The Cinema is Dead. Long Live the Cinema: A Multiple Case Study of the Connection Between Community and Transitional Cinemas

A Thesis

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By

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this research was to demonstrate the link between transitional cinemas and the communities in which they reside. As cultural assets, transitional cinemas are in a unique position within the world of film presentation, but they share many characteristics with other arts nonprofits. The cases of Images Cinema in Williamstown, MA and the Drexel Theater in Bexley, OH coupled with fieldwide data and broad theories found in the literature of nonprofit arts undeniably establish this connection. Among the many similarities and differences between cases and artistic fields, it remains clear that an arts nonprofit is an arts nonprofit with strong community ties that enrich both the audience and the providers.
DEDICATION

This thesis is dedicated to anyone that loves and champions the art of film.
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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

Moviegoing is, at its core, a social experience. The moment those lights dim and the film reel rolls, you’re no longer an individual sitting in an auditorium; you’re part of a mass of people who are connected through a shared event and the desire to be entertained and transported. In that moment, when you turn from a solitary viewer into an audience, you form a trusting and reciprocal relationship not only with the movie but also with those around you. Every person in the theater contributes to the experience.

Alexander Huls, 2012

Setting the Stage

Cinema has long struggled to be considered an art form. The cinema as an ideological construct and a physical manifestation of the art form has been relegated to the artistic back burner. With an influx of super hero films and Hollywood franchise pictures dominating the box office both nationally and internationally, the continuation of this line of thought should come as no surprise. As a burgeoning cinephile, I was the first in line to buy my local library’s only copy of Jean Luc Godard’s Weekend on VHS. It cost me a dollar and was not available in any other format outside of a one hundred dollar, out of print DVD copy from New Yorker Films. This was 2008. Modes of viewing have shifted drastically in the past few years with technological advances coming faster than we can type the words to the page. The same changes in technology that are shifting viewing habits are promulgating the death of celluloid film (Eagan, 2012). Some scholars and amateur cinephilies would argue that this death is more of a transition and opens up doors for further exploration of a wider array of films. I cannot disagree. But this technological advance is also adversely impacting independent movie theaters around the
country, forcing the close of thousands of cinemas that simply cannot afford to change their existing mode of projection from film to digital (Hurley, 2012). Even with all of the threats to the survival of cinema as an art form, there are dozens if not hundreds of examples of thriving art house cinemas across the United States. These cinemas vary in their size, programming, location, patron demographics, geographical location, business model, and institutional age, but they all champion film as an art form. They exist out of a passion for the continued exhibition of this relatively young artistic medium. Any savvy Internet user can find her film of choice and be watching it within a matter of hours or even minutes. An art house cinema is rarely a venue for showcasing rare or hard to find films. Cinemas are now finding that they need to expand outside of the confines of passive presentation and look toward the active participation of their audience.

**What is a Transitional Cinema, and Why Should I Care?**

For the purposes of this writing, we will consider a transitional cinema to be a cinema that has changed its business model from that of a for profit to a nonprofit or is in the process of doing so. There are a myriad of reasons why any one cinema would change its business model in such a way, and each case is unique. However, there seems to be a trend emerging in the early stages of data collection that would suggest a financial need to restructure. The cinemas that experience transitioning are doing so out of necessity. A transitional cinema is only in transition by force. That is to say, a cinema that is surviving financially with a satisfied audience and staff would rarely consider transitioning. This thesis serves as a study of these transitional cinemas demonstrating how the community has impacted them leading up to their transition and continued to support them post transition. Conversely, the study will also consider the impact that the cinema has had on
its respective community both pre and post transition. Although the nonprofit business model is relatively young, there exists a large body of literature representing nonprofits in the arts across many disciplines and media. This literature is curiously devoid of any substantive, analytic research on nonprofit cinemas. The following study serves as an addition to the dearth of literature currently available on the subject. It seeks to serve as an aid for professionals going through a transition or beginning to take the journey as a nonprofit cinema.

Who Are the Players, and How Do They Fit In?

This thesis uses qualitative methods of research with data gathered primarily through case studies of two transitional cinemas in the United States: Images Cinema in Williamstown, MA and The Drexel Theater in Columbus, OH. These cases were selected because of their differences in community size, demographics, geographic location, and age. The case studies provide a view of the field on a specific level, but in order to place them within the field as a whole, data was collected from outside sources such as journals, conference presentations, magazines, online publications, and first hand accounts and experience. The literature consulted, coupled with the data collected from cinemas, provides a holistic view of each case and their relationships to the field. In order to gather data from each site, I have prepared a five-part questionnaire. In the questionnaire, I focus on questions of institutional history pre-transition, catalysts for transition and the transitional phase, the environment of the cinemas, the post-transition phase that looks at the impact of transition, and programming. The pre, post, and during transition questions address the direct impacts of transition. Environmental factors can also impact the transitions and are important to include. Programming is a cinema’s primary function. As
previously discussed, this is evolving, and with the added change in business model for transitional cinemas, it is changing by definition. The discussion of programming within the two case studies is a furthering of post-transition questions that focuses on a specific function of the cinema. Programming is viewed in contrasting models. When the cinemas operated as for profit institutions there were not considerations from the board of directors. There was no direct obligation to follow a mission that included community consideration. The community is the audience; therefore, the impact of the community’s patronage directly impacts programming among other things. Conversely, cinematic programming can shift a community’s film going habits and ultimately broaden their artistic boundaries and the artistic capability of film as an art form. The previously discussed community to cinema relationship that develops in the case of transitional cinemas allows for such an impact.

Scope, Limitations, and Bias

As an avid cinephile, I have long been interested in the movies. After a failed attempt at making films, I thought the next best thing I could do was to be in charge of the place that premiered the art form. I took a long and winding path to The Ohio State University, and have extended my desire to run an art house cinema into research. If I could, I would consider all transitional cinemas in my research and create a truly comprehensive national model for a United States system of independent cinema exhibitors. Operating within a restrictive time frame and budget, I will have to settle with using two unique cinemas. This poses limitations of generalizability, but this study, and qualitative research in general, does not concern itself with generalizability. The scope of this study is fairly small. Even within the framework of two case studies, the nature of the
thesis does not provide for elaboration on all community impacts in transitional cinemas. As such, I will attempt to look at programming as a concrete measurement of impact and touch on other areas as they present themselves in the data and throughout the literature.

Research Question and related Sub Questions

This thesis principally seeks to answer the question: what is the impact of transitional cinemas on their respective communities’, and what is the impact of the community on the cinema? This question naturally raises many more questions. How can we apply the concept of Richard Florida’s, “Creative Class” to the idea of nonprofit cinemas? Where does market failure factor into the transitional equation? What is the relationship between university communities and transitional cinemas? How and why do transitional cinemas become cultural assets? Does cinema hold cultural value within the context of the transitional cinematic community? How does the market relate to that specific community? This research will seek to answer these questions and be a tool for those in the field considering transition or simply exploring different options of operation for cinematic exhibition. A deeper analysis of transitional cinemas and a synthesis with current theories of the nonprofit arts world will play a dual role in adding to the literature and the field. I am not alone in my questioning. Paul DiMaggio states, “We need to better understand the emergence of nonprofit enterprise in the presentation and exhibition of art forms that have in the past been largely commercial: Who are the pioneers, what causes them to choose the nonprofit form, and how do their organizations’ structures and missions differ from those of their for-profit counterparts?” (2006). Through this immersive look at transitional cinemas, this thesis seeks to illuminate the meaningful community impact that these institutions, and by extension, the art of film, have
throughout the United States.
CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

As we illuminate sectors of the arts that statistical systems ordinarily obscure [cinemas], we shall begin to see the nonprofit arts sector as less professional and more participatory, less restricted to high culture and more widely spread throughout the cultural hierarchy, and less limited to the grand museum or concert hall and more ubiquitously integrated into our homes, schools, churches, and everyday lives.

Paul DiMaggio, 2006

Introduction

The history of the art house cinema reflects technological advances, artistic shifts, and various economic and social theories. There are many facets to be explored within the art house film movement. The following literature review seeks to collect and analyze the current information on art house cinemas in order to provide a brief history of the art house as venue and filmic mode. This leads to a discussion of present day trends in the independent movie theater industry including technological shifts, programming similarities across venues, economic factors impacting the industry, transitional cinema examples, and the move to a nonprofit model. In order to fully discuss the shift to the nonprofit form taking place in cinemas across the United States, field specific terms will be defined as they emerge and in isolation. From isomorphism to the Creative Class, theoretical terminology will be expanded and explored in order to connect abstract concepts to the phenomenon of the transitional cinema. Finally, this chapter will look boldly into the future and discuss some of the characteristics, pitfalls, benefits, and struggles of the cinema’s digital transition.
Before diving into this chapter, there are a few terms that must be defined directly in order to fully discuss transitional cinemas. I will define them and provide a bit of context for their inclusion.

- **Isomorphism** as defined in Paul DiMaggio and Walter Powell’s piece, “The Iron Cage Revisited: Institutional Isomorphism and Collective Rationality in Organizational Fields,” is as follows: a constraining process that forces one unit in a population to resemble other units that face the same set of environmental conditions (1983). DiMaggio and Powell attempt to further break down the meaning of institutional isomorphism by looking at three different types: coercive, mimetic, and normative. Coercive is given to forms of political influence and legitimacy issues. Mimetic isomorphism is a characteristic of uncertainty and takes the form of following established models of organizations within the field that are deemed successful. Normative isomorphism is associated with professionalism. In this chapter and briefly in consequent chapters, I will discuss programming in transitional cinemas. Mimetic isomorphism will be a key a factor in that discussion.

- **Cultural Assets** as defined by David Throsby are posited in relation to cultural value. Assuming that cultural value can be measured according to a unit of account that acts as a comparable replacement for a monetary scale in measuring economic value and in which one can assign varying levels of cultural valuation that differs among individuals, we develop a system that is distinct from an economic system but not unrelated (Throsby, 1999). Throsby asserts that an item of cultural capital that contributes cultural value is in turn a cultural asset. Within
this system of measurement, there can arise a collective view of cultural value. Transitional cinemas can be seen as a form of community cultural asset through a collectively high cultural value.

- **Art film, independent film, and commercial independent film** are all different and important distinctions in film type when it comes to transitional cinemas. The principal distinction between an independent film and a mainstream film according to industry professionals is domestic box office gross and distribution. Mainstream films bring in at least $85 million and show on at least 2200 screens; independent films bring in around $11 million or less and show on 800 or less screens (Ipsos Worldwide Motion Picture Group, 2011). This distinction becomes more minute and ephemeral when classifying art film, independent film, and commercial independent film. Financially, it is somewhat simple to distinguish between a true independent film and a commercial or studio independent film. Films backed by a major studio or an arm of a major studio would qualify as commercially independent. These films commonly have the tropes of independent film but a much bigger budget. Consequently, they show on more screens. In order to get a better perspective on what distinguishes these three, I will look at an article about a German film festival that celebrates American Independent Film. Beatrice Behn quotes the co-curator of Unknown Pleasures, the aforementioned film festival, Andrew Grant as saying, “‘American independent films' are movies that share a certain way of production -- meaning they are mostly written, directed and produced outside of the big studios, with that comes a certain spirit which the films portray, a spirit of freedom and independence,” (2013). This is a clear
distinction from the studio independents. Art films are a different classification entirely. They are art above anything else. These films crossover budgets and audiences, but they are rarely seen outside of the independent market. Balancing programming between these types of films is crucial for the transitional cinema. This balancing act is not unique to cinemas. Film festivals such as Unknown Pleasures program similarly.

• **Cinephilia** is defined by Antione De Baecque and Thierry Frémaux in Christian Keathley’s book, *Cinephilia and History, or The Wind in the Trees*, as:

> A system of cultural organization that engenders rituals around the gaze, speech, and the written word. Here, undoubtedly, is the very identity of the practice once ‘bitten by the cinema,’ everything comes to depend on how one sees films, from where in the audience, in what position, according to which individual framing, on how a screening is brought to life, how the group gets around, how this intimate diary of gaze is shared (by conversation, by correspondence, by published writing), and how, finally, the films become the site of symbolic battles through competing attitudes and writings (2005, p. 6).

This term will be used liberally in describing those who are truly passionate about film, and it should be noted that I, as author of this piece, identify as a cinephile. This of course colors my view, but I remain objective and transparent in my writing.

