Contribution of Lux Prize Films to European Identity: A Study from a Critical Cosmopolitan Perspective

Contribución de las películas ganadoras del LUX Prize a la identidad europea: un estudio desde la perspectiva del cosmopolitismo crítico

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Abstract

Cinema projects values, can be a driver of European integration, and contributes to the formation of a shared European identity (European Commission, 2014). To support these assertions, it is essential to identify specific evidence within films. This study argues that critical cosmopolitanism, as both a theory and a methodological framework, is suitable for conducting this type of research. Additionally, it suggests that the concept of Europeanisation, which denotes a specific European identity, may be a more appropriate term than integration to describe the process of Europe's transformation and adaptation over time (Delanty, 2009). The study presents a methodological proposal for operationalising this framework and applies it through discourse analysis to films awarded the European Parliament LUX Prize between 2007 and 2019. Findings indicate that these films reveal both challenges and opportunities to overcome differences and embrace diversity through intercultural dialogue. The article concludes that critical cosmopolitanism is a pertinent framework for analysing how cinema reflects and fosters a European identity. The LUX Prize-winning films portray the current stages of the Europeanisation process and reveal a desire for a shared normative culture, making common values visible over differences and promoting a sense of belonging to an ever-evolving European community.

Keywords: Cosmopolitanism, cultural identity, european cinema, european cultures, europeanisation.

Resumen

El cine proyecta valores, puede ser un motor de la integración europea y contribuye a la formación de una identidad compartida (Comisión Europea, 2014). Para sustentar estas afirmaciones, es esencial identificar evidencias dentro de las películas. Este estudio sostiene que el cosmopolitismo crítico, como teoría y como marco metodológico, es adecuado para realizar este tipo de investigación. Además, sugiere que el concepto de europeización, que denota una identidad europea específica, puede ser un término más apropiado que el de integración para describir el proceso de transformación de Europa a lo largo del tiempo (Delanty, 2009). Se presenta aquí una propuesta metodológica para operacionalizar este marco y se aplica, mediante el análisis del discurso, a las películas galardonadas con el Premio LUX del Parlamento Europeo (2007-2019). Los resultados indican que estos largometrajes revelan tanto desafíos como oportunidades para superar las diferencias y abrazar la diversidad a través del diálogo intercultural. El artículo concluye que el cosmopolitismo crítico es un marco pertinente para analizar cómo el cine refleja y fomenta una identidad europea. Las películas ganadoras del Premio LUX muestran las etapas del proceso de europeización y el deseo de lograr una cultura normativa compartida, donde los valores comunes superen las diferencias.

Palabras clave: *cosmopolitismo, identidad cultural, cine europe, culturas europeas, europeización.*

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1. Introduction

The concept of 'European identity' is somewhat ambiguous. There are different perspectives on and approaches to the idea, and those authors studying the concept have diverse backgrounds. Many ambiguities arise from the fact that Europe is viewed as a complex project because of the lack of adhesion to an emotional identity. This is due to the absence of a concrete ethnos, which remains within the individual nation-states (Cadenas, 2018). Despite the ongoing struggle between various identity positions, Olausson (2010) argues that it is a creative process that enables transformation. Other authors (Jullien, 2016) claim that there is no such thing as identity or, more specifically, cultural identity.

The notion of European identity has gained growing interest due to concerns about the European integration of states and markets, and of peoples and cultures (Delanty, 2019). An alternative conception of European identity addresses cosmopolitan heritage within Europe. In this sense, Europe has an identity in terms of heritage or cultural tradition that comprises a common or at least widely shared set of values, ideas, beliefs or practices. Authors such as Beck and Grande (2007), Benhabib (2008), Delanty (2002, 2009, 2010), Jackson and Sørensen (2015), Risse (2004) and Schlesinger (2007) have studied the phenomenon from this standpoint.

The formation of a European identity is therefore no different from how national identities emerged in a formative period over time, yet it does not exist in the same sense (Delanty, 2009). Furthermore, the identity formation process includes the complicated relation to non-European countries, especially those under colonial domination. Symbolically, Europe has been constituted as a collective imagination, and the symbolic form of this Europe is growing (cultural symbols and a budding political community based on citizenship and rights). The absence of political identity does not preclude a European political community based on values other than economic ones (Delanty, 2010). Europe is not only a common market of goods, labour, capital and services shared by member states of the European Union (EU) and associated countries thereof (EEA and EFTA members). There are also social dynamics in common, which entered modern European politics in the shape of social policies and a more general normative conception of society (Delanty, 2018c, p. 5).

The 1992 Maastricht Treaty marked a new stage in the process of creating an ever-closer union among the peoples of Europe. The union established (the EU) was to be founded on the former European Communities, supplemented by the policies and forms of cooperation established by the Treaty. Its task was to organise, demonstrating consistency and solidarity, relations between the Member States, and between their peoples (European Union, 1992). The Treaty represented a step forward from the 1973 Declaration on European Identity (European Communities, 1973) and the Tindemans Report (European Communities, 1976), allowing for a link between European identity and advances in political integration through cultural action (Sassatelli, 2008).

In this sense, the EU (and Council of Europe) slogan: 'united in diversity,' is somewhat misleading since the integration process also allows for diversification. As Europeans learn how to coexist, the implication is that there will be more pluralisation than unification. Delanty (2009, p. 214) noticed a paradox in the attempt 'to create a European identity through the policy mechanisms of European integration' and argued that the term 'Europeanisation' was more appropriate than 'integration' to characterise the transformation process that Europe has undergone over time. For Radaelli (2003, p. 30), Europeanisation refers to the processes of construction, diffusion and institutionalisation of formal and informal rules and ways of doing, and of 'shared beliefs and norms' that are firstly consolidated in the EU public policy and politics, and then incorporated into domestic discourse and identities. Europeanisation is not simply about crossing horizontal links between different European societies; it includes vertical connections, and transversal links between European societies, the EU and the broader global context (Delanty 2009, p. 215).

The connection between Europeanisation and EU cultural policies (and, consequently, with cinema) was established by Sassatelli (2008). This assertion connects nicely with a cosmopolitan approach, which seeks to identify contexts and spaces of both Self and societal transformation (Delanty, 2019). Within the EU cultural policy framework, cultural goods – of which cinema is an example – are protected, promoted and legitimised as bearers of cultural identity. Knauss asserts that 'the importance of film for the formation of individual and collective identity has been widely recognised' (2023, p. 352). Cinema is not 'just an industrial art form (...) but also a particularly useful means for the dissemination of cultural ideas' (Liz, 2016, p. 16), and serves as a platform for researching connections between cosmopolitanism, borders and mobility (Rovisco, 2013). Stacey (2017) acknowledges that films can materialise and envision different cosmopolitan outlooks and agendas in their narratives and visuality.

