

This item is the archived peer-reviewed author-version of:

Discourses of cultural diversity and inclusion in film policy : the case of Flanders (2002–2022)

Reference:

De Man Alexander, Willems Gertjan, Biltereyst Daniel.- Discourses of cultural diversity and inclusion in film policy : the case of Flanders (2002–2022)
European journal of cultural studies - ISSN 1367-5494 - (2024), p. 1-20
Full text (Publisher's DOI): <https://doi.org/10.1177/13675494241228937>
To cite this reference: <https://hdl.handle.net/10067/2031820151162165141>


 European Journal of
Cultural Studies

**Discourses of cultural diversity and inclusion in film policy:
the case of Flanders (2002-22)**

Journal:	<i>European Journal of Cultural Studies</i>
Manuscript ID	ECS-23-0167
Manuscript Type:	Original Manuscript
Keywords:	critical film policy studies, diaspora film and media, cultural diversity policies, Flemish cinema, critical discourse analysis
Abstract:	<p>This article examines how Flemish film policy actors and industry stakeholders have conceptualized, framed, and operationalized cultural diversity and inclusion over the past two decades (2002-22). Drawing on a critical discourse and interpretive policy analysis of policy documents and a series of in-depth expert interviews, we investigate how discourses of diversity in cultural policymaking are consistently shaped by (neo-)liberal continuations of deregulation, state neutrality, and marketization. This article identifies several discursive shifts over the years, highlighting their complex tensions with the persistent, liberal-egalitarian principle of difference-blind universalism. Framing these tensions as a major obstacle in achieving a paradigmatic policy shift towards the inclusion of ethnic/diasporic minorities in Flemish cinema, we advance a more comprehensive way of understanding why media diversity policies have, so far, proven inadequate.</p>

SCHOLARONE™
Manuscripts

1
2
3
4
5
6
7
8
9 **Title: Discourses of cultural diversity and inclusion in film policy: the case of Flanders (2002-22)**
10

11
12
13 **Abstract:**

14 This article examines how Flemish film policy actors and industry stakeholders have conceptualized,
15 framed, and operationalized cultural diversity and inclusion over the past two decades (2002-22). Drawing
16 on a critical discourse and interpretive policy analysis of policy documents and a series of in-depth expert
17 interviews, we investigate how discourses of diversity in cultural policymaking are consistently shaped by
18 (neo-)liberal continuations of deregulation, state neutrality, and marketization. This article identifies several
19 discursive shifts over the years, highlighting their complex tensions with the persistent, liberal-egalitarian
20 principle of difference-blind universalism. Framing these tensions as a major obstacle in achieving a
21 paradigmatic policy shift towards the inclusion of ethnic/diasporic minorities in Flemish cinema, we
22 advance a more comprehensive way of understanding why media diversity policies have, so far, proven
23 inadequate.
24
25
26
27
28
29
30
31
32
33
34
35
36
37
38
39
40
41
42
43
44
45
46
47
48
49
50
51
52
53
54
55
56
57
58
59
60

Introduction

While migrant and diasporic filmmakers increasingly gained access to mainstream European film production since the mid-1980s (Berghahn & Sternbergh, 2010), a plethora of well-established exclusionary practices still constrain their work and employment options. Research indicates that a range of factors contribute to these barriers, including educational privileges, informal, nepotistic, and discriminatory recruitment cultures, short-term and project-based employment strategies, and the predominantly white, male, and upper-middle-class nature of the industry's gatekeepers (Bhavnani, 2007; Grugulis & Stoyanova, 2012; Nwonka, 2015; Saha, 2016; Eikhof, 2017; Malik & Shankley, 2020; Brook et al., 2021). Hesmondhalgh and Saha (2013: 185) conclude that the cultural industries fail 'to create lasting and valuable spaces of cultural production that adequately embody the distinctive experiences and concerns of racialized communities'. While the above-referenced literature focuses on the cultural and creative industries (hereafter CCIs) in the UK, the European Audiovisual Observatory's (2021: 101) latest diversity and inclusion report suggests that despite many efforts, 'there is still a long way to go in order to achieve a satisfactory level of diversity and inclusion in the European audiovisual sector'.

This article features an interpretive policy analysis of discourses on cultural diversity and inclusion in Flemish film policy from 2002 until 2022. We take the establishment of the Flanders Audiovisual Fund (Vlaams Audiovisueel Fonds, hereafter VAF) in 2002 as the key policy and funding agency of the Flemish government as a starting point. This structural reform of the support system, alongside the implementation of the Belgian tax shelter system in 2003, fueled the professionalization of the Flemish film industry, resulting in a range of commercially successful and critically acclaimed films. Flemish cinema also became somewhat more culturally diverse in this period. In 2009, Kadir Balci, a Flemish filmmaker of Turkish and Albanian descent, released the semi-autobiographical film *Turquaze* revolving around a cross-cultural

1
2
3
4
5
6
7
8
9 relationship (authors removed, 2013). Since then, he has been joined by a handful of other filmmakers with
10 origins in the Kurdish regions of Turkey and Iraq (Bülent Öztürk, Sahim Omar Kalifa), Morocco (Adil El
11 Arbi, Bilall Fallah), Romania (Teodora Ana Mihai) and recently Ghana (Anthony Nti, Inès Eshun). Despite
12 their contributions, diasporic filmmakers in Flanders remain modest in number, and their works often
13 occupy the peripheries and interstices of the Flemish film landscape. The geographical, thematic, and
14 linguistic affordances of the vast majority of domestic productions in the 21st century, as well as their
15 casting decisions, continue to reflect a traditionally white and culturally homogeneous construct of
16 ‘Flemishness’ (authors removed, forthcoming). In recent years, advocacy groups have brought attention to
17 issues of social exclusion and the lack of (self-)representation faced by diasporic creative workers, urging
18 policy actors to take action. In response to their demands of reparative action, the VAF has acknowledged
19 ‘the diversity conundrum’ and emphasized its commitment to change.¹
20
21
22
23
24
25
26
27
28
29
30
31

32 While existing literature mainly concentrates on the inadequacies of institutional diversity policies in the
33 UK linked to strategies of neoliberalism, this article analyzes how Flemish film policy actors and industry
34 stakeholders have conceptualized, framed, and operationalized cultural diversity and inclusion over the past
35 two decades (2002-22). Who were the key actors with political power and what have been their dominant
36 expressions in language and practice? How do they reflect broader ideological underpinnings and how did
37 they materialize into the governance of Flemish film production? We systematically analyzed these
38 discourses in their imbrication with wider political-economic trends in and around Europe (cf. creative
39 industries turn) and rekindled proclivities of Flemish nationalism. The heuristic focus on a small European
40 nation (i.e. Flanders) and the longitudinal component of the research design allows us to uncover how
41 several discursive shifts on diversity and inclusion over the years have been consistently shaped by
42 normative ideas on cultural policy, state neutrality, and difference-blind universalism (cf. infra), resulting
43
44
45
46
47
48
49
50
51
52
53

54 ¹ <https://www.vaf.be/voor-de-sector/inclusie>
55
56
57
58
59
60

1
2
3
4
5
6
7
8
9 in little to no change. We argue that the restrictive ideological framework within which Flemish policy
10 actors and stakeholders negotiate their position vis-à-vis identity-related questions of power and difference,
11 withholds them from creating conducive spaces for ethnic and diasporic film practices. In so doing, we shed
12 light on and formulate new questions about how state support, funding mechanisms, and industry norms
13 (in-)directly shape the production of diasporic communities in film.
14
15
16
17
18
19

