

A Reel or a Raw Deal for Women in the Film Biz?

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1. Introduction

Helen Fielding's character, Bridget Jones, is supposed to typify a young, unmarried 30-something professional women of the 21st Century. Whether this is really the case, is debatable. What is not typical, however, is the recognition the film version of Fielding's novel and its director, Sharon Maguire, have achieved. In the Focus 2005 World Film Market Trends², Sharon Maguire and her film, "Bridget Jones's Diary", are listed as receiving the highest cumulative admissions in Europe for a European film from the years 1996-2004. In this Top 20 list, only one other female director appears, Beeban Kidron and her follow-up film *Bridget Jones: The Edge of Reason*; which coincidentally attracted the highest number of admissions in Europe for a European film in the year 2004.

Over the past 15 months, the Culture-Biz team has been writing another type of Diary. In 455 days, they recorded the status of women working as creators and managers in the film business in Austria, Finland, Germany and Portugal. Their first entry starts with an overview of their domestic film industries and with an account of the number of women working in the film business over the past ten years. Have the scales increased or decreased? In the months that followed, they recorded the number of women being trained and eventually working as professionals in the "super creative core³" of the business: as directors, producers, editors, scriptwriters and cinematographers of feature, short and documentary films. Their investigations did not stop there. They validated that success in the Euro-

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² European Audiovisual Observatory: *Focus 2005: World Film Market Trends*. Strasbourg: 2005. Figures on the cumulative admissions for European films in Europe are based on an analysis of around 80% of admission in 34 European countries for 1996-2003 and in 24 European countries including Turkey for 2004.

³ Florida, Richard: *The Rise of the Creative Class*. New York: Basic Books, 2002, page 69. Florida defines the Super-Creative Core as "scientists and engineers, university professors, poets, novelists, artists, entertainer, actors, designers and architects as well as the thought leadership of modern society: non fiction writers, editors, cultural figures, think-tank researchers, analysts and other opinion makers whether they are software programmers or engineers, architects or filmmakers. People in the creative class engage in this kind of work regularly; it is what they are paid to do."

pean film business is not only about “biz” in terms of company profits or admission numbers, but about “creativity” and recognition of artistic achievement through, for example, prestigious awards that can help launch careers and provide continuing support for projects. Are women more successful on the “biz” or “creativity” side of the film industry? This chapter will help provide some answers to these questions using the information and data provided by the four Culture-Biz country teams⁴ and published in their reports which follow this introduction.

2. Employment Trends in Cultural Activities and Occupations

In 2004, EUROSTAT published the results of a large scale study on Cultural Employment in Europe⁵ (2004) based on a new typology combining two different set of data from the EUROSTAT Labour Force Survey which cross tabulate:

- Employment in *cultural activities*, which counts employment in all cultural businesses (Economic activity of the establishment/NACE data);
- Employment in *cultural occupations*, which counts employment for all cultural professions (International Standard Classification of Occupation/ISCO data).

The results show that in 2002, the number of persons working in the cultural labour force in both cultural activities and cultural occupations in Europe was around 4.2 million persons; representing a share of 2.5% of the total employment figures. The majority of persons (70%) are *salaried employees* in, for example, public sector cultural institutions (in comparison to 85% for the overall labour market) while around 30% are *cultural operators* in the private sector as either employers (owning companies) or self-employed free lance workers (in comparison to 15% for the overall labour market).

The share of women working in the total cultural labour force was estimated at 46.4%; a slightly higher figure than the share of women working in other sectors (43.8%). This confirms the results of previous studies that there is a significant amount of women working in the cultural sector in comparison to other sectors and that there could be greater potential for women to advance their careers⁶. Does it

⁴ In order to capture the specificities of the national context, markets and cultures, a multi-methodological approach was designed, employing both quantitative (e.g. data collection) and qualitative (e.g. interviews) research tools and implemented by the Culture-Biz country teams.

⁵ Department of Studies and Prospective (DEP), French Ministry of Culture and Communication: *Definition and Production of Harmonised Statistics for Culture in Europe. Batch 1: Cultural Employment*. EUROSTAT, June 2004.

⁶ See two previous studies published by ERICarts; *Culture-Gates: Exposing Gate-Keeping*

make a difference whether they are working in the publicly subsidised side of the sector (e.g. in government ministries, publicly funded cultural institutions) or in the private sector culture industries (e.g. in companies or as freelance artists)? The Table “Women in the Cultural Labour Market in Europe” presented in the Introduction to this book helps us to answer this question: while the share of women working in the cultural labour market is quite high in comparison to total employment, their share as cultural operators in the private sector is just below 30%.

Breaking the new typology down, we can use the NACE (921) and ISCO (2455) classifications to isolate data for the film branch of the audiovisual industry. However, what we can see from the Introduction to this book is that while there is a significant amount of missing comparable data, EUROSTAT has been able to generate an EU average showing interesting results related to the film sector.

According to the “business” data produced under the NACE classification, women represent 40% of those working in the film business (motion picture and video activities); slightly below the share of women working in the total cultural labour market. This led to an initial optimism that we might find a reasonable share of women owning or managing film companies. However, this was met with the disappointing realisation of the very low share of women (2.97%) working as “self-employed with employees” (entrepreneurs) in the film business in 2003.

When examining related *occupational data* provided by the ISCO classification for the film branch of the audiovisual industry for “film, stage and related actors and directors”, we can recover from this last disappointment with the knowledge that women occupy on average 36% of film related jobs. The more important question to ask now is: which jobs or professions do they have?

Unfortunately, EUROSTAT does not provide sufficient data for all EU countries that would allow us to construct a European comparative analysis on the share of women working in the film industry in Europe over, for example, a ten year period. Whether we use the data produced by the NACE classification for film activities, the ISCO classification for film occupations or the combined typology, only general statements can be made. This was not sufficient for the Culture-Biz team to really locate women working in the film industry. Additional sources of information were consulted including:

- data provided by national statistical offices, trade magazines, professional directories to help identify the number of women working in film companies;
- members lists available for professional associations and filmographies which help to identify the share of women working in different professions

as film directors, producers, editors, screen writers and directors of photography of feature, short and documentary films; and

- film credits which were used as a cross reference or supplement to information provided by membership organisations.

The next parts of this chapter will focus on women working on the business side of the European film industry. It will be followed by section 7 on women in occupational fields on the “creative side”.

3. Women on the “Biz” side of the European Film Industry

The share of women working in the European film industry is approximately 40%. According to the Culture-Biz country studies, this figure has not significantly changed over the past 10 years. Yet, what is this business we are talking about? What do we mean by the European film industry?

European Film Industry – Film Industries of Europe

The over 100 year old European film sector was characterised as “art cinema” and defined by specific movements, schools of film-making as well as by individual *auteurs* – larger than life independent film directors. Today, the concept of European cinema is more often understood in terms of individual national film industries whose main goals are to achieve commercial success, to generate employment and to promote the culture and identity of a particular country. It is therefore more realistic to speak of a European cinema(S) industry which is vibrant but at the same time fragmented.

New challenges have generated a dichotomy of demands to both defend the fortress around the European film industries while internally opening the gates between nation states to enable “domestic productions” to cross borders. The first set of demands are a reaction to the international trade agreements⁷ created under the auspicious of the World Trade Organisation such as the GATT (trade in goods) GATS (trade in services), TRIPS (protection of intellectual property), MAI (protection of investment) and SCM (regulation of subsidies). Spear headed by the European Commission and some national governments, *protective* measures such as import quotas or the famous *exception culturelle*, have been proposed to defend European culture and cultural heritage, including the audiovisual and film industries against foreign domination of the European market as will be seen from the market

⁷ For a legal analysis of the European film industry within the WTO framework see: Herold, A. “European Public Film Support within the WTO Framework” in: *Iris Plus*. Strasbourg: European Audiovisual Observatory, 2003.

data presented in section 4 below. New geopolitical realities have led to the second set of demands which call on the European film industries to also reflect “contemporary Europe’s multicultural diversity within and across national boundaries”⁸.

Some argue that Europe’s cultural and linguistic diversity is one of the reasons why Hollywood has been able to dominate European markets and audiences with popular films which appeal to a mass audience. European films demand a “cultural competent viewer which simultaneously denies access to mass audiences in other countries who do not share or acquire the same competence”⁹. In the over mediated age of the 21st century, the European mass audience lacks the incentive and the visual communication skills required to engage in and embrace diverse experiences across their own cultural boundaries; as evidenced by the fact that less than 20% of admissions were recorded for locally produced films within national markets and that only 7.8% of admissions to European films were earned in EU markets in 2003.¹⁰ The effect of recent initiatives such as the Europa Cinemas Network to distribute European films which would not otherwise have access to European audiences are not yet known. However, the Culture-Biz country studies report the absolute importance of Europa Cinemas to distribute not only other European productions, but their own domestic works.

Efforts to create a pan-European film industry of creative individuals working together on common projects are promoted and financially supported by European programmes¹¹ of the EU (Media Programme) and the Council of Europe (Eurimage production fund). Progress has also been made on the legal front for the establishment of “European” film companies¹². However, according to the interviewees of Culture-Biz, there remain serious obstacles due to ill informed national bureaucracies which are not yet familiar with European laws or with transnational ways of working as well as practical challenges to overcome, for example, linguistic barriers when producing a film involving professionals working together from different countries. The sheer amount of administrative work required when engaging in co-

⁸ Bergfelder, T. “National, Transnational or Supranational Cinema? Rethinking European Film Studies” in: *Media Culture & Society. Volume 27(3)*. Sage Publications, 2005, p. 317.

⁹ Ibid, p. 325.

¹⁰ European Audiovisual Observatory: *Annual Yearbook for Film and Home Video, Volume 3, 2004*. Strasbourg: 2005, p. 33.

¹¹ Together they provided over 85 million euros to the film industry in 2003.

¹² More and more companies are applying to obtain a legal status as “European Economic Interest Group” (EEIG). The EEIG status was created by a 1985 Council Regulation (2137/85) and is a legal instrument allowing companies to cooperate with partners based in other Community countries for the realization of a specific project in a loose, flexible form of association and on an equal legal footing while maintaining their economic and legal independence.

productions across countries has recently become, according to one German film director, a disincentive for some to apply for funding from European programmes.

This debate may be some what in vain when heeding the warnings of Andre Lange who observes that it is becoming even more difficult to define the industry along either European or national lines due to the intermingling of primary sources of investment from around the world and the increasing amount of transatlantic co-productions which are co-financed by international partners. He provides the example of "European classified film" *Alexander* directed by Oliver Stone and "shot in Thailand and Morocco at Warner Bros' initiative, partly financed thanks to European, Japanese and Korean pre-sales organised by the British subsidiary of a German group. The cast are European and the post-production phase took place in France".¹³

4. Market Structure of the European Film Industry

The European film industries do not operate under the same market structure or economy as other industrial sectors; without public intervention, the European film industries would not survive. In this context, we need to speak of both "market" and "non-market" activities of the film industry; in other words, of profit making ventures and artistic production subsidised by direct and indirect measures; the latter will be addressed in section 6.

This section will briefly examine the overall economy of the film industry and will then locate women working in different professions of small to medium sized film companies as well as in the management structure of major companies which dominate the market. Are there more opportunities for women to work in small rather than large multinational companies? In which positions are they working?

Economic Value

In 2004, European cinema as a branch of the audiovisual *industry* generated over 1 billion euros in revenues; during the same period the members of the Motion Pictures Association of America (MPAA) generated 15.7 billion USD¹⁴. While new industrial strategies have been adopted to increase revenues to support the different areas of the sector, the overall prognosis for the European film industry, according to Lange¹⁵, is that it is in a deteriorating state and the majority of film production

¹³ European Audiovisual Observatory: *Focus 2005: World Film Market Trends*. Strasbourg, 2005, p. 4.

¹⁴ European Audiovisual Observatory: *Annual Yearbook for Film and Home Video, Volume 3, 2004*. Strasbourg, 2005.

¹⁵ Lange, A.: *The Financial Situation of the Various Branches of the European Union Audiovisual Industry*. Speech given to an Italian EU Presidency Meeting of Experts on the Reform of Instruments to Encourage the European Audiovisual Industry, Taormina, 15-16 November 2003.

companies are operating on a “financial water line”. On the other hand, there are voices of hope. According to Ben McLannahan, writer for CFO Europe online magazine, “Europe’s producers are now looking to wrestle market share from the Hollywood giants. Key to the revival is risk-sharing with co-producers, funding diversification and a portfolio approach to development slates. [According to Rasmus Ramstad, CEO of Svensk Filmindustri], this means reaching across borders to join forces with producers in other European countries [...] Although international projects can cost more and take longer to put together, the upside can be very high”¹⁶.

