I'D BE THE (CAMERA)MAN: HOW WOMEN CINEMATOGRAPHERS COUNTERACT ROLE EXPECTATIONS THROUGH AXIS SOCIAL TRAITS (EXPANSION OF SOCIAL ROLE THEORY)

by

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ABSTRACT

While cinematographers and film workers have been studied within production studies, bringing these important creators within the realm of critical media effects and sociology research is still emerging. This research adds to existing literature by combining knowledge from each of these fields along with gendered creative labor studies to examine the lived experiences of women cinematographers working in a primarily male-coded occupational role. Through the examination of 36 in-depth interview responses, both *agentic* and *communal* traits described under Social Role Theory (Eagly, 1987; Eagly & Wood, 2012) were found as necessary traits for cinematography labor. Additionally, a third group of traits, conceptualized as *axis traits,* were identified that create gender fluid agency for women cinematographers to be seen as successful "in-members" within their masculine or agentic-coded occupation. Performance of these *axis traits* allow women cinematographers to perform both *agentic* and *communal* traits in tandem for successful cinematographer work and allows them to be accepted "in-members" by the male colleagues and industry. Finally, strategies for making meaning, belonging and highlighting the experiences of women working in a masculinized industry are discussed as well.

Keywords: women cinematographers, gendered creative labor, Social Role Theory, agentic traits, communal traits, axis traits

DEDICATION

"Too many coincidences and instances of God's hand, it's insane. I thought my way to greatness, I could claim this, but He gave me the brain."

(Quoted from "JT" by Jon Bellion)

and

To Henry and Lily, I hope this shows you that you can be and do whatever you set your mind to.

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS AND SYMBOLS

1AC	First Assistant Camera
2AC	Second Assistant Camera
ASC	American Society of Cinematographers
DP	Director of Photography
SOC	Society of Camera Operators
SRT	Social Role Theory
ICFC	International Collective of Female Cinematographers

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CONTENTS

ABSTRACT ii

DEDICATION iii

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS AND SYMBOLS iv

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS v

LIST OF TABLES xi

LIST OF FIGURES xii

LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS xiii

INTRODUCTION 1

CHAPTER 1 – REVIEW OF LITERATURE 5

Cinematography's Place in the Cultural Industries 5

Women Cinematographers and Gendered Creative Labor 7

Theoretical Frameworks: Social Role Theory 13

Umbrella Dimensions of Social Role Theory 17

Left On the Cutting Room Floor: The Edited History of Women in Film and Media 26

A Brief Look Back at Women's Film/Media History 28

Women in Film/Media Today 33

Existing Limitations of the Theoretical Areas 35

Expansion of the Theoretical Frameworks and Contribution to the Field 37

CHAPTER 2 – METHODOLOGY 39

In-Depth Interview Structure 40

Recruitment Procedures and Outcome 42

Data Coding and Analysis Procedures 44
Positionality Statement 45
Limitations of Methods 46
Contributions to the Field 50
CHAPTER 3 – RESULTS 52
Agentic vs. Communal Traits: Which Are Best for Successful Cinematography Work? 53
Agentic Traits 53
Communal Traits 57
Concept of "Axis" Traits 63
Experiences of Women Cinematographers Despite Both Trait Possession 69
Restricted Capital 70
Performance Questioned 75
"Acting More Masculine" or Overly Performing Agentic Traits 79
Meaning-Making and Belonging in Their Masculine-Coded Occupational Role 81
Meaning-Making by Women Cinematographers 81
Creating Belonging 83
CHAPTER 4 – DISCUSSION OF RESULTS AND CONCLUSION 86
REFERENCES 92
APPENDIX I: INTERVIEW PROTOCOL 114
APPENDIX II: CODEBOOK 118
APPENDIX III: RECRUITMENT MATERIALS 125
Email Template 125
Social Media Post with Caption 127
APPENDIX IV: TABLES 128
Table 1: Agentic and Communal Traits and Definitions 128

APPENDIX V: PARTICIPANT DEMOGRAPHIC RESULTS 134

APPENDIX VI: ILLUSTRATIONS 135

Illustration 1: Ergorig CenterFit (Women's) Vest 135

Illustration 2: Easyrig Standard Cinema Flex (Women's) Vest 136

Illustration 3: Breakdown of Film Crew Positions Flow Chart 137

APPENDIX VII: POST-INTERVIEW FOLLOW-UP SURVEY 138

APPENDIX VIII: FIGURES 140

Figure 1: Participant Follow-Up Survey Bipolar Likert Scale Results 140

Figure 2: Axis Trait Visualization 141

APPENDIX IX: IRB APPROVAL LETTERS 142

Institution 1 IRB Approval Letter 142

Institution 2 IRB Approval Letter 143

LIST OF TABLES

1. Agentic and Communal Traits and Definitions 138

LIST OF FIGURES

1. Participant Follow-Up Survey Bipolar Likert Scale Results 150

2. Axis Trait Visualization 151

LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

1. Ergorig CenterFit (Women's) Vest …………………………………………………… 145

2. Easyrig Standard Cinema Flex (Women's) Vest ……………………………………... 146

3. Breakdown of Film Crew Positions Flow Chart ……………………………………… 147

INTRODUCTION

In the last century, mass media and communication research has seen a shift in focus to analyze the experiences of new, diverse creators. Already examined are creators such as influencers, TikTokers, game streamers, and more. The last decade specifically has seen new work in communication and media industry studies in television, film, publishing, music, and advertising as well as media education to incorporate these new creators (Duffy, 2016; Deuze, 2007; Hesmondhalgh & Baker, 2011; Mayer, 2011; Serazio, 2013 for examples). While not new in history, the concept of a "women cinematographer" seems new by society and industry standards within the creative industries.

Often called the "creative economy" in literature, it is one of the most important areas of our 21st century market in that it possesses the sub-areas of art, film, media, entertainment, social media, theatre, performing arts, music, advertising, design, and more (Henry, 2009). Although the work of women cinematographers is not a "new" profession, women working in cinematography is still perceived as an anomaly and something unexpected. Interestingly, cinematographers are critical decision makers in the filmmaking process because they help craft what is actually *seen* on screen. Cinematographers can be defined as true "symbol makers" and "culture creators" due to the visual commodities they create. Under this understanding lies an opportunity to explore how "culture both constitutes and reflects relationships of power" (Fortmueller, 2015) by examining how on-screen representation is impacted by the off-screen. Culture is viewed here as the specific context in which creative, expressive, and symbolic activities in media, arts and communication practices demonstrate the potential for gainful

activity (McRobbie, 2002). The oversight of media effects research for not considering these key media players further showcases not only the great need for increased research, but a cultural misunderstanding of what a cinematographer is and does.

To provide a framework for understanding women cinematographer's representation within the film industry, women consist of less than 10% of camera, sound, and transportation department crew members. They are employed higher in positions such as casting, make-up, and costume departments (Follows et al., 2016) which are later seen as more accepted "feminine zones" for creative work. The roles that showcase lower representation than cinematographers at 6.2% specifically are music composers (6%) (Follows et al., 2016). Additionally, when examining the front of the job "pipeline," most university and college programs record equal and sometimes more participation by women among film students (Follows et al., 2016), but then those numbers astronomically decrease as they move within the industry. Within mass media research, countless studies too vast to list here have called attention to the misrepresentation of not only women, but other minority groups within our on-screen media.

Eikhof & Warhurst (2013) note that a common characteristic within creative labor is the image of a revolving door consistently churning certain workers out and a trend of the same workers in, which could produce the same sort of images over and over without fresh, new voices remaining in the pipeline. There seems to be something occurring among women cinematographers within the filmmaking industry based on the large gaps in representational numbers where there are exponentially less than their white, male counterparts. What is causing less and less women cinematographers to be seen representationally within the industry? What traits are they seemingly "lacking" to successfully rise through industry ranks? What are their overall experiences in what seems to be a "masculine" industry?

Within this frame and with these questions in mind, I explore the lived experiences of women cinematographers across the various levels of the cinematography industry. Bringing specifically gender research to media industry studies is important due to the feminization trend of unpaid, invisible, and poorly paid creative labor, which cinematography aligns (Duffy, 2016; Negra & Tasker, 2014). There are copious amounts of research too expansive to list here in full noting how unpaid and domestic labor is gendered as "feminine work" (i.e. Duffy, 2015; Welter 1966, Hesmondhalgh & Baker, 2015, etc.) Duffy (2016) encourages new research that analyzes the traditional concepts of "women's work" and how those interplay with value-generating efforts and creative labor today. What does "women's work" in cinematography look like, if any at all?

Additionally, my research explores how film's gendered history interweaves with social roles, industry socialization practices, and identity conflicts experienced by women cinematographers as they are considered "out members" within their own industry. History itself serves as a socializing factor and women cinematographers are working under the assumption that their place in the industry is a recent, new occurrence. Gaines (2018) explains that while neither a corrected history nor groundbreaking quantitative scholarship has corrected the issue, there could lie hope in qualitative, historical, sociological, and culturally-focused research that combines each to see a collective picture. It is an examination of the symptoms as a whole to see the sickness perhaps. Therefore, I begin with a literature review of defining the creative industries, gendered creative work, and an overview of Social Role Theory (Eagly, 1987; Eagly & Wood, 2012). Additionally, I explore what traits make for "successful" cinematography work and the gendered divisions that may be occurring within cinematography labor. Additionally, how do women cinematographers experience their very "masculine-coded industry" and make

meaning within their work and space despite this gendering. "Meaning-making" can be viewed in both content and practices, as well, as actions in production (KhosraviNik, 2020).

Within cinematography, it is how women cinematographers seek to understand their industry around them; apply that understanding to their own goals and actions; and examine areas of contention within that site of contention between experience and application (Kurzman, 2008). It is the culture, norms, understandings, social reality, and definitions of the situation, typifications, ideology, beliefs, worldview, perspective or stereotypes of women cinematographers within their experienced reality (Krauss, 2005; Lofland & Lofland, 1996). Noting the agentic and communal traits women cinematographers deem to be used for "successful" cinematography work and their perceptions of the industry's definition of "successful" traits is one area of "contention" under study. Additionally, how do their lived experiences juxtapose with possible identity conflicts as "in-members" of their industry culture? Finally, amidst this site of struggle, how do women cinematographers create a sense of belonging despite contention; and transform these experiences into new meaning that affects both their "perception and action" (Krauss, 2005).

To investigate these areas, I conducted in-depth ethnographical interviews with 36 women cinematographers across the various cinematography sub-industries (defined below) and analyzed the results based on the extant literature outlined below including emerging themes that revealed themselves during the analysis process. It is my hope that through a collective examination of the off-screen representation, using women cinematographers as case, we can medicate our industry to heal the on-screen representations as well.

CHAPTER 1 – REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Cinematography's Place in the Cultural Industries

"Creative industries" is often interchanged throughout research with "cultural industries" due to the cultural products produced in each of these areas (Henry, 2009). While not the same conceptually, creative labor and the industries associated with creative labor *are* cultural creators themselves. Creative labor is defined by Banks & Hesmondhalgh (2009) as "work which is geared to the production of original or distinctive cultural commodities that are primarily aesthetic and/or symbolic-expressive, rather than utilitarian and functional" (p. 416). Media and media work is both culture creating work, but also influenced by the culture it is within.

Cinematography work resides in the filmmaking and entertainment industry which have been credited throughout research as cultural commodities. They have also been credited as commodities that create culture themselves. A culture of its own, the film industry operates under ideologies, social orders, and norms that are reinforced from one generation to the next unless active, focused change occurs. They can also affect culture in that these visual representations create new symbols, languages and cultural markers. The creative industries, including film, play a vital role in our collective memories, belief systems, traditions, and norms (Omidi et al., 2022)

The importance of studying women cinematographers' work and experience, specifically, contributes to a wide variety of research questions among media effects and gender representation scholars. For years, mass media and communication research has been concerned

with gender stereotypes and representation in the media, many scholars fail to examine the key group of media producers who actually create the image — cinematographers and camera operators (used interchangeably here, but not always the same person in industry). Film and production studies have been paying closer attention to these issues, but I believe critical expansion within media effects can help bridge this gap between scholarly disciplines.

Work in the creative economy (or cultural economy) is a commitment to "permanently transitional work" requiring both high degrees of *risk and willingness* of mobility without the *promise* of mobility (McRobbie, 2002). A person's livelihood is made as long as one is able to get the next "gig" after "gig." The prevailing wisdom of the creative economy touts youthfulness, talent, and endless resources of energy as key requirements to keep up with the constantly changing work schedules and technological advancements. The creative laborer must conduct a range of economic activities to sustain their livelihood even outside of their specific occupational "role" (Christopherson, 2008). These "portfolio" careers mean that creative workers do not operate under one sole organization or employer, rather they are constantly working both independently and dependently with a variety of employers (McRobbie, 2002). In film, cinematographers can at times be employed by production companies, large film and entertainment studios, commercial organizations, or freelance without connection to a larger system for example. Hollywood (where film is primarily housed) promises "autonomy, creativity, fame, and wealth" — a narrative all too familiar to scholars studying the creative industries, but one perceived as "once in a lifetime" for rising creatives (Fortmueller, 2015). Where the creative worker feels most autonomous is where the creative industries can be most exploitative. Creative labor is where labor and leisure seemingly coexist though it is far from "less work."

Media industry and entertainment work, including cinematography, frequently circulate folk narratives of unpaid internships, free or minimally compensated labor, and paying for the opportunity to work (Fortmueller, 2015). Many students and young creatives partake in these activities during or post-college in hopes of "breaking into" the film and media industry. Fortmueller (2015) notes how this narrative allows Hollywood to continue capitalizing on workers who feel they have "no choice" in their labor and are captured by the allure of freedom. Conor et al. (2015) explains that many media organizations operate under the premise that it is a "privilege" to work for them in these exploitive ways due to the high competition within industry. McRobbie (2002) notes that creative workers operate under self-exploitive tendencies working hours no employer could legally enforce; without protection of employment; lack of occupational benefits such as sick and maternity leave; minimal, if any, knowledge of unions and protections; and covering of own work costs at minimum. Young (1999) call this the "chaos of reward" (McRobbie, 2002) and Pratt (2002) termed this work pattern as "bulimic" (i.e. feast or famine, stop-go, long periods with little to no work, etc.). Fuch (2014) notes that creative workers are part of a collective work force that is required for the existence, usage, and application of media. What defines them is not a common type of occupation, but rather the industry they contribute to and are capital in which they are exploited.

Women Cinematographers and Gendered Creative Labor

Despite this veneer of freedom and fame, the creative industries and creative labor does not lose the "class, gender, race, ethnicity, etc." inequalities of other labor forces in lieu of this new glamorized workforce (McRobbie, 2002). In some ways, it may even enhance them. Talent (by whatever subjective definition it is seen under) does not "win out" and emerging patterns of success and failure still fall on familiar lines. Reward systems for aspirant creative workers are highly uneven (Duffy, 2016).

Women creative workers, cinematographers included, note that entrepreneurially they feel limited by cultural barriers, information network access, financial work resources, and representation within the creative industries (Henry, 2009; Bruni et al., 2004). The production processes required within the film industry are organized around high-risk, project-based, network-reliant characteristics (Christopherson, 2008). For instance, one regularly meets other crew members such as directors, producers, and line directors that could be responsible for one's next opportunity. If cinematographers do not have a well-developed network of other high-level networks, moving up and through the film industry can be difficult. Unfortunately for women to obtain cinematographer work, their employment is highly dependent on this networked culture. These networks are almost exclusively consistent of white men and continually rehire the reliable and familiar, barring much new network membership (Christopherson, 2009). Dirse (2013) notes that since there are fewer networks for women in the industry, the obstacle remains that they lack work to show because they are not getting work. These networks, typically male-led, foster and reinforce segmentation along "Othered" lines and restrict members access to opportunities and capital-building employment (Christopherson, 2008). Even women who have seemingly broken through this network barrier still find it only gets harder and harder.

Taylor (1993) explained that in regard to "breaking into" the film industry, assistantships, mentoring, formal trainings under department leads, and more are essential for mobility. This symbolic capital is essential for advancement and movement within the industry. Unfortunately, women are noting how these opportunities are most hard for them to acquire (Shimkus, 2006). Some cinematographers note that it is possible to "climb the ladder" of the industry by entering through another department such as the electrical department. Whether to gain networks or "gender clout" with their male colleagues, some women participants in other studies have noted

that they found an easier time transitioning from electrical to DP then "working their way up" through camera departments (Shimkus, 2006; Malekiewicz & Mullen, 2005).

As mentioned above, creative labor is characterized as "transitional" life cycle work with high levels of investment. Researchers have assumed women are hesitant to undertake creative labor due to their cultural roles as caregivers and child rearers (McRobbie, 2002). McRobbie (2002) found in their research that some women creative workers put off motherhood indefinitely for the sake of their creative careers, a decision that does not affect male creative workers. While the creative industries are characterized by high risk, based on representational numbers it seems that is it not risky in the same way for everyone (Christopherson, 2008).

Women's struggles within the cinematography industry are dismissed as trivial, noting "worse things could happen to women" in creative industries (Hesmondhalgh & Baker, 2015). Unfortunately for women creative workers, and women cinematographers — they have. Among women creative workers broadly, Marcella et al. (2005) found that over 60% of women surveyed in the creative industries had experienced unequal treatment and gender-related barriers to career progression. Additionally, a 2018 report by the Center of Talent Innovation found that 41% of women working in the media and entertainment industries reported sexual harassment at some point in their careers (Omidi et al., 2022). The bombshell that rattled the filmmaking industry occurred when the decades of allegations of rape and sexual assault against former Hollywood film producer Harvey Weinstein came to light (Kantor & Twohey, 2017). His victims included on and off-screen women. Women creative workers are tasked with managing their sense of self amid conditions of radical uncertainty (Duffy & Pruchniewska, 2017). Dirse (2013) states that with such inequalities and disparities occurring around her and with her, unfortunately the women cinematographer must be ready to "respond spontaneously to events happening around

her and thus has little time to mediate the reality of a give situation (p. 16)." Additionally in creative labor, there are little avenues for reporting such inequalities and disparities. There is also fear of being "blacklisted" or seen as a "troublemaker" to potential employers (Conor et al., 2015).

The recent death of cinematographer Halyna Hutchins on the set of the film "Rust" in 2021 caused quite a paradox within the film industry, and wider culture in that non-industry persons grappled with the concept of a "woman cinematographer" as well. Actor Alec Baldwin discharged a prop gun toward the camera (a move intentional for the filming of the scene) being told it was unloaded. Unfortunately, bullets were in fact loaded in the gun which shot and killed Hutchins on scene. As news reports of this incident circulated, while tragic, the first narrative to circulate was that of why this *woman* cinematographer would have an actor shoot towards her (a common practice with prop guns as safety is confirmed with no bullets loaded) and questioned her ability to do the job based on this "poor decision." Male cinematographers, and men widely, knocked Hutchins for her "incompetence" as a cinematographer when Baldwin was facing possible murder charges. To add further layer to this tragic incident, the ammunitions specialist for the film, a role typically held by men as well, was also a woman causing an even bigger uproar.

Second assistant camera operator, Sarah Jones, was killed in 2013 after a train hit her during an unsafe shoot on rail tracks and it was noted "she should not have been out there." Rather than acknowledging the movie's operation without a permit due to deliberate oversight of the directors and producers (Fortmueller, 2015), the blame was largely cast on Jones.

The precarity of the creative industries has given rise to several "toxic gear techno cultures" (not to be confused with Massanari's concept of technoculture). A techno culture here

is instead conceptualized as industries defined *by* their technologies and creating cultures *around their technologies*. The creation of a "toxic gear techno culture" is done by consistent "Othering" those perceived to be outside the culture, rituals, norms, applications, etc. of that technology culture. Members of these cultures demonstrate technical prowess of their technologies, connoisseurship of these technologies (taste making), and enjoyment of the technologies. "Othering" of those who do not demonstrate the same level of prowess, connoisseurship and enjoyment are thus restricted more from those technologies or questioned in belonging to the culture that uses them.

Much like "geek culture" in gaming, cinematography's techno "gear culture" and work culture can both be classified as deeply masculine. Like gender itself, this toxic techno cultures has its own performative practices. Spaces in STEM and media interests tend to view women as either objects for sexual exploitation, unwelcome outgroup members, or both (Varma, 2007; Massanari, 2017). Women gamers, for instance, face harassment, bullying and threats for their participation in male-coded "gamer culture" (Garvey, 2023).