20 **Theoretical and methodological framework**

21
22
23
24 Academic research, policy reports, and professional testimonies provide compelling evidence that the
25 European CCIs suffer from systemic power imbalances, which disproportionately favor white, middle-
26 class, cisgender men (Cottle, 2000; Bhavnani, 2007; Randle et al., 2007; Eikhof & Warhurst, 2013; Siebert
27 & Wilson, 2013; O'Brien et al., 2016; Ozimek, 2020; European Audiovisual Observatory, 2021). Scholars
28 ascribe these imbalances to discriminatory dynamics on a political-economic level (e.g. the industries'
29 organizational structure and its project-based modes of production), while also signaling the need for social
30 and cultural capital - often understood as social privilege - to navigate the industry (e.g. personal networks,
31 informal recruitment processes, and unconscious bias) (Grugulis & Stoyanova, 2012; Nwonka, 2015;
32 Eikhof, 2017; Hennekam & Syed, 2018). Bringing together these macro- and micro-explanations, Saha
33 (2016, 2018, 2021) disentangled many of the complexities, contradictions, and ambivalences inherent to
34 the mediated production of race, cultural identity, and difference in a neoliberal, marketized context. His
35 work is quintessential for our premise that how policy actors and stakeholders have so far addressed the
36 diversity conundrum in and around Europe has mostly constrained, rather than fostered, and perniciously
37 shaped diasporic screen practices.
38
39
40
41
42
43
44
45
46
47
48
49
50
51
52
53
54
55
56
57
58
59
60

1
2
3
4
5
6
7
8
9 In the spirit of this widely acknowledged inference, scholars - mostly in the UK - have delved into the (lack
10 of) initiatives by public broadcasters and funding institutions to include more diasporic minority workers.
11 While Newsinger and Eikhof (2020) critiqued the more practical inadequacies of UK film policy, others
12 attended the discursive developments of these 'diversity debates'. Malik (2013, 2015), for instance,
13 documents a shift in policy discourses of the BBC from rhetoric infused with multiculturalist ideas to more
14 ambiguous discourses of cultural, and eventually creative diversity, each shift indicating 'an incremental
15 depoliticisation of race' (Malik, 2015: 91). Studies on film policy (Nwonka 2015, 2021; Nwonka & Malik,
16 2018; Moody, 2017) present similar findings, arguing that the UK Film Council in 2000 resonated with
17 New Labour's attempts to merge cultural aspirations of social justice with economic ambitions. They
18 consider the result a toned-down version of multiculturalism that circumvents discussions of power and
19 hegemony and that problematically implies that 'the absence of ethnic minority groups in the film sector is
20 simply an outcome, a condition that organically presents itself' (Nwonka, 2015: 10).
21
22
23
24
25
26
27
28
29
30
31
32
33

34 These discursive evolutions must be understood, on the one hand, in light of what Lentin and Titley (2011)
35 coined 'the crises of multiculturalism' and, on the other, against the backdrop of 'the creative industries
36 turn' in cultural policy. The first indicates a shift away from anti-racist, political approaches that seek to
37 recognize and accommodate difference in a pluricultural society towards more depoliticized, assimilationist
38 overtures of social cohesion, diversity, and citizenship, in which a post-racial, post-multicultural image of
39 the world is falsely thrown up. The latter refers to the fact that governments have embraced the market as
40 the most efficient and democratic way to organize the production of cultural goods (Garnham, 2005;
41 Hesmondhalgh, 2005; 2008). While these trends have been primarily observed in the UK, research on the
42 performances of national and regional policies in continental Europe suggests a similar shift from
43 multiculturalist to integrationist approaches (Bovenkerk-Teerinck, 1994; Leurdijk, 2006; Horsti & Hultèn,
44 2011; Saeys, 2012; Horsti, 2014; McGonagle, 2014; Awad & Englebert, 2014; Bjørnsen, 2014).
45
46
47
48
49
50
51
52
53
54
55
56
57
58
59
60

1
2
3
4
5
6
7
8
9
10
11 To better understand why both obsolete and newfangled discourses of multiculturalism, cultural diversity,
12 and inclusion in screen policies have been so inept, more empirical research is required. As Flemish film
13 policy has traditionally been a locus of Flemish nation-building that has, from the 1980s onwards,
14 increasingly devoted itself to more commercial imperatives (author removed, 2017), it offers a particularly
15 interesting case to unravel how institutional diversity policies emerge from a wide array of often conflicting
16 discourses. Furthermore, in 2002 the Flemish government established the VAF as a semi-autonomous film
17 fund and policy agency to assume several film-related competencies. The VAF is governed by a partly
18 politically appointed board of directors and operates within the normative, legal, and financial framework
19 negotiated with the Minister of Culture in the form of a management agreement. Nonetheless, this new
20 institutional framework served to keep politicians at arm's length and to avoid direct political interference
21 in selection commissions as they allocate public money for screenwriting, development, production, and/or
22 promotion. With the sector heavily relying on public funding (approximately 70% of majority Flemish
23 features between 2003 and 2019 made use of these support schemes), the VAF fleshed out as an effective,
24 technocratic state apparatus to connect with and shape the industry. Similar to other European film funds,
25 it facilitated the professionalization of the sector but failed to disrupt patterns of social exclusion and
26 discrimination. Zooming in on the Flemish case, our aim is not so much to examine the technical and
27 praxeological aspects of Flemish film policy, as to analyze how normative ideas on multiculturalism,
28 cultural diversity, and difference have been articulated, asserted, and/or contested on a discursive level and
29 how the meaning of such concepts has shifted over the past two decades.

30
31
32
33
34
35
36
37
38
39
40
41
42
43
44
45
46
47 Arguing that discourse and language are constitutive acts that are never neutral and always performed
48 within a specific socio-political context, we built our interpretive policy analysis (Yanow, 2000) on the
49 epistemological, theoretical, and methodological conjectures of Critical Discourse Studies (hereafter CDS)
50 (Fairclough, 1992; Chouliaraki & Fairclough, 1999; Wodak & Meyer, 2016; Joye & Maesele, 2022).
51
52
53
54
55
56
57
58
59
60

1
2
3
4
5
6
7
8
9 Firstly, we collected all publicly available Flemish film policy documents (n = 348) from 2002-2022,
10 covering legislative material, management agreements between the VAF and the Flemish government,
11 annual reports, policy notes and letters, parliamentary discussions, minutes of consultation committee
12 meetings, transcripts of speeches and meetings, etc. In addition, we conducted 17 semi-structured, in-depth
13 expert interviews with former and current policy actors and key industry stakeholders.² By analyzing film
14 policy documents over a prolonged period of time, thereby including documents that do not explicitly
15 reflect on diversity issues but that delve into wider, contextual factors, and by supplementing this vast
16 document analysis with expert interviews, we can move beyond the practice of simply reconstructing policy
17 debates. Instead, we adhere to Carvalho's (2008) call for CDS to focus on the dialectical relationship
18 between rhetorical practices within texts and their surrounding situational, institutional, and socio-cultural
19 contexts.
20
21
22
23
24
25
26
27
28
29
30
31