*History of Art House Cinemas and the Art Film Movement*

As the dominant Hollywood industry moves further into the art film industry, we see the emergence of another art film culture that is attempting to define its
position, as did the art cinema of the 1940s. The terms on which we can examine art cinema rely on our knowledge of the rise of art cinema in the United States and its negotiation for space within the U.S. film industry. (Wilinsky, 2001; p.138)

Defining a genre of film is not a simple task. Art film is unique. It serves more as a financial and social tag that crosses genres. It does, however, pose some overarching characteristics. One cannot take all science fiction films to be art house movies, but at the same time, Stanley Kubrick's *2001: A Space Odyssey* is undoubtedly both an art house film and a science fiction film. On the other hand, the 2012 film *Battleship* is certainly a science fiction film, but there are few, if any, who would argue for its status as an art film. Because art cinema crosses genres, it must be defined in terms of its audience, reception, and its place outside of the mainstream - more specifically: Hollywood. For the foundation of an art film definition, David Bordwell’s 1979 essay, “The Art Cinema as a Mode of Film Practice,” will be heavily utilized; however, given its date of publication, Bordwell’s definition will have to be expanded to fit the current cinematic landscape.

Art house cinema stands in direct contrast to the established Classical Hollywood narrative. The Classical Hollywood narrative is one of cause and effect and a linear structure; whereas, the art cinema is motivated by principles of realism and authorial expressivity resulting in a looser narrative and characters with undefined desires and goals (Bordwell, 2002). Bordwell argues that due to characters with undefined goals, the art film is afforded the opportunity to pronounce life meaningless and pass judgment on the modern world. Art cinema tackles both objective and subjective verisimilitude with an overriding authorial intelligence in which the viewer comes to expect certain stylistic elements in narration. An example of this would be Terrance Malick’s breathtaking nature cinematography used as an authorial stylistic element throughout his entire
filmography demonstrating his wrestling with the existence of God. Above all Bordwell boils down the narrative similarity in art house cinema to one word, ambiguity:

With the open and arbitrary ending, the art film reasserts that ambiguity is the dominant principle of intelligibility, that we are to watch less for the tale than the telling, that life lacks the neatness of art and *this art knows it*. (Bordwell, 2002; p. 99)

All of these tropes and characteristics are sufficient for defining art film as it was from a rough period of 1940-1960, but the 1960s saw a shift in American cinema influenced by the art cinema in large part of foreign filmmakers. The American Independent film movement of the late 1960s through the mid to late 1970s greatly influenced Hollywood, and the art house began to blend with the mainstream. Characteristics were appropriated from the mainstream to art house and back again to form more complex structures in each distinct branch of cinema and continue doing so today. Art house cinema could historically be defined as those films showcased in art house or independent cinemas, film festivals or repertory houses, but in this digital age there must be an expanded range of venues for these films. That is not to say that the historical home of first run art house cinema is still not a good barometer for the art film, but the ushering in of the digital has pushed many of these venues out of business.

The definition of art cinema is dynamic and is very particular to a time and place. Bordwell’s foundation is strong and still applies today, but accounting for the digital as well as other paradigm shifts in cinema gives a more complete picture of what art film is today. Cementing any sort of definition, even in contemporary terms, can be a trap. Because of the nature of cinema and media in general, there is a rapid trend in platform
shifts and stylistic changes that simply cannot be accounted for in a clear and concise manner. Leaving the definition of art film open is somewhat unsatisfactory. Perhaps it is best to combine the definition presented by Bordwell with the famous words of Supreme Court Justice Potter Stewart when describing hardcore pornography, “I know it when I see it,” or better yet, “I feel it when I see it.”

With a definition for art house cinema established, I now present the origins of the art house itself and the audiences that frequented them. There are quite a few comparisons to be made with the early art house cinema culture and its current state in the digital age. These comparisons may help give a fuller picture of the current state of distribution in the art house world and what can be expected as the industry quickly phases out the analog. The birth of the art house cinema is chiefly a post WWII phenomenon that closely parallels the cultural and social shift in the American consciousness caused in the aftermath of the war. Before WWII the studios controlled distribution of films by dictating which films were first run, block distributing films, and maintaining a process of complete vertical integration in which only those cinemas owned by the studios in large metropolitan markets received the first run movies (Wilinsky, 2001). These studio practices began to change after the war, but they were instrumental in laying the foundation for the types of films art house cinemas were to show. Without the option of showing the latest Cary Grant picture until well after its initial release in the studio cinemas and sometimes not at all, the independently owned movie theaters had to look for other films to exhibit.

Although art house cinemas truly began in the years following the end of WWII, the origins of the art film exhibition space began much earlier. As early as the 1920s little
cinemas began showing European, avant-garde, documentary, and classic films. These little cinemas often charged a subscription fee and higher ticket prices catering to a wealthy and socially elite audience. Little cinemas also attracted members of the intelligentsia and academic communities (Twomey, 1956). Not only were these venues, clear predecessors to the post-war art houses in terms of audience and content; they were similar in terms of creating a specific cinematic atmosphere. Little cinemas knew who was attending their movie theaters, and they attempted to accommodate them accordingly. Everything from the lighting to the decorations was designed to center the attention on the films themselves. Exhibitors were attempting to eliminate all distractions for the true cinephiles frequenting the little cinemas.

As with any industry in a perfectly competitive market (or at least theoretically perfectly competitive), competitors will flood the market until there is no more profit to be made as long as demand stays steady. Hollywood attempted to jump into the little cinema market, and an influx of competitors with dwindling demand and the rise of sound led to the demise of little cinemas in the late 1920s (Lefkovits, 1938). Following this downfall, other types of cinemas came to fill the market void. Ethnic, upscale, and newsreel theaters continued the process of fine-tuning the art house cinema.

The post WWII art houses created an atmosphere that gave audiences an overall alternative experience to the one found in mainstream movie houses from the décor to the concessions and of course the films themselves. Although as Barbara Wilinsky notes, “Art cinema developed in response to the social and industrial changes taking place after World War II,” an art house in 2013 shares quite a bit with an art house of the 1940s (2001). In a New York Herald Times article from 1949, Otis Guernsey Jr. called the true
art theatre patron a die-hard. This attitude of the fully committed cinephile as art house cinema patron can be seen today in an article published by *The Village Voice* on February 29, 2012, Grover Crisp is quoted as saying, “The audience for classic films is a very discerning group” (Churner, 2012). This tenuous connection of statements is not insignificant. True cinephiles are still at the core of the art cinema going audience. The films, venues, distribution, projection, and business model may have changed, but art cinema audiences remain steadfast in their devotion to cinema, high levels of education and income, and sense of cultural distinction.

*Examination of the Current Trends in the Field through the Literature*

It’s about a few people loving you enough and those people being enough.  
(Palmer, 2013)

Although there are few examples of transitional cinemas in the United States and no real in depth examinations of the transitions of those that have made the leap from for profit to nonprofit, there are many trends to discuss in the industry. This section will serve as an examination of current trends in art house and independent movie theaters, the overall film industry as it applies to both Hollywood and the independent scene, and a brief look at some of the current documentation on nonprofit art houses.

Independent cinemas and independent film are always seen in contrast to the mainstream and Hollywood; however, there are some interesting overall film industry and market trends that impact transitional cinemas. In his book, *Entertainment Industry Economics: A Guide for Financial Analysis*, Harold Vogel provides quite a few of these figures and characteristics as they apply to the entire movie industry. Vogel discusses the various studios and the differences in films they finance. Minimajors such as Lions Gate and The Weinstein Company are responsible for a large chunk of the studio independent
films shown in transitional cinemas (Vogel, 2010; p. 80). A curiosity of the film industry emerges in economic hard times. When the dollar is weaker domestically, foreign sales of films increase (Vogel, 2010; p. 92).

An overall increase in the money brought in from foreign rentals is both beneficial and detrimental to transitional cinemas. It is a boon to the mainstream industry, consequently, cinemas balancing their programming with studio independent films and the occasional Hollywood film, will benefit. However, the smaller independent films are forced to diversify their venues for screening as the first run film exhibitors are flooded with options. The other side of the increased profits in the film industry is the willingness to take more artistic risks with smaller films. While looking at film marketing in Europe, Finola Kerrigan and Mustafa Özbilgin stumbled upon a related issue of major film producers worldwide. Because the U.S. major film studios control an enormous share of
the exhibition and distribution markets abroad, new entrants are all but nonexistent (Kerrigan & Özbilgin, 2004). Although they are discussing the European film market, a similar dynamic exists domestically with small production companies struggling to stay afloat. The struggles of the art house as a result of the successes felt in Hollywood are coercing innovation.

The art house film industry is currently undergoing a big change. This change has many factors: technology, community, audience, and funding just name a few. The trend that is key to the examination of transitional cinemas is the jump into the nonprofit world which has been increasing in recent years (2011-2013), and has really only been extensively documented since the emergence of the Art House Convergence in 2008. Art house and independent cinemas are transitioning in droves with a reported 75% of art houses running as nonprofits as reported via a compilation of three surveys by the Bryn Mawr Film Institute in Pennsylvania (Sherr, 2012). This figure is also seen in the number of attendees of the 2011 Art House Convergence in Park City Utah with 75% reporting as 501(c)3 nonprofits (Siegel, 2011). Russ Collins, director of the Art House Convergence, admits that it is hard to justify with quantitative data, but he cites the growth of the Convergence as a sign of a trend toward a nonprofit business model in art house cinemas.

In order to get a better picture of how rapid and expansive the move to the nonprofit world has been in the field for the past ten to fifteen years (1998-2013), I will list a few examples of transitional cinemas within that time period: From its cries for help in 2001 to its newly minted nonprofit status and symbol of the community, the Brooklyn Heights Cinema in 2012 (Bahrampour, 2001; O’Neil, 2012), Campus Theatre of Smallville, PA in 2006 (Roberts, 2011), The Denver Film Center in 2000 (Epstein, 2000),
Images Cinema of Williamstown, MA in 1998, and At the Screen of Santa Fe, NM in 2009 (Kaufman, 2011). These are just a handful of examples that span the country and cover 14 years. We also see failure in transitioning. The Sutter Theatre in Yuba, CA attempted to transition back in 2008 (Koskey, 2008). The community was behind the efforts for transition, and they still are. But the Sutter is now on track to become a community theater. The idea of an art form for the community run as nonprofit exists, but it has recently been transferred from film to the stage.

Community is the name of the game. A 501(c)3 nonprofit is by design a community entity. For transitional cinemas, this is no exception. Leo Redgate, former executive director of the Community Film Institute of Fairfield, CT, has some great advice for those looking to save their local cinema, “you don’t have to love movies in order to save your local independent theatre. What you need to do is care about your community, and I mean that” (Sluis, 2011). In fact, many transitional cinemas are still alive because of a community response to save them (Epstein, 2000; Kaufman, 2011; O’Neil, 2012; Sluis, 2011). This is one of the major components of the transitional trend and model I am proposing through the analysis of my case studies. Anthony Kaufman wrote a piece on Indiewire entitled, “How to Create a Thriving Arthouse Theater (Almost) Anywhere.” This article does exactly as its title implies, but it does so in very abstract terms through examples. Because the focus of the article is creation not transformation, there are some community distinctions to be made. Kaufman espouses two different ways to incorporate the community when creating an art house cinema – 1. Build up a community that is not particularly film literate into one that loves cinema. 2. Establish a cinema in a community of cinephiles (Kaufman, 2011). These are two very
interesting ideas about the community surrounding an art house, but Kaufman fails to distinguish between for profit and nonprofit. By leaving this out, he inadvertently argues for the inherent value and inclusion of the community for independent movie houses. Kaufman’s notions of community as applied to a transitional cinema naturally evolve. Through educational programs, an emphasis on local films, encouraging community discussions, and partnerships outside of the cinema and the arts, transitional cinemas are exhibiting the importance of community involvement in increasing numbers.

Nonprofit does not mean, “no money.” Transitional cinemas are still burdened with making ends meet financially. Nothing is free. These cinemas hold a unique position in the field of film exhibition but not among arts nonprofits. Nonprofit art houses rely heavily on membership. The Roxie of San Francisco saw its annual budget go from $430,000 to $750,000 because of its members and donations (Sherr, 2012). The Bryn Mawr Film Institute has nearly 6,400 members, and Hadrian Belove of Cinefamily in Los Angeles decided he had to multiply his membership base by at least two or three times the current members in order to run the cinema comfortably (Hillis, 2011). Memberships are crucial to keeping the doors open for the transitional cinema. They not only provide finances. They also give the community a sense of direct engagement with the cinema and become advocates for the cinema within the community. Members are invaluable.

Along the lines of membership is the celebrity endorsement. Cinemas in large metropolitan areas with well established roots and boards of directors might not have trouble with this, and one might think that transitional cinemas in smaller communities would. However, this is typically not the case. Writer/director Alexander Payne and actress Laura Dern attended a fundraising event in which they held a question and answer
session after Payne’s film *Citizen Ruth*. The event raised $185,000 or about 20% of funds needed to keep the doors of Omaha, NE’s Film Streams open for the year (Fischbach, 2008). Actor/writer/director Ed Burns attended a question and answer session for his film *Nice Guy Johnny* at the Community Film Institute (Sluis, 2011). Celebrities can even be vital members of the community revival of a cinema. Actress Ali McGraw backed At The Screen and led the charge for transition of that cinema (Kaufman, 2011).