Interestingly, even as the "old guild" phases out of the filmmaking industry, the newer members still (even if subconsciously) reinforce this ideology (Christopherson, 2008; Batt et al., 2001). Men tend to dominate technical and "craft" jobs such as cinematographers, camera operators, editors, etc. (Hesmondhalgh & Baker, 2015). Moreover, feminine "craft" jobs such as costume design and makeup departments tend to be "relatively unrecognized and undervalued noting they involve no technical and craft skills at all" (Banks, 2009, p. 28).

It seems a white, middle class, male perspective dominates the profession. Hollywood both on and off screen has been attributed as an "old boys' club," "bro culture," and "masculine" (Dirse, 2013). Additionally, due to structural inequalities already highlighted within my review

of literature, research on “below-the-line” workers (where cinematographers reside) is sparse but growing. As seen in Illustration 3 within the Appendix, “below-the-line” workers are those under an imaginary line that separates managerial roles such as producers and directors from crew positions such as camera persons, makeup, lighting, etc. Despite women creative workers achieving the same as, if not at times more than, male creative workers, they are still less valued in both their work and use of work technologies. The literature suggests that the disciplining and norms within cinematography are highly gendered and affecting women participants greater than male participants of the industry (Wotanis & McMillan, 2014).

The creative industries and their associated labors present a paradox: an industry that is “open,” “diverse,” and “filled with endless opportunity” while also being extremely segregated, restrictive, wrought with inequalities, and siloed. Bandura (2002) explains these dualisms in a field showcase the cross-cultural connections between autonomy and power; personal agency against social structure; and individualism against collectivism.

With the success of the recent SAG-AFTRA strike, it seems as though the filmmaking industry is experiencing the largest change in representation since its early gender shift in the 1950s. It seems that the white men-dominated workforce is being challenged and the voices of diverse creative workers are starting to break through. My research with the accompanying literature utilizes in-depth interviews to uncover how women cinematographers in their men-dominated industry understand how masculinity and femininity are at play in their roles and the effect this has on them and their work. I seek to understand how they make sense of their lives and work within their industry.

I acknowledge that creative work processes and workers are bound up both in individual and societal level forces that affect their experience of creative labor. Assessing the multiple,

interconnected levels where creative workers experience precarity offers insight into the characteristics of the media and cultural industries and its connected labor (Duffy et al., 2020; Hesmondhalgh & Baker, 2011). Understanding how these media workers practice, what traits are successful for work, what are their experienced realities, how are they motivated, and produce meaning for themselves as cinematographers is of vast importance to my research and overall media studies. Practically, this can also help women creative workers make sense of their work in predominately male subfields.

Theoretical Frameworks: Social Role Theory

Due to gendered imbalances seemingly present not only in cinematography, but widely in creative labor, the most appropriate theoretical framework to explore the lived experiences of women cinematographers working in a traditionally masculine-coded occupation is Eagly and Wood's Social Role Theory (1987; 2012). Examining what traits make for successful cinematography work and the gendering of these traits through the dimensions of Social Role Theory promise insights into why women cinematographers are smaller in representational numbers in the industry.

The cinematographer is responsible for taking the director's vision and translating that through camera to created image and recordings. The cinematographer's influence can be both great and small dependent on the relationship, vision, and scope of the film. Cinematographers must master both the art form of telling a story, designing scenes, directing talent, creating camera compositions and more; while also being rooted in the scientific use and understanding of filmmaking technologies. As stated above, this involves not only the knowledge side of lighting, sound, video, etc., but also the ability to use and manage a plethora of technologies.

It toes the line between art, business and the technical environments (Bielby & Bielby, 1996). Quoting German philosopher Walter Benjamin about cinematography, Eiland & Jennings (2003) note that it is "difficult to say which is more fascinating, its artistic value or its value for science" (Shimkus, 2006, p. 165). In Shimkus (2006) one cinematographer explained that "the function of a cinematographer is a very involved one because [they] must function in both the artistic area and the mechanical [scientific] area" (p. 235).

Cinematographers must master both the art form of telling a story, designing scenes, directing talent, creating camera compositions and more, while also being rooted in the scientific use and understanding of filmmaking technologies. This involves not only the knowledge side of the scientific components of lighting, sound, video, etc., but also the ability to use and manage a plethora of other technologies in the role. Based on this brief description, cinematography appears to be a role that uniquely calls upon both masculine-coded gender role traits and feminine-coded gender role traits.

Past research has assumed that women's caregiving roles such as pregnancy, nurturing children, and childrearing are a determent to their ability to work the long hours and travel requirement typical of cinematography work, as is the social distribution of men to more physically demanding roles due to their greater physical sizing (Eagly et al., 2000). Cinematography requires the use and management of technological equipment that vary in weight, size, and competency — each attributed highly masculine and agentic qualities. Eagly et al. (2000) notes that a number of technological aspects and competencies that have been socially attributed as male further gender hierarchies. It seems in terms of cinematography as a field, although the role requires both masculine-coded and feminine-coded traits, only the masculine-coded have been socialized as "normal."

Eagly's (and later in collaboration with Wood's) Social Role Theory built on the psychological study of sex differences with social gender roles, or socially held beliefs about the behaviors appropriate for each socially-identified gender, has casual impact on occupations and labor (Eagly, 1987; Eagly & Wood, 2012). [Social Role Theory will be abbreviated as SRT hereafter]. Research shows that SRT's dimensions of agentic and communal traits can cause both vertical and horizontal sex segregation in that socially assigned gender roles can limit both the types of jobs one gender can hold and the level of power they can assume in those jobs (Eagly et al., 2020; Cortes & Pan, 2018; Levanon & Grusky, 2016).

Psychologists' initial question of whether sex differences exist has evolved instead to a more theoretically rich conversation of why sex differences occur and in turn what differences mean for our understanding of gender. SRT primarily speaks to a traditional, heterosexual definition of gender based biological definitions of sex within the extant literature (i.e., male/female). To clarify definitions and explain how my research approaches the difference between sex and gender is as follows: sex is referred to as "a classification, generally as male or female, according to the reproductive organs and functions that derive from the chromosomal complement [generally XX for female and XY for male]" (Mazure, 2021); and gender is referred to as "a person's self-representation as male or female, or how that person is responded to by social institutions on the basis of the individual's gender presentation." In the context of gender, socialization and external factors serve as a process that shows men and women what behavioral norms are considered appropriate behavior for their gender (Thompson & Greene, 2017). Considered a component of SRT in some research, socialization shares much of the same language and findings as SRT in that both are widely concerned with culture and context. Additionally, gender has also been considered as a performative part of identity that can vary in

its level of salience (Steiner, 2014). One could identify as female, but have more masculine interests, aesthetics, traits, etc. and vice versa. This can be seen also in the cultural term of "tomboy" for more masculine or masculine-acting women.

Researchers found a persistent and constant difference among their data with contradictory findings, and although the differences were not large when found, they did have effect (Eagly, 1987; 1995; 1997; Hyde, 1996). As many in media studies know, even small communication effects can have consequential, large impacts if repeatedly enacted over time (Eagly et al., 2000). Unfortunately, the differences found within research and relatively small effect size did call in to question the accuracy of the findings and their generalizability to people's socially held beliefs (2000). Regardless, research in this area of gender differences has consistently documented different expectations for men and women's attributes and social behaviors including occupation (Broverman et al., 1972; Deaux & Lewis, 1984; Eagly & Wood, 1991; Ruble, 1983; Williams & Best, 1982; Wood & Rhodes, 1982 to list a few foundational studies). SRT argues that beliefs men and women hold about gender role performance reflect in both the division of labor and gender hierarchy of society (Eagly et al., 2000).

For example, when men enter primarily women occupations, it is found that those occupations' status increases, pay increases, and disparities are much less for men entering "non-traditional" careers (Kaur et al., 2023) therefore seemingly again conforming agentic attributes. Finally, women in careers deemed "low status" are seen as frivolous due to their highly communal nature, but under the surface possess very agentic traits for success such as social media influencing (Duffy, 2015).

Padavic (1991) found in her participant observations she conducted while employed in a predominantly male plant that men tended to treat her as if she were stereotypically feminine

characterized by a fear of big machinery, low technical prowess, and physical weakness. In defiance, this caused her to act more masculine in an attempt to disprove stereotypes. It also caused her to doubt her own ability and increased her fear of failure (Padavic, 1991). I echo her words here that this myth highlights in cinematography "it takes masculine men to do masculine work" (1999, p. 287).

Unfortunately, women entering men-dominated occupations could be connected to the socialized viewpoint that they lack the necessary characteristics of the social person required for the role (Lopata, 1999). Referencing the masculine and feminine qualities in SRT, whichever attributes the job requires thus genders the job, but what do you do when those qualities are both masculine and feminine? How do we socially sort workers into appropriateness then?

Umbrella Dimensions of Social Role Theory

As mentioned above and unpacked here — SRT operates under the concept that we construct socially held beliefs about the behaviors deemed "appropriate" for each socially-identified gender. Based on my own decade of work within the cinematography field, I posit that both agentic and communal attributes are needed for successful work. Under SRT, all qualities or gendered traits can be attributed under two umbrella dimensions defined as *agentic* and *communal* attributes (Bakan, 1966; Broverman et al., 1972; Eagly & Steffen, 1984; Eagly & Wood, 2012). Eagly & Wood (1991) explain that women are typically attributed to more communal qualities whereas men are attributed to more agentic qualities based on assigned social roles including occupation. Communal traits are those that orient toward others' behavior and well-being such as being affectionate, emotional, good listener, compassionate, warm, caring, expressive, etc. (Eagly et al., 2020). Whereas agentic traits orient to the person's own self or mastery (i.e. ambitious, assertive, competitive, courageous, risk-taker, creative) (Eagly et al.,

2020). Communal traits and occupational roles are assumed to be derived from the "typical" positions held by women – i.e., mother, caregiver, teacher, secretary, etc. (Eagly & Wood, 1991). Agentic traits and occupation roles are assumed to be derived from their corresponding "typical" positions as well — i.e., firefighter, cameraman, police officer, business owner, etc. (Eagly & Wood, 1991).

Agentic personal qualities are the ones linked to occupational success in men-dominated fields rather than women-dominated fields (Cejka & Eagly, 1999; Glick, 1991). For example, research suggests a link between low status and communal traits among women as their occupancy in these social and occupational roles typically have less authority, power, and status (Eagly et al., 2000; Wood & Karten, 1986). Interestingly, shifts to male domination within industry contexts also turns the industrial qualities assigned to it agentic as well (Eagly & Wood, 2000). Contextually within my dissertation, I explore which traits make for successful cinematography work as defined by women cinematographers who would be considered "non-traditional" players in their field.

Widely as cinematography is situated in the "creative industries," creative work although expressive and emotional (very feminine communal traits) is coded culturally as masculine. Previous scholars connected this perception of masculinist creativity to sex segregation in music, magazine publishing, and the television industries (Conor et al., 2015). Reis (2001) found in a review of literature that women's creativity was limited by constant gender stereotyping, internal/external educational barriers, and life barriers that hindered their development. Beginning with the idea of the "self-made man," I posit that creative labor has truly always been gendered masculine due to its agentic qualities ignoring its communal (feminine) qualities. Whether creativity *is* masculine is out of the question, but rather *culturally* it has been attributed

this way. Empirically, studies examining creativity/creative labor are mixed (Hora et al., 2021). Some studies report men outperforming women in creativity (i.e. Altwater & Carmeli, 2009); others report women outperforming men (Cohen-Meitar et al., 2009), and some report no gender differences (Dong et al., 2017). Creativity as a trait, and essential for cinematography work, can be definitively defined in either agentic or communal territory then.

In updated work about the SRT, Eagly shows that women's advantage in communal traits increased over time while men's advantage in agency showed no change (2020). Of the 30,093 adults sampled from 1946 to 2018 (16 polls included in results), the women's consensus against agentic traits remained consistent (Eagly et al., 2020). Hsu et al.'s, (2021) meta-analyses also found that women's agency made steady increase since 1987, but men's remained stable. Additionally, they discovered that the gender gap for communal traits was larger than that of agentic traits between the sexes which could imply the social forces at play posited by SRT (p. 1005).

Perceivers may also interpret typical gender qualities from the type of paid (and unpaid) labor they most commonly undertake or seen performed by a given gender (Eagly & Wood, 1999). To the extent that women occupy more communal-attributed roles, those roles are then therefore attributed to the female gender role. Within cinematography, as stated above, this can be seen in the gendered view of women working in makeup departments, costume departments, assistants and more. Discussed later, these attributions can begin as early as childhood and adolescence (Eagly & Wood, 2000). This creates a "pink ghetto" (Beasley & Theus, 1988) or "pink-collar" association (Steiner, 2014) in certain occupations deemed feminine or women-identified. Here "women are warmly congratulated for their distinctiveness in personal traits [i.e.,

communal] that are appropriate to the tasks and behaviors assigned to them and to which men have no aspirations" (Jackman, 1994, p. 347).

Communal and Agentic Traits in Cinematography/Creative Labor

A resounding theme in gendered occupational labor is that of women are seen as unsuitable for jobs or excluded from roles that are (a) high in authority; (b) requiring physical strength; (c) requiring technical skills; (c) involving authoritative social control; and (d) highly artistic roles (Shimkus, 2006; cited from Erickson et al., 2000: Wright, 1997; Bielby & Baron, 1986; Kilbourne et al., 1994). Edwards (1997)'s respondent noted how "there's a fear that decisions we make affect the whole film, and it's scary [to male higher-ups] because women haven't been seen as technicians" (Shimkus, 2006, p. 5). Working in cinematography mirrors highly masculine occupations like construction in that there are requirements for the management of varying degrees of heavy machinery; technical equipment; knowledge of tools, electricity, sound; physical capability; and sometimes unsafe and physically demanding working environments (Shimkus, 2006).

For example, in management, within the cinematographer's, or Director of Photography's (DP), crew there are a few import/overlapping roles they supervise that are important to note. The "camera operator" typically works under the DP and "uses the camera at the discretion of the cinematographer" to capture scenes (Shimkus, 2006). When the DP wishes to direct the scene, take breaks, or have an assisting hand on shooting a scene, a camera operator works as that assisting hand. The first assistant camera operator, or 1AC, is responsible primarily for keeping the camera in focus for the DP during shooting with an external focus pull. They also continuously monitor the "sharpness" or focus of the scenes during all filming. As the 1AC

cannot actually see the scenes at times or is constantly monitoring the intricate details of focus, the job is considered a highly technical one (Shimkus, 2006).

The 1AC is also responsible for the management and maintenance of the camera gear on set with the DP. They typically change out lenses, remove unwanted accessories, maintain batteries for set, set up monitoring devices, and more. They also oversee the 2nd assistant camera (2AC) operator and any other assisting crew members as necessary (Shimkus, 2006). The 2AC operates the clapperboard, keeps meticulous notes during filming, organizes the movement of equipment from locations, and the management of overall inventory to assist the 1AC (Shimkus, 2006). While this is not an extensive overview of all the requirements of the DP, 1AC, and 2AC, nor the other behind the camera roles, these are considered some of the most technical and artistic roles in crafting the actual images on screen.

Communal traits used for cinematography work besides the technical agentic are greater empathy for others' emotional experiences (Eisenberg & Lennon, 1983); and women are found to be superior in positive interpersonal behaviors (Wood, 1987). Communal qualities noteworthy for successful management of crews and working with other departments within the industry. Men are found to be more strictly oriented to task-accomplishing behavior (Anderson & Blanchard, 1982; Carli, 1982; Lockheed, 1985) and tend to have higher tolerance for risk, higher self-efficacy and willingness to start from the ground up (Tsai et al., 2016). (All considered based on previous research highlighted here as highly agentic traits.) All in all, this makes cinematography a ripe research ground in that there are both stereotypical masculine, agentic qualities, and feminine, communal qualities at play.

The performance of these agentic and communal qualities also affect the way labor is both divided and how agency allows for mobility to higher levels of the industry according to

SRT (Eagly et al., 2000). Most perceived legitimizing forces at play in filmmaking work reside in the award, accreditation, and festival route fronts. The American Society of Cinematographers, or ASC, is the most active, legitimizing, accrediting association for cinematographer work within the United States and its affiliate associations worldwide. Keating (2019) describes the ASC's founding as an "honorary organization for elite cameramen." The Society's main function was to develop a professional identity and legitimizing source for cinematography practice.

In my interactions with other women cinematographers behind closed doors, many have compared ACS membership to that similar of fraternity life. Prospective filmmakers are admitted only if recommended or sponsored by at least three active or retired members (Anderson & Chagollan, 2006). While the ASC did not explicitly exclude women from its ranks, the cultural norm at the time of its founding in 1919 (and its future/current reality) is one of male participation. Women were not invited for membership until the 1980s, and as of 2015 hold only 4% membership (Hutchinson, 2018). The gap between its first women membership admittance and its second spanned 15 years (a little better than 60 before its first) (Maddock, 2021). Holben (2002) quoted a former ACS head who explained, "every woman cinematographer that we can identify at this point and who has a recognizable body of work is currently in this club if they want to be in it" (Shimkus, 2006, p. S-2). The problem with this statement is fairly obvious. The concept of their identification of women cinematographers and what is considered "a recognizable body of work" seems to be skewed.

As of 2024, only three women have ever been nominated for the Academy Award in Cinematography — Rachel Morrison (2017) for her work on *Mudbound*, Ari Wegner (2021) for her work on *Power of the Dog*, and Mandy Walker for her work on *Elvis* (2022). Each were

glimmers of hope that a woman *can* make it to the top, but still startling reminders of how far there is left to go. Women have gained opportunities to DP “non-women” topic films such as Maryse Alberti’s *Creed* (2015), Rachel Morrison’s *Black Panther* (2018), and Charlotte Bruus Christensen’s *A Quiet Place* (2018) after only being relegated to create in “women” genres (a similar trend noted for cinematographers of color).

If the ACS currently only holds roughly 4% women membership, is that really *all* the identifiable women cinematographers with noteworthy bodies of work? The answer seems unlikely. Further, the ACS and the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences’ (or Oscars’) pattern of promotion of women in cinematography is dismal. Since the Academy’s founding in 1927, only *three* women have been nominated for the Academy Award for Best Cinematography. None have won. *The Guardian* author, Pamela Hutchinson said, “If you find it hard to imagine a woman lifting a camera, perhaps you can’t imagine her lifting an Oscar, either” (Hutchinson, 2018).

In festival participation, from 2002-2012 in Sundance Film Festival women made up only one-quarter of all film creators in the narrative genre, and a little over one-third in documentary (Smith et al., 2013). Comparatively, according to their research, representational trends drop off dramatically as cinematographers advance through their careers finding that only 4% of the top grossing films in 2018 were filmed by women cinematographers (Sundance, 2019). Behind-the-scenes in employment of these festival films, the Sundance research found that films directed by men featured less women representation within their crews (20% increase for women-directed crews) (Smith et al., 2013). Among research respondents, women independent filmmakers highlighted gendered financial barriers; men-dominated networks, stereotyping on sets;

work/family balance issues; and exclusionary hiring practices as barriers to their career development (Smith et al., 2013).

Even women filmmakers hoping the "indy (independent) circuit" would bring them access or a foot in the door found themselves relegated to the outside looking in (Nuñez, 2015). It is a common belief that if women choose to disregard the "studio" or "Hollywood" route, then they would have an easier time "making it." This is a common fallacy of our new digital landscape. While it is easier to have your creations seen by audiences, they are not always profitable audiences and, again, reinforces women's silos in to unpaid or low-compensated creative labor. Women working in creative roles report inequalities in the allocation of raises, promotions, and assignments (Windels et al., 2010) with no place to report these inequalities they face. Additionally, often noted in trade press publications, many women filmmakers report the unlikelihood of finding work if their film does not perform well; and others report being replaced if their film does — much like the replacement of directors after the success of "women genre" film *Twilight* in 2008 (Nuñez, 2015). The movie outperformed studio expectations and the original woman director was replaced after its success — a conflicting move for rewarding success in the eyes of industry women. When a movie by a male cinematographer or director flops, they have no troubles finding work again seemingly earning multiple "second chances" (Nuñez, 2015).

Unfortunately for women filmmakers, legitimizing factors that grant them career mobility and reputation still reject a model of rewarding art and instead reward "just business," but seemingly a masculine-only business (Nuñez, 2015). Based on the various agentic and communal qualities in literature, women and men are both equally suited for the role of cinematographer given each possess half the required agentic and communal qualities at times.

