Rethinking cultural diversity in the UK film sector: Practices in community filmmaking

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Abstract
Academic, policy and industry debates have tended to focus on the mainstream film sector when discussing cultural diversity. One of the persistent challenges for the sector has been how to diversify cultural representation and participation. This article suggests that participatory modes of community filmmaking make an important contribution to cultural diversity. Drawing on an evidence base derived from qualitative research conducted in three English regions, the article shifts the spotlight away from the mainstream and onto the margins of the film sector in order to explore more 'bottom-up' approaches to cultural diversity. It examines how community filmmakers interpret and engage with questions of cultural diversity and how this connects to the participatory and business practices that they adopt. The findings highlight the significance of processes of practice in how mediated cultural diversity manifests itself and the value of community filmmaking in contributing to wider cultural diversity debates and practices.

Keywords
Community, cultural diversity, filmmaking, practice, United Kingdom

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Introduction

This article contributes to the theme of 'diversifying the creative' by analysing how cultural diversity is understood and practised within community filmmaking today. It demonstrates how community filmmaking is a space within the UK film sector where filmmakers can adopt inclusive film practices and approaches that support cultural diversity. These particular approaches to cultural diversity can inform wider debates and practices around how to achieve diversity in the audiovisual media sector.

There has been an ongoing debate about how the film sector supports cultural diversity, as illustrated by the recent controversy around the lack of diversity in the American film industry (BUNCHE, 2015) or the latest report published by United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO, 2016) on *Diversity in the Film Industry*. The mutual significance of cultural diversity to film culture both in terms of broader cultural representations in film content (Berghahn and Sternberg, 2010; UNESCO, 2016) and within the film workforce (BUNCHE, 2015; Carpentier, 2003) is widely agreed. While the cultural diversity debate has been present in the United Kingdom for some time, it has run in parallel to a substantial evidence base that points to a continued scarcity, and even demise of demographic cultural diversity in the creative sector (Creative Skillset, 2012), including broadcasting (Malik, 2013) and the arts (Arts Council England (ACE), 2014; O'Brien and Oakley, 2015). Despite a series of cultural diversity policy interventions since the 1990s, based around training, access and diversity targets, significant barriers to participation (DCMS, 2011), inequalities in the workforce (Creative Skillset, 2012) and dissatisfaction with how different cultural groups are represented (O'Brien and Oakley, 2015) all continue to be a source of concern. The great majority of such policy interventions tend to be 'top-down' and focus on the mainstream part of the film sector. Meanwhile, 'bottom-up' film production practices such as community filmmaking may have the potential to create new opportunities for various, often marginalised, individuals and groups to both participate in film production and broaden access to knowledge and skills in creative spaces of greater cultural diversity. However, they have been overlooked within policy and academic research in recent years. As such, there is a need to better understand how these practices can support cultural diversity within the film sector.

The emergence of community media and filmmaking in the 1960s constitutes the 'range of community-based activities intended to supplement, challenge or change the operating principles, structures, financing and cultural forms and practices associated with dominant media' (Howley, 2010: 2). One way to counteract the mainstream was thus to change the means of media production processes by making them more participatory, giving every citizen access to media production to better tell their stories through self-representation (Sandoval and Fuchs, 2010). The participatory approach of community media and filmmaking was thus conceived as a key feature in promoting cultural diversity. The new affordance offered by digital technologies in terms of film production and dissemination in the last 15 years has expanded the debate around participatory film production, with the notable rise in user-generated content, amateur production and emergence of new forms of co-creation and participatory practices (Banks and Deuze, 2009; Roig, 2013; San Cornelio and Gómez Cruz, 2014). Nevertheless, community filmmaking as a field of enquiry has been characterised by a lack of academic writings integrating theory and empirical fieldwork in the last 10 years (Shand, 2008). In addition, despite growing interest in media co-creation and participatory practices, there is a need for more research detailing these practices today (Roig, 2013; San Cornelio and Gómez Cruz, 2014), notably in relation to filmmakers' motivations and the participatory and business models they put in place (Roig, 2013). Linking back to the original premise of community media and filmmaking in terms of supporting a broad conception of cultural representation, questions arise about how cultural diversity is understood by community filmmakers today and the potential link between the processes of practice that they are engaged in.

Using the example of community filmmaking, this article explores perceptions of cultural diversity expressed by filmmakers, examining how they describe the role of cultural diversity in their community filmmaking practice and how they believe they support it. This, we propose, is embedded within specific business and film participatory approaches that generate a symbolic cultural space in which people from different cultural origins and traditions actually come together to produce creative work. As mentioned, we argue that the potential value of community filmmaking in contributing to cultural diversity has been overlooked in both industry and academic debates. What is also missing from within these accounts is a focus on how filmmakers themselves talk about cultural diversity and how they consider it to be generated in their practices. This article therefore seeks to enable an understanding of more 'bottom-up' approaches to cultural diversity within the film sector, shifting the spotlight away from the mainstream and onto the margins of the film sector and emphasising the role of processes of practice in how cultural diversity manifests itself.

The article addresses these timely questions by using the United Kingdom as a case study. The United Kingdom is ranked among the fifth most important feature film producer in the World – being the most important one in Europe (UNESCO, 2016). It has also, significantly, been a precursor in the community filmmaking movement (Long et al., 2013; Malik, 1996; Nigg and Wade, 1980). In addition, 'diversity', in one way or another, has been a key facet of cultural policymaking in the United Kingdom since the 1970s. Nevertheless, a lack of cultural diversity within screen representation (on-screen) and also in terms of the social composition of the workforce (off-screen) is repeatedly acknowledged as a problem, as we have started to outline. The UK context, therefore, constitutes a particularly salient example for debates around 'diversifying the creative' because of its established tradition of participatory modes of film practice, alongside its long multicultural history underpinned by strong liberal intentions aspiring to diverse cultural access, expression and representation. More widely, the research opens up questions beyond the United Kingdom and is relevant where cultural diversity and screen media is an issue and where attempts are made to 'promote' cultural diversity through the media. Furthermore, we consider the article to be particularly apt because it contributes to current debates around the new participatory practices emerging within the creative economy, thanks to the digital revolution (Bakhshi et al., 2013) and the potential of newer modes of participatory film practice to support cultural diversity in future contexts.

The research presented here is based on the findings of a 1-year Arts and Humanities Research Council 'Connected Communities' Project (2013–2014), exploring community filmmaking and cultural diversity in England. Within this research, we adopt an interdisciplinary approach drawing on media studies, business studies and creative industries research in order to set the multi-dimensional context of community filmmaking in the United Kingdom. The main objective of this article is to examine how cultural diversity and community filmmaking are understood and enacted by community filmmakers themselves and explore the relationship between cultural diversity and the practices and processes that they are engaged in. In particular, we would like to answer the following two sub-research questions:

- How do community filmmakers interpret and engage with questions of cultural diversity and what are their motivations?
- What participatory and business practices do community filmmakers adopt to engage with diversity?