32 This allows us to critically analyze the discursive developments regarding cultural diversity in Flemish film
33 policy, connect them to broader ideological and philosophical lineages, and consider their political and
34 social repercussions. Furthermore, by adding a longitudinal perspective to the analysis of institutional
35 diversity policies, we contribute to our understanding of how discourses on multiculturalism, cultural
36 diversity, and inclusion are consistently interlaced with and shaped by divergent ideological lines of
37 thinking. While this article specifically focuses on discourses pertaining to the inclusion of ethnic and
38 diasporic minorities, it is essential to acknowledge that they cannot be understood in isolation from related
39 discussions on class, gender, and equality.
40
41
42
43
44
45
46
47
48

49 **Diversity without 'difference' (2002-9)**

50

51
52
53 ² The respondents of the expert interviews were provided with the option to have their interviews processed
54 anonymously, either partially or entirely. The names of the respondents are cited in this paper only if their
55 position and role in the Flemish film policy process are deemed pertinent.
56
57
58
59
60

1
2
3
4
5
6
7
8
9
10
11 Drawing on our document analysis and expert interviews, we discern three intertwined discourses used by
12 policy actors and industry stakeholders to address the diversity conundrum in the film fund's early years
13 (2002-9): creative diversity discourses, discourses of interculturalism, and justificatory discourses. While
14 the first two diversity discourses failed to unambiguously invoke questions of power and difference, the
15 justificatory discourses rationalized a 'difference-blind' policy and funding strategy.
16
17
18
19
20
21

22 *Cultural vs creative diversity*

23
24
25

26 One of the major themes of discussion in the first stage of the film fund addressed the concept of 'creative
27 diversity'. In fact, to install the VAF, two decrees were proposed in the Flemish parliament: one by Jos
28 Stassen (Agalev, the green party), crouched in the paternalistic idea that public film support must emerge
29 from cultural imperatives proposed through government initiative, and another by Carl Decaluwé (CVP,
30 Christian-democratic party) and Peter Vanvelthoven (SP), reflecting a more neoliberal approach in which
31 film was regarded as 'a virtually economic affair with a cultural component to it' (Flemish Parliament,
32 1999: 9) requiring state support but with the government's only directive function limited to safeguarding
33 an acceptable level of creative diversity. As the latter was approved, the VAF was set to pursue a culture
34 versus commerce two-track policy in which a wide range of creative expressions was to be supported,
35 ranging from mainstream to arthouse films. Aside from this concern for creative diversity, little to no socio-
36 cultural considerations were incorporated in the official documents of the VAF.
37
38
39
40
41
42
43
44
45
46
47
48

49 Apropos cultural diversity, a brief mention was included in the fund's very first management agreement
50 (VAF, 2002: 3), highlighting it as a strategic objective of the fund and a desirable yet vague and
51 unquantifiable condition to be achieved by the industry. However, the status quo was never really
52
53
54
55
56
57
58
59
60

1
2
3
4
5
6
7
8
9 challenged, nor were issues of multiculturalism truly present on the film policy agenda. Looking back at
10 this period during our interview, the VAF's Head of Content explained that,
11
12
13

14 'Diversity was more of an umbrella term to address a manifold of topics, but because it was such an
15 umbrella term, it didn't inflict any debate. It could easily imply a diversity of stories, ranging from
16 experimental video installations to audience-oriented films and everything in between.' (Interview
17
18
19
20
21 Karla Puttemans)
22
23

24 It is not so much that an appreciation of both audience-oriented films and arthouse productions is
25 problematic in and of itself. But once this creative diversity discourse serves to explain the funds' selection
26 strategy and to justify its approach to the diversity conundrum without reference to identity-related power
27 imbalances, it obscures issues of multiculturalism and difference. This must be understood in light of
28 Malik's (2015) claim that discourses of creative diversity - as they replace more culturally specific lexicons
29 - tend to depoliticize or even obscure diasporic issues of social exclusion and discrimination.
30
31
32
33
34
35
36
37

38 *Interculturalism*

39
40

41 In 2006, the announcement of an action plan titled 'interculturalism' by Minister of Culture Bert Anciaux
42 (Spirit, left-wing/regionalist party) engendered a discursive shift. This plan explicitly recognized the extra
43 barriers for diasporic and ethnic minorities in the cultural industries and held government institutions such
44 as the VAF responsible for addressing these concerns. Hence, Anciaux (2006) introduced a discourse of
45 interculturalism, premised on the construction of a reciprocal, 'intercultural' public sphere that embraces,
46
47
48
49
50
51
52
53
54
55
56
57
58
59
60
interculturalism, or even celebrates diversity and to which everyone is supposedly invited. As Anciaux favored the term
interculturalism, he rejected concepts like multiculturalism and cultural diversity. This anti-multiculturalist

1
2
3
4
5
6
7
8
9 vantage point was explicated in the Council for Culture's advisory document, which stated that in any
10 political approach to multiculturalism and cultural diversity,
11

12
13
14 'culture is seen as a natural, fixed, and therefore immutable social system (the 'essentialist' notion).
15
16 This form of cultural fundamentalism poses an important problem. The concept of 'cultural
17 diversity' narrows down to a container for problem statements where people seek certain forms of
18 ethnic-cultural deprivation and look for solutions. While this practice seemingly takes aim at
19 integration, it produces the opposite, namely segregation. After all, cultures are understood, here, as
20 closed entities and policies are conveniently predicated on counting the represented colors.'
21
22 (Council for Culture, 2005: 5)
23
24
25
26
27
28
29

30 The idea that the political project of multiculturalism paradoxically provokes pigeonholing and that its
31 rhetoric works in counterproductive and segregative ways not only lacks empirical evidence; it is founded
32 on a misunderstanding of its underlying theoretical lineages and is rooted in an irrational fear of 'identity
33 politics'. Fundamentally, it reflects the liberal-egalitarian adage of 'difference-blind universalism', which
34 argues that an individual's affiliations based on religion, culture, ethnicity, gender, and/or nationality should
35 not be taken into account in the distribution of rights and resources (Murphy, 2013, p. 80). This reveals the
36 ideological ambivalence of Anciaux's action plan. While it aims to address identity-related power
37 imbalances in the Flemish film industry, it uses a soft, toned-down language that refutes this strategy by
38 reiterating a difference-blind perspective. The enigma surrounding the action plan and its failure to
39 unambiguously address identity-related questions of power and difference (echoing the creative diversity
40 discourse), partly explains its ineptitude in producing structural change. The second part of the explanation
41 pertains to several justificatory discourses employed mostly by the VAF's leadership, to explain their
42 institutional and ideological limitations in adhering to Anciaux's demands for interculturalism.
43
44
45
46
47
48
49
50
51
52
53
54
55
56
57
58
59
60

1
2
3
4
5
6
7
8
9
10
11 *Justificatory discourses*
12
13

14 As we explained, the establishment of the VAF implemented an ‘arm’s length’ policy that prevented the
15 minister from directly intervening with the film fund’s strategies. While Anciaux issued an interculturalist
16 policy - ambiguous as it may have been -, the implementation was still in the hands of the VAF’s leaders,
17 the board of directors, and the independent commissioners. In response to the action plan, they mainly
18 discussed the roles that policy actors can or should take up vis-à-vis the audiovisual industry. Herein, the
19 VAF usually presented itself as a receptive and neutral funding institution of the Flemish government.
20 While the word ‘receptive’ implies that they are ‘not entitled to determine which projects are submitted’
21 (VAF, 2004: 19), ‘neutral’ suggests they ought to assess all funding applications independently from
22 questions of cultural identity and ethnicity, according to the principle of difference-blind universalism. The
23 VAF’s 2006 annual report included a paragraph on the fund’s approach to interculturalism, stating that,
24
25
26
27
28
29
30
31
32
33
34

