judgements. While gatekeeping relations help filter out a large number of films, taste judgements are critical to decision-making about the final selection of films.

Personal taste is here different from professional taste in the sense that judgements are based on the quality of finished films rather than the professional assessment of film packages. One specialist independent stressed the importance of watching finished films as follows: "We cannot take the risk of pre-buying and paying high fees for the films we acquire. It is absolutely necessary that we see films first so that we know precisely what we can afford to pay for the rights." Such decision-making starts with their personal judgement of films. Several specialist independents, in this respect, stress a need for personal engagement, a need for an impactful story with an educative subject matter. This emphasis on personal taste tallies with Friedman's observation (2014:32) about comedy scouts located in what Bourdieu (1993:125) calls the restricted subfield.

It is, however, worth noting that there are still a great many of films that meet such criteria at this final stage of their filter and selection process, as demonstrated by one specialist independent: "The film festivals are flooded with high quality art-house product. There are simply too many films worthy for theatrical releasing." While another specialist independent said: "I work in this business for more than 15 years. There are so many good films out there. It is a shame that I am only allowed to acquire between 10 and 20 titles every year." Given such choice, personal taste is by no means the only constraining factor in their decision-making.

For specialist independents, professional taste is secondary to personal taste, yet remains necessary to decision-making. Their professional taste judgements are bound by a more commercially minded and calculative logic which involves identifying elements around which a marketing campaign can be built and identifying the primary audience to which films potentially appeal. One executive demonstrated this as follows: "It is very expensive to buy an audience so we need to be creative and inventive." This calls for strategies that push the content of films to the fore, as he further specified: "Our approach is that the content is the marketing and the marketing is the content." More specifically, specialist independents cater to the demands of niche audiences by creating an interactive dialogue through low-cost promotional forms such as social media and live events (e.g. local festivals and special screenings). Further, some of them tend to prioritise films by the same directors and producers, with whom they work closely to organise marketing campaigns. The effect of watching finished films thus extends more explicitly to the process of connecting specialist films to niche audiences, demonstrating that professional taste involves more than simply relying on institutional factors by considering the value of packages available for pre-sales, as described for major independents.

Combining personal and professional taste, in this way, is a luxury born out of necessity, enabling specialist independents to acquire films in which they believe. The abundance of quality films on show at festivals brings about a need to rely on both personal and professional judgements to classify films and navigate decision-making accordingly. In other words, taste judgements serve the function of filters, further paring down the number of films to choose from, for which personal and professional taste necessarily need to be closely aligned (Bourdieu, 1984:240). However, in this decision-making context of specialist independents, the construction of professional judgements is based on strategic and calculative considerations, which speak first and foremost to audience expectations. Therefore, in contradiction to Bourdieu's taste analogy, decision-making is not guided only by structural dispositions, because personal and professional taste judgements turn out to be markedly different in approach.

Beyond the notion of taste preferences, specialist independents acknowledge the role of team members, colleagues and critics in making decisions at festivals. They provide social influences on which they can always rely to test and confirm taste judgements, adding weight to their assessment of films, as became clear in the participant observation research at the Berlin Film Festival. First, several team members travel to the festival to assess the quality of films and discuss ideas for marketing and release strategies. Second, they are able to rely on film reviews by critics. Trade magazines such as *Screen International*, *Variety* and *The Hollywood Reporter*, for instance, publish daily editions specifically for the Berlin Film Festival and other key festivals, which include reviews and ratings of films, giving a firm impression of industry opinion (Bielby, 2011). Third, they rely on what Friedman (2014:31) calls "non-competitive informal networking", by means of information exchange with like-minded colleagues in the industry. Some meetings are pre-arranged, while others take place spontaneously. Buyers and sellers come together on the sales floor and at social spaces created within the sales market, where they discuss projects and acquire a sense of the level of buzz surrounding films (Bielby, 2011). Similarly, film screenings offer opportunities to share views with others. Such informal conversations are thus important in aligning taste judgements with industry opinion and build in a degree of certainty.

8. Conclusion

This paper has built on the relatively limited scholarly knowledge about transnational gatekeeping and networking arrangements in the cultural industries through the case study of Dutch distributors in the film industry, using a mixed method approach. The quantitative analysis involves a typology of *Hollywood majors, major independents* and *specialist independents* and the type of films they engage with, confirming broad assumptions about the circumstances of distributors operating in different segments of the market. The usefulness of this quantitative method bears resemblance to the study by Foster et al. (2011), providing a strong methodological basis on which to rely before delving into qualitative methods such as interviews and participant observation. While several studies have pointed to methodological complexities in researching gatekeeping practices within fields of popular culture (Peterson & Anand, 2004; Friedman, 2014), the mixed methods approach has enabled a productive triangulation of evidence. This approach remains critical to opening out perspective on transnational gatekeeping and networking arrangements through an inductive case-based study.