Market Share

According to the European Audiovisual Observatory¹⁷, the performance of European film companies has improved in recent years. From 2003-2004 there was a slight increase of 2% in the number of feature films produced in Europe from 750 films produced in 2003 to 764 films produced in 2004. Among the countries studied, they collectively produced 144 films in 2004, in other words, just less than 20% of the total European market: Austria (24 films), Finland (18 films), Germany (60 films + 27 co-productions) and Portugal (8 films + 7 co-productions); the majority of films are produced in France, (183 films in 2003). When compared to the amount of films produced in the United States (475), Europeans produced over 1.5 times more feature films than Hollywood Majors.

Despite the high level of European productivity, budgets for individual films produced by European companies pale in comparison to those of the MPAA: the average investment in one American film was 63.6 million USD in 2004; Culture-Biz reports that the average European feature film is made on a budget of around 1-2 million euros.

It is even more difficult or next to impossible for small countries, such as those in the Culture-Biz study, to compete with the dominance of American film productions for audience share. This figure varies from country to country and can be as high as 97% in Austria or as low as 47% in France. The market share for European films in the United States in 2004 increased to 4.7% up from 3.3% in 2003. Among the total feature films recently released in Culture-Biz countries, only a very small share were locally produced: 1.5% in Austria, 6.5% in Portugal, 17.5% in Germany and 22% in Finland (this is a high figure given the popularity of domestic film productions since the late 90s). Section 7 of this chapter presents data on the share of women as directors, producers, editors, screenwriters and directors of photography for these films.

¹⁶ McLannahan, “The Reel Deal” published on: *CFO Europe.com*, 21.09.2004.

¹⁷ Data is derived from the European Audiovisual Observatory: *Annual Yearbook for Film and Home Video, Volume 3, 2004*. Strasbourg, 2005.

5. Film Biz: Women in Decision-Making Positions

One of the questions of the Culture-Biz team was to determine whether there were more opportunities for women to participate as decision-makers in large scale vs small to medium sized film companies in Europe. This section will map the main companies controlling the film industries and situate women within their ranks. As shown by data produced by the European Audiovisual Observatory¹⁸, there are only a few companies which indeed control several branches of the film industries in Europe including development, production, distribution and exhibition. These are mainly foreign (American) owned companies and their subsidiaries. Their share of the European market in 2004 was over 70%; meaning that European companies – large or small – control less than 30% of their own market.

These American owned companies are the product of corporate mergers of media entertainment businesses which first took place during the 1980s. In the beginning they were fierce competitors of government owned monopolies and later became the new “lords of the global village”¹⁹. By the 90s, there were 10 mega media-conglomerates that had acquired large and small companies spanning across the culture industries to include: newspaper, book and periodical publishing companies, television and radio broadcasters, sound recording and film businesses (*diagonal integration*). As part of an economic strategy to gain market power, they bought up operations / businesses across the value chain of cultural production (*vertical integration*). But they did not stop there. These multi-media empires also came to hold interests in telecommunication companies, public water and energy utilities, sport teams, advertising companies, computer firms, military defence, investment firms, industrial development and manufacturing companies. According to Bert W. McChesney, we are now living in a global but “small world of big conglomerates”²⁰ which mainly originate from the United States. They are: Disney, General Electric, News Corporation, Viacom, Vivendi, Sony, Bertelsmann, AT&T, Liberty Media and AOL/Time Warner; the latter company was the result of the largest merger in corporate history valued at over USD 165 billion in 2002 (and later dismantled in 2004). These corporations have been largely unrestrained by government regulations and now control the means to produce and distribute ideas and images which define popular global culture.

¹⁸ Figures derived from two publications of the European Audiovisual Observatory: *Annual Yearbook for Film and Home Video, Volume 3, 2004*. Strasbourg, 2005 and *Focus 2005: World Film Market Trends*. Strasbourg, 2005.

¹⁹ Bagdikian, Ben. “The Lords of the Global Village” in: *The Nation Magazine*. June 12, 1989.

²⁰ McChesney, R. W. “The New Global Media: It’s a Small World of Big Conglomerates” in: *The Nation Magazine*. November 29, 1999.

According to the list of top film companies in Europe produced by the European Audiovisual Observatory (ranked according to operating revenues), several are major players operating in at least three branches of the European film industries (production, distribution, exhibition, rights management). Among them (both American and European) are:

- Disney (Walt Disney International Ltd);
- Time Warner (Time Warner Entertainment Ltd);
- Pathé (Group Pathé, France);
- UGC;
- Vivendi (Group Canal+, Universal Pictures Production Ltd);
- Fininvest (Medusa Film, Italy);
- Kinopolis Group (Belgium);
- Cecchi Gori Group (Italy);
- Sony (Columbia Pictures) and
- The Bonnier Group (AB Svenk Filmindustri, Sweden).

Our initial intent was to study the share of women on the executive boards and management teams of the corporations dividing the data between 1) parent companies and 2) their film groups. However, not all companies have this multi tier management structure (e.g. Disney or Pathé). In other cases, it was difficult to determine the difference between the executive board and management team of both or either of the parent companies and their film groups. For some companies such as UGC and Cecchi Gori Group, there is no public information available on their corporate or management structure. Not all hope is lost. We were able to determine the share of women:

- on the *executive board of directors* of the parent companies which range from 0% (Vivendi Universal), 7% (Time Warner), 17% (Walt Disney), 22% (Kinopolis Group), 28% (Pathé Group) to 42% (Bonnier Group). In all cases, the presidents of the boards are 100% men.
- on the *management teams* of the parent companies which range from 0% (Vivendi Universal), 11% (Bonnier Goup) 12% (Time Warner), 15% (Kinopolis Group), 17% (Walt Disney), 40% (Pathé Group)
- in *decision-making positions* of the film groups which range from 14% (Time Warner), 36% (Canal+) and 75% (AB Svenk Filmindustri). In 2005, Donna Langley was named Universal Pictures President of Film Production.

A closer examination of the information which is available shows that the majority of women on the management teams of the parent companies are executives of corporate communication, marketing, human resources, finance, and administration. In the case of Fininvest (owner of Medusa Films), the executive positions are

occupied by several members of the Berlusconi Family including Marina and Barbara Berlusconi. Bonnier Group – a member of the Nordic media conglomerates - is also a family owned and run media company with several members of the family sitting on the board of directors. While there is an astounding share of women both on the Bonnier board of directors of the overall company and even more so in decision-making positions of their film group, the film production division shows less inspiring results: only one woman responsible for production coordination. This is also the case for the Group Pathé which shows a high share of women on the management team of the parent company, but no women employed as film producers within the company (of which there are 6). Many companies refused to provide us with adequate information and in some cases, to even take our telephone calls.

Two other major film production companies in Europe were studied, namely Studiocanal France (of Canal+) and Gaumont – one of the oldest film studios which employed, Alice Guy Blaché - the first female director in the motion picture industry and perhaps the first ever director of a fictional film and of a film shot in colour. The results are promising. The share of women on the executive management team of Studiocanal is 56% occupying positions such as director/manager of international sales, communication, human resources, press and PR. In the case of Gaumont, women occupy similar executive positions, yet their share is much less, representing 27% on the management team of Gaumont Film Productions.

Film Distribution

Culture-Biz country studies report that there is a high penetration rate of foreign companies (mainly American) which have bought out and control the main film distribution channels in Europe. For example, one of the oldest film distribution companies in Austria, “Kiba”, set up to promote films of cultural value, was pushed out of the market by international film distributors such as Warner, Constantin and Universal. In Portugal, only a handful of foreign companies and their subsidiaries (e.g. Columbia Tristar) were responsible for releasing 73% of all films distributed. This seriously affects the circulation of domestically produced films within their own country, not to mention to travel into the wider European space as the main objective of these companies is to distribute economically successful block buster films. According to 2003 figures published by the European Audiovisual Observatory, only about 30% of all European films were distributed beyond their national borders. This figure drops dramatically when examining the figures for films produced by new member states of the EU; only 18 films produced by these countries were distributed throughout Europe, accounting for 0.01% of the European admissions in 2003. According to the German study, domestic films have a greater chance of being distributed if they have received support from national broadcasting companies than those

without such support. On the other hand, newly subsidised independent film distribution companies, set up over the past 20 years, have become important vehicles for domestic film makers to have their films shown in their own country.

The top “5” film distribution companies ranked by the European Audiovisual Observatory according to operating revenues (1999-2003) are: Warner Bros. Distributors Ltd (US subsidiary in England), United International Pictures (US subsidiary in the Netherlands), Warner Bros France (US subsidiary in France), Medusa Film (owned by Fininvest, Italy), Columbia Tristar Films GmbH (US subsidiary in Germany). These corporations do not only distribute films, but other entertainment products such as DVDs, videos, games, merchandise resulting from films etc.

According to the Culture-Biz country studies, it is almost impossible for local distributors to compete against these mega corporations especially considering the sums of money poured into by major distributors for marketing which is the key to success for a film. New films from other countries either do not find a distributor or they come only in a small number of copies into selected cinemas in big cities. It remains to be seen whether developments such as “video on demand” will help European films which do not have access to distributors and hence mainstream cinemas to reach European audiences by becoming part of television programming which is broadcast on TVs or over the Internet.

Again, there were considerable difficulties in obtaining information about the corporate structure of these companies and the share of women working in executive or managerial positions within the company hierarchies. From the information we were able to generate, we can find similar patterns of employment in large film distribution companies as in the vertically integrated companies discussed above. This means that, while there are hardly any women on the Board of Directors of these companies, there is a high share of women working as managers of marketing, sales and public relations. An example of “good practice” is found at Columbia Pictures Tristar Germany, where the share of women on the executive management team was 75% in 2005 including the CEO. The example of “bad practice” is United International Pictures Netherlands with only one woman on the management team (as publicity manager). Culture-Biz studies showed similar results that the share of women in management positions is very low (9% in German distribution companies) and that they make up the majority share as employees in positions of marketing, distribution co-ordination and PR.

Exhibition of Films

Large distribution companies usually have interests in exhibition channels, namely as owners of cinema houses and more recently of large multiplex film theatres now dominating the market. Requiring large scale investments, this development has

led to an increased concentration in recent years of cinema complexes and owned by United Cinemas International Multiplex and Odeon Ltd (both under the umbrella of the US investment company, Terra Firma), Europalaces (joint venture of Gaumont and Pathé, France), UGC (France), and Kieft & Kieft (bought by the Australian Group AHL in 2003); all of which are directed and managed by men. Their main interest is to earn maximum profit by programming Hollywood blockbusters, thus leaving little room for (less well marketed) European films to be released in multiplex theatres. According to the EAO, the highest concentration of screens in multiplexes was in the UK where approximately 59% of the cinema screens were located in multiplex theatres housing 8 or more screens. Belgium follows closely behind with 50% of the cinema screens located in theatres housing 8 or more screens²¹.

While, the national teams reported that there has been an increase in the number of admissions to nationally produced films, especially in Finland and Germany, the EU average is quite low at 26.3%. In 2003, only 3 European films were listed on the list of the top 50 grossing films in Europe. Another 12 were co-produced with American partners. A closer look at these films shows a dismal level of female directors among the top 50 grossing films in Europe.

Table 1 Share of Female Directors among Top Grossing Films in Europe, 1996-2003

	Total	Male	Female	%F
Directors of Top 50 Films in EU	448	435	13	2.9%
Directors of Top 50 European Films in EU	435	413	39	8.6%

Source: ERICarts compilation on the basis of top 50 lists published by the European Audiovisual Observatory 1996-2003.