35
36 ‘At the application level, migrants can just as easily submit projects as natives. They have as much
37 chance of getting funding, as long as they meet the criteria that apply to all applicants. It is true,
38 however, that, in practice, the influx of projects by migrants is rather limited.’ (VAF, 2007: 21)
39
40
41
42

43 This receptive conceptualization reifies the idea that the VAF depends on the cultural diversity among
44 applicants who request funding, as interfering with (discriminatory) industry practices exceeds its
45 competencies. In interviews with the first two VAF directors, Luckas Vander Taelen (2002-5) and Pierre
46 Drouot (2005-17), both vehemently opposed a steering policy approach, stating that cultural diversity
47 should naturally emerge from the industry rather than being a political priority.
48
49
50
51
52
53
54
55
56
57
58
59
60

1
2
3
4
5
6
7
8
9 'A steering policy is very, very, very dangerous. Before you know it, you end up in a policy where
10 you consider yourself 'ideologically correct', or 'politically correct'. A policy in which you try to
11 support important causes and so on, but in which you make horrible films. [...] I am naturally against
12 such a specific policy approach. My only standard was quality. Quality and talent.' (Interview Luckas
13 Vander Taelen)
14
15
16
17
18
19

20 'The question revolves around how you should assess a project. One might say that this or that should
21 have been prioritized but I don't agree. If it's good, it's good and it should get funding. The same
22 criteria should apply for all projects.' (Interview Pierre Drouot)
23
24
25
26
27

28 These discourses clearly suggest a passive and difference-blind approach to the diversity conundrum in
29 which governments should not intervene in addressing identity-related power imbalances. Instead, they
30 assume a meritocratic state of affairs for the Flemish film sector, where diasporic minorities have equal
31 power and opportunities. Throughout the interviews, this was confirmed by many policy actors and
32 stakeholders who vocally denied discriminative mechanisms in the sector.
33
34
35
36
37
38

39 Interviewer: 'What is your perspective on the idea that the Flemish audiovisual sector has been an
40 exclusive sector over the past 20 years?'
41

42 Respondent (producer): 'I disagree and I also say this during debates. I do not agree. [...] You need
43 to have enough people who choose to go to film schools. The Flemish audiovisual sector does not
44 comprise hobbyists. It comprises people with talent - not everyone who wants to become an actor or
45 director, makes it. So, you need to have talent and you need to go to a film school or follow a course
46 that allows you to grow sufficiently.' (Interview anonymous respondent)
47
48
49
50
51
52
53
54
55
56
57
58
59
60

1
2
3
4
5
6
7
8
9 By attributing the sector's cultural inequalities entirely to educational privileges and issues of talent, this
10 respondent suggests a 'deficit model of workforce diversity' where social inequalities are ascribed to a
11 deficient group that lacks the educational background, skills, and resources required to fully integrate
12 (Newsinger & Eikhof, 2020). This model fails to comprehend identity-related inequalities in relation to
13 specific practices and structures of (symbolic) power and privilege, repudiating the idea that diasporic
14 minorities witness additional industry barriers. This argument is further consolidated by what we coin 'the
15 myth of a progressive sector'. In discussing the sector's overall attitude, an interviewed producer claimed
16 that,
17
18
19
20
21
22
23
24
25

26 'This debate is being held quite often in our sector. We are, in that respect, a sector that does not
27 necessarily slow down, even though this is sometimes portrayed differently. There is a great
28 openness towards diversity and inclusion within our sector, like other artistic sectors. Artistic sectors
29 are often ahead of society, you know.' (Interview anonymous respondent)
30
31
32
33
34
35

36 The portrayal of the Flemish film industry as a progressive and meritocratic realm of equal opportunity
37 functions as a discursive strategy to naturalize the absence of diasporic minorities, putting the blame on
38 their supposed incompetence to integrate well into educational and professional structures. The biggest
39 problem of this discourse, in policy terms, is that it essentially helps to justify the idea that as a receptive
40 and 'neutral' film fund, the VAF is not allowed to interfere with the industry based on moral, ideological,
41 or political grounds. We argue that issues of cultural diversity are inherently political, and that policy actors
42 and industry stakeholders can thus not remain neutral. The difference-blind approach of 'doing nothing' is
43 just as much shaped by an underlying ideological framework as is any multiculturalist policy of recognition
44 and difference. It is an oblivious but common mistake to confuse a passive and distant attitude toward
45 structures of power and inequality with a neutral one.
46
47
48
49
50
51
52
53
54
55
56
57
58
59
60

1
2
3
4
5
6
7
8
9
10
11 The confluence of these ‘difference-blind diversity discourses’ (i.e., creative diversity discourses,
12 discourses of interculturalism, and justificatory discourses advocating for a receptive and supposedly
13 neutral film fund) has impeded transformative policy approaches as they delegitimize affirmative or
14 reparative action towards diasporic minorities based on their identity. The VAF did organize an
15 ‘intercultural film atelier’ once, comprising a number of workshops in 2008-2009. This measure was only
16 possible because it was not considered a large infringement on the notion that the VAF was not supposed
17 to exceed its receptive role, nor did it imply a subversion of the difference-blind selection strategies in its
18 regular funding schemes. As a direct result of the ‘deficit model of workforce diversity’, the intercultural
19 atelier aimed to enhance the influx of diasporic creatives through training and development schemes, once
20 again reiterating the idea that once diasporic creatives come equipped with the right professional skills, they
21 will enjoy equal opportunities.
22
23
24
25
26
27
28
29
30
31
32
33

34 The film fund leaders evaluated the intercultural atelier after one year and concluded that it problematically
35 underlined and perhaps even essentialized the ‘difference’ and ‘otherness’ of its diasporic participants. As
36 this would supposedly hamper their integration into the industry, the ‘intercultural atelier’ ceased to exist
37 after its first edition. While concerns of ghettoization legitimately tap into some of the intricacies present
38 in all anti-racist policies (see Saha, 2018), they do not justify the VAF’s return to inaction. We argue that
39 the rapid disappearance of the intercultural atelier emanates from (and is indicative of) the dominance of
40 the difference-blind paradigm in both discourse and practice during the VAF’s early years. The absence of
41 diasporic and underprivileged voices from the policy realm and the fear of identity politics not only gave
42 rise to a discourse of ‘diversity without difference’; it also produced a naïve approach of inertia.
43
44
45
46
47
48
49
50
51
52

53 **The silent years of neoliberalism (2009-18)**

54
55
56
57
58
59
60

1
2
3
4
5
6
7
8
9
10
11 This difference-blind *modus operandi* was continued in subsequent years, albeit with much less debate.
12
13 Due to the diplomatic skills of its leader, Pierre Drouot, and in the wake of a growing number of successful
14 films such as *Bullhead* (2011) and *The Broken Circle Breakdown* (2012), the VAF had acquired a solid
15 reputation. This allowed the VAF to claim a stable and relatively autonomous position in the political
16 landscape. This was paralleled by the conclusion of Anciaux's legislative term. The two subsequent
17 Ministers of Culture, Joke Schauvliege (CD&V, the Christian-democratic party, 2009-14) and Sven Gatz
18 (VLD, liberal party, 2014-9) were much more prone to the 'arms' length' approach, allowing the VAF to
19 mature from a film fund that merely allocates public money into an effective locus of expertise where new
20 policy strategies are conceived. Schauvliege pursued an 'integrated film policy' and transferred additional
21 film-related competencies from the Ministry of Culture to the VAF. As a result, the film fund's policy
22 duties became more comprehensive, and from 2014 onwards, the VAF supported the entire value chain of
23 the film industry.
24
25
26
27
28
29
30
31
32
33
34
35