Mulvey *et al.* (2017, p. 3) mention that perspectives on cosmopolitanism and cinema have been manifold. The perspective taken in this study relates to the representational level of film. It emphasises how cinematic stories have materialised cosmopolitan outlooks through the representation of alterity, the marginalised other, and migrant subjectivities of identity transformations in a globalised context, in which national boundaries are reshaped and the formation of new and fluid forms of belonging takes place.

The aim of the study is twofold. First, to test the contribution of European cinema to European identity by observing it through the lens of the Europeanisation process described further above. For the purpose of this study, European cinema is understood as that produced or co-produced by any country in Europe (not limited to EU member states). And second, this study attempts to make a methodological contribution.

The study departs from a traditional approach in film studies and aims to apply perspectives and methods from a different academic field. Critical cosmopolitanism is a sociological current, on which Delanty is a prominent author. It offers an appropriate approach to and methodological framework for the analysis of European identity and the Europeanisation process.

2. The critical cosmopolitan approach

Current understandings of the term cosmopolitanism can be classified into six main groups as: 1) a socio-cultural condition dealing with transnational mobilities, senses of belonging and identity-building; 2) a philosophy or worldview related to global justice and world citizenship; 3) a political project beyond the borders of the nation-state; 4) a political project for recognising multiple identities; 5) an attitude or disposition towards engaging with the world and the culturally different Other; and 6) a practice or competence of (again) engaging with the world and the other (Vertovec and Cohen, 2002, p. 9). Thus, cosmopolitanism is both a normative theory and a social situation.

There is an assumption that Europe – a political project beyond nation-states whose aim is to include multiple identities ('united in diversity') – is cosmopolitan, which warrants a certain type of governance. Critical scholars writing about Europe have started to question this assumption (Biebuyck, 2010).

Critical cosmopolitanism adheres to the essential side of constructivism and focuses on one central idea: the existence of a plurality of narratives that interact with one another, mutually shaping each other and giving birth to a new perspective on Europe and its past. Critical cosmopolitanism has an emancipatory aim, in that it seeks to find inclusive alternatives to mobility restrictions (Sager, 2018). The cosmopolitan situation appears in encounters, exchanges, and dialogues, and out of such encounters and dialogues comes a set of universalistic rules (Delanty, 2012).

This approach opens an array of possibilities for the study of the European integration project: it overcomes national and universalist narratives and understands Europe as the result of a sum of narratives and cultures, which cannot be limited to just one narrative or just one culture (Delanty, 2018b). Delanty is the main representative of this academic current, and this study adopts his perspective.

The experience of cosmopolitanism can be a measurable condition. Delanty (2012) argues that, in methodological terms, cosmopolitan indicators are those that concern social and cultural mediation. Previously, he had also stated that for cosmopolitanism to be a useful analytical tool, several indicators had to be established. Delanty does not set such indicators in any specific way. However, he establishes the four dynamics that must be present to show the extent of a cosmopolitan dimension. Specifically, the dynamics established by Delanty (2009, p. 86-87) are:

— *First dynamic. The capacity for the relativisation of one's own culture or identity:* In the encounter with the Other, the Self or native culture undergoes a process of learning or self-discovery, i.e., understanding the Other. Delanty explains this notion of the Other:

> All notions of Self and Other have been mediated through the wider category of the World. Europeans became reflexively conspicuous of themselves as the inhabitants of Europe as distinct from other parts of the world, Asia, Africa, the Americas (2019, p. lii-liii).

Delanty also specifies that:

> if identity implies a relation to another, it may be the case that the Other of Europe's identity is in fact its own past and that what is needed more urgently today is the re-discovery of the diversity of traditions that constitute what we know as Europe (2019, p. 332).

This concept of the Other is related to memory, a category in the fourth dynamic. Delanty (2018b, p. 195) also states that 'Mobility is a key aspect of European identities.'

— *Second dynamic. The capacity for the positive recognition of the Other:* This goes beyond the use of the Other in self-transformation to an accommodation of the Other. It is possible to situate this capacity in many forms of multiculturalism and forms of alterity based on hospitality. Hospitality is utilised as 'the claim of a stranger entering foreign territory to be treated by its owner without hostility' (Kant, 2016, p. 138).

— *Third dynamic. The capacity for mutual evaluation of cultures or identities: This* translates the possibility of intercultural dialogue extending beyond learning from the Other to a transformation of cultures and standpoints. When this happens, cultural pluralisation may appear in the form of social inclusion, which supports the idea that 'the cultural logic of Europeanisation results in pluralisation' (Delanty, 2009, p. 226).

— *Fourth dynamic. The capacity to create a shared normative culture: This emerges* out of the critical dialogue of standpoints and consists of a transcendence of difference and diversity towards a shared or common culture. It can be understood as a more developed third culture in which a translation of perspective occurs. Europeanisation may occur through a process of 'transformation in identity, in communication and in cultural models' (Delanty, 2009, p. 77).

3. Materials and Method

3.1. Materials

If European-produced films, as part of the European audiovisual sector, project 'values and can be a driver of European integration by contributing to our shared European identity' (European Commission, 2014, p. 2), the films that have won the LUX Prize may be an illuminating sample to test this statement from a critical cosmopolitanism viewpoint.

The European Parliament (EP) set up the LUX Prize in 2007 to identify and support films that tackle key issues in European public debate. Fictional feature films selected for the LUX Prize would help to air different views on some of the main social and political issues of the day (European Parliament, 2024).

Previous research has pointed out that the prize raises questions concerning the role of cinema in constructing a European identity (Stjernholm, 2016). That author argues that the LUX Prize becomes a distinct space where the negotiations of European cinema and European identities are particularly salient. The winning films frequently revolve around controversial questions regarding what the European community is. Integration, migration and poverty are recurring themes in the competition and, therefore, in the winning films. Stjernholm (2016, p. 24) argues that what distinguishes the LUX Prize from others is the way 'in which politics, cultural expression and questions of collective identity' are interwoven'. He also points out that cinema is singled out within the EP as a particularly effective constructor of cultural identities. Further, he argues that a prize of this sort is seen by EU institutions as a valuable platform between the 'sphere of European politics and individual citizens and may foster a sense of shared European culture' (2016, p. 25).