Raising funds for a transitional cinema is not solely dependent on outside players within the community and celebrity endorsements. Cinemas have also found that program diversity is a very important part of bringing in a steady audience. Unless a cinema finds itself heavily subsidized, usually as part of a larger institution, it cannot consistently show films that will have a very limited audience. Transitional cinemas must balance their programming. According to the Bryn Mawr Film Institute, only two thirds of the attendance for independent movie theaters was for regular features; the breakdown of the regular features shown was 56% first-run arthouse or specialty films; 12% repertory; 11% second or sub-run art-house fare; 11% first-run commercial; and 10% second or sub-run commercial (Schroeder, 2012). Diversity in programming is a must. If two thirds are consumed with regular programming, than the other third has to be consumed by the other activities that cinemas use to engage the community and raise funds. Cinemas have educational programs, question and answer sessions, and film festivals. These are activities that Richard Peña calls, “movies plus” (Sluis, 2009). Film festivals are becoming increasingly important for transitional cinemas by diversifying programming, involving local artists, and reaching out to broader audiences (Epstein, 2000; Roberts, 2011; Skinner, 2009).
Trends are also emerging for art house cinemas in marketing and distribution. The digital world is certainly a part of the new distribution system. It is also manifested in the proliferation of Internet based advertising. There are several ways that cinemas are attacking their marketing. These marketing tactics seem to be mostly narrowly tailored. The Coolidge Corner Theater in Brookline, MA is appealing to its scientific demographic by having, “Science on Screen,” in which they show a film and discuss the science behind it afterward; Twitter, Facebook, and email are all being utilized; and increasingly thinking outside of the field for partnerships and marketing endeavors is becoming common practice (Hillis, 2009). The Internet is used as a quick, inexpensive, and far-reaching marketing tool even with a targeted strategy.

When arts organizations partner with non-arts organizations, both parties are taking a risk. However, this is a common practice in arts nonprofits and holds true for transitional cinemas specifically. The Urban Institute, a nonprofit, nonpartisan policy research educational organization that investigates social, economic, and governance problems confronting the nation and evaluates the public and private means to alleviate them, found that these sorts of partnership are often seen between the arts and educational, health, and religious organizations with risks to finances, mission, time, and reputation (Walker, 2004). Although these types of partnerships are inherently risky, when they work, they ultimately build up relationships between community leaders and contribute to the longevity of both organizations. The most common arts/non-arts partnership seen in cinemas is educational. Cinemas partner with universities and K-12 schools for family friendly programming and intellectually specific and rigorous screenings (Epstein, 2000; Roberts, 2011; Sluis, 2009). Tangential to direct partnerships are the benefits experienced
by spillover business into shops and restaurants surrounding the transitional cinema. This can be seen at the Jacob Burns Film Center and the Community Film Institute (Jacobson, 2003; Sluis, 2011). These cinemas are important cultural assets. As is discussed in more detail further in the chapter, the transitional cinema can be seen as a cultural asset and the art it exhibits, film, can be seen as a community good. The people have gathered to save a pillar of the community. Its value as a cultural asset comes from this in tandem with the benefits it extends to local businesses and to other citizens.

Statistics and figures from the Art House Convergence have already been discussed in brief, but I must elaborate on what the Convergence is and a slight issue I have with relying on their data exclusively. The Art House Convergence, “was created to promote best practices while galvanizing the strength and enthusiasm of the art-house community” (Schroeder, 2012). It takes place annually in conjunction with the Sundance Film Festival in Park City, Utah. Nearly 300 delegates from 38 states gathered in 2012 to discuss issues ranging from nonprofit structure to the digital transition. The Convergence is a place for a wider representation than that of the National Association of Theatre Owners (which does not allow not for profit admittance), but it does not include everyone (Schroder, 2012). The website indiefilmpage.com lists 320 independent cinemas in the United States compared to the 138 surveys sent out to cinemas by the Bryn Mawr Film Institute in 2012 for the 2013 Art House Convergence and the 626 art houses found in the U.S. in 1956; however, indiefilmpage is not the most accurate representation of the number of independent cinemas in the country with outdated links to defunct cinemas and chains such as Landmark (“Theaters,” n.d.; Twomey, 1956). The conference comes with a fee of $575 per person, hotel costs of $419 dollars for three nights plus tax,
transportation to and from the airport, and the cost of airfare for the event. It is essentially a camp for independent cinemas. The fee for attending the conference along with the cost of travel, food, etc. may exclude a large portion of the cinemas in the United States. As such, any figures taken directly from the Convergence may be an undercount of actual data, but the data do serve to show larger trends among art house cinemas.

Programming is no easy task. An art house cinema programmer is essentially plying the role of curator for her cinema. For a burgeoning cinema or one on the verge of transition, falling back on mimetic isomorphism in programming is highly likely and may even be a natural step, following in the footsteps of national tastemakers such as the Film Forum (Sluis, 2009). But what on the surface looks like timid imitation, may also stem from other factors. Large studios are gobbling up independent film sensations with aplomb and leaving the smaller more intimate projects with difficult distribution decisions. Art house cinemas become victims of location. When a larger studio decides to pick up a smaller film for distribution, the larger multiplexes perk up their ears. The large cinemas like to bet on the horse backed with the most money, and they get first choice on film bookings (Fischbach, 2007). Again, the transitional cinema displays its ingenuity by expanding out past simply focusing on nightly features when situated only a few miles from a 20 screen multiplex (Sluis, 2011). With such a select group of money making independent films, cinemas are left picking over a few choice movies that are going to have a strong enough backing from their marketing to draw an audience.

Being a nonprofit, transitional cinemas are subsidized through fundraising, grants, and membership among other things. In a heavily subsidized organization, often embedded within a larger cultural institution such as the Wexner Center for the Arts Film
and Video Department, a programmer can select freely and may ultimately be afforded the opportunity to exhibit more artistically daring cinema than her less fortunate compatriots, but the trend in art house cinemas is more along the lines of diversification of appeal rather than of artistic voices (Roberts, 2011). Ideally a cinema will eventually build up trust within a community and cement a solid enough reputation to have patrons come out to any film being shown (Kaufman, 2011). That is when the real fun begins.

Before the fun can truly begin, one has to get into a deeper discussion of programming for art houses. As mentioned, programming for a transitional cinema is akin to curating. Programming for a commercial chain of cinemas is purely commercial. It is the essence of the “industry” in the entertainment industry. Due to the sheer volume of cinemas represented in a mainstream exhibition chain such as AMC or Regal, there exists an inherent lack of diversity and risk taking in programming. In this way, a cinema pre-transition is comfortable resting on its laurels and relying on overpriced, poor quality concessions for profits. Studios are perfectly content with watching sequels and retreaded franchise pictures devoid of significant artistic creativity such as *The Avengers* and *Iron Man 3* gobble up enormous box office grosses. Money talks. As a result, art house programmers are relegated to the same proverbial burner as nonprofit cinemas – they are at best ignored by the general population with the majority simply unaware of their existence.

All of that said, programming remains essential, and those doing the job are varied in their approaches. Given the lack of attention shown to programming on the local level in the traditional mainstream cinema, it stands to reason that a chain making the transition from first-run Hollywood into the art house world would take awhile to
develop a personality in programming. In a supplemental online piece for *Cineaste Magazine*, film programmers Robert Cargni-Mitchell, Bruce Goldstein, Gary Meyer, James Quandt, and Jackie Raynal were asked questions about their programming philosophies and patron demographics. The results varied from programmer to programmer, but they all ultimately landed on an audience focus whether that be teaching an audience and expanding horizons by bringing the audience to the cinema (Cargni-Mitchell), playing to what is popular with the pre-existing cinemophile audience and ignoring critical consensus for personal taste (Goldstein), or seeking a mix of old and new (Meyer) (2010). All of these established programmers have a strategy that works for them, but for newly emerging or transitional houses, there still exists a need for cohesion in programming guidance to balance the audience satisfaction with artistic integrity. Just a cursory glance at the agenda for the 2013 Art House Convergence shows no less than 12 talks and roundtables on programming during the 4-day event. This heavy focus at a conference in which three quarters of the attendees come from nonprofit cinemas demonstrates the importance of programming in transitional cinemas.

*A Digital World: The Digital Transition and the Future of Art House Cinemas*

Art cinema. Art house cinema. Art film. Art movie. These are just a few of the names adopted by those who study and write about film and media used to categorize a certain type of film that began its rise in the United States post World War II and has experienced many stages of success and failure since its inception to the time of this writing. Unlike many other film genres, art house cinema did not fully live through the transitional period of sound that began in 1923 (Enticknap, 2006). One could argue that the film industry is currently undergoing an equally important revolution fifteen years
into the predominance of digital as a form of filmmaking as well as a form of distribution. The two eventful periods in cinematic history are not to be equated; however, they do share a similarity in their impact of which one cannot yet fully grasp. Art cinema is living through its first platform revolution. Because the move to digital is a multifaceted transition that concerns distribution as well as creative freedom, its impact is seemingly even larger than that of sound. The digital has given and continues to give rise to multiple platforms in viewer consumption with vast consequences for the whole of cinema as a global industry. Art house cinema is one of many areas being changed by the digital through both necessitated means and what some scholars have deemed the, “democratization of film” (Steele, 2011).

The digital has taken over and it shows no sign of letting up. This has forced exhibitors to change their method of projection. It may not be a problem for large movie theater chains, but for many transitional cinemas, the change from 35mm projection to digital will be difficult if not impossible. Michael Hurley an art house owner and the creator of BigScreenBiz.com - a website dedicated to the business of all things movie theater - reports that one thousand movie theaters will simply have to close their doors due to a financial inability to make the digital change (Hurley, 2012). The closing of cinemas across the country is a sign of the end for these exhibition spaces. It may very well mean that many films will never be seen on the big screen in the way they were intended to be viewed. Not everything is digital. Even cinemas that manage to survive the change to digital will have to maintain a 35mm projector in order to show all of the many films that have not and may never be converted to a digital format. Many champions of 35mm film make arguments in favor of one medium over another, but the truth is,
historical art film will not survive unless there is a push to adopt the digital while keeping film projection alive.

Streaming video has become a large component of the film industry as a whole, and this impact has greatly shaped the landscape of art films. Without a venue of exhibition or a print to screen, art house cinema is increasingly seeing its home on the small screen. It is not a surprise to look at the box office numbers for 2011 and see the major studios taking the bulk of the profits. It is even less of a surprise to see the amount of art films that produced financial losses for the year coming out of the small independent studios. The key to analyzing such statistics is looking at the films that were successful: Cave of Forgotten Dreams and Pina both 3D documentaries, Margin Call, Certified Copy, and The Trip among others (Wilson, 2012). The two 3D documentaries appear to be embracing the digital in their exhibition at the cinema. The art cinema world has been slow to adopt 3D technology, but these two films are demonstrative of financial and artistic success marrying the art house to 3D. A bigger indicator of the future of the art house cinema rests in the other financially successful titles listed. These films are some of the art house pictures that embraced streaming video in 2011. Both Certified Copy and The Trip were made available through Netflix Watch Instantly and Video on Demand soon after their initial theatrical release dates. Margin Call is surely a model for future art house releases. It was released through video-on-demand (VOD) and theatrically on the same day, otherwise known as a day-and-date-video-on-demand release. This is notable not because it was one of the highest grossing films to be released using this method, but because it managed to capture two distinct market segments: the
theatergoers and the VOD market. Two weeks after it was released, 98% of theatergoers were unaware of its availability streaming on demand (Saperstein, 2011).

Streaming is not only a place for new art house cinema to thrive in the digital age; it is also a home for many films that would otherwise fill the classic repertory programming of an art house cinema. A number of these films are only available digitally to the general public and will never grab enough of a market share to be profitable anywhere, not even streaming. However, providers such as Netflix and Hulu have made them available to attract cinephiles to their particular streaming service. In the past, those same viewers would have gone to their local art house to consume this type of programming. This shift in viewing comes from an embrace of new technology to make rare films more widely available, but it is also a symptom of the financial burden felt by independent distributors. Even studios with critically lauded titles are feeling the pressure. Indomina, a distributor of films such as *Holy Motors* and *The Imposter*, closed its doors in early 2013 due to poor organization and insufficient funds (Thompson & Hanna, 2013). This is yet another example that the diversification that transitional cinemas are embracing outside of nightly screenings is going to increase in the near future.

