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Research Article

Globalization of Cinematographic Communication[1]

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Abstract. This article examines the globalization – in its Americanization format – of international cinematic communication within the perspective of cultural diversity. The globalization process is comprehended as a result of the historical succession of market formations: from free competition in American cinema to an oligopoly and on to a national and an international monopoly. During the period of polypoly, the trail for globalization was blazed by the grande dame of the cinématographe: France. The United States, where in 1908 French films accounted for 70% of the market share, mounted a resolute challenge. We look at three factors – institutional, geopolitical, and creative – that explain why the French lost their domination over the American and, then, their own market. The French state responded to the soft power of American cinema by introducing quotas for national films. The industry was motivated by the need to protect the state both within its borders and beyond, and the preserve national customs and traditions. A number of other countries also resorted to the use of quotas as a means of mitigating the soft power of the United States: larger countries did so for economic considerations, while smaller countries did it for cultural reasons. The globalizational might of the American film industry is explained through the rational choice of the main line for its stylistic development and the filmmakers' mastery of their craft, as well as through the professional skills of industry executives and marketing divisions, investment from big capital, and through support from the government in its push for the "cultural hegemony" of the United States. The major studios that emerged during the period of oligopoly (1909–1929) competed with one another on the terms of a certain accord. Their method of dealing with competition was to invest obscene amounts in movie production, far beyond the capabilities of smaller studios, which enabled them to establish a national monopoly over the domestic market (1930–1946). On the world market, the chosen method of competition enabled the American film industry, in the second half of the 1940s, to gain the position of international monopolist. An important role in the process was played by Motion Picture Export Association, established in 1945, as a sort of "diplomatic service" that functioned with permission from and under the support of the U.S. government. From its position as the global monopolist, the American film industry strives not only to dominate intercultural cinematic communication, but also, in this status and as a means of popular geopolitics, to control it through lobbying and exporting capital and goods. The transborder circulation of products by various national cinemas and the cultural diversity of cinematography have largely fallen prey to the globalization process. Extensive research has demonstrated an imbalance in in-

[1] English translation from the Russian text: Zhabskiy M. I., Tarasov K. A. 2022. Globalizatsiya mezhkul'turnoy kommunikatsii. *Mezhdunarodnye protsessy* [International Trends]. 20(3). P. 28–44. https://doi.org/10.17994/IT.2022.20.3.70.4

tercultural film communication. When, in a social-functional respect, the importing of films mainly supplants their production in a certain country, the population is largely deprived of the chance to reproduce its culture and, accordingly, its identity with the means of depicting and mastering its own image. The making of a national cinematic picture of the world and its integration into the communicative process becomes a pressing issue in the provision of cultural diversity.

Keywords: intercultural communication; popular geopolitics; film industry; Hollywood; soft power; market; globalization; cultural diversity; state; quota system.

> Creations of the spirit are not just commodities; the elements of culture are not pure business […] What is at stake is the cultural identity of all our nations […] It is the freedom to create our own images. A society which abandons to others the way of showing itself, that is to say the way of presenting itself to itself, is a society enslaved.
>
> François Mitterrand

In the waning decades of the 19th century, an issue made its way onto the agenda of civilizational and cultural discourse which, along with scientific and technological progress and urbanization, acquired increasing social significance. Its appearance reflected the division of the struggle of the human race into two chapters: "first the fight to get leisure; and then the second fight of civilization – what shall we do with our leisure when we get it? (Fowles 2007: 190–191).

Here, the author is referring primarily to the leisure of broad sections of the population. A promising answer to the civilizational and cultural challenge of history was provided by the synergistic practice of scientific, technical and artistic creativity at the turn of the 20th century. From the spark of the first paid public film screening in France on December 28, 1895, the flame of the cinematic spectacle that defined the 20th century and the associated process of intercultural communication – the interdependent cinematic life of the peoples of the world – began to burn.

In 1914, the Russian writer Leonid Andreev pointed to the global communicative potential of silent cinema at the time: "Having no language, equally understandable to the savages of St. Petersburg and Calcutta, it is truly a genius of international communication; it brings together the ends of the earth and the edges of souls, including a shuddering humanity in a single current" (Andreev 2011: 39–40). What the writer had in fact done was pronounce the birth of a new international process – intercultural film communication.