The study sample consists of 13 feature films that received the EP LUX Prize in every edition from 2007 to 2019. In 2020, the EP presented a newly created award, the LUX Audience Award, unifying the old EP LUX Prize with the People's Choice Award of the European Film Academy (EFA).

It is important to mention the selection process for feature films competing for the Prize between 2007 and 2019. The various institutions involved in the process had different views of the main social and political issues of the day, and of European identity[1].

Baschiera and Di Chiara (2018) summarised the selection process for the films in the sample. Those authors noted that the timeline of the selection process for the LUX Prize ran parallel to the European film festival circuit. Every year, a new selection panel would be formed in February after the Berlin Film Festival, and, shortly

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[1] The LUX Prize website displayed all relevant information on the selection process, but it is no longer available since the prize changed to the LUX Audience Award in 2020. The current website contains information about the LUX Audience Award selection process.

after the Cannes Film Festival, 10 competing films would be selected and then announced in July at the Karlovy Vary Film Festival. The three prize finalists would then be revealed at the Venice Film Festival, while the final vote would be held at the EP in Brussels in November. The composition of the selection panel included producers, distributors, cinema operators, festival directors, film critics, and representatives of the European Commission (Creative Europe) and Eurimages. Baschiera and Di Chiara pointed out that, from 2012, the percentage of panel members with experience as festival directors or festival programmers had consistently increased, 'settling above a 40% share, with a peak of more than 60% in the 2016 edition' (2018, p. 238).

Thus, although the award relied on the votes by Members of the EP, the selection panel was ultimately responsible for the pre-selection and selection of the three finalist films. The films in the sample are:

Table 1. Films that have won the LUX Prize (2007-2019)

Lux Prize Year	Title	Nationality	Screenplay	LUX Prize website link
2007	*Auf der anderen Seite (The Edge of Heaven)*	Germany, Turkey	Fatih Akin	https://luxaward.eu/movies/2007/auf-der-anderen-seite-edge-heaven
2008	*Le silence de Lorna (Lorna's Silence)*	Italy, France, Belgium	Jean-Pierre and Luc Dardenne	https://luxaward.eu/movies/2008/le-silence-de-lorna-lorna-s-silence
2009	*Welcome*	France	Philippe Lioret, Olivier Adam, Emmanuel Courcol	https://luxaward.eu/movies/2009/welcome
2010	*Die fremde (When We Leave)*	Germany	Feo Aladag	https://luxaward.eu/movies/2010/die-fremde-when-we-leave
2011	*Les neiges du Kilimandjaro (The Snows of Kilimanjaro)*	France	Robert Guédiguian, Jean-Louis Milesi	https://luxaward.eu/movies/2011/les-neiges-du-kilimandjaro-snows-kilimanjaro
2012	*Io Sono Li (Shun Li and the Poet)*	Italy, France	Andrea Segre, Marco Pettenello	https://luxaward.eu/movies/2012/io-sono-li-shun-li-and-poet
2013	*The Broken Circle Breakdown*	Belgium	Carl Joos, Felix van Groeningen	https://luxaward.eu/movies/2013/broken-circle-breakdown
2014	*Ida*	Poland	Rebecca Lenkiewicz, Pawel Pawlikowski	https://luxaward.eu/movies/2014/ida
2015	*Mustang*	France, Germany, Turkey	Deniz Gamze Ergüven, Alice Winocour	https://luxaward.eu/movies/2015/mustang
2016	*Toni Erdmann*	Germany, Austria, Romania	Maren Ade	https://luxaward.eu/movies/2016/toni-erdmann
2017	*Sami Blood (Sameblod)*	Denmark, Norway, Sweden	Amanda Kernell	https://luxaward.eu/movies/2017/sami-blood-sameblod
2018	*Woman at War (Kona fer í stríð)*	Iceland, United Kingdom, France	Benedikt Erlingsson, Ólafur Egill Egilsson	https://luxaward.eu/movies/2018/woman-war-kona-fer-i-strid
2019	*God Exists, Her Name Is Petrunya (Gospod postoi, imeto i' e Petrunija)*	North Macedonia, Belgium, Slovenia, Croatia, France	Elma Tataragić, Teona Strugar Mitevska	https://luxaward.eu/movies/2019/god-exists-her-name-petrunya-gospod-postoi-imeto-i-e-petrunija

Source. LUX Prize website.

3.2. Method

As detailed further above, the study relies on the four dynamics established by Delanty (2009) for the theoretical background to the methodological contribution that this study makes. The theoretical concepts were articulated to establish classification categories. The categories were then operationalised by applying indicators that appear within the films in the sample (Table 2).

Table 2. Dynamics (concepts), categories and indicators

Dynamic	Categories / Indicators

1. The capacity for the relativisation of one's own culture or identity	1.1. Cultural encounters with the Other (Delanty and Harris, 2019, p. 97)
	    1.1.1. East/West, North/South. Europeans with inhabitants from other parts of the world, Asia, Africa, the Americas
	    1.1.2. Own past
	    1.1.3. Diversity of traditions
	1.2. Mobility and border imaginary (Delanty, 2018a, p. 195)
	    1.2.1. Migration
	    1.2.2. Working and living in different countries
	    1.2.3. Borders (military or political borders, passport, border police, war zones, detention camps and refugee camps) (Delanty, 2009, p. 229-230)
	1.3. Personal reflection on one's own culture or identity because of cultural encounters (Delanty, 2008, p. 220)
	    1.3.1. Actions and words of the characters.
	    1.3.2. Actions of the characters

2. The capacity for the positive recognition of the Other	2.1. Hospitality (Delanty, 2015, p. 291)
	    2.1.1. Invitations
	    2.1.2. Charitable acts
	2.2. Understanding or better empathy (Delanty, 2012, p. 340)
	    2.2.1. Empathy
	    2.2.2. Forgiveness
	    2.2.3. Regret

3. The capacity for mutual evaluation of cultures or identities	3.1. Intercultural dialogue (Delanty, 2009, p. 87)
	    3.1.1. Positive evaluation of the Other's culture
	    3.1.2. Negative evaluation of the Other's culture
	3.2. Change of opinion as a result of the interaction between parties through intercultural dialogue
	    3.2.1. Thoughts and actions that show change of opinion
	3.3. Cultural pluralisation (Delanty, 2009, p. 226)
	    3.3.1. Social inclusion: facts and dialogues

4. The capacity to create a shared normative culture	4.1. Memory (Delanty, 2002, p. 353-355)
	    4.1.1. Religious identity
	    4.1.2. Consequences of the dissolution of the Soviet Union
	    4.1.3. Holocaust
	    4.1.4. Past and present wars
	4.2. Justice and rights in the form of social contract (Delanty, 2002, p. 356)
	    4.2.1. Citizenship
	    4.2.2. Human dignity or lack thereof
	    4.2.3. Anti-corruption
	    4.2.4. Sustainable development, stakeholder capitalism and corporate responsibility
	    4.2.5. Equality for women
	    4.2.6. Anti-racism
	    4.2.7. Inclusion of marginal voices
	    4.2.8. Differentiation (because integration also entails processes of differentiation) (Delanty, 2009, p. 222)

Source. Authors' own elaboration.