The Criterion Collection, “a continuing series of important classic and contemporary films,” has made a deal with Hulu to stream its entire library through their paid membership service, Hulu Plus (Lawler, 2011). The Criterion Collection is in a fascinating position in both its restorative practices and new release acquisitions. They are a distributor of films both new and old all of which could be seen as art films or at the very least auteur driven films serving as an example of their respective film movements. Criterion works with two major distributors, IFC and Janus Films. Following in the
footsteps of Magnolia Pictures who are a subsidiary of 2929 Entertainment, owners of Landmark Cinemas, the largest chain of art house cinemas in the United States and innovative distributors in their own right, IFC shows some signs of the old Hollywood studio system with its vertical integration of being a distributor on television, DVD/Blu Ray, VOD, selling to boutique distributors such as Criterion, and owning a movie theater that exhibits IFC films (Hilderbrand, 2012). Janus films works almost exclusively with restoration. They share more with the practice of importing and showcasing foreign films of the early art houses of the 1940s. Janus has toured Jean-Luc Godard’s 1967 film Weekend, the works of Charlie Chaplin, and Rainer Werner Fassbinder’s World on a Wire in art house cinemas and museums throughout the United States. Presumably these films will then be released on the Criterion Collection in physical formats (DVD and Blu Ray) and online (Hulu Plus). Pulling from a variety of sources, Criterion curates a noteworthy collection of films that represents some of the best art films both classic and contemporary. Their embrace of the digital along with studios backing art films such as Magnolia and IFC is a sure sign of what can be expected for the future of art house cinema distribution.

All of the talk of distribution and the life of art cinema in the digital age still leaves room for a discussion of those 1000 theaters Hurley discussed in April of 2012. Anthony Kaufman has taken a closer look at how the transition to digital is impacting cinemas in his piece, “Three Ways Small Arthouses are Saving Up for Digital Transition.” What is happening in these cinemas that are living out the prophecy of convert or die is really a shift back to a few of the trends already discussed earlier in the chapter. A personal touch at the Downing Film Center is helping them distinguish themselves from
the local multiplex; celebrity endorsements are rising up from Cinefamily to the Brattle; and most significantly, cinemas in areas large and small are finding that community support has been the number one factor in determining their survival through this digital transition (Kaufman, 2013). Notably, many of these cinemas are utilizing the crowd source method of funding through the popular website, Kickstarter that allows users to create a campaign in which donors give money for a project. The funds remain uncollected unless the project creators reach their target funding level by a certain date. These methods of raising funds for specific campaigns or general operating funds and building and maintaining an audience in which cinemas are engaging are examples of how art houses are operating in the experience economy. In this model of economics, a transformational experience that is customized and changes the individual is expected (Pine & Gilmore, 1999, p. 165). The digital transition has become an opportunity for transitional cinemas to refocus their attention on the ideals that make them essential cultural assets.

Theory Definition and Positioning

When researching a topic within the arts or creative sector, there are some terms, ideas, and concepts that will naturally arise. In order to fully understand the community impact of the transitional cinema, I will attempt to define and discuss these terms as they appear in the literature. This term definition serves as a bed for continued discussion and analysis of the cases found in Chapters 5. Although this section is primarily concerned with defining theoretical concepts, I will also make room for the elaboration of field specific terms. The arts, and nonprofit arts in particular, have a wealth of literature from which to draw; however, I will focus the discussion to topics of the Creative Class and
the university, active arts participation, cultural value, partnerships across disciplines, business structures, and market issues.

There are many issues within the market that impact nonprofit arts. I will examine some of these ideas as they apply to transitional cinemas in particular. Paul DiMaggio’s piece, “Nonprofit Organizations and the Intersectoral Division of Labor in the Arts,” will serve as the primary text from which I will draw on the notion of market failure in the arts and the need for arts organizations to change their model from for profit to nonprofit. David Throsby’s, “The Production and Consumption of the Arts,” will supplement the idea of market failure in the arts and present a few more market, economic and community factors impacting transitional cinemas.

The argument for market failure in the arts is a simple one. The arts cost more to produce or exhibit than the public is willing to pay; therefore, these organizations need to be subsidized by the government in the form of a sanctioned nonprofit that affords them the opportunity to seek grants, members, and tax incentives among other things. The economic feasibility of survival for the public good that is an arts organization is contingent upon government support (DiMaggio, 2006; p. 12). There is clearly a market failure when it comes to transitional cinemas, but one must now ask why a particular arts organization is worth subsidizing. It could just as easily be said that the market failure of these cinemas is an indicator that they are nonessential and should cease to exist. DiMaggio concisely answers the question of why these organizations are worth subsidizing through a differentiated goods theory. Noncommercial arts industries, such as transitional cinemas, provide, “collective consumption goods,” that are not limited in benefit to the ticket buyers (DiMaggio, 2006; p. 13). The ticket buyer or arts participant is
provided with a unique benefit, but the surrounding community also benefits from the continued existence of the institution. The price that ticket buyers pay is typically only proportional to individual value. This is where the subsidization of the arts in the form of nonprofits demonstrates its worth.

David Throsby presents an almost Floridian view of the market failure argument posited almost a decade prior to Florida’s work. He espouses an idea of market failure in relation to the notion of the arts as a leading sector of central city renewal and urban economic development (1994, p. 25). Throsby is utilizing the idea of market failure in the arts, but relating it to a city perspective rather than one of community benefit. This plays as the flipside of the same market failure coin. He goes on to mention that studies have found that the perceived benefits from these arts organizations extend beyond the individual out to ideas of national identity, and individuals are willing to pay for them through taxation at somewhat higher levels (Throsby, 1994; p. 25). Throsby also uses his piece to describe taste as it relates to consumer behavior and economic theory; there exists a systematic relationship between taste and economy (1994, p. 4). Given this relationship, cinematic trends in programming may stem not only from insular community influence but also from national tastemakers (critics, celebrities, and media outlets) and human capital.

The Creative Class is a notion popularized by Richard Florida. In his seminal work on the subject, The Rise of the Creative Class, he defines the Creative Class as a group that engages in work whose function is to, “create meaningful new forms,” with two levels or layers: the Super-Creative Core and creative professionals. The Super-Creative Core consists of poets, artists, professors, scientists, actors, and architects to
They are in the highest order of creative worker and are fully engaged in the creative process producing new forms or designs that are readily transferable and useful (Florida, 2002). The creative professional is tangentially related to the Super-Creative Core. While they may not work as originators of any kind, they use creativity in their problem solving on the job. The Creative Class is a construct that purports to be correlated to economic growth and development in cities.

Almost immediately after Florida began publishing his ideas of the Creative Class, he felt the backlash. In one of several publications that explicitly call Florida’s findings false or misguided, Michelle Hoyman and Christopher Faricy argue that the Creative Class is not related to growth. Instead they show that human capital predicts economic growth and development while social capital predicts average wage but not growth; they also found a high correlation between clusters of universities and economic growth (Hoyman & Faricy, 2009). Richard Florida also relates the idea of universities to the Creative Class in his book, Creative Cities and the Creative Class. Florida makes a few key insights into the role that universities play within the idea of the Creative Class. Because the university is a magnet for talent and the highly creative, the Creative Class tends to exist and thrive in cities with universities. Florida also mentions that creative workers want to live and work in progressive environments with museums, fine arts, upscale shops, outdoor activities, and good schools for their children (2005).

Joshua Long argues that Richard Florida’s notions have gone unchallenged in the mainstream and goes on to delineate a large handful of his scholarly detractors. Long is using the city of Austin, Texas as a model for the potential unsustainability of Florida’s ideas (2009). Although I agree with the empirical, quantitative evidence presented by
Florida’s opponents, I still feel his ideas have some value. Florida’s idea of the Creative Class is at least partially useful, not as an economic measurement but as an indicator of sectoral characteristics and demographics and the relationship of the university to human capital.

The Creative Class does not exist outside of the notions of human and social capital. Florida touts the university as a key piece of creative cities. He further connects the idea of universities with human capital. Much like Hoyman and Faricy, Florida is positing the economic importance of human capital as an extension of the university. Xavier Castañar and Lorenzo Campos, while looking at innovation in artistic organizations, come across a similar argument of human capital as it applies to the level of innovation for arts organizations. They note that human capital or education level both enable the existence of arts organizations in a community and force them to continue innovating their programming (Castañar & Campos, 2001). David Throsby posits yet another view of the human capital issue. He contends that through a sort of addiction of acquired, “good taste,” the shadow value of the arts will decrease as human capital characteristics such as experience and understanding are acquired (1994). These notions of human capital are all in some way tied to education. The university is an institution of higher learning that according to Florida attracts members of the Creative Class and according to Hoyman and Faricy is correlated with economic growth. While the Creative Class itself may not serve as a particularly useful or methodologically sound model for measuring economic growth and sustainability, its ties to the university are crucial in discussing the particular case studies of transitional cinemas, all of which reside and operate within close proximity of one or more universities.
Active participation has quickly become an essential part of arts nonprofits. Because nonprofits are mission driven and government sanctioned, they exist under certain parameters. These parameters include an educational component. Many nonprofit arts institutions have fixated on education in their missions as something that is feasible, beneficial, and essential. These mission driven organizations focusing on education as a component, are increasingly turning to active participation from community members. Chris Walker, Cory Fleming, and Kay Sherwood discuss the different types of arts participation in depth in a study for the Urban Institute. The report finds that there are four types of arts participation: program and event attendance, parents involving their children, making or supporting art as amateurs, and support through donations of time or money (Walker, Fleming, & Sherwood, 2003). These different forms include active participation and they do so increasingly as you go up the Ladder of Commitment (See Figure 2). It is important to note the varying forms of participation and the increased level of active participation that is seen as one scales the Ladder of Commitment. The higher the level of commitment, the more likely a participant is to attend events or participate actively in a specific organization, therefore contributing to the longevity and sustainability of the organization and by extension the art form. Although this broad notion of active arts participation is a key piece of understanding the transitional cinema; it is also important to note that arts participation motivation varies greatly from organization to organization and even within institutions. Francie Ostrower has a piece on just that. She notes that people have different reasons for participation. For example 65% of museum attendees were motivated by a sense of knowledge gain (Ostrower, 2005). Awareness of these factors can help transitional cinemas tailor their forms of active
participation.

Conclusion

This chapter contains a wealth of information that has been stripped down to the essential details. The topics within each subsection of this literature review are large enough to justify a separate article and in some cases entire books or theses. They have been discussed in brief here in order to round out the background for my analysis of the case studies presented in this thesis. The changing technology and overall landscape of the industry are critical to these cinemas. However, the transitional cinema does not exist in isolation and should be taken into consideration within the larger context of the arts and arts nonprofits. Combining theoretical studies that have already taken place within the arts and applying them to cinemas is one of the ways in which I will qualitatively articulate the transitional justification from for profit to nonprofit in the film exhibition world and in doing so, fill a gap in the literature. There are many examples of transitional cinemas presented here. A common thread of community involvement and investment runs throughout them and will be further explored as it applies to specific cases. Ideally, this chapter will provide the necessary tools for a deeper discussion that demonstrates the importance of the art house cinema. The transitional label is important not because transitional cinemas possess the magic lamp that will save the integrity of film as an art form, but because the transition that has taken place is a unique phenomenon that inherently positions the community surrounding it front and center and builds up these venues as cultural assets worth preserving and the art form presented within worth saving.
STRONGER COMMITMENT
Art Support: Volunteering
Amateur Art Participation: Performing in Public
Socialization of Children: Arranging Lessons
Average number of events attended per year: 15–31

MODERATE COMMITMENT
Art Support: Donating Money
Amateur Art Participation: Performing in Private
Socialization of Children: Taking Children to Events
Average number of events attended per year: 11–19

LEAST INTENSE COMMITMENT
Art Support: Only Attending Events
Amateur Art Participation: None
Socialization of Children: None
Average number of events attended per year: 9–10

SOURCE
Urban Institute:
1998 Cultural Participation Survey

Figure 2 Ladder of Participation
CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY

Case study methodology is not rigorous or less rigorous per se. It becomes rigorous or less rigorous depending on the type of knowledge we want to generate in order to solve specific problems... When used appropriately, case study methodology is very rigorous, comparable with any other research method. 
Daniel David, 2007

Philosophical Rationale

Qualitative research and its distinction from quantitative research were not of great interest or import to me prior to undertaking this research. Studying various methods of qualitative and quantitative research in graduate level courses, I found the most appropriate format for my research to take would be that of multiple case studies. Robert Yin provides the following definition of a case study:

A case study is used to understand complex social phenomena. In brief, the case study method allows investigators to retain holistic and meaningful characteristics of real-life events—such as individual life cycles, small group behavior, organizational and managerial processes, neighborhood change, school performance, international relations, and the maturation of industries. A case study is an empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon in depth and within its real life context, especially when the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident. (Yin, 2009)

The case study is useful, but a cross case analysis of multiple cases is even better because it allows for similarities or discrepancies to emerge from the data creating an opportunity
to shed light on problems, issues, or concepts across an entire field (Schwandt 2007, p. 56). This type of holistic approach requires the use of multiple methods. The research can take a mixed method form employing both qualitative and quantitative research. It can simply utilize multiple methods within one of the two spheres, or a combination of methods within the qualitative sphere can be mixed with a combination within the quantitative sphere. In either circumstance, case studies require a variety of approaches and methods in order for them to be truly holistic.