Andreev had no way of telling the dramatic economic, political, social and cultural impact that the development of film communications would have around the world. Several decades later, the German philosopher Oskar Negt, exaggerating somewhat, noted that cinema had succeeding in creating barriers that separate human beings from each other in a way no worse than aeroplanes and firearms (Negt 1973: XXYIII). Major film studios started to appear in the early 20th century in the United States, and

the competition for moviegoers' money led to their eventual monopolization of the world film market, marginalizing the film industries of other countries to the point where they all but lost their national cultural uniqueness. This state of affairs forced UNESCO to step in in order to protect this uniqueness and preserve cultural diversity across the globe.

When looking at how national film industries responded to these challenges, it is important to understand and take into account the real mechanisms through which Hollywood acquired the status of international monopolist. Hollywood movies have dominated the Russian film space since the 1990s. At a State Duma round table meeting in 2004, Andrei Konchalovsky rightly pointed out that Russian cinema was losing its audience, stating: "the results of globalization are increasingly noticeable among the modern generation of moviegoers. This generation has already been colonized."[2] In our examination of the globalization of intercultural film communication, we have attempted to tackle this most sensitive of issues from all sides. The discourse presented here is based on theoretical and empirical analytical materials available in world literature on the economic, sociological, political and aesthetic aspects of the cinematic life of humankind in different periods of its history. Factual data from statistics and the sociology of intercultural film communication are also used.

The American Film Industry as an Instrument of Popular Geopolitics

In inter-state relations, culture, along with political values and foreign policy, is an important carrier of "soft power" (Nye 2004: 10). And the film industry plays a significant role in this as a transnational consensus narrative (Campbell, Martin and Fabos 2016: 255) that contributes to the formation of a common cultural experience for all humanity. One of the many things that the film industry does is convey the image of a given country to the rest of the world and, as a bearer of its "soft power," it becomes an instrument of popular geopolitics.

In the hundred-plus years since the advent of cinema, the space of transnational cultural communication – mutually enriching but with uncertain consequences – has expanded, intensified and unified, thanks in large part to the widespread distribution of film industry products on various media platforms. The governments and brightest minds of many countries are concerned in particular about Hollywood, which is spreading "like an octopus with tentacles […] across the globe […] [I]n recent years, overseas markets, particularly China and Russia, have become increasingly important […] almost 70 per cent of the studios' annual revenue from box office now comes from international markets."[3]

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[2] Interesting Economics. 2004. *Kinoprotess*. No.1–2. P. 41–42.

[3] Brook T. How the global box office is changing Hollywood. *BBC Culture,* 03.05.2021. URL: https://www.bbc.com/culture/article/20130620-is-china-hollywoods-future#:~:text=Speak%20to%20anyone%20in%20the,go%2Dahead%20to%20a%20movie

The contradictory nature of intercultural communication and the desire to make money is not exhausted: "Hollywood films seeking an international audience are a form of soft diplomacy through which America presents itself to the rest of the world. They peddle American concepts of success, romance and heroism through stories of individual triumph in the face of adversity, tales of redemption and fantastic battles of good versus evil. They also often reflect the darker side of contemporary American life with their violence and portrayal of cultural anxieties."[4]

In the 1940s and 1950s, when American films were the main source of information about the United States for most people who did not live there, some inside the country criticized the film industry for showing the dark side of American life on the screen, while others retorted that the cinema is just another form of entertainment. Hollywood found itself at the centre of the ideological struggle between communism and Western-style democracy. "Even the State Department entered the battle, by suggesting that American films were not giving the best image of this country to foreigners" (Jowett 1976: 384). Hollywood had its defenders, who saw it as an "agent for democracy." Summing up the debate, Garth Jowett noted in the mid-1970s that motion pictures had done much to familiarize the rest of the world with America's material culture. "Even while they conveyed erroneous impressions about the extent of crime and violence," writes Jowett, "for over fifty years the movies had become clearly identified with the United States' position as the world's most rapidly growing unit of political and economic power" (Jowett 1976: 385). Since the 1990s, Russia has been in the orbit of America's popular geopolitics through its film industry.

