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Winners of the Cannes Film Festival as a reflection of the world's
ideas and thoughts at the moment in time

Ekaterina Lukianova

Master in Sociology

Supervisor:
PHD, Vera Borges, Associate Professor,
Iscte – Lisbon University Institute

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Sociology Department

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Summary

This study analyses how winning films at the Cannes Film Festival reflect and address societal issues, providing a glimpse into the socio-cultural, historical and political climate at the time of their creation. Analysing a series of films that have won prestigious awards reveals thematic trends and patterns that correspond to global social changes and ideologies. The methodology involves an extensive literature review of existing research into film content analysis, followed by a careful selection and examination of the films based on predetermined criteria. A contextual analysis is then carried out to identify the relationship between the films' themes and the socio-political environment at the time of their production. The synthesis of the results aims to contribute to sociology, in particular to understanding the intersection between cinema and cultural discourse, focusing on the unique case of the perception and interpretation of global cinematographic works in Portugal.

Keywords: culture, film festivals, Cannes, qualitative research

Abstract

Este estudo analisa a forma como os filmes vencedores do Festival de Cinema de Cannes reflectem e abordam questões sociais, proporcionando um vislumbre do clima sociocultural, histórico e político no momento da sua criação. A análise de uma série de filmes que ganharam prémios de prestígio revela tendências e padrões temáticos que correspondem a mudanças sociais e ideologias globais. A metodologia envolve uma extensa revisão da literatura sobre a investigação existente em matéria de análise de conteúdo de filmes, seguida de uma seleção e exame cuidadosos dos filmes com base em critérios pré-determinados. Em seguida, é efectuada uma análise contextual para identificar a relação entre os temas dos filmes e o ambiente sociopolítico na altura da sua produção. A síntese dos resultados pretende contribuir para a sociologia, em particular para a compreensão da intersecção entre cinema e discurso cultural, centrando-se no caso único da perceção e interpretação de obras cinematográficas globais em Portugal.

Palavras-chave: cultura, festivais de cinema, Cannes, investigação qualitativa

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Introduction

Art is a reflection of social, political and economic processes in society. Traditionally, artists of different eras have created their works by drawing inspiration from the world around them. Cinema in today's world is one of the most accessible art forms after the industrial revolution and digitalization. Nowadays, anyone and anywhere can watch any movie on the projector, cinema, TV channels, CD's, mobiles, laptops, computers, tablets and even watches. There are so many resources, many websites and platforms where you can check out movies from all over the world and from all eras. Access has expanded to not only movies, but also information on directors, actors, and even reviews discussing the meaning. In today's world you will no longer find a person who has never watched a movie, even children of very young years have watched "Inside Out" and other Disney animated movies. Cinema is a big part of people's lives; from there they learn from a young age and analyze as adults. Therefore, cinema has a huge potential for projecting ideas.

One of the most striking examples and even the of projecting a political idea through film is Leni Riefenstahl's 1935 film *Triumph of the Will*, which glorifies Nazi Germany and its leader. Through cinema, any thoughts of the author, whether manifesto against or propaganda, taking the form of a narrative, can spread to all segments of society. The same "Triumph of Power" reflected the internal mood of Germany at the time. This power of cinema has transformed and changed just as much in step with progress and digitalization. Now this power is wielded by both mainstream and auteur cinema, because of the wide availability of both the films themselves and the in-depth discussions from prominent film critics, professional journals and, of course, the juries of renowned film festivals.

Film festivals play a key role in the industry. These events provide a platform for filmmakers from all countries and nationalities to express their thoughts and draw attention to the problems of particular regions, cultures and societies. Researchers often refer to film festivals as venues for creating transnational spaces that collide global cultural production with national cinematic traditions (Rüling & Pedersen, 2010). Film festivals are venues for public discourse and showcasing significant projects from around the world. This tradition developed in the 1940s of the last centuries (Festival de Cannes, 2022). Also, inheriting all the above ideas about the power of cinema, these events become a mirror for the reflections of

ideologies, propaganda, social unrest, minority issues and any other micro and macro social stories from different ends of the global society.

Until now, the exact number of film festivals around the world has not been counted. It is unlikely that they have been counted in most countries, as such events may be held sporadically, without being registered in the special databases that count such data. According to the site “Stephen Follows: Decoding the world through data”, from 2000s at least 9,700 film festivals have been organized around the world. There are now about 3,000 festivals held regularly. 75% of all film festivals have been established in the last 10 years. Such venues for filmmakers to express themselves on a mass scale are becoming increasingly popular. However, there is a "Big Three" of the most famous and prestigious film festivals: Venice, Cannes and Berlin (*How many film festivals are there in the world*, 2013). This paper will focus on the Cannes Film Festival. It can be said that through all these 9700 film festivals one can gather almost all the diversity of human thought for a certain period. This is where the secrets of history are kept, thoughts from all over the world, the main really exciting events of the year, if not decades and centuries.

The Cannes Film Festival “is a free platform for the presentation of films outside the political arena” (Festival de Cannes, 2023). It is here that the films that express the greatest protest coming from their country's society were most often presented. For example, even a few Russian directors have shown their films and received awards freed from political repression. This particular festival, as the freest, was chosen as part of the exploration of global ideas and the world through the lens of cinema. The Cannes Film Festival is one of the most prestigious and influential film festivals in the world, attracting filmmakers and industry professionals from all over the world (Festival de Cannes, 2022). Each year, the festival awards the coveted Palme d'Or and other prizes to outstanding films in various categories.

Thus, the films of the Cannes Film Festival can be the most vivid representations of the experiences of the political and social situation in the world. Since 1998, the Festival de Cannes has played the role of an international platform for the consolidation of heritage films (Zarandona, 2016).

The **focus of this study** is to examine how films that have won at the Cannes Film Festival serve as a mirror of the prevailing ideas, issues, and perspectives of the world during the specific period in which they were honored.

Contemporary politics and current events serve as a rich source of inspiration for filmmakers, providing them with a platform to address pressing societal issues (Rüling & Pedersen, 2010). Having this in mind, because of the power of the internet, digital systems, the accessibility of cinema and its power in society, it is particularly interesting to consider this topic. However, there are too many products in the movie industry to cover them all. Therefore, in this thesis we pay special attention to film festivals, which reach selected films by country, genre and even film direction. The frontier of such events is the most famous among the general public and the most prestigious festival among filmmakers - the Cannes Film Festival.

The main purpose of this study is to analyse thematically films from the past five years (2024 - 2019) that have won the Palme d'Or and Grand Prix awards and to explore the subject and artistic elements that make them representative of their time.

Research on film festivals has a history that is both long and not deep. Most often, authors and articles have focused on the creation of spaces that collided culture and tradition in film (Harbord, 2002, 2007), the history of the creation of film festivals (Rhyne, 2009), and the study of the economic and marketing implications of such events (Mazza & Strandgaard Pedersen, 2008). However, film historians, anthropologists and ethnographers are more often confronted with difficulties when researching film festivals in the field of social practices (Valck, 2007). Therefore, this study will be an additional step in systematically approaching cinema as a mirror of socio-political issues in society. This is a **literature gap** and our research contributes to improving it.

The **practical relevance** of this research work lies in examining film festivals from the perspective of projectors of filmmakers' thoughts and experiences embedded in films. Film festivals popularize auteur cinema, which most often emanates from socio-political issues, to a wider audience. Thus, it will attract the attention of film festivals in terms of careful selection to prevent the triumph of propaganda cinema and responsible attitude towards the popularization of meanings.

The **scientific significance** of the work is to promote the social side of the significance of film festivals and films that receive high honors. This area of scientific knowledge should be expanded as the number of festivals and their popularity among non-experts in the field is growing.

The main **research question** is: to what extent do films - that have won at the Cannes Film Festival - reflect the ideas, issues and attitudes prevalent in the world during the period in which they were awarded?

This central question seeks to explore the relationship between the films that won awards at the Cannes Film Festival and their ability to reflect the broader social, cultural and political context of the time.

By assessing the extent to which these films correspond to and reflect prevailing ideas and thoughts, this **study aims** to provide insight into the role of the Cannes Film Festival in showcasing and representing global consciousness at specific historical moments.

Our analytical and methodological strategy of research is:

1. To find, organize and analyze available information and literature related to the research topic (Chapter 1);
2. To present a list of films according to the criteria predefined in the study based on rigorous content analysis (Chapter 2);
3. To search for existing scientific papers on the study of the semantic load and other elements of films (Chapter 1);
4. To present and discuss the results from previous chapters, making a brief digression into the socio-cultural, historical and political time context of making films (Chapter 3);
5. To make a map that shows the connection of the themes of the films with the global context of creation (Chapter 3);
6. To identify any noticeable trends or patterns in the types of films that have received prestigious awards and their relevance to prevailing ideas and issues. Finally, to summarize the main contributions of my research study to the field of sociology, in particular the field of sociology of culture in Portugal (Conclusion).