Since Delanty does not establish categories or set indicators in a specific way, the methodological contribution of this study begins at this point. To determine the categories, the researchers reviewed the key ideas scattered throughout Delanty's extensive body of academic research on Europe and critical cosmopolitanism. This review allowed relationships between those key ideas (categories) and the four dynamics to be found. It is precisely within these dynamics that the Europeanisation process – from encounters with the Other to the creation of a shared normative culture – became apparent (see Table 2 for references to Delanty's work allowing each category to be related to a particular dynamic).

The researchers selected indicators to determine what should be looked for/found within the films, and then used them to perform discourse analysis of the films. All elements within the films were taken as discourse elements. Special attention was paid to dialogues, attitudes, actions, mise en scène, framing, editing, camera position, narrative structures and sound.

The researchers performed the analysis independently and later compared the degree of agreement/disagreement between them.

4. Results

The results show that the four dynamics of the Europeanisation process proposed by Delanty (2009) are present in the films to varying degrees.

Nine of the 13 films display the initial mechanics of a process that could engender Europeanisation. Every story line and plot show various cultural encounters that lead the characters to reflect on their own identity and to acknowledge the presence of the Other, whether non-European or indeed European facing their own past or even the diversity of European traditions. There is also plentiful evidence of intercultural dialogue, leading to either a common understanding or a rejection of the Other and resulting in either a change of opinion or a meeting point of judgements and viewpoints. However, it may also result in further distancing between the parties. Moreover, many indicators found in the films demonstrate the difficulties in attaining European values such as social rights and justice.

Four films have specific characteristics that render the application of indicators difficult, without forcing the story. These films are *Les neiges du Kilimandjaro*, *The Broken Circle Breakdown*, *Mustang* and *God Exists, Her Name Is Petrunya*. In these stories, there is no encounter with the Other, even though Delanty indicates that an encounter should occur for the Europeanisation process to begin through the dynamics. Therefore, the results linked to the dynamics will be presented first, and then, the particularities of these four films will be explained.

4.1. First dynamic. The capacity for the relativisation of one's own culture or identity

Table 3 lists the films where this first dynamic is present, in relation to the categories it pertains to.

Table 3. Films showing categories of the first dynamic

Categories	Films showing categories
Cultural encounters with the Other	*Auf der anderen Seite, Le silence de Lorna, Welcome, Die Fremde, Io sono Li, Ida, Toni Erdmann, Sami Blood* and *Woman at War*
Mobility and border imaginary	*Auf der anderen Seite, Welcome* and *Woman at War*
Personal reflection on one's own culture or identity because of cultural encounters	*Auf der anderen Seite, Le silence de Lorna, Welcome, Io sono Li, Ida* and *Toni Erdmann*

Source. Authors' own elaboration.

4.1.1. Cultural encounters with the Other

The results show that the connection in cultural encounters happens between East and West; none of the films reflected North/South connections. *Ida* and *Sami Blood* display a cultural encounter that is an inner one, within their respective national identities.

A good example is found in *Auf der anderen Seite*. The film presents Ayten (Nurgül Yesilçay), a Turkish 20-year-old political activist operating both in and from Turkey, who has fled to Germany to escape the Turkish police. Once in Hamburg, Ayten befriends Lotte (Patrycia Ziolkowska), a German student, who invites her to lunch at the University canteen and quickly opens herself up to both Ayten's cause and her as a person.

To narrate the encounter between the two women, close-ups are used first, with continuity editing to maintain consistency of both time and space, as well as the axes of gaze, direction and movement. The shot/reverse shot technique is also used. The cultural encounter is strengthened by the fact that the film has multiple plots that intertwine. The characters move smoothly around these different spaces and structures. The three parts of the film are linked by time jumps and chronological coincidences, which viewers are capable of recognising from the information supplied by the filmmaker. Ironically, the characters do not become aware of that despite the search for the Other being present in the film's plots.

An example of an encounter of a different tone is shown in *Welcome*, set in 2009 in Calais. Bilal (Firat Ayverdi), a 17-year-old from Mosul, and his friend Zoran (Selim Akgul) – staying at what became known as the 'jungle' – go into a supermarket to buy food. The security guard stops them: 'Just one minute, just to buy food,' they reply. The guard retorts: 'No, and now get out.' Simon (Vincent Lindon) and his ex-wife Marion (Audrey Dana), the main French characters of the film, are also at the supermarket and notice the incident. They ask the supervisor why the boys are banned from entering. The answer is: 'This annoys the customers.'

Ida is a long reflection on the character's identity. Set in Poland in the 1960s, during the Cold War, the film is about a young novice who is required to face her Jewish heritage before taking her final vows in the convent. Throughout the film, she tries to accept who she is, her own background and the historical past of the Holocaust.

Shot composition leaves empty space above the characters' heads, allowing their thoughts or spiritual lives to be known. Similarly, the use of close-up shots reflects introspection or reflection on their identity and own past. Such shot composition places the characters so that they are looking at the edge of the frame, which serves to allegorically show that they are imprisoned in the space, that there is no possible way out of the institution (convent, government, situation).

The conventional use of shot/reverse shot in dialogues is avoided. The effect of this is that there is no visual correspondence between the characters, and it increases the impression of reflection by the characters. Moreover, it generates a feeling of distancing or detachment between them. The atmospheres become present and acquire great importance due to the existence of long silences, which represent the characters' thought processes and invite the viewers' reflection. Recourse to shots showing the protagonist isolated helps to portray the encounter with herself and with her past, along with shots that show her boxed in or overwhelmed by the lack of identity.

Sami Blood is set in Sweden in the 1930s, before World War II. The film tells the story of a young Sami girl who wants to leave her Sami homeland and study but, because of her ethnic background, she is not allowed to do so. The film raises the issue of minorities and racism and falls into the 're-discovery of the diversity of traditions' (Delanty, 2019, p. 332).