The issue of the film industry is not that "men are just evil," but it is one of uneven power distribution that falls on the traditional lies of masculinity. The art which inspired women to pursue a career in filmmaking is overshadowed by gendered social role expectations. For a woman to be considered successful in a men-dominated occupation, she must "possess not only what is explicitly demanded by the job description," but also an additional set of properties which "the male occupants normally bring to the job" as well (Shimkus, 2006, p. 62). A quote from Ross & Padovani's (2019) study of women journalists is appropriate for within cinematography as well, "in journalism [*and cinematography*], we are all men" (p. 5, emphasis mine).

Several studies highlighted below have also explored issues with labor division specifically within cinematography. Krasilovsky (1997) has fought for the rights of women behind the camera for years in both action and research. She compiled over 90 interviews with camerawomen internationally documenting their struggles and their respondents also echo these common threads (Krasilovsky, 1997). Speaking to women film students about entering the industry, participants in another study warn that women are already "behind the curve" before starting. In Windels et al. (2010), one respondent noted, "Students need to know [about working in film]. They need to make an informed decision about embarking on a career where the potential for making it to the top is 80% less if they are women" (Mallia, 2008, p. 13). The unfortunate reality for women hoping to start in film is one where they are behind in an industry they haven't even begun in. This can be extremely discouraging for budding creatives seeking a fulfilling career.

Regardless, SRT does highlight the shared expectations of socially acceptable gender roles and gives light to that fact that most people understand to some degree a shared consensus

about gendered work and behavior. Put simply, everyone possesses some sort of "sorting" what jobs can be performed by women and men to some degree; and overall societally everyone agrees. Among other theories such as Social Cognitive Theory, scholars argue that virtually everyone has a cognitive representation of their culture's gender beliefs (Banaji & Hardin, 1996; Devine, 1989; Eagly et al., 2000). It doesn't mean everyone necessarily *approves* the shared consensus, but everyone is aware of it. While SRT does not dismiss individual differences or experience, it holds to the conclusion that social and cultural factors are the root issue of gender difference, i.e., gender roles are "dynamic aspects of culture that changes in response to alterations of the work and family roles of the [binary] sexes" (Eagly et al., 2000, p. 125). Under this theoretical framework of Social Role Theory (Eagly, 1987; Eagly & Wood, 2012) and its applicability as a theoretical framework to examine the lived experiences of women cinematographers in an agentic-coded occupational role, I answer the following research questions:

> *RQ1: Based on the responses of women cinematographers, what role do agentic and communal qualities play for 'successful' cinematography work?*
>
> *RQ2: What are the experiences of women cinematographers working in a traditionally "masculine" coded gender social role occupation?*
>
> *RQ3: How do women cinematographers make meaning within their creative industry?*
>
> *RQ4: How do women cinematographers create a sense of belonging within their creative industry?*

Left On the Cutting Room Floor: The Edited History of Women in Film and Media

Before advancing to methodologies and findings of this study, an important discussion of the history of women in film and media should be discussed. While the film industry sits within our previously defined creative industries that note unique opportunities and work structures, the work inequalities represented within are all too familiar and fall on similar lines as mentioned

(Shimkus, 2006). If we allow the lens of cinema history to widen, we see that it was women who ran the industry first (Stamp, 2021). Sawhney (2020) states that while women seemingly have had odds stack against them, women have historically made contributions to the cinematography industry. Before they were allowed voting rights, they were starting a groundbreaking cultural industry. Lehto (2012) notes how the phenomenon of a woman "cameraman" still feels like a contemporary issue though, but actually is one from the history books. Therefore, important for the context of my work is a brief history of the filmmaking industry and women's involvement.

Stamp (2021) emphasizes how many feel we are experiencing this "first wave" of women to work behind the camera and that is far from true. Vital conversations about equality in the film industry, particularly among behind-the-scenes creators are occurring, which is a massive step forward, but we put forward at a deficit without understanding the industry's gendered (and *silent* history) (Stamp, 2021). Literature surrounding the underrepresentation of women as cinematographers is scarce, but interestingly, when present, is usually done by women filmmakers-turned-researchers like me. Additionally, a stream of feminist media researchers have worked to steadily and diligently dismantle the "male film canonical" history depicted in scholarship (Hearst, 2018; Stamp, 2021). Much of the research that works to change the filmmaking narrative began in production studies (Stamp, 2021), a subfield that I strategically place my dissertation within as well while also residing in media effects/sociology research. Due to many films from this era being lost to time, folk stories and "anecdotes of, by, and about women workers" during this period were largely passed on within industry, thus failing to reach scholarship until those industry workers entered the academy (Mays, 2021).

Scholars such as J. E. Smyth (2018), Emily Carman (2016), Erin Hill (2016), Maya Montañez Smukler (2019), and Jane Gaines (2018) have collected years of research of their own

and others to address the lack of literature. Hill (2016) discusses “feminized labor” that can be traced back to the beginnings of the commercialized studio system and how unpaid, low status work was done almost exclusively by women. Interestingly, women were essential requirements as laborers in the early centuries of film work, even at their low-status roles, and studios were not able to operate without their work. Hill (2016) notes how as “studios swelled to the size of small cities, they needed women’s low-wage labor as much as they needed investment capital” (Mays, 2021, p. 164). They also argued that their positions removed obstacles at the feet of their male creative workers creating paths forward for them and becoming emotional managers of their success (Mays, 2021; Hill, 2016). Gaines (2018) explores the first generation of filmmakers effectively “pink slipped” from the industry at the turn of the century. Smuckler (2019) informs the “New Hollywood” of the 1970s by highlighting reform and equality efforts of women film workers at the time detailed more below; and Smyth (2018) and Carman (2016) show how early filmmakers created an industry and worked to assert greater control over their careers (Stamp, 2021). While this is far from an expansive list of scholarly work, they are considered some of the most prominent works that helps us understand cinematography history with women in the picture.

A Brief Look Back at Women’s Film/Media History

Back in the 1800s, a new form of art emerged and one that would revolutionize the media and art spaces — filmmaking or the “*cinematographe.*” Interestingly, the birth of this transformative creator space came at the hands of a woman named Alice Guy Blanché (Shimkus, 2006; McMahan, 2002), but is traditionally attributed to the Lumiére brothers in media history books. Blanché’s filmography spans almost 30 years between 1896 to 1920; and consisted of approximately 1000 films (McMahan, 2002). Her career began alongside prominent male

filmmakers noteworthy in film history such as the Lumière brothers, George Méliès, and Thomas Edison (Lehto, 2012); but lasted past her male counterparts' stints in the industry.

Dr. Martha Lauzen, explains that the early days of Hollywood were considered "the golden age for women" because filmmaking was more of a curiosity and art than the business enterprise it has risen to today (Dean, 2002; Shimkus, 2006). "There was no glass ceiling 75 years ago when women accounted for at least half of those writing [and producing] silent films…. and were among the most highly compensated professionals in the industry" (Shimkus, 2006). Blanché's film *La Fee Aux Choux* (*Shoes*) has come to be widely recognized by some film historians as "the first narrative film" (Shimkus, 2006; McMahan, 2002). Blanché noted in a 1914 article for *The Moving Picture World*:

> It has long been a source of wonder for me that many women have not seized upon the wonderful opportunities offered to them by the motion-picture arts to make their way to fame and fortune… of all the arts there is probably none in which they can make such a splendid use of talents so much more natural to a woman than to a man and so necessary to its perfection (Slide, 1986, p. 139; Shimkus, 2006).

According to census data from the period, during the establishment of the film industry between 1910s and 1920s, more than half the U.S. population lived in cities. In particular, the movement from the Midwest to Southern California was largely led by women. In her book *Go West, Young Women! The Rise of Early Hollywood*, Hallett (2012) states that more women than men made up the population in Southern California. In 1920, Los Angeles (the birth city of Hollywood) was the only western city where women outnumbered male occupants (Hall, 2014). Women not only thrived in filmmaking roles, but other highly technical roles as well such as film editing which back then was a very physical, detailed process of *actually cutting* film strips (Barborová, 2012).

As history moved on, the industry and its connected technical roles became “male territory” (Barborová, 2012). As an example, in regard to film editing, Murch (2001) noted that “the job was like tapestry or sewing… it was when sound came in that the men began to infiltrate the ranks of editors, because sound was somehow electrical” (Barborová, 2012; p. 75). Far from women’s ears working less proficiently than men’s; or somehow losing the ability to make good films — gendered occupational patterns began to emerge. By the end of the 1930s, the film industry had become hierarchical, centralized, and commercialized with men holding most positions of power (Shimkus, 2006).

Shimkus (2006) notes how women in the early days of cinema had more opportunities due to the field not being “masculinized” yet. They explained that once the industry’s economic potential was realized, the field followed the path of many before it in that it was perceived a masculine lead was most beneficial. Once the masculine shift occurred in filmmaking, women’s roles were delegated to that of low-wage positions such as make-up artists, assistants, clapperboard operators, and more. These roles had virtually no decision-making power for films and therefore were designated “women’s territory” (Mays, 2021).

During the 1970s, activism efforts yielded the most substantial gains for women filmmakers than it had in the last several years. At the time, at least sixteen women can be counted leading production on at least one commercial feature film until 1980 (Stamp, 2021). Activists partnered with industry guilds such as SAG (now SAG-AFTRA or Screen Actors Guild – American Federation of Television and Radio Artists) and DGA (Directors Guild of America) to bring industry change which was a substantial step. Additionally, the American Film Institute created a workshop in 1974 explicitly creating advancement opportunities for women (Stamp,

2021). From this workshop would come one of the first prominent Black women filmmakers, Maya Angelou.

Finally, these efforts ended in a class-action lawsuit against Columbia Pictures and Warner Brothers studios for alleged patterns of gender and racial discriminatory hiring practices (Stamp, 2021). Despite the rise of the Spielbergs and Scorseses of the time, many women filmmakers enjoyed prominent spots of leadership among the major studios. Interestingly, during my examination of film and media history, I noticed that both periods of women advancement in the film industry fell during three prominent war times for the United States: World War I and World War II (1914-1945) during the “golden age” for women filmmakers; and the Iran-Iraq War (1980-1988) in the latter century.

However, as women’s activism has risen, statistically there has been a decline in women representation in the 21st century. Even with bright periods such as the 70-80s, women have never enjoyed the creative freedom and opportunities enjoyed during the “golden age” (Stamp, 2021). Why are women continually fighting for a place at the proverbial table of filmmaking once again? Why did opportunities for women filmmakers vanish so quickly and our culture seemingly keeps “resetting the tapes?”

As mentioned earlier the industry is highly networked, Erickson et al. (2000) note that there is a popular assumption that you can “work most efficiently” with those who are familiar to you (in this case male cinematographers) (Shimkus, 2006). The production processes required within the film industry are organized around high-risk, project-based, network-reliant characteristics (Christopherson, 2008). Unfortunately for women to obtain cinematographer work, their employment is highly dependent on this networked culture. These networks almost

exclusively consist of white men and continually rehire the reliable and familiar barring much new network membership (Christopherson, 2008).

Since there are fewer networks for women in the industry, the obstacle remains that they lack work to show because they are not getting work (Dirse, 2013). This process of "gender-zoning" can create strict areas for women agency in predetermined feminine spaces and discouraging involvement outside of their "zones" (Darvin et al., 2021). Interestingly, on women-directed films, women representation among crew members rises to 30.9% as opposed to 24.1% on male-led crews (crew reflects more than just camera department roles in these figures). Furthermore, women cinematographers also hire 67.4% more women in their camera departments than male cinematographers (Follows et al., 2016).

Research surrounding occupational gendering, sex differences, gender inequality in occupations, and women labor in men-dominated industries is abundant. Despite this, Gaines (2018) states "we [women cinematographers] are still an empirical pickle" in both industry and academia (Stamp, 2021, p. 171). Smyth notes how creating this corrective history to the rise of filmmaking industry undoes the ignoring of vital work performed by women at so many levels of the filmmaking industry (2018). Therefore, through my dissertation work I highlight the importance of continuing to hear the lived experiences of women working in male-dominated industries, such as cinematography, to counteract canonized male histories that exclude the work of women.

"The geniuses of the system were not just men," says Smyth (2018). Despite the factors of women's equality activism movements, governmental equal opportunity initiatives, and even scientific advances in the size/usage of filmmaking technologies — there has been little improvement surrounding women's ability for success in filmmaking today (Shimkus, 2006).

Since 1998, women representation has only increased by 6% (Mays, 2021). According to research, it would need to grow 25% every five years to reach gender parity (Mays, 2021; Women In Film, 2020).

Women in Film/Media Today

Women are still underrepresented in creative departments and roles by a ratio of 2.3 to 1 (Windels et al., 2010; Endicott, 2002). In the "golden age" of Hollywood (1920s-1950s), women could be found in virtually every department of every studio making waves within the industry, unhindered by gendered divisions (Donoghue, 2021). Today within film industry roles, women consist of less than 10% of camera, sound, and transportation department crew members. They are employed higher in feminine-coded positions such as casting, make-up, and costume departments (Follows et al., 2016). The only role that showcases lower representation than cinematographers at 6.2% are music composers (6%) (Follows et al., 2016). Allen-Young (2020) highlights how a *ten-year* study of the highest grossing films (1,114 films total) revealed that *six* films were by women filmmakers of color.

Dr. Martha Lauzen's research consists of reports generated about women representation in behind-the-camera roles within the film industry for approximately ten years. Each year, Dr. Lauzen examines the top 250 grossing films and examines the workforce behind them noting their gender makeup. The Center for the Study of Women in Television and Film (2021), which Lauzen leads, released *The Celluloid Ceiling* report outlining the latest statistics for behind-the-scenes employment of women in the top U.S. films. The percentage of women working in behind-the-scenes roles rose slightly which was recorded as "record highs" for the industry. In the top 250 films of 2020, women comprised 23% of all directors, writers, executive producers, producers, editors, and cinematographers bringing a 2% increase from 2019 and 6% increase

since 1998. While this number seems promising, when narrowing the focus to cinematographers specifically, still only around 6% of cinematographers were women (Lauzen, 2021).

Additionally, cinematographers are considered “below-the-line” workers where financial pay structures are generally lower, less valued, and considered less of the leading creative force behind films (Maddock, 2021). With these roles already receiving less pay than “above-the-line” workers, the further feminization of low-paid work causes women in these roles to make less than their male counterparts.

The reality is that women only consist of a little over 20% of behind-the-scenes roles in the film industry. In 1975, British film theorist Laura Mulvey brought to light the repetitive tendency of females in film exist to “satisfy the scopophilic and narcissistic desires of the male viewer” (Ishikawa, 2023, p. 2). Mulvey coined the “male gaze” to explain the stereotypical and harmful representations of women in popular media, specifically film. From the beginning, filmmaking was considered an art form with great cultural power to shape opinions, perspectives, and ideologies (Shimkus, 2006). Unfortunately, the vast majority of films are produced under this gendered male gaze that has been proven time and time again in media effects research to produce gendered representations of women (Mulvey, 1975). Since cinematographers are one of the most instrumental roles in the creation of visual films besides directors — they are also highly instrumental in influencing the viewers of those films whether they recognize it or not (Shimkus, 2006).

The lived experiences of women cinematographers are a ripe place to explore the cinematographer as “historical actor” and current “site of struggle” (Callahan, 2012). Women are left to recapture the accomplishments of their predecessors who have been relegated to historical ghosts. Malone (2020) says “the pressure is on Hollywood [and the wider film industry] to let

more women in." As our field was beginning its own roots in the 1970s, maybe much research mirrored the gender makeup of our industry which is why research in this area remains sparse. Through my dissertation, I offer contribution to the field in multiple academic conversations by combining each of these areas to one cohesive work.

Existing Limitations of the Theoretical Areas

The main limitation of SRT as a theoretical framework is that it cannot wholly answer the question surrounding why there appears to be a lack of women cinematographers within the industry. To build theory in a cumulative way, it must be known that even the most quantitative, "definitive" findings are but one perspective of the research story. Regardless of the way scholars approach and understand research, research itself is "intimately shaped by the ways the numbers [get] gendered" (Luker, 2009, p. 30). In terms of actual gender research (research that focuses on gender), which I situate my dissertation within as well, it is even more so. When researchers forget this fact that "numbers can lie" our research is detriment to our peril (Luker, 2009). The traditional socio-psychological viewpoint that scientists tend to hold is that "good theories" serve as mirrors that reflect true representations of the way "things really are" (Griffin et al., 2019). While they do reflect "the way things are", they are still only one portion of the mirror. Interestingly, in the social sciences, we scholars find that our theories of human behavior are always in flux even when correlations are cast with confidence.

Among the meta-analyses, Eagly & Wood (1991) state that authors committed to equality among the sexes might be tempted to report more null differences. This returns us to the possibility that "numbers can lie." Additionally, the small effect sizes and inconsistencies among findings can be seen as trivial and dismissed. Among research findings, men and women are found to be disproportionately different and within others are found to possess no difference.

Eagly & Wood (1991) state that while the effect sizes may be small statistically, in their natural settings enacted by individuals the effects are actually quite monumental.

Eagly & Wood (1991) encourage researched shaped by a view that no matter presence or absence of differences, to highlight the importance of *any* difference demonstrated. The presence of difference in their view showcases the work left to be done. Additionally, social contexts and cultures should be examined in tandem as well as individual-level identity enactments. How a person's experience, skills and attitudes impact perceived gender differences is also of great importance (Eagly & Wood, 1991). Scholars call for future research that highlights this fact and showcases various contexts where these effects differ due to contextual factors (such as women in men-dominated industries) which I pursue here. Social Role Theory, although accounts for social constructs of gender and appropriate roles, it lacks understanding of how that interacts and interplays at the individual level. Additionally, social roles are defined by positions within a social structure therefore impacting the definition of those social roles. Therefore, my work not only examines multiple "levels" of cinematography work, but also examines both the social and individual level(s) of women cinematographers' work and role traits.

Additionally, I seek to understand the processes proposed within the context of the United States therefore excluding cross-cultural examinations. This was done due to the scope and size of the dissertation. Both are ripe areas of future study.

Finally, my work specifically examines the gender identities of male and female without placing the same generalized experiences as monolithic representations for other gender identities. While this neglects other gender viewpoints and stereotypes, all woman-identifying individuals are included in the recruitment and analysis process, but differences of experiences are be noted to protect their experiences from being erased by generalized gender experiences.

With these limitations in mind, my work consists of in-depth interviews with women cinematographers across the various cinematography subindustries within the United States. The subindustries operationalized within my dissertation can be defined as the freelance level (freelance, single-ownership business); corporate level (operating under a production house/branded organization); union/unionized level (operating within industry unions for work); and academy level (ASC or feature film productions).

Expansion of the Theoretical Frameworks and Contribution to the Field

Interestingly, SRT posits that when behaviors should function from gender roles and when it should follow from other roles when *the formal role assigned to men and women is the same.* Reviews find that the appealing view that gender differences can be whittled down to sexist, stereotypical views has been challenged (Eagly & Wood, 1991). There is now consensus that social, cultural as well as individual factors are at play. So, while those attitudes may be present, they are not the sickness, merely a symptom.

Organizations and industries provide rich ground for comparing men and women's behavior, roles, and socially constructed perceptions of self/others. Eagly & Wood (1991) state that within these contexts men and women have seemingly been selected according to the same set of relevant criteria and been similarly socialized into their roles, but this ideation neglects the nuance and experiences actually present in these contexts. This logic in the context of my work assumes that men and women cinematographers engage in similar behaviors to complete their jobs, gender roles are less salient and sex difference effects are weaker.

While Eagly & Wood's (1991) meta-analysis did bring some support for this idea in that men and women in the same organizational roles did behave similarly, a wider analysis reveals that is not the norm. This is what my dissertation explores in the context of women

cinematographers. Regardless of the findings of similarly, it appears through industry accounts and recent findings, that women are still treated as "less than members" even when holding the same role. Therefore, gendered social roles, socialization practices, and identity challenges can thereby induce sex differences even in the absence of any intrinsic differences between women and men (Eagly & Wood, 1991).

My desire is that my dissertation toes the line between theory "testing" and "generating" through what Glaser and Strauss call "theoretical sampling" (Luker, 2009). Across the board, mass media scholars are working to collect reliable numbers to continue showcasing difference, but through an in-depth qualitative analysis conducted, I add to the understanding of the social, cultural as well as individual factors at play through gender role trait analysis. Evans & Diekman (2009) state there is further beneficial research to be done among gender, roles, and individual processes, so I offer my insights to contribute to a deeper understanding of the "women experience" in men-dominated industries using women cinematographers as a case.