We recognise that, in focusing on these questions from the perspective of the community filmmaker, we do not extend such understandings of cultural diversity to the perspectives of communities and other participants. However, our research provides a strong focus on those who are engaged with community film work on a regular basis, capturing their viewpoints, thus allowing a stronger

'bottom-up' understanding of the different practices, motivations and priorities for those involved in a still marginalised and under-researched aspect of the film sector. We also recognise that our focus is deliberately on processes of production and its relationship to mediated cultural diversity, rather than on how cultural diversity is mediated through representation (in terms of the kinds of representations that subsequently end up on screen) or reception (how the films themselves are received).

The article is organised in four parts. First, we pay significant attention to reviewing the research context with regard to key conceptual understandings of mediated cultural diversity, community filmmaking and participatory approaches and the related business models that support these. Second, we sketch the methodology adopted and the project data collected. As with our literature review, the third part is also organised around our two sub-research questions, addressing these by presenting the key findings emerging from the project. Finally, we conclude by highlighting the opportunities and challenges raised by our findings and address the main research question of what the role of cultural diversity is in community filmmaking practice, with a statement of our scholarly contribution.

Cultural diversity and community filmmaking in context

The first part of this section sets the context for the data analysis that follows, outlining various definitions of cultural diversity, and how community filmmaking has historically related to this. Community filmmaking originates in the community arts and media movement of the 1960s which aimed to challenge mainstream arts and media values and production systems by giving a voice to every citizen to represent and cater better for the needs of all parts of society, whatever their position or background, and to elicit social change and support political contestations (Berrigan, 1977; Carpentier and Scifo, 2010; McKay, 2010; Nigg and Wade, 1980). At the same time, principles underpinning cultural policymaking, particularly in the 1970s and 1980s, were oriented towards employing a more overt group-based approach by targeting specific communities for inclusion and access and identifying patterns of discrimination, such as racism (Malik, 2013). This recognition of the link between the media and social change, and more specifically between media democracy and equality of representation, translated into public investment for the cultural sector. Historically, the audiovisual sector has played a significant role in UK activist politics, for example, in the Left political film of the 1960s and later in what has been described as an 'oppositional film culture' in the form of collectively managed film workshops with non-hierarchical working relations (Dickinson, 1999). Here, diverse filmmakers worked in ongoing collectives, engaging in distinctive creative practices (political, aesthetic and economic) outside of the mainstream film sector and also demonstrating 'a commitment to the local community, and to pressure groups such as trade unions, feminist organisations and anti-racist bodies' (Petley, 1989: 6). This socially responsive and cooperative mode of working helped yield a culturally significant workshop movement during the 1980s, supported by the 1981 Grant-Aided Workshop Production Declaration Act through continuous financial support for those filmmakers working on a non-commercial and non-profit basis (Long et al., 2013).

This historical context of diverse filmmakers working in these kinds of film collectives is useful as we also consider the cultural context of such production circumstances. One element of analysis within the academic literature has focused on how communities of identity (based around shared interests, politics, places or demographics) use cultural spaces for political and aesthetic projects seeking to re-work or re-imagine dominant cultural representations, or provide an alternative (or oppositional cinema) to the mainstream (cinema) (Mercer, 1988; Pines and Willemen, 1989). We can link these modes of practice, in which the means of cultural production are secured to enable a

broader range of people to create work from within community settings, to the literature around cultural identity, cultural diversity and mediation. Within cultural analysis, a distinction has been made between the idea of cultural identity (the identity or feeling of being part of a group) as a static entity (something that mainstream media have been problematised as reifying) and the idea of cultural identity as a moving phenomenon where new cultural selves are constantly being formed. The work of Stuart Hall, for example, has done much to suggest that cultural identity is constantly being repositioned and reshaped (Hall, 1990). Thus, as a consequence, we might regard cultural diversity (where diverse cultural identities co-exist) itself as a (mediated) process. Inherent in these processes is how different people build conditions for sharing through film, enabling cultural identification while also resisting essentialist identity paradigms. Cultural diversity is thus built, and mediated, through these processes of practice. As Hall (1990) points out in his canonical essay on cultural identity which also focuses on the case of the emerging Caribbean cinema and Black British cinemas in the 1980s, cultural identity is constituted within (not outside) forms of representation, and thus, film 'is able to constitute us as new kinds of subjects, and thereby enable us to discover places from which to speak' (pp. 236–237). Processes of mediation (what the media does and what we do with the media, as Silverstone (2005) suggests) include production, representation and reception. This means that, as Siapera (2010) puts it, 'cultural diversity is also mediated' and that 'we understand, and interact with, cultural diversity, and we construct our cultural identities (also) in and through the media' (pp. 6–7). This strongly links with our first research question because it focuses us on how community filmmakers themselves interpret and engage with questions of cultural diversity and allows us to consider their motivations. Our research therefore uniquely foregrounds the role of one aspect of the media, community filmmaking, capturing new understandings, interactions and formations of cultural diversity that emerge from within community contexts.

Conversely, when we consider how cultural diversity has been treated within cultural policy-making (Freedman, 2008), including in the film sector, it is apparent that historically there have been different (often conflicting) European traditions (Bašić-Hrvatin et al., 2008). Media studies literature has noted how the idea of 'diversity' is dependent on the context in which it is invoked (Tambini, 2001); 'diversity' has referred to diversity in media content, diversity of supply of media products (linked to issues of structural pluralism and competition) or diversity of participation (e.g. of ethnic minorities, as part of a broader debate around cultural diversity) (Freedman, 2008). In the United Kingdom, cultural diversity was first operationalised under the rubric of multiculturalism in the 1970s and 1980s (Pitcher, 2006). By the 2000s, and influenced by shifting governmental requirements during the 1990s that coincided with the closure of some of the significant spaces that had helped yield the cooperative mode of film working in the 1970s and 1980s, cultural diversity was conceptualised as a more 'flowing concept'. Cultural diversity had now become 'a mode of thinking about identity' (Pitcher, 2006: 3) in which the 'policy goal has been to increase the social capital of individuals in Britain as a means to ends such as democratic renewal, social cohesion, and economic productivity' (Pitcher, 2006: 3).

The idea that cultural diversity can be 'promoted', through, for example, programming, employment and organisational development, sits in tension with what Arjun Appadurai (2006) calls the 'facticity of difference' in contemporary society, the fact that there is 'an already-existing sociopolitical reality of which cultural difference has become a defining feature' (p. 2). And yet, there remain today deep inequalities in the film sector (Newsinger, 2012; Nwonka, 2015) including around levels of participation and engagement, revealing a disconnect from the diverse sociopolitical reality that exists in the fabric of UK society. Therefore, one of the persistent challenges for the mainstream film sector has been of how to diversify representation and production and bring about a more socially inclusive film industry. Within these environments, community

filmmaking is a potentially rich example of a cultural space in which 'lived' cultural diversity, or the 'facticity of difference', to use Appadurai's term, is being enacted and strengthened through film and self-representation, emanating from within community cultural production contexts. Despite this potential value, the plethora of diversity initiatives since the 1990s has been focused on the mainstream, rather than on the community film sector, and is not informed or shaped by these alternative processes of film practice. A recent example is the announcement in 2015 of new British Film Institute (BFI, 2015a) Diversity Standards across all Film Fund Lottery funding schemes, including film development, production, distribution and audience development to 'recognise and acknowledge the quality and value of difference'. Such schemes also place emphasis on quantitative modes of measuring diversity, for example, in terms of levels of diversity on-screen or in the social composition of the workforce. Furthermore, one of the dimensions that is lacking from such mainstream-focused strategies, and which is apparent in the community mode of filmmaking, is a strong ethos of participation and representation through collaborative practices and modes of working.