Subjective shots are used to increase the viewers' identification with the protagonist; they are taken at the height of her eyes and, when she is lying on the floor, the camera is also located at ground level, except in the scene where Elle Marja, the Sami girl, is brought back home from the village dance against her will. In that scene, the camera is slightly above her eyes, at a high angle. It frames expressive shots and leaves the protagonist in a situation of vulnerability in relation to her sister. The latter is situated in a position of moral superiority by being faithful to her own.

When Elle Marja, through a change of clothes, becomes Christina, the 'Swedish' character into which she transforms in order to escape from her Sami culture, it shows that costumes also support the cultural encounter. The narrative use of characterisation is shown at the end of the film, when Christina climbs the mountain to the village. During that process, her clothes are torn, her gathered-up hair is set free, and the makeup that masked her appearance spreads all over her face.

4.1.2. Mobility and border imaginary

Welcome clearly depicts border imaginary. The scenes shot in Calais, where the refugee camp known as the 'Jungle' was located, seek to enhance the truth of the story. Hidden in a lorry, Bilal and Zoran attempt to cross the English Channel to get to the United Kingdom.

The border police check the lorry, and their dogs are shown sniffing around underneath it, trying to pick up the scent of humans. The refugees must wear a plastic bag so that their breath cannot be identified by the police's NO_2 measurements. They are discovered and one of the young refugees dies of asphyxia.

The placement of the camera at a high-angle, which is objectively warranted by the narrative, portrays the vulnerability of the characters hidden in the trailer, who are risking their lives. The film uses a variety of frames to underline the importance of each object or subject at every given moment. The Coast Guard is shown policing the natural border formed by the English Channel, which Bilal tries swimming across several times.

Image 1. Border imaginary. Bilal and Zoran get into the lorry at Calais port

Source. Lioret, P. (Director). (2009). *Welcome*.

4.1.3. Personal reflection on one's own culture or identity because of cultural encounters

Le silence de Lorna shows a young Albanian woman (Arta Dobroshi) living in Belgium. She has married Claudy (Jérémie Renier), a drug addict, to get Belgian citizenship. She becomes involved in a plan organised by a group of Belgian and Albanian gang members to get rid of Claudy so that she can marry a Russian man, who is also seeking EU citizenship. By living through Claudy's addiction and showing him compassion, Lorna is a good example of personal reflection on her own identity. The camera is constantly with the character Lorna, using the camera-in-hand technique. The tracking of characters and actions in the spaces enables viewers to become privileged witnesses to the events. The out-of-field sound also reinforces Lorna's viewpoint when, for example, Claudy cries out for her help to overcome his withdrawal syndrome. When Claudy is recovering in hospital, Lorna observes him while he is asleep. She then wants a 'quickie divorce' as a non-violent solution for ending their marriage. In a dialogue between Lorna and the gang member Fabio (Fabrizio Rongione) she says: 'I'd rather that he stayed alive.' The vibrations produced by the moving camera are not concealed, thus giving the film a documentary look. In the viewer, it strengthens the feeling of being witness to a real story. Naturalness is sought in the sound by avoiding artificial sound effects.

4.2. Second dynamic. The capacity for the positive recognition of the Other

Table 4 outlines the films where this second dynamic is present, in relation to the categories it refers to.

Table 4. Films showing categories of the second dynamic

Categories	Films showing categories
Hospitality	*Auf der anderen Seite, Welcome, Die Fremde, Io sono Li, Sami Blood, Toni Erdmann* and *Woman at War*.
Understanding or better empathy	*Auf der anderen Seite*, *Le silence de Lorna*, *Welcome*, *Ida* and *Woman at War*.

Source. Authors' own elaboration.

4.2.1. Hospitality

Io sono Li shows Shun Li (Zhao Tao) as a Chinese immigrant in Venice, a bartender at a pub where Bepi (Rade Serbedzija), a Yugoslavian immigrant in Italy, and his friends meet. She is working to get her residence papers and paying a Chinese gang to bring her eight-year-old son to Italy. Bepi takes Shun Li to his home so she can phone her son in China. He also invites her to a cabin in the Lagoon of Venice. In return, Shun Li invites Bepi to celebrate the Feast of the Poet (the famous Chinese poet Qu Yuan) with her and the people she lives with. Bepi even leaves his cabin to Shun Li in his will.

Continuity editing and cut-ins are used, and the action is put into context using descriptive situation shots. Close-up shots are used to portray the expressions and feelings of the characters. The use of sound is also designed to reinforce emotion in certain passages. For example, when Bepi takes Shun Li fishing and shows her his cabin in the lagoon, the music is emotive.

Another example is taken from *Toni Erdmann*. The film shows Winfried (Peter Simonischek), a middle-aged German man visiting his daughter Ines (Sandra Hüller), who is working in Bucharest. Winfried likes to play practical jokes and, disguised as Toni Erdmann, a fictional character wearing a weird wig and fake teeth, he appears unexpectedly in Ines's professional life pretending to be her CEO's life coach. Both visit the oil refinery that Ines's company is in the process of restructuring, where Winfried/Toni needs to use the bathroom. Then a Romanian worker sees him in the woods and invites him to use the bathroom at his home: 'Come with me, come with me.' Winfried/Toni accepts and wants to pay him for this ('I only have euros'), but the worker refuses. The worker's son accepts the money, but the father makes him offer Winfried/Toni apples in return. Winfried/Toni accepts the apples.

Image 2. Hospitality. Toni/Winfred enters the refinery worker's home

Source. Ade, M. (Director). (2016). *Toni Erdmann*.

In the conversation whilst on their way to visit the Romanian factory, Ines's father is constantly reproaching her. The director breaks up the sequence and shows the dialogues in shot/reverse shot, isolating them and visually highlighting that discordant situation.

The mise en scène is realistic. The camera follows the characters, endeavouring to portray the naturalness and veracity of the story.

4.2.2.Understanding or better empathy

Auf der anderen Seite contains an illuminating example. Ayten had been deported from Germany back to Istanbul, where she was jailed. Lotte follows her to Istanbul and, in trying to get her released, she agrees to hide a pistol. Lotte is then robbed and murdered with that pistol by a group of street children, probably the Kurdish children to whom the police inspector had referred. Suzanne, Lotte's mother, later visits Ayten in prison. Ayten asks Susanne to forgive her and shows repentance, for she feels guilty about Lotte's death. Susanne offers Ayten help, and the latter then takes the decision to abandon her activist struggle and cooperate with the police. There is empathy between Ayten and Susanne. Finally, they both embrace at the German bookstore owned by Nejat (Baki Davrak), a German professor of Turkish descent. It was filmed in very characteristic natural spaces. The only intervention in the sets is for narrative purposes like, for example, when a search notice for Ayten is posted on the notice board in the bookshop.