CHAPTER 2 – METHODOLOGY

With my background in cultural studies, media sociology, media industries, and media effects research, I utilized the following methods. Collectively, I used an ethnographical approach. Ethnography, usually multi-method encompassing, can be described broadly as "describing and interpreting the observable relationships between social practices and systems of meaning based on "firsthand experiences and exploration" of a particular cultural setting" (Atkinson et al., 2001, p. 4; Lindlof & Taylor, 2019). It is a great method for understanding how the world *looks* and *feels* to a particular group of people (Lindlof & Taylor, 2019). Within this understanding, I conducted in-depth interviews with women cinematographers actively working in the industry. Additionally, adding to the "firsthand experiences and exploration", I included my own scholarly personal narrative (SPN) within my dissertation in sections. SPNs are "writer's deliberate attempt to create a life by imposing a series of narrative-specific meanings on it" (Nash 2004, p. 9). Nash (2004) states they are academic works used solely or used complementarily in writing; and grounded in theory in a careful examination of one's own life (Nash 2004). Not to be confused with autoethnography, SPN differs due to its diffused focus and techniques for research (Ng & Carney, 2017).

Aptly as the research subjects in question are cinematographers, the methods here allow for a "zooming in and out" of their lens of their cultural space to uncover what is happening at the personal experiential level, to the organizational level (or industry levels), and finally what is occurring societally. Most important to highlight in regard to my methodology is that an ethnographical approach is not a boundless, all-encompassing method, but rather one strictly

fenced by permeable boundaries that are guided by adaptability and research ethics to best research the phenomena at hand (Maddox, 2022). Therefore, the boundaries of my methodologies are outlined below:

In-Depth Interview Structure

Many researchers find that there is insufficient quantitative data to accurately represent employment trends within the creative industries due to the project-oriented nature of its work (Christopherson, 2008). Even if organizational numbers can be gathered, this largely ignores the massive wave of freelance and independent creative workers. Therefore, the creative industries and creative labor are difficult to depict quantitatively. Because of this, researchers can rely on rich qualitative data to garner insights in research. Interviews are literally "views of something between (inter) people" (Brenner, 1985, p. 148; Lindlof & Taylor, 2019). They are beneficial for "generating factual information about the world" that cannot be observed by other means (Lindlof & Taylor, 2019, p. 221) and get under the surface of the mundane, every experience. In ethnographical work, interviews "better account for individual agency and experience" and "make real sense of the actual ways in which life is acted out on an everyday level" (Bennett, 2008; Phillipov, 2013). In-depth interviews allow us to see the "actual social practices, processes, and interactions in culture creation and performance 'on the ground'" (Cohen, 1991, p. 223; Phillipov, 2013). When considering questions of power, of which my research does, Krijnen (2017) says its best to start with research from the perspective of the marginalized groups in the power relationships under examination.

Specifically, in examining the lived experiences of women cinematographers we are offering voice to the marginalized women creative worker in the filmmaking industry rather than relying on those in power (acknowledging that sometimes can be women). Typically, research

within the film industry relies on perceived "power" decision makers, such as directors, producers, and other "above-the-line" roles. As stated in my introduction, cinematographers are critical decision makers because of their role in crafting what is actually *seen* on screen. I add to media effects research an examination of these creative workers to highlight the great cultural power we hold as cinematographers, specifically how if there were more women cinematographers represented behind the camera then front-of-camera representations may also improve.

Within this context, I conducted 36 in-depth interviews with women cinematographers across the various subindustries. Interviews were conducted until saturation was reached (i.e. resounding themes are being referenced by participants again and again throughout the interviews). The subindustries operationalized within this study can be defined as the freelance level (freelance, single-ownership business); corporate level (operating under a production house/branded organization); union/unionized level (operating within industry unions for work); and academy level (ASC or feature film productions). Based on previous scholarly literature trends that focus more on what I have labeled the "academy level" and preliminary questioning at the National Association of Broadcasters' (NAB) conference in 2022 and 2023 with a select sample of women cinematographers — I felt it was best to include all sub-levels of industry to examine whether the issues span each of these occupational levels.

Interviews were held via my institutional Zoom account at a date and time that worked best for the women cinematographers' schedules. Interviews were between 60 to 90 minutes, running for approximately 70 mins on average, to allow for detailed data collection. Questions in the interview protocol included the use of agentic and communal qualities in cinematography work; how they navigate their roles; how they build their identities as cinematographers and

"selves"; questions surrounding their experiences within the field's "gear techno culture", gender makeup; and more. The full interview guide can be found in Appendix I.

Recruitment Procedures and Outcome

Participants were recruited from direct messages on Instagram, the POSH Collective Facebook group (579 members), ladycameraguy's (a prominent women camera operator interested in assisting in my research) Instagram account (77K followers), and the Female Filmmakers (To Employ and Empower Each Other) Facebook group (4.4K members). These were chosen strategically as they are each communities/spaces for women cinematographers to connect with one another and network. Additionally, ladycameraguy's Instagram frequently posts female cinematographers and operators as featured posts. A list of these cinematographers was generated based on these posts with her permission, although she herself was not featured in this study. I also corresponded with Women In Media, Inc., an industry organization where women cinematographers have membership, that provided me a "crew list" of registered members to contact for recruitment. Finally, snowball sampling from participant referral was used. Snowball sampling is a process "of yielding a study sample through referrals made among people who share or know of others who possess some characteristics that are of research interest" (Biernacki & Waldorf, 1981, p. 141; Lindlof & Taylor, 2019). Here, it is important to note that snowball sampling is a strategy of choice in the recruitment process rather perceived necessity. As almost all cinematographers were contacted from my preliminary list gathered from industry databases or social media, these referrals allowed participants to recommend other women cinematographers that may not be in the database referenced and/or shown to me in my own algorithms and searches via social media. Additionally, as the women cinematographer pool itself is small by comparison, women cinematographers are familiar with one another and

provided a sense of "vouching" for the research and allowed for further entrance into the participants' worlds for this ethnographical work.

After IRB approval, I conducted interviews beginning March 2024 and concluded May 2024. Funding for my dissertation was obtained through a Broadcast Education Association scholarship fund for graduate research. Participants were compensated $50 for their participation and could opt-out of participation at any time. Participants were compensated $50 due to the nature of their work — with the interviews potentially costing them a day of production or post-production, the goal is to compensate them for the time they are utilizing for the interview to not further unpaid, "free" labor within the creative industries, even through research.

One hundred and seventy-seven total respondents were emailed or contacted on social media. Of these, 56 participants opted-in to participate. Ultimately, 36 proceeded to schedule and complete interviews. Several cinematographers had projects arise during the interview process which prevented them from participating as originally opting in to do. Between opt-ins, opt-outs, and maybe responses, the overall response rate was a little over 35% (Yes = 25%, No = 7%, Maybe = 3%).

For privacy and protection reasons, women cinematographers' names and any identifying information were removed from the responses. In preparation for my research, I found a constant recruitment issue that women cinematographers were afraid to "speak out" because of a concern that they would face backlash or "blacklisting" within the industry. Therefore, anonymity was a reflexive choice that I feel best protects the participants of my research. This allowed participants to speak freely and honestly without fear of industry retribution or consequence at all levels. Copies of the approved Institutional Review Board application, recruitment email, and recruitment social media post are located in the Appendix.

Data Coding and Analysis Procedures

Interviews were transcribed with Adobe Premiere Pro 2024, anonymized, and then coded in NVivo 14. There was a consistent back and forth during analysis of consulting the literature for theoretical themes such as identified agentic and communal traits (a complete reference list is included in Appendix IV), while also leaving room for emergent themes and traits (Glaser & Strauss, 1967). While not a true "grounded theory" approach as previous theory and concepts was analyzed in the dataset, in the spirit of grounded theory emerging themes were analyzed as well that fell outside of the theoretical areas to advance scholarship in these areas. This is considered more a "thematic analysis" approach. Maguire & Delahunt (2017) remind that thematic analysis is not tied to a particular epistemological or theoretical perspective making it flexible and advantageous to research work. Echoing Glatt (2022), "data collection, organization, and analysis [were] dialectically linked, each informing the other aspects in an ongoing process of refinement" (p. 7).

Interviews were coded according to the research questions under resounding themes, but specific codes such as agentic and communal traits were coded as referenced in the theoretical review of literature above. Table 1 shows the agentic and communal traits coded for and their working definitions to help further define coding (located in the Appendix). As mentioned, my analysis was completed when theoretical saturation was reached among the data. "Saturation is signaled by the continuous observation of what is already known, and by repetitive field notes [and responses from participants]" (Snow, 1980, p. 103; Lindlof & Taylor, 2019). A copy of the codebook is included in the Appendix.

Post initial coding, I noticed several traits were, based on previous literature, either agentic or communal, but participants were describing these traits in contrary ways based on the

context of our conversations in interviews. To reconcile this difference, a post-interview follow-up survey was sent with the list of agentic and communal traits mentioned above. Participants were asked to rank on a bipolar Likert scale whether each trait was generally more associated with male cinematographers or female cinematographers in their work. On the scale, an average score of 1-2.99 was considered “masculine” or an agentic trait, 3-3.99 was considered “neutral”, and 4-5 was considered “feminine” or communal. Those results are illustrated in Figure 1 (located in the Appendix). Agentic and communal traits were not re-coded into a newly agentic version of the trait or communal trait (i.e. if for instance “warm” as a communal trait was shown to be scored more agentic in the survey, it was not moved to the agentic section). Rather, the differences were noted to be unpacked and discussed in relation to previous literature in the Findings and Discussions section. A copy of the follow-up survey is also included in the Appendix.

Positionality Statement

An important note of positionality to recognize is the use of my own personal narrative throughout my dissertation, but also the perceived possibility of bias/lack of objectivity in my also *being* a women cinematographer. In feminist media studies, it is said often that “we study ourselves and assume the validity of our research interests” (Steiner, 2014). Feminist scholars note how the “researcher’s positionality affects all aspects of the research process” (McCorkel & Myers, 2003, p. 199). True qualitative scholars lean into this concept by acknowledging our positionality not only in the write-up of our research, but during the entire research process as well. Despite rigid pursuits of objectivity by positivists, no researcher’s positionality is exempt from interacting with their research. McCorkel & Myers (2003) ponder that the reason many social scientists are hesitant to consider the effect of their positionality on their empirical work is

that it “unearths the ghosts we are trained to bury at the start of our research projects” (p. 200). Regardless of the way we approach and understand research, research itself is “intimately shaped by the ways the numbers got gendered” or positioned through our interaction with our work (Luker, 2009, p. 30).

McCorkel & Myers state that the researcher must consider how they reproduce their own position and privilege through the analyses they produce and have candid examinations of “their backstage” (p. 205). Positionality is not eradicated through methodologies or epistemologies. Finally, as feminist researchers there is always a pursuit to give voices to the women whose views and experiences we are studying, but we run the risk of overlooking our own when we forget our involvement in culture as well.

Being a women cinematographer, I have my own experiences that are similar and different to the participants. While I agree to not notice precisely the things I’ve experienced and are hoping to study (Luker, 2009), the very fact *I have experienced them* is important and such will be highlighted alongside participant’s responses. Borrowing from my auto-ethnographical friends who “use data to analyze how structures of power inherent in culture inform some aspect of her or his story” (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016, p. 60) — I have interwoven a similar method called *scholarly personal narrative* (Nash, 2015) throughout this work as part of my ethnographical methods.

Limitations of Methods

Tuli (2010) reminds that no research methodology is necessarily ideal, and that selection relies on the expertise of the researcher to use whichever methodologies will best answer the research question at hand. Each methodology has its own strengths and weaknesses, and it is important to assess each during the selection process. Speaking to the overall validity of

qualitative work, for true qualitative research to be considered trustworthy and valid it must have sound rationale for the chosen processes and methodologies involved in data collection and analysis (Guba & Lincoln, 1985; Tuli, 2010). Therefore, below outlines some common limitations and weaknesses associated with the methodologies I proposed for my dissertation work and the justification for their selection.

I do align with the assumption that the universal experience of women does not exist full-stop (Krijnen, 2017), but there are collective experiences that many of us share. Therefore, a limitation of this study is that I do not explicitly examine the various constructions of gender experiences experienced with cinematography work (i.e. persons of color, transgender people, binary people, queer people, etc.). While individuals of various intersectionalities arose in the participant pool, I include through the lens of the common experiences of the majority (i.e. women), but make a no point to "speak for them" rather than allowing them to "speak to" the complexities of their own gender, race, etc. negotiations (Garvey, 2023). Unpacking the complexities of distinct gender experiences falls outside of the scope of my work.

Additionally, a limitation lies in the use of varying levels and subindustries of the filmmaking industry as most research in this area resides in the realm of "Hollywood" studies. Some critics would advise interviewing only those women who are working and accredited within the formal cinematography circle of Hollywood. I believe rather than being a limitation of my research in examining the varying levels, it is a strength and counteraction to what Ferguson (1990) calls the "feminine fallacy." It states that women who achieve high rank, influence, and power will automatically be "feminists" or full-scale representations of all levels of experience. At the varying levels, women cinematographers will approach work, life, identity, mobility, and

more all in differencing ways; therefore, it's important to analyze the varying levels for not only truer representation of the industry, but the ability to gather cross-level insights as well.

Another limitation is that interviews and ethnographical research from the perspective of marginalized groups in context can be seen as only a partial part of the story. To this I argue that statistical data falls against the same limitation. All research is, but one side of a situated research narrative which is why I bring these varying levels of research in this area together. Scholars argued that we cannot apprehend the full breadth of any social phenomena (Weber, 1949;Coleman, 2010).

At times in qualitative work, an additional limitation that could be considered is that of women cinematographers not realizing the cultures they are in and, therefore, cannot speak to the nuances I seek to explore. Scholars notes from his own research how "it's highly unlikely that members of any subcultures would recognize themselves reflected here", thus emphasizing the importance of bringing participants in as "co-creators" of the research (Hebdige, 1979; Phillipov, 2013). While they may not recognize their belonging to a culture, it does not make them any less in it and bringing awareness to them of their belonging speaks to the purpose of research. This "fallacy of internality" is merely an assumption that culture participants cannot fully articulate their own cultural practices and participation (Hills, 2002), but if that is held as standard then all research, even survey work, is debunked. If we are neglectful of allowing participants to give voice to their experiences, then our research is biased still despite our pursuit of empiricism. To borrow a scholar from my positivist friends, Klaus Krippendorff (creator of the statistical standard Krippendorff's alpha in the 1960s) said as researchers "we must grant others that occur [in our research] construction the same autonomy you practice constructing them" (Griffen et al., 2019, p. 30).

A final limitation could be seen in the age-old debate for *generalizability* of research findings. Flyvbjerg (2006) addresses this by noting how "it is untrue that [cases] cannot provide reliable information about the broader class" (Maddox, 2022, p. 221). In reality, isn't all research a "case?" Research, whether an actual case study or not, is one moment in time and picture of a certain phenomenon in a certain place. We are drawing on contextualized situations, even empirically, to generalize broadly. While qualitative research does not "generalize" broadly, it seeks to promote the study of the same phenomena in other places and spaces. In-depth knowledge of one industry can provide useful "jumping off points" for thinking about not only the wider context, but also similar industries with similar structures/challenges (Glatt, 2022, p. 2). This approach has been used to assist to extrapolate broader creative cultural findings in media research (Guarriello, 2019; Maddox, 2022).

Additionally, although these findings, and the findings of similar studies, cannot be truly "replicated" via research methods, culture reproduces findings in a myriad of ways which is why we are continuing to research these phenomena. The sheer concept of saturation and the same responses resounding again and again in research is further proof of generalizability. The hope is that through the rigorous, thick description provided in the results, "someone in a potential receiving context may assess the similarity between them" and extrapolate it to their case (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016, p. 257). If we fail to acknowledge the transferability and generalizability of even situated, qualitative findings we risk doing the same things over and over again. In the case of women cinematographers, we will watch as generation after generation of media women fight for equality, equity, and inclusion onscreen and behind the scenes (Stamp, 2021). Our empirical data will never change, and we will be stuck asking the same questions because we neglect important research.

Contributions to the Field

I believe there are two fallacies at play in the creative industries regarding women. The first exists among gender and media effects research is that in some ways women are just "deficient and in need of something special to help them" (Ross & Padovani, 2016). The second is that "women working in male-owned media [are to] correct the [gendered media content's] distorted, misleading content that represents them" (Steiner, 2014, p. 360).

As data studies have been done on women cinematographers' representation in some part, looking beyond to factors industrywide (Donoghue, 2021), is a helpful angle to add to future research; and is where my work strategically situated. Exploring the nuances behind the numbers is a contribution my research seeks to add. Additionally, adding specificity to women cinematographers' lived experiences working in the filmmaking industry and wider creative industry is another goal of my work. Donoghue (2021) calls for research that utilizes interviews, oral histories, and industrial ethnography for understanding how a creative career path is built in Hollywood and the filmmaking industry. They also encourage both micro-level and macro-level analyses to trace the complexities of women's experiences in the midst of navigating the precarious conditions of freelance creative careers such as cinematography. Understanding the power dynamics at play requires a preverbal "zooming in" and "zooming out" of the industry.

Media effects and industries scholars, I believe, have the opportunity to reframe the questions we are asking by taking off our once familiar epistemological hats and asking, "how would the 'other' side see what's going on here?" This can help locate sites of tension, conflict, and new perspectives. Lindlof & Taylor (2019) remind that the traditions, whether we like it or not, are always interacting with one another evolving and transforming in tandem. In Hollyn (2009), they include a quote emphasizing, "cinematography is infinite in its possibilities… There

are infinite shadings of light ad shadows and colors… it's an extraordinarily subtle language and figuring out how to speak that language is a lifetime job (p. 56).

CHAPTER 3 – RESULTS

The participants included in this study all self-identified as women cinematographers. The sample reported that they were largely 44% ages 33-40 years old; 44% White; 53% held Bachelor's degrees; 36% held graduate degrees (MAs or MFAs specifically); and 94% were from the United States (6% reported being from other countries and the specific countries were not listed for anonymity). Regionally, participants largely reported 53% were regionally located in the West region of the United States. From the sub-levels of the film industry, 95% participants reported operating at the freelance level (freelance, single-ownership business); 56% of participants at the corporate level (operating under a production house/branded organization); 42% of participants at the union/unionized level (operating within industry unions for work); and 28% of participants operating within the academy level (ASC or feature film productions). These categories were not mutually exclusive. Located in Appendix VIII is a demographic table containing all reported sample data for each item.

Participants' responses highlighted several interesting findings that are organized in to three parts — (1) reported agentic and communal traits necessary for successful cinematography work with the introduction of the concept of "*axis traits*"; (2) women cinematographers' experiences in a masculine-coded occupation despite agentic/communal trait possession; and finally, (3) how women cinematographers make meaning and belonging in their masculine-coded

occupational role. Below are each of the three sections with discussion of my findings following the three sections.

Agentic vs. Communal Traits: Which Are Best for Successful Cinematography Work?

Agentic Traits

Beginning with RQ1 surrounding whether agentic or communal traits are successful for cinematography work, agentic traits already determined within the review of literature were confirmed as such including: assertive, controlling, competitive, confidence, self-efficacy, courageous, risk-taking, dominant, firm, forceful, mastery, technical knowledge/interest, and physical strength (a complete list of agentic trait citations is included in Appendix IV or Table 1). Participants resounded repeatedly that these agentic traits led to more successful cinematography work than possessing purely communal traits which were seen as more "soft traits."

Participants noted how assertiveness and control were seemingly connected traits as to have one is to have the other instinctively. Participant 32 explained that one needed to "establish authority on set" to maintain crew hierarchy since the DP/cinematographer holds such a high position between above-the-line and below-the-line roles. In interviews, participants and I agreed that the role of cinematographer/DP should be considered *the line* between above and below as we are working to maintain that flow of work and information hierarchy between parties. Located in the Appendix, Illustration 3 illustrates a visual picture of participants' vision for how the hierarchy feels to them with DPs falling in the middle of "battlegrounds" in a sense. Participant 32 went on to say that maintaining control and authority on set keeps "[stuff] from

going sideways" and "projects a sense of control" no matter what occurs during the project [explicitive replaced].

> Participant 37: "I think it's something about speaking with authority… I sort of habitually speak with authority and people listen to me."