Our contribution here is a revelation of the versions of cultural diversity that are being mobilised through community filmmaking production processes, as one facet of processes of mediation. We go on to suggest that cultural diversity – as a dynamic, mediated process – is shaped by a range of political, economic and organisational factors, in addition to strong motivations and reflexive efforts by community filmmakers today to counter mainstream representations of cultural identities as well as tackle the barriers to participation of cultural minorities in mainstream media production. We point to the potential significance of this more embedded approach to cultural diversity, compared to more formalised interventions that seek to inculcate an abstract idea of diversity into prevailing organisational structures.

Taking into account the recent UNESCO report on film diversity, in refining our definition of cultural diversity, we find UNESCO's acknowledgement that it is a useful multi-dimensional concept, but also value its foregrounding of demographic diversity (racial, ethnic and gender differences of the people involved) and diversity of ideas (points of view and social, political and cultural perspectives) (UNESCO, 2016), which correlates with what we have identified in community filmmaking contexts. The UNESCO report focuses on the mainstream film industry on a global level and draws on the work of Albornoz and Garcia Leiva (forthcoming) who evaluate diversity of audiovisual systems through three aspects: a mixed ecology of production, distribution and exhibition; differences in terms of variety, balance and disparity in values, identities and aesthetics; and as delivering access and choice for people who might 'even create and disseminate them' (UNESCO, 2016: 6). This final aspect suggests approaching diversity through processes of practice, a dimension that is particularly evident and useful as we go on to suggest that cultural diversity can be realised when a variety of cultures and practices mediate the process and in settings that are not organised by prescriptive determinations of what cultural diversity constitutes and applied within existing unequal structures.

By engaging with community filmmakers to understand better how cultural diversity is mediated within their own practice, we therefore recognise that cultural diversity is itself a mediated concept (Siapera, 2010). Pertinently, the definition of cultural diversity that we have devised within this research also has its origins in a uniquely British ethos of multiculturalism (Favell, 1998), which is emphatically not about assimilation or about the margins becoming more like the mainstream (either politically or structurally). Rather, it is about the mobilisation of participative processes and practices at the margins of the film sector that are also deeply inclusive. Within this article, we examine how community filmmakers interpret and engage with cultural diversity outside of what are in fact heavily contested 'top-down' diversity policy frames (Malik, 2013), working outside mainstream industrial spaces and often without public funding.

Community filmmaking: new participatory landscapes and practices

Definitions, terminology and modus operandi of community media can be highly dependent on the social, cultural and policy frameworks within which they are embedded (Jiménez and Scifo, 2010). Nevertheless, community media have had a strong focus on processes rather than products to distinguish themselves from the mainstream sphere where the focus is on the cultural and economic values that audiences derive from the media products that they can acquire on the market (McKay, 2010). As outlined in the previous section, community filmmaking emerged as one way to counteract the mainstream by challenging the traditional process of the filmmaker in total control of his or her work and introduce more democracy in all the stages of the film production process (Nigg and Wade, 1980: 19): 'That way everyone understands what is going on and feels parts of the end product because they have helped shape it'.

However, it is important to note contention within the early literature about the limitations of these participatory modes of media production. For example, Berrigan (1979) highlights challenges with regard to the transmission of media skills and knowledge from media producers to communities and the lack of technological and logistical affordance of some media tools. The real degree of control and power that communities can exercise in terms of media production, management and distribution within particular local and national media landscapes and their capacity to operate and act as a counter-discourse or system to mainstream media have also been questioned (Sandoval and Fuchs, 2010). Since then, there have been ongoing debates about the modes of representation and operation of traditional community-led media such as community television, radio and video (Couldry and Curran, 2003; Howley, 2010).

In the last 20 years, the rise of digital media and web 2.0 platforms has further expanded the debate on the democratisation of media and participatory approaches in media production (Banks and Deuze, 2009; Carpentier and Scifo, 2010; San Cornelio and Gómez Cruz, 2014). Indeed, the advent of digital cameras and new online distribution channels has democratised the means of film production and editing (Conway, 2004; Fox, 2004), with an increase in user-generated media content. Some amateur and non-commercial film productions have been incorporated into mainstream production (Conway, 2004; Fox, 2004; Shand, 2008) in order to support self-representation, media democracy and production of alternative content (i.e. BBC *Video Nation*, see Carpentier, 2003; Lagerwey, 2004). In addition, new community and participatory film production practices have emerged within commercial media production (Banks and Deuze, 2009). Bruns (2006) describes these co-production processes as *produsage* where 'the production of ideas takes place in a collaborative, participatory environment' which 'enables all participants to be users as well as producers of information and knowledge' (p. 2). These processes are embedded within a shift in the production of culture or the value chain of meaning from the author/producer to reader/consumer with the involvement in/influence of consumers in/ on the making/design/creation of new products in the last 20 years (Hartley, 2004; Mehrpouya et al., 2013). More affordable costs have also led communities and community organisations to seek the assistance of filmmakers to tell their stories (Coffman, 2009).

Questions arise then with regard to the modes of representation and operation of these newer community modes of filmmaking 'between the home and mass modes' (Shand, 2008: 53) and in terms of participatory practices and how they support cultural diversity. In particular, how do filmmakers negotiate their relationships with communities (Banks and Deuze, 2009) and what types of media access and participatory approaches do they put in place? For example, what are the rules of participation, the space for negotiation and the ownership of results (San Cornelio and Gómez Cruz, 2014)? The recent work of Roig (2013) on practices in community-based participatory film production that he illustrates as crowdsourcing types of projects that are characterised by unrestricted membership and the self-selection of participants is useful. Roig (2013) proposes that these

practices can be grouped within seven categories (p. 2325): performative practices, organisational practices (organisation of the community itself), production practices (i.e. all the elements of content production), self-promotion practices (i.e. of the form of film production itself, that is, community-based), finance practices (how to get financial support), community practices (engagement, sharing and decision making) and circulation practices (access/use, commercialisation and promotion). It is important to note the interconnection across these practices. Within each community filmmaking project, it is envisaged that filmmakers and communities will mobilise elements across these seven categories of practice at various stages. As such, Roig's analysis helps us to understand how new participatory processes of practice challenge common assumptions that consider media production in relation to traditional value chains. In fact, we suggest that one cannot understand community filmmaking simply as a production practice without considering and questioning how communities are involved at various points in the film process, a point that is interwoven with the conceptual understanding of cultural diversity outlined in the previous section, as something that is only realised when a variety of cultures and practices mediate the process.