Long shots are used in combination with expressive close-up shots to portray the characters' emotions and thoughts. The depth of field is reduced to isolate the characters from the background and focus the viewer's gaze on the emotions expressed.

Image 3. Empathy. Ayten (Turkish) and Susanne (German) embrace at the German bookstore in Istanbul

Source. Akin, F. (Director). (2007). *Auf der anderen Seiten*.

A different example of empathy between East/West is shown in *Woman at War*. The film depicts Halla (Halldóra Geirharðsdóttir) as an independent woman who leads a double life as an environmental activist against the aluminium industry in Iceland. Halla has a twin sister called Ása (Halldóra Geirharðsdóttir), who is a yoga teacher. Ása swaps places with her sister in prison, and before entering the cell, Ása tells the policewoman: 'I understand why and what you do but I do not resent you for this. And I have learnt this attitude in the East,' 'I can see into your inner Self.'

4.3. Third dynamic. The capacity for mutual evaluation of cultures or identities

Table 5 displays the films where this third dynamic is present, in relation to the categories it includes.

Table 5. Films showing categories of the third dynamic

Categories	Films showing categories
Intercultural dialogue	*Auf der anderen Seite, Welcome, Io sono Li, Sami Blood, Toni Erdmann* and *Woman at War.*
Change of opinion as a result of the interaction between parties through intercultural dialogue	*Auf der anderen Seite, Le silence de Lorna, Welcome, Io sono Li, Toni Erdmann* and *Sami Blood.*
Cultural pluralisation	*Auf der anderen Seite, Le silence de Lorna, Welcome, Die Fremde, Io sono Li* and *Toni Erdmann.*

Source. Authors' own elaboration.

4.3.1. Intercultural dialogue

Auf der anderen Seite presents a conversation between Nejat and Susanne. It is the Bayram Festival in Istanbul, and Susanne sees men rushing to the mosque. Susanne asks: 'Where are they going?' Nejat explains the origins of the festival: Ibrahim's attempt to obey God's mandate by sacrificing his own son Ismael. Susanne realises that this is the same story that appears in the Book of Genesis (Gn 22), about Abraham and Isaac. Looking at Nejat she says: 'We tell the same story.'

4.3.2. Change of opinion as a result of the interaction between parties through intercultural dialogue

A clear example is found in *Welcome*. Simon tells the coastguards that Bilal is his son in order to get them to rescue him after Bilal started swimming across the English Channel under difficult circumstances. Simon changes from a foreign view of the Other to accepting Bilal as his own blood.

Another example taken from *Auf der anderen Seite* is when Susanne reads her daughter Lotte's diary after her death, and tries to understand her. Her daughter wrote: 'I'm surprised that my mother doesn't understand it, she was like that too' (voiceover). Faced with such a traumatic situation, the unstable emotional state of the mother warrants the jump-cut editing. In this instance, the camera occupies the same position in general, and high-angle shots are taken to portray the character's situation of vulnerability at that moment in time. And, by means of a montage sequence of several shots, the mother occupies different positions in the room as time passes and her grieving process progresses.

In *Sami Blood*, there are various shots comparing life in the city to life in the village, and life in the present to life in the past. For example, the moment when the two sisters were sleeping next to each other, and when Christina opens the coffin, lies down next to her dead sister clad in traditional dress, shows repentance and asks for forgiveness.

In *Toni Erdmann*, there is an anagnorisis, that is, a recognition by Ines that causes a major change in her. In the party scene, Ines realises how much she loves her father and then goes out onto the street dressed in a bathrobe and runs after him. This process of change culminates in the final shots when she puts Toni Erdmann's fake teeth on.

4.3.3. Cultural pluralisation

Die Fremde shows Umay (Sibel Kekilli), a young German woman of Turkish descent. She has fled from an unwanted marriage in Istanbul and gone back to Germany to her family, who rejects her for that reason. Once she is back in Germany and tries to rebuild her life, cultural pluralisation is shown in her relationship with German friends and the German work environment. An example is when the German man courting her takes her to see the city skyline as a metaphorical resource of hope, of a new life. Long shots are used to describe the context that the characters inhabit, how they are situated and how they move through the spaces.

4.4. Fourth dynamic. The capacity to create a shared normative culture

Table 6 displays the films where this fourth dynamic is shown, in relation to the categories it is associated with.

Table 6. Films showing categories of the fourth dynamic

Categories	Indicators	Films showing categories
Memory		*Auf der anderen Seite, Le silence de Lorna, Welcome, Die Fremde, Io sono Li, Ida, Toni Erdmann, Sami Blood and Woman at War*
Justice and rights in the form of social contract	Citizenship	*Auf der anderen Seite*
	Human dignity or lack thereof	*Io sono Li*
	Anti-corruption	*Welcome*
	Sustainable development, stakeholder capitalism and corporate social responsibility	*Toni Erdmann and Woman at War*
	Equality for women	*Die Fremde* and *Welcome*
	Anti-racism	*Ida* and *Sami Blood*
	Inclusion of marginal voices	*Sami Blood*
	Differentiation	-

Source. Authors' own elaboration.

4.4.1. Memory

Delanty (2009) recognises references to religious identity, to the Holocaust and to wars (recent or past) as categories that may help to construct a European shared memory. The analysis of the films found references to the consequences of the dissolution of the Soviet Union as a fourth indicator in this category.

Religious identity is reflected in *Auf der anderen Seite*, *Welcome*, *Die Fremde*, *Io sono Li*, *Ida* and *Sami Blood*. References to the Holocaust were identified in *Welcome* and *Ida*, while references to wars were identified in *Welcome* and *Woman at War*. Finally, references to the consequences of the dissolution of the Soviet Union were reflected in *Le silence de Lorna*, *Io sono Li*, *Toni Erdmann* and *Woman at War*.

4.4.2. Justice and rights in the form of social contract

Justice and rights in the form of social contract are indicators displayed in the films, albeit negatively. The analysis of this dynamic highlighted the fact that the films reflect situations in which ways of creating a shared normative culture for Europeanisation to occur are highly sought after and desired. However, this third culture has not yet been attained. The results obtained in this dimension point towards the absence of a completed shared normative culture.