This research will be based on a qualitative content analysis methodology. This section of the study is devoted to the issue of reflecting the winners of the Cannes Film Festival in a socio-cultural and historical context. As a tool for collecting information, we will use films, interviews with directors, reviews of major magazines, and existing recent research. As a result, an augmented map will be compiled to illustrate the reflection of the global context.

This dissertation consists of 3 chapters, and an introduction and conclusion. The first one is a review of the literature on this topic. The second is a methodological one and the presentation of a selection of films, interviews. The third chapter presents the results and reviews for analysis, bringing socio-cultural and historical context. It is devoted to the results of data collection and analysis. We also present an intermediary discussion of the results and, finally, the main conclusion and the contribution to sociology of culture.

CHAPTER 1

Literature review

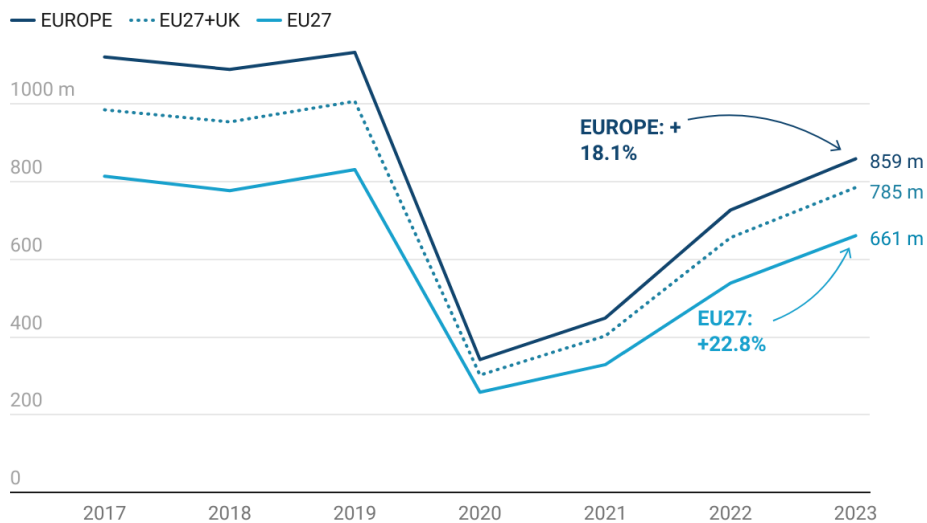
In this chapter, we will look at the idea of film festivals from commercial projects to a manifesto of socio-cultural, environmental and any other disturbing context in society. At the beginning, we will present scientific arguments about the need to study cinema in sociology further than the representation of mass culture due to the popularization of cinema. Next, we will highlight the lack of research on film festivals in sociological and cultural studies. Such events were considered from the point of view of the commercialization of space and the economy of culture, but the socio-cultural significance was underestimated by researchers. Nevertheless, there is evidence that major festivals discuss the most important global topics in society, and directors are constantly advancing in ways to convey their artistic vision of the world. To confirm these conclusions empirically, we will provide a brief summary of the history of the development of film festivals. The chapter will end with a logical discussion of the role of film sociology as a necessary element of global culture. We will consider the theories of cultural production from the point of view of directors and members of the film crew, as well as the theory of cultural consumption on the part of the viewer, since it is on this bundle and its interpretation that the idea of the entire present study is based.

1. Cinema, or as a sociological object

Almost all of us have ever watched a movie. Cinema is one of the most popular cultural activities when compared with others and within different European countries. It is one of the activities that receives the most public funding and cultural attendance. Studies from the EFARN (European Film Agency Research Network) shows us that the number of movie theatre attendance in EU countries is constantly growing (Council of Europe, 2024). In 2022, this figure amounted to 643 million visits (Council of Europe, 2024). After the coronavirus infection in 2021, the percentage of attendance has almost reached the pre-coronavirus period, increasing by 63% compared to 2021 (Council of Europe, 2024). In 2023, this figure continued to grow by 18%, amounting to 859 million cinema visitors (Figure 1) (Council of Europe, 2024).

Cinema attendance in Europe – 2017-2023

Provisional estimates of theatrical admissions in millions; calculated on a pro-forma basis for the Council of Europe member states (EUROPE), comprising the European Union member states (EU27) and the United Kingdom (EU27+UK).



Formerly, EU27+UK served as the proxy for Europe in earlier reports and press releases. With the acquisition of additional data, the Observatory has shifted its focus to encompass wider Europe in its publications, while maintaining reporting on EU27+UK for the sake of consistency and continuity.

Source: European Audiovisual Observatory • Created with Datawrapper

Figure 1, Cinema attendance in the Europe, 2017-2023 – the provisional estimates (Council of Europe, 2024)

Co-occurring with the interest in cinema, the number of movies made every year around the world is also growing rapidly. They deal with different social issues, historical and political events, speaking different languages about different plots.

Over time, this is what has caused a real diversity of genres in filmmaking. Now, with the development of shooting technologies and ways of transmitting films, accessibility is almost absolute. Many consider cinematographers to be a wide part of popular culture because of "not the deepest" pictures, such as, for example, "Twilight" and other films. However, these are not all films that are projected and shown on large and small screens. With the development of the availability of film recording methods, ethnic or author's works are increasingly appearing. The authors present them as a response to problems or to draw attention to global and local challenges. This is how the understanding of some films is born as a reflection of social problems or individual views.

Cinema is the most influential channel of communication in modern society (Stepanov, 2020). Having emerged at the same time as sociology as a science, this cultural field was not

recognized as an object of research for a long time (Signorelli Heise, Tudor, 2016). Many researchers, influenced by the general trend of understanding films as a huge part of mass culture, see cinema as a form of mass media or the development of institutions of agitation and the psychology of managing social masses due to its wide accessibility and recognition.

Contemporary scholars in the field of cultural and social approaches to film note that the founders of critical social theory were "too insistent on disenchantment" (Bartmański & Alexander, 2012). For a long time, work in the field of cinematography among cultural sociologists was considered rather marginal (Stepanov, 2020). The study of the media of visual and textual content of cinema was considered meaningless, sociologists perceived such works as frivolous, and did not accept sociological and cultural methods shifted to cinematography. At the same time, even supporters of critical theory turned to the art of cinema in their works "to conceptualize the processes taking place in contemporary society" (Stepanov, 2020, 2).

Even now, there are too few publications in this field, unlike other cultural and sociological trends, in Portugal and around the world. If we turn to the most popular and most peer-reviewed journals with articles and works from the cultural field, humanitarian environment, research in the field of sociology of cinema occupies the smallest part of all, the sociology of music and other cultures significantly bypass both the number of theories and the number of authors.

With the passage of time, cinematography gained gradual recognition, but experienced incomparable stagnation. Starting its development in the 90s of the last centuries, by the beginning of the 21st century there was a slight decline in the interest of scientists in this field of knowledge (Stepanov, 2020). Due to the long lack of recognition, there were too few basic theories and comprehensive studies, so researchers had to re-create the base.

Nevertheless, the French founder of cultural sociology promoted an important idea for the development of this field of knowledge. Denzin (1995) wrote that collective feelings in society become conscious at the moment of "focusing on external tangible objects" (Denzin, 1995, 28). Cinema can be fully considered one of these. It was not until the beginning of the 21st century that sociologists and cultural historians began to consider this idea. Cinema

began to be cautiously labelled as a significant phenomenon in modern society (Emmison, Smith, 2001).

Closer to the 2010s, film studies became more interesting within the framework of cultural studies (Stepanov, 2020). It became an interesting alternative to sociological paradigms and patterns of studying and understanding contemporary society (Stepanov, 2015). It was only at this time that a non-marginalized approach to cinema as a form of representation of social reality was formed (Stepanov, 2020). This area of mass culture has now become a recognized material for the study of society's representations of itself (Turner, 2008).

Researchers are now turning to the analysis of cinematic techniques, texts and media-visual metaphors, the experiences and interpretation of actors, their economic part and role in the consciousness of modern society. Cultural scientists have separated cinematography from the usual research paradigms, adding unique ways of analysis. Cinematography has now become part of the social, with films being investigated from the perspective of observing social processes, institutions, phenomena and individual actors (Patton, 2007).

With the accumulation of research in this field, films have been considered within institutions rather than as a separate object (Stepanov, 2020). Contemporary cinema has many directions, themes and forms of manifestation; they speak of individual phenomena, institutions or entire systems. "In this respect, films are an indispensable source for diagnostic reflection on the anthropology and institutional organization of contemporary societies, as well as for defining social roles and frameworks of social interaction" (Stepanov, 2020).