Qualitative research is characterized by its ever-evolving definition as a method of inquiry. For this research I will use Catherine Marshall and Gretchen Rossman’s (2011) definition which states:

Qualitative research typically

• is enacted in naturalistic settings
• draws on multiple methods that respects the humanity of the participants in the study.
• focuses on context.
• is emergent and evolving, and
• is fundamentally interpretative (p. 6).

Context and setting are key factors in recognizing shared characteristics across sites that aid in the development of an overarching theory for the transitional cinema.

Case study is the most complex of the qualitative methods because of the requisite use of multiple methods. The case study was first developed in the field of sociology. Frederic Le Play was attempting to remedy great social suffering of the time. His earliest research of what would later develop into cases studies began in 1829. Le Play is credited
as being the first to bring the case study to the social sciences in order to complement statistics (Healy, 1947). This early relationship with the quantitative and focus on observed facts and inductive method are mainstays of both case study and qualitative research in general. The research Le Play was conducting was much more immersive and time consuming, but the idea remains consistent with the multiple case study thesis presented.

*Research Process and Position*

The curious set of circumstances that led me to my current educational destination provided the basis for my research subject. I worked as an intern on two separate occasions for Images Cinema in Williamstown, MA. My strong relationship with the staff at Images was the basis of my first case.

Even before deciding on an institution for my graduate degree, I knew my thesis would be related to movie houses. As my undergraduate degree was essentially in filmmaking, I never truly embraced or learned how to be a scholar. My thesis began looming over my head in the later weeks of the spring quarter of 2012 as I was heading off to my second internship with Images. I knew that Images was going to be a part of my research, but I was still not certain how. After refamiliarizing myself with the strong community ties of the cinema, I began to consider the overall connection between community and cinema for nonprofit cinemas. This led to the development of seeking out a unique case in the already sparse territory of nonprofit cinema. My focus shifted to the specific case of cinemas that once operated as for profit and are currently operating under a nonprofit model.
After establishing my focus, I realized I would need to frame my research. A single case study seemed entirely too specific resulting in less robust data and ultimately lacking in any sort of overarching theory. Novice researchers can attest to the flood of thoughts that soon came to me. I started off with a list of over twelve cinemas that had changed from for profit to nonprofit. This list was strategically narrowed. Ultimately, I landed on four cases: Images Cinema in Williamstown, MA, Little Art Theatre in Yellow Springs, OH, The Drexel Theater in Columbus, OH, and The Loft Cinema in Tucson, AZ—selected for their differences in geography, community size and demographics, longevity, and accessibility. Nonprofit cinema directors are burdened with a massive workload. After months of communication with the four cinemas, the Little Art and The Loft were simply too overworked to be able to participate. One may argue that the cases I selected were solely based on the final factor of accessibility, ostensibly making my sample one of convenience. I do not deny the convenience of my sample; however, the myriad of unique characteristics that make up each cinema gives credence to a holistic set of case studies. The convenience merely ensures that my data collection goes smoothly over a very limited period of time.

As with all good qualitative research, the researcher’s personal perspective must be discussed. My perspective is certainly colored by my avid cinephilia and advocacy for the furthering of the medium as an art form. My undergraduate career and a portion of my high school studies were dedicated to the creation of moving pictures. Hardly a week goes by in which I do not see a movie in a movie theater. It would be safe to characterize me as an interested party. Rather than taint the study, I would argue that my bias demonstrates a genuine passion that keeps my findings pragmatic and as objective as is
reasonably expected in qualitative research. The theories and commonalities I postulate serve only as informational tools not opinions of best practices.

Data Collection

This research utilizes extensive questionnaires and e-mail communication; previous research in the field; histories of the particular cases and the field overall; and any relevant data, qualitative or quantitative, the participants choose to make available above and beyond the requested answers to questionnaires. The questions posed fall under four distinct categories: History (for profit), Change (transition period), Environment (post-change), and programming. These four categories take a deeper look at why the particular cases decided to make the transition from for profit to nonprofit through an analysis of the pros and cons of the structure, the multifaceted impact of technology, and the amount of community value demonstrated. The questionnaire was presented to the executive director of each cinema with the option of having more experienced or qualified employees answer any question she or he felt appropriate. Input from community and/or board members was also considered along with the questionnaire. Open email communications coupled with a specific questionnaire were used in order to address particular areas of interest while keeping data collection flexible and open.

Answering the questions is only part of the puzzle. Findings taken from the existing research, consisting almost entirely of small articles in local newspapers and online publications, will serve to illuminate trends in the field and across the studies. Daily Variety provides a resource for writings on the subject. Film Journal International provides similar writings on cinemas focusing mostly on specific cases of nonprofit cinemas. Local newspapers are the last resource for past studies of nonprofit cinemas.
These serve mainly to note significant changes to cinemas within specific communities and are not analytical in nature. As such, they do not provide theories to connect with specific site examples; rather, they complement the cases.

Festivals and conferences provide the most direct and comprehensive research of nonprofit cinemas and programming. A presentation on independent film presented at CinemaCon in 2011 serves to make an important distinction in programming for nonprofit cinemas. Articles coming out of the Art House Convergence, an annual conference for community based art house cinemas, provide the most significant research of the field.

The outside research dealing specifically with art house cinemas only provides a factual link between the case studies and trends in the field. Literature on cultural value, the Creative Class, the nonprofit arts, cultural assets, and market failure provides a broader application of theory to these case studies. This literature facilitates a back and forth between abstract ideas and concrete examples. This sort of reciprocity is precisely the type of relationship that creates opportunity for a larger theoretical construct of the field.

Limitations and Advantages

Although a case study is meant to provide a holistic view, there are inevitably limitations to every study. Generally speaking, a qualitative research study is not to be considered generalizable across an entire field on its own (Marshall & Rossman, 2011, p. 252). The research should be taken as evidence of a particular case. If similar circumstances characterize a separate case, the research can be used to help determine what may happen with the similar case. This applies to case studies. Although my
research would never be universally generalizable, a larger sample size of case studies could provide more inclusivity for specific community types.

As this is a master’s thesis, it also represents a study limited by time. There is a small window for research. Inevitably, this will lead to the omission of facts that could enrich the findings of the study and enlighten any theoretical models presented. The shorter time period is not only limiting in its omission of data; it also limits the amount of analysis and theoretical comparison that could give the study a richer conclusion and overall stronger impact on the field.

Questioning is an essential trait of all scholars. This trait presents its own unique set of limitations. These are quasi-limitations, in that they can be accounted for directly and presented as merely consequential to the research design. Data sources must be questioned. When utilizing data from articles coming out of the Art House Convergence conference, I have to question the source. Do these figures only represent the attendees of the conference and their specific viewpoint? If so, what is the larger picture? It is a select few art house cinema workers, across both the nonprofit and for profit world, that can afford to travel to Utah, take the time off, and pay for the conference. Given these limitations, it follows that the data from the Convergence is an underrepresentation of the field. By addressing these sorts of issues, I am able to minimize the amount of limitation that comes from questioning the data source. Concurrent with the questioning of the data source comes questioning of the self and issues of bias. Simply acknowledging and describing my bias as a limitation, similarly curbs the level to which it negatively impacts the study.
CHAPTER 4: BACKGROUND

The attempts by art house operators and art cinema participants to carve out a niche helped to shape the economic, social, and industrial structure as well as the cultural significance and values associated with the film industry from which they were originally excluded.

Barbara Wilinksy, 2001

Introduction

The background chapter of this thesis will provide the bulk of the factual information of the two cinemas that serve as case studies: The Drexel Theater and Images Cinema. The history of each cinema will be discussed in as much detail as possible in order to provide a stronger basis for cross case analysis. All of the information on the history of the cinemas themselves comes from executive directors of the cinemas as a response to a questionnaire that is provided in Appendix C. Despite all of the mimetic isomorphism that can be seen among transitional cinemas, each institution has its own unique set of stories and circumstances. Embedded within each story there are industry shifts that impacted the cinemas similarly across locations. The idiosyncrasies of each cinema and the way they handled these changes speaks volumes about them. The chronological background of each cinema is important to fleshing out each case, but it is not the only factor. This chapter will also present a profile of the surrounding communities of each case study. This discussion will begin to demonstrate the demographics of patrons that make up the audience of each case.

Throughout this chapter, there will be similarities that arise among the differences. Among those similarities is the burgeoning presence of the Ladder of Commitment shown in Chapter 2. The transition afforded the cinemas the luxuries that come with a greater tie to the community. Allowing patrons to climb up the Ladder of Commitment
comes from building a community focused foundation from the board to the staff out to the programming. One of the benefits of utilizing the case study methodology is being able to note these similarities and differences across various cases. By providing examples from the field that directly apply to those found in the literature review, I am able to provide a bridge between theory and practice. This chapter simply gathers all of the information to set the table for this type of analysis to be presented in Chapter 5.

Cinematic History: The Drexel Theater

Established in 1937 as a neighborhood, one screen movie house in the heart of Bexley, the Drexel seated 737 audience members who paid ten cents to come see the biggest and best films of the day. Films would come to the Drexel after having their initial run at the Ohio Theatre in downtown Columbus. This meant that the Drexel was a second run, suburban cinema. The box office was located on the street, and in the lobby were couches. There was no door between the screen and the lobby only a screen to block out the sunlight. Upstairs there was a ladies restroom and ladies lounge. There was also an equivalent set of rooms for the men downstairs. The location and inclusion of these areas is not extraneous information. The lounges served as a space for dissection and discussion of the films. It was and still is an important thing to provide a space where audience members feel comfortable conversing not only about the films they have just seen but also about any topic that may arise.

In the 1950s and 1960s the downtown cinemas began to lose their cache, and the suburban neighborhood cinemas were getting new films directly from distributors. They became first run movie houses. As a result many of the downtown movie theatres either

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1 All information presented in this section is taken from former owner and current artistic director of the Drexel Jeff Frank’s answers to the questionnaire found in Appendix C unless otherwise indicated.
closed down or were converted into regional theaters for local actors to put on plays. The downtown cinemas put on what were called road shows where they would show a film for months extending into periods of over a year. Along with these long runs, the screenings themselves would be longer than what the suburban cinemas were putting on. They had prelude and exit music, intermissions, and even newsreels. The neighborhood cinemas were given shorter programs. The Drexel became a place to see big Hollywood films and would put them on for extended runs. They had *Camelot* for nine months. This period of showing epic films and being held as a prestigious location for them lasted until around the late 1970s when the cinema industry began to change. Other movie theatres were expanding to have two and three screens. The Drexel still had one and became a discount house. They played two films a night for two dollars.

By 1981, Jeff Frank and his wife Kathy decided that they wanted to buy the Drexel and make it a repertory house. There was no permanent home for classic or art films in Columbus. In the summer there were classic movies at the Ohio Theatre through a program that Frank curated. Art films came in the occasional series on one the college campuses and the Columbus Museum of Art. During our interview, Jeff noted, “when we purchased the business, we felt it was important to bring back the original look of the theatre; the Drexel had a lot of history, and it was not being recognized to its full potential” (Delgado & Frank, 2013). They restored the marquee, stripped some decorations, and restored the original lighting system in the theatre. With the adequate physical adjustments to the space that helped restore some of the original feel of the cinema, the Drexel began screening classic films. Although the cinema was a home
primarily for classic cinema, they did screen a select few foreign and American independent films.

Gradually, the Drexel began showing more contemporary foreign and independent films as more and more independent distributors emerged. Directors who were not able to get their films distributed through a major were able to do so through these new independent distributors. The late 1980s marked the shift in many repertory houses from classic programming to contemporary art cinema. In cities with close ties to cinema (New York and Los Angeles), the revelation of an increase of independent distributors was not as impactful, but for places like the Drexel, it allowed them to be able to select from a larger pool of contemporary art and foreign films and not rely so heavily on the classics. At the same time, classic films were becoming more widely accessible to the public through VHS. By programming foreign and independent films that were current, the Drexel was able to capitalize on an exclusivity of film product.

Around the same time that VHS was making a big splash, cinemas around Columbus were expanding from one screen to up to eight. It was the era of the multiplex. By having multiple screens, the cinemas were able to minimize the risk in programming that came with backing one film for at least a one week run and in many cases, two or three weeks. In 1991, The Drexel expanded into a three-screen cinema by cutting down one auditorium with 737 seats into three of varying size. The Drexel kept its original screen size and basic dimensions in the main house and was able to move the films from house to house as they aged in their run. As new films came in, older films would move to the smaller auditoriums. In 1993 the Drexel opened the Radio Café. It was one of the first full service restaurants of any cinema in the country. The Radio Café was initially
intended for just desserts and coffee but expanded to include full meals that patrons could take into the cinema. It also continued in the tradition of providing a space for discussion that the lounges served in the original Drexel.