In inter-state film communications, "donor" and "recipient" relations are, as a rule, asymmetrical. The donor in this case is typically the U.S. film industry, while the film industries of other countries are usually the recipients. Recipients not only in terms of American films themselves. National cinemas have variously imitated, transformed and varied the American model or else resisted and rejected it (Moran 1996: 7). In practical usage, the American film industry has gained the status of an international film industry (Guback 1979: 21, 37).

In terms of the "movie rental" industry, Russia is predominantly a recipient. The country's film audience, which represents Russian society in the act of film consumption (Zhabskiy 2020: 9, 251, 258) and, as such, acts as an object of external "soft power," is a resident of the "global film village" constructed by Hollywood. In an effort to establish contact with its Americanized audience, national film naturalizes Hollywood in its products (Zhabskiy 2015: 83–85, 385–386), unwittingly exposing their films to cultural erosion. How, and with the help of which technologies, did Hollywood become the most influential film industry in the world? How did it overtake the once glorious Russian cinema as the dominant force?

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[4] Brook T. How the global box office is changing Hollywood. *BBC Culture,* 03.05.2021. URL: https://www.bbc.com/culture/article/20130620-is-china-hollywoods-future#:~:text=Speak%20to%20anyone%20in%20the,go%2Dahead%20to%20a%20movie

How France Lost Its Position as the World's Leading Film Market

The nature and level of globalization of intercultural film communication is a product of the historical evolution of market forms in the American film industry. The earliest market form was free competition – *polypoly*. Films were made by small and medium-sized production companies. Mergers and alliances were not a thing in the film industry back then (Prokop 1982: 25–35). The multipolar production landscape contributed to the development of free intercultural film communication.

During the period of polypoly, France, as the pioneer of cinema, developed the technical and creative means for it to monopolise the industry across the globe. French filmmakers came up with techniques for shooting and screening movies, and established a studio production system. They essentially set up a global film distribution network, and Pathé and Gaumont even opened representative offices in pre-revolutionary Russia. "By 1908, when the cinema 'industry' was just 13 years old, French film releases, led by Pathé, had captured up to 70 per cent of the American market" (Grantham 1998: 61). Until 1910, the majority of films distributed in the world were French (Jäckel 2003: 4).

It was thanks to French films being distributed all over the world that interest in this new form of entertainment spread and inspired would-be filmmakers in other countries – first in Italy and the United States, and then in Denmark, Great Britain and Germany. Russia also got in on the intercultural film communication act in the 1900s. An "original, purely national style" emerged: "Russian cinema was close to gaining an important position of the international market when the War, which cut Russia off from the rest of the world, completely interrupted the distribution of Russian films…" (Sadul 1958: 298, 299).

International film trade initially developed multilaterally. Anticipating the possibility of a global film industry, Emilie Altenloh emphasized that "there can be no talk of international film, at least today. It seems that nothing much is happening in this area. On the contrary, we can see traces of its origin in each film. In general, certain features of national origin appear so strongly and massively that we can talk about the number of types of films being equal to the number of countries participating in world production" (Altenloh 1914: 11).

During the period of polypoly, the French film model had a significant influence on film production in other countries: "Only the Americans, who created films to their own liking, were able to completely free themselves from […] the French models. Their films resemble mass productions more than any other. Drama and comedy are made using the same template" (Altenloh 1914: 11). These assertions point to the movement towards the global film we know today: national and cultural individualization and international schematization.

As a framework socio-organizational condition for film production, polypoly provided significant scope for the development of cinema in different countries. At the same time, as Dieter Prokop has noted, the process of concentrating capital in the hands of individual producers gradually gained momentum, and horizontal and vertical integration took place. The film market took on the form of an oligopoly in 1909–1929. A small number of large film companies emerged (Paramount, Fox Film, Warner Brothers, etc.) and started to occupy a dominant position. Clawing for sales markets, they resorted to investment competition, and the emphasis was placed on the production of big budget films. The winners would be decided by how much money the oligopolists had at their disposal.