36 Simultaneously, policy actors and stakeholders increasingly referred to the film sector as a 'creative cluster'
37 that generates economic value. In line with this prevailing 'creative industries ethos' (see; Garnham, 2005;
38 Hesmondhalgh, 2005, 2008), the commercial value of film production became the main justification for
39 public support. In correspondence with stakeholders (e.g. the producers association VOFTP) and other think
40 tanks (e.g. Econopolis), the VAF lobbied with various Flemish government ministries to develop new
41 financial support schemes for the Flemish audiovisual industry. These support schemes involved tax
42 incentives, funding mechanisms (i.e., VAF/Media Fund, Screen Flanders), and co-production agreements,
43 all of which were mainly aimed at attracting private investments to the local screen industries (authors
44 removed, forthcoming). This strategy was continued under Gatz, who emphasized that the film production
45 resources made available by the Flemish Government had 'a large return on investment' (Gatz, 2014: 23).
46
47
48
49
50
51
52
53
54
55
56
57
58
59
60

1
2
3
4
5
6
7
8
9 In pointing out the direct economic value of the film sector and its spillover effects on other industries, he
10 celebrated the existing support schemes. More so, he claimed that to further professionalize the industry, it
11 was important to sustain and develop a policy framework that stimulates cultural entrepreneurship.
12
13
14

15
16 The ‘creative industries discourse’, that prioritizes commercial values, gave rise to what Newsinger and
17 Presence (2018: 459) have labeled as a ‘corporate welfare system’ where public money is used to artificially
18 increase the size and economic activity of the commercial film sector, but where no efforts are made to
19 disrupt its undemocratic workings. Consequently, discourses on interculturalism and cultural diversity were
20 relegated to the background. When Schauvliege took office in 2009, she emphasized a bottom-up strategy
21 to diversity and invited the subsidized institutions of the cultural industries to propose their own objectives
22 through a ‘declaration of commitment’:
23
24
25
26
27
28
29
30
31

32 ‘The sector will become co-manager of the diversity policy and will thereby become co-responsible.
33 The cultural industries must make explicit their positions and missions regarding diversity. After all,
34 a diversity policy must emerge from a bottom-up movement.’ (Schauvliege, 2009: 17)
35
36
37
38
39

40 Similar to the management agreement, this declaration politely urged the VAF to cherish cultural diversity
41 as a core value without articulating concrete objectives. Furthermore, neither the document analysis nor the
42 expert interviews reveal that the VAF was involved in drafting or signing this declaration, or that any action
43 was taken on it. At heart, Schauvliege nor Gatz convincingly imposed upon the VAF a diversity policy of
44 any kind. Instead, they fully relied on the arm’s length principle, allowing the fund to increasingly pursue
45 an economically-focused film policy track (imbued with a neoliberal business rationale) whilst maintaining
46 a difference-blind selection strategy. Despite all that, many respondents naïvely described the VAF as a
47 non-ideological and supposedly neutral institution that need not be involved in shaping the industry based
48
49
50
51
52
53
54
55
56
57
58
59
60

1
2
3
4
5
6
7
8
9 on moral, ideological, or political grounds. This difference-blind attitude buried debates on cultural identity,
10 difference, and equal participation between 2009 and 2018, leading to no institutional diversity policies
11 being installed.
12
13
14

15 16 **Putting inclusion on the agenda: just for a while? (2019-22)** 17

18
19
20 In 2019 and 2020, new advocacy groups emerged and brought the diversity debate back to the policy
21 agenda, proposing a discourse of 'inclusion'. While the VAF has now exceedingly adopted this discourse
22 of inclusion, the following section demonstrates that some of its discursive and practical commitments
23 remain closely aligned with the theoretical lineages and commercial contexts of the creative industries
24 approach. Furthermore, the VAF's portrayal of this inclusion project as temporary indicates the absence of
25 a paradigmatic shift away from the difference-blind principle.
26
27
28
29
30
31
32

33 *Discourses of inclusion* 34

35
36
37 In response to the audiovisual sector's exclusive condition and in the wake of transnational activist social
38 movements (i.a., #Metoo; Black Lives Matter), several new, bottom-up advocacy groups emerged also in
39 Flanders. These groups support creative workers from underrepresented groups, demanding affirmative and
40 reparative action. Wanda Collective and Women in Film, Television and Media Belgium (WIFTM
41 Belgium, part of Women in Film & Television International or WIFTI), for instance, are independent action
42 groups that unite non-male filmmakers to challenge different forms of gender-based discrimination from
43 an intersectional perspective. Likewise, Represent was established by Belgian Malian actress Aminata
44 Demba to create tools for industry professionals to adopt more inclusive working methods towards ethnic
45 and diasporic minorities. The first tool, a questionnaire entitled '*Represent: change the narrative*', was
46
47
48
49
50
51
52
53
54
55
56
57
58
59
60

1
2
3
4
5
6
7
8
9 designed to compel industry gatekeepers to reflect on how their professional and creative practices relate
10 to questions of cultural diversity. As these advocacy groups were able to collectively raise their voices in
11 public debates, they introduced a discourse of inclusion, reframing the discussion.
12
13
14

15
16 An important affordance of this inclusion discourse is that it implicitly demands an active stance from the
17 policy actors and stakeholders in power. Rather than explaining away the absence of ethnic and diasporic
18 minorities as a societal heartache that the Flemish audiovisual industry inherits, it is here understood as the
19 result of the exclusive way in which industry professionals organize and practice creative processes.
20 Accordingly, this discourse denotes the existence of identity-related barriers and effectively invokes
21 questions of power. This disintegrates the notion of a meritocratic industry and renders untenable the idea
22 that policy actors can and should remain neutral by inaction. As this discursive regime gained momentum
23 and in a way became fashionable, the VAF reconsidered its position and adopted the term 'inclusion' in its
24 official policy discourses.
25
26
27
28
29
30
31
32
33
34
35

36 In recent years, the VAF has dedicated a significant amount of attention to this matter on its website, in
37 official documents (e.g. year reports), and during annual events (e.g. sector day). More so, the VAF
38 currently requires producers and filmmakers to reflect on how their proposal deals with diversity and
39 inclusion in application forms and claims to use this as an important criterion in the selection process. In
40 addition, the VAF explicitly seeks to set up more culturally diverse selection commissions and demands
41 stakeholders to suggest candidates from underrepresented groups. These developments have been
42 consolidated in the latest management agreement (2022-25) which includes more reflections on cultural
43 diversity, gender equality, and inclusion and states that,
44
45
46
47
48
49
50
51
52
53
54
55
56
57
58
59
60

1
2
3
4
5
6
7
8
9 'the VAF will employ a policy that stimulates diversity and inclusion, with respect for the specificity
10 of each project.' (VAF, 2022a: 9)
11
12
13