It can be assumed that nowadays cinema can be perceived through the prism of the philosophical concept of "zeitgeist". More and more often directors, screenwriters, directors and animators talk about social problems as a source of their inspiration. In many ways, this was also the initial promotion of cinema.

Authorial and meaningful cinema has always existed in parallel with popular culture. This was not so noticeable to the general consciousness due to the strong difference between the cultural capital of different more pronounced economic classes. Now these boundaries are

more blurred, the Internet has provided an opportunity even for people without special education and sufficient cultural capital to understand even the most difficult films through reviews and interviews by the directors themselves. The prevalence of certain techniques, themes and genres can be considered as a standardizing style of thinking of modern society (Herder, Spencer and Voltaire) (Saarinen, 2006).

Thus, film studies are necessary to fully understand films as empirical material. This can also be presented within the framework of Weber's (1920) theory of the 'ideal type'. Films represent an artistic vision of the filmmaker. Cinema as a mass media, an instrument of mass culture and agitation, social control, but also a manifestation of the social.

All these vast and disparate understandings are folded into separate entities in separately created institutions, regardless of the director's original idea. This is precisely the process that is taking shape within film festivals. The organization of films of a certain category into special institutions with their own limited and designated space, a well-thought-out structure, formed social contracts and facts creates a certain research interest. Festivals that have existed since the 1940s have now transformed into a special socio-cultural order that has been little studied.

2. Festivals, as a centre of sociological studies

2.1. What is a film festival?

Modern film festivals are an actively developing industry with a huge geopolitical prevalence. In Figure 2, we can see the full list of film festivals in all states of America. The full number of festivals in the world is much more. They range from large and well-known to small, specialized (gender, ethnic, etc.).

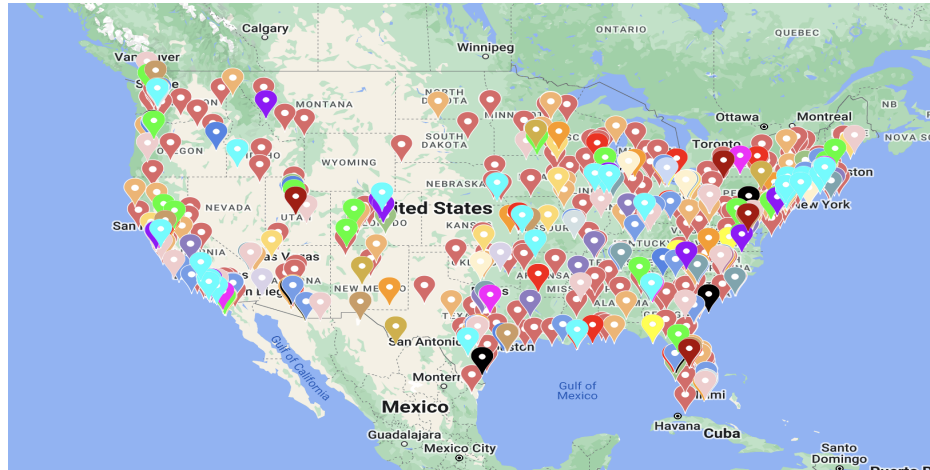


Figure 2 - The amount of film festival in US on the map (Film Festival Database, 2020)

Festivals such as Berlin, Venice and Cannes international events attract the attention of the world's media and the entire industry. Figure 3 shows at least 25 of the most influential and popular film festivals around the world (*The Best 25 Film Festivals in Europe for Feature Films*, 2023). Since the number of film festivals is growing every year, and a larger percentage has appeared and developed in the last few years, film and media researchers have begun to turn their attention to festivals, their traditions and events.

1. [Cannes Film Festival](#)
2. [Venice Film Festival](#)
3. [Berlin International Film Festival](#)
4. [BFI London Film Festival](#)
5. [Karlovy Vary International Film Festival](#)
6. [Valladolid International Film Festival \(Seminci\)](#)
7. [Film Festival Ghent](#)
8. [Munich International Film Festival](#)
9. [Leeds International Film Festival](#)
10. [Stockholm International Film Festival](#)
11. [The International Film Festival of the Art of Cinematography Camerimage](#)
12. [Transilvania International Film Festival](#)
13. [Zurich Film Festival](#)

14. [Locarno International Film Festival](#)
15. [San Sebastian Film Festival](#)
16. [International Film Festival Rotterdam](#)
17. [Gothenburg Film Festival](#)
18. [Warsaw International Film Festival](#)
19. [Galway Film Fleadh](#)
20. [Raindance Film Festival](#)
21. [ACID \(Association of Circulation of Independent Films\) Cannes](#)
22. [Sofia International Film Festival](#)
23. [Reykjavic International Film festival](#)
24. [Tallinn Black Nights Film Festival](#)
25. [IndieLisboa – International Film Festival](#)

Figure 3, The most popular and significant film festivals in the world, (*The Best 25 Film Festivals in Europe for Feature Films*, 2023)

Film festivals as a territory of influence

Earlier scientific works and publications reflected traditional views: the role of festivals in the formation of local cinemas, festivals as territories of international influence and cooperation, where cultural production collides with familiar traditions in the field of cinema (Harbord, 2002; Mazdon, 2006; Elsaesser, 2005; Evans, 2007). However, now the theorization of the research potential of film festivals is increasingly converging on territorial, structural and semantic organization (Rüling & Pedersen, 2010).

Film festivals are a special organized space, part of cultural production. Festivals were originally created as a separate cultural zone where various films could be shown outside the

previously accepted mass film industry facilities (cinemas, etc.). Film festivals usually operate outside commercial agreements in the form of rental rights, ticket prices, and revenue from the films themselves or cinemas and other commercial organizations. Traditionally, film festivals are considered alternative exhibition venues (Rüling & Pedersen, 2010).

Over time, film festivals have become alternative exhibition venues for participants in the form of directors, directors, screenwriters and actors. Many films could have been not only not recognized by the masses without festival awards and reviews, but also would not have received recognition or further funding. It soon became clear to the film industry that film festivals would leave their mark on the film industry (de Valck & et al., 2016).

"Film festivals are three 'F's': films, festivals and friends" (de Valck & et al., 2016, 7). "They offer a unique combination of bodily, visceral, and mental stimulation by engaging multiple senses, offering intellectual stimuli, and providing social connection" (de Valck & et al., 2016, 12) (Dovey, 2015). "Thanks to this special combination of ingredients, festivals have established themselves as centers where cinephilia and the love of cinema are supported" (de Valck & et al., 2016, 21).

Film festivals, recognition and value

From the very beginning, film festivals have increased the value of films, their recognition and the fame of alternative filmmakers. "Competition programs, international juries and prizes were used to pay tribute to selected films and filmmakers, elevating them to a higher level compared to the annual national production" (de Valck & et al., 2016). There are a huge number of films that are shown exclusively at festivals – this is the first reason for their existence.

Moreover, is the opportunity to share experiences. Festivals are "special events on the agenda of the film industry. They are at the intersection of many institutional logics; they are "surprisingly intense, but at the same time hybrid events" that take place at the intersection of art, commerce, technology, culture, identity, power, politics and ideology" (Rüling & Pedersen, 2010).

"They are 'places of residence and travel' that are simultaneously connected to certain cultural and institutional contexts and act as places of global 'travel and exchange'" (Mazdon, 2006). Thus, film festivals, despite their temporality and certainty in the time interval, are an environment for the formation of new values: from economic and aesthetic, to cultural and historical. One way or another, this is connected with the festival organization and the original idea of a space for displaying opinions. "They contribute to the social formation of values and status and provide an arena for opposing existing industry structures" (Rüling & Pedersen, 2010).

The third reason for the existence of film festivals is friends. Such events bring together many participants, leading experts, regional leaders and other industry participants. Film festivals are one of the few opportunities to meet friends and establish new social connections in one concentrated space. Also, such connections often form a situation of challenging trends and values (Rüling & Pedersen, 2010).

Event organizers themselves also face an unstable environment that needs to be managed and structured. Thus, a special professional institute is being created. "In such a situation, many festival organizations are now seeking to go beyond individual festival events and play a more active role in their environment, for example, acting as intermediaries between participants on the ground, selecting and demonstrating projects at an early stage, creating online communities" (Rüling, 2009a).

The last and most interesting reason for the existence of film festivals is the creation of a metaphorical window into the world. Movies themselves, from a scientific and practical point of view, act as a reflection of social processes, problems and challenges. The festivals become their concentration. "Festivals have a unique potential for shaping the agenda and intervening in the public sphere. They can influence our aesthetic tastes, political beliefs, and outlook on life. Simply put, film festivals can change our perception of the world" (Rüling & Pedersen, 2010).