Additionally, having a competitive mindset was also confirmed as an agentic trait among cinematography work. Participants noted how the industry has "nothing to do with talent" in terms of advancement. "If you are a good talker and networker, they might recommend you to someone they know," said Participant 7. Participant 2 emphasized the concept of "rubbing shoulders" and socializing with a purpose in specific settings. Participant 12 shared that in addition to in-person networking, cinematographers need to be able to "shamelessly sell" themselves and "broadcast pride" about their work on social media.

> Participant 7: "I know some people that don't really have as much talent as a cinematographer, but they have moved up very fast because they know how to talk to people. and honestly, like it's true when they say, 'it's who you know, not what you know.'"

> Participant 14: "People have to become aware of you in order for you to catch fire, and I think that's what it takes is networking or being good at getting yourself out there."

Networking, a competitive-mindset and assertiveness also contribute to being confident and possessing high self-efficacy. Participant 4 called this attitude a sense of "showmanship;" and Participants 11 and 13 noting the need to be "outgoing" and "having a fashionable mystique" about you as a cinematographer. Participant 27 explained that gaining confidence can come from two places: either you find your own voice and storytelling look that validates your skillset or you simply "fake it until you make it." This means that you may not have the skillsets, but you exude confidence and the other agentic traits above to provoke others to trust you in the work. Participant 24 encouraged cinematographers to "just do the work" and create films — even bad

ones. Participant 2 explained that this preparation allows you to find inspiration from others and prepare for the next gig that could be higher on the advancement ladder.

> Participant 36: "The best you can do and what everybody should be doing, in theory, is preparing themselves to the point where if they got that job tomorrow, they would [be able to do it]."

Participant 7 noted how much of their confidence comes from that preparation mindset which has led them to be recognized by laypersons for their work, asked for expertise in teaching engagements, and peer recognition with awards, etc. "I feel like that solidifies like, okay, I have done some good [stuff], and I belong here," said Participant 7 [explicitive replaced].

Physical strength was one trait also discussed as cinematography is typically *only* associated with this agentic trait, and not without reason. Participants noted how days on set are usually 12 hours at minimum on average, consist of standing for long periods of time uninterrupted, and not to mention include carrying a plethora of heavy gear (Participant 4). Participant 34 said it's more about building "sustainability" in terms of physical strength and Participant 4 stressed "longevity." Participants noted how typically laypersons would assume a "gym bro" or large physically built person would be most successful in terms of cinematography, but cinematography work was more about stamina, core, shoulder, and back strength (Participant 14 and 17). Additionally, you could be using a tripod, Steadicam vest, running with your camera, hiking, squatting in strange positions and more (Participant 11 and 19). "I think those two things are incredibly important to just sustain yourself in this industry, because it's so taxing on you," said Participant 4.

On top of the physical drain on the body cinematography takes, there is also emotional and mental work being done as well. Participants stressed hydrating, getting good sleep (when

capable), and taking time for yourself to be a more balanced DP stressing it’s more about stamina than bulk strength.

> Participant 34: “They kind of like, lose, momentum because they're not, building sustainably.”
>
> Participant 16: “I think it’s also a mental thing too. So, you are taking care of your body so you can perform as an artist because then that's how your mind is more open to creativity.”

Finally, participants noted being technically fluent is a beneficial agentic trait as well. Defined by the participants, “technically fluent” means that you can speak and act out the “language” as a cinematographer from at least some experience in the technical areas of camera, lighting, electric, and sound recording (Participants 1, 7, 11, and 23). Participant 17 explained that as a DP, you do not necessarily need to know how every single piece of equipment works, but need an overall understanding of each of the technical area and how their technologies work generally to know what is needed to capture the shot.

> Participant 28: “I think a very important thing to do is to have a vision and, at least be able to communicate that vision to other people so that they can help you execute it.”

Participant 33 said with this knowledge you can essentially be a “one-woman” crew if needed, but other participants encouraging hiring out the areas you want to supplement your knowledge (Participants 1 and 37). Participant 4 encouraged all DPs to possess a “scientific” mindset that looks to what is coming out to be familiar with the “research” but understand you may not have direct interaction with that “research.”

> Participant 25: “I would say it's important as a cinematographer to always stay up to date with all the latest tech, even if you aren't actively using certain technology on your own

> personal sets… having mindfulness of it is really important because you never know when you're going to have to whip out that tool."

> Participant 26: "I had somebody tell me you really only need to know 10% more than somebody else to be able to teach them that thing."

As our industry's technologies update rapidly, participants noted the internet, specifically YouTube, as a great place to learn, but stressed to look for "reputable sources." "You can tell who is for real," one participant said. Knowledge of different camera systems such as Canon, ARRI, RED, Sony, etc.; practicing the fundamentals of filmmaking; and getting constant set experience were also ways to stay "technically fluent." Finally, participants said knowledge of the post-production process helps know how that technical knowledge translates in the final product and vice versa (Participant 1).

Communal Traits

Aligning with previous literature, participants cited collaborative, gentle, patient, kind, humble, warm, good listener, interpersonally sensitive, compassionate, emotional, sympathetic, well-being oriented, caring and nurturing as more communal traits (a complete list of communal trait citations is included in Appendix IV or Table 1). As mentioned above within the agentic section, these communal traits women cinematographers said were essential to cinematography work but felt that the industry differed in that opinion.

Regardless of industry perception, several participants noted how the "collaborative nature" of cinematography work was one of their favorite parts of the job. Participant 4 equated it to musical "riffing" where they bounce ideas off each other within crew to see what new ideas can come to set. Participant 7 explained it helped them in the running of their sets:

> Participant 7: "You also have to be very much knowing when you have to be collaborative, and you have to know when to give in and when to not. When to know that what you're doing is the best thing to do and when to say no and be paid to put your pride aside."

Collaboration on set was also explained as being "open to creative ideas" and possessing a "team mindset" that notices that films are not made in a silo, but together with people (Participant 7).

> Participant 8: "I think film as a whole, it is really a people's business. I think you need to be a great team player instead of just a great camera woman or a great technician."

Participant 17 said this "collaborative mindset" is something that must be possessed going in to set or you can tell the DPs that just want you to stay in your space without this collaboration.

Next, the traits of gentleness, patience, kindness, humility, and warmth were combined in to one code called "nice person" as resounded by participants in their responses. By participants definition, a "nice person" cinematographer is one who can take intense amounts of stress due to the pressurized nature of sets and deliver a consistently fun, warm, and enjoyable set experience. Film sets are usually high risk, quick timelines, and limited room for errors. This "nice person" can manage conflict, anxiety, person-to-person respect, and support their team while "honoring their skills" at the same time (Participants 4, 8, and 11).

> Participant 11: "They always say, 'people won't remember what you say to them, but they'll remember how you made them feel.' So, I feel like that's a huge part of it, is that you just want your entire energy to be positive and creative and passionate and have that be the thing that people remember about you."

This professionalism and "consistent niceness" leads to good reputations industry-wide and helps garner more word-of-mouth recommendations (Participants 7 and 11). Kindness and a "healthy collaboration" on set leads to more leads for that next opportunity and retaining good crew mates (Participants 8 and 17). Additionally, aligning with collaboration, this "nice person" DP is one who is not egotistical and remains humble despite success. They respect the expertise of their crew mates and do not micromanage their work (Participants 8 and 10). They also defend their crew as the "ultimate peacemaker" if conflicts arise and mediate solutions to benefit all (Participant 23).

Next, participants noted the communal trait of being a good listener to successful cinematography work. Many explained this meant one is a good, active listener, but also are one to listen to feedback on oneself as well (Participants 9, 28, and 36). One is willing to "take direction" and "tell stories that may not fit one's voice" (Participants 5 and 9). Participant 10 stated that you are responsible as a cinematographer for taking the visual idea of the director and "make it real." To do this, you need to be an active listener that asks questions and "listens for the story," especially in documentary work. Participant 23 said you need to be a fluent "people-reader" that can listen even when someone isn't speaking and know what they mean or what they are saying. "We are the original AI bots," said Participant 23 about their ability to bring information from seemingly disconnected sources together. Participant 28 explained, "a big part of the job is just asking questions and getting a really deep understanding of what it is that you're working on." Using tools like observing the people around you such as talent and crew; being consistently curious; and detail-oriented in pre-production, production, and post-production strengthens this trait.

> Participant 9: "Generally, a good cinematographer is somebody who can connect dots between pieces of information that they've been given, whether it's from the same person or from two different people across the world."

> Participant 36: "I think something that makes a professional cinematographer is someone who listens to their crew and to [the other people] who are working with them and just understanding how they can make it better and be better to work with."

Being very interpersonally sensitive which includes compassion, sympathy, and being emotional/recognizing emotion were regularly noted communal traits as well. Participant 30 called it the ability to "read the room" whether that be the crew, the management, or the talent. They encouraged all DPs to take some sort of psychology education course that would teach more DPs this skill because they noticed how it's "not natural" to everyone. Participant 28 noted

jovially that it's knowing "when to laugh and when not to laugh" — basically saying reading and recognizing appropriate moments for emotional responses to what is going on around you. Participant 8 explained that it's "choosing your moments wisely" for whatever you are doing or communicating. If your DP is in the middle of a conversation, then do not come in between them and ask an unrelated question or interrupt; or similar interactions.

Participant 26 explained that in their wedding and documentary work it is the ability to know when to "script something" and when something should be naturally captured or "non-scripted." It's reading the emotion of the scene and knowing when to focus on it, ignore it, or enhance it (Participant 28). Two participants noted how this interpersonal intimacy allows them to create intimacy and comfort on their sets:

> Participant 33: "I guess the quick intimacy with people. Creating quick intimacy with people on set… making everyone very comfortable on set."

> Participant 13: "I really am proud of and value my ability to not intimidate subjects because it's the camera in your face and you're not an actor — that's intimidating. The fact that, like, my presence can help that."

Participant 16 says this ability to read talents' nerves and read crew members comes back to "what is the camera saying?" What are the visual cues that are translating through the camera that can be recognized as emotion or interpersonal communication? Finally, Participant 12 says that interpersonal sensitivity is also the ability to take "emotional responsibility," citing you ultimately cannot control how others feel but can try and then take responsibility for what you can.

Being concerned with others' well-being or well-being oriented is another longstanding communal trait echoed here along with being caring and nurturing. Several participants expressed their care for their crew in several different ways. Participant 23 noted how they really focus on set safety and ensuring everyone is in safe working environments. Participant 10

explained how the role of DP is about understanding what your crew's needs are on set and figuring out how to meet those needs. Sometimes these needs even come before the job of the day. Participant 29 explained it's a process of "watching for issues" and almost protecting the crew by forecasting and protecting. Participant 14 said they have been called "motherly" on set due to many of these actions as well. Participants 17 and 29 aim to create an atmosphere of vulnerability on set that fosters openness, trust, and the ability to bring needs directly to the DP without fear.

Many DPs explained that this well-being orientation and caring atmosphere contributes to getting additional opportunities through recommendations, but also through creating a "friend" atmosphere that rehires one another. Participant 8 explains they want everyone on their sets to feel like they are working with their friends during the long hours and intense work. "I want my friends to succeed," they said about helping their crewmates advance and grow.

> Participant 29: "I'm not a fan of sets which are like super serious. Obviously, we're all there to get a job done and it's not to say people should be joking around constantly but I try to be an approachable person and try to just be open and willing to listen."

Contradictions Among Participants Between Interviews and Follow-Up Survey

One important finding to note among participant responses was a few contradictory coding scenarios between participant interview and follow-up survey responses. This interview response versus follow-up survey contradiction was interesting for several traits in both the communal and agentic trait categories respectively. For instance, although originally listed as agentic traits in previous studies (see Table 1), participants noted that being analytical and self-sufficient (independent or start-up mentality) were more "neutral traits" in their post-interview follow-up survey than in their interviews. Additionally, being able to navigate the political landscape of set-life and being considered "well-connected" were originally coded as neutral due

to participant responses, but then considered agentic traits by participants in their follow-up survey. Also, divergent from the literature are the traits of adaptable, calm, helpful, multitasking, organized, prepared, problem solver, sensitivity to story, and expressive (i.e. Eagly & Karau, 2002; Eagly, Wood, & Schmidt, 2004; Himes, 2017; Karau & Eagly, 1999; Martin, 2024). Originally, based on participant responses, these traits were coded as communal traits. Ironically, when sent the follow-up survey, participants chose to designate each trait as more neutral, but leaning closer to the communal side except for organized which scored closer to "neutral." It was at this point in coding that a third category began to emerge among "neutral" scoring traits. There were some traits that scored truly neutral in the follow-up survey and did not seem to "swap" places in both interview and survey (these will be later referred to as "*axis traits.*") Other traits, however, did truly swap zones, such as agentic to neutral; or communal to neutral; or neutral to either agentic or communal to name a few.

Regarding traits that "swapped," among participant responses, many of these neutral traits were discussed in relation to their "zone" (i.e. communal v. agentic). The neutral formerly communal traits mentioned above were considered by participants in the context of where they felt women cinematographers excelled more in these areas, but post-interview they coded them as neutral which was an interesting paradox to highlight. They discussed them as *communal* but coded them *neutral* after the fact. The same phenomenon for agentic-to-neutral traits.

As the neutral-communal traits leaned more to the "communal side" of the neutral zone and were discussed more communally based on participant responses, perhaps with a 6-point Likert scale, these traits would have scored more truly in the "communal zone." It could also be that these traits should be further researched to see if they would be better combined in to one trait that several individual traits with a more communally coded trait.

Similarly, for traits that were in themselves neutral-agentic based on interview responses then changed to be viewed as agentic in the survey, well-connectedness was a common noted trait. Leaning more to the "agentic zone" of neutral, well-connectedness was originally included with being "well-liked" as a neutral trait due to participant interview responses as participants equated well-connectedness with having a great "Rolodex" of those who you can call to partner with for work opportunities. One reasoning for this being coded post-interview as more agentic could be this "Rolodex" concept that sounds similar, based on participant responses, to the agentic trait of networking. Similarly, political was coded as neutral initially then noted as "agentic" afterwards by participants. For the political trait, participants described this trait the ability to be "diplomatic", a "good negotiator", ability to understand hierarchies, and production limitations. It also means that you make decisions definitively to participants.

This could be similar to agentic traits of "firm", "assertive", or "competitive" perhaps thus leaning it more agentic to participants after-the-fact. In the same vein, being analytical and self-sufficient were, as mentioned, coded as agentic initially based on previous studies (see Table 1). Leaning neutral in the follow-up survey, participants explained that this analytical trait was connected to the research that needs to go into documentary work and/or the logistical work needed to understand what needs to happen to make a client/director's vision come to life. Again, echoing considerations for the other trait findings, this could be due to the Likert scale containing 5-points or an area for deeper discussion on those specific traits for further investigation in future studies.

Concept of "Axis" Traits

While some agentic and communal traits seemed to "swap" their locations as mentioned above, participant responses did clearly reveal a third category of traits I conceptualize as *axis traits* as an addition to our understanding of Social Role Theory (Eagly, 1987; Eagly & Wood,

2012). *Axis traits* can be operationalized as "gender-fluid" traits that allow for simultaneous residency within the communal and agentic trait zones with ease. These traits can also be seen as "hinges" that open the door for flow between agentic and communal trait actions at the same time thus allowing flexibility in agency and ability among gendered workers. It could be visualized as a hallway with a door open between them allowing entrance into both rooms (it is visualized in Figure 2 located in the Appendix).

Essentially, as observed among participant responses, *axis traits* can re-balance a person's gender role traits. For example, if a woman cinematographer is being socially affected by possessing more communal traits and being seen as a "less than member" by in-group members (in this case male cinematographers), the performing an *axis trait* allows them to "walk" in to agentic trait territory safely and, thus, be fluidly "accepted" and allowed to continue and be successful in their role as cinematographer more so than if they only performed communally.

Axis traits were rated almost perfectly neutral in the post-interview survey more so than traits that simply "swapped territories." These maintained their neutrality between interview responses *and* follow-up survey responses. Among participant responses, *axis traits* were always discussed in relation to merging an agentic and communal trait's performance simultaneously. The three *axis traits* observed among participant responses were *communication, creativity*, and *leadership.*

Axis Trait I: Communication

Communication was the most-cited axis trait among each of the responses and one that merged several agentic and communal traits. Several participants even noted how successful cinematography work "hinged" on good communication, speaking to the operation of these traits

unknowingly. Like the other axis traits discussed below, *communication* revealed itself through participants' responses as an axis that all the other traits operated around — all touching communication equally therefore bending or altering the access of certain traits to their gender role. With effective communication, women cinematographers could be aggressive, but also gentle and kind. They could be assertive and good listeners. They could be competitive while also being oriented to the well-being of others. They could be artists and technicians.

> Participant 10: "I mean, I think a lot of it is, is understanding how to communicate with people because as a cinematographer, you're being hired for your creativity as well as your technical knowledge."

Calling back to DPs being "the line" instead of above or below it, effective communication creates opportunity to be successful "middle management" according to Participant 10. Participant 2 said effective communication creates fluid flow of information from top-down and bottom-up between crew and producers/directors. Participant 5 said it creates "movement" on set that allows for direction to be taken, vision to be executed and all to know their roles in that movement. Information gathering and sharing is a consistent component of effective communication as an axis trait (Participant 10). It can also be literally learning the "lingo" of the industry to understand what is being said and making sure everyone else can speak the "language." It's creating space for learning symbols and meanings unique to their culture and over-communicating them to ensure everyone is on the same page (Participant 4). Additionally, successful communication includes delegating and communicating needs efficiently to, again, not only ensure smooth movement on set physically, but also between agentic and communal traits.

> Participant 31: "I think communication is probably the number one thing because if you can't communicate what you're trying to do, then it's not going to work. Because you are, at least the way I see it, you're an artist first, but filmmaking is a collaborative art form,

> so if you can't actually communicate what you're trying to do to the people that you need to help you do it, it's not going to happen, or it won't happen the way you want it to."
>
> Participant 37: "I do think it's hard to say because so much of it really is communication, but there's so many kinds of communication and facets to that [in the role]."

Axis Trait II: Leadership

The second *axis trait* is referred to as *leadership* or "the act of leading" based on participant description. Similar to *communication*, *leadership* allows for successful multi-trait performance in both areas of agentic and communal. Participant 2 explained, "I heard once someone said the director is in charge of the actors, but the DP is in charge of the whole set." Participant 4's responses highlighted how a DP actively leading must excel in several agentic and communal traits equally and unbalance causes issues in work. They are a good listener, organized, diplomatic, scientific and more showcasing execution of both agentic and communal traits to list a few. Participant 10 explained they have to be able to "back up what they are saying" noting that performing the *axis trait* of *communication* also is enhanced by *leadership* in that a leader can lead from experience. They possess the required agentic or communal traits for receptive trust and respect from crew members of any gender. One participant highlighted how leadership as an *axis trait* grows a cinematographer's agentic and communal traits in tandem (Participant 7). Participant 13's responses highlight, again, how a good leader earns trust from the crew when these traits are in balance.

Participant 27 said that the *leadership* trait also is the "guardian of the story" and the "spirit" of the set. A DP with a strong *axis trait* in leadership pursues the "best result for the

production of the story" (Participant 27). Participant 10 explains that strong leadership that balances these traits equally is essential to successful cinematography work.

> Participant 10: "It's also a management job because you've got a whole crew that you're leading to create this image because, again, it doesn't exist and it's not something in the real world. You're making it out of nothing."

Axis Trait III: Creativity

The final *axis trait* noted by participants was *creativity*. Recalled from the review of literature, *creativity* has received mixed results in academic research as an agentic and communal trait (i.e. Hora et al., 2021, Conor et al., 2015; Altwater & Carmeli, 2009). Here, *creativity* was discussed as a "hinge" between both sides of the agentic/communal spectrum and a catalyst for successful trait transition. *Creativity* was discussed as something to be performed and something to alter degrees of performance of other traits. For instance, Participants 2, 4, and 7 explained the "creative eye" is something that can't be taught and is something you just have. You can learn creative aspects, but the true creative eye is something uniquely born to someone. Participant 38 noted "you can't teach taste" and that taste making is something that takes practice through the act of creativity seemingly noting creativity as inherent and to be practiced. Participant 31 said creativity is "not binary" and exists on a spectrum, thus furthering the concept of axis traits being "fluid." That spectrum needs to be "malleable and unique" according to Participant 9, for successful cinematography work.