By the late 1930s, major film studios found themselves at the mercy of the Morgan and Rockefeller financial groups, which implemented rationalization in these companies (Prokop 1982: 82). Film production was separated into the streams that exist today: big budget (category A) and low budget (category B). The institutionalization of expensive film production meant that competitors who did not have large amounts of capital faced bankruptcy.

The U.S. film market turned into a battlefield between two of the most ambitious national schools – namely, the American and French cinemas. France withered under the pressure of the United States, whose film market had until 1907 been supplied almost entirely from abroad (Altenloh 1914: 16). It could not even withstand the pressure of the American film industry at home. French cinema became a space for the manifestation of "cultural animosity" between France and America that long predates the cinema: "since 1908, there has been an explosion of Franco-American cinema animosity roughly every 20 years. The one exception in this otherwise constant cycle is 1968" in connection with the 21st Cannes Film Festival (Grantham 1998: 58).

There were three factors at play in France's loss of the film market: institutional, geopolitical, and creative. Having joined forces in the form of trusts, the first American firms used all means at their disposal to push foreign competitors out of the country (Gomery 2005: 16). The French hegemony was an affront to American industrialists, and French companies because the target of the "patent wars" taking place in American cinema (Grantham 1998: 60). In just two months, the foreign share of short films in release fell by 25 percent.

The geopolitical factor is associated with the influence of the First World War, after which an economic crisis broke out. French cinema lost its connection with foreign markets. It also lost its global hegemony, falling far behind the American and German film industries: "Crushed by foreign films, French cinema had virtually no access to the American, British, German and Russian markets" (Sadul 1982: 9).

The American film industry immediately took advantage of the gap left by French cinema, relying on the support of the U.S. government to do this. It was during the post-War period that active ties were established between the film industry

and government departments on the matter of international trade. It is telling that in 1916 U.S. consuls were instructed to report on the market for American movies, and the information collected was subsequently shared with the film industry (Lee 2008: 379).

The creative factor in the defeat of French cinema both at home and on the global markets was connected with the choices made with regard to how film should move forward. The inherent contradiction in film industry products between their value in the spiritual and cultural sense and the fact that they are produced and distributed as a commodity, in practical terms, meant that there were three possible options for the development of intercultural film communication: 1) placing an emphasis on the economic aspect of film (commercial cinema); 2) developing the self-sufficient aesthetic of the medium (avant-garde, art house); and 3) moving towards an interactive and sociocultural film, midway between the first two (popular cinema). In cinema, which combines culture and industry, Hollywood emphasized the latter (*industry*) and preferred the first model of development – commercial. France, meanwhile, chose the former (*culture*) and the second model of development – aesthetic. The winner in this fight between the national cinemas of the two countries would be decided by the size of the audience loyal to them and how they demonstrated this loyalty through the purchase cinema tickets. And because the commercial return of cinema depends on the magic conveyed through artistic means, the aesthetics of the medium also became a field of competition. This fight, in turn, would be decided not by professional film critics, but rather by viewers, again manifested in the fact of actually watching the films.

In the end, American film won convincingly. Between 1924 and 1927, three-quarters of all films approved for the French screen were American productions. There was no room for films made in other countries (Guback 1979: 24). In 1928, the French government adopted a law that would regulate the import of films through quotas. To use Joseph Nye's terminology, we can say that the state responded to the pull of "soft power" of foreign cinema with administrative repulsion.

France was not the first country to introduce quotas on films. "The shift away from free trade principles between the two wars and the disorganization of the system of international payments led to the widespread adoption of this method of import control" (Bernard, Colli 1997: 451). The trend was started by Germany in 1921, and other countries soon followed suit.[5] Hungary and Italy introduced quotas in 1925, and Austria, Australia, Great Britain, Hungary and Portugal did so in 1927. Denmark refrained from the practice, while Finland has never used quotas for film screenings. Several other countries implemented a quota system much later: Brazil in 1932, Mexico in 1949, South Korea in 1967, Argentina in 2004 and Malaysia in 2005. Some countries justified the practice with economic arguments, while others pointed to the importance of the cultural component of the film industry. Even so, the cultural aspect is

[5] Quotas and Levies. 10.05.2021. URL: https://www.terramedia.co.uk/media/film/quotas_and_levies.htm

important for all countries. As researchers have noted: "It is extremely difficult for a society to practise free flow of media and enjoy a national culture at the same time – unless it happens to be the United States of America" (Smith 1980: 53). That said, is the flow of information to the United States free?