In contrast to this low European average, the national reports show that female directors and their films are making some progress and their way up the charts. For example in Austria, the share of female directors among the top 10 films at the beginning of the 90s was 14% and rose to 22% during the period 2001-2003. In Germany, there was only one film directed by a woman who made it to the top box office lists at the beginning of the 90s. Ten years later, the share of female directed films on the top box office lists increased to 15%. In Finland, the share of female directors achieving box office success increased from 7% in the early 90s to 27% in the early millennium years. According to interviews conducted in Finland, “women directors are winning over a large share of the audience due to the nature

²¹ European Audiovisual Observatory: *Annual Yearbook for Film and Home Video, Volume 3, 2004*. Strasbourg, 2005, p. 18.

and content of their films which are focussed on socio-dramas – probing the resilience or breaking of the human psyche or personality under new social duress that is seen to prevail in today's Finland. Female directors and producers are also making children's films which are aimed at attracting parents. For example a children's film which was directed by a women attracted twice as many as Aki Kaurismäki's film "The Man without a Past".²²

The total number of cinemas in Europe is decreasing while the total number of screens is increasing as a result of large cinema chains. Diversity of supply is maintained by small niche distributors²³ which are members of Europa Cinemas. Created in 1992, Europa Cinemas is the first film theatre network devoted to increase the circulation of nationally produced films across their border into other European countries and to raise the number of persons attending these films. As part of the EU Media programme, the Europa Cinemas network also provides financing to cinemas that "commit themselves to the programming of a significant number of non-domestic European films and to organise promotional activities concerning European films for young audiences"; at the moment the network supports 479 cinemas in 264 European cities. In 2005, they initiated a programme to encourage the theatrical screening of short films across Europe.

While an extremely important and welcomed initiative to help empower the European film industry in general and European film makers in particular, there are very few women found among the top executives running Europa Cinemas: the Board of Directors is dominated by men (only 1 woman of 17 members = 5%), there are no women on the Management Board and few women on the Experts Committee (3 of 12 members = 25%). The picture looks better when examining the employees where women occupy 44% of the positions including co-ordinators of various programmes, international relations and events, general administration and accounting.

Small to Medium Sized Film Businesses in Europe

As described in the national report from Germany, many European film companies are either "independent" or "company-dependent"; the latter meaning that they are affiliated to public or private TV companies and therefore face lower financial risks in their productions and in the acquisition of new projects. In fact, the main employer, producer and distributor of films are national broadcasting companies across Europe.

²² See Culture-Biz Film Finland by Ritva Mitchell.

²³ In Finland there are 11 regional film centres located around the country which help to diversify the cinema supply through domestic film screenings and, provide contact points among film enthusiasts and amateur film makers. Their main goal is to promote film as an art form.

According to Andre Lange²⁴ of the European Audiovisual Observatory, it is very difficult to generate comparative data on the specific number of “independent” film companies across all European countries. Using the AMADEUS database of film production, distribution and exhibition companies, they can at best estimate that there are approximately 5 000 film companies in Europe. These are just estimates as there is no unified definition of what constitutes a film company. This makes it extremely difficult to collect and present comparative data.

The Culture-Biz country studies confirm that most European film businesses are small and medium sized companies, the majority of which are located in the main capital cities of different countries. They produce around 10-12 domestic films per year and employ less than 10 persons; mainly engaging freelance professionals to work on a project to project basis. Individual freelancers also have their own companies which are one-man or one-woman shows. They mainly produce “made for TV movies” and the occasional film for theatrical release. New companies are being set up for the purpose of one film production and dismantled afterwards; this trend is prevalent in the UK.

The data published in the Culture-Biz country studies provide us with more gender specific information. At the beginning of the study, we hypothesised that, given the structure of these small to medium sized companies, women would have a better chance of obtaining decision making positions in comparison to their lack of opportunities in large-scale companies with established hierarchies as noted in the data above. However, the data below will show that this is not necessarily the case and that their situation in SME’s mirrors to some extent their position in larger companies.

On the other hand, one strategy has been for women to create their own companies. Women whose careers are strictly focussed on the production side are more and more running small business structures which they either founded themselves or inherited from their family. Women have also been encouraged by colleagues to set up their own companies after successfully working for others. Those women who both direct and produce films set up companies in order to empower themselves by establishing the conditions to enable their own works to be made and distributed. While running their own companies, women also simultaneously work as “freelance directors” for other companies. Women as employees of film companies generally hold PR or marketing positions or are office managers, accountants or secretaries. Data from the different countries show us that in.....:

²⁴ Lange, A.: *The Financial Situation of the Various Branches of the European Union Audiovisual Industry*. Speech given to an Italian EU Presidency Meeting of Experts on the Reform of Instruments to Encourage the European Audiovisual Industry, Taormina, 15-16 November 2003.

Austria, approximately half of the film companies are one man shows and only a handful have 20 or more employees and/or have the capacity to reach international standards in terms of equipment, experience, financial performance, labour capacity and expertise. Out of the top 30 film production companies in Austria, 28% are owned by women, 23% are managed by women. Over 70% of administrative positions are held by women.

Finland, none of the 3 main companies engaged in feature film production is managed by a woman. One of them is a holding company which serves as an umbrella to 15 small companies producing advertisements and television programmes, some of which have been founded and are managed by female producers.

Germany, only 12 companies receive almost half of the total public film funding available, of these, approximately 20% are directed by women and 30% of them have women in their management teams.

Portugal, over 90% of the film production companies employ less than 9 persons; 15% are managed by women, another 15% managed by both men and women together, and the remaining 70% are managed solely by men.

Summary

The data shows that women are more and more occupying management positions in both large and small to medium sized companies as heads of sales, communication, human resources, financing etc., regardless of whether it is a film production, distribution or exhibition company. There is a noted difference between American and European owned companies, with more women working in the higher echelons of decision-making in the latter. Overall, women are more likely to work in the “film division” of media corporations than on the boards or executive management teams of the “parent company”; with the exception of family owned businesses such as the Bonnier Group, Sweden. However, even though there are more women working in these “divisions” they hold more “biz” than “creative” jobs as, for example, film producers or directors. An exception and perhaps a “major break-through” was seen in 2005 with the appointment of Donna Langley to President of Production for Universal Pictures. While there are more and more women managing smaller film production companies in order to have a greater degree of autonomy and to manage their work with their family life, their share is still quite low at 20%.

6. Public Support to the European Film Industry

Data provided in section 4 shows that European cinema can not be left solely up to market forces but that in the interest of creativity and cultural diversity, public support is imperative. Without public intervention the industry would not survive. For exam-

ple, in Portugal, 16 out of the 17 feature films commercially released in 2003 received support from the state ICAM (Institute of Cinema, Audiovisual and Multimedia).

Different types of public policy instruments are required to support both the “supply” and “demand” side of the European film industries. Such policy instruments are especially important in those countries which have very small markets in order to support independent producers and directors as they face a high concentration of foreign companies and products saturating local markets and influencing local demands. Indeed, Culture-Biz interviews with small and medium sized companies were full of complaints that they can not attract comparative levels of support for marketing and distribution as other major (US) producers enjoy which is imperative to generate “demand”.

On the *supply* side, public support measures can be both *direct* subsidies (e.g., to purchase state of the art equipment or for sub-titling/dubbing films in local languages) and *indirect* (e.g., content quotas to increase the number of domestic or European films on European screens, tax exemptions or preferential credit rates). Such support can be granted for longer or short periods of time and at different stages of cultural production: *ex-ante* for the development of film projects, scripts, etc; *ex-interim* for the realisation of film projects; and *ex-post* for distribution and marketing of completed film projects. Equally important are public policies and programmes to boost audience *demand* for domestic (or European) productions through, for example, promotion of European cinema in school programmes.

Public Policies

National policies to support film making in Europe have been designed to foster both the cultural and economic productivity of the industry. A brief survey of national film policies in Europe shows the following top ten priorities of governments:

1. Emphasise the cultural and artistic value of film production;
2. Strengthen the economic basis of the film industry so that it is capable of gaining its own share of the domestic market²⁵;
3. Provide support to current and new generations of film makers and producers;²⁶
4. Regulate employment relations between public broadcasting organisations and film makers/producers;
5. Prevent illegal copying and distribution;
6. Protection of cinematographic heritage;

²⁵ Considering the overwhelming market data presented in section 3 it is highly questionable whether this policy objective could ever be met.

²⁶ At the beginning of the millennium, 15% of the public budget for film production in Austria was given to “new comers”.

7. Protection of the rights and interest of the audience (classification of films, rating schemes);
8. Setting programme or import quotas;
9. Support for the distribution of films through either funding to film festivals or subsidies to distribution companies;
10. Setting criteria for their evaluation of film projects which either receive state funding or are given awards/prizes.

More recently, many governments in Europe have been or are in the process of amending their film laws and policies with the intention of creating new financing models for the sector. For example, in Portugal, a new *Film and Television Law* was approved in July 2004²⁷. Among other things, the new law created an investment fund that is co-financed by a specific share of revenues generated by film distributors, television distributors and operators, in particular cable TV operators.

While there are many policy instruments for the film industry in general, there are very few public policy or programme initiatives to directly support women as professionals in the film industry. The national studies for Culture-Biz provide some examples of both “good and bad practice”:

The City of *Vienna* has taken important steps forward. As a result of an effort to raise the number of women working in public institutions, the number of women working for the Vienna Film Fund was raised to 63% in 2003; 62% of the jury members are female. To improve transparency on the situation of women in the film industry, the Council of Vienna publishes a statement on the status of women, their film projects and initiatives in their annual Culture and Arts Report.

Public support for film making with the aim of supporting the local film industry and preserving *German* film as a cultural asset has been part of the country’s cultural policy for decades. Some specific policies and programmes of the *Länder* are aimed at women film makers. For example, two female film festivals supported by the *Länder* government of North Rhine Westphalia will now be joined into one festival taking place alternatively between Dortmund and Koln. A “Guide to Female Film Directors” was published in 2004 with public support and presents the biographies and filmographies of 136 female film directors (selected by a jury). An online edition is planned for 2005. The guide is aimed at facilitating networking among female film directors and provides no excuses for the associations of film directors to not include more women. It also shows that there is a potential resource of female directors that would make a higher share of women in key posi-

²⁷ The new Law, that revokes Decree-Law no. 350/93 of October 7, entered into force in September 2004 but still lacks the regulations to implement the law. Regulations of the new law will be drawn up by the next Government, according to an announcement by the Executive in December 2004.

tions possible. Culture-Biz Germany also records an „example of bad practice“: in the 1970s, mainly feminist film makers united to form the Association of Female Film Workers and demanded that women should receive a 50% share of all funds allocated to films, places in education and training and seats on grant-giving bodies. In 1987, the group appealed to the Constitutional Court against the Film Support Law (FFG) because the organs and grant-giving bodies of the FFA were all staffed with men. In 1988, the Constitutional Court rejected the appeal.

According to the *Portuguese* report, gender is a “recent political concern”. While the government has implemented a plan on equal opportunities for the whole of the labour market, there are no specific measures aimed at women in the film industry. There are, however, some initiatives taking place with the national broadcasting company aimed at providing opportunities for women to hold positions traditionally held by men: training courses have been set up for women who hold administrative positions to learn about film production techniques. An initiative within the broadcasting company includes efforts to bring about new modes of work in the organisation such as allowing more flexible working hours and programmes to provide more support for childcare.

Public Funding

The European Audiovisual Observatory estimated that in the early years of the 21st Century, the film and audiovisual industry received around 1.3 billion euros of direct funding from a variety of sources including: the state, regional/local governments, broadcasting companies²⁸, taxes/levies collected from cinemas, TV, video, cable subscribers, lottery funds and foundations²⁹. 56.7% of the total public funding went directly to the film sector, with a 2/3 majority given to film production and less than 2% given to development projects and script writing combined. According to their report, the level of direct aid to French film makers is by far greater than in any other country and represents around 38.7% of all funding available in Europe. While 1.3 billion euros may seem like a lot of money, in real terms, it represents less than 10% of the operating revenues of film production companies in Europe and does not necessarily end up in the hands of Europeans. According to Ben McLannahan:

“much of the money ends up in US hands—about 70% of the cash in German Medienfonds, for example, has found its way into Hollywood. In addition, qualifying rules can be rigid and arcane. There are ex-

²⁸ While there has been a recorded decline in the funding derived from the pre-sales of television rights by national broadcasting companies, the latter remain the main source of financing for film productions.

²⁹ European Audiovisual Observatory/European Investment Bank: *Public Funding for Film and Audiovisual Works in Europe – A Comparative Approach*. Strasbourg 2004.

tremely big legal complexities and obstacles in the way of obtaining funding, says Rasmus Ramstad, CEO of Svensk Filmindustri, a Swedish film firm. Unless you're a big producer that can surround yourself with an army of lawyers and accountants or tax specialists, you may be unaware of the opportunities that exist in Europe. What's more, there's a dwindling pool of bank lenders. In recent years traditional film financiers like Dexia BIL, ING, BNP Paribas and Deutsche Bank have all scaled back lending. According to Philippe Kern, secretary general of the European Film Companies Alliance, a lobbying group in Brussels, most have been scared off due to the highly specialised nature of the market, the low lending volume and the deterrent effect of past mistakes."³⁰

European funding programmes such as MEDIA + (for small companies to finance projects) and Eurimages (coproductions) are also extremely important sources of financing for the film industry, investing over 400 million euros since the early 1990s.