From the late 1980s into the expansion from one screen to three, and up through their transition they were screening primarily foreign and independent films with the occasional series of classic films, a summer children’s film festival, westerns, noirs, and the Jewish Film Festival. Throughout this era, the Drexel was primarily concerned with being the only place in town to see a certain film. They wanted exclusives. This was a very successful business model throughout the 1990s. The commercial cinema chains were only large enough to fill their screens with Hollywood films and left the other films (art, independent, foreign, documentary) to the art houses. By the early aughts (2000-2003), the cost of distribution was on the rise, and many independent studios were either closing their doors or merging with majors to stay afloat (Goodale, 1999). As the smaller studios began to distribute films that were winning Oscars, the majors began to change their release patterns. In the Columbus market, cinemas were expanding from multiplexes (6-10 screens) into megaplexes (12-36 screens). This meant that Columbus was over screened. The megaplexes began to show the art films coming out of the independent arms of the major distributors, and the Drexel had to share exclusives. This led to patrons going to the cinemas that were closer to them rather than traveling to the Drexel.

Around the late aughts (2007-2009), the Drexel began to feel the impact of a large financial struggle. They had to cut a large number staff and trim the budget all around. During this same time, Jeff Frank began going out to Utah to attend the Art House Convergence. “I noticed that a vast majority of the cinemas were running as
nonprofits which allowed them to receive grants and have members,” Frank stated (Delgado & Frank, 2013). He spotted the trend and talked it over with his partner and wife, and in 2009 Friends of the Drexel, a nonprofit group created to save the Drexel Theater, was born. This group was made up of community members invested in keeping the Drexel alive. They aided in the initial ideas for transition. The idea was to make the Drexel a community based, mission driven movie theater. The Drexel officially made the transition from for profit to nonprofit in 2011 when Friends of the Drexel purchased it and adopted the mission statement:

To foster, support and promote educational, cultural and arts programming at the Drexel Theatre in Bexley, Ohio the organization presents a diverse array of international, documentary, independent and classic films, that would otherwise not be available to the general public, which entertain, educate and deepen the appreciation of films and media arts by the community (“Nonprofit report,” 2011).

*The Environmental Context: Bexley and Columbus*

Bexley, OH is a relatively old city established within an even older city of Columbus. Its residents vary in age, income, race, and education; however, the variation is somewhat slight and has not changed much over its hundred-year history. Bexley was established in 1908 as a village merging Bullit Park, a wealthy neighborhood founded in the late 1800s with homes and estates built east of Alum Creek, and Pleasant Ridge, a Lutheran community rooted in the educated university environment of Capitol University founded in 1876 (“About Bexley”, n.d.). This combination of education and wealth is an important and steadfast quality of Bexley and to a larger extent, the communities of successful transitional cinemas. Bexley officially became a city in 1932 and is
geographically miniscule covering only 2.5 square miles of land (“About Bexley”, n. d.). In isolation, this size is misleading. The city could more geographically accurately be described as a neighborhood of Columbus, Ohio. As such, it is located fairly centrally and within 20 miles of The Ohio State University, Capital University, and the Columbus College of Art and Design.

Bexley’s close proximity to Capital University, the surrounding Columbus universities, and the highly rated school districts gives it a large population in the 15-24-age range. Given the high volume of universities in the city, we see similar numbers for Columbus population with a larger number of older citizens in Bexley (United States Census Bureau, 2010).
These data may be quite different, but the difference in race is even larger with 89.6% White and 5.9% Black or African American in Bexley and 61.5% White and 28% Black or African American in Columbus (United States Census Bureau, 2010).
The two most disparate statistics between Columbus and Bexley are the two on which Bexley was founded and the two that are integral to the transitional cinema: income and education.

![Race (Columbus) Pie Chart](image)

![Income and Benefits (2011 Dollars; Bexley) Bar Chart](image)
Figure 8 Income and Benefits (2011 Dollars; Columbus)

Figure 9 Education (Bexley)
The income difference is vast with the percentage of Columbus residents earning $200,000 or more of combined income and benefits at 1.7% and 20.7% in Bexley (United States Census Bureau, 2011). The education level is not as divergent as the income, but the percentage of Bexley residents with a bachelor’s degree or higher is 69.4% with 31% earning a graduate or professional degree while in Columbus only 32.3% of residents have a bachelor’s degree or higher and only 10.7% have graduate degrees or higher. While the education levels are different, the amount of higher learning institutions located near Bexley is significant.

_Cinematic History: Images Cinema^2_

Images Cinema opened its doors in 1916 in Williamstown, MA as the Walden Theatre. The original building was a fraternity that was built for Williams College in 1869. The back of the house was where the 400-seat movie auditorium was located. At

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^2 All information in this section is taken from current executive director of Images Cinema Sandra Thomas’s answers to the questionnaire found in Appendix C unless otherwise noted.
the front of the house were the lobby and two storefronts. The storefronts and front lobby remain open to this day. The cinema was split and today the house holds 200. After Walden, the King family lived in the apartment on the second floor above the theatre and ran the cinema and the liquor store housed in one of the storefronts. Throughout the 1950s and 1960s the cinema was owned off and on by various owners including a small chain called Hallmark Cinemas. The name of the cinema changed in the mid 1960s from Walden Theatre to The College Cinema.

After the College came The Nickelodeon. Sandra Thomas notes that, “the cinema began exhibiting art house and repertory films when George Mansour and the Nickelodeon took over” (Thomas, 2013). He was initially just interested in learning how to book films for a cinema. Mansour left the cinema in the early 1980s. He continued to book for Images into the early aughts and books cinema out of Boston to this very day. Mansour is a legendary film booker and LGBT activist (Bronski, 2003). His initial programming of Images opened the doors and set the stage for what the cinema was set to undergo on its way to becoming a transitional cinema.

Under the ownership of Donald Fisher, Images began struggling financially. The proliferation of VHS was hurting the business. In the mid 1980s Fisher began screening pornographic films to make ends meet. This was a controversial move for the time and in the small town of Williamstown. Into the 1990s Fisher continued to face problems. He was not only fighting against competing technologies and modes of viewing. Fisher also had to contend with the landlord who bought the building in the mid 1990s. The landlord cut the theater in half and took away the front entrance. Patrons now had to come in
through the alley to see films in a smaller theater. He was not making any money and was just fed up with the whole situation, so he decided he would put the business up for sale.

In 1998 Larry Weber, a retired businessman, Ellen Bernstein, owner of The Advocate, Julius Rosenwald, a local movie lover, Shawn Rosenheim, a professor at Williams College, and Matt Harris, a tech developer who was part of Tripod, got together to try to save Images Cinema. These were all either business smart individuals, film fans, or both. The group saw that losing money on every ticket sold meant there was going to have to be a change. Executive director, Sandra Thomas mentioned that, “they did not want to compromise on the film selection, so they knew that the cinema had to become a 501(c)3 nonprofit in order to solicit donations and grants” (Thomas, 2013). They rallied the community and got their support. Together they raised around $80,000 toward the purchase of Images and other expenses related to changing over the business into a nonprofit. The group established by-laws and were dedicated to making Images a community cinema. During this process, the group also started a membership program. Memberships are one of the perks of being a nonprofit and are especially integral to arts nonprofits (DiMaggio, 2006). They hired Alexander Kalmanovsky and Angela Cardinali to run Images as a nonprofit. Alex was in charge of the film and artistic aspects of the cinema, and Angela concentrated more on marketing, fundraising, and running the business end.

After the initial purchase and changeover in staff and business structure, Angela and Alex decided they needed to pursue a relationship with Williams College. They pitched the cinema to the college as a connection to the larger world. Williamstown is located in a very rural part of the state, and they believed that the movie theater could
provide a greater outside connection. Ultimately, the college agreed to support the cinema financially in 1999. In exchange for their financial support, Williams’ students received access to screenings at the member rate. They agreed to give Images $25,000 annually. That number remained constant until the financial downturn of 2008 when the amount dropped to $22,500 where it remains today. This funding was and is still an essential portion of the operating funds for Images.

Alex and Angela were splitting an annual salary of $15,000. At such a miserly pay rate with such a large workload, they wore themselves out very quickly. They left Images after around 18 months. After Alex and Angela came Bob and Sheri Riddell. The board told them that they would be working part time. In reality, their positions were more of a full time plus situation. They were overwhelmed, and did not stay for long. Then came Daniel Wallace who had recently gone through a falling out with his business partner at a local bakery. He began turning the business around by straightening up the financial bookkeeping, keeping up with the accounting, and managing the memberships more efficiently and accurately. Daniel also did not stay long.

Given all of the changes in leadership over such a short period of time, the community began to lose confidence in the cinema. In 2002, Sandra Thomas, the current executive director of Images came on board, and she recognized the need to get back the community support. There was a lack of leadership from the board of directors that may have accounted for the disorganization of the cinema up to that point. Sandra was forced to put on an emergency fundraising campaign immediately after becoming executive director. As some of the less invested board members began to drop out, the others picked up the slack, and new members came in to help out. Today Sandra continues to be
the executive director at Images with full community and board support running under the mission statement:

Images Cinema, a non-profit community movie theater, presents a wide range of independent, foreign and classic films which impact filmmaking and our culture. Images Cinema is dedicated to the exploration of film as an art form, a source of entertainment and an educational tool (“GuideStar exchange,” 2011).

The Environmental Context: Williamstown and The Berkshires

Williamstown is a very old city for the United States. It is location near where some of the early European explorers and settlers lived. The city initiated its establishment by the General Court of Massachusetts Bay in 1750 as a rural farming community with heavy forestation and was eventually renamed from Fort West Hoosac to Williamstown in 1765 (“About Us”, n.d.). In 1793, Williams College opened its doors. By the time the Industrial Revolution hit, doctors lawyers, and other highly educated professionals were a large part of the community; the new industry brought a different class of laborers and pushed some of the rural workers out of the city proper (“About Us”, n.d.). Today the city represents the northwestern portion of an extremely culturally vibrant Berkshire County. With the death of many of the initial business that made up the Industrial Revolution, the Berkshires are replacing metal with the arts. The Berkshires are known as a popular location for vacation homes with many summer festivals. Williamstown is a unique community even within this geographically sparse area with its close proximity to institutions of higher education. Williams College is a world-renowned home for academics and Massachusetts College of Liberal Arts is located in the next
town over, North Adams, which is also home to the second largest contemporary arts museum in the country, MASS MoCA.

The population of Williamstown and the surrounding Berkshires is largely reflected in its history with a mix of factory workers and educated professionals. The current move to art as the new industry has been, in part, an attempt to connect these two communities.

Figure 11 Population (Williamstown)
It is also important to consider the vacationers as part of the population that fluctuates annually. The vacation community is a large part of the Williamstown economy and may not be fully represented in the U.S. Census data provided. There tends to be stronger concentration of wealth in Williamstown than the larger Berkshire County which includes a larger number of factories with Berkshire County residents earning over $75,000 annually in income and benefits is 29.9% and 48.5% in Williamstown even with an overwhelming student population (United States Census Bureau, 2011).
Patrons of Images Cinema range from the very young up to the elderly. Typically they are forty or older. The tendency for older audiences to populate the cinema is a
double-edged sword. Older patrons are more open to seeing a film they know nothing about. They trust the programming blindly. However, this audience is also beginning to slowly pass away. The older population is well represented outside of Williamstown. This demographic is willing to travel into Williamstown to see a film.

The level of education in Williamstown is much higher than the surrounding county with 54.3% of its residents having a bachelor’s degree or higher and 32.3% having a graduate or professional degree, while in Berkshire County, only 30.2% have earned a bachelor’s degree or higher and 12.8% have graduate or professional degrees (United States Census Bureau, 2011).

![Figure 15 Education (Williamstown)](image)
There is a clear divide between Williamstown and Berkshire County in terms of education, but the shift in focus from industry to art is slowly breaking down the cultural divide. The Williamstown Theatre Festival, Clark Art Institute, and Williams College Museum of Art are three major players in the Berkshire cultural scene and are located in Williamstown. This is both good and bad. The people of Williamstown and surrounding areas are accustomed to going out to cultural events, but there also exists competition in these institutions even for films.

This chapter has focused on laying out some in depth histories of the transitional cinemas that serve as case studies: the Drexel Theatre and Images Cinema. It has also presented some charts and figures of patron demographics and the surrounding communities in which the two cinemas sit. The history of each city also provides context for the current state of each community and cinema. With a brief acquaintance with the
historical facts, the stage is set for further discussion of the actual instances of transition in each cinema and a deeper analysis of each case as part of a larger investigation of cinemas in the nonprofit arts world in Chapter 5.
CHAPTER 5: FINDINGS, ANALYSIS, AND CONCLUSION

Above all, it was proven again this year that the art-house world has something going for it that multiplexes will never have: community. As noted in the A[rt] H[ouse] C[onvergence] program guide this year, “art house theaters will remain alive and well and be especially vital if operated and supported as a community-based cultural institution.