The Foundations of Hollywood's Global Dominance

Returning to the evolution of the market forms in American cinema that gave a powerful impetus to globalization processes, let us draw attention to this fact. The large film studios that emerged, having certain interests in common, were willing to make agreements and work together. When the moguls ran the show, this was a consequence of the dire need to turn a profit as fewer people were going to the cinema and the film market had become saturated (Prokop 1982: 73). After having concluded a number of contracts and agreements, they founded the Motion Picture Producers and Distributors of America (MPPDA) in 1922, which was renamed the Motion Picture Association of America (MPAA) in 1945. Cooperation under the MPAA banner turned out to be so coordinated that a monopolistic structure eventually emerged in the American market. Between 1930 and 1946, the oligopoly in American cinema was gradually replaced by a national monopoly (following a transitional period in 1926–1929) (Prokop 1982: 73).

The various contracts and agreements concluded by the MPPDA's, and then MPAA's members allowed them to jointly control the U.S. film market. For example, movie theatres owned by different studios were located in different territories. The oligopolists, who had now become a collective monopolist, competed with each other as divisions of a single cooperation. The only real competition came in the form of the Society of Independent Motion Picture Producers, but all the first-run theatres (on whose success the total box office receipts depended) belonged to the major studios.

This competitive advantage was taken away from the major studios in 1948 following an antitrust ruling by the federal court (Lee 2008: 373), which worsened the problem of profitability of monopolistic film production. As a result, foreign markets became increasingly important, which in turn kick-started the development of the film market into a global monopoly. In the new market landscape, the American majors took over international film distribution, moved Hollywood film production to Europe, and bought or created new production and distribution companies there. These and other measures cemented their status as an international monopolist. During the 1960s, foreign markets accounted for approximately half of Hollywood's total revenues (Lee 2008: 374).

Two decades later, Karen Stabiner would go on to identify a number of characteristics of the international monopolist when she stated: "no other country in the world regularly exports most of its product to all the major foreign territories, other countries do not have the expectation of great financial returns, nor the responsibility to provide lowest-common-denominator entertainment" (Stabinar 1983: 135). We

should note here that this desire of the United States ran into ideological barriers in the Soviet Union and a number of other countries, which until the 1990s stymied Hollywood's communicative potential significantly.

The development of global intercultural Hollywood-dominated film communication was facilitated by the internal and external conditions of its functioning. A total of 4.7 billion movie tickets were sold in the United States in 1947. Ten years later, that number had shrunk by 2.5 billion. The commercial importance of the filmgoing public weakened significantly. Independent studios in the United States became more competitive. It thus became more economically viable to produce more expensive pictures that competitors simply could not match in terms of their budgets (Prokop 1982: 139–140).

As for external influences, geopolitics once again made an impact. The Second World War had effectively killed the export of American films to Europe. In the 1930s, the foreign income of most studios barely affected their corporate status since it only meant additional profit, the situation changed in the new decade. A decade later, however, and the situation had been flipped on its head. The domestic market could not fully ensure the profitable functioning of the film industry, which produced around 400 films annually and employed a huge amount of people (Guback 1979: 23). It became imperative to restore their previous positions in Europe.

In an attempt to return to the European market and intensify film trade abroad, a kind of "diplomatic service" was created within the MPAA called the Motion Picture Export Association (MPEA, later the MPA). The MPEA's work consisted in trying to get the barriers to the importation of Hollywood films removed and to ensure that American films had the same access to the silver screen as locally produced pictures. This non-governmental organization was able, on the one hand, to successfully oppose the adoption of national laws that restricted the movement of American films, and, on the other hand, to set the wheels in motion for the creation of legal conditions allowing U.S. studios to use the existing measures of state support for national cinema in a given country. The MPA has since earned itself the nickname of "the little State Department" (Lee 2008: 376). It negotiated deals "as if it were an autonomous state that had complete control over the political and economic aspects of the foreign film trade, the cultural consequences of which are difficult to overestimate" (Guback 1979: 23–24).