The Media Plus Programme of the European Union is comprised of three different funding programmes:

1. *MEDIA New Talent* for independent production companies whose projects are the result of one of the MEDIA programme training activities. EU funding covers 50-60% of the project costs. The total budget in 2004 was 770 000 euros;
2. *Development of Single Projects* for European production companies, registered for at least 12 months. Funding covers 50% of the eligible development costs for a work. The total budget in 2004 was 7 120 000 million euros; and
3. *Development of Slate funding 1st and 2nd stages* for European production companies which are at least three years old and have the capacity to carry out several projects simultaneously. The total budget in 2004 was 8 810 000 million euros.

While the results of the EU call for proposals are listed on their website, only the names of the companies and working titles of the films are posted. As the names of the directors are not included nor are the names of the experts sitting on the juries selecting the projects which receive funding, it is very difficult to determine whether the EU programme is adhering to the principles of gender equality in their decision-making processes. We can, however, mention the "New Talent Prize" for feature film scripts written by screenwriters younger than 35 and who were among the successful projects selected in the MEDIA NEW TALENT call for proposals. The award money is 50 000 Euros. This award was given for the first time at the

³⁰ McLannahan, "The Reel Deal" published on: *CFO Europe.com*, 21.09.2004.

Cannes Film Festival May 2004 to Duane Hopkins, UK and in 2004 to Peter Börjeson, Sweden.

In 2003, *Eurimages* - a Council of Europe fund for co-production, distribution and exhibition - awarded over 20 million euros in support funds. Research was carried out on the share of women sitting on the selection board of Eurimages (2004), on the share of female film directors which received support for the years 1991-1993/2001-2003 as well as on the amount of funding they received. The results show that:

- *Eurimages* is directed by a *Board* composed of the representatives of the Member States. It decides upon the policies and conditions of the award as well as on the projects to be supported by the prize. A president of the Board is elected (currently Jacques Toubon). There are 42 persons sitting on this Board of Management: 13 women and 29 men (31% women).
- in the early 90s, the share of women film directors which received funding from *Eurimages* was on average 19.3%. This figure did not change in the early 2000 years – with the average remaining at 19.3%.
- female directors receive significantly less funding than their male colleagues in actual financial terms. Figures for the period 1991-1993 show that women received on average 17.6% of the funds awarded. Again, the situation did not change in the period 2001-2003: women films directors receiving 17.4% of the award money.

The majority of *national film funding* goes into feature film production. The Culture-Biz teams investigated these public funds and asked about the share of women applying for and receiving grants from the state. However, this type of information was not easily accessible in all Culture-Biz countries. They all recommended that public institutions which provide film funding should include more gender-transparent information in the Annual Reports and thus monitor the ratio of projects submitted by women and amount of support they finally receive. This recommendation is not only aimed at national bodies but also at the EU Media Programme!

Data which was found indicated that the share of women receiving state financing for their film projects has in fact increased. The interviews suggest that it is, however, more difficult for women to receive financing for “larger-budget” feature films. According to a young Portuguese feature film maker, “feature film production continues to be the category that is least accessible to women perhaps not so much as a result of choice, but by means of exclusion. In this regard, the respective socio-economic mechanisms are highly complex and go beyond the realm of film-making”.

In *Austria*, the two most important institutions providing support for film productions are the Austrian Film Institute (funding provided by the Federal Chancellery) and the Vienna Film Fund (supported by the city of Vienna). There is no information available about the share of women applying for or receiving funding from these bodies.

In *Finland*, the main bodies providing funding are the Finnish Film Foundation (from funds generated through the lottery and channelled via the Ministry of Education and Culture), the Finnish Broadcasting Company (YLE) and the Centre for the Promotion of Audiovisual Culture (AVEK). Approximately 1/3 of the total applications submitted to these bodies were from women. They have been extremely successful in obtaining funding for short and documentary films and less successful in obtaining funding for their feature film projects. In 2002, the share of women film makers applying for and receiving Arts Council of Finland grants was 35% (applied) and 36% (successful)

In *Germany*, there are multiple actors on the Federal and Länder level providing support for film productions. There are also multiple types of funding available, such as *success funds* paid to producers whose films have achieved a high market share and *project funds* which have to be paid back depending on a film's success. In monetary terms, there was a 50% increase of additional funding made available in the past ten years from the state. The share and total number of female feature film directors that have received funding for their films has doubled, the share for producers has tripled. This is not the case for documentary films directed and produced by women. The number of women directors of short films has almost doubled during the last ten years and so did the number of women receiving funds for their productions. . However, it must be noted that the share of films made by women that receive public funding from the German Federal Film Fund was just over 20% in 2002/2003.

In *Portugal*, the Ministry of Culture's Institute for Cinema, Audiovisual and Multimedia (ICAM) is the main regulatory and funding body for film production. Funding for the film sector is generated from television advertising revenues. The number of female film directors receiving funding from ICAM increased from 19% in the early 90s to over 25% at the beginning of the millennium.

7. From Biz to Creative Professions: Profiling Women Working "Behind-the Scenes"

As we saw in section 2, the majority of persons working in the European film industries either have their own business or work in companies which employ less than 20 persons. With regards to women, the data presents a troubling picture: while progress is being made, women are still not well represented in top decision

making positions of either large media corporations (that indeed control the marketplace) or in small and medium sized film businesses. Could it be that there are more women working “behind the scenes” as professionals in the “super creative core³¹” of the film industry as directors, producers, editors, scriptwriters and cinematographers of feature, short and documentary films?

Data provided by EUROSTAT does not provide us with sufficient information to determine the share of women working in specific “creative” professions in the film industry. Another source needed to be found. The Culture-Biz team was inspired by an ongoing study being conducted in the USA by Martha Lauzen from the School of Communication, San Diego State University and called, “The Celluloid Ceiling”. This annual report from Dr. Lauzen monitors the share of women working “behind-the-scenes” as directors, executive producers, producers, writers, cinematographers and editors among the top 250 grossing films in the United States. Her latest 2004 data shows that the overall share of women in these creative film professions is in decline from 19% in 2001 to 16% in 2004. Trend data on individual professions collected by Lauzen for 2000 and 2004 shows that the share of female directors dramatically declined from 11% to 5%. Looking at the same period, there was also a decline in the share of female editors (from 19% to 16%) and writers (from 14% to 12%). There was, however, a slight increase in the number of female executive producers (from 16% to 19%) and cinematographers (from 2% to 3%). No change was recorded in the number of female producers (24%) during this time³².

The Culture-Biz team decided to follow a similar approach by examining the share of women working on publicly funded films and to determine which artistic positions they occupy behind-the-scenes. 5 main professions were studied including directors, producers, editors, screen writers and directors of photography for three specific genres of films: feature, short and documentary films. Is the situation better or worse for European female film makers in comparison to their American colleagues?

Before jumping into the results of the data we will take a slight detour and look at the potential share of women which could occupy such positions by examining the number of women being trained. We will then compare these figures to the share of women working on the top domestic film productions over a ten year period.

7.1 Forecasting Women as Future Film Makers

According to a recent EUROSTAT report on cultural employment in Europe, those employed in the cultural field are better educated than the total labour force: 40%

³¹ Florida, Richard: *The Rise of the Creative Class*. New York: Basic Books, 2002, p. 69.

³² Lauzen, Martha.: *The Celluloid Ceiling: Behind-the-Scenes Employment of Women in the Top 250 Films of 2004*. published on <http://www.moviesbywomen.com/marthalauzenphd/stats2004.html>.

of cultural workers were university graduates in 2002, compared to 24% for total employment.

The results presented in section 5 show that the majority of women working in large companies hold positions such as communication manager, PR, international relations, sales, administration etc. This reflects the results found in the previous Culture-Gates³³ study that there is an increasing amount of women studying these subjects. Women seem to be making their way from universities to companies and up the hierarchical ladder. What about the “artistic” side of the film business?

The Culture-Biz team was asked to study their respective film academies for the years 1992-1997-2003 to determine, on the one hand, the share of female students as future “film makers”, and on the other hand, the share of female professors who act as role models and “connectors” of students to the outside world, putting them into direct contact with TV editing departments, international financing partners, festivals, competitions, and public relations firms.

In general, the results show that there has been an increase in the number of higher level education programmes such as media studies and other audiovisual driven courses. Specific programmes for film production have also increased which has led to a certain “professionalisation” of the sector via training. The Culture-Biz country studies confirm this fact and show that there is a steady increase in the number of students enrolled in such programmes. The total number of students and graduates is, however, quite low with numbers ranging from 20 students per year to 1-3 graduates. Extracts from the Culture-Biz interviews help us to understand these low numbers. They seem to concur that while there is a greater number of cinema and audiovisual courses available which diversifies the range of opportunities, especially for women, formal education is still not the main pre-requisite for building a career in film production. In fact, the film industry continues to employ a high percentage of persons who are skilled rather than formally educated or trained to work in the business. According to one young Portuguese producer, “cinema is a Darwinist universe – survival of the fittest”. This sentiment is echoed by a German film maker who says, “each genuine talent can, shall and will gain success with or without university education – please no more universities or colleges for film makers. There are too many students for the market and for the funding available. We need a structure that prevents directors from falling into a pit after three years and two films”³⁴.

³³ ERICarts Report: *Culture-Gates: Exposing Professional ‘Gate-keeping’ Processes in Music and New Media Arts*. Bonn: Arcult Media, 2003.

³⁴ Others will argue that the increasing amount of new film professionals is not the problem, but rather the negative economic development and subsequent reductions of the workforce in the film industry is what caused the demand for jobs to exceed the number of jobs available.

Film courses were first introduced in *Austria* in 1952 at the Academy for Music and Performing Arts in Vienna (now University) which were later grouped under the *Vienna Film School* in 1998. At the beginning of the 90s, women made up 30% of the student population. This figure increased to 42% in 1997 and then again to 51% in 2002. In terms of professional fields, there was an increase in the number of women studying directing (from 33% to 40%), a large number of women studying to become producers (59% in 2002) and editors (78% in 2002). The share of women studying screen writing has declined from 40% in the early 90s to less than 30% in 2002. The most important development has been the enormous increase in the share of women studying cinematography: rising from under 10% in 1992 to over 50% in 2002. There has been a slight increase in the number of female professors. At the beginning of the 90s they represented 19% and this rose to 23% in 2002. The share of female graduates has also increased from 1 student in 1992 (total 3 graduates) in the early 90s to 6 female graduates in 2002 (out of a total of 13 graduates).

In *Finland*, higher education for the field of film was established in 1959 in the School for Camera Art. This eventually became the *School of Film, Television and Production Design* with its own department at the University of Art and Design in Helsinki (UIAH). There are, however, very few students accepted to study film production. Only 22 students were enrolled (12 men and 10 women) in 2004 and are streamlined into seven separate study programmes. The data shows that the majority of men study directing, cinematography, sound design – while the majority of women study screen writing and producing. There are two female professors of editing and documentary film making (5 male professors of screenwriting, cinematography, sound design, history of cinema and main chair of the school) and 6 female lecturers and course teachers (in comparison to 12 male)

In *Germany*, there has been an increasing number of female students at art universities and academies of film and media. Among the top 5 universities specialising in this field, none have a share of female professors which is proportionate the share of female students or graduates. Among the film academies distributed throughout the German Länder, the highest representation of women among film professors is 25% at the *University for Film and TV (HFF) "Konrad Wolf" at Postdam-Babelsberg*, the oldest of the five media universities in Germany founded in 1954. It also has the highest share of female graduates at 43.6%. The results of the German study show that there are more female directors and scriptwriters that graduate from film academies than their male colleagues.

The number of women studying at the *National Film and Theatre School in Portugal* slightly increased over the past ten years from 28% in 1992 to 32% in 2002 with the largest numbers of women still studying certain "female" fields and few registered in courses for, e.g., cinematography. During this same time period there was a slight increase in the number of female professors teaching various cinema courses yet their number remains dismally low at 2% of all teaching staff.