2.2. Film festival history in six steps

The history of film festivals is ambiguous and under-reported. These events have been covered in terms of economics, cultural heritage and fashion centralisation among other

things. Film festivals were initially more professionally orientated, and did not have a mass or commercial or mainstream sense. Early in their history, film festivals emerged as events for associations of European filmmakers. The annual International Film Festival is 'a very European institution' (Elsaesser, 2005). Almost a century has passed since the first festival was held in Venice. During this time, as we have already noted, the number of film festivals has grown exponentially (de Valck & et al., 2016).

The history of film festivals. Festivals have almost a century-long history of formation: from the origin of the idea to the cancellation of the first festivals due to the war, reconstruction and the first organizations in the modern world. Today, film festivals, as we know them and observe them every year, are a global cultural phenomenon. Their history goes back to the distant past, starting with the first steps of the film industry. Let's consider the gradual development and their role in the research environment.

- 1) **Film festivals - pioneers.** The first events for cinematographers and with their participation began from the time of the first developments of shooting methods. The forerunner of the film festivals was the World's Fair in Paris in 1900, "where the Eiffel Tower cinema, organized by the Lumiere brothers, was one of the main attractions" (de Valck & et al., 2016). However, this event was not global. At that time, at the beginning of the 20th century, the critical emphasis in such events was on the work of the director, rather than on the national or cultural contribution of the entire film festival or exhibition.
- 1) **The Birth of Film Festivals.** After the first attempts to create a common cinematic space, it was only 30 years later that a festival appeared that can really be called such. In 1932, the first Venice Film Festival was held. Venice, in general, has become the progenitor city of film festivals. It was here that the prestigious Golden Lion award was born, which is still considered one of the most prestigious. The Venice Festival also remains a significant place for the entire industry (de Valck & et al., 2016). However, due to the military context, festivals of that time became a propaganda point, others were completely canceled.

- 2) **Post-war period.** Further, the festival's history developed slowly and ambiguously. Due to the outbreak of World War II, the festival initiative was suspended. The events in 1939 were urgently cancelled. After the war, it was only in 1946 that the Cannes Film Festival was founded. Over time, it will become the central event in the entire film industry (de Valck & et al., 2016). It was here that many world premieres of films took place, which were subsequently noted at the professional and global levels.
- 3) **The formation of the critics at film festivals.** In the post-war years, film festivals became the center. However, in the mid-1960s, this cinema was separated from the political field, when the main awards were no longer a diplomatic treaty or a commercial market. "Any film producer could put their film up for sale, and many of them did so. By 1964, about 300 films were being shown in small cinemas located along the main street of Cannes, Rue d'Antibes, where the Cannes film market was located (Zamot, 1964). Shown at the same time as the actual festival program, the market films created the impression of a parallel film festival taking place away from the splendor of the Palais des Festivals, the madness surrounding the stars, and the hustle and bustle of the Croisette. Not bound by any diplomatic or political restrictions, the commercially oriented Cannes film market did what the main festival did not do, namely, it gave a clear idea that there are many new films being produced in the world that deserve attention and screening. According to critics, it was the market, not the main competition, that made the trip to Cannes worthwhile for those interested in global filmmaking" (Ostrowska, 2016).

The Cannes Film Festival. "The role of Cannes in shaping the canons of arthouse cinema contributed to the enduring importance of the festival" (Ostrowska, 2016). In the late 40s and early 50s, this was due to the pacifist goals of Cannes and the special program policy of the festival (Ostrowska, 2016). Then the idea itself moved to the paradigm of reviewing films by critics (Ostrowska, 2016). In the 1960s, the role of the jury and producers grew (Ostrowska, 2016). Gradually, by the 1970s, the Cannes Film Festival became a more prestigious and significant place. "Next, the idea of a "director's" or "author's film" at the turn

of the 1960s and 1970s is manifested" (Ostrowska, 2016). "The idea of the Cannes film is the result of recent changes in production: the practice in which film festivals simultaneously serve as a meeting place for representatives of the film industry, as well as themselves acting as creative film producers with the help of festival initiatives and funds for the development of cinematography" (Ostrowska, 2016).

- 4) **The formation of auteur cinema in the film festival industry.** After the protests in France, film festivals were suspended, including Cannes. "This has turned the festival into a much more politically independent organization in terms of program selection" (Ostrowska, 2016). This process was also influenced by the creation of independent directing associations: "the protection of artistic, moral, professional and economic freedom to create and participate in the development of new cinematic structures" (Thévenin 2008: 50). This led to the creation of a separate independent spin-off line of film screenings from independent directors during the following Cannes Festivals. Thus, film festivals have become not a selective political event, but an independent event of self-expression of directors.
- 5) **6) The modern look of film festivals.** With the development of the film industry, film festivals began to become more international, and directors from all over the world could claim a place in additional independent screenings outside the main program at the critics' choice. Specialized events are also being created in national or problematic contexts: in different countries, festivals dedicated to feminism or racial issues. Thus, film festivals have now developed into both an art exhibition with a selection for the program, and into an alternative universe of original films from around the world about acute social or other problems. Cinema is presented not only as an art, but also as a manifesto.

A Variety of Film Festivals. Over time, of course, the recognition of film festivals has only grown. They have become different in format, genre and direction. Moreover, festivals have emerged that focus on social issues or explore new technologies in cinema. For example, the Sundance Film Festival in the USA is a platform for indie cinema and experimental

works, whereas the Tribeca Film Festival in New York actively explores the intersection of cinema and technology (de Valck & co., 2016).

To conclude this part, As Valck et al (2016) considered, independent programming is directly connected with the 'value' and the accumulation of 'cultural value'. As one of the most important researchers of film festivals, the author emphasizes their absolute importance in the entire film industry, forming the top lists of films watched by both cultural experts and the general public. For more than 80 years, film festivals have been a showcase of cultural and social thought on the part of artists, as well as cultural and ideological choices for the general public, who perceive the cultural values being recreated and recreate in their behavior consciously or not, or on the contrary, reveal the habitus and eliminate social facts or norms within the micro part of society.

3. Sociology of film festivals

Cinematography is always two parts of the same whole. On the one hand, it is the creators who create a product of art, and on the other hand, it is the consumer of thoughts and ideas who perceives them through their prism.

3.1. Cultural production

According to the theories of Marxism and cultural hegemony by Antonio Gramsci (1848), economic structures and social classes shape cultural production. This highlights how capitalist systems influence the creation of culture, often leading to the reproduction of dominant ideologies and the exploitation of labor in cultural industries. Dominant groups in society maintain their power not only through coercion, but also by spreading their cultural values, norms, and beliefs (Lenny, 2007). Thus, film festivals not only manage society and people's resources commercially, but also sell propaganda as part of the monetization and commercialization of success.

As noted earlier, cinema is an important part of world culture in our time. The emergence of cinema has become almost the first milestone in the globalization of thoughts and ideas, which we are now seeing through the Internet. We can say that cinema is the first prototype for the rapid transfer of information across cities and countries even before the

advent of the World Wide Web. This is supported by the theory of industrialization by Theodor Adorno and Max Horkheimer (Horkheimer & Adorno, 1972).

Based on these theories, the main propaganda trends and ideologies from the state and other forces have accelerated in the form of industrialization. This reinforces the established tradition of considering cinema from this sociological point of view. Moreover, according to Bourdieu, cultural capital based on already existing cultural artifacts affects developing generations. Nevertheless, the cinema is diverse, the author's cinema is popularized and distributed through film festivals, among others. The duality of the development of cultural capital, which makes it possible to understand such films, is interesting.

3.2. Cultural consumption

On the other hand, cultural capital for modern man is erased and is inferior to the theory of cultural omnivore. The same industrialization and globalization, the Internet and access to classified information about cultures are rapidly affecting the viewer. Now a complex author's film is available for interpretation and discussion on various forums. The level of cultural consumption has increased. Cultural omnivores are characterized by a willingness to interact with various cultural genres and the ability to navigate various cultural fields. This also affects cultural production, as directors can and begin to broadcast their ideas, as a large audience is ready for this.

To consider the problem of consumption in a more substantive way, we turn to the theory of perception. Perception theory focuses on how the audience interprets cultural texts and extracts meaning from them. It highlights the active role of the audience in the process of cultural consumption, highlights how people discuss and interpret cultural messages based on their own experiences, identity and social context.

Conceptually, film festivals can be viewed from the point of view of "events shaping the field of activity" (Lampel & Meyer, 2008), "temporary organizations [...] that unite and shape the development of professions, technologies, markets and industries" and in which "people from different organizations and with different goals" participate. to meet periodically or on a one-time basis to announce new products, develop industry standards, create social networks,

develop industry standards, create social networks, recognize achievements, share information and interpret it., and conduct business" (Lampel & Meyer, 2008: 1026).