Furthermore, Roig (2013) highlights that 'cultural experiences are increasingly socialized; participation and co-creation discourses are embedded even in mainstream productions; and engagement is a fundamental element of any creative endeavour' (p. 2329). This point has been increasingly raised in the literature on media production (Banks and Deuze, 2009). Nevertheless, these new media participatory approaches involve a reconciliation process between professional and amateur practices as well as their distinctive motivations in terms of arts, commerce and other social and civic objectives (Chapain and Hargreaves, 2016). More light needs to be shed on how these new participatory practices, by involving a more diverse set of contributions, support cultural diversity, how they re-shape media workers' identities and upon which business models they are based. This strongly links with our second research question because it focuses us on the connections between participatory practices and emerging business and finance models.

Community filmmaking funding and business practices tend to swing between two long-term established models. On one hand, the involvement within publicly funded institutions usually promotes artistic excellence and participations, but comes with other expectations and strong socio-policy agendas that can dictate content and agendas beyond artistic imperatives (Hill, 2012). On the other hand, the community filmmaker, especially when funding and investments are lacking, has to remain business-minded and put economic sustainability at the forefront of projects. The importance of questioning and challenging these models and considering alternative ones for participatory work is a point that has been highlighted by the participants in our research and that we will go on to discuss in our findings. However, beyond the two antithetic business models, creative practitioners are specifically recognised for their ability to establish networks and, through intermediaries and engagement with a range of stakeholders, to drive their agenda (Comunian, 2012). As part of this networked practice, communities can be seen as a defining part of the creative and business practice. They are perceived as shareholders and often also as financial supporters as well as indicators of success and engagement. We see networked participatory practices becoming intertwined with new finance and business models (communities co-productions, crowdfunding, crowdsourcing, community of interest companies, etc.), which further highlights the importance of considering them as part of the complex practices of community filmmakers and the enabling process through which community filmmaking can support cultural diversity.

Methodological approach and data collected

As highlighted in the literature, given the lack of knowledge on current practices around the community mode of filmmaking and its relationship to cultural diversity, our research has followed a

mixed method approach but with a strong inductive element based on the UK context. In addition, as local and national cultural and policy frameworks play an important role in the way community film-making is understood and practised, the research has focused on three English regions more particularly: London, the West Midlands and the South East. These three regions capture different geographical dynamics with different patterns of engagement and activities in relation to the creative economy and filmmaking. While London is a nationally (and globally) recognised capital of film-making with 54.6% of UK firms in the sector and more than 80% of their turnover (BFI, 2015b), it is important that the project captures dynamics that go beyond the capital and into regional centres of production and promotion of filmmaking and community filmmaking. This corresponds with the regionalisation of media and film policies in the last 15 years in the United Kingdom. Therefore, we have selected two other English regions to analyse: the South East and the West Midlands. The West Midlands, for example, has a long history of active community filmmaking (Long et al., 2013) and had a strong regional policy commitment to film in the late 1990s and early 2000s (Andres and Chapain, 2013). However, the region has also struggled to establish itself as a film production centre and only accounts for 2.3% of UK film companies and only 0.4% of the UK film turnover (BFI, 2015b). In contrast, the South East due to its close proximity to London is the United Kingdom's second strongest regional film centre, accounting for 16.8% of the UK firms in the sector and 7.8% of the UK film industry turnover. As with other English regions, a disparity of funding for culture (Stark et al., 2013) and a perceived 'lag' in cultural production have characterised some of the cultural policy discourses associated with these regions and their image (Chapain and Comunian, 2009).

To better embed the research within regional and national dynamics, our project has been conducted in partnership with four organisations: the BFI, which is the lead organisation for film in the United Kingdom in charge of film strategy and support for film production, distribution, education and audience development, and three regional film organisations that play a key role in community filmmaking in terms of training, funding, production and/or distribution. These are WORLDwrite[1] in London, LightHouse[2] in the West Midlands and City Eye[3] in the South East. The role of these research partners has been to help map out the field of community filmmaking practice, its cross-over with cultural diversity and any related policies in the initial stages of the research process, as well as supporting the research team in gaining access to community filmmakers in each region. Adopting this broader national data collection framework has allowed us to capture both national and regional pictures of community filmmakers in the United Kingdom. This article focuses on the national dynamic in community filmmaking practices, rather than on geographical comparisons.

Our analysis adopts a template and thematic approach (Brooks et al., 2015) by setting up sensitising themes of analysis emerging from the literature that we then refine through two stages of data gathering. The first stage consisted of (1) undertaking an initial exercise of delimitation of our two key concepts: community filmmaking and cultural diversity within the UK context and (2) clarifying the boundaries of our research in terms of the themes of analysis. In order to do so, we began by organising a 1-day workshop with a group of 12 UK and European academics and practitioners in the field of community filmmaking and cultural diversity (including our research partners[4]) in London in April 2013. The workshop used a structured conversational and participatory research approach (i.e. World Café[5]) to elicit the views of the participants. Given the flexible understandings of how cultural diversity and community filmmaking are defined, we were keen to capture any potential change in its current practices, and participants were asked to offer their own interpretations of these two concepts and without any prompts. The approach was slightly different with regard to clarifying the boundaries of our research themes. Participants were asked their views on a number of sensitising themes that had already been identified in the literature on cultural diversity, community filmmaking and filmmaking as bearing some relevance and importance in exploring how cultural diversity could be supported and/or enacted through community
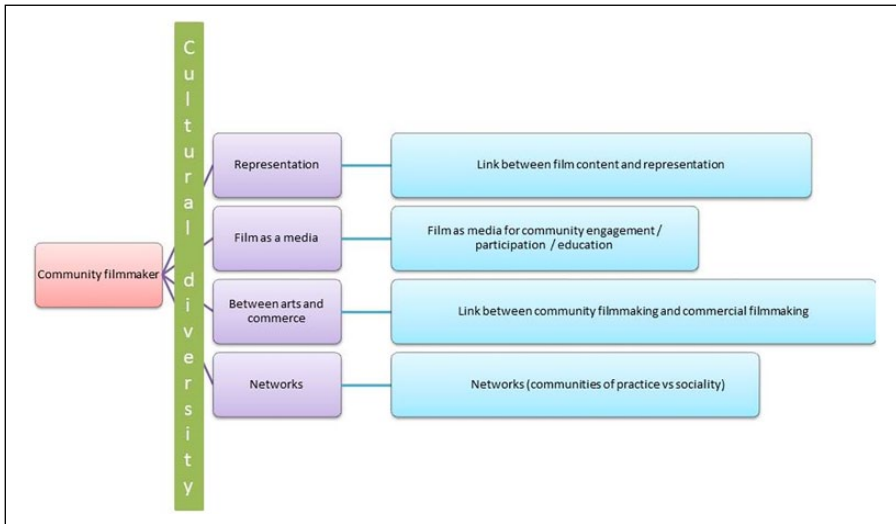
Figure 1. Themes selected from the literature and explored within this article.

filmmaking. These include some of the themes discussed within this article (see Figure 1). Key messages emerging from the workshop were validated with participants on the day and through post-workshop interactions.