14 The VAF also launched a new action plan, entitled 'Inclusion' In this action plan, the VAF describes
15 inclusion as 'an active process that goes beyond diversity' (VAF, 2022b: 1). Whereas 'diversity' simply
16 refers to the surmise of difference within society, 'inclusion' ought to imply an active stance in which equal
17 opportunity is furnished by raising awareness and stimulating industry professionals, rewarding inclusive
18 creative processes, and removing barriers.
19
20
21
22
23

24
25
26 The fact that the VAF no longer hides behind its supposedly receptive nature as a film fund, that it takes an
27 active stance in this debate, and that it currently tries to mainstream difference rather than ignore it, can be
28 attributed to the above-described semiotic affordances of the language of 'inclusion'. This is an important
29 step towards a more democratic film landscape, particularly because the discursive progressions on
30 diversity of a film fund like the VAF play a symbolic role in setting the stage for diasporic (and other
31 minoritized) creatives to navigate the industry. Nonetheless, it is important to understand these recent
32 commitments to inclusion in their imbrication with other, potentially conflicting policy discourses and
33 recent political changes surrounding the VAF.
34
35
36
37
38
39
40
41
42

43 *Challenges of inclusion* 44 45 46

47 In 2019, a new Flemish government was installed with Jan Jambon from the Flemish-nationalist party N-
48 VA as not only the government's leader but also the new Minister of Culture. As we have explained
49 elsewhere (authors removed, forthcoming), this resulted in the fact that the already dominant neoliberal
50 ethos of the creative industries approach was amalgamated with a discursive reiteration of Flemish
51
52
53
54
55
56
57
58
59
60

1
2
3
4
5
6
7
8
9 nationalist values. Furthermore, the N-VA explicitly resists institutional diversity policies that impose strict
10 rules (e.g. quota) upon the industry. The divergent way in which these discourses are often positioned
11 against each other has produced an ultimately ambivalent policy context. Consequently, the VAF hesitantly
12 blends its discourse of inclusion - which in and of itself denotes a discriminative and exclusive status quo -
13 with tenacious friction towards policy and funding strategies that underscore questions of power in relation
14 to cultural identity and difference. In fact, the VAF's adoption of the discourse of inclusion is mostly
15 predicated on the rather meaningless utterance that 'equal talent deserves equal opportunity' (VAF, 2002b:
16 1). While no one can really disagree with that statement, the problem lies in how to assess talent and how
17 normative ideas on art, media, and film policy omit identity-related issues of power and social privilege
18 when refurbishing the ideal of a difference-blind selection procedure.
19
20
21
22
23
24
25
26
27
28
29

30 This ever-remaining friction withholds the VAF from taking measures that go beyond stimulating industry
31 professionals. Besides their discursive efforts and changing attitudes, its action plan also presented two
32 practical measures that are in the pipeline for the future. Firstly, the VAF has co-founded the New Dawn
33 film fund, a transnational cooperation that provides additional funding for film projects that specifically
34 resonate with the goal of a more inclusive and democratic European film landscape.³ The second measure
35 comprises an 'impulse bonus' for projects that benefit the inclusion of gender minorities, based on a number
36 of criteria. Both measures gear towards offering financial rewards for producers that adopt inclusive
37 working methods and thus aim to uplift the financial and commercial envelope of inclusive film projects.
38 However, this stimulating approach raises concerns as it can be seen as commodifying diversity and
39 inclusion, highlighting the tensions between the moral justifications of institutional diversity policies and a
40 neoliberal 'business rationale'. Furthermore, Aminata Demba pointed out that,
41
42
43
44
45
46
47
48
49
50
51
52
53

54 ³ <https://newdawn.film/>
55
56
57
58
59
60

1
2
3
4
5
6
7
8
9 'An impulse bonus is some sort of gift. It communicates that once you set out to become more
10 inclusive, you get a small bonus. In other words, if you clean your room, you get some candy. But
11 you can still choose not to clean your room. That way, you communicate to the sector that they can
12 opt for taking responsibility, but they are not obliged to. That is not truly standing behind your
13 decision or genuinely believing that structural changes must be made.' (Interview Aminata Demba)
14
15
16
17
18
19

20 In other words, while the VAF may have chosen to alter its discourses and partly adjust its functioning, it
21 still refuses to impose upon the industry a radical rejection of discrimination, marginalization, and exclusion
22 at all costs.
23
24
25
26
27

28 Demba's critique mirrors Ahmed's genealogy of the 'lip-service model of diversity' (2012), which refers
29 to how diversity has become an institutional speech act, a rhetoric that is incorporated by institutions to
30 rebrand themselves as progressive, without truly committing to reparative action or redistributive justice.
31 These ritualized, polite diversity discourses do invoke difference but have lost their critical edge and fail to
32 subvert the status quo's patterns. Furthermore, the VAF oftentimes frames this newfangled emphasis on
33 identity-related issues in film policy as a necessary, but temporary, infringement on the principle of
34 difference-blind universalism. According to the Head of Content of the VAF,
35
36
37
38
39
40
41
42

43 'It should be clear that when we decide to give certain priorities, for instance with the forthcoming
44 impulse bonus for inclusion, we are only allowed to do so, up until the figures demonstrate that the
45 problem - as far as that specific problem is concerned - has been resolved. And then we must
46 immediately withdraw from that measure.' (Interview Karla Puttemans)
47
48
49
50
51
52
53
54
55
56
57
58
59
60

1
2
3
4
5
6
7
8
9 In other words, the VAF's institutional diversity policies are aimed solely at correcting current power
10 imbalances, but once they have achieved their desired effect, they can be discharged. The conviction that
11 the VAF is only allowed to take into account questions of ethnic, cultural, and/or gender identity for as long
12 as the CCI's remain iniquitous, indicates the absence of an actual paradigmatic shift towards an
13 encompassing policy approach that reflects and appreciates questions of (cultural) identity, positionality,
14 diversity, and equal participation in every step of the way.
15
16
17
18
19
20
21

22 **Conclusion**

23
24
25
26 Previous research on institutional diversity policies in the UK suggests that strategies of market
27 fundamentalism shielded government institutions, film funds, and PSBs from their social responsibilities,
28 resulting in toned-down, ambiguous discourses of multiculturalism. This article addresses the Flemish case
29 (2002-22) and draws upon a longitudinal research design to analyze how diversity policies in film and
30 media are negotiated by a multifaceted, complex array of often conflicting ideological linearities and social
31 changes. Hence, we contribute to a more comprehensive understanding of the conceptual contingencies
32 surrounding diversity debates across different cultural, political, and temporal contexts in and around
33 Europe. As an institute operating between the Flemish government and industry stakeholders in the
34 audiovisual sector, the VAF's policy approach is inevitably, and for good reason, the product of multiple
35 demands and expectations. Our analysis reveals several discursive and attitudinal shifts over the years,
36 codetermined by the institutional framework, the administrative skills and personal proclivities of those in
37 leading positions, the extent to which ethnic and diasporic minorities have a voice in these debates, and
38 wider political, economic, and socio-cultural trends.
39
40
41
42
43
44
45
46
47
48
49
50
51
52
53
54
55
56
57
58
59
60