The enormously rich work of Bourdieu and the insights of neo-institutional theory have of course been taken up in a variety of ways in culture studies. This paper draws only on institutional factors and taste preferences in so far as they are directly associated with decision-making, rather than robustly criticising the broader underpinnings of these theoretical traditions. It also adds new insights by placing emphasis on strategies developed in specific transnational contexts. Thus, the major independents in the Dutch market usually acquire mid-range films at an early stage of production. They rely largely on institutional factors such as status, reputation and trust, but also on the professional assessments of acquisition scouts and sales agents about the nature of the packages available for pre-sales, which adds necessary expertise which compensates for the inability to rely on personal taste. Those major independents tend to develop personalised relations (Havens, 2011) with a group of selected sales agents, and use such networking arrangements to gain a competitive advantage and acquire a better sense of the state of projects in which they are interested (Godart & Mears, 2009).

By contrast, specialist independents usually acquire smaller art-house films in a completed state, which allows them to watch finished films and base decision-making largely on taste judgements. However, they still rely on team members, critics and like-minded colleagues to develop a more fuller consideration of a film's comparative value. That is not to deny their involvement in gatekeeping networks, since filtering out a first selection of films requires working with scouts and sales agents, but such relationships are usually maintained at arm's length, and their actual decision-making is therefore less reliant on those arrangements.

This comparison between major and specialist independents is similar to the analysis of networking arrangements in the music industry undertaken by Foster et al. (2011), but it also shows how the search and selection strategies of these distributors impact on taste judgements, bringing into focus how personal and professional judgements work together in different decision-making contexts (Smith Maguire, 2008; Kuipers, 2012; Friedman, 2014). Major independents rely on professional taste, while the decision-making by specialist independents involves both personal and professional taste judgements. Specialist independents can afford the luxury of choosing from a large number films, thus paring down their selection to films in which they believe, for which personal and professional taste are necessarily closely aligned. However, contrary to Bourdieu's taste analogy (1984:240), such decision-making is as much guided by aesthetic appreciation and disposition as by carefully calculated taste judgements.

Taken together, these findings provide new insights in the discussion of transnational gatekeeping and networking arrangements. Rather than asserting that decision-making is complex, it becomes clear that decision-making is heavily regulated and controlled. Regardless of the context in which major and independent distributors operate, the analysis shows that they are able to rely on several sources to legitimise their decision-making. Networking arrangements help in acquiring in-depth and sometimes privileged information about the state of projects, as demonstrated by Godart and Mears (2009), Franssen and Kuipers (2013) and Friedman (2014), but, crucially, this analysis shows that they are also being used to evaluate and confirm decision-making. That is not to deny that decision-making remains an uncertain process, but adopting tried and tested methods adds weight to the decision-making process.

Returning to the notion of gatekeeping networks (Franssen & Kuipers, 2013), although relationships with sales agents and scouts certainly serve as organisational filters through which film projects are identified and classified (Hirsch, 1972), the impact of those relationships extends further, bringing along privileges and social pressures which are more valuable in some contexts than in others. For instance, the decisions of major independents are more instinctively guided by engagement with sales agents, taking the form of a social force through which decision-making is structured. However, the analysis of specialist independents shows that the influence of sales agents and scouts remains limited to the process of filtering out certain products, while taste preferences become a more critical influence on decision-making. Crucially, this means that decisions about the bigger films in the sales markets are more influenced by gatekeeping networks than smaller films. While interviews with foreign distributors confirmed that such insights are broadly generalisable to other European film markets, this study calls for further analysis of how such gatekeeping networks operate and influence decision-making in other fields of cultural activity.

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Online supplement (not included in word count)

Appendix A1: the number of films released in the Dutch market by each distributor in 2009 and 2010.

Distributors	Number of films[22]	Percent	Cumulative
AFD	67	9.97	9.97
AMF	18	2.68	12.65

[22] Only films included in the correspondence analysis are shown in Appendix A1.

BFD	60	8.93	21.58
CD	27	4.02	25.60
CM	45	6.70	32.29
CNA	51	7.59	39.88
EYE	59	8.78	48.66
IF	38	5.65	54.32
ML	11	1.64	55.95
PAR	28	4.17	60.12
SPR	24	3.57	63.69
TWF	13	1.93	65.62
UPI	60	8.93	74.55
WB	52	7.74	82.29
WBU	36	5.36	87.65
WDS	22	3.27	90.92
eOne	61	9.08	100.00
Total	672	100.00	

Although there are differences between distributors in terms of the number of films distributed in the Dutch market in 2009 and 2010, each distributor represents at least 11 films, which is necessary to give some credence to the analysis.

Appendix A2: categorical variables correlated with the number of films in 2009 and 2010

Categories	**Number of films**	**Percent**	**Cumulative**
High admissions	62	9.23	9.23
Low admissions	477	70.98	80.21
Medium admissions	133	19.79	100.00
Total	672	100.00	
Dutch productions	84	12.50	12.50
Other countries	311	46.28	58.78
US-led productions	277	41.22	100.00
Total	672	100.00	
Dutch language	89	13.24	13.24
English language	378	56.25	69.49
Other languages	205	30.51	100.00
Total	672	100.00	
Festival awards	137	20.39	20.39
International awards	71	10.57	30.95
No awards	464	69.05	100.00
Total	672	100.00	

Appendix A3: Variables included in the multiple correspondence analysis.