The main message from the workshop with regard to objective 1 is the variations in understandings of cultural diversity. Participants at the workshop recommended that while cultural diversity can be associated with the recognition of various ethnic groups in society, the research might usefully adopt a broader understanding, to include age, gender, sexual orientation, disability, geography/place, social class and cultural practices. Ultimately, it was felt that culturally diverse community filmmaking was about enabling the voices of 'unheard' and marginalised communities. In addition, the views were that these could be articulated through community filmmaking in various ways. As we proceeded to interview community filmmakers, we maintained this adaptable understanding, rather than imposing our own definition and framework. Discussions with our research participants have also highlighted community filmmaking as a broad concept that can be understood in different ways. On one side, there is participatory community filmmaking – where the filmmaking process is wholly managed and undertaken by the community involved. On the other side of the spectrum, there are community filmmakers who might film community issues but without involving the community in participatory ways. Given our research objectives and interest in modes of participatory practice and their connections with diverse cultural participation, we decided to consider as specific objects of our research community filmmakers who *work in participatory ways within communities* and to consider what role cultural diversity plays (or not) in their work and practice.

This open and broad approach was integrated in the second research stage, which consisted of 20 semi-structured interviews with community filmmakers across our three English regions (8 in the West Midlands, 6 in London and 6 in the South East). Interviewees were selected through a snowballing sampling approach, starting with our research partners and their networks and going outwards. In selecting the filmmakers to interview, due regard was given to include a variety of ethnic origin, gender, types of community filmmaking activities undertaken and with the kinds of communities engaged with (see Table 1). We interviewed 12 women and 8 men whose levels of

Table 1. Interviewees' occupations and types of film portfolio and activities.

Interviewee	
1	Independent filmmaker with her own production company making films for TV, public and art organisations, and her own films sponsored by public fund
2	Independent filmmaker making films for charity organisations and sponsored by public funds, working as assistant on other film productions
3	Independent filmmaker making her own films and working as assistant on other film production
4	Group of independent filmmakers making their own documentaries sponsored by public fund; combining this activity with other occupations
5	Independent filmmaker with her own production company and cultural manager making her own films and education and commercial films for charitable organisations; screen writer as well
6	Independent filmmaker making his own films and working for public and private organisations and lecturer at university
7	Independent filmmaker with his own production company making commercial, education documentaries and feature films as well as his films sponsored by public funds, crowdfunding and lecturer at university
8	Independent filmmaker with his own production company, worked for TV and now on feature films
9	Independent filmmaker who runs an organisation specialising in information, documentary and arts films and making films with local communities
10	Independent filmmaker, with her own company, who uses film to create a space where working class and ethnic minority experiences and cultures express their experiences through film
11	Independent filmmaker and lecturer specialising in documentary film. Has produced for BBC and Channel 4. Interested in cultivating pluralised film spaces through which newer understandings in inter-cultural communication can evolve
12	Independent filmmaker runs an organisation working with communities to produce short films, deliver training courses, set up film festivals and film clubs as a platform to screen the work and develop audiences
13	Independent filmmaker with major role in facilitating diversity through community filmmaking at national level
14	Collection of community filmmakers who run organisation to support diverse young people in working collectively to make films engaging with social issues
15	Visual artist who has recently worked extensively with film (but before used other media) interested in disability and marginality
16	Animation artist working across film and animation in a range of commissioned contexts for communities, schools and others
17	University lecturer teaching film and community filmmaking but with previous work in youth community filmmaking context for more than 10 years
18	Part-time university lecture and part-time community filmmaker worked in collectives for a long-time but now his part-time practice is more commercial (also does engage with commissioned worked from charities etc.)
19	Community filmmaker working independently mainly commissioned work via the charity sector
20	Community filmmaker running a community filmmaking organisation, supporting workshops and new productions involving a range of communities and stakeholders

experience with community filmmaking vary from less than 5 years to more than 20 years of experience. Interview questions were based on the themes identified within the literature and refined based on the findings from the workshop. Coding of the interview material was undertaken in reference to the refined themes guiding the interview process in the first instance. In the second instance, other key emergent themes were identified and coded.

Findings: cultural diversity and community filmmaking

Community filmmakers and cultural diversity: representation and motivations

The first dimension of interest within the research is how community filmmakers interpret and engage with questions of cultural diversity either in terms of issues of representation or their motivations. When asked about their understandings of cultural diversity in relation to community filmmaking, many interviewees offer their own definition of the term based on their understanding of the word 'culture' in the sense of language, country of origin and ethnicity. Others talked about culture in the sense of gender, sexual orientation, religion or social class. As such, cultural diversity can be generated through community filmmaking because of, for this young filmmaker, 'having different cultures represented in front of the camera and behind the camera and it's not something you see that often on either side really' (Interviewee 2 or I-2). A connection is therefore drawn in this participant's conception of cultural diversity, between various processes of mediation, specifically production/participation off-screen and representation/visibility on screen.

Interestingly though, some interviewees offer a more contextual understanding where cultural diversity is dependent on your own identity or the place in which you live. For example, this filmmaker who is heavily engaged in film work with people with disabilities and/or mental health issues suggests that it is about representing 'something that is diverse from what you are' (I-18), or this filmmaker who after having worked in London moved to the South East which gave her a different perspective: 'And then I moved here […], and again it was just white people you know, so cultural diversity means a different thing here, it has to, you know, you can't talk about cultural diversity in the same way' (I-16). This adaptable approach to what cultural diversity actually is and how it is context-bound corresponds with UNESCO's (2016) acknowledgement that it is a multi-dimensional concept.

Whatever their understanding of cultural diversity, issues of representation play a major role in the motivation behind community filmmaking. Without prompting, most interviewees offer that the key role and cultural value of community filmmaking are to give a voice to diverse people in order to address broad practices of marginalisation within mainstream cultural representation. For example, one filmmaker, who makes educational films that promote cross-cultural interchange, explains the absence in the mainstream of particular kinds of stories so that 'The short version of our evolution into film is as an educational tool to tell a different story that we felt was being side lined or not taught at all' (I-13). This quote illustrates how the social and political, and questions of representation, are at the centre of the community filmmaking process. Reference is repeatedly made to the struggles around representation and identities that have been foregrounded in the fertile debates around cultural filmmaking in the 1980s and that materialised in and underpinned the civic ethos of the independent workshop movement (e.g. in relation to debates around multiculturalism and anti-racism (Malik, 1996; Mercer, 1988)). Another filmmaker, with over 20 years' experience, including in the 1980s independent workshop movement, points to historical problems within mainstream representation: 'But I think … if you were looking historically, then, it's very important to understand the extent to which people were ghettoised, shoved out, kept out, barred from all aspects of cultural life' (I-12). Cultural history therefore shapes how new approaches to cultural diversity are informed.