Jeff Berg, 2013

Introduction

The world of independent and art film exhibition has experienced a rollercoaster ride since the early days of cinema. With the predominance of digital exhibition, the advent of the megaplex, online streaming, and VOD\(^3\), there have been hundreds of closings and vast shifts in the cinematic landscape. Among these closings, there have been a few cinemas that have held on to survive shifts in technology. As has been seen at the Art House Convergence and through my research, the rate at which cinemas are changing business models is increasing exponentially with the 2013 survey data coming out of the Convergence showing 78% of participants as nonprofits (Bryn Mawr Film Institute, 2013). That is not to say that the shift from for profit to nonprofit, or transition, is only a direct result of recent struggles. Cinemas have been transitioning for decades. In an article on the digital age of film presentation, David Bordwell sums up the recent shift stating:

Because the audience is smaller and more select, many art houses have become not-for profit entities created by community cultural organizations. They are

\(^3\) All of these changes have occurred in the past ten years (2003-2013).
dependent on donations, private or public patronage, and miscellaneous income from many activities, not only screenings but filmmaking classes, special events, and other activities. (2013)

This succinct summation of the impetus for transitioning can be applied across time and cases. Reasons for transitioning are varied, and there may be cinemas that are not primarily concerned with the impact this shift in business model will have on community activity outside of the financial necessity for change. The following chapter synthesizes the cases of Images Cinema in Williamstown, Massachusetts and the Drexel Theatre of Bexley, Ohio. Through a comparison and analysis of the data presented in Chapter 4, presentation of additional data from each cinema, application of the data to theory presented in Chapter 2, and overall industry data taken from the 2013 Art House Convergence, Chapter 5 of this thesis will demonstrate the community impact of transitional cinemas and provide a context for further exploration within the field.

Transitional Change Catalysts

A cinema is in transition by force. With rare exception that I have not come across, cinemas transition from for profit to nonprofit out of necessity. By this standard, a deeper analysis outside of the simple financial need for survival would seem trivial. However, there are nuances for each transitional cinema and the nuances speak to the specific community in which each of the cinemas is situated. Whether or not a transitional cinema intends to be or is already situated as a community cultural asset, the change in financial model semantically and legally precipitates this relationship between institution and community. The catalyst for change differs from case to case in the inciting incident. This is to say, a cinema may be turning an old multiplex into an art house to be the home for
film festivals and film studies programs with the generous support of Starz Encore or attempting to keep up with distributors who are cutting back on film prints or eliminating them altogether consequently adding screenings by local filmmakers and a greater overall community involvement (Epstein, 2000; O’Neill, 2012). Both cases are essentially situations of financial necessity or opportunity in shifting; however, one has a built in community tie through its history and the other desires to create it. In both cases the community becomes more invested and involved as a result of the shift.

Chapter 4 documents the history of both Images Cinema and the Drexel Theatre. Covered within that history is the change from for profit to nonprofit. The two have very different stories in very different communities, but there are still quite a few basic similarities. As has been heavily stated, a need for financial restructuring was at the core for both cinemas. Images was struggling financially in the 1990s and was even showing pornographic films to bring in money. When the cinema was purchased, the new owners board members, and staff all knew that the days of running a single screen art house as a for profit were long gone. In the years leading up to Sandra Thomas as executive director, the management staff changed quite a bit. This is partly due to the overwhelming nature of the position and partly due to a somewhat disinvested board of directors.

The transition was not the immediate cure the cinema was hoping for. With the addition of Thomas as executive director and a changeover in board members, Images began to truly live up to its duty as a cultural asset for the community. Prior to Thomas, there was little programming outside of the nightly film screenings. By expanding programming into film festivals and more interactive, targeted activities, Images was able to utilize its nonprofit status to invest in the community and achieve a greater artistic
vision. As many have stated, becoming a nonprofit is not the magic elixir that will save you (art house or otherwise). In order to stay afloat after transitioning, a cinema has to capitalize on all of the aspects that a nonprofit 501(c)3 has to offer from grants to tax deductible donations. The cinema must also consider its deeper relationship to the community. Fully realizing this creates a more invested audience willing to trust the programming and return to the cinema more readily.

Images made their transition in 1998 and took about 5 years to truly settle into the nonprofit model. The Drexel’s change is relatively recent in comparison. The cinema transitioned in March of 2011. Jeff Frank saw the data coming out of the Art House Convergence and the exhibitor format change at the industry level and knew that in order to upgrade the Drexel’s projection systems, the right move would be transitioning. Again, the choice was based on the financial constraints brought on by the industry, and again, the community became an even larger part of the cinema. With the help of Friends of the Drexel, Frank was able to make a relatively painless transition. Prior to the change in business model, Jeff and his wife Kathy stopped taking a salary. The Drexel was going through some financial hardship to say the least. With a change in projector systems imminent, they knew there was going to have to be a change.

As a nonprofit, the Drexel has been able to raise the necessary funds to convert their projection in all three houses and is currently raising funds to update the sound system. The Drexel has always been a home for the community of Bexley, but the transition has lit a fire under the community members, the staff, and the board of directors giving the Drexel a deeper source of community investment both financially and through their patronage. Given the brevity of the Drexel as a nonprofit to date, there
cannot be a one to one comparison of the two case studies. The similarities emerge in spite of the variation in institutional age and transitional time period. A divergence in catalyst detail simply reinforces the uniqueness of each cinema and the ties that each cinema maintains and grows through transition. The case for the transitional cinema and community link is stronger for having differences across regions, because one can see the importance in the similarities.

*Environmental and Demographic Similarities across Cases*

Given the myriad of differences between Images and the Drexel from the population density to the surrounding community and age as a nonprofit, it would be natural to deduce a tenuous connection between the two cinemas at best; however there are many demographic similarities that emerge. These similarities extend to the theories discussed in Chapter 2 and to the discussion of highlighting the similarities among the differences. While two cases are not enough to declare the emergence of trends, it is enough to begin the discussion and apply fieldwide figures to corroborate when appropriate.

As nonprofit entities, both Images and the Drexel have a board of directors. The makeup of the board is similar across cases. Both have boards made up of lawyers, longstanding community members and supporters, accountants, and film lovers. They also each have a pair of local celebrities that carry clout for their organizations. At Images Richard Rand the senior curator of paintings and sculpture at the Clark Art Institute and Joe Finnegan the general manager of the Williamstown Theatre Festival are both active board members and big names for the cinema to attract new community members and those outside of the community familiar with their respective institutions.
Similarly, the Drexel has Robert Lazarus, Jr. the heir of the Lazarus department store family and E. Gordon Gee the outgoing Ohio State University president as board members. These are members who might not be at every meeting but give their cinemas higher cache and grant seeking power.

Two qualities that Bexley was built upon and in which the arts tend to thrive are high income and high education. In Bexley 20% of the residents earn over $200,000, and in Williamstown almost 50% of the residents earn over $75,000 (United States Census, 2011). In the United States 10.6% of the population has a graduate degree or higher; in both Bexley and Williamstown the percentage is higher than 30. DiMaggio notes, “Education has been the best predictor of interest in the sorts of arts experiences that nonprofits provide for as long as anyone has studied the topic,” (2006, p. 19). However, he fails to mention cinemas as being a part of these arts experiences, but as has been seen throughout this thesis, they are very much at the table. This is the first concrete example of the similarity of transitional cinemas to other art forms in the nonprofit world. Historically a high level of average income has been held as important for the arts, but what has been seen in recent studies is the ability for a small number of the local economic elite to support and sustain the arts in their area (Castañar & Campos, 2002). Both Bexley and Williamstown have enough members of the economically elite for this to hold true in their respective communities. Although this is ultimately beneficial to Images and the Drexel, both cinemas must compete with a multitude of arts organizations in the area for the support of the elite. This forces them to be more active in the community.
A study out of the U.K. conducted by Aisla Hollinsead on why certain patrons rarely if ever see art house films reveals a Bourdieuian argument of cultural capital coupled with a lack of marketing accounting for the low attendance of patrons in what she calls, “multiple deprivation areas” (2011). In other words, what we get is an exclusion of patrons from areas with lower incomes, cultural capital, levels of education, and in minority communities. Although this is not a study focused in the United States or even in North America, it serves as a fairly relevant piece of research that mirrors the trend in demographics that makes up both Bexley and Williamstown. Both communities have a large population of wealthy, well-educated citizens that translates to higher levels of cultural capital and the continuation of that cultural capital from generation to generation (Fryer Jr., 2003; p. 9).

Income and education relate to the historical studies of benefit to the world of arts nonprofits; however, they do not speak to Richard Florida’s Creative Class. Florida’s work demonstrates the power of universities and their ties with high levels of human capital. The communities of the cinemas in these case studies both boast a high level of education and by extension high levels of human capital. This extends to creating community cultural institutions or assets. The sense of a cinema as cultural asset is not unique to transitional cinemas. Before the Drexel transitioned, they were still a Bexley institution. Both Cinemas have a long history in their communities; however, becoming a nonprofit, situated in an area of high human capital has aided in solidifying this status and given each cinema a greater sense of reputational longevity.

Both cinemas are located in low population areas surrounded by larger populations. Bexley has a population of 13,057 with a surrounding Columbus population
of 787,033 and Williamstown has a population of 7,989 with the surrounding Berkshire County being home to 131,219 (United States Census Bureau, 2010). Both communities are a small percentage of their surrounding populations. Bexley is 1.66% the population of Columbus and Images is 6.1% the population of Berkshire County. As such both institutions must attract members outside of their community as well as within. Despite the spike in the data when looking at the number of young people in each area with 20% between the ages of 15-24 in Bexley and 31.2% in the same range in Williamstown, both cinemas report that their most loyal and numerous age range skews older than 45. Florida focuses on the Creative Class as relating only directly to the younger generation. Reading only into the Census data would lead one to believe that his notions are validated. As was seen in both of the case study cinemas, this is not the case. There is a larger population of the Creative Class that resides in an older demographic but within the same sphere of human capital in a university setting. The dearth of younger patrons reflects the nature of the data discussed in the literature review pertaining to the rise of the Internet and streaming content. Viewing habits become ingrained and it results in an older audience for physical viewing in movie houses. A study taken from Val Morgan Cinema Network, a cinema advertiser out New Zealand, restates that highly educated and affluent citizens make up the majority of the audience for art house films and goes on to graphically demonstrate that over 30% of the audience is over 50 with nearly 55% over 35 (2011). This data is consistent with the facts coming out of the case studies that show a higher level of dedicated older patrons.

The nonprofit model provides an increase in the number of revenue streams available for the transitional cinema. Both Images and the Drexel are member cinemas.
Images recently celebrated its 500th member with a cake (Images, 2013). The Drexel is still trying to increase its membership with Jeff Frank stating it as one of his main goals for the Drexel as a nonprofit. The survey conducted by Bryn Mawr on membership data provides the following chart:

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<td>Mean Couple/Family Dues</td>
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Table 1 Art House Cinema Memberships 2011

The survey also demonstrates the characteristics of cinemas that made profits in 2011, those that remained even, and those that ran at a loss. A trait of cinemas running even is having a significantly lower number of individual donations and relying on foundations. Increasing membership is a clear way for the Drexel to increase its individual donations. As can be seen in the following chart taken from the same Bryn Mawr survey data, individuals make up the vast majority of development and funding for art house cinemas (2013).
The funds brought in from membership supplement the funds brought in from ticket sales and, in the case of Images specifically, are an essential component of survival. The percentage of memberships relative to population size is crucial for measuring the level of community investment and can go a long way in determining to what extent the cinema is considered a cultural asset or as former Images board member Julie Mackaman called Images in a 2010 interview, “the Community Living Room.”

Theory Application (to Examples)

In Chapter 2, I presented some abstract concepts and briefly touched upon their relevance to the subject of transitional cinemas. With the theoretical footing in place, this
section will now explore specific examples from the case studies of this thesis as they apply to these theories and ideas. Both Images and the Drexel exhibit characteristics and experiences that are directly applicable to the ideas of market failure in the arts, cultural assets, the Creative Class as it applies to the university, human capital, and active participation. The examples coming out of the transitional cinema case studies are not unique in the field. This section will also use data from the 2013 Art House Convergence taken from a 2012 Survey conducted by the Bryn Mawr Film Institute to make comparisons with a slice of the larger art house community.

Sandra Thomas, executive director of Images Cinema, knows about the need for her cinema’s nonprofit status. Images loses two dollars per ticket sold on nightly programming. This does not lend itself to running without outside donations, grants, volunteers, and members. When Paul DiMaggio talked about the failure of the free market in the arts, he was discussing the performing arts historically and large museums. His oversight was excluding art house cinemas. While many cinemas are turning to a nonprofit model in order to stay afloat, they may not be aware that the issue they are facing comes from an established issue in the nonprofit arts world stemming from a need to supplement a failure of the free market. The distinction of being a 501(c)3 is not easily obtained and necessitates a mission driven, community centered approach. Because these nonprofit intuitions are given the ability to solicit donations that are tax exempt, they are given a tax break by the federal government. This privilege also gives the institution a stamp of approval from the government and becomes a statement of importance. In other words, the government is promoting the exhibition at these cinemas as a public good and
subsidizing the organization to provide a service that it would not financially be able to provide otherwise (DiMaggio, 2006).