1
2
3
4
5
6
7
8
9 This article offers a critical understanding of how (neo-)liberal continuations of deregulation, state
10 neutrality, and marketization in cultural policymaking form the rationalized axis against which these
11 debates are consistently shaped. In essence, we argue that efforts to promote cultural diversity and inclusion
12 by either the government or the VAF - genuine as they may have been -, all contained unresolved tensions
13 with the persistent principle of difference-blind universalism. Rooted in a liberal-egalitarian mindset, this
14 implies an ideally receptive and 'neutral' film fund that need not be concerned with recognizing difference.
15 We argue that this forms the major obstacle in achieving a paradigmatic shift in Flemish film policy and,
16 instead, plead for a policy of recognition and difference that creates conducive spaces where diasporic,
17 minoritized professionals and creatives can navigate with an equal amount of freedom and enunciative
18 power. It is a policy and funding strategy that irrefutably resists a discriminative and unequal status quo by
19 underscoring, rather than ignoring, questions of cultural identity and difference. A policy that draws upon
20 Bailey and Harindranath (2006: 307) as it appreciates ethnic and diasporic film practices for its attempts to
21 'intervene in the domain of symbolic cultural production, where they construct new codes and discourses
22 that contest pre-established exclusionary social definitions and representations of ethnic minorities'. It is
23 only by recognizing these differences as distinct qualities and by accommodating this multitude of unfixed
24 positionalities, that Flemish cinema can become an open, democratic sphere of freedom, equal dialogue,
25 and social interaction. As Stuart Hall (1993: 112) once wrote: 'we are always different, negotiating different
26 kinds of differences'.
27
28
29
30
31
32
33
34
35
36
37
38
39
40
41
42
43
44

45 **References**

46
47
48
49 Ahmed S (2012) *On Being included: racism and diversity in institutional Life*. Durham: Duke University
50 Press.
51
52
53
54
55
56
57
58
59
60

- 1
2
3
4
5
6
7
8
9 Anciaux B (2006) *Flemish Action Plan Interculturalization of, for, and by culture, youth work, and sport*
10 *[Vlaams Actieplan Interculturalisering van, voor en door cultuur, jeugdwerk en sport]*. Brussels:
11 Flemish Parliament.
12
13
14
15
16 Awad I and Engelbert J (2014) Between diversity and pluriformity: The ‘new style of Dutch public
17 broadcasting. In: Horsti K, Hultèn G and Titley G (eds) *National Conversations: Public Service*
18 *Media and Cultural Diversity in Europe*. Bristol: Intellect, pp. 84-104.
19
20
21
22 Bailey OG and Harindranath R (2007) Ethnic minorities, cultural difference and the cultural politics of
23 communication. *International Journal of Media & Cultural Politics* 2(3): 299-316.
24
25
26
27 Berghahn D and Sternberg C (2010) *European cinema in motion: migrant and diasporic film in*
28 *contemporary Europe*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.
29
30
31
32 Bhavnani R (2007) *Barriers to Diversity in Film*. London: Film Council.
33
34
35 Bjørnsen G (2014) The Multicultural Mission in Public Service Broadcasting: The Case of Norway. In:
36 Horsti K, Hultèn G & Titley G (eds) *National Conversations: Public Service Media and Cultural*
37 *Diversity in Europe*. Bristol: Intellect, pp. 185-202.
38
39
40
41 Bovenkerk-Teerink LM (1994) Ethnic minorities in the media: The case of the Netherlands. In: Husband
42 C (ed) *A richer vision: The development of ethnic minority media in Western democracies*. Unesco,
43 pp. 38–57.
44
45
46
47 Brook O, O’Brien D and Taylor M (2021) Inequality talk: How discourses by senior men reinforce
48 exclusions from creative occupations. *European Journal of Cultural Studies* 24(2): 498-513.
49
50
51
52 Carvalho A (2008) Media(ted) discourse and society: rethinking the framework of Critical Discourse
53 Analysis. *Journalism Studies* 9(2): 161-77.
54
55
56
57
58
59
60

- 1
2
3
4
5
6
7
8
9 Chouliaraki L and Fairclough (1999) *Discourse in Late Modernity*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University
10 Press.
11
12
13 Cottle S (2000) *Ethnic Minorities and the Media: Changing Cultural Boundaries*. Buckingham: Open
14 University Press.
15
16
17
18 Council for Culture (2005) *Advice from the Council for Culture on the cultural (in) Europe:
19 consciously dealing with diversity [Advies van de Raad voor Cultuur over het culturele (in) Europa:
20 bewust omgaan met diversiteit]*. Brussels: Flemish Parliament.
21
22
23
24
25 Eikhof D and Warhurst C (2013) The Promised Land? Why Social Inequalities are Systemic in the
26 Creative Industries. *Employee Relations* 35(5): 495–508.
27
28
29 Eikhof D (2017) Analysing decisions on diversity and opportunity in the cultural and creative industries,
30 A new framework. *Organization* 24(3): 289-307.
31
32
33
34 European Audiovisual Observatory (2021) *Diversity and inclusion in the European audiovisual sector*.
35 European Audiovisual Observatory.
36
37
38
39 Fairclough N (1992) *Discourse and Social Change*. Cambridge: Polity Press.
40
41
42 Fairclough N (2013) Critical discourse analysis and critical policy studies. *Critical policy studies* 7(2):
43 177-197.
44
45
46 Flemish Parliament (1999) *Proposal for a decree by Mr. Jos Stassen that establishes a Flemish film fund /
47 Proposal for a decree by Carl Decaluwé and Peter Vanvelthoven c.s. that authorizes the Flemish
48 government to participate in the installment of the non-profit association Flanders Audiovisual Fund*.
49
50
51 Brussels: Flemish Parliament.
52
53
54
55
56
57
58
59
60

- 1
2
3
4
5
6
7
8
9 Foucault M (1972) *The archaeology of knowledge*. London: Routledge.
- 10
11
12 Garnham N (2005) From Cultural to Creative Industries: An Analysis of the Implications of the ‘Creative
13 Industries Approach to Arts and Media Policy Making in the United Kingdom’. *International Journal*
14 *of Cultural Policy* 11(1): 15–29.
- 15
16
17
18 Gatz S (2014) *Policy note Culture: 2014 - 2019 [Beleidsnota Cultuur: 2014 - 2019]* . Brussels: Flemish
19 Parliament.
- 20
21
22
23 Grugulis I and Stoyanova D (2012) Social capital and networks in film and TV- Jobs for the boys?
24 *Organization studies* 33(10): 1311-1331.
- 25
26
27
28 Hall S (1993) What is this “black” in black popular culture? *Social justice* 20(1/2): 104-114.
- 29
30
31 Hennekam S and Syed J (2018) Institutional racism in the film industry: a multilevel perspective.
32 *Equality, Diversity and Inclusion* 37(6): 551-565.
- 33
34
35
36 Hesmondhalgh D (2005) Media and cultural policy as public policy: The case of the British Labour
37 government. *International journal of cultural policy* 11(1): 95-109.
- 38
39
40
41 Hesmondhalgh D (2008) Cultural and creative industries. In: Bennet T and Frow J (eds) *The SAGE*
42 *Handbook of Cultural Analysis*. Thousand Oaks: Sage Publishing, pp. 252-269.
- 43
44
45
46 Hesmondhalgh D and Saha A (2013) Race, Ethnicity, and Cultural Production, Popular Communication.
47 *The International Journal of Media and Culture* 11(3): 179-195.
- 48
49
50
51
52
53
54
55
56
57
58
59
60
Horsti K and Hultén G (2011) Directing diversity- Managing cultural diversity media policies in Finnish
and Swedish public service broadcasting. *Journal of Cultural Studies* 14(2): 209-227.