The analysis revealed a repeated narrative resource when the films wanted to depict elements of the European normative framework: the police. This indicator repeatedly appeared in the analysis, so it seems important to investigate it in more depth. This narrative resource appears in *Auf der anderen Seite*, when Ayten seeks political asylum: the police and judges are the ones who must process this request. In *Le silence de Lorna* the police's intervention allows for a narrative of how Belgian citizenship is obtained, and how one behaves in the face of domestic abuse or when seeking a divorce. *Welcome*, *Die Fremde* and *Woman at War* also present this type of narrative tool. In *Welcome*, the police and judges are depicted as the guarantors of borders and immigration. An example of this is the filming of Bilal's and his friends' trial after being discovered trying to get to the United Kingdom via Eurotunnel, as is that of the repeated interrogations at the police station of Simon, a French citizen who is helping them. In these scenes, the dialogues are filmed in shot/reverse shot and different depths of field, separating the authorities from the citizens.

In *Die Fremde* the police are portrayed as the guarantors of citizens' rights, i.e., women's rights. Umay calls the police when her father locks her and her child in the family home and does not allow her to go out onto the streets. She knows her rights and calls the police. In *Woman at War* the police systematically detain and

release a tourist with Latino traits whenever the electricity grid is sabotaged by Halla. Perhaps the intention of that recurring narrative resource, i.e., the police mistaking a non-European tourist for an illegal immigrant, is to point out the inconsistencies of a European normative framework when dealing with the Other.

In accordance with Delanty (2009), there is evidence of this social contract in the following indicators:

— *Citizenship: Auf der anderen Seite* explicitly reflects a conversation about the advantages of being an EU citizen. Ayten and Susanne talk about civil rights in Turkey: Susanne says, 'Perhaps things are better when you join the EU.' In fact, Germany rejects Ayten's request for asylum because Turkey might become an EU member and thus it is considered unlikely that her rights will be violated.

Prior to these events, the film uses cross-cutting to show, in parallel, the May Day (Labour Day) demonstrations in Turkey and Germany. These synchronous situations make it possible to overlap and compare the stories and places. The viewer is shown the difference between a western European society, with an orderly demonstration, and a more passionate Turkish society, with violent altercations that ultimately precipitate events (the police pursue Ayten and she flees to Germany). This difference is also conveyed by the filmmaking, with stabler shots in the first situation and faster, more dynamic cutting in the second.

— *Human dignity or lack thereof: Io sono Li* portrays how Chinese workers that enter the EU with their own contracts and agreements are not treated in line with EU social standards. Shun Li is in Italy through an immigration agreement that is linked to the repayment of all the costs of her trip and to the payment of a fee to bring her son to Italy. 'We pay the trip and the residence permit for you, and then you must repay everything,' her Chinese boss reminds her. This agreement affects the human dignity of Chinese workers. For example, Shun Li cannot ask for holidays or time off, and thus it is as if she were trapped in some form of slavery. This becomes apparent in the following dialogue between Shun Li and her Chinese boss: 'Can I take half a day off tomorrow?' 'Impossible' 'I must buy my son a birthday present' 'I am sorry, you may not'.

Some of the montage resources help to portray this reality. Filmed from the outside, various shots of the windows of the building where Chinese workers live at night are used. People are going about their day-to-day activities. These shots symbolise the characters' confinement, the impossibility of leaving until 'news arrives'; a euphemism referring to the moment when the bosses decide that they have finished paying off the debt for their trips from China and for their residence permits.

— *Anti-corruption: Welcome* shows how illegal border crossings are controlled by mafias. The harsh nature of French laws contrasts with the desire to stop this type of illegal crossing. When Simon wants to help Bilal and give him shelter, the police superintendent replies: 'Helping illegal immigrants is a crime.'

— *Sustainable development, stakeholder capitalism and corporate social responsibility: Woman at War* portrays the impact of environmental activism on factories in Iceland. This film belongs to the comedy genre and takes advantage of humour and satire to address social interest issues such as climate change, the power of government and business institutions, and repression. Activism is present in Halla's manifesto: 'Attacks against Mother Earth are crimes against humanity'. This is also reflected in the costumes, props and sets when the figures of Gandhi and Mandela are used. Because of the manifesto, the United States and Israel take charge of the inquiry into responsibility for the attacks. The film refers to the struggle between sustainability and development within countries, and Halla's attacks and manifesto depict this struggle at citizen level.

As the manifest of the Mountain Woman (Halla) starts to spread widely, a scene begins in which the President of Iceland proudly shows the birthplace of the Republic, the cradle of its democracy. Surrounded by nature and mountains, he explains to a group of foreigners that the ancient Vikings would gather there in a circle of power that enabled them to exercise their right to govern. Then, an aerial shot is used to show the political decision-makers forming a circle, discussing the strategy that they should follow to silence the manifesto. They criminalise Halla and the film shows the police persecution and harassment, conveying some tension by using dialogues that overlap with the sound of helicopter blades or the nervous barking of dogs.

Toni Erdmann presents a reception at the United States Embassy where Ines's German manager gives a speech about the advantages and the benefits that Romania has obtained from joining the EU: '(...) Now, the requirements of membership, including EU Directives, make up one of the driving forces in Romania's programme of reform, modernisation and investment in infrastructures.' This example shows the dynamics of the European form of capitalism.

— *Equality for women: Die Fremde* is a film in which arranged marriages, domestic violence (Umay is beaten by every man in her family) and the lack of freedom suffered by women are most clearly shown. Although she is a German citizen, Umay cannot obtain a divorce or get custody of her son. *Die Fremde* narrates the tension within the family, which leads to an honour killing. Tragedies such as Umay's situation can occur in the heart of Europe, which is supposedly the champion of women's rights.

The film was shot using a normally stable camera-in-hand technique. Strident movements are avoided, although the filmmaking style helps to convey a situation of latent violence. This apparent stability is broken by dynamic camera movements in the numerous sequences of explicit violence that occur during the film. For example, the aggression that Umay suffers trying to defend her son from the punishment meted out by her husband, the aggression she experiences at the hands of her older brother who tries to take her child from her, or the sequence in which Umay slits her wrist, trying to protect herself from the threat of her own father.

— *Anti-racism:* This category is present in its negative form: racism. Examples can be found in *Sami Blood*, in which there are many scenes of the girls' measurements being taken for the purpose of characterising race. *Sami Blood* is also linked to marginal voices and is discussed under that indicator further below.