Of course, the MPAA could not have acted in this way without the permission of the U.S. government. During the Second World War, Hollywood cooperated closely with the U.S. government by assisting with the country's information campaign, and this practice continued into the Cold War. After the War, the government pumped money into Hollywood in the hope that the export of films would help spread American ideas to destabilize areas and fight the spread of communism. President Harry Truman "secretly supported propaganda schemes that included the promotion of U.S. film exports." The MPAA was even permitted to use the State Department's secure channels for sensitive messages (Lee 2008: 379–340).

The MPAA sought not only to dominate foreign film markets, but also to control them through lobbying overseas (either independently or jointly with the U.S. government) for the export of capital and goods (Prokop 1982: 250). The 1970s marked a turning point in the understanding of the industrial mechanisms that were in place for regulating the production and distribution of audio-visual products, the "imbalance in the international cultural exchange." The credit for this goes to UNESCO, which put the issue of one-way communication between developing countries and the rest of the world on the map (Mattelart 1998: 480).

The major studios in the United States signed agreements with foreign companies, thus allowing them to bypass the measures that existed in these countries to protect homegrown cinema (Razlogov 2011: 75). In addition, the revenues generated from investing in European cinema allowed U.S. film companies to take advantage of government subsidies there in the co-production process. By the mid-1960s, Hollywood studios were absorbing 80% of the funds earmarked for British productions. British cinema thus became an appendage of Hollywood (Guback 1979: 26).

Thanks to the U.S. authorities, foreign representative of the American film industry had access to the highest government circles in Europe. By suspending the export of films, Hollywood threatened the very survival of the national film industries in overseas markets, and even managed to influence national legislation on cinema (Prokop 1982: 146).

The hegemony of the American film industry across the globe in the late 1960s and early 1970s did not protect it from economic crisis due to the prolonged decline in movie attendance. By 1970, ticket sales had dropped to 17.7 million per week, compared to 85 million some years before (Austin 1989: 36).

Looking back at how many saw the state of the film industry in 1980, T. Guback noted that movies were failures from both an artistic and commercial perspective, and that "the prospect of Hollywood becoming a fond memory had become a reality." Observers questioned the practicality of the major film production itself, and the United States government even grew concerned. During a discussion on film legislation in the House of Representatives in 1971, James Gordon stated that the government should consider the salvation of this vital industry as a matter of national policy, adding that cinematography, at the end of the day, "selling America" in its visual representation to the entire world, demonstrates the activities of a freely competing enterprise (cit. ex: Guback 1979: 37).

As a result, changes were made to federal tax laws that made it possible to create a system of tax-exempt capital investments in film production and distribution – an indirect form of government subsidization of private enterprise (Guback 1980: 65). The old Hollywood gave way to the new one (Jowett 1976: 434), incorporated into multinational conglomerates with business interests in tobacco, sugar, and other areas. Pursuing corporate interests, the managers of these conglomerates started to move labour, material and financial resources from country to country, completely neglecting

the interests of the economic stability of foreign film industries or the cultural needs of those countries whose industries they were supposedly trying to serve (Guback 1979: 31).

The new Hollywood managed to overcome the crisis. In 1980, Thomas Guback stated that the American film industry was stronger that it had been 30 years previously, and that there was no reason to believe that Hollywood was dying (Guback 1980: 86). The course of intercultural film communication has preserved and strengthened its unidirectionality. The American audience, raised for decades on the products of the studio system – which owned the movie theatres and quashed any chance of cultivating alternative tastes by showing foreign films – almost never watched popular movies from other countries.