Most film festivals are organized as a collection of numerous events, including contests (the main competition and various additional programs), "master classes" with the participation of famous cinematographers, screening of thematic programs (for example, retrospectives or country screenings), demonstration presentations and master classes (for example, the work of a large studio in progress, Program strategies of television channels or new technological developments), markets for co-production, distribution and recruitment, as well as a number of social events (for example, receptions and parties)., which contribute to ensuring that participants have an idea of the emerging agenda in a particular area. Thus, in addition to (rethinking) values, festivals play an important role in the learning process of participants on the ground, allowing them to be considered as a temporary "learning ecology" (Levitt & March, 1988; Rüling, 2009b).

Methodological Strategy

In this chapter we will look at the research methodology. This will be discussed in four parts: methodological approach, procedure, participants and data analysis. Firstly, we will firstly briefly define the methodology of the whole study with a justification of each approach to form the final outcome. Secondly, we will look in more detail at the data collection process with the same explanation of the application of a particular method with a more detailed description of the approaches. Thirdly, a separate section will be devoted to the description of the interview sample, as this has a great impact on the final result, it is necessary to describe the type of sample, the criteria and their justification. Fourthly, we conclude by briefly describing the process of data analysis, which will be outlined as the outcome of the research.

1. Methodological Approach

This study examines the hypothesis that the films – that are winners of the Cannes Film Festival - are a reflection of the social, historical, political issues or unrest of the time when they were particularly recognized and awarded. This refers to a theory of cultural production oriented towards social reflection and cultural consumption especially for viewers with and without specialized cultural capital for understanding auteur films.

In order to investigate this issue, it is supposed to create a flexible and, in some respects, innovative methodological strategy to investigate such a unique assumption.

1. Create a representative group of films, which are Cannes Film Festival winners, to cover some cultural and social diversity;

Make a list of the winning films of the Cannes Film Festival: Palme d'Or, Grand Prix. Films will be selected from festivals over the past 6 years (2024-2018, as the festival was canceled in 2020 due to covid).

2. Then choose five films awarded at the Cannes Film Festival over the past 6 years. Films should be illustrative in different dimensions:

- 1) diversity of geographical origin or devoted to the problems of different countries (since most films were shot in the USA);

- 2) content (various social issues);
 - 3) the intentions of the directors, the teams (the main meaning that the team laid down).
3. Create a matrix of socially, historically, politically important ideas, movements and other things by year according to the selected movies.
 4. Conducting interviews with film buffs who will watch or re-watch the selected films for the first time in order to better understand the perceived cultural production in the field of socio-historical-political representation.

2. Procedure

1. Film selection

A list of all the films that have won an award at the Cannes Film Festival will be selected. They have been recognized by both critics and a large circle of viewers already, as all awards take place after the film has been distributed. This list will be examined for social, historical, and political themes, and the film's region of creation and genre will also be taken into account. Unique films will then be highlighted for further analysis.

2. Creation of an issues matrix

After selecting the individual five films based on their year of production, key social, historical, and political events will be selected. A matrix of the most important ideas and events will be compiled to assist in creating interviews, conducting interviews, and interpreting the results. Such a contextual matrix will be compiled two years before the official premiere of each film, as it takes a fair amount of time to create and film.

3. Conducting the interviews

Interviews were conducted via calls in various digital technologies as well as face-to-face personal interviews (N = 10). We will conduct semi-guided in-depth interviews, as it is very important for us to hear the viewer's instinctive impressions, recall their emotional experience, and recall incidents in the distant past. The sampling was spontaneous and quota-based, based on the deduced films in the cultural context. The interviews lasted between 70 and 120 minutes on average. A verbal consent to be interviewed was read to each

participant before the interview began. Everyone was provided with information about the interview consisting of a verbal informational consent that provided information about the purpose of the study, the questions, and each participant was also made aware of the option to opt out of individual questions or full participation. The interview consisted of open-ended questions on the following topics: general film perception and emotional impressions, social reproduction, social, historical and political context, and cultural perception. Various research methods such as probing, echo-probing were used during the interviews. This is especially important for in-depth interviews that aim to listen fully to the interviewee. All interviews were transcribed as text documents and used to form overall findings. The video recordings were deleted.

3. Participants

To participate in this part of the study, an unlikely, purposeful sample of cinema lovers:

- 10 people overall, 5 men and 5 women, where 5 people in each group are people with different gender (homosexuals, etc.). Representation of people of different sexual preferences and self-definitions is extremely important, as many of today's lesser-known festivals focus on gender issues. This is due to the fact that, being part of the majority of the world, it is impossible to understand the problems of minorities clearly enough;
- Also, in the sample there are: 2 representatives of the Southern Korean culture, 2 representatives of the Swedish culture, 2 representatives of the British culture, 2 representatives of the Turkish culture, 2 representatives of the French culture. This sample is not necessarily based on the country of birth, but somehow selects a person familiar with the context of the culture without necessarily living in the host country;
- All participants should have the same cultural background: they should be people with a higher education (minimum: Bachelor's degree), with a job that can be classified as middle class in the country of residence. This is because, despite the theory of cultural omnivore, cultural capital does not lose its importance, which is often applied in cultural studies. In order to make the research purer we choose interviewees with higher education. The perception of films by people with less education is worthy of a separate study.

4. Data analysis

The interviews lasted from 70 to 120 minutes. The interviews were transcribed verbatim. The interviews were analysed using thematic analysis to distinguish the meanings of the interviewees' unstructured thoughts. Afterwards, MAXQDA software was used to code all the interviews.

CHAPTER 3

1. Films selection

Statistics on the winning films of the Festival de Cannes

Statista has summarised some interesting statistics about which countries have the most Palme-winning films from between 1955 and 2019 (McCarthy, 2019; Figure 4). The Cannes Film Festival, as a very European event, of course shows an overwhelming number of winning countries just from Europe. Ironically, the United States stands at the top of the list, although it has not participated in the festival since the beginning of its history. Nevertheless, the film industry in this country is more developed than anywhere else in the world.

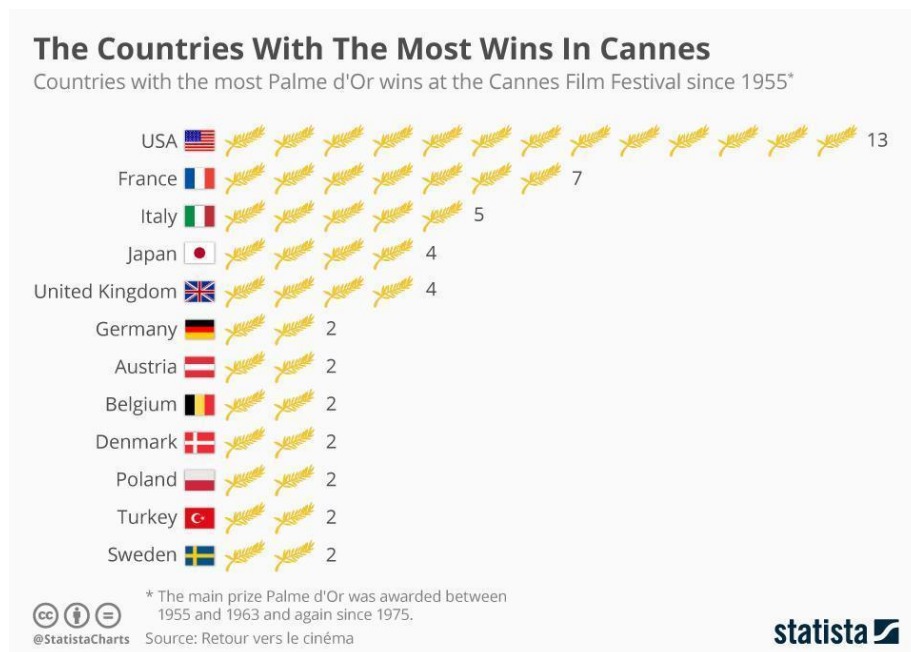


Figure 4, The countries with the most wins in Cannes 1955 – 2019 (McCarthy, 2019)

Of course, European countries have strong differences in cultural, social and political contexts. However, we would also like to consider other parts of the world, such as West and East Asia and Scandinavia. Especially since Japan and Sweden, for example, have triumphs, and Asian cinema is particularly strong as a separate field in recent times. Therefore, we will try to present the most diverse and comprehensive list of films.

Selected Cannes Film Festival winning films by category

The films that won in the main categories at the Cannes Film Festival from 2024 to 2018 were investigated. In this way, we were able to select 5 films for further analysis. Let's present them and describe the idea of why certain films were included in the list.