Creativity was also discussed among participants as a method for executing other traits such as problem-solving, independence, risk-taking, and multitasking. While each of these aforementioned traits have their own place in either agentic or communal "territory," through *creativity*, they are able to be performed in tandem. Participant 13 explained that there can be creativity in execution of different things on set. Participant 11 noted that creativity is the ability

to come up with ideas from nothing and a person has a passion for repeatedly coming up with these ideas. This constant use of creativity alludes to passion as well in that a strong creativity axis is driven by passion (Participant 11). Finally, the *creativity axis trait* seems to be able to interact with the other two axis traits of communication in that it must be shared and holds a leadership role as well in that it does not “take away from the story” (Participant 14).

> Participant 23: “I think you're artistic in a way you never realized you were. You're an artist first.”

In conclusion, participants resounded over and over that successful balancing of agentic and communal traits through these perceived *axis traits* was the key to successful cinematography work. RQ1 asked whether based on the responses of women cinematographers, are more agentic or communal qualities required to be successful in cinematography; and based on participant responses it seems to be “hinged” on balance.

Participant 17 said as a cinematographer you are a “translator” between so many different people, things and concepts on a set. “It's a very tricky thing, and I do think there's a lot of aspects that played into this in terms of like, culture and history, kind of like a society issue,” they said about why cinematography is more masculine, agentic trait-coded culturally. Several participants noted how at times you may be more successful in more one-sided traits (either agentic or communal) but should not abandon the pursuit of the “other-side traits” in their opinion. Even though communal traits are seen as “less than” within the industry, through axis trait performance, these traits can be uniquely performed with perceived “successful” traits to truly balance cinematography work. Participant 28 noted how women biologically have the ability to see color better due to an extra component in women’s eyes whereas men can detect movement better biologically. Several participants noted that no cinematographer is going to

approach the work of cinematography the same way, but it is the pursuit of this balance that is key. One equated cinematography work to the concept of “yin and yang”, stating “women have masculine energy and men have feminine energy. These are just universal life forces that are running through everything and everyone, but I kind of think what makes a good cinematographer is someone who has high feminine and high masculine energy [or traits],” said Participant 19 (emphasis added by me).

Participants said cinematography work needs to be “balanced” (Participant 27) and said it is a “multifaceted role” that does not rely on one area for success (Participant 34). Another equated a cinematographer who possesses only one-sided traits on either side can come off like watching a movie with the same actor where they seemingly play the same person (Participant 31). It leaves projects that resound the same over and over. Participant 37 said it’s the concept of “looking right (seemingly alluding to agentic traits where technical mastery resides) and feeling right (seemingly alluding to communal traits where emotion resides).”

> Participant 3: “I think that's kind of the nice thing about cinematography. You do find people who are more technical, or you find people who are a little more artistic, but like I said, it really comes down to being able to communicate what you're trying to say depending on the type of project. So, I think having clarity in your ideas, having some confidence and then I think the ability to work with people is key.”
>
> Participant 14: “I think that it is required to have a balance of both things. You could say whether you're a woman or a man or neither. There's this brain balance of femininity and masculinity that each body ought to take on in order to be the cinematographer.”

Experiences of Women Cinematographers Despite Both Trait Possession

Women cinematographers working in a masculine or agentic trait-coded industry noted three common experiences (addressing RQ2) — restricted capital, job performance questioning, and the temptation to “act more masculine” or lean into the more agentic traits and gender stereotypes of the role.

Restricted Capital

Participants noted how they felt their capital was restricted in three specific areas: advancement, "pigeoning" of opportunities, and gendered technology that restricts work. In terms of advancement, many participants felt they were stuck in a "mid-career ceiling" (Participant 34). This participant had been working for almost 15 years and was classified in the same way but has male counterparts who are given multiple high-level projects in the same amount of time and considered "seasoned." Participant 1 said if you reach a "lower position" such as 2nd AC then you have essentially "made it" - "It's really hard in the camera union to move beyond 2nd AC as a female. That is the bar. That's where we stop, and it's unfortunate." Another echoed they were not given the same opportunities to advance to those "higher-level jobs" for DP work. (Participant 9). Participant 10 explained that typically when you succeed at second AC, even once, you are typically giving a "push up" to the next position. She observes it happening for her male counterparts, but not for her female counterparts stuck at 2nd AC.

These lower positions typically result in less pay as well. Participant 31 explains that there is a bottoming out of women cinematographers in the industry because women are "more prone to take the pay offered" than their male counterparts. Participant 26 found that several women counterparts made only 70% pay, if that, of their comparative male counterparts. Participant 13 recalled a project where the crew call was for minority crew members such as persons of color, queer people, and women, but the project only offered half-day pay rates for a full day's work. Participant 38 pointed to a Netflix documentary that discusses these issues surrounding advancement for women cinematographers in the industry, but even that documentary was shot by a male cinematographer.

Participant 10 also explained that they felt that producers have a hard time seeing that their skills would be transferrable to higher-level projects. They explained the multiple hours,

crews, and projects effectively add up to the same amount of work as a "feature" or some higher budget production. Not seeing these skills as transferrable limits the genres and types of opportunities they get to add to their portfolio. "The hard part is getting the job," said Participant 24 about getting opportunities to build a diverse portfolio. Participants regularly quoted the concept of "to get experience, you need experience" in the job market. Participant 14 wished it was "about hiring the best person for the job," but shared disheartenment that women are not even on the list. Ironically, Participant 36 shared a story about how she trained a male counterpart on the basics of how to exposure a proper shot and that counterpart was given a higher budget project as a DP the next time over her. "As much as we think it's an art form, it is [a business]," said Participant 1. Participant 28 noted how even some ASC-credited women are still not given access to higher-level budgets within the Society without someone vouching for them, whereas male credits are given the roles without question. Two participants discussed sexual harassment and unwanted advancements that they refused and were then punished for by not being called back for a job, passed over, or needed to end work due to the incidents. I also experienced these sort of advances.

Culturally, participants discussed how women cinematographers are not represented at the higher "academy level" which feeds into this "gigantic echo chamber" limiting women cinematographers' advancement (Participant 8 and 28). Participant 24 said she could count the number of truly academy level "successful" DPs on one hand. Participant 14 shared a memory most of us women cinematographers remember — *THE* ASC photo.

> Participant 14: "The ASC puts out an image of everyone who was awarded, and it was all men, all white. There was not one woman. On social media that got blasted… it's abundantly clear what the problem is — a lack of opportunity apparently."

In 2023, the ASC shared a photo of their 38th Annual Award Winners who consisted of 100% white, male nominees. Receiving extreme backlash online, the Society deleted the photo and instead posted a photo of all of the female attendees at the awards in a group photo for International Women's Day. The newly posted photo also received major backlash as well. Additionally, when raising awareness of these issues, many women cinematographers are told "they are lucky to be a woman in this day and age" (Participant 1). That women are "taking the jobs" of their white, male counterparts explained by Participant 8.

On the other hand, women are also being tokenized as hires for specifically "women's genres" and "women's stories" and siloed to lower budget areas of the industry such as documentary according to participants. Women's stories typically have less budgets, are seen as "less prestigious," and not seen as serious work for advancement, but instead are "diversity-pick jobs." Women cinematographers are typically passed over for feature narratives, action genre films, war films, and other more "masculine topics." One cinematographer was hired because they needed "the feminine look" — an abstract concept that even they could not define (Participant 36). Another noted that they were hired for several trauma-centered documentaries which was great for such an important topic, but felt the work was seen as "less than" more "serious" work (Participant 33). Participant 19 was hired on projects that needed "extra sensitivity" as well, but again, were seen as less-than opportunities industry-wise as they were women-focused. Discussing the struggle with knowing sometimes women *are* more capable of telling these stories (most likely due to their communal traits like interpersonal sensitivity), Participant 5 struggled with "playing that card" to get roles. "I'm not taking advantage of it, but I definitely know it's a card… how dare I not play it, you know?" said Participant 5. Participant 31

said that although on the surface these topics seem perfect for women cinematographers, “it doesn’t have anything to do with empowering women. It is lower budget and we need a girl.”

> Participant 14: “Which is insane because it's a human story — a women’s story. It's hilarious when people say that because women are half of this earth, you know? It's a human story.”

Women cinematographers of color noted how they were only reached out to by agents due to being specifically a “double minority check” (Participant 12 and 23). Participant 23 said that although the industry is touting more inclusive hiring practices, it’s “all talk and no follow through,” but sees the next generation trending toward more inclusivity as they rise through the ranks. Participant 19 attended a local union event for their area and was discouraged by the lack of goals for increasing diversity, equity, inclusion, and belonging among both women and people of color.

> Participant 8: “People are usually so focused on what's happening in front of the camera. And it's like, man, look at all this representation that Hollywood is trying to push out now, but they're forgetting the stuff that's happening behind the camera… nobody is really looking at the crews.”

While women telling women’s stories is great, participants largely noted that its women’s representation in non-women’s stories that showcases the issue in restricted capital and could be a variable in misrepresentation on-screen in “higher-level” stories. Additionally, with women’s stories being seen as “less than” opportunities, the de-valuing of women and minority presence on and off screen seemingly perpetuates.

> Participant 34: “There's, you know, like a woman behind the camera is almost even more insidious in that it’s when you're hired, you're hired to be there to *look* like a woman behind the camera. Because those moments is when they're recognizing that you can do the job they are fine with.” [emphasis added mine]

Participants also explained that advancement capital was hindered in that the tools of the job were not made for them, or they were not given access to tools needed for success due to

gendering of even their occupational technologies. Several participants explained their dislike of the “women’s vests” made by ErgoRig and Easyrig, two leading companies that make camera body harnesses. Both harnesses originally had bars that went across the chest for back support when mounting a camera to the vest. As women explained to companies that the physical limitations this caused on their chest as well as the length from chest to hip — the two companies released “women’s versions” in the past three years. The ErgoRig featured in Illustration 1 can be seen now having a vertical bar up the center of the chest instead of horizontal which participants say is not much better (located in the Appendix). This new “women’s” bar sits in the middle of the breasts and digs in to the inner-side tissue of the breast and lower-collarbone. For some smaller chested women, this bar could be considered more comfortable, but on the whole women report continued discomfort with the vest.

Then the Easyrig “Flex” vest can be equated to a halter, v-neck bikini top that is more comfortable, but still not great support for women cinematographers. The soft v-neck design offers some shoulder and back support, but the “flex” nature that makes it more comfortable for the chest does not alleviate weight as well in other places (i.e. shoulders, back, hips, etc.) The Easyrig vest can be seen in Illustration 2 (located in the Appendix). I shared in my participants’ frustrations with the vests and commented how all that both vests were to be pink to truly be considered “for women” in the industry. One woman explained how she needed a safety harness on set once and was told repeatedly to “wear a harness that fit them for safety.” When she inquired about a safety hardness for women, the safety trainer said they never had to buy one and did not have one on set. She was then instructed to wear a male harness after being seemingly “scolded” to not wear a vest not made for her body (Participant 15). Participants expressed

frustration that the male-first mentality seeped all the way down to the build of our trade technologies which hindered their ability to do their job safely.

Participants also expressed dislike for industry trade events such as NAB Show due to the “bro culture” that penetrates them (Participant 4). Several participants shared how they hated the performative “tech talk” that ensues where they are even questioned and have to prove their knowledge. I expressed my own frustration with these events being questioned as a woman and still being seen as “less capable” despite camera and industry technologies trending smaller and lighter in design. Participants stated over and over that male cinematographers tend to hire “people that look like them” and women cinematographers are implementing this strategy for themselves. “Men do that for men. Women can do it for women,” said Participant 10. Participant 25 opted to start their own production company to “create access to stories” they would not normally have the opportunity to. Several other participants discussed “skipping” the hierarchy and just starting off automatically at the top of the line. While they explained this does tend to promote more “free labor,” it’s a sacrifice to gaining real opportunities in the future.

Participant 23 explained they believe we are “at the tail end of the male gatekeepers” of the industry. Participant 37 hopes that women cinematographers will be given access in the near future to projects with “higher stakes, budget, and power.” With organizations and associations like Women in Media, Inc. along with others targeting industry norms to bring about more inclusive hiring practices and work environments, Participant 17 said “the fight won’t end tomorrow,” but they are optimistic for change.

Performance Questioned

Despite both agentic and communal traits being present in cinematography work, women cinematographers are finding that their technological knowledge, an agentic trait, is most

questioned while also being emphasized in the role. This performance questioning comes from both male crew members, upper crew management, and industry technology vendors primarily.

> Participant 8: “I would say coming into the film industry, I don't think I've ever been more aware of my race or my gender more than ever before in my entire life. At the same time, the thing that I am wanting is I want people to recognize me as a female cinematographer, but I don't want any connotations associated with that.”

Women cinematographers report frequently being asked if they were hair and makeup on set the moment they stepped away from the camera (Participant 34). Participant 2 recounted frequent times where male crew members try to overstep them on set. Participant 42 and I have experienced cameras being physically taken out of our hands so we could “be shown” how to operate them.

> Participant 38: “You don't even know how to respond. It's almost like you got the wind sucked out of you, and it's not only it's happened, you're like, how do I respond to this? Your head is like, how do I respond to this? Nobody teaches you in film school how to react to that because you're being taught by men who've never had it happen to them.”

Male cinematographer’s performance is continually rewarded it seems and such blatant actions are something that seems out of their experience. From their entrance to the world of “film,” being less than capable or less than sufficient seems as foreign a concept as a woman in film itself. Participant 9 recounted a time that her male co-worker kept going to a less-experienced male editor for post-production questions. Participant 33 was told upon being hired for a job that “they couldn’t tell she was a woman from her reel” online. Participant 17 was asked before beginning film school if they “could hold a camera.” Participant 1 was on set and a male camera operator said she could not work the focus wheel that day because “women can’t pull focus.” After asserting a technical decision over a male crew member, Participant 7 was called a derogatory slur for being “too much” and “rude.”

In the wedding filmmaking space, Participant 30 said they could divide their workday in half in that the first half of the day it's beneficial to be a woman in that you have access to spaces with brides much easier. By the end of the day, when working with DJs and audio technicians, then the technical questioning comes in to play from fellow vendors and guests. Participant 11, along with other participants, recalled countless times a man on their set was asked questions regarding the shoot while they were standing right next to them. This person has to correct those asking, noting that the woman beside them was actually their boss to which almost everyone was surprised.

Participant 10 was on a set where they needed to move from a lower budget camera to a more higher quality Alexa Mini build based on what the director and producer wanted to pivot to for the story. Once she had the new Alexa Mini rig on her shoulder, a producer said, "now you look like a DP!" Participant 10 wondered what they looked like before this comment and said, "it's hard to escape even with the best of intentions, it's hard to escape being seen partly for your gender identity and not just as someone doing the job."

> Participant 38: "It's sort of exhausting to be constantly reminded of it. You're like I just want to be a person [doing my job]."

Participant 13 expressed frustration with hiring practices that are aimed "to increase women representation" among DPs and crew. They explained that at times companies will hire inexperienced younger filmmakers who may not possess the skills going in, then when they are unsuccessful, will use them as justification for not hiring more women. Industry technology vendors also carry a seemingly gendered view of women cinematographers in their interactions with participants. Participant 36 recalled being patronized at a trade show by vendors treating her as if she did not know anything about the gear they were selling on site. "Why would I be here if I was a person who didn't know anything about [this stuff]?" they said. Participant 28 expressed

wanting to be seen as a cinematographer first and that these bad company interactions really just hurt their business in the long run, not her career. Participants explained that they felt that they were constantly afraid to make mistakes, they needed to know how to do every little thing and control their own nerves in order to not manifest these experiences into existence for themselves.

Several cinematographers also spoke to using the axis trait of communication to make their technical knowledge "more palatable" for male counterpart interactions. Participant 25 equated it to "putting on a show to get respect" in regard to technical knowledge.

> Participant 25: "[It] becomes like a whole draining process, because it's like you leave these [interactions] exposed feeling so exhausted because you're putting so much effort into putting yourself out there to be respected in a professional way."

Participant 5's strategy is using indicators and terminologies that signal both mastery and almost a connoisseurship or high society signaling. Women cinematographers hate this so-called "warm-up period" and said the standards for true knowledge are actually a low bar in terms of making an impression that earns any capital. These interactions translate to the online space as well. Participant 26 and I discussed mixed-gender versus all-female Facebook groups for discussing cinematography work. We both disdained posting and usually refrained from mixed-gender groups due to the backlash and hostility received on posts.

> Participant 31: "You've hired me to do a creative job and creativity doesn't exist without questions. Like some of that is just pure sexism because there are just those men who are like, 'I'm not going to listen to some, you know, woman.'"

Additionally, online when searching for resources for learning technology or tutorials for work, there are very few women posting due to harassment about capability, appearance, and more. Participant 6 has received brand deals to promote filmmaking gear and feels like most people see her as a "girl blogger" instead of a working cinematographer partnering with brands.

Participant 9 and I discussed starting YouTube channels for tutorials that showcase more women in the field, but each discussed fear of the online retaliation that would inevitably occur.

Despite these interactions, many participants recounted supportive brands that do recognize women cinematographers' contributions to the industry. Two participants talked about partnerships with inclusive rental houses and one shared with me about an all-female rental house in Los Angeles. Culturally, as women and girls are discouraged from pursuing more technical, "scientific" interests, these women cinematographers say they make sure to "check their work at all times," clearly articulate their knowledge, and deeply research the changing industry technologies to stay ahead. While the technology is not made for them, by them, or with them in mind as users, women cinematographers are not incapable of excelling technically in the industry.

"Acting More Masculine" or Overly Performing Agentic Traits

The final common experience can be explained as participants feeling the need at some point in their career to "act more masculine" or overly perform more agentic traits to fit into the industry culture. Almost every participant talked about how big an issue dress (or clothing) was. From shirts, pants, shoes, hair, makeup, to everything in between, participants commonly discussed the need to dress more masculine to been seen as professional on set. Even in the wedding space, Participant 26 stated how professionalism "is defined by a man's body" in terms of fashion. Participant 34 said she felt uncomfortable and awkward initially on set and matched what her male counterparts wore: khakis, black t-shirts, polo shirts, and sneakers. They noted it needed to be "not too loud" and "not too feminine." Participant 25 explained it as this understood "certain way to dress" on set that very much is a professionalism performance aspect.

> Participant 25: "It's like constructed in our brains, but it's little things like that affect how men will treat you and give you a certain amount of respect on set. My hair's always done a certain way and I just have always have to be more, you know, masculine presenting

> just to make sure that I can still kind of fit in, but also like delegate in a way where people will still gain respect and that's something I'm still kind of working on deconstructing."

Besides dress, participants also noted that "speaking their language" was a common theme explaining it as "bro-ing" out on set. Usually this manifested as discussing sports or other stereotypical topics. Many women cinematographers noted how this caused them to lean in to stereotypes about men which they did not like but fitting into the general "male" dynamic on set "makes it easier" for their workday (Participant 1). Participant 14 classified "bro-talk" as cut, dry, and aggressive. They also noted that to show emotion on set was immediately a blow to respect and professionalism. Participant 19 called her strategy the "mother or brother method." Depending on who they are talking to, they tend to lean in to being more motherly or more masculine in their interactions on set. They said, for example, the "mother" role is more nurturing, checking in on what they need, etc. Whereas the "brother" role was more saying things like "great work man!" and other gendered mannerisms.

Participant 27 was once told that the way they operated the dolly was "too sexy" and was dismissed from the set due to the director being "distracted" which led them to consistently dress down and grow quieter on set to not attract attention. Although they do feel this pressure to perform a certain masculinity on set, many participants actively fight against it who are further in their career. Participant 36 regularly wears bright red lipstick to set because it is the "utmost feminine symbol" in their opinion.

> Participant 36: "I don't want to be like masculinized and feel that I have to masculinize myself to be respected."

Other participants note how now they wear makeup, necklaces, accessories, loud colors, and any other feminine fashion symbols they desire to set. They "don't want to hide themselves" (Participant 24) and want to "be themselves" (Participant 16).

> Participant 8: “I act as a woman because that's what I am, and that's what I'm comfortable being. I understand the pressure that you feel. but I think, you know, there is a lot of power in being [a woman]. There's nothing weak about this identity.”

Meaning-Making and Belonging in Their Masculine-Coded Occupational Role

RQs 3 and 4 address how women cinematographers make meaning and find belonging within their masculine-coded occupational role. With making meaning, answers fell within two main areas: telling stories and making a difference. How is that defined by participants?