One thing of note about the state of global intercultural communication is the fact that the American market is relatively closed to the European film industry, and Western markets as a whole are closed to the rest of the world.[6] At the beginning of the 21st century, the share of imported films in the U.S. market was around 5%, compared to 1–3.6% in the European Union (not counting European and American productions). The "rest of the world" in this case effectively meant a small number of industrialized countries (Japan, Australia, Canada), as well as Hong Kong and Taiwan. The rather sobering conclusion was thus drawn from this that there was practically no place for films produced by "third-tier" participants in the global film market (which, we might note, includes Russia) on American and European movie screens. And little had changed by the early 2020s.

The obstacles that currently exist in intercultural film communication are so significant that the concept of an "iron curtain," traditionally used in connection with Soviet cinema, is more than apt here. In the discursive tradition, the administrative blocking of the cross-border movement of films for ideological reasons is qualified as an "iron curtain," while blocking the marketing of a film for commercial reasons is a natural result of competition.

Note that the commercially motivated blocking of intercultural communication in the United States turned out to be far more effective than the administrative and political blocking in the Soviet Union. In the early 1970s and 1980s, six to eight American titles were put on general release in the Soviet Union annually. These films were often among the best performers at the box office, well ahead of other foreign films in terms of the number of tickets sold (Zhabskiy 2009: 665–675). This is how Soviet moviegoers became acquainted with American cinema, albeit in measured doses. Soviet cinema, on the other hand, remained a kind of uncharted territory for American audiences.

The erosion of the Soviet system in the 1990s radically changes the paradigm of intercultural film communication between Russia and the United States. The Russian state, which had for decades been defending the cultural sovereignty of its film

[6] *Focus 2002. World Film Market Trends*. 2002. Strasbourg: European Audiovisual Observatory.

industry through administrative and political means, was now open to the communicative potential of Hollywood. It all started with *perestroika*. In 1988, the MPAA signed an agreement with the USSR State Committee for Cinematography that allowed the American studios to market their films in the Soviet Union by sharing box office revenue and through the construction and leasing of theatres (Lee 2008: 388). However, the Soviet side, as it was believed in the United States, largely ignored the agreement. An embargo was placed on the export of films to the Soviet Union that stayed in place following its collapse pending the enactment of stricter copyright laws. "During the 1990s, the Russian film industry collapsed and fell into a state of disrepair as American films flooded into the market with an average of eighty American releases per year. Although Russia has resurrected its film industry in recent years, Hollywood films still dominate the local market" (Lee 2008: 388). And the statistics back this up: in 2003, Russian films accounted for just 4.8% of total box office receipts. Things picked up in 2004 (13.4%), and again 2005 (29.5%),[7] before a series of ups and downs began.

In 2010, domestically produced films accounted for 25.3% of the total box office receipts in Europe. Individual countries contributed differently to this self-sufficiency, with France accounting for 9.4% of this figure, Italy accounting for 4.1%, Germany 3.1%, the United Kingdom 2.7% and Spain 1.4%.[8] Domestically produced films were indeed the main competition for Hollywood productions in the European cinema markets, although they never won.

In 2018, the share of European films rose to 29.4% of total box office receipts in Europe. As was the case in the past, European film can be divided into three groups: 1) relatively successful, accounting for over 30% of domestic box office receipts; 2) middle of the pack (15¬–30%); and 3) the rear (less than 15%). The first group is made up of three countries – Turkey (62.9%), France (39.5%) and Poland (35.5%). Russia is part of the second group (27.4%), while the rear is brought up mostly by small countries (the film industries of seven countries account for less than 2% of box office receipts).[9]

European films attract audiences in the countries where they are produced. Some 6400 domestically produced films were released in Europe in 2019 (including films shown in at least one country). A total of 257 million movie tickets were sold to these films, 72% of which in the countries of production. Only 71 admissions were generated by European films in non-national EU markets.[10]

Box office figures for Russia show that the share of domestic films in the pre-pandemic period (2009–2018) was between 15.3% and 27.5%, with an average of 18.9%.[11] Just like in the West, an important incentive for intercultural film communication was

[7] *Kinostatistika 2007: Statistical Digest*. 2008. Moscow: MAKS Press. P. 33.