When discussing current problems with gaining access, marginalisation is sometimes discussed unequivocally in terms of race, and at other times geography or class are seen as the biggest determinants that have led to exclusion from working in the industry – here envisaged as an exclusion that takes place behind the camera and in terms of the 'making' of representations of class on-screen. This filmmaker whose work focuses on the class and race community dynamic suggests that 'as far as I can see, very often it is your class that ends up deciding whether the subject of the film is on the other side of the camera' (I-10). Class conditions are a recurrent feature in creative industries literature including around how inequalities are sustained and not adequately addressed in official, quota-led diversity strategy-making (Newsinger, 2012; Nwonka, 2015). In these ways, discussions around representation are framed as 'political talk', both evaluating historical and current approaches and recognising what community filmmaking can and cannot do when limited access, funding and other social structures remain a problem, a point that resonates with the more critical literature on the topic. Community filmmaking therefore presents a particularly interesting case in historical and current debates around cultural policy, representational practice and self-identity and maps onto current deliberations around progression and sustained employment within the film sector (Creative Skillset, 2012), as well as audiences and portrayal.

These tensions within the politics of representation are also closely tied up with the motivations behind community filmmakers' practice, which appear to orientate around social, political and artistic motivations. *Social* motivations are apparent in the recurrent highlighting of processes of engagement and community development. One filmmaker, with experience of working with diverse communities through community-led documentary film, speaks explicitly about the link between community filmmaking and social structure:

> we are working with communities … trying to bring some kind of exchange, some kind of dialogue in places and environments where that dialogue hasn't happened. And the fact that it hasn't happened says all sorts of often hypercritical things about the social structures of those places that they can't bring excluded groups into some kind of communication. (I-11)

So, here, as in many other discussions with community filmmakers, there is a strong sense of community filmmaking redressing certain imbalances in representation and consciously involving otherwise excluded communities through collaborative processes. For this filmmaker, with a major role in facilitating diversity through community filmmaking at national level, 'It's actually giving control to the means of production to enable people to tell their own stories' (I-13). The research findings therefore situate film as not only a radical instrument but also a tool for emotionality and expression for a broad range of identities, with the potential to challenge the problems of mainstream representation.

With regard to *political* motivations, our participants are deeply reflexive about their practice and demonstrate a clear concern about ethical processes of engagement and the political contexts that surround the communities that they work with. Many community filmmakers directly contest the notion that meanings and ideologies are fixed, by facilitating or producing film as a counterhegemonic, cultural space in which communities, for example, communities of identity, can be re-imagined and directly involved in re-working cultural representations through community contexts (Pines and Willemen, 1989). For this interviewee, with long-term experience as an independent filmmaker,

> Community filming actually is … a range of practice … a doorway to an amazing new way of looking at things. A community context can do that because typically, it's not run by large amounts of money; it's not run by preoccupations with big audiences. It's more important that you're creating stories that can form a

circle and return to the most important people in this whole process which should be the people in the films and their experience and creating communities that ripple out from that. (I-11)

The idea of community development is strongly presented here, as well as the different possibilities that are able to materialise precisely because of the community – not mainstream – context in which the work is produced. This is a hugely significant finding because it suggests that the creativity of community filmmakers might be enhanced by the fact they are not working within or constrained by mainstream film business models, or indeed the 'top-down' mainstream cultural film policy paradigms (including those that are based around cultural diversity). It suggests alternative 'ways in' to thinking about and mobilising diversity as an inclusive, participatory creative practice, thus correlating with the definition of cultural diversity that outlined earlier.

Furthermore, the marginalisation of community filmmaking from mainstream practice also reveals new *artistic* possibilities, motivations and thematic preoccupations, as well as modes of practice. The relative accessibility of the medium today, for this filmmaker who has worked with a range of marginalised communities, means that

> Anybody can be a filmmaker; the technical know-how is being simplified. So, because it's being democratised, community filmmaking therefore should have more importance, because communities can put their statements, or whatever they want to say, out there without having to hire people like me. They can do it themselves … (But) the opportunities that people have for bringing that visual voice and then having it screened somewhere is less and less now. (I-9)

An idea emerges of the value of film also in terms of its relative accessibility today and its civic possibilities, and scope for self-representation. But it also points to the current tension that exists between an apparent rise in access and modes of self-representation that are facilitated by newer technologies but also the diminished opportunities for exhibiting such work with most community filmmakers highlighting that their work tends to be presented at bespoke community events, independent festivals or online with little access to traditional film distribution channels.

Community filmmakers and cultural diversity: participatory and business practices

The second area of interest within our research focuses on participatory and business practices that community filmmakers adopt to engage with diversity today. Findings from the research suggest that community filmmaking is usually only one element of filmmakers' portfolio of activities. While some interviewees would identify themselves as being a community filmmaker, some would not. Most of our respondents stumbled into community filmmaking at some point in their careers by participating in other people's projects, through training or by working on professional projects sponsored by charities or public organisations representing specific communities.

It is interesting to note that there does not seem to be one understanding and enacted model of community filmmaking across our respondents but a wide range of participatory and business practices attached to community film projects. The participatory and business practices approaches chosen are intrinsically linked to both the creative process inherent to filmmaking and the other social, educational and civic objectives envisaged within each project in a kind of balancing act. Business and financial models emerged in the interviews as enablers and pragmatic elements which sometimes drive the project (where funding or a structure is sought before the project starts) and sometimes follow the project (where the participatory practice has already started and because of the value it has created, funding is sought to allow distribution, dissemination or follow-up). So, as discussed in relation to Roig's set of practices, for most of the projects we encountered through

our interviews, the interconnection and mix of organisational and financial practices cannot be modelled in a rational and linear way. Furthermore, creativity often seems to be forged and shaped by specific participatory and financial conditions rather than undermined by it. While the financial motivation is not always considered the main driver to engage in community filmmaking, many filmmakers suggest the need to make their film practice economically sustainable. Indeed, using different models and engaging in a range of film-related works across commercial, public and 'not-for-profit' sectors are giving them the opportunity to pursue their non-commercial objectives. Some have also developed new funding models alongside other modes of financing as commented on by this filmmaker who has developed successful crowdfunding projects: 'I make films in the traditional model and I make films in the very new ways of doing things, in terms of self-distribution, crowd funding' (I-7).

Filmmakers' networks and connections – and the role of the community filmmaker as 'broker' – seem particularly important in making community filmmaking happen – even when mainstream funding is not there to support these initiatives. As this filmmaker who works mainly with charities in the health sector highlighted, funded projects are based on networks and shared understanding, which then facilitate trust and funding for the projects to take place:

> that project was a result of a relationship that I have with the Chief Executive of that charity. […] they know me and they know that I and colleagues […] have a good approach and a reasonable understanding of [mental health] different issues […] we made the effort to go and talk to people and find out a bit more about them and sort of demystify the film making process in some ways. (I-19)

However, many interviewees highlighted how funding and economic sustainability represent a challenge as they try to present stories that might not be popular or mainstream. As a result, relying on multiple networks (Comunian, 2011) and a range of stakeholders and knowledge communities becomes even more pivotal to their working practice and success.