Overall, the results show that women have access to training which could lead them to key positions in the film industry. The four Culture-Biz country studies show that women are on their way to make up half of the film student population. A closer look at specific courses shows that the study field of editing is feminised. Women are increasingly studying screen writing and producing. Despite the increase in the number of women studying cinematography in countries such as Austria, it remains a male dominated field of study. At all film schools, the share of female professors do not correspond to the share of female students and in fact is dismally low, especially in Portugal (women make up 2% of teaching staff). On the other hand, results from Austria show a positive development with the steadily increasing number of female professors over the past ten years.

The next section will determine whether doors to the professional working world are open to the growing number of female graduates, especially in professions such as editing, screenwriting and producing. Culture-Biz Germany, however, provides us with a gloomy overall forecast: according to Monika Lerch Stumpf who studied the careers of 700 students, only 3% of all film graduates find work in the field of cinema.

7.2 Women Working in Key Creative Positions

Establishing a professional career in the film business is not quite the same as in other fields. Competition is fierce. Newcomers who fail to make their first film a success will unlikely get a second chance; this is the same for graduates and non-graduates of film academies alike. A successful film may help to secure funding for the next project but does not necessarily guarantee a life long career as a film maker. According to Elke Baur “even those who have already made a name for themselves have to prove with every new project that they can keep up or improve the standard. Those who do end up at the ‘top’ usually try to keep their positions for as long as possible and do not voluntarily retire”.

Job profiles³⁵ for all key positions in film production - directors, producers, scriptwriters, editors and directors of photography - are defined and provided by their respective professional associations. These “job descriptions or profiles” show that film makers require a wide range of skills including artistic, management, technical, administrative and financial. As leaders of huge production teams, one could compare their role and responsibilities to high level executives or managers of large companies.

³⁵ The Culture-Biz team had the privilege of working together with Elke Baur, a professional film and television producer and scientist from Germany, who provided us with great insight on the dynamics of the film industry in general and professional developments in particular. The job profiles in this section have been provided by Elke Baur.

The majority of the key decision-makers in film productions are independent persons who work on a project basis either as temporary employees or on an honorarium basis. Some will have small companies which enables them to carry out several film projects at one time. According to Elke Baur, many of them are holding more than one key position. For example, screen writers are also directors or producers; editors and actors are at the same time directors. Due to digitalisation, more directors are also editors of their own films. Multiple job holding is less common among directors of photography.

Film makers do not necessarily work only on one genre such as feature film making but also create documentary and short films³⁶. In fact, the Culture-Biz studies show that the majority of film makers do not work only on film productions, but on also TV programmes or advertising campaigns in order to earn money between film projects. As in other art fields, film makers also work as decision-makers in funding bodies, as directors of festivals or as professors at film academies or universities.

It was assumed at the beginning of the Culture-Biz study that regardless of their working trajectories, large numbers of creative film professionals would be gathered in a common platform e.g., professional associations of directors or editors, similar to other art fields. After all, professional associations negotiate contracts and set industry standards for remuneration. It can be that representatives of professional associations participate in decision-making processes of either film funding programmes or perhaps even on juries of film festivals. Membership to these associations was to serve as a benchmark to help us determine the over or under-employment of women in certain professions. However, when examining the membership data collected by the Culture-Biz teams, there were large discrepancies between the number of members and the reported amount of professionals working in the different professional fields. For example in Austria, professional film related associations only represent 18% of those working in the film industry. Another curious finding was that there are more women working in the field than are members of professional associations. The Culture-Biz interviews helped us to understand why. They reported that these associations act as closed clubs – as boys networks which are very difficult for women to access or penetrate. Some of the Culture-Biz studies indicated that many women do not have the self-confidence or motivation to make themselves known in the field and therefore do not even register themselves in these associations or in directories or industry listings which would help to counteract the claim that there “are no women working in the field”. In Finland, for example, some female film producers have stated that they prefer not to become members of professional associations.

³⁶ More recently the boundaries between these genres are becoming less rigid as in the case between feature films and documentaries.

This reality only reinforced the Culture-Biz team's decision to examine the actual film credits of publicly funded feature, short and documentary films to locate women working as creative professionals in the film industry. The data provided below is cut two ways. We will first profile and examine the share of women in 5 main occupational groupings: directors, producers, editors, screen writers and directors of photography. We will then look at the data from the point of view of film genres, in other words, the share of women working on feature, short and documentary film productions.

7.2.1 Film Directors

Film directors are the main creative force in film-making, from the first planning stages to the production of the final film product. A film director must bring together dramaturgy, actors, language, music, and visual elements to form a film. He or she must lead and motivate all artistic and technical staff members. The director is responsible to communicate to the producer his or her vision for the film and identify the means of production needed. Directors arrange the script with respect to artistic and technical requirements, construct budget frameworks, commission research on the subject of the film etc. In co-operation with the producer, the director participates in casting and employing the artistic-technical staff. Together with the director of photography, the director works out a visual concept for the film including the overall story board and sequences for the different scenes. Together they choose film locations, design studio scenes, plan stunts, special effects and the use of special equipment. The director is also involved in choosing costumes, make-up and props. They also work out a musical concept for the film, either in co-operation with the composer (if original music is used) or through the selection of existing works and recordings. During the post-production period, the director produces the final cut/final version of the film in co-operation with the editor. This includes the supervision of speech synchronisation, music and sound recordings and final mixing, selecting a title and making the final optical or electronic colour correction. The director is involved in public relations and in the production of advertising or other communication material required to promote the film.³⁷

According to the Culture-Biz teams, the number of female directors has generally increased between the early 90s and beginning of the 21st Century. This is in stark contrast to the findings of Martha Lauzen in her study "Celluloid Ceilings" which show a stark decrease of female film directors in the United States³⁸. Let's take a closer look at the individual Culture-Biz countries:

³⁷ For more information: Bundesverband der Fernseh- und Filmregisseure in Deutschland e.V.

³⁸ Lauzen, Martha: *The Celluloid Ceiling: Behind-the-Scenes Employment of Women in the Top 250 Films of 2004*. published on: <http://www.moviesbywomen.com/marthalauzenphd/stats2004.html>.

In *Austria* the share of female directors of feature films has doubled over the past 10 years reaching almost 20%. According to the Austrian study, many of the new female directors are forming their own production companies in order to make it easier to produce their own films. The share of female directors belonging to the professional association for film directors is only slightly lower (23%). The share of female directors of documentary and short films is higher, reaching almost 35%.

In *Finland*, there was also an increase in the number of female feature film directors in the late 90s with approximately half a dozen female directors making more than one film at the same time. The relative share of female directors increased 6 times (in real figures the increase was from 2 to 13). The share of women in the Finnish Film Directors Association is 34% (or 32 female members). There was also an increase in the number of female directors of short films while there was little change in the field of documentary films.

In *Germany*, the share of women working as directors of feature films increased from 12.5% to 15% in the last ten years. These figures more or less reflect the number of female members of the Association of Film Directors (17%). There is a significantly higher amount of female directors of documentary films (34.3%), however there has been a slight decrease in their share at the beginning of the 90s (35.6%). The share of female directors of short films has risen over the past ten years arriving at 36% at the beginning of the millennium.

In *Portugal* there has been a slight increase in the share of female directors rising from 21-27%. This is higher than the share of female directors listed in the professional directories (only 17%). There is not enough data in Portugal from the beginning of the 90s to make any trend analysis in the field of short films or documentaries. At the beginning of the new millennium their share was not that much higher than in feature film productions 27.8% (short films) and 30.6% (documentary films).

7.2.2 Film Producers

The job of a producer is enormous. At the outset, the producer develops new ideas, looks for authors and directors, reads and assesses scripts. He or she is responsible for securing the overall financing of the production, and bears the financial risk. Therefore, producers must be very familiar with funding application processes, be able to draft and monitor budgets, negotiate with project financing partners such as international co-producers, TV-managers, distributors and sales agents. As almost all creative decisions have financial implications, the producer works very closely with the director and artistic team.

Once the framework of the project is established and the financing is secure, the producer concludes working contracts with the staff and with third parties which are commissioned during the production and post-production phases. In this con-

text, he/she must have knowledge of the employment laws and strictly observe legal working hours throughout the production (especially in the case when children are involved in the production).

Producers work out the shooting schedules in co-operation with the director and the production manager (who may be one and the same person) and become the liaison person keeping the production together. A range of skills are needed for this job including leadership to direct a huge amount of people, dramaturgical and organisational talent, knowledge of foreign languages, and the ability to steer a group which is usually made up of many large egos and sometimes conflicting personalities. Producers must be able to make quick decisions, flexible enough to implement changes at a moments notice and resolve complicated situations. A producer usually has several years of work experience in film and TV production before starting to work as a producer for a company or as an independent entrepreneur.

Following the production, the producer is responsible for public relations and marketing to promote the entry of films at important festivals and/or the exhibition of the films in cinemas.

The data collected by the Culture-Biz teams show that the share of female producers of feature films has also increased over the past ten years. There are significant differences between the Culture-Biz countries, for example, in the number of women producing documentary films which has increased in Austria, while their share has significantly decreased in Finland and Germany.

In *Austria* the share of female producers has doubled in the past 10 years from 6% to 12% in feature film production. This is also the case for documentary films (5% - 11%). There has, however, been a large decrease in the number of female producers of short films from 33% - 23%.

The share of women in the *Finnish Film Producers Association* is 33% (or 20 female producers). The number of female producers of short films has increased dramatically over the past 10 years from 10% to 44%. There was a slight increase in the number of feature film producers from 16% to 18%. There was, however, a decrease in the number of women producing documentary films dropping from around 30% to 18%.

In *Germany*, the share of female producers of feature films increased over the past ten years from 16% to over 20%. While the number of women producing feature films has increased, there has been a decline in the number of women producing documentaries (just under 30% at the beginning of the 90s and around 20% at the beginning of the millennium). Women make up ca. 30% of the members of the Producers Association in 2003. There is no trend data on the number of female producers of short films in Germany.

In *Portugal* the figures on the share of women producers of feature film productions show little or no change. Their share is less than 20% and well below their representation in professional directories (48%) The share of female producers of short films is 24% and of documentaries is 36%. These figures fall below the number of female professional producers.

7.2.3 Film Editors

In co-operation with the director, the editor is the person responsible for assembling the filmed material and for giving it rhythm, tension and fluency. Editors require a high degree of sensitivity and ability to realise the concept of the director, cinematographer and scriptwriter; making their stories come alive during the editing process. They also require a wide range of technical skills which, due to rapid technological progress, required continuous training.³⁹ The editor must be able to assess the effect of a scene and work out a sequence. The first editing is still largely determined by the script. In subsequent editing phases, the structure of the film may be altered through re-arranging sequences, re-editing and reduction. During the final editing, seemingly small changes are made. Sound editing is a specialised field and has major effects on the overall film. This job is done separately from the picture editing process and mainly by professional sound editors.

Results from the Culture-Biz studies show that the profession of editing used to be “feminised” – meaning that there was an overwhelming share of women as editors of feature films than men. However, the country data below shows that, within the period under study, the share of women as editors has been declining at an incredible rate (except in Portugal where their share has been increasing). A longer term analysis by Elke Baur shows that this process of decline has been going on for a much longer time in Germany: the share of female editors at the end of the 1970s was 88%⁴⁰ and at the beginning of the 21st Century was only 37%. Baur attributes this drastic decline to the change in the professional profile of “editors” caused by the shift from analogue to digital cutting techniques and therefore the profession has become a lot more attractive for men. She blames the lack of support for women to be “re-trained” which left the door wide open for men to take over. In Culture-Biz Germany, Baur writes:

“It seems that with the introduction of computer-based editing, the profession became much more attractive for men. Looking back, it has to be admitted that little was done for the support and further training of women in this professional area, and thus in Germany a female dominated professional profile was lost. When electronic analogue editing

³⁹ <http://www.bfs-cutter.de>

⁴⁰ Ibid.

came up first, many of the female editors left it to the (predominantly male) VTR technicians, leading to an increased share of men in digital editing. Further computerisation in the film sector will probably lead to fundamental changes in other professional profiles, making some of them even redundant. At present, women hardly profit from these developments, at least there is a steady decrease in the employment shares of women in the newly developing IT-professions. The importance of technical changes for the respective professional profiles has been under discussion in the professional associations for some time, leading to appropriate further training initiatives, e.g. for editors. However, there is still little indication that gender questions might play a role in the development of concepts for training or in addressing the target groups.”