Meaning-Making by Women Cinematographers

Several participants defined that how they “make meaning” within their work as cinematographers is by “making magic” in their films (Participants 6, 10, 30). “Magic” to them is this concept of Zen on set where everything comes together in just the right way, collaboration is occurring, and you’ve made something from nothing. Almost all participants said there is nothing else they’d rather do. Others stated that “meaning” is made by the response to their art when it is shown, someone responds to it, or they get to physically see people enjoy their work (Participants 3 and 31). “[It’s] human magic that we create,” said Participant 10. Another said it’s a “diverse art form” that brings together so many people to create it. It can’t be done alone (Participant 17). Participant 36 said it’s meaning-making for them in that they get to bring emotional concepts to the visual realm. It’s the “performance of life” and “the love of life” on camera where you can visually see representations of psychological constructs such as “loneliness" or “love” (Participant 36).

Other participants noted how their meaning making occurs through being a “recorder of history” and that they get to “leave history” for future generations to view (Participant 23). It’s a “privileged” position that cinematographers operate within in that their stories impact others, help bring meaning to people, are worth-telling, matter, and able to change minds (Participants 2, 9, 14, 23, 24, 27 and 34).

> Participant 14: “This person [made this film] in order to show me this… to hinge my mind, to change my perspective on something. I think that's a beautiful way to communicate.”

Others say it’s meaning making in that they get to leave a piece of themselves within their work (Participants 7, 35). Participant 35 equated her work to this beautiful tomato she grew with her own ability — this art they’ve carefully “farmed.” Speaking to the balance of traits needed for success, Participant 28 said, “it's a combination of using your technical and scientific skills as well as being creative. Like, I really love that I can use the left and right side of my brain.”

Finally, several participants said their meaning making coalesced in opportunities to “change the room” of cinematography so to speak. They can be in the room where decisions are made, promote more diversity on set, be of good service to others, empower others, and create opportunities for the future and very well change an entire industry with them (Participants 5, 8, 10, 11, and 22). Participant 33 reminded that cinematography, as a trade, is important cultural work that creates the literal very images retained within our society. “A friend of mine used to use the phrase ‘media as medicine,’ and I think that there's a lot of healing to be done on an image level,” said Participant 19. One cinematographer echoed this noting how we as creators hold great power in the ability to shift perspectives and can ideally make some of the “first images of their kind” that bring new representations and cultural memories to reality (Participant 25). “There’s just a lot of responsibility in this role,” said Participant 16. The art cinematographers create can make people happy, allow others to learn new things, unearth truths buried, freeze memories in time, and much more (Participants 12, 22, and 39). As powerful as our representations are on screen, participants remind that they were indeed crafted, and our artisans must always understand the great role they play.

> Participant 39: "I think [cinematography] is powerful because every time you're [the DP] the stories are placed in your hands. You're in control of their lives in a way and how it's going to go."

> Participant 32: "We know that there's great power in who's behind the camera. There is a very good importance in that and we need to strive for that and strive for more diversity behind the camera and that bring more diverse stories on screen."

In the words of Participant 36, if we as cinematographers cannot understand of the great role we play in crafting cultural memory and symbols, "then who will?"

Creating Belonging

Besides discussing how meaning making for them manifested in telling stories, making a difference, and impact people's lives — they also almost unanimously stated they would not do anything else than work in this industry despite the negative experiences and struggles. Related to feeling like they belong in the industry, several participants highlighted how they have built a supportive, non-judgmental community for themselves of other women DPs. Additionally, having supportive male colleagues categorized as "allies' is also a noted element. Having male cinematographers that build up women cinematographers and see them as *cinematographers* first, rather than women, creates a great sense of belonging. Participants said this community allowed them to ask questions without being looked down on or seen as less professional. Participant 8 called it a space for "knowledge building' among like-minded individuals. Another said it's having people on the "same journey, from the same background" to talk with and garner advice (Participant 3). One recalled how this inclusive, supportive comradery among women was not always there in the industry (Participant 33). They explained that in earlier decades, women almost saw each other as placeholders. You could have literally only one woman in the crew, and you were clawing against each other to be that one woman.

Now participants say the industry is "a place for everyone" and encourages everyone to share their "different and diverse stories and perspectives." Participant 14 said at an awards

dinner they were interacting with other women cinematographers very warmly and felt an atmosphere of competition among the male attendees. She said the women cinematographers had this "inherent trust" between each other and wondered if her male counterparts had ever experienced that. She hoped their interactions would somehow "spread the culture" around in a positive way. Inclusive hiring among women cinematographers is a front and center focus when they are given a "voice in the room" according to Participant 5.

> Participant 8: "I have my moments of imposter syndrome, where I look around the room and I don't really see anyone in there that looks like me besides myself, that doesn't mean that I'm in the wrong room."

Participant 4 explained women are now "gatekeepers" in some sense and are fostering a more inclusive set life. "You won't escape [these things] leaving the film industry, but maybe it's more obvious [in our industry]," said Participant 10. Women cinematographers said there are many female DP collectives, associations, and organizations making effective change to alter the gender makeup of the industry. This was explained as not an overcorrection to block white, male cinematographers, but to spread opportunities around more equitably.

Participant 2 described their community as women who vouch for her, believe in her, and make her feel like she has a place in the industry. "Just showing up, taking up space. I'm such a big, advocate for just taking up space," said Participant 25 about how to belong in the industry. They explained if you are doing the work, then you deserve to be here whether others think so or not. "I feel like I belong because no one else is doing it quite like me," said Participant 30 and Participant 23 stated, "I've done good work. I'm not done yet." Several participants noted how before social media it felt like you were operating in this industry vacuum where you could not actually see other women cinematographers, but now with the help of the Internet these connections for belonging are easier and easier to make.

Participant 8: “It's like a great sense of community where you look around and you're like, finally I see people that look like me doing what I'm doing.”

Participant 9: “Something that I have felt that has caused me to think I belong here is when I've worked with other cinematographers, and they were picked for the hire over me... and they're doing things that I would have done... and there's things that I would have done better and it just makes me think that I do belong here and one day I will be picked.”

CHAPTER 4 – DISCUSSION OF RESULTS AND CONCLUSION

Success within the film industry at any level is characterized by the same uncertain conditions as many other creative industries as discussed in the review of literature. Additionally, traits successful to cinematography's creative labor have traditionally been deemed as very "masculine" or agentic-heavy traits. Based on participant responses, the same cultural barriers that limit most creative workers are present with women cinematographers as well — network access, work resources, and representational issues (Bruni et al. 2004; Henry; 2000) due to agentic gendering of the role of cinematographer. Echoing previous scholars, the agentic gendering of cinematography work has perpetuated the consistent pattern of women's work being seen as less than (Duffy, 2016; McRobbie, 2002). Women cinematographers reported the agentic traits of being very networked, competitive and more as key factors in being able to advance and "move" up, out, or whatever direction is "successful" within our industry. As mentioned in the review of literature, the inability to grow your network not only limits your opportunities for work, but also projects an image of *not being able to get work* to others. Within RQ1, women cinematographers noted that while they believed that agentic and communal traits were successful for cinematography work, they recounted how the *agentic* traits are the ones that seemingly "get you somewhere" in the industry. While the creative industries are characterized by high risk and the willingness of mobility (McRobbie, 2002) among other characteristics, we can see based on participant responses that it is not their willingness preventing their advancement rather gendered perceptions of who can even succeed in the role.

Although gendered as a masculine role, my findings confirmed my own experience that successful cinematography work balances both agentic and communal traits, but at times there can be a perceived imbalance due to “othered” gendering. Whether it is in performance of the role or in the technologies used to perform the role, it appears that women cinematographers are not only “Othered”, but also “Absents” from the minds of those “inside” the industry as illustrated by the design of something seemingly as small as Steadycam vests. This doubt and low expectation of women cinematographers’ abilities, seeing only their communal traits, and being seen as unable to perform agentic traits effectively leads to doubting in themselves of their own ability as well.

To counteract this “Othered” gendering, seen here women cinematographers enact the performance of what I conceptualized as *axis traits.* As stated within the findings, *axis traits* are “hingeable” traits that allow for movement in and out of the agentic and communal trait zones effortlessly within the cinematographer work role specifically. In practice, cinematographers illustrated this in several ways through each of the identified *axis traits: communication, creativity, and leadership.* As highlighted by participants, cinematography work requires a balance of both agentic and communal traits for true success and advancement; and women cinematographers are effectively using these *axis traits* to allow themselves fluid movement amidst a tumultuous industry. These axis traits promote balance and fluidity in participants’ responses surrounding how they make meaning and belonging in their industry as well.

On a psychological and even sociological level, *axis traits* seem to be a strategy for bringing balance to these gendered divisions of labor and hierarchy reflected across specifically the cinematography subindustries. Women cinematographers are able to regain lost agency and even dubbed themselves as a new wave of “gatekeepers.” *Axis traits* help make work boundaries

created by gender stereotypes and social roles more permeable and could be a way to break down barriers against "othered" persons in non-traditional work roles. As stated in my expansion of theoretical frameworks and contributions to the field, performance of *axis traits* allows women cinematographers to engage in similar deemed "successful" behaviors to complete their jobs; and gender roles are less salient and difference effects are perceived to be weaker based on participant responses.

As noted in Eagly's (1987/2012) Social Role Theory, gender behaviors have causal impact on occupations, and *axis traits* could be a new variable for exploration on how it affects their impact. Echoing earlier references to Eagly et al.'s (2000) findings, even small effects such *communication, leadership, and creativity* as subtle subversions within cinematography work can have consequential, large impacts if repeatedly enacted over time. Agentic and communal traits impact both vertical and horizontal gender segregation and without performance of the *axis traits*, these divisions could remain unaffected. Through performance of the *axis traits* within the role of cinematography, there was movement observed based on participant responses both vertically and horizontally.

Additionally, with more women cinematographers gaining increased agency, this growing wave of cultural creators should be tested to see their effect on the "male gaze" in film and media (Mulvey, 1975). One participant said, "If we can tell this many stories at the hands of white men solely, imagine what we can do when we widen the lens." Women cinematographers are seemingly throwing off their "historical hand-me-downs" and working to regain the industry they started by shifting and attempting to "de-gender" the role of cinematographer. This work showcases how women cinematographers are a great case for further exploration of them as both historical actors and sites of struggle within media effects and communication research.

What could seem unconnected at surface level, RQ2's exploration of women cinematographers' experiences within a masculine (agentic)-coded industry actually illustrates the *axis traits* in practice as well. *Axis traits* seem to counteract what SRT described as vertical and horizontal sex segregation within occupational roles due to gender social roles (Cortes & Pan, 2018; Eagly et al., 2020; Levanon & Grusky, 2016). When women cinematographer's capital was restricted in some way, typically they used one of the three *axis traits* to effectively "hinge" themselves to a place of safety ultimately fluidly moving between agentic and communal zones to a more neutral perceived zone to others. For instance, when female cinematographers felt restricted in advancement opportunities due to being seen as too far "leaned" on the communal traits, several female cinematographers bypassed the hierarchies of set life by using the *leadership* trait and starting their own production company or opportunities (an agentic trait action). This also, due to them stepping in to their own opportunities and performing *leadership*, provided opportunities to new levels of power which is also posited to be restricted within SRT (Cortes & Pan, 2018; Eagly et al., 2020; Levanon & Grusky, 2016).

Additionally, when their agentic technical knowledge was questioned and their perceived gender balance was shifting communally, they leaned into the *communication axis trait* to send palpable language signals to fluidly perform their traits within the agentic territory thus "balancing" them. Finally, when women cinematographers felt pressured to perform more masculine, they leaned into the *axis trait* of *creativity* to communally express themselves through fashion thus, again, re-balancing their work roles and perceivably "de-gendering" their role.

Counterintuitive to scholarly literature, leadership is usually considered a more agentic trait across studies (Eagly & Karau, 2002; Himes, 2017; Karau & Eagly, 1999). The research surrounding creativity as a more agentic or communal trait is also mixed depending on

situations, so creativity specifically as an *axis trait* is a place for further study to see if it holds in other creative roles. Additionally, all three axis traits would be interesting to examine to see if the traits considered as "axis" traits change from work role to work role; or are their resounding *axis traits* that hold despite roles, work situations, and possibly even feminine-coded occupations where men work.

As mentioned, and echoed by participants, examining the crews behind the images made in one of our most powerful cultural industries is vitally important due to the "culture making" and "culture taking" actions that film undergoes. Our work as cinematographers both takes from culture and infuses it within our work, but also has the ability to effectively reshape culture as well. Omidi et al. (2022) reminded us that film plays a vital role in our collective memories, belief systems, traditions, and more — which, according to Mulvey (1975), are led by ultimately "male gazes" on the whole. While participants are mostly optimistic for change and see gendered norms changing for the better, they want attention to grow to see the bottomed-out separation of opportunity and representation among women cinematographers. The work of Women in Media, Inc. and other organizations are working toward active, focused change which these cinematographers are joined in. Many participants thanked the many women cinematographers that came before them and paved the way for their "space in the room." Small as it may be, it's a space.

One women cinematographer said in addition to the work they are doing, it's going to take true allyship from the men of the industry. "[It will take] men who are in the industry in positions of power to use those powers in meaningful, inclusive ways," said Participant 5. Many participants quoted Reed Morano saying she hopes that one day our industry gets to a point where being women or men as cinematographer does not matter — that we are *all*

cinematographers regardless. “We're not little fragile angels. Let us get out there and do our thing,” said Participant 23. Participants said (without knowing playing off the agentic and communal coding) it’s the communal power of representation that is most powerful (Participant 36) and the reality that there are little girls out there seeing women cinematographers succeed, even on small levels, that inspires them to pursue their dreams (Participant 16). Creating these new visual symbols and cultural markers behind the camera, I believe, could be a key to changing gendered representations in front of the camera. Not all women are “champions of change” and fall back on their own gendered biases, so these new creations are not full-proof, but could be a start. While our cameras may be mirrorless by design, our work serve as mirrors still. Through the casting off these “historical hand-me-downs” of who can create and what they look like — we open the future up to a diverse prism of representation that allows for all stories to be heard and seen both on and off screen. While representational numbers shift slowly, it will take intentional experiential shifts to occur with numerical representation to truly make a difference in bettering our industry.

Scholars interested in future directions for work regarding these findings could consider exploring, as mentioned, whether these axis traits hold despite work roles, situations, and other gendered occupations. Additionally, do the very definition of what traits are considered “axis traits” change from occupational role to occupational role? Also, including other minority gender perspectives and international perspectives would be interesting to explore within this concept of *axis traits* as well. Finally, it would be interesting to examine both men *and* women perspectives for successful cinematography work for a comparative analysis of agentic, communal, and axis traits.

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APPENDIX I: INTERVIEW PROTOCOL

Hi there! You are receiving this document because you requested the interview questions ahead of time for review! Some of these questions may be worded strangely and if so, I'll clarify during our interview so do not worry if you are not sure what I'm specifically asking for. Also, there are no wrong answers! These are solely me asking about your experiences working as a woman in cinematography.

As a woman in cinematography myself, I hope to create a safe, warm space for you to feel open to discuss any challenges you may have experienced, but also be an encouragement for how successful and amazing you are! I look forward to speaking with you and as always, any questions, please let me know!

Introduction:

- Introduce myself and restate purpose of study.
- Did you complete the pre-questionnaire survey that includes the consent form? If not, let's complete that now if you are still interested in participating.
- Are you still okay with our conversation being recorded? Explain transcription and purpose.

BEGINNING: Re-intro purpose of study – speaking to highlighting experiences of women cinematographers and filmmakers within the wider filmmaking industry.

Interview Protocol:

1. We can begin by you just telling us a little about yourself, who you are, what you do, etc.
2. So can you describe for me what a cinematographer does? Obviously, I know, but for someone who has no idea?
3. Not thinking of yourself specifically, what qualities would you say makes a good cinematographer as a whole? (RQ2)
4. What makes YOU specifically a good cinematographer? (RQ2)

5. What training or skills would you say are required to be a cinematographer? (RQ4)

6. What are skills or training that you would say aren't required to be a cinematographer, but you find are really helpful? (RQ4)

7. How does one gain the technical prowess to be involved in our industry? (RQ3)

8. If applicable, how do you have to keep your body physically in shape to be a cinematographer? (RQ3)

"Now let's talk about advancement and defining success in the industry…"

9. Who sets the practices and processes for cinematography? Who sets the standard? (RQ3)

10. Who determines what makes a successful cinematographer? (RQ3)

11. How do you advance in the industry? (RQ2)

12. What traits make you successful at advancing through the industry do you feel? (RQ5)

13. Based on your perception, do you feel there are adequate opportunities for advancement in the industry specifically for women? (RQ5)

"Now let's discuss a few questions about you specifically…"

14. How do you craft your professional identity as a cinematographer (generally and you)? (RQ6)

15. How do you craft your personal identity as a cinematographer (you)? (RQ6)

16. Is gender a big or small part of your identity as a cinematographer? (RQ7)
    - How do you feel your gender affects your identity as a cinematographer? (RQ7)
    - How do you feel your gender affects your skills as a cinematographer? (RQ7)
    - How do you feel your gender affects your performance as a cinematographer? (RQ7)

17. Are there moments or instances you can recall that made you question your identity as a cinematographer that you can share? (RQ8)
    - Asked differently, in what ways have you experienced any identity conflicts within your work? (RQ8)

18. Are there ways that you feel your skills, attitudes or performance are perceived differently as a woman in your work? (RQ4)

"Now, we are moving to some questions about our field and its place in culture more broadly…"

19. When you hear the word "cameraman" what do you picture mentally? (RQ2)

20. Women are typically not expected behind the camera, why do you think that is? (RQ2)

21. How does it make you feel if I told you that cinematography was started at the hands of a woman?

22. Women are typically associated into careers "appropriate" for their gender social role, how do you feel about that as a woman in a non-traditional career such as cinematography? (RQ2)

23. Thinking of our industry and from your perception, how do you feel gender associations have shifted in regard to our industry? (RQ2)

    - In your experience, what are some experiences where you felt any perceived backlash breaking any "norms" within the industry? (RQ2)

    - In your experience, what are any challenges or microaggressions within the cinematography industry that you or others have experienced? (RQ2)

"Now I'm going to go back to our discussion about gear and technology within our industry with a few questions…"

24. There seems to be an "all-men" mentality surrounding who can be a cinematographer or handle video equipment. Can you share any thoughts on that statement? (RQ2)

25. In your opinion, is our culture surrounding gear gendered? (RQ2)

26. In what ways have you experienced moments of "acting more masculine" to fit in to the industry that you can share?

27. Would you say there are definitive "women's spaces" in cinematography? Either work or genres or some other area? (RQ2)

"There are only four questions left in our interview…"

28. What motivates you as a cinematographer?

29. How do you make meaning for yourself as a cinematographer? (i.e. what makes this job significant or worth something to you?)

    - How do you make meaning for yourself as a woman cinematographer?

30. In what ways do you feel like you belong in the industry?

31. Are there any other thoughts or experiences you'd like to share that I did not ask about?

KALEY: Thank them for their time. Explain writing process and reiterate compensation procedures. Restate anonymity.

END PROTOCOL

APPENDIX II: CODEBOOK

RQ1: Based on the responses of women cinematographers, what role do agentic and communal qualities play for 'successful' cinematography work?