1. 'Everything We See as Light', 2024, Payal Kapadia, India, Drama, Grand Prix

As Indian film reviewer and Variety journalist Naman Ramachandran writes (2024), 'Payal Kapadia's "All We Imagine as Light" is the first Indian film in competition at the Cannes Film Festival in 30 years.' This is a particularly important film at this year's Cannes Film Festival, as India is rarely represented at the festival, and the world knows even less about the country's culture and modernity. The film is in the drama genre, so we can assume something more realistic and tragic than classic Bollywood.

2. 'Triangle of Sorrow', 2022, Ruben Östlund, Sweden, satirical black comedy, Palme d'Or winner

As the Guardian writes after the film's premiere in 2022, this film is 'the end of Western civilisation' (Thorpe, 2022). This film is a multinational satire on the myriad of social, political, and class factors in society throughout Europe.

3. 'Unclenching Fists', 2021, Kira Kovalenko, drama, Un Certain Regard Awards

The film is shot in the Ossetian language, displaying all the colour of the region of origin. It is also the second of the selected films directed by a female director, which is particularly important for the representation of social unrest. The film explores the impact of tradition and patriarchy on personal freedom. It also addresses issues of identity and social pressure, making it important for exploring mechanisms of social control and adaptation in a transforming society.

4. 'Parasites', 2019, Pon Joon-ho, South Korea, thriller, Palme d'Or winner

'Parasites' is the first South Korean film to win the Palme d'Or at the Cannes Film Festival. This film created a furore, opened the world of South Korean cinema. This film, among other things, told a lot about the social structure and culture of South Korea, revealing all the vices of society. Horrifying in its truth the film.

5. ‘Capernaum’, 2018, Nadine Labaki, Lebanon, drama, Jury Prize at the Cannes Film Festival

African cinema is underrepresented in film festivals due to the late development of the industry in the country and the lack of big budgets to make them. Nevertheless, such films have been increasingly found on the lists in recent years. The film ‘Capernaum’ is one such film. It tackles pressing social issues such as poverty, child neglect and migration, showing the mechanisms of social inequality and injustice. These are all things that can be presented about developing countries in a candid narrative.

Exploring the social, political and historical matrix of the time of making the selected films

1. ‘Everything We See as Light’

In fact, the world knows very little about what is happening in India. And it is Kapadia's film that shows this as it does not rely on the plot but on the characters and the relationships between them, where the city is as much a character in the film.

The second leitmotif becomes the theme of women in India. ‘This is a city that gives women a lot of opportunities. It is safer for a woman to work here than in other parts of the country.’ It is a celebration of womanhood. ‘It was normal for me to make a film with so many female characters,’ she says, “and I feel something strong about female friendship and companionship, which have helped me a lot in my life” (Payal Kapadia, cited by Thompson, 2024).

Also the director shows the migration from rural to urban areas and shows the complete opposition of these worlds. The film explores this theme through the stories of three heroines, Prabhi, Anu and Parvati, who, after moving to Mumbai, face problems of adaptation and social inequality. The characters embody the typical struggle of migrants to survive in a rapidly urbanising society, which reflects the reality of many people in India (Thompson, 2024).

India is a colourful country, the world still needs to explain the traditions and culture. However, development in the country and globalisation is shifting the traditional way of life. The film also highlights the sectarian conflicts in recent years. The Hindu and Muslim

communities develop against the backdrop of Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) politics, which supports the idea of a Hindu nation (Thompson, 2024).

This brings to the political context of the film. One of the characters, Parvati, faces eviction from her home as a result of an urban reorganisation programme that has left, and still leaves, the poorest, non-relocatable sections of the population without a livelihood. This process will continue until at least 2031 (BA, 2023).

2. ‘Triangle of Sorrow’

Director Ruben Östlund stated that the idea for the film came to him back in 2017, but the film was planned to be presented in 2021, preceding the years of creation. However, the film is being presented at the Cannes Film Festival in 2022 due to the cancellation of the festival in 2021 (Gray, 2023). Despite the award, the much-anticipated Triangle of Sadness, caused controversy in public opinion, becoming one of the most controversial Palme d'Or winners in recent years.

Östlund explained that the film's title ‘triangle of sorrow’ refers to the wrinkles between a person's eyebrows and that it is called ‘wrinkles of worry’ in Swedish. ‘Triangle of Sadness is a social commentary that manages to deliver the truth about the bourgeoisie, capitalism and gender roles in as satirical a tone as possible without losing the point. A masterful, raucous, fun ride’ (CinéOtium, 2023). A brief comment on the film is ‘power corrupts’. ‘Östlund plays with societal expectations: gender roles, wealth and capitalism’ (CinéOtium, 2023).

Gender Themes

The director shows how beauty can help to advance in class society. However, a pair of similar characters with beauty as a privilege still have to struggle with gender roles where men have to pay regardless of economic class (CinéOtium, 2023).

A critique of the super-rich and the pyramidal structure of society

Östlund described the premium cruise yacht as an ‘inverted (social) pyramid’ - ‘on the bottom deck are the non-white cleaners; on the middle deck are the cruise ship staff and on the top deck are the mega-rich.’ The film tells of a series of hilarious, unrealistic acts by members of the upper class - a rich old lady who demanded that the entire crew go swimming, an elderly couple who made a fortune selling hand grenades and were later killed by their own

hands, a drunken Russian capitalist , who kept talking about how he was selling ‘shit’ (like fertiliser), and the paralysed woman who could only repeat ‘In Den Wolken’ (meaning ‘in the clouds’), eluding the fact that their extreme wealth made them detached from reality and the down-to-earth world’ (CinéOtium, 2023).

An inverted class dynamic and allegory of power and human nature

After the crash of a luxury liner, the class pyramid flips 180 degrees. The cleaning lady becomes the leader, and the ill-equipped rich had to submit. ‘This inversion of classes clearly points to an allegory of the corruption of power in the face of both the dynamics of relationships and the structure of society’ (CinéOtium, 2023). Corruption helps the model protagonist to get food by selling his body. The rest of the rich have to work to earn the same thing.

3. ‘Unclenching Fist’

‘The film, a compelling study of a young woman trying to assert her independence in a North Ossetian mining town with a bitter legacy of violence, was one of four women's feature films to win awards from a jury headed by British director Andrea Arnold... Arnold called ‘an explosion of originality, corporeality and feeling’ (Lodge, 2021).

‘Unclenching Fists seems to be a very scary, even shocking film, but all the gruesomeness is completed rather by the viewer's imagination (Pugachev, 2021).’ The whole film is the clenched fists of a young girl who is trying to escape from a hyper-parenting and stifling family, she is trying to escape from the insularity of a small town in the mountains. ‘In Kovalenko's world, escaping from one's tormentors is easier said than done’ (O'Connor, 2021). This film shows the shackles of patriarchy, the powerlessness of women, and the hardened traditional values in regions of Russia that are impossible to escape from (O'Connor, 2021).

‘Ada has to face humiliation after humiliation, not least a deeply disturbing sex scene. And then there is the matter of the physical interactions in her family, both their quarrels and their affection, which would be deeply disturbing even without hints of incest. Clenched fists? Try clenched teeth’ (O'Connor, 2021)..

4. ‘Parasites’

“Parasites’ hailed as a masterpiece, is a hilarious, anxiety-ridden film about a poor family that infiltrates a rich house’ (Sims, 2020). The main motifs of the film become capitalism, inequality and social hierarchy that is inextricable. ‘This can be attributed to South Korea’s uniquely rapid economic boom, which largely occurred under the military dictatorship of President Park Chung-hee, who insistently put economic growth ahead of civil liberties...But as in Germany and the first-world countries of Europe, the richer a country gets, the greater the relative gap between rich and poor becomes. And I think it’s the same in Korea’ (Pon Joon-ho, cited by Sims, 2020).

The director shows this through direct quotations of the structure of society: semi-basement flats at the back of the city, where a large number of poorer people live. The hardened traditions that maintain social hierarchy through symbols of wealth, in the form of the gift of landscape stone (Sims, 2020).

Also, Korea is one of the unique countries that has maintained a social hierarchy similar to castes in India where the strata have their own names. The richer have a maintained permission to abuse, bullying that lower strata in the social hierarchy have to endure.

5. ‘Capernaum’

‘Capernaum’, which means “chaos”, tells the story of this child. The Oscar nominee talks about being a female director in Lebanon, the child poverty that inspired her latest film and the Syrian refugee crisis

The film tells the story of little boys Zane and Jonas’ daily struggle between life or death every time they cross the street. The film is based on the director’s research ‘which she conducted within, as she puts it, “the belts of suffering that surround our cities”. Many of her actors are real people who have lived in situations similar to the ones she portrays on screen’ (Schama, 2018).