Admissions	High admissions [> 250,000]	Medium admissions [60,001 – 250,000]	Low admissions [500 – 60,000]
Production country	US-led productions	Other production countries	Dutch productions
Language	English language	Other languages	Dutch language
Awards	International awards	Festival awards	No awards

Appendix B: Results multiple correspondence analysis

Multiple/Joint correspondence analysis

Number of observations	=	672
Total inertia	=	0.3714475
Number of axes	=	2

Method: Burt/adjusted inertias

Dimension	Principal Inertia	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Dimension 1	0.2084678	56.12	56.12
Dimension 2	0.1094341	29.46	85.58
Dimension 3	0.004623	1.24	86.83
Dimension 4	0.0016042	0.43	87.26
Dimension 5	0.0005169	0.14	87.40
Dimension 6	0.0001671	0.04	87.45
Dimension 7	8.04e-06	0.00	87.45
Dimension 8	5.13e-07	0.00	87.45
Dimension 9	4.33e-32	0.00	87.45
Dimension 10	4.33e-32	0.00	87.45
Dimension 11	1.20e-33	0.00	87.45
Total	0.3714475	100.00	

Statistics (x1000) for column categories in standard normalisation

	Overall			**Dimension 1**			**Dimension 2**		
Categories	**mass**	**qualit**	**% iner**	**coord**	**sqcor**	**contr**	**coord**	**sqcor**	**contr**
Distributors									
AFD	20	572	5	64	9	0	707	564	10
AMF	5	839	10	1699	836	15	125	2	0
BFD	18	825	3	215	171	1	582	655	6
CD	8	923	33	722	71	4	3457	852	96
CM	13	913	22	1425	696	27	-1027	217	16
CNA	15	891	18	1208	690	22	-900	201	12
EYE	18	868	17	1184	820	25	-395	48	3
IF	11	825	11	-32	1	0	1635	825	30
ML	3	816	3	1042	571	4	-942	245	3
PAR	8	446	5	-280	79	1	-832	367	6
SPR	7	876	19	-2011	832	29	-639	44	3
TWF	4	566	9	1491	561	9	-188	5	0
UPI	18	900	31	-1627	865	47	-455	36	4
WB	15	875	35	-1837	832	52	-583	44	5
WBU	11	838	9	893	522	9	-958	316	10
WDS	7	711	18	-1875	711	23	-11	0	0
eOne	18	575	7	-560	469	6	367	106	2
Admissions									
High	18	817	43	-1807	794	60	421	23	3
Medium	142	974	24	543	971	42	-42	3	0

Low	40	924	29	-1105	923	48	-44	1	0
Awards									
Festival	41	976	36	1028	665	43	-970	311	38
International	21	1036	40	-1768	925	66	-847	111	15
No awards	138	910	8	-33	11	0	416	899	24
Prod. country									
Dutch prod.	25	763	123	315	11	2	3544	752	314
Other prod.	93	904	75	1069	787	106	-570	118	30
US-led prod.	82	887	93	-1296	838	138	-435	49	16
Language									
Dutch	26	772	118	307	12	2	3385	760	303
English	113	870	62	-872	775	85	-421	95	20
Other language	61	890	93	1474	797	133	-693	93	29

The two dimensions together explain a variance of 85.58%, indicating a high level of reliability to the interpretation of the analysis. Most of the distributors are well represented in this two-dimensional space, with quality scores ranging between 800 and 926, but distributors AFD, PAR, TWF and eOne have lower scores and are less accurately described in the two dimensions.

The horizontal axis (dimension 1) largely structures the field. The admissions category, in particular, scores high squared correlations. By contrast, the low score for Dutch productions (11) and Dutch language (12) demonstrates the marginal impact of those categorical variables on this axis. However, Dutch productions and Dutch language achieve higher scores on the vertical axis (dimension 2), respectively 752 and 760, which is higher than most of the other categorical variables, revealing their importance to this axis. This becomes also clear in the column at the right of the table, which demonstrates the contribution of those categorical variables to this dimension.

Appendix C: the number of films distributed by different types of distributors correlated with admissions figures in the Dutch market

Year	Distributor type	Number of films	Admissions
2009	Hollywood Majors	81 films (23.0%)	18.4 million (65.4%)
	Major independents	132 films (37.5%)	7.9 million (28.1%)
	Specialist Independents	139 films (39.5%)	1.8 million (6.5%)
2010	Hollywood Majors	77 films (24.1%)	15.9 million (59.1%)
	Major independents	122 films (38.1%)	9.8 million (36.4%)
	Specialist Independents	121 films (37.8%)	1.2 million (4.5%)

Although the Hollywood major distributors distributed fewer films than major independent and specialist independent distributors, those films attracted much more viewers, demonstrating their dominant position in a small film market as the Netherlands. This table also shows that major independents typically deal with films that are being watched by fewer viewers than Hollywood majors, while films of specialist independents attract the fewest viewers.