Our findings support Roig's perspective on the importance to consider how finance and business practices might influence the sustainability of participatory practices. However, while the majority of our respondents recognise the challenge of dealing with such unstable business models and financial structures, sometimes the fact that a grant or financial structure is not in place at the start of the project might facilitate the creation of more exciting or diverse content as there is no need to structure it in response to the funder or institution supporting the production. In this respect, community filmmaking projects are often used to experiment with creative practices and participatory approaches and the lack of initial funding is seen as creative enablers. This is illustrated by a filmmaker:

> I think that some really interesting stuff is coming out of it, […] that would otherwise never have been portrayed in that way, because they would have been waiting for their money or the council to give them big cash or whatever. The idea that they've motivated themselves to make things is really exciting. (I-5)

This comment highlights the strong interconnection between business practices and the type of participatory practices put in place within community filmmaking projects in addition to the role with regard to the production of new creative content. The majority of interviewees associate community filmmaking with involving a more participatory approach than 'mainstream' filmmaking. As such, community films are about the communities they were made with and certainly the *with* element is a key element of the process. This is consistent with the original premise of community filmmaking and media as defined by Berrigan (1979). However, findings suggest that this participatory approach can play out in very diverse ways, from one filmmaker to the other and from one project to the next, as highlighted by this filmmaker when asked about his approach:

> There are so many different ways in which people can come together to collaborate and then use film as a medium in which to explore and express something that they want to. I think the methodologies can be very different. (I-7)

Filmmakers display some unique and also a common range of production, circulation, community engagement, performative and self-promotion practices in their community filmmaking projects depending on their objectives and contexts. This diversity of approach is consistent with Green et al. (2015) where communities can be involved at different points in the film value chain, leading to collaboration and joint-decision making in the film production process with various degrees of formalisation. In many cases, in addition to 'informal engagement', 'collective agency and decision making' and 'knowledge and expertise exchange', that is, community practices, participants from the communities 'are invited to play at being filmmakers, and also to play with the aura of filmmaking and its processes and imaginaries', that is, performative practices as defined by Roig (2013: 2327–2328). This is illustrated by the approach of this filmmaker:

> Film is about using the vehicles and tools, as a filmmaker's toolkit, […] to tell the story of that community group. […] What is it that they want to do? […] Then, it is just working with that group, learning about those ideas, and taking them through […] scripting, storyboarding, location-finding, props and all those processes. The same things that I would do in broadcasts, I would do in community. (I-1)

This two-way involvement with communities is seen as crucial to the practice of community filmmaking. Filmmakers feel that they need to confront their own perceptions about the communities they are going to represent usually with assistance from brokering agents from these communities; this is also seen as a way to facilitate access to information and participants within communities and build on their knowledge. One common reason mentioned by many filmmakers resides in ensuring 'authenticity' in producing the film by building joint meaning and experience between the community and the filmmaker. According to Roig (2013), this discourse around authenticity is part of the self-promotion of community filmmaking practices as a departure from traditional models of film production. There are stories to tell in every community and these are 'authentic' stories from people that normally do not have a voice either on UK television or in films, that filmmakers considered to be biased in their under-representation of specific parts of UK society and geography and/or in their reproduction of stereotypical images for certain minority communities. As expressed by one filmmaker who used to work for the television sector, 'I think the non-broadcast side is flourishing. I understand it's doing quite well. There are lots of people who are using film and video as a medium to get their voices out there. I think that is quite healthy' (I-8). Getting the input from the community is not enough and making the film *with* the communities is crucial. In most cases, this performative element is seen as crucial not only to the authenticity of the story but also to the development of filmmaking skills among communities with no access to them. As such, the participatory process is an important point in the way community filmmaking can support cultural diversity in the United Kingdom by democratising the means of media expression and production.

Some filmmakers reflect, though, on the ethical position they might find themselves in having to balance the participatory process with the quality of the creative output produced in terms of film 'standards' (Banks and Humphreys, 2008) and/or, at times, the requirements of the funders in the case of community films made for lobbying, pedagogic, information or marketing purposes. For example, one community filmmaker decided to use actors to represent the stories of the people in his community instead of interviews as he felt it would better achieve the narrative poetic effect he was after in his film. Another filmmaker ended up making two films: one which fitted the client's expectations and another one which matched better her creative vision. These practices can raise

questions with regard to the degree of 'authenticity' mentioned above and link to some of the debate about the limits of community filmmaking (Sandoval and Fuchs, 2010). Most filmmakers, however, remark on how community filmmaking can be a fantastic terrain for learning and experimentation, complementary or inherent to their overall film practice. Making community films allows them to not only escape what they see as a highly regulated broadcast/mainstream cinema environment but also support other non-economic objectives they want to pursue in their career as a filmmaker. For example, this filmmaker who operates across the commercial and charitable sectors notes,

> I have done some bonkers stuff, and some wonderfully creative and brilliant things in my career through community filmmaking, and probably less creative when they have been funded by the mainstream because, actually, there have been very specific boundaries about broadcasters or funders in that set, who have reduced, in some ways, the creative boundaries. (I-5)

Finally, some interesting findings emerge in relation to the new affordance that digital technologies provide for community filmmaking. Indeed, some interviewees associate community filmmaking with new practices like crowdsourcing of film production, that is, bringing together contributions from other filmmakers operating in the community of interest upon which the film is about; the rise of these practices is starting to be documented in the independent film sector (Baranova and Lugmayr, 2013). Some filmmakers also mention how they are now using web 2.0 in their *circulation practices* to build up and/or keep in touch with their audience. This can be done by posting news about the making of their films or by adding some teasers or online bonus activities before and after the release of their film – the objective being to build an audience before and during the filming process and after the film is produced. These increased opportunities are highlighted by this filmmaker who has been increasingly experiencing with transmedia practices to expand the circulation of her films: 'The digital age in which we live in now: films are not just about mega films shown at the cinema or put on TV. There are so many dissemination routes that we can go down' (I-7). This is linked to the challenge that community filmmaking, like independent filmmaking, faces in terms of dissemination outside of festivals and local cinemas as mentioned by Spink (2014) and by many of our respondents. As such, these new digital channels offer real opportunities for a wider dissemination of community films and their usually more diverse content.

Conclusion

This article has presented an in-depth analysis of the mobilisation of mediated cultural diversity in the UK film sector, using the example of community filmmaking. It offers an opportunity to rethink how cultural diversity manifests itself, adding to academic and policy debates about its enactment within the film sector. Community filmmaking contributes to 'diversifying the creative' by both allowing filmmakers to support the participation of communities who rarely, if ever, have a voice within mainstream cinema in what they call a more authentic way and broadening access to knowledge and skills related to film processes. This contribution relies on participatory models where filmmakers and communities mobilise a set of interconnected practices. Our conclusion summarises key findings and states our contribution to existing academic and policy debates on diversity and the media.