‘According to Labaki, the script writing and research happened simultaneously - the more she learnt from the people she met who lived in this extreme poverty, the more her story developed. Some truly remarkable scenes in Capernaum were filmed in a hellish garage turned detention centre, a veritable prison, which Labaki says she gained access to through great perseverance and also by finding allies inside; she told them that if they ever wanted to

make a difference, they needed to show the world all the horrors that were happening there' (Schama, 2018).

'The characters in this film do terrible things - beating their children, selling them into modern-day slavery, cursing them mercilessly - and yet the lens is sometimes kind to them. 'I don't know any better,' Zane's father excuses himself at one point. 'Do you know what it's like to feed your child sugar and ice?' his mother asks her accusers. It is hard to accept this defence after seeing the crimes these parents have committed against their children, and yet it is hard not to feel that they are just as much victims of a broken system as their offspring' (Schama, 2018).

CHAPTER 4

Results

1. Reproduction of the social in cinema

The films that were selected in the study somehow use understandable plots and motifs to attract a large number of viewers. The purpose of cinema, as most of the respondents say:

‘Cinema is one of the most powerful tools to tell the story of your people to the larger world’ (Respondent 1, India, Male, 29 y.o.).

Therefore, social motifs need to be both understandable and colourful at the same time. The themes of gender, social and economic inequality are understandable to all as they can be observed everywhere. Therefore, all respondents conveyed in one way or another the social context and the main meaning that the filmmakers themselves and the social processes brought to the films. The genre features of such films, which often use elements and techniques of dramatic cinema make all the reflected problems sharper:

‘The film highlighted the problems more than offering solutions. It was more of a cry for help than a guide to action’ (Respondent 2, India, Female, 24 y.o.).

‘On the one hand it was very interesting, on the other hand it caused a feeling of discomfort because of the sharp social themes it raises, such as class differences and human greed’ (Respondent 3, Sweden, Male, 21 y.o.)

Respondents noted themes of economic inequality in almost every film. Indeed, when analysing the plots of each film, it can be seen that different cultures and societies speak differently about the same class issue.

1.1 The problem of economic inequality in films

‘All that we see as light’

It was most interesting to explore the reactions of cultural representatives from India after watching this film, as it is a new film that has yet to be discussed fully with the media

and social media. The reaction of the respondents from India was overwhelming. They remarked that the film was extremely emotional and left a lasting impression.

'The film vividly depicts issues such as poverty, social inequality, gender discrimination and exploitation of migrant labour. These themes intertwine and show how hard it is to survive in a world where people do not have access to basic rights' (Respondent 2, India, Female, 24 y.o.).

Unfortunately, India has a long history of struggling with economic inequality, namely multidimensional poverty, extreme poverty. Nevertheless, a large number of the population is surviving. This is noted by the respondents themselves.

'The film raises issues of social injustice and inequality. It makes us think about how the system exploits the vulnerable and why it is important to fight for the rights of every individual.' (Respondent 1, India, Male, 29 y.o.).

Nevertheless, poverty alleviation programmes are taking the country out of crisis and the proportion of poor people has been reduced from 25% to 15% by 2021. Therefore, respondents were more likely to focus on other social issues in films.

Triangle of Sadness

This film is a provocation, a deep satire that could not help but leave a mark after watching it. It is worth noting the difference that the respondents were from countries with different degrees of economic development. Therefore, the problems of the economic gap are perceived differently in films for European audiences.

'It (the film Triangle of Sadness) heightened my awareness of how deep the social inequalities in the world are. I began to think more about how money and power shape people's daily lives.' (Respondent 3, Sweden, Male, 21 y.o.)

Respondents noted that the film is not about unjust poverty, but about the destructive power of wealth, stupidity, greed and corruption that *'drives even the poorest people crazy when the game is turned upside down'* (Respondent 4, Sweden, Female, 28 y.o.).

This satire on hierarchy and order shows that in reality money cannot buy everything. Wealth will not save you from shipwreck or ensure your survival on a desert island.

Respondents noted that the film highlights all problems equally, but also does not focus on anything in particular. Respondents differed in their understanding of the irony of economic stratification. One interviewee noted the bullying and helplessness of rich people, while another noted that there would be no way out of this state even in the case of general equality: *'Someone always has to be the leader, someone will always have power, even if it is a simple survival skill. Corruption, capitalism - they will make the previously poor and wealth-hating person just as fat'* (Respondent 4, Sweden, Female, 28 y.o.).

'Unclenching Fists.'

This film did not elicit the same strong response from respondents regarding the issue of economic class. Respondents were inclined to discuss other social problems, but one respondent commented as follows:

'A small mining town in the mountains is not a representation of extreme poverty in Russia. This is everyday life for the majority of the population who do not live in the administrative centres of the region. It's not about class inequality, it's about what it's like to be hostage to a system that supports it.' (Respondent 5, Russia, Female, 23 y.o.)

'Parasites.'

'What I could hear from my friends who had seen this film before was widespread amazement at why a rich and developing country shows poverty in such a mundane way. 'I felt like I was collecting these pizza boxes with them,' is what my friend from Spain stated to me.' (Respondent 7, South Korea, Male, 26 y.o.)

It is true that Asian cinema has not attracted attention for a long time, for a long time Asian countries were not represented in film festivals or did not take prizes. Nevertheless, for a large audience, the film 'Parasites' talked more about South Korean life than any guidebook.

'It was really hard for me to watch it, I understood every action of the characters. I had goosebumps because for a while I also lived in a semi-basement flat to pay my tuition fees and leave.' (Respondent 8, South Korea, Female, 27 y.o.)

As one respondent noted, not everyone will be able to understand the actual drama of the film because of the subtle cultural undertones. There are very different attributes of economic class and affluence observed here, which imbue the film with a different meaning.

‘Probably some people will overlook the theme of education. But for us, going to university is often an unaffordable luxury. And the moment with the smell from the driver is a sign of living in an old house with faulty sewage, it’s your judgement of poverty.’ (Respondent 7, South Korea, Male, 26 y.o.)

Probably, an average viewer could have taken the film ‘Parasites’ as a satire on the economic gap in the country. However, the underlying social issue becomes less obvious.

‘Capernaum.’

Capernaum is a revelation film about life in Lebanon. Poverty, child exploitation and lack of social support are most vividly portrayed here. These problems are very acute in Lebanon and other countries with high levels of inequality.

‘I hadn’t seen this film before, although someone told me about it. It’s very hard: looking at how the younger generation lives. Nowadays a lot of people try to escape from it, like me (a migrant in Portugal). I guess from here it was even more difficult for me to look at this truth. Poverty in the eyes of a child is the worst thing’ (Respondent 9, Lebanon, Female, 31 y.o.).

Watching this film is not for everyone. It is a frank, heavy and documentary film where the actors (non-professionals) talk about situations in their lives including.

‘Do you know what ‘capernaum’ means? ... Yes, a lot of people will say ‘chaos.’ But it is the Galilean city where Jesus Christ lived and performed miracles. Another translation is ‘house of comfort.’ Now compare that to what actually happens in the film. Zane also has the meaning as ‘being’ if I remember correctly. This is the being of the son of god now in my country’ (Respondent 9, Lebanon, Male, 21 y.o.).

‘Of course this film is a cry for help, there is one of the highest levels of inequality here, a third of the population lives in total poverty, only 20% of the others can call their life worth living.’

One could not define this film more accurately. Indeed, it is filled with a heartbreaking story of what it is like to live in a holy but ‘God-forsaken’ place with no papers and no hope of any help.

1.2 The problem of social inequality in films

This issue was expressed in different aspects, but not all films emphasised it for the respondents, let us list the explanations and quotes of interviewees who explained social inequality in their own terms without relying on scientific definitions.

‘Everything we see as light.’

Economic inequality is a general trend that becomes a platform for other, deeper issues to develop.

‘Yes, right now the government in India is trying to support the residents, but it's not all that simple. Here we see a striking cultural feature - forced urbanisation. There are no social guarantees that your life will actually get better...’ (Respondent 2, India, Female, 24 y.o.)

For respondents from India, social inequality in the film was presented as an unresolved issue of lack of support for migrants to big cities. As observed, many do so consciously, moving for a better life, but are faced with the

‘It plausibly shows the problems of migrants such as labour exploitation, lack of rights and discrimination faced by many in India and elsewhere.’ (Respondent 2, India, Female, 24 y.o.)

‘Parasites.’

‘The parasites of society are what this film is about. But who are the parasites? No, none of the characters. It's the social hierarchy, social statuses and some symbols, capital, connections, anything you can imagine.’ (Respondent 8, South Korea, Female, 27 y.o.)