Similar to Lauzen’s “Celluloid Ceilings” findings, there is a decline in the number of female editors of feature films⁴¹. The Culture-Biz studies show, however, that there are a growing number of women as editors of short and documentary films, suggesting that they have been pushed out of feature film productions.

In *Austria* the share of female editors working in feature film production has dropped considerably from 73% in the early 90s to 57% in the early millennium years. This figure is well below the share of women in Professional Association of Editors (88%). The share of female editors for short and documentary films has remained stable in the past 10 years with slight increases for both arriving at around 50%. These figures are less than in feature film production and are still below the share of women in the professional association of editors.

The number of female editors of feature films in *Finland* has decreased from 30% to 15% over the past ten years. A decrease of female editors is also evident in documentary films, but the contrary is true for short films where there has been an increase in their overall share but decrease in actual numbers.

In *Portugal* the share of female editors in feature film production has increased from 30%-42% in the past ten years. This figure is above their share in the professional directory (35%). The share of women as editors of shorts (26%) and documentaries (34%) is less than in feature film production.

7.2.4 Screenwriters

The film script is like the score of the film; it tunes all elements of the film into a harmonious composition. The film script needs to be interpreted by the artistic staff. It creates a sort of micro cosmos where characters live through conflicts and solve them. Work on a film script usually goes through four stages.

⁴¹ Lauzen, Martha (2005).

1. **Research:** The screenwriter constantly needs to verify his/her concept of the characters and make them as “real as possible” drawing upon the details of every day life experiences. Therefore he or she must acquire a profound knowledge of the subject of the story. This may be gained through interviews, studying relevant books or immersing oneself in a certain environment.
2. **Story Outline:** The exposé contains the core of the story, the artistic idea upon which the basic elements of the story are to be constructed. This exposé contains information on the venue and time during which the story is set, description of the main characters, perspective on the main conflict of the story, short description of the plot, climax and end of the story.
3. **Treatment:** The exposé is often followed by a treatment, a more detailed account of the story, outlined by scenes. It is descriptive, and does not yet include dialogue but a sequence of action, key scenes and locations. It clarifies how the main streams of action are connected to each other.
4. **Film Script:** The film script includes all dialogue, descriptions of locations and sequences in space and time, information on meaningful props, costumes, sounds, music, light, atmosphere and colours. Every film script tells a story (and is therefore a work of art in itself) and is at the same time an instruction for action during the film’s production. Film scripts are made up of two different levels of vision and sound: describing the images while at the sometime providing the dialogue between the characters. The final script also defines the amount of personnel, technical equipment and financing required to realise the film. It provides the instructions for the preparation and the shooting of a film, even when the screen writer is not on the set.⁴²

Screenwriting is a profession which has seen an increase in the number of women over the past ten years especially for the genres of feature and short films. This is in contrast to the decline of female screenwriters of feature films in the United States as reported by Lauzen⁴³. The only exceptions reported were in Finland and Germany where the share of female screen writers of documentary films has slightly decreased.

In *Austria* the number of female screenwriters of feature films has more than doubled in the last ten years from 12% to 26%, however this is below their share in the professional association of script writers (38%). An increase can also be seen in the production of short films rising from 22% to 38% and in documentary film making

⁴² Source and more information: <http://www.drehbuchautoren.de>

⁴³ Lauzen, Martha (2005).

from 15% to 42%. This development has been assisted by the Script Writers Academy and by its female president who initiated several programmes and schemes to assist women scriptwriters⁴⁴.

In *Finland* the share of screenwriters increased in the genre of short films (from 27% to 46%) and in feature films up from 16% to 23%. The contrary is true for documentary films where there has been a slight decrease.

In *Germany*, women make up around 35% of the members of the screen writers association. The share of women screenwriters of feature films has increased over the past 10 years from 15% to 20%. There has been a decline in the number of female screenwriters for documentary films from 39% at the beginning of the 90s to 36% at the beginning of the millennium. On the other hand, their numbers have almost doubled in the field of short film production reaching 37% in 2003.

In *Portugal*, the share of female scriptwriters of feature film productions has also seen an incredible rise from 14% at the beginning of the 90s to 33% at the beginning of the millennium. Women represent 36% of all scriptwriters of short films and 22% of documentary productions.

7.2.5 Directors of Photography (DoP)

The director of photography is responsible for the cinematography of the film in co-operation with the director and co-ordinates a team of camera persons and other required staff. He or she decides on the technical parameters of the film, especially lighting, image composition and camera work. In addition, the director of photography participates in the preparation of the story board, dividing scenes into camera movements.

Directors of photography must have both artistic and technical skills and are involved in all stages of film making from pre-production to production and post-production.

During the pre-production phase, the basic artistic concept of the film is developed and all necessary decisions concerning financial, technical and personnel are made. The director of photography is involved in all of these decisions. In addition, the DoP participates in selection of shooting locations, venues and buildings. He or she decides on the technical equipment to be used, takes test shots of actors, costumes, props, decorations and buildings and advises on additional shoots, the use of animation or other computer techniques.

⁴⁴ The *Sabine Perthold Script Writers Forum* actively supports women script writers in Austria to an amazing success on all levels: there has been an increase in the number of women studying script writing, women make up the overwhelming majority of top prize winners for script writing and female scriptwriters are involved in 1/3 of all film projects supported by the Vienna Film Fund.

The director, director of photography and editor jointly pre-select the material to be used in the editing phase. The final responsibility of the director of photography is to correct the light and colour of the film in a lab before the final copy is printed.

Whether in Europe or in the United States, female directors of photography are a rare phenomenon. In former times their low representation was blamed on the heavy weight of the equipment. The assumption that today's lighter digital equipment led to an increase in the share of women in the profession is hard to verify considering that the number of women as directors of photography has not really increased in the past ten years. According to a Portuguese director/producer, "easier access to light weight cameras will not improve the presence of women in the cinema. Just because someone has a light weight camera does not mean they know what they are doing; you need experience. Women are not stupid and do not need easier equipment. Instead they need a different status in society".

Data collected by the Culture Biz teams show that the share of female directors of photography of feature films has decreased in Austria and Portugal and has increased in Finland and Germany – despite the fact that in all countries their share is less than 10%. Their share in short and documentary films is much higher and has, in some countries, increased over the past ten years.

In *Austria*, the share of female DoPs for feature films is dismal and has in fact decreased from 3.4% to 2% in the past ten years. Not even the promises of new technologies have been able to help women enter this field. Their share in short and documentary films productions is much better where the share of women has in fact increased from 9% to 20% (documentary films) and 14% to 35% in the field of short films.

The share of women working as DoP of feature films in *Finland* was 0% in the early 90s and rose to 7.5% in the early millennium (real numbers 3 women).

In *Germany*, women make up 5% of the members of the association of cinematographers. While there were almost no female DoP in the 70s, their number has greatly increased in all fields, doubling in the field of feature film production (from 4% to almost 10%), in the field of documentary field production rising from almost 10% in the early 90s to over 20% at the beginning of the millennium. In the early millennium years, the share of female DoPs of short film productions reached 25%.

In *Portugal*, the situation is similar to Austria. Female DoPs have decreased from 12% to 9% in the past ten years. The share of women as DoPs of short films is 10% and of documentary films is 15%.

7.3 Women as Film Makers According to Genres

At the beginning of the Culture-Biz study, we were aware that there were more women working on short and documentary film productions and that feature film

production was mainly “a male bastion”. The data collected by the Culture-Biz teams proved our initial observations yet show some interesting developments when cross examining the different professions with the different genres. The tables below provide an overview of the rising and declining share of women in different professional fields and for various film genres (feature, short and documentary films). Data was collected on publicly funded films for the periods 1991-1993 and from 2001-2003.

7.3.1 Feature Film Production

Despite the overall increase in the share of female feature film directors, particularly in Austria and in Finland, the most prestigious genre in the business remains in the hands of men.

We should not be too disappointed, however. Developments in some professional fields have shown significant growth in the number of women over the past ten years such as producing and screen writing which could indicate that women are slowly but surely crossing the threshold from short and documentary films to feature film production. Indeed, many persons interviewed for Culture-Biz indicated that women only enter the arena of feature film production after first “making a name for themselves in the fields of short and documentary film production”.

While the majority of women still work as editors, their overall share is in steady decline to such drastic extents that in some countries it has changed from a female to a male domain. The few women working as directors of photography of feature films are disappearing (except in Germany where female DoPs are increasing – slowly but surely). One of the main barriers identified by the Culture-Biz interviews which prevent women from participating in feature film production is lack of access to sufficient financing required for high budget productions.

Table 2 % Share of Women in Key Positions of Publicly Funded *Feature Film Productions*

	1991-1993				2001-2003			
	A	D	P	SF	A	D	P	SF
Number of Funded Films	29	135	33	37	48	168	52	39
Directors	9.4	12.5	21.2	5.4	18.9	15.0	27.0	31.7
Producers	6.3	16.4	19.2	16.3	12.3	20.7	19.3	17.9
Editors	73.3	63.2	30.7	30.0	56.6	37.3	42.4	15.4
Screen-writers	11.9	14.9	14.3	16.4	26.1	19.2	33.3	22.9
DoP	3.4	4.1	12.0	0	2.0	9.6	9.3	7.5

Source: Austria (A): Mediacult database

Finland (SF): Finnish Film Archive and Film Database Tenho

Germany (D): Zentrum für Kulturforschung database for the years 1992-1993 and 2002-2003

Portugal (P): Institute for Cinema, Audiovisual and Multimedia (ICAM)

7.3.2 Short Films

The majority of “newcomers” start off their careers by making commercial ads, television dramas and producing short films before they tackle their first full-length feature or documentary film. The data collected by the Culture-Biz teams shows that the majority of women continue to work on short film productions in comparison to feature and documentary films. One of the explanations given in the interviews is that short films require lower budgets and due to their size, allow women to be the director, producer and editor of their own films. They have more control over the project and do not have to compromise or defend their vision against pressures of high level executives and / or big investors.

The data on professions below show that the share of women in all key decision-making positions has increased over the past ten years, even in the area of editing which has seen drastic declines in feature film production. The most notable increase is in the share of female directors of photography of short films; in Austria women represent 35% of short film directors of photography! Female screen writers of short films have also greatly increased, except in Finland where their share has not changed in a 10 year period.

Table 3 % Share of Women in Key Positions of Publicly Funded Short Film Productions

	1991-1993				2001-2003			
	A	D	P	SF	A	D	P	SF
Number of Funded Films	47	201	5	55	35	98	71	46
Directors	23.5	25.5	0.0	27.6	34.3	35.5	27.8	46.8
Producers	33.3	-	0.0	44.7	23.1	-	24.3	44.7
Editors	46.8	-	0.0	39.6	52.9	39.8	26.2	39.6
Screen-writers	22.6	17.1	0.0	46.3	38.9	37.0	36.4	46.3
DoP	14.0	-	0.0	4.8	35.1	24.6	10.3	18.0

Source: Austria (A): Mediacult database

Finland (SF): Finnish Film Archive and Film Database Tenho

Germany (D): Zentrum für Kulturforschung database extracted from the German Board of Film Classification and for the years 1992-1993 and from the German Short Films Catalogue for the years 2003-2004.

Portugal (P): Institute for Cinema, Audiovisual and Multimedia (ICAM)

7.3.2 Documentary Films

Most documentaries are made on low and sometimes on no budgets. Many functions are combined and are done by the same person, for example, the director may also be the screenwriter and another person may take on the role of producer,

editor and director of photography. Many documentary film makers use digital equipment for their editing and camera work.

Some of the Culture-Biz interviews have suggested that there are more women choosing to work on documentary film productions because of the style of film making. For example, according to a female director from Portugal, it is possible to use smaller cameras that help “to dismantle the barriers between the person filming and the person being filmed and allows direct eye contact to occur during shooting. That way there is more reciprocity between the person filming and the person being filmed. This style of film making is outside of the traditional separation or power games played between director, cinematographer and actor and therefore more attractive to women”.

The data below shows us, however, that there is a decline in the share of women in certain professions. For example, in Finland, we see a decrease in the share of female producers, editors, screen writers and directors of photography of documentary films. The data in Tables 2-3 lead us to wonder whether female film makers have graduated from documentary film making and are entering the “higher echelons” of feature film making.