In relation to cultural diversity and its representation, we have found that cultural diversity – which we recognise as a dynamic, mediated process (Hall, 1990; Siapera, 2010) – is shaped by a range of political, economic and organisational factors. This is coupled with strong motivations and reflexive efforts by community filmmakers to counter mainstream representations of cultural

identities, tackle the barriers to participation of cultural minorities in mainstream media production and 'give voice' to diverse ideas and modes of socio-political engagement that may be difficult to enact in more commercial and mainstream filmmaking. We make a unique contribution to the existing literature on diversity and film by identifying community filmmaking as a critical site for cultural diversity in an otherwise deeply unequal sector with regard to access, demographic diversity and regimes of representation. We also recognise that this positive idea of 'giving voice' to the otherwise marginalised comes from the filmmakers, and there is potential to explore this idea further with communities themselves. Very interestingly, our participants do not have a prescribed or neat view of cultural diversity and therefore implicitly challenge a prescriptive approach to cultural diversity – a view that is consistent with the seminal cultural studies literature that has identified cultural identity-making as a fluid process (Hall, 1990) and that has resisted static, unmediated conceptions of cultural identity or, indeed, cultural diversity.

The ideas that are able to emerge through participative modes of working are seen to enable diversity of opportunity where different (often marginalised) voices can emerge and communicate and collaborate through film. Its representational value is in its claims around the resonance of film for these diverse identities, its visual reach and relative accessibility, and how it can be embedded in a particular community and context, producing an idea of a more 'authentic' and organic approach to diversity. A further contribution to academic debates around cultural diversity and the media is in how we bring community filmmakers into these discussions. We identify in our research a dynamic contribution that community filmmaking makes to cultural diversity, actively creating a symbolic and cultural space in which meanings of cultural diversity are created. Here, community filmmakers actively re-shape and re-position their practices within alternative business models, in order to deliver their civic agency and aspirations without making them instruments of 'top-down' industry-led paradigms such as 'creative diversity' (see Malik, 2013 for a critical analysis of this concept).

This proclaimed authenticity is dependent on the participatory approach associated with community filmmaking and the economic sustainability of the business models upon which community films are produced. Our findings show that that there is no one model of community filmmaking today but that it is a dynamic practice emerging from the mobilisation of capabilities and resources from both filmmaker(s) and communities through a collaborative process in terms of the development of the film's themes and how it is produced. Indeed, our research demonstrates that as for other emerging participatory creative projects (Roig, 2013), when undertaking community films, filmmakers enact and mobilise a wide range of production, performative, self-promotion, engagement, finance, organisational and circulation practices that they adapt in collaboration with communities based on their needs, knowledge and skills and the objectives of the project. The creation of value is clearly seen in the capacity to bring the voices of 'unheard' communities into the representational process, through co-conception and co-design with the filmmaker and, in many cases, co-production and co-performance and increasingly co-distribution made possible through online tools. This participatory process also supports the development of knowledge and skills with regard to the film process within communities and contributes to the democratisation of the means of media production. In many cases, this also allows filmmakers to experiment with their creative process. These practices ultimately generate cultural, economic and social values through the content they produce and the processes they are based on. As a result, they tend to support the development of both filmmakers and communities, and not their respective substitution or exploitation, as argued by Banks and Humphreys (2008).

It is important to note, though, that these practices are highly influenced by (1) the ethos of the filmmaker and his or her capacity to broker and be able to transfer his or her knowledge of filmmaking to the needs/expectations of the communities and offer some form of training; (2) the reciprocal understanding of the film process and the presence in the community of brokering agents; and (3) the funding restrictions in terms of money and guidelines/objectives that some projects need to meet. Additionally, while the cooperation of communities is critical to the film

process, the filmmaker is often positioned as knowledge 'expert' and facilitator, which he or she needs to balance from an ethical point of view. As such, as with any other participatory and co-creation process, the facilitation and the quality of the relationship between communities and filmmaker are crucial (Banks and Deuze, 2009).

Our findings start to address the current lack of research on the community mode of filmmaking highlighted by Shand (2008) in addition to offering an understanding of how community filmmaking supports cultural diversity within the film sector. At the heart of this is the mobilisation of a set of flexible practices in a collaborative process between filmmakers and communities seeking an authentic and self-defined expression of diversity. Parallels can be drawn between these practices and the ones used within other participatory modes of filmmaking such as the crowdsourcing projects discussed by Roig (2013). In addition, our findings suggest that community filmmaking is part of the portfolio of creative activities undertaken by some filmmakers alongside more mainstream film practices. We could argue that, in itself, this porosity and connections can act as a supporter of cultural diversity within the film sector. While the distribution and circulation of community film projects to a wide audience outside the community context in which they are based may, at times, still be a challenge, our findings suggest that there is a need to recognise these practices as a bridge between amateur and professional creative practices. They also advocate for a more complex understanding of the creative economy as it plays out today (Chapain and Hargreaves, 2016).

In these ways, community filmmaking autonomously addresses the various aspects (such as audience development and diversifying 'creative teams') targeted by current BFI Diversity Standards (BFI, 2015a) with regard to supporting cultural diversity. From a policy perspective, it is apparent that outside of institutional cultural policy diversity paradigms, apparent within the national film policy frameworks, community filmmaking is producing its own approaches and standards of cultural diversity. In contrast to the formally recognised, mainstream film sector, community filmmaking appears to be delivering a more culturally representative version of the United Kingdom through film. Our research not only suggests the strong possibility of the mainstream learning from such practices but also recognises that currently the impact of the community film sector is restricted due to limited funding, distribution and exhibition opportunities.

This article provides a reinterrogation of an acutely marginalised, under-theorised and complex area of contemporary filmmaking in the United Kingdom. Our research suggests that diversity can be built around practices, as well as content, and that this can be mobilised through particular methods of collaboration that produce a 'bottom-up' mode of diversity that is not apparent in the mainstream film sector. At the same time, we nuance this finding by suggesting that there is not one kind of simple cultural diversity described by community filmmakers, highlighting its flexibility, and that there is a complex relationship between the ethics of the filmmaker, co-creative practice and the participative processes that builds and augments diversity. It would be interesting to explore to what extent these processes play out in other creative sectors, countries and contexts.

Declaration of Conflicting Interests

The author(s) declared no potential conflicts of interest with respect to the research, authorship, and/or publication of this article.

Notes

1. See http://www.worldwrite.org.uk/
2. See http://light-house.co.uk/
3. See http://www.city-eye.co.uk/
4. Other participants were selected on the basis of their contribution to the field either with regard to community filmmaking, cultural diversity or both. The group include a mix of men and women from various ethnic backgrounds and from across the United Kingdom and Europe.
5. See http://www.theworldcafe.com/key-concepts-resources/research/ for more details

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