A second example is *Ida*. Set in Poland in 1962, the film is about Anna (Agata Kulesza), a young novice. Anna is a World War II orphan who was brought up by nuns in a convent. Before making her vows, she visits her aunt, Wanda (Joanna Kulig), a Jewish woman and a former member of the Communist Party. Ida is faced with her Jewish identity and past: her family had been murdered in the Holocaust by neighbours from their own village.

— *Inclusion of marginal voices:* The results show that LGBTQ+ relationships, drug addiction and minorities are portrayed as if they were the main marginal voices. As mentioned further above, *Sami Blood* is set in the 1930s, a time when the Sami were not allowed to study or leave their land. Elle Marja (Lene Cecilia Sparrok) comes across a group of Swedish boys, who ambush her, calling her a 'circus animal'; 'they are less developed,' says one of the boys. Elle Marja confronts them, and the boys cut her ear as a way of marking her as if she were a reindeer.

The film was shot using the camera-in-hand technique, endeavouring to maintain shot stability except in the most violent or emotionally unstable scenes. An example is the sequence in which the reindeer are marked by cutting their ears, in which the violent camera movements convey the sensation of a documentary. There is an almost identical sequence when teenagers mark the protagonist as if she were an animal.

Image 4. Marginal voices. Elle-Marja's close-up with her cut ear

Source. Kernell, A. (Director). (2017). *Sami Blood*.

— *Differentiation:* The films do not show any situations in which Europeanisation is perfectly attained. There is no evidence in the films of integration-related differentiation. However, the analysis suggest that differentiation is embodied in specific characters. These characters already appear to depict a cosmopolitan dimension. For example, Lotte (*Auf der anderen Seite*), displays no prejudice towards the Other, right from the first encounter with Ayten. Likewise, Nejat (*Auf der anderen Seite*) – the German professor of Turkish descent, who understands both Turkish and German cultures – seems to incorporate all dynamics in his character.

Shun Li and Bepi (*Io sono Li*) can also be considered cosmopolitan characters from the start. There is no change within them, as they are already in a third culture.

Winfried/Toni (*Toni Erdmann*) appears as a cosmopolitan character through his standpoints and openness to Romanians and their culture.

Finally, the particularities of the four films not included in the dynamics are set out further below. These four films did not display an encounter with the Other in the way that it is applied in this study.

Les neiges du Kilimandjaro is set in Marseille (France) and the drama takes place among French characters from the same cultural and social setting.

The Broken Circle Breakdown is set in Belgium and is a love story between two very different characters. Through its music, wardrobe, time references and settings, the film shows links between European and American cultures. However, the world in which the characters live is not the driver of the story and does not determine their approaches to life.

Mustang is set in rural Turkey. Five teenage sisters are confined to their family home to take on the role that their culture allocates to women. The film shows how each of the five sisters deals with the situation. There is a dramatic clash within their own culture and family, but there is no Other to transform or change the story. Similarly, in *God Exists, Her Name Is Petrunya*, the rights and dignity of the main character clash with tradition and culture. Petrunya (Zorica Nusheva) was lucky to retrieve the cross from the river's frozen waters, but she is a woman, and this is inconceivable in the Orthodox tradition in North Macedonia.

5. Conclusions

The results of this study confirm that critical cosmopolitanism and its methodological framework are suitable for establishing categories and indicators. Applied to a sample of 13 feature films that had received the EP LUX Prize, such categories and indicators enabled verification of whether the discourse in those films displayed elements of the Europeanisation process. The study therefore contributes to making critical cosmopolitanism a usable framework, both theoretically and methodologically. Furthermore, it confirms that the four initial dynamics can be translated into indicators that work well when performing film discourse analysis. Thus, the method may be suitable for other samples and further research work.

The notion of European identity is only possible based on the different countries and the complex geopolitical relationships historically established with them. Such ambiguous concept could indeed be operationalised in the films. By looking for those elements or indicators, it was possible to evaluate whether the films contributed to European identity through Europeanisation, a process that begins with an encounter with the Other and ends with the possibility of sharing a normative culture through justice or rights in the form of social contract. This connects with the initial assumption about European identity, which is that the absence of a political identity does not preclude the existence of a European identity based on values other than economic ones.

There were 13 editions of the EP LUX Prize (2007-2019). This study shows that the films reflected the absence of a completed shared culture, specifically within particular citizen groups. The findings cluster around intercultural dialogue and show that there are opportunities not only to overcome difference and diversity through such dialogue, but also to increase Europeanisation. This could lead to the conclusion that some of the winning films expressed a desire for such shared European culture to exist, suggesting that the real situation had shortcomings.

The historical circumstances since 2024 indicate that what constitutes Europe today cannot be easily addressed by either the political project of European integration or reference to a cultural project. In 2007, when the EP Lux Prize was established, it was seen by EU institutions as a valuable platform for fostering a sense of shared European culture, i.e., its focus was on fundamental EU values. If the Europeanisation process is moving towards a realm that may not be necessarily a cosmopolitan one (Delanty, 2021), then the results of this study point towards that trend.

This study analysed the 13 feature films and has presented the results with examples taken from all of them. It seeks to provide an overview as an original contribution. Consequently, a detailed analysis of each film has not been given, which, moreover, would not be possible due to text length constraints.

One limitation of the study is the very nature of the research object. Films as cultural products are works of fiction, they are not reality itself or even documentaries. As symbolic works, films show certain interpretations, within a limited period of time. The complex realities they reflect are therefore simplified. Multifaceted situations such as memory, human dignity or women's rights are necessarily downscaled. For example, Sami minorities, the complex situation of Jews in Poland in the 1940s, honour crimes, and the situation of immigrants in Calais in the 2000s become open texts that are full of symbols, but these texts do not actually exist. Thus, the limitation lies in the fact that the social dynamics displayed in the films are seen through the lens of film directors and then shaped by cinema industry drivers. As a vehicle for meaning, cinema helps to shed light on these social issues, but it is not the only way to achieve that. Further research efforts could include analysing the information provided by scriptwriters and directors about their objectives when making these films.

Finally, to some extent the study has attempted to apply Delanty's theoretical framework and methods unchallenged and has therefore not been able to either fully engage in a critical dialogue with the theory or object to the underlying assumptions. The aim of the study was to operationalise a complex theoretical framework, which involved reviewing the extensive literature produced by the most representative author of critical cosmopolitanism.

For future research work, a decision on whether the whole theoretical framework should be adopted is recommended, as is engaging in a critical discussion with the author.

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CRediT author statement

Conflict of interest

The authors have no competing interests to declare that are relevant to the content of this article.