We see the opposite trend in Austria where the share of women in all professions has increased tremendously. With a few exceptions, it seems that women working in creative professions of the film industry in Austria are making progress on all levels; even if their share may remain low.

In Germany there has been little or no change, except in the extraordinary increase in the number of female directors of photography. No trend analysis is possible for Portugal, except to say that the share of women directors of documentary films at the beginning of the 21st century was comparable to the other countries studied, while the share of female producers was much higher than in the other countries.

Table 4 % Share of Women in Key Positions of Publicly Funded *Documentary Film Productions*

	1991-1993				2001-2003			
	A	D	P	SF	A	D	P	SF
Number of Funded Films	35	55	2	16	23	109	82	13
Directors	16.3	35.6	0.0	26.3	34.5	34.3	30.6	31.3
Producers	5.0	28.8	0.0	29.4	11.9	26.1	36.0	17.6
Editors	45.0	60.3	0.0	57.9	48.3	52.5	34.0	50.0
Screen-writers	15.9	38.5	0.0	33.3	42.9	35.8	22.2	26.3
DoP	8.9	9.9	0.0	14.3	20.0	21.0	15.8	12.5

Source: Austria (A): Mediacult database

Finland (SF): Finnish Film Archive and Film Database Tenho

Germany (D): Zentrum für Kulturforschung database

Portugal (P): Institute for Cinema, Audiovisual and Multimedia (ICAM)

8. Achieving “Success”

Determining “success” in the film business is not always calculated in the same way as other professional fields which often value success as climbing a vertical hierarchical structure until one reaches the “top” given their formal qualifications and experience. Those working as employees in non-artistic professions of large film corporations may strive to achieve similar career goals. Indeed, some of the highest positions in the film industries are extremely well remunerated and are comparable to CEOs of other corporations.

As the majority of professional artists working in the film business are freelance workers, “success” will be measured in another way. Artistic achievement is rewarded in the form of either financial feedback (e.g. box office revenues from their films or receiving a large commission from a television producer) or recognition bestowed upon them by prestigious awards or positive critiques. Professional recognition of this kind is particularly important in countries with small markets which are captured by foreign companies and products.

The Culture-Biz interviews confirmed that producing an American style blockbuster is not necessarily everyone’s indicator of “success” and that there are other important (and perhaps difficult to obtain) goals which they strive to achieve in their careers, such as:

1. Establishing a viable company;
2. Producing their own films and have autonomous decision-making powers;
3. Living from the proceeds of their company;
4. Receiving a commission from a broadcasting company;
5. Receiving a grant from a national film funding body;
6. Having a large enough marketing budget to promote their films;
7. Participating in prestigious film festivals and winning awards (which ensures funding for their next film);
8. Achieving international or European recognition by producing a film which travels beyond its national border and is picked up by a foreign distribution company (this is especially important for those living in countries with very small markets).

Criteria upon which professional achievement is rewarded is set by “gate-keepers” which can either be individuals (critics), groups (e.g. evaluation committees) or platforms (e.g. film festivals). Together they have different types of economic or symbolic power to determine, for example, which films are submitted for competition at a film festival or whether the next film project is financed. They have the influence to launch an individual career and to support his/her continuing success. Their actions and decisions set standards upon which the criteria of “excellence” is defined and is

used, for example, when writing about the history of film and its main protagonists. As we have learned from our earlier studies such as “Pyramid or Pillars” and “Culture-Gates”, the contribution of women is generally omitted from history books – and in the context of “Culture-Biz” from film directories and databases - which suggest that the criteria upon which standards are decided must change.

In this last section, we will turn our attention to examine three different types of gate-keepers operating in the film business and examine whether women are among their ranks and whether this affects the level of “success” women achieve.

8.1 Critics

Those interviewed for the Culture-Biz study unanimously acknowledged that positive/negative critics in newspapers, on television and radio can make or break a film. Within the different countries studied, women make up less than 25% of all critics, except for in Austria where women account for 65% of the critics published in film magazines, top daily newspapers and 4 weekly news magazines. This figure is in stark contrast to Finland where the share of female film critics published in the main 16 newspapers is 11%. A look at the list of film critics employed by Screen International - one of the most important film industry magazines - shows a similar low share of women: among the 11 film critics counted in 2004, there were 2 women and 9 men (18% female).

8.2 Grant-giving Committees

Members of grant giving committees are also “gate-keepers”. Each country has a grant giving committee which is located either within or under the Ministry of Culture or at arms length via Arts Councils or specialised Film Funding Institutes. There are different types of project funds which they give for pre-production, production, post-production – which in many cases has to be paid back depending upon the success of the film. Funding is also given to producers of films whose audience figures exceed a certain level e.g. 500 000.

Members of these committees collectively take on a prominent role in the advancement or not of a career in film making due to the fact that the industry is heavily subsidised and film makers rely on public funding (especially from broadcasting organisations) to support their projects. According to the Culture-Biz studies, those persons elected to sit on decision-making bodies come from national broadcasting companies, private companies investing in film funds, professional associations, government bodies, etc. There are exceptions: for example in Finland, where the award committee of the National Council for Cinema is made up solely of professionals based on the principle of “peer evaluation”. It was hypothesised by the Culture-Biz team that the higher share of women on

funding committees would result in a higher share of women receiving funding for their projects. The results of the Culture-Biz national studies are mixed:

In *Finland*, the number of women on the jury of the National Council for Cinema outnumbered the men (60% women and 40% men). Figures show that there has been an increase in the number of women receiving grants rising from 21% in 2001 to 46% in 2003.

In *Germany*, the landscape is quite diverse with funding provided by the Federal government as well as by the individual Länder. Here we provide only one example of the North Rhine Westphalia Film Foundation. The share of women on the grant giving committee was 36%. The share of female directors which received funding from this committee for feature film production was only 10%.

In *Portugal*, there were no women on the ICAM jury at the beginning of the 90s. This changed during the period 2001-2003 when women represented 22% of the jury members. There does not seem to be a connection between the share of women on the jury and the share of women receiving funding: at the beginning of the 90s, women receive almost 20% of the project funding and ten years later this share increased to 26%.

With the exception of Finland, it can not be said that the growing number of women in grant giving committees automatically leads to more support for women film makers. Reports from the Culture-Biz teams show that there are hurdles for women to overcome within funding committees and it would be necessary for female committee members to do some “work from within” to help change attitudes and stereotypes of women film makers as demonstrated in the statement by Gabreile Röthemeyer, head of a Länder film funding institution. She was asked whether the “male committee members think female directors are in principle less capable”, she answered “yes” – “she will never manage” is something she often heard from male colleagues.

8.3 Films Awards

At the end of the 80s, several filmmakers from around Europe created the European Film Academy Awards (EFAA). Ingmar Bergman was the Academy's first president and today there are over 1 600 members who are European film professionals⁴⁵. Based to a certain extent on the Hollywood “Oscar” Academy Award system with all the glamour and publicity that it can garner, the aim of the EFAA is in fact, to counter the permeation of Hollywood films, creative professionals and ac-

⁴⁵ For comparisons sake, there are over 6 000 members of the American Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences. For more information on the European Academy activities see: <http://www.europeanfilmacademy.org/>.

tors in the consciousness of European movie goers and to unite the fragmented European film industries on a collective and high profile platform. Technically, the European Film Academy Awards and their ceremonies can provide needed publicity for the industries and help to promote European films across their borders. The jury is still out, however, as to whether the “Oscars” à la Europa really provide helpful “keys” which can potentially open up opportunities for individual future projects and financing as does winning a Hollywood Oscar. What we can ask is whether this platform is beneficial for women? Are they participating in the selection process? Are they winning these potentially prestigious awards?

Looking at the structure of the European Film Academy we find that there is still a lot of work to do. First of all, there are very few women on the Board of the Academy (currently made up of 19 members: 16 men and 3 women). Curious enough, the Secretariat is run entirely by women. Looking at the professional profiles of the main positions of those working in the Secretariat helps to address our curiosity. Main jobs are: financial assistance, co-ordination of selection procedure, press/PR, production assistant, accounting etc. These mirror the positions held by women in large film or media companies and tells us that the main executive and artistic decisions are taken by the Board. An examination of the EFA award winners from the periods 1991-1993 and 2001-2003 is disheartening: not one woman won any of the top awards including, “Best European Film”, “European Screenwriter Award”, “European Cinematographer Award”, or the “Prix Arte” (prize for a documentary film). One woman won the 2002 Achievement in World Cinema (Victoria Abril) and in 1993 Sally Potter won the Young European Film Director of the Year (this prize was cancelled in 1997).

How does the picture look in “nationally based film academies”?

The British Academy Film Award (BAFTA) was founded in 1947 – 20 years after the founding of the American Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences⁴⁶. Information on the structure of the BAFTA for 2004-2005 shows that there is a Council of Trustees (3 men as Academy President, VP and Chairman) and 12 “officers of the academy” comprised of 7 men and 5 women in positions of Chief Executive, Chair of the Television Committee, Deputy Chairman of the Film Committee and Chair of the Children’s and of Events and Education Committees. Women make up the overwhelming majority of the BAFTA staff: out of 37 positions there are only 11 men (half of which are technical staff). When examining the share of women who have won a BAFTA for best film, outstanding director, original screen play, editing, cinematography, best short film during the time period 1991-1993 and 2001-2004 we found the following results:

⁴⁶ There has been criticism that the BAFTAs are a mirror image of the American Academy “Oscar” Awards and that more American than European films enter competition and win awards.

- prizes for best director and best original screenplay were never given to a women during this time period;
- only two women won for best film (8.7%);
- 1 women won for best cinematography (12.5%);
- 2 women received the top editors prize (25%); and
- 6 women won the best short film prize (35.3%).

All except for two of these prizes were given to women during the 2001-2004 period, which could mean that there are slow but positive developments being made.

Results from Culture-Biz Finland provide more hope: the share of women who have received the Jussi Statuette (Finnish Oscar) has increased from 20% in the early 90s to 33% in the early millennium years. The first award to be given by the German Film Academy will be in Summer 2005; something to monitor in the future.

8.4 Film Festivals – Mangers, Jury Members, Award Winners

Film festivals are extremely important for European film makers. They are important marketplaces where investors, producers, directors can meet and deals can be made. Press coverage of important film festivals is extensive and can create a “buzz” about films that no PR budget could match. A bad review of a film screened at a festival can jeopardise its success at the box office and sometimes even distribution deals. In some countries, such as in Austria or Germany, participation at a film festival is an important precondition for receiving further film funding.

There is barely a day which goes by that somewhere in the world a film festival is taking place. These could be large “A-festivals” like the Cannes Film Festival, ones which focus on a particular genre of film making such as short, documentary or animation film festivals. Others specialise in, for example, sci-fi movies. There are a growing number of festivals devoted to specific groups such as children or women’s film festivals⁴⁷, gay and lesbian film festivals, black film makers festivals etc. According to Ken Turan author of “Sarajevo to Sundance: Film Festivals and

⁴⁷ Created in 1979 for female directors, “Festival International de Films de Femmes” is one of the most well know film festivals for women in Europe and takes place each year in Creteil, France. In addition to its festival activities, the organisers maintain an online documentation centre called IRIS which presents a database of films made by women and organised according to theme. It also maintains an online archive of films screened at previous festivals. While the festival, and the many like it being organised around the world are important meeting places for female film makers and for showing the increasing number of women on both the biz and creative side of the film industry, some criticise such initiatives for ghettoising women film makers outside of the mainstream and not doing enough to penetrate the closed circles from which they have been excluded. In many instances, the women’s festivals have experienced serve financial problems and faced a disinterested public revealed by low audience numbers.

the World they Made”, there are festivals with business, geopolitical and aesthetic agendas. All of them combined have become alternative distribution networks and industries unto themselves. There are emerging professional profiles of the “festival jet-setter” – flying around the globe searching for new talent, distribution deals and engaging in rights trading.

Turan provides several reasons for the explosion of film festivals around the world. Among them are:

- The desire of cities to host film festivals thereby building up their tourism industry (and hence economic development) by attracting visitors before and after the festivals.
- Independent and foreign language filmmakers use festivals as a “market-place” to earn money for their films and to have the opportunity to exhibit their films to a wide international public. This is especially important in the context of the domination of Hollywood films on local cinema screens pushing local talent out to the margins of their own market.