- 1
2
3
4
5
6
7
8
9 Horsti K (2014) The cultural diversity turn: Policies, politics and influences at the European Level. In:
10 Horsti K, Hultèn G and Titley G (eds) *National Conversations: Public Service Media and Cultural*
11 *Diversity in Europe*. Bristol: Intellect, pp. 43-60.
12
13
14
15 Joye S and Maesele P (2022) Critical discourse analysis: the articulation of power and ideology in texts.
16 In: P Stevens (ed) *Qualitative Data Analysis: Key Approaches*. California: California: SAGE
17 Publications, pp. 17-42.
18
19
20
21
22 Lentin A and Titley G (2011) *The Crises of Multiculturalism: Racism in a Neoliberal Age*. New York:
23 Bloomsbury Publishing.
24
25
26
27 Leurdijk A (2006) In Search of Common Ground- Strategies of Multicultural Producers in Europe.
28 *European Journal of Cultural Studies* 9(1): 25-46.
29
30
31
32 Malik S (2013) Creative diversity: UK public service broadcasting after multiculturalism. Popular
33 Communication. *The International Journal of Media and Culture* 11(1): 227-241.
34
35
36
37 Malik S (2015) The Rise Of 'Creative Diversity' In Media Policy. In: Thorsen E, Jackson D, Savigny H
38 and Alexander J (eds) *Media, Margins and Civic Agency*. London: Palgrave Macmillan, pp. 89-101.
39
40
41
42 Malik S and Shankley W (2020) Arts, media and ethnic inequalities. In: Byrne B, Alexander C, Khan O,
43 Nazro J and Shankley W (eds) *Ethnicity and Race in the UK: State of the Nation*. Bristol: Policy Press
44 University of Bristol, pp. 149-167.
45
46
47
48 McGonagle T (2014) Public service media and cultural diversity: European regulatory and governance
49 frameworks. In: Horsti K, Hultèn G and Titley G (eds). *National Conversations: Public Service Media*
50 *and Cultural Diversity in Europe*. Bristol: Intellect, pp.61-82
51
52
53
54
55
56
57
58
59
60

1
2
3
4
5
6
7
8
9 Moody P (2017) The UK film council and the ‘cultural diversity’ agenda. *Journal of British Cinema and*
10 *Television* 14(4): 403-422.

11
12
13 Newsinger J and Presence S (2018) United Kingdom: Film funding, the “corporate welfare system” and
14 its discontents. In: Murschetz PC, Teichmann R and Karmasin M (eds) *Handbook of State Aid for*
15 *Film: Finance, Industries and Regulation*. New York: Springer International, pp.447-462.

16
17
18
19
20 Newsinger J and Eikhof DR (2020) Explicit and implicit diversity policy in the UK film and television
21 industries. *Journal of British Cinema and Television* 17(1): 47-69.

22
23
24
25 Nwonka CJ (2015) Diversity pie: rethinking social exclusion and diversity policy in the British film
26 industry. *Journal of Media Practice* 16(1): 73-90.

27
28
29
30 Nwonka CJ and Malik S (2018) Cultural discourses and practices of institutionalised diversity in the UK
31 film sector: ‘Just get something black made’. *The sociological review* 66(6): 1111–1127.

32
33
34
35 Nwonka CJ (2021) Diversity and data- an ontology of race and ethnicity in the British Film Institute’s
36 Diversity Standards. *Media, Culture & Society* 43(3): 460-479.

37
38
39 O’Brien D, Lauriston D, Miles A. and Friedman, S (2016) Are Creative Industries Meritocratic? An
40 Analysis of the 2014 British Labour Force Survey. *Cultural Trends* 25(2): 116-131.

41
42
43
44
45 Ozimek AM (2020) *Equality, Diversity and Inclusion in the Screen Industries*. Report, Screen Industries
46 Growth Network, The University of York, UK, July.

47
48 Randle K, Leung WF and Kurian J (2007) *Creating Difference*. CIRCU: University of Hertfordshire.

49
50
51 Randle K, Forson C and Calveley M (2015) Towards a Bourdieusian analysis of the social composition of
52 the UK film and television workforce. *Work, Employment and Society* 29(4): 590-606.

- 1
2
3
4
5
6
7
8
9 Saha A (2016) The rationalizing:racializing logic of capital in cultural production. *Media Industries* 3(1):
10 1-16.
11
12
13 Saha A (2018) *Race and the cultural industries*. Cambridge: Polity.
14
15
16 Saha A (2021) *Race, culture and media*. California, Sage Publications.
17
18
19 Saeyes A (2012) *European Cinema in Motion: Migrant and Diasporic Film in Contemporary Europe*. PhD
20 Thesis, University of Southampton, UK.
21
22
23
24 Schauvliege J (2009) *Policy note Culture: 2009 - 2014 [Beleidsnota Cultuur: 2009 - 2014]*. Brussels:
25 Flemish Parliament.
26
27
28 Siebert S and Wilson F (2013) All work and no pay: consequences of unpaid work experience in the
29 creative industries. *Work, Employment and Society* 27(4): 711-721.
30
31
32
33 VAF (2002) *Management agreement between the Flemish Community and the Flanders Audiovisual*
34 *Fund [Beheersovereenkomst tussen de Vlaamse Gemeenschap en het Vlaams Audiovisueel Fonds*
35 *vzw]*. Brussels: Vlaams Audiovisueel Fonds.
36
37
38
39 VAF (2004) *Year report 2003 [Jaarverslag 2003]*. Brussels: Vlaams Audiovisueel Fonds.
40
41
42 VAF (2007) *Year report 2006 [Jaarverslag 2006]*. Brussels: Vlaams Audiovisueel Fonds.
43
44
45 VAF (2022)a *Management agreement 2022 - 2025 between the Flemish Community and the Flanders*
46 *Audiovisual Fund vzw with regard to the VAF/Film Fund [Beheersovereenkomst 2002 - 2025 tussen*
47 *de Vlaamse Gemeenschap en het Vlaams Audiovisueel Fonds vzw met betrekking tot het*
48 *VAF/Filmfonds]*. Brussels: Vlaams Audiovisueel Fonds.
49
50
51
52
53
54
55
56
57
58
59
60

1
2
3
4
5
6
7
8
9 VAF (2022)b *Action Plan Inclusion Flanders Audiovisual Fund [Actieplan Inclusie Vlaams Audiovisueel*
10 *Fonds]*. Brussels: Vlaams Audiovisueel Fonds.

11
12
13 Wodak R and Meyer M (2016) *Methods of Critical Discourse Studies*. California: Sage Publications.

14
15
16 Yanow D (2000) *Conducting interpretive policy analysis*. London: Sage Publications.

17
18
19
20 **Data Availability Statement (DAS).** The authors declare that the data supporting the findings of this study
21 can only be partly made available to interested parties upon reasonable request. Due to the nature of the
22 data sources, the data is not publicly deposited in a repository. Particularly the interviews are subject to
23 restrictions and strict confidentiality agreements.
24
25
26
27
28
29
30
31
32
33
34
35
36
37
38
39
40
41
42
43
44
45
46
47
48
49
50
51
52
53
54
55
56
57
58
59
60