Agentic Qualities: Qualities or traits participants describe as more masculine leaning. Traits considered typical of men or male-identifying individuals. Characteristics are ascribed more strongly to males (Hines, 2017).		
Code	**Definition**	**Work Cited**
Aggressive	"Determined to win or succeed and using forceful action to do this."	(Cambridge Dictionary, 2024; Himes, 2017; Eagly & Karau, 2002; Karau & Eagly, 1999)
Analytical	Defined by participants as very logical and rational in their thinking process.	(Martin, 2024)
Assertion/Control	Assertion: "Individuals who are high in assertiveness don't shy away from defending their points of view or goals, or from trying to influence others to see their side." Control: "The fact or power of directing and regulating the actions of people or things; direction, management."	(Psychology Today, 2024; Himes, 2017; Eagly & Karau, 2002; Karau & Eagly, 1999; Eagly, Wood, & Schmidt, 2004) (Oxford Dictionary, 2015; Himes, 2017; Eagly & Karau, 2002; Karau & Eagly, 1999; Eagly, Wood, & Schmidt, 2004)
Competitive/Networked	"Competitiveness as a personality trait is commonly	(Zhang, Andersson, & Wang, 2021; Veeleen, 2021; Eagly &

	viewed as having three dimensions – competing to win (CW; to dominate and suppress others unscrupulously), competing to surpass (CS; to surpass or excel above others), and competing to develop (CD; to focus on personal development).” Networked is defined by participants as having many industry connections or the ability to make those connections.	Karau, 2002; Karau & Eagly, 1999) (Martin, 2024)
Confidence/Self-Efficacy	“Confidence is a belief in oneself, the conviction that one has the ability to meet life's challenges and to succeed—and the willingness to act accordingly. Being confident requires a realistic sense of one’s capabilities and feeling secure in that knowledge.” “Self-efficacy refers to an individual's belief in his or her capacity to execute behaviors necessary to produce specific performance attainments. Self-efficacy reflects confidence in the ability to exert control over one's own motivation,	(Psychology Today, 2024; Himes, 2017; Eagly & Karau, 2002; Karau & Eagly, 1999; Eagly, Wood, & Schmidt, 2004) (Bandura, 1977, 1986, 1997; Himes, 2017; Eagly & Karau, 2002; Karau & Eagly, 1999; Eagly, Wood, & Schmidt, 2004)

	behavior, and social environment.”	
Courageous/Risk Taking	“A person who is brave, fearless, and willing to take risks.”	(Proudfoot, 2017; ProWritingAid, 2023)
Dominant/Dominate	“A dominant personality involves traits like proactivity, assertiveness, and often, extroversion. Aggression and manipulation are also possible.”	(Himes, 2017; Eagly & Karau, 2002; Karau & Eagly, 1999; Gillette & Gepp, 2022)
Firm/Forceful	“A firm character is someone who is not easily swayed or influenced by external pressures, but rather remains steadfast in their convictions.” “Forceful is someone who expresses their opinions and wishes in a strong, emphatic, and confident way.”	(Himes, 2017; Eagly & Karau, 2002; Karau & Eagly, 1999) ProWritingAid, 2023; Collins Dictionary 2024)
Physical Capability	Physical capability is the capacity to engage in the behavior concerned by being physically strong, able, etc.	(Willmott, Pang, & Rundle-Thiele, 2021)
Self-Sufficient/ Independent/Start Up Mentality	“Collectively, means believing in yourself, your strength and potential, you can do things without oversight, and can start things/complete things without being told, capable of self-directed actions.”	(Himes, 2017; Eagly & Karau, 2002; Karau & Eagly, 1999)

Technical Knowledge/ Skill/Mastery	"Possession or display of great skill or technique" Very interested in gear, technical knowledge or capability to use multiple technologies or understand technologies as defined by participants.	(Merriam Webster, 2024; Martin, 2024)

Communal Qualities: Qualities or traits participants describe as more feminine leaning. Traits considered typical of women or women-identifying individuals. Characteristics are ascribed more strongly to females (Hines, 2017).		
Code	**Definition**	**Work Cited**
Adaptable	"Flexible, open-minded, and able to navigate changes and challenges with grace and resilience; or a person's ability to adjust to new situations and circumstances."	(ProWritingAid, 2023)
Collaborative	"The act of working together with other people to create or achieve something"; open to other's ideas, etc.	(Cambridge Dictionary, 2024; Martin, 2024)
Gentle/Calm/Patient/Kind/Humble/Warm (Includes Affectionate)	Defined by participants as an overall "nice person" who is warm to be around, kind, humble, not overly proud, shows affection	(Himes, 2017; Eagly & Karau, 2002; Karau & Eagly, 1999; Eagly, Wood, & Schmidt, 2004; Martin, 2024)

	to others, well-liked by others, etc.)	
Good Listener	Someone who actively listens and retains information from what was heard as defined by participants.	(Martin, 2024)
Helpful	“If you are inclined to assist others in any situation, you are a helpful person.” Willingness to help in any circumstance, willing to help any person, etc.	(Himes, 2017; Vocabulary.com, 2024)
Multitasking/Multitasker	Defined by participants as a very “motherly” instinct in that you have the ability to manage and do several things at once.	(Martin, 2024)
Organized/Prepared	“Having a formal organization to coordinate and carry out activities” or someone who does the necessary pre-production and other necessary tasks to ensure a successful shoot as defined by participants.	(Merriam-Webster, 2024; Martin, 2024)

Problem Solver	Someone who proficiently performs "the process or act of finding a solution to a problem."	(Merriam-Webster, 2024)
Storytelling/ Interpersonally Sensitive /Sensitive to Emotion	Ability to "see" the story in all projects and be attentive to story, also can see emotion in story and emotion in others (i.e. crew, talent, etc.) as defined by participants.	(Himes, 2017; Martin, 2024)
Well-Being Oriented/Caring/Nurturing (Includes Compassionate, Emotional, Expressive, Sympathetic)	"Describes a concern with the welfare of other people."	(Himes, 2017; Eagly & Karau, 2002; Karau & Eagly, 1999)

- Emerging Hinge Qualities *(Revealed Based on Initial Codes)*
  - Communication
  - Creativity
  - Leader/Leadership *(agentic-coded in previous literature; i.e. Himes, 2017, Eagly & Karau, 2002; Karau & Eagly, 1999)*
  - Political
  - Well-Connected/Liked
- Which Are Essential *[for Successful Cinematography Work]*
  - Balance of Both

RQ2: What are the experiences of women cinematographers working in a traditionally "masculine" coded gender social role occupation?

- Acting More Masculine
- Capital Restricted

- Gendered Tools
- Pigeoning
- Stuck in Advancement

- Performance Questioned
    - Longer Stories

RQ3: How do women cinematographers make meaning within their creative industry?

- Making a Difference
- Telling Stories

RQ4: How do women cinematographers create a sense of belonging within their creative industry?

Conclusion

- Performative Acts and Industry Change Perspective
    - Optimistic
    - Pessimistic

APPENDIX III: RECRUITMENT MATERIALS

Email Template

Hello [FIRST NAME]!

Women In Media recommended you to me — my name is Kaley Martin and I am a doctoral candidate working on my dissertation at The University of Alabama in Tuscaloosa, Alabama while working at the University of Montevallo as a filmmaker instructor. As a female cinematographer turned researcher, my dissertation seeks to bring further understanding of the "women experience" in men-dominated industries using women cinematographers as a case.

I seek to explore the lived experiences of women cinematographers and how gendered social roles, socialization practices, and identity developments interplay in our effort to make meaning within our work and space.

I would love the opportunity to include you in my study if you are interested and value your time in considering participating!

If you choose to participate in my study, we would book a date and time via my Bookings page that is most convenient for you for a 60-90 minute Zoom interview. Your interview responses will be transcribed, and all identifiable information will be removed before being included in any final academic papers. (For instance, your name will be removed and any additional information that might lead a reader to be able to identify who you are will be removed for anonymity.)

As compensation for participating, you will receive a $50 gift card after your interview. I truly appreciate your time if you choose to share your story with me. If you have any other women cinematographers that you think would enjoy participating in my study as well, please feel free to pass along my contact information or this e-mail!

If you have any questions about my study, feel free to ask me or my dissertation committee chair, Dr. Shaheen Kanthawala. Our contact information can be found below or you are welcome to respond to this email!

Thank you in advance for your consideration and I hope to hear from you soon!

Kaley Martin, M.A.
Doctoral Candidate
The University of Alabama, Tuscaloosa, AL 35487

Instructor
University of Montevallo, Montevallo, AL 35115
256-997-7870 | kaley.martin@montevallo.edu

Dissertation Committee Chair:
Dr. Shaheen Kanthawala
Assistant Professor
Journalism & Creative Media
The University of Alabama
(517) 281-8044
skanthawala@ua.edu

Social Media Post with Caption

Hello all! With permission from the admins, I wanted to re-post my dissertation work because the interview time has finally arrived! (Exciting!)

My name is Kaley Martin and I am a PhD Candidate at the University of Alabama/Instructor at the University of Montevallo. My dissertation surrounds the lived experiences of female cinematographers working across the various levels of our industry. As a female cinematographer myself, I would love for you to participate! All participants receive a $50 gift card for participating and interviews last between 60-90 minutes on Zoom at a time most convenient for you.

Please e-mail or direct message me if you are interested in participating!

Any questions about my dissertation project, please email me at either of my addresses to reach me: kaley.martin@montevallo.edu.

Thank you for supporting women in media!

APPENDIX IV: TABLES

Table 1: Agentic and Communal Traits and Definitions

Agentic Qualities: Qualities or traits participants describe as more masculine leaning. Traits considered typical of men or male-identifying individuals. Characteristics are ascribed more strongly to males (Hines, 2017).		
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	viewed as having three dimensions – competing to win (CW; to dominate and suppress others unscrupulously), competing to surpass (CS; to surpass or excel above others), and competing to develop (CD; to focus on personal development).” Networked is defined by participants as having many industry connections or the ability to make those connections.	Karau, 2002; Karau & Eagly, 1999) (Martin, 2024)
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Well-Being Oriented/Caring/Nurturing (Includes Compassionate, Emotional, Expressive, Sympathetic)	“Describes a concern with the welfare of other people.”	(Himes, 2017; Eagly & Karau, 2002; Karau & Eagly, 1999)

APPENDIX V: PARTICIPANT DEMOGRAPHIC RESULTS

Measure	Item	Count	Percent
Age	18-24 years old	3	8%
	25-32 years old	6	17%
	33-40 years old	16	44%
	40-47 years old	6	17%
	48 years old and older	5	14%
Race/Ethnicity	White	16	44%
	Black or African American	2	6%
	Hispanic or Latina/o	5	14%
	Asian or Pacific Islander	7	19%
	Biracial or Multiracial	6	17%
Highest Education Level	Bachelor's Degree	19	53%
	Graduate Degree	13	36%
	Some College	3	8%
	High School Diploma/GED	1	3%
Country of Origin	United States	34	94%
	Other	2	6%
Region of Residence in United States	Northeast	10	28%
	West	19	53%
	Southeast	3	8%
	Southwest	3	8%
	Other	1	3%
Sub-Levels Within Film Industry (Not Mutually Exclusive Categories)	Freelance Level	35	95%
	Corporate Level	20	56%
	Union/Unionized Level	15	42%
	Academy Level (ASC or Feature Level)	10	28%

APPENDIX VI: ILLUSTRATIONS

Illustration 1: Ergorig CenterFit (Women's) Vest

(Taken from Ergorig's Website)

Illustration 2: Easyrig Standard Cinema Flex (Women's) Vest

(Taken from Easyrig's Website and B&H Photo's Website)

Illustration 3: Breakdown of Film Crew Positions Flow Chart

(Taken from Assemble Magazine) With Participant Visualization Added)

APPENDIX VII: POST-INTERVIEW FOLLOW-UP SURVEY

For a complete list of agentic and communal trait references, please see Appendix III and V.

Reflecting back on our conversations during your interview, please rank the following traits we discussed on if you consider the quality and/or trait more of a masculine trait/quality or a more feminine trait/quality within the context of our conversations discussing the differences between men and women cinematographers generally (understanding there is always nuance and grey area deviations).

	More Masculine Trait/Quality		Neutral Trait/Quality		More Feminine Trait/Quality	
Sensitive to Emotion	○	○	○	○	○	Sensitive to Emotion
Sympathetic	○	○	○	○	○	Sympathetic
Calm	○	○	○	○	○	Calm
Expressive	○	○	○	○	○	Expressive
Physically Strong	○	○	○	○	○	Physically Strong
Interested in Story	○	○	○	○	○	Interested in Story
Humble	○	○	○	○	○	Humble
Assertive	○	○	○	○	○	Assertive

Others Well-Being Oriented	○	○	○	○	○	Others Well-Being Oriented
Patient	○	○	○	○	○	Patient
Technically Savvy	○	○	○	○	○	Technically Savvy
Dominant	○	○	○	○	○	Dominant
Creative	○	○	○	○	○	Creative
Organized	○	○	○	○	○	Organized
Competitve	○	○	○	○	○	Competitive
Controlling	○	○	○	○	○	Controlling
Leader	○	○	○	○	○	Leader
Well-Liked	○	○	○	○	○	Well-Liked
Good Communicator	○	○	○	○	○	Good Communicator
Networker	○	○	○	○	○	Networker
Adaptable	○	○	○	○	○	Adaptable
Problem Solver	○	○	○	○	○	Problem Solver
Self-Confident	○	○	○	○	○	Self-Confident
Political	○	○	○	○	○	Political
Good Listener	○	○	○	○	○	Good Listener
Interpersonally Sensitive	○	○	○	○	○	Interpersonally Sensitive
Well-Connected	○	○	○	○	○	Well-Connected
Firm	○	○	○	○	○	Firm
Helpful/Interested in Helping Others	○	○	○	○	○	Helpful/Interested in Helping Others
Risk-Taker	○	○	○	○	○	Risk-Taker
Forceful	○	○	○	○	○	Forceful
Supportive	○	○	○	○	○	Supportive
Analytical	○	○	○	○	○	Analytical
Multitasker	○	○	○	○	○	Multitasker
Empathetic	○	○	○	○	○	Empathetic
Aggressive	○	○	○	○	○	Aggressive
Nurturing	○	○	○	○	○	Nurturing

APPENDIX VIII: FIGURES

Figure 1: Participant Follow-Up Survey Bipolar Likert Scale Results

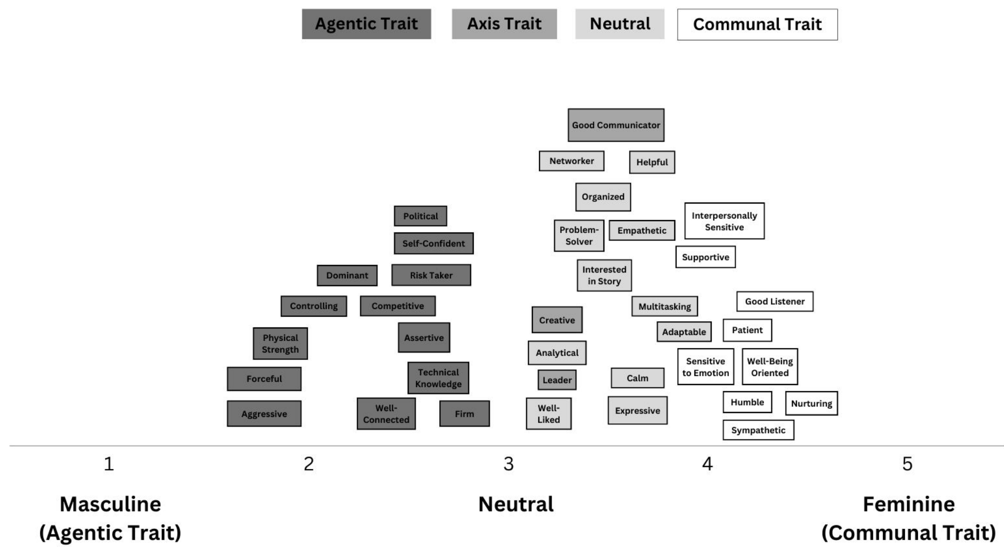
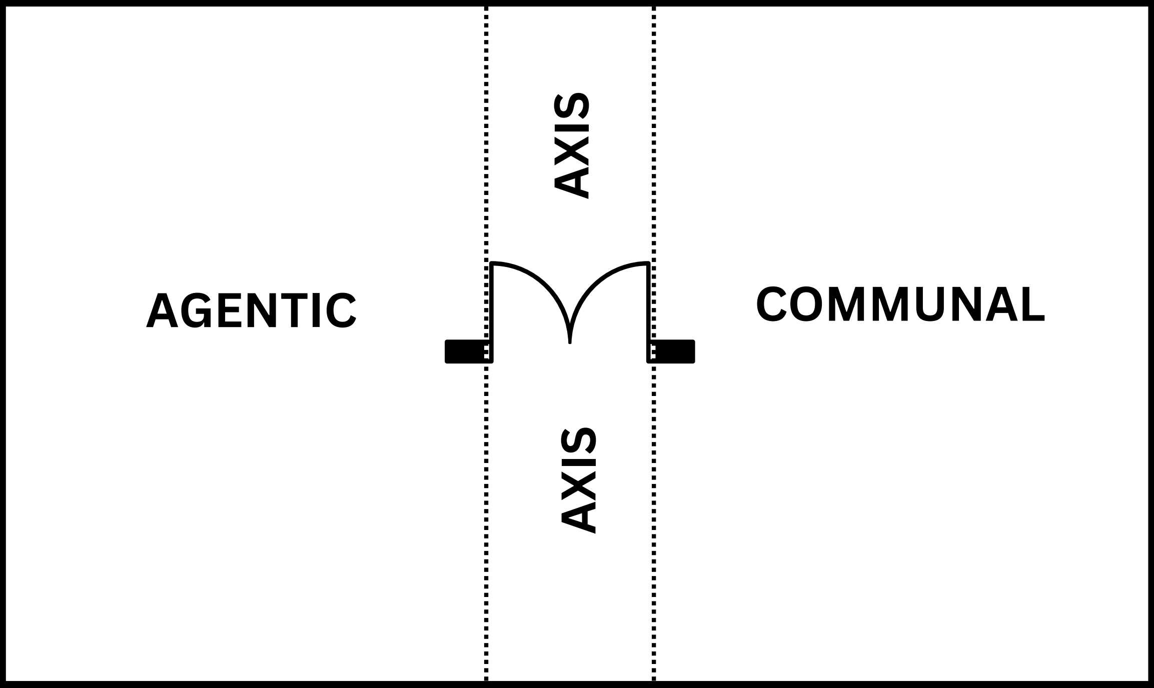


Figure 2: Axis Trait Visualization



APPENDIX IX: IRB APPROVAL LETTERS

Institution 1 IRB Approval Letter

March 7, 2024

To: Kaley Martin
Department of Journalism & Creative Media
College of Communication & Information Sciences
The University of Alabama
Box 870172

From: Edward M. Shirley, MA, CIP
Interim IRB Team Lead

Re: **Notice of Approval**

IRB Application #:	e-Protocol 23-04-6521
Project Title:	"Exploring the Lack of Women's Representation Among Cinematographers Across the Filmmaking Subindustries"
Submission Type:	New
Approval Date:	March 7, 2024
Expiration Date:	March 6, 2025
Funding Source:	None
Review Category:	Exempt
Approved Documents:	Informed Consent

Dear Kaley:

The University of Alabama Institutional Review Board has approved your proposed research. Therefore, your application has been approved according to 45 CFR part 46 as outlined below:

(2) Research that only includes interactions involving educational tests (cognitive, diagnostic, aptitude, achievement), survey procedures, interview procedures, or observation of public behavior (including visual or auditory recording) if at least one of the following criteria is met: (iii) The information obtained is recorded by the investigator in such a manner that the identity of the human subjects can readily be ascertained, directly or through identifiers linked to the subjects, and an IRB conducts a limited IRB review to make the determination required by §46.111(a)(7).

The approval for your application will lapse, as noted above. If your research will continue beyond this date, please submit the Continuing Review to the IRB as University policy requires before the lapse. Please note any modifications made in research design, methodology, or procedures must be submitted to and approved by the IRB before implementation. Please submit a final report form when the study is complete.

Please use reproductions of the stamped IRB-approved informed consent form to obtain consent form your participants.

All the best with your research.

166 Rose Administration | Box 870127 | Tuscaloosa, AL 35401 | 205-348-8461 | rscompliance@ua.edu

Institution 2 IRB Approval Letter

Human and Animal Subjects Research Committee (HASRC)
Dr. Tiffany R. Wang, Chair
Station 6625
Montevallo, AL 35115
twang@montevallo.edu

MEMORANDUM

To: Kaley Martin

From: Dr. Tiffany R. Wang, HASRC Chair

RE: Documentation of Reciprocal Approval (#KM031124)

Date: March 11, 2024

The research described in the IRB Protocol titled ***Exploring the Lack of Women's Representation Among Cinematographers Across the Filmmaking Subindustries*** submitted by Principal Investigator Kaley Martin (University of Alabama/University of Montevallo) has received reciprocal approval from the Human Animal and Subjects Research Committee and is considered to be in compliance with the American Psychological Association's Ethical Guidelines. This study was initially approved by the University of Alabama's Institutional Review Board (Protocol ID: 23-04-6521) on March 7, 2024 (all supporting documents submitted with request for reciprocal approval).

Please notify Dr. Tiffany R. Wang (twang@montevallo.edu) if modifications need to be made to the study **and** when the research concludes.

HASRC Chair	March 11, 2024 **Date**