He quotes a *Variety* interview with Pierre-Henri Deleau, (former head of the Cannes Film Festivals Directors Fortnight) that “people are going to [so many film festivals] because the theatres are not doing their job to show films from the rest of the world”.⁴⁸ He furthers that, a lot of the foreign language films that would have had distribution opportunities 10 years ago do not get seen in cinemas anymore and are only shown at festivals; this shows the importance of festivals for linguistically diverse European industries.

On the *European* level there is a network of some 200 film festivals called “the European Coordination of Film Festivals (ECFF)”⁴⁹ which receives support from the EU MEDIA Programme. It organises conferences and workshops for its members on specific themes, e.g. subtitling, short films and diversity in Europe, the cultural and socio-economic impact of film festivals and encourages exchange among its members. It also supports a working group on “women and film in Europe” and hosts a database “female film workers in Europe” which aims to document the contribution of female directors, producers, screen writers and cinematographers and build a new history of film which this time includes women’s contribution. Unfortunately, the work which was started on this database in 2001 appears to have been stopped⁵⁰.

⁴⁸ Turan, K.: *Sarajevo to Sundance: Film Festivals and the World they Made*. London: University of California Press Ltd, 2002, p. 7-8.

⁴⁹ The board of directors of the ECFF is made up of 19 members who represent different film festivals throughout Europe. 7 of these members are women (=37%). The Executive Bureau of the network is presided by a man and the secretary general is also a man. There are 5 members of Bureau; 3 men and 2 women (= 40%).

⁵⁰ Perhaps the ECFF could learn from the work of the “First Weekenders Group” which

Given the significance of film festivals on the career paths of film makers, the Culture-Biz team decided to study three aspects: the share of women in the management teams, their representation on the award juries, and their share of awards.

Festival Management

The structure of the core team organising a major film festival resembles that of a film company. Key positions are: president, artistic director, festival manager, heads of production, programming, marketing, international relations, sales, press office, administration and finance. For the purposes of this study, a range of international feature, short and documentary films festivals were selected from across Europe in addition to the data collected in the Culture-Biz country studies.

Major *feature* film festivals which were examined place in: Cannes, Karlovy Vary, Locarno, San Sebastian and Venice. The results of our data collection show there is a high share of women working in the management teams of feature films festivals. With the exception of the Cannes Film Festival, women made up over 60% of the management teams (29% for the Cannes film festival). Similar to the data on the share of women in large film companies, the majority of women hold positions such as head of programming, communication, marketing, press, administration etc. None of these festivals had a female President. There are some examples of "good practice" from 2004: Cannes Film Festival had a female festival manager and the Locarno and Karlovy Vary Film Festivals each had a female artistic director. An example of "bad practice" comes from Culture-Biz Germany showing that there were no women on the management team of its most important and internationally recognised Berlinale Film Festival in 2003/2004.

A look at selected European *short* film festivals from Bristol, Clermont-Ferrand, Oberhausen and Tampere show a similar trend. The share of women among the management teams are quite high especially in Bristol (88%), Oberhausen (72%), Tampere (60%) and less so in Clermont-Ferrand (40%). The majority of women in these teams hold positions such as festival manager, programme director, public relations, programming, press, administration, sales and festival coordination. Women do not hold the top position as president in any of these festivals.

publish a weekly listing of films directed by women the first weekend they arrive at the box office in order to help raise box office numbers and have a direct impact on the industry. For more information see: <http://www.moviesbywomen.com>. This type of work is required more than ever as can be seen from Culture-Biz Germany which reports that historical information – spanning a period of 110 years - provided in the publicly funded German film portal launched in early 2005 provides information on only one female scriptwriter, one producer, one distributor and 17 female directors and mainly refers to the date of their deaths rather than their contribution.

We can find the same picture among the management teams of *documentary* film festivals. Data from festivals held in Amsterdam and Marseille show, once again, that women make up a large majority in positions such as programme head, festival managers, public relations etc. The share of women in the management team of the Amsterdam documentary film festival 2004 was 65%; in Marseille 58%.

Culture-Biz teams collected information on the share of women on management teams of the main film festivals which take place within their own country. The national data shows mixed results:

In *Austria* women are the directors of 2 out of the three most important film festivals in Austria: Viennale, Diagonale and Crossing Europe, and are well represented on the management teams.

In *Finland* there are 6 major film festivals which are mainly directed by men (except the Children's Film Festival in Oulu). Women are mainly directors of marketing (50%), head of information services (67%) or occupy lower level staff positions (83%).

In *Germany*, there are no female directors of documentary film festivals despite their contribution to the field and the share of female directors of short film festivals is 20%.

In *Portugal*, there is a low share of women in festival management (30%). Women are mainly found in PR/marketing jobs and some are involved in programming.

Juries and Award Winners

The juries of film festivals are in a powerful position. Members of the jury are a mixed of film directors, producers, actors, film critics, government officials and other artists. The jury members of large international festivals sometimes become a travelling group of "stars" which, according to Turan need "bodyguards" and a public relations team to ward off the "tabloid" style rumours which can swirl around them, not to mention other types of "external" pressures and "internal" prejudices they may face.

The majority of awards given at film festivals are financial. The worth of the "prestige" bestowed upon the winners can, however, far exceed the prize money by securing financing for the director/producers next film or films as well as opportunities to distribute their prize-winning film to a very wide and sometimes international audience which generates additional box office revenues. The juries and award winners of the festivals mentioned above have been examined. The results – especially among the award winners – are astounding (not outstanding!).

Among the major *feature* film festivals, the share of female members of the jury giving the main award for the Cannes, Karlovy Vary and San Sebastian Festivals have increased over the past ten years to reach over 40%. The opposite is true from

the Locarno and Venice film festivals where we found a decrease in the share of female jury members over the past ten years (29% at the Locarno festival and 22% at the Venice festival). The picture becomes drastically worse when examining the amount of female directors which have actually been awarded a top prize by these juries. Over the past thirty years (1974-2004):

- 5 female directors have won the Locarno Golden Leopard (out of 296 directors in official competition, 60 were female directors);
- 3 female directors have won the Venice Golden Lion (out of 293 directors in official competition, 38 were female directors);
- only 1 female director has won the Cannes Palme D'Or (out of 306 directors in official competition, 15 were female directors);
- no female directors have won either the Karlvyo Vary Crystal Globe (215 directors in competition, 31 of which were female directors) or the San Sebastian Concha D'Oro (248 directors in competition, 25 of which were female directors).

According to Culture-Biz Germany, the share of women among the members of the international jury of the Berlinale 2002-2004 was 50%. No woman won a Golden Bear during this time.

The share of female members of the jury giving the main award for *short* film festivals was as follows: the Bristol (16%), Clermont-Ferrand (37%), Oberhausen (55%) and Tampere (35%). As we saw in the figures above, hardly any female film directors have won the top film prizes despite the increasing share of women on the award juries. This is not the case in two of the short film festivals. In fact, the share of women winning prizes over the past ten years is higher than their share on the juries at Bristol (40%), Clermont-Ferrand (45%) film festivals. The share of women winning awards at the Oberhausen film festival during this time was 45%. An example of "bad practice" mirroring the results of the feature film festivals is the Tampere short film festival where no woman has won the top award over the past seven years (despite the presence the number of women in competition which represented 26% of entries).

Data from international *documentary* film festivals held in Amsterdam and Marseille show a similar picture: a reasonable share of women on the international juries in Amsterdam (35%) and Marseille (46%). This has not had any affect on the share of female directors winning awards:

- only 4 female directors out of 155 in competition over the past 10 years have won the top award at the Amsterdam documentary film festival
- only 1 female director out of in competition over the past 15 years has won the top award at the Marseille documentary film festival

Culture-Biz Austria reported a better picture where the number of women on the juries of the Viennale, Diagonale film festivals and of other important Austrian film awards has increased from 29% in the early 90s to 45% at the beginning of the millennium. The share of women winning these prizes has also increased from 14% in the early 90s to 42% ten years later.

9. Some Concluding Remarks

At the end of the film version of "Bridget Jones Diary", Sharon Maguire left the viewers with a mixed ending. On the one hand, Bridget got her man and held a full time job. On the other hand, work still needed to be done on some details of her life such as the increased units of alcohol and cigarette consumption. The pages of Bridget's Diary were filled with stories on the complexities of her life and not a step by step linear progression towards her "successes". She was, however, given a new chance, a new diary and an optimism to record a better future. What kind of ending have the Culture-Biz teams provided us with?

Their studies record both encouraging and discouraging developments for women working on both the "biz" and the "creative" side of the film industry. On the one hand, women are making their way up certain corporate ladders to obtain lead positions in large and medium sized companies as well as in the management of film festivals. Glass walls appear which divide women and men among the range of top executive positions; between communication, finance, human resources and administration and the "top top" executive positions of president or managing director.

Similar skills based developments can be seen when examining the share of women among creative professions with more and more female producers responsible for the financing, personnel and marketing of films. There is an increasing amount of female screenwriters which is a profession profiled as requiring "creative communication" skills. On the other hand, there are almost no female film directors working for major film companies, there are hardly any female directors of photography working on publicly funded feature films and the number of female editors which once dominated feature film making is in fast decline.

More and more women are setting up their own film companies and small but steady steps forward are being made for female directors of feature films. Very recent success stories from female directors such as Sharon Maguire and Beban Kidron, coupled with the insight from Culture-Biz Finland that a broad spectre of movie goers are more and more attracted to the subject matter communicated by female directors, gives us hope that a new Diary could record details of a different and even more promising future.

What we learned from the data provided on artistic recognition (see section 7) shows that there are almost impenetrable brick walls between the mind sets of award committees and the works created by female film makers. In addition, women still receive less funding for their projects in comparison to their male colleagues from both European and national funding or grant giving bodies; even though the actual amount of funding has increased over the past 10 years. Whether this has an

effect on the final production and therefore on the potential for their works to be submitted for competition at festivals is unknown. However, what is astoundingly clear is that works by female film makers do not make it into competition at the major European festivals and those that do, are not winning awards; despite the fact that there are more and more women sitting on the competition juries.

Criteria used to determine artistic excellence needs serious diversification from the core. Herein lies one of the largest obstacles to the circulation of works by women and their possibilities for subsequent and higher levels of funding for their projects. The increasing numbers of women's film festivals, of course, provide an important platform to at least have their works shown. However, these works remain out of the mainstream platforms.

As the film industries in Europe are heavily subsidised by the public sector through Ministries for culture and the media, arms length bodies and national broadcasting companies, gender mainstreaming policies apply and need to be enforced. As seen in the Culture-Biz country studies there are still very few specific policy and funding initiatives to support women film makers or women working in the film industries⁵¹. There are even less initiatives taken by private sector businesses who are mostly concerned with the bottom line and not societal goals such as achieving equality in the cultural labour market. Regular collection and publication of data on businesses may help to bring more transparency and facilitate action in the private sector. This may prove to be difficult given the lack of transparency in staffing structures of such companies.⁵²

The stories told by women in the film industry and recorded in the chapters that follow specifically point to a larger problem, namely the system of values which influence our perceptions / attitudes towards "equality" in general and the types of works created by female film makers in particular. Time and again the interviews reported that women are more accepted as producers, directors and writers of children's films than of any other genre. However, they propose that the question is not necessarily about cinema as an art form or about specific genres. Today, the centre of power of the industry revolves around complex economic mechanisms, business models and networks of which many women film makers reported they

⁵¹ The Culture-Biz studies show that the majority of public policies and programmes have concentrated on the professional roles played by men and women in the television sector. For example, the Austrian national broadcasting company (ORF) has installed kindergartens for staff members and have introduced new methods to organise work including more flexible management models and working times.

⁵² The majority of companies provide information on the CEO and executive management teams of their respective companies. What the Culture-Biz teams wanted to examine was the internal staff structure and decision-making processes as part of a more complex gate-keeping methodology developed in the ERICarts Report, "Culture-Gates" (2003).

are excluded from. Many interviewees said that the larger problem of the status of women in society is simply reflected in the film industries and that more work is required to facilitate a shift in the dominant values⁵³. Greater acceptance of their creative expressions on the one hand and managerial capacities on the other would increase their social capital and hence their level of independence, freedom and equal participation in societal not to mention cultural development.

⁵³ See also "Women and Men in Political and Business Elites: A Comparative Study in the Industrialized World" in: *Current Sociology*, Vol 52, No 3. May 2004. Of particular interest and relevance to the "Culture-Biz" study see articles written by Renata Siemińska, "Values" and by Brigitte Liebig and Silvia Sansonetti, "Career Paths".