Parasites is a very culturally rich film, it is not about wealth but about the different floors of the social ladder. This is what the average viewer might not have noticed, but a South Korean will. Social status is higher than economic status, because attributes in the form

of education, level of work (senior manager and so on), place of work and even the city, the street.

'It's such a personal thing. In my youth, I also had difficulty finding a job. The lowest positions were associated with humiliation, but you're forced to obey. That's the rules, that's how it's always been lived' (Respondent 7, South Korea, Male, 26 y.o.).

Respondents identified this theme as the main theme in the whole film. Each act can be explained in terms of hierarchy, creating the image of climbers on the social ladder to success.

1.3. The problem of gender inequality in films

Regarding gender from film to film, it was most and interesting to observe how members of different gender interpret the content of the film depending on their own social knowledge and experience.

'Everything We See as Light.'

This film follows the lives of migrant women in India. It is interesting to note that only a girl pointed out the gendered nature of the film.

'Yes, it is a particularly female-centric film. We see a story typical of India - women move to big cities to finally fight for their financial independence. The woman becomes a full member of society, of economic relations.' (Respondent 2, India, Female, 24 y.o.).

'Triangle of Sadness.'

This is the most interesting case study within the research. The film looks at the gender issue not from the female side but from the male side. The male respondent reacted very vividly to this moment, whereas the girl was embarrassed but gave her response.

'Yes, that moment where you had to split the bill! She is successful, took him to a restaurant to suit her taste, to match her super-hyper-model status. And he has to pay, even though his situation was questionable money-wise right now. So what's this now? Why shouldn't she pay?' (Respondent 3, Sweden, Male, 21 y.o.).

'Strange moment, you don't expect to see it in the film. Yes, the question 'who should pay?' is plaguing everyone. Yes, she could have paid for it, perhaps she should have just talked about it from the beginning so she could make a choice about whether it was right for her. I agree that the unspoken nature of this rule is disconcerting. However, the income gap between men and women doesn't override one point in the film.' (Respondent 4, Sweden, Male, 28 y.o.)

'Unclenching Fists.'

This film is also interesting in terms of male and female viewpoints. The male respondent as well as the female respondent noticed that the film speaks about the trap of women in the southern regions of the country where patriarchy reaches its maximum in distorted Muslim traditions.

'I was confused after watching it. I guess there was a bit of shame that I didn't understand enough about the tragedy of the protagonist. I understood her struggle for freedom, but I didn't understand her enough as a young girl, why she humiliated herself and endured, how she should have done better' (Respondent 6, Russia, Male, 33 y.o.)

'I cried from the first minutes. I felt like Ada was myself, the whole film I felt suffocation, I wanted to quit watching many times. My wish is not that I never watch this film, but that things never happen to our country that lead to the objectification of women when they lose the struggle for freedom unconditionally.' (Respondent 5, Russia, Female, 23 y.o.)

'Parasites.'

This film is rarely seen from this side, as the respondent says, but it is just as much a cultural subtext. Here the woman is the opposite of all of the above.

'You've seen this wealthy and more European family where the woman is the jewel of life, going to sports and raising the perfect child. But there's another, more common side, where the woman is the one who holds everything together: the house, the children, the husband. And that's the norm so much so that I'm afraid to get married and have the same lifestyle.' (Respondent 8, South Korea, Female, 27 y.o.)

'Capernaum.'

According to respondents of both biological genders, this film shows the cruelty of the woman's share in Lebanon.

'Here you are a slave and that's all. You'll be sold to a family, as it was in the film, you'll serve some old pervert in return for a pittance for your birth family. And then you'll be impregnated at the age of 12 and thrown out to die. Oh yes, and there's no-one and nothing for it. Nothing at all' (Respondent 9, Lebanon, Female, 31 y.o.).

Here being a woman means you lose your will and freedom, no one will protect you, except your younger brother Zein, who will go to prison at the age of 12 because of this.

2. Reproducing the political and historical in film

Of course, cinema is a reflection of what is happening in the world, but it is more of an overall sum rather than the impact of something separate. However, elements of documentary cinema are present in the films.

2.1. Influence of political situation

The film *All That We See as Light* is based on the stories of non-professional actors, as is *Capernaum*. This technique reflects the relevance of what is happening right now while the viewer is watching the film. The use of real people who have lived through all the horrors makes the films especially poignant. The same technique is used in the film *'Unclenching Fists'*. In this way, the filmmakers do not just speak out about a certain situation in their country or in a certain part of society, but through real characters they speak to the viewer about what is happening without their knowledge or awareness somewhere very far away. This increases the impact, attracts more meanings.

'Unclenching Fists'

The historical and political context of film making was not mentioned by the respondents in isolation during the discussion of films. However, the context of actual history influenced the understanding of the films more strongly. Thus, respondents from Russia, and from Lebanon, both talked about how the hostilities influenced their understanding of the films. They started to see additional context about free will and human rights to life.

'If you had asked me what this film was about two years ago, I would have said it was a story about patriarchy, about the role of women in society, about the shackles of the traditional structure of society. Now I see it differently: it's a story about how the system has taken away people's freedom. It's some answer to why one man can't break the system, despite all the fairy tales about bad stories with a good ending. It's not like that. This is what is called in Russian literature, a story about a little man.' (Respondent 5, Russia, Female, 23 y.o.).

The same intonation could be found in the conversation with respondents from Lebanon. Fighting alongside one's own country cannot go unnoticed, leading people to more philosophical responses due to cultural sensitivities.

2.2 Influence of historical situation

'Capernaum'

In the film Capernaum, the scene where little Zane judges his parents for giving birth to him has a deep philosophical meaning, touching on questions of ethics, existence and responsibility.

'The episode embodies the idea of existential despair; questioning the moral right of parents to bring a child into a world that is incapable of providing him with a decent life' (Respondent 9, Lebanon, Female, 31 y.o.).

The scene raises the philosophical issue of freedom and choice: no one chooses to be born, but everyone faces the consequences of a life where external circumstances can be terribly unfair. Zane's question to his parents reflects one of the central questions of existentialism - about the meaning of existence and the human right to choose, including the right not to exist if life turns into endless suffering.

Symbolically, the scene reflects the conflict between individual and social responsibility in a situation of war and poverty. Parents give birth to children for personal or traditional motives, but often fail to take social and material responsibility for their future. This is the very existence of being in chaos. Is such an existence really necessary? If life is bound up with suffering, and only death can relieve it.

'This conflict is exacerbated in contexts of poverty and marginalisation, raising questions about how society can influence the destinies of people who have been deprived of opportunities and rights since birth.' (Respondent 9, Lebanon, Male, 21 y.o.).

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Annex A. Interview Guide

Interview Guide

Block 1. Socio-demographic information

Hello! Thank you for participating in the interview. Could you, please, tell me a little bit about yourself? Education level, work, etc.?

Block 2. Film consumption

1. Can you tell us about how you feel about movies?
2. How do you choose a movie to watch?
3. How often do you watch movies?
4. What movies do you watch most often?
5. In what context do you view movies?

Block 3. Social Reproduction

1. How do you feel about movies that cover social, historical, or political events?
2. Can you name the movies that you liked or impressed you the most? Why?

Block 4. Questions about perceptions of a particular movie

1. Tell your impressions of the movie you watched.
2. What do you think is the most important message of the movie? How did you understand it?
3. Do you think the movie accurately reflects social or historical events? Why yes or why no?
4. What do you think is the main social or political message of this movie?
5. What do you think is the director's main goal in reproducing these events?

Block 5. Questions about social context

1. What social issues do you think are most vividly represented in this movie?
2. Did you feel that the movie offered solutions to social problems or just highlighted them? Can you give examples?
3. How did this movie influence your perception of social problems in your country or the world at large?

Block 6: Questions about historical context

1. What historical events or eras depicted in this movie made the greatest impression on you?

2. Do you think the movie has educational value in the context of history? Why yes or why no?
3. Have you seen examples of a filmmaker using historical events to create parallels to contemporary issues? If yes, provide examples.

Block 7. Questions about political context

1. What political issues or conflicts are highlighted in this movie?
2. What impact do you think the movie had on your understanding of these political issues?
3. Do you think this movie can influence public opinion and political decisions? Why yes or why no?

Block 8. Concluding Questions

1. Did this movie change your perception of any social, historical, or political issues? If yes, in what specific ways?
2. Do you believe that films that cover social, historical, or political events have a significant impact on the way people see and understand important world events? Why yes or why no?
3. Is there anything else you would like to add about the impact of this movie on your perception of social, historical, and political events?

Additional questions

1. How important do you think films like this are in raising public awareness of social, historical, and political issues?
2. Has the film influenced your behavior or attitudes? If so, in what ways?
3. If you could ask one question to the director of the movie, what would it be?

Do you have any recommendations for other viewers on what to look for when watching such movies?