Jeff Frank at the Drexel knows that his audience is well-educated, white collar, reads the New York Times, and listens to NPR. This demographic is quite common for art house cinemas and is due in part to the proximity to universities. Both Images and the Drexel are situated less than a quarter of a mile from a university campus. The Convergence data on educational demographics shows a similar trend:

![Percentage of Theaters with University Nearby](image)

**Figure 18 Percent of Theaters (University Proximity)**

The chart and the statistics are a bit overwhelming. Upon first glance, a one to one correlation could be made between education level and the health of the transitional cinema. However, application of Richard Florida’s Creative Class and the proximity to
universities within his model, allows for a richer take on the situation. Whether or not those at Images and the Drexel are aware of it, they are experiencing the ancillary benefits of a higher level of human capital. Patrons come in all levels of intellect. The demographic they see are the core audience. In the same way that the goods these cinemas are providing have an extended benefit into the community, the core patronage and their level of education, and by extension human capital, have spillover effects into the community by broadening the audience. This effect of a high level of human capital associated with universities also extends itself into the local economy. As was shown in Chapter 4, both Bexley and Williamstown are towns that have historically benefitted from community members with high levels of income. When discussing these similarities the question becomes one of retention of an older population rather than attraction of Florida’s presumed younger Creative Class. His conception of the Creative Class carries with it these notions of economic growth through increased human capital (2002). With the examples of Images and the Drexel, there is once again a display of how financial affluence and high levels of education couple to provide a solid bed for the sustainability of the arts.

The short life of the Drexel as a nonprofit and Jeff Frank’s desire to increase the level of membership for the cinema are indicators that it has yet to blossom in its current business model. Images has had fifteen years to develop and as such, is a beacon for the idea of active participation in the arts. As discussed in Chapter 2, there are varying levels of participation within arts organizations. The more invested the individual or family in a particular organization, the more willing to contribute. Increasing along the Ladder of Commitment, the most dedicated patron will be donating financially as well as
volunteering his or her time. At Images, there are many active participants that have been present since the days of the transition. This small group of dedicated citizens collectively joining to save their movie house is a common trend for transitional cinemas (Epstein, 2000; Kosky, 2008; Roberts, 2011; Sluis, 2011). The Images volunteers sell concessions, plan events, donate space and products, do office work, and help with event set up. This variety in volunteers and strong level of dedication along the Ladder of Commitment are clear indicators of a strong cultural asset as defined by Throsby in which the collective society applies cultural value to an asset in such a way that it can be ranked among similar assets (1999). If we extend this idea to include the number of active participants, we can see a strong relationship between the transitional cinema as cultural asset to the community and the field. The following chart from the Bryn Mawr survey of the use of volunteers in art house cinemas demonstrates the unique position of Images Cinema in its use of volunteers by spreading out their responsibilities and being among the few cinemas in which they aided in concession sales (2013):

Figure 19 Cinema Volunteer Distribution by Use
The Urban Institute’s Arts and Culture Indicators Project defines cultural vitality as, “the evidence of creating, disseminating, validating, and supporting arts and culture as a dimension of everyday life in communities,” (Jackson, Kabwasa-Green, & Herranz, 2006). Merging all of the concepts discussed within this theory section, places the transitional cinema as a potential component of cultural vitality. The key to this is the ways in which the community is involved with the transitional cinema. For both Images and the Drexel, the idea of being a community cultural asset goes beyond simply providing the community with content. These cinemas also give members of the community the opportunity to show their own art through film festivals, galleries, and talks with local filmmakers. The transitional cinema utilizes its position to garner support for itself and for the arts as a whole consequently contributing to the cultural vitality of the community.

*Environmental and Demographic Differences across Cases*

In the world of transitional art house cinemas, every cinema is unique. This is as true for the institutions as it is for the communities in which the cinemas reside. The differences seen in the case study examples are vast and may even outnumber the similarities; however, many of these differences are minute and circumstantial. They should be taken relative to their specific geographic environment and community history. They are not indicators of a unified model across cinemas. Instead the differences across communities become a means to highlight the benefits of the previously discussed similarities. In fact, too many similarities would be counter to the art house movement and would ultimately lead to a rash of mimetic isomorphism. The differences are yet another way in which the transitional cinema is dedicated to the community it serves.
Images is located in Williamstown, Massachusetts. In Chapter 4, comparisons were made between it and Berkshire County. The Drexel is located in Bexley, Ohio. Bexley is situated within Columbus, Ohio. Columbus is the capital city of Ohio and is much more densely populated than an entire county. Because it is located in a sparsely populated area, Images attracts patrons from many surrounding cities and even states. This is both natural and necessary for Images; however, the difference in population density does not exclude the Drexel from its share of out of town visitors. The Drexel is a destination for those seeking out films that are not playing in their local multi or megaplex, but the majority of their patrons are still local.

Closely related to the density of population is the rural versus urban aspect of the two cases. Transitional cinemas are community oriented. As such, the patronage plays a role in the programming. For a rural cinema like Images, there are farm film festivals that provide citizens a venue for discussion about living sustainably or talking about the latest farm subsidy cuts after a screening of pressing documentaries. The need for this sort of programming at the Drexel is not nearly as demanding given the largely urban population and patronage of the cinema. Common among both Images and the Drexel is the student involvement. Both cinemas provide a space for student film festivals. The demographic difference is unified in community involvement and a proximity to institutions of higher learning.

Perhaps the most obvious and most discussed difference between these two cinemas is the age as nonprofit. Both cinemas have long and storied histories as for profit institutions, but the Drexel has only been a nonprofit since 2011. Because Jeff Frank stayed on during the transition and changed his role from owner/executive director to
artistic director, the transition has not been as rough. At Images there were several changes in management and board members. They got off to a rocky start. The Drexel is still in its infancy as a nonprofit and is currently adjusting to this new business model. Institutional age is a factor in analyzing these two cinemas. There are more examples of life post transition for Images, and the Drexel gives a more immediate look at how the process impacts the overall operation of the cinema.

**Conclusion**

The case of the transitional cinema is far from exhausted. This thesis serves simply as a case study for Images Cinema and the Drexel Theatre. Through this discussion, I was able to position the transitional cinema in the world of nonprofit arts. Both cinema case studies and the entirety of the nonprofit cinema field share commonalities with the greater nonprofit arts world. In many ways, transitional cinemas are like galleries that display art from local or smaller scale artists a majority of the time but get the bulk of their audience and operating finances from the occasional showing of a major artist. The membership aspect of transitional cinemas is similar to that of museums or even public television with the most dedicated patrons donating to the institution and really serving as the lifeblood keeping them afloat. This distinction allows for further research within the world of nonprofit arts and that of the transitional cinema. Given the abundance of Hollywood and big money influence in the film industry, it is not surprising that art house cinemas have been overlooked for study as institutions of nonprofit arts; however, this study has shown that an arts nonprofit is an arts nonprofit. None of the arts are devoid of their commercial counterpart. Film simply has to contend
with a larger counterpart than most of the other art forms that have been discussed in greater detail throughout the literature.

I began this thesis with aspirations of demonstrating a connection between cinema and community because of my personal experience of working in a transitional cinema. The transitional cinema seemed to be a place where likeminded community members rallied to save an institution of importance. This rallying turned out to be only a piece of the community pie that is the transitional cinema. The Creative Class and the university, the idea of cinema as cultural asset, the subsidization of art, and the idea of active participation all contributed to the relationship between transitional cinemas and their communities. Given the variety of examples and circumstances found in the literature review and in the case studies, it follows that this connection is strong and non-circumstantial at its core.

The relative paucity of literature on the subject forced me to expand outside of the traditional realms of research. In doing so, I noticed a sizeable amount of studies coming out the U.K. and Australia. It seems that other English speaking nations hold cinema in higher regard as an art form. In the United States, there tends to be an attitude of the big machine known as Hollywood gobbling up the entire industry leaving no room for the existence of art in cinema. In attempting to obtain domestic data, I came across a very limited amount of sources. There were even websites such as Baseline Intelligence that are explicitly there to, “help you make money” (“About Us Baseline Intelligence, n.d.). They provided a report on art house audiences for $995.

Even with a strong connection between community and transitional cinemas, transitioning is not the be all and end all of saving an art house. It is one of the
components that impacts the cinema by strengthening that bond and ultimately building trust in the institution. As a community cultural asset, the transitional cinema must continue to prove its worth by living up its full potential and cement its value in providing the community with a rich a varied form of cultural good. In a constantly evolving cinematic landscape, it is the job of the exhibitors to find the best way to keep the art alive and the community involved.

Further Questions

With the connection between community and cinema established or at the very least the groundwork for the discussion laid, there are further questions that need to be asked. How can we use research in other areas of the nonprofit arts to strengthen the case for the transitional cinema? Are these models financially sustainable? How is the change in distribution going to impact the world of transitional cinemas? Is there a similar bastion for high levels of human capital for transitional and art house cinemas located outside of the general area of universities, or do the cinemas themselves act as such? What can we learn from other countries and their established governmental/national support of film as an art form? Are there related studies in the way other countries subsidize different art forms that would expand upon the notion of the transitional cinema?
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Thomas, S. (2013). *An Oral History of Images Cinema* [Questionnaire response audio file]. Received electronically on May 6, 2013 in response to questionnaire found in Appendix C.


APPENDIX A: IRB – HUMAN RESOURCE CURRICULUM COMPLETION REPORT
CITI Collaborative Institutional Training Initiative

Human Research Curriculum Completion Report
Printed on 1/7/2013

**Learner:** Benjamin Delgado (username: BenjaminFDelgado)
**Institution:** Ohio State University
**Contact Information** Department: Public Policy
                        Phone: 812 459-6416
                        Email: benjaminfdelgado@gmail.com

**Social and Behavioral Research:**

Stage 1. Basic Course Passed on 01/16/12 (Ref # 7277945)

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For this Completion Report to be valid, the learner listed above must be affiliated with a CITI participating institution. Falsified information and unauthorized use of the CITI course site is unethical, and may be considered scientific misconduct by your institution.

Paul Braunschweiger Ph.D.
Professor, University of Miami
Director Office of Research Education
CITI Course Coordinator
APPENDIX B: IRB EXEMPTION
Based on your response, as long as you are not including the opinions of the community members:


Please note that this determination does not release investigators from adhering to the ethical principles contained in the Belmont Report—as well as associated, applicable procedures.

Any changes to the research may alter the above determination. Please contact our office for guidance before implementing any changes. All forms and procedures can be found on the ORRP website—www.orrp.osu.edu. Please feel free to contact the ORRP staff contact listed above with any questions or concerns regarding this determination.

Tani Prestage

**The Ohio State University**

Tani Prestage, MPH, MA, CIP Quality Improvement Specialist
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APPENDIX C: TRANSITIONAL CINEMA QUESTIONNAIRE
Transitional Cinema Questionnaire

Instructions:
Please answer these questions as thoroughly and accurately as possible. Please return your completed questionnaire within two weeks of reception (April 1, 2013) to benjaminsdelgado@gmail.com. Your participation is greatly appreciated. Thank you for your time.

1. History (for profit)
Please provide the most complete history of your cinema leading up to the change into a nonprofit cinema.

2. Change (transition period)
What was the major catalyst for transitioning from a for profit to a not for profit? If there were multiple incidents/circumstances, please include those as well.
Who were the major players involved in the transition?
How were specific community members, groups, or organizations involved in the transition?
What changes were made to staff or staff structure with the transition?
How was the initial board of directors selected?

3. Environment
How does the physical and cultural environment impact your cinema?
How would you characterize the demographics of your patrons?

4. Post-Change (nonprofit impact)
How has the community been involved with the cinema since its transition?
How has the cinema been involved with the community since its transition?
Aside from the legal differences from which a nonprofit benefits (tax exempt donations, volunteers, etc.), what has the cinema been able to do that was not possible as a for profit?
What has been given up as a result of transitioning?
How have the Internet and other streaming services impacted your cinema overall?
Has patronage increased or decreased since the transition?
Is there a marked difference in patron demographics, programming, financial stability, or community support? If so, please elaborate.

5. Programming
Please provide detailed programming information (film titles, tickets sold/revenue per screening, length of screening, special events, ticketed vs. free, demographics of patrons, and target audience) for the years of operation of your cinema, paying close attention to the years directly after the change to nonprofit and the years leading up to the change. This information will aid in displaying the differences between the for profit and not for profit models and ideally demonstrate the instrumental and intrinsic value of the programming post transition.
How involved is the board of directors in programming?
Is there a full time staff person in charge of programming? If so, how closely does this staff person interact/collaborate with staff, board, and community members?
How have the Internet and streaming services impacted programming for your cinema?