[8] Kanzler M. 2010. The European Cinema Markets 2010 in Figures. 02.10.2010. URL: http://www.obs.coe.int/online_publication/expert/europeancinemamarkets2010.pdf.

[9] Annual Report 2019. Key Trends in European Cinema. 06.01.2021. P. 8. URL: https://www.unic-ininemas.org/fileadmin/UNIC_AR19_online.pdf.

[10] Yearbook 2020–2021. Key Trends. 06.06.2021. P. 40. URL: https://rm.coe.int/yearbook-key-trends-2020-2021-en/1680a26056.

[11] The share for 2019 was 19.7%. The pandemic disrupted and clouded the natural dynamics of this indicator in 2020–2021.

the demonstration of the dark sides of everyday life. Audiences are invited to enjoy films depicting manhunts, bloodshed, murder, and so on. In mainstream films, "violence, cruelty and eroticism sprinkled with more violence have become the main elements of largely similar plots" (Tarasov 2005: 91). Our research gives us serious cause for concern that there could be a risk group among young audiences (Tarasov 2005: 202–276; 2016: 84–86; Zhabskiy, Tarasov 2018: 76–85; Tarasov 2018: 65–73; Tarasov, Zhabskiy 2021: 230–272; Tarasov 2021: 168–186). There is other evidence to suggest that cultural monotony dominates the space of film communications.

Intercultural Film Communication in the Global Mainstream Created by Hollywood

Refracted through the economic, social, political, cultural and other characteristics of a given society, the "soft power" contained in the products of the American film industry manifests itself differently in different countries. Even so, the film market of almost every country is dominated by Hollywood, which since the mogul days has aimed at churning out films that satisfy the emotional needs of the middle class. And the practice of consuming films cultivates these needs in other strata of society.

Immersed in the fantasy world of cinema, the viewer's mental register automatically switches. It shifts to a mode of regression and, depending on the nature of the film, empathy, identification and projection. Hollywood shrewdly creates effective structural and aesthetic mechanisms in its films in order to stimulate these processes. In doing so, the film transports the viewer into the virtual world, performing a function that is universal for the audience – it entertains them. Hollywood's primary goal is to produce entertainment.

Until the early 1970s, Hollywood beat out the competition with films whose appeal was ensured by the paradigm of the so-called "zero-degree (classical) style" of filming, which was felt in all big-screen Hollywood productions. The organizational, production, technical and aesthetic innovations that emerged over the years were subordinated to two main narrative practices: telling interesting stories and hiding all signs of the production techniques used to make the films (Sobchak, Sobchak 1987: 6).

According to a study conducted by the respected art critic David Bordwell and his colleagues, the classical style involves creative work in line with genre cinema. When watching a film, the viewer should experience the illusion that they are witnessing real events that capture and hold their attention. Artistic innovations are allowed in doses, and only on the condition that they do not contradict the established communicative conventions of the film process. The story must be believable, develop linearly, and have a beginning, middle and end. The fact that the story is made up, as well as the tools and techniques used to tell it, must be hidden from the audience. The story must be understandable, have significant emotional appeal and the ability, when viewed, to activate the psychological processes of regression, empathy, identification, and projection of the American and, more broadly, global audience. The most important thing

is to create the illusion of reality. The viewer should feel like they are observing interesting and possibly dangerous events, but from a safe place (Jowett, Linton 1989: 100–101).

It is through these and other features of the film's image system that Hollywood has subordinated the aesthetics of its products to its commodity function and thus gained a competitive artistic advantage in the market of mass media culture. The aesthetics and economics of cinema combine in such a way that, despite the existing cultural differences between countries, Hollywood products are universally consumed due to the common denominator of attractiveness.

American cinema demonstrates and implements "soft power" through the attractiveness of the film's characters. Sociologists have identified a complex of personal characteristics of protagonists that Russian viewers find attractive (Rondely 2013: 145–146). At the top of the list are optimism, willpower, independence, self-reliance, self-confidence, the drive to succeed, and initiative. This stereotypical set of positive character traits in the viewer's consciousness "is gradually established as an image – a model! – of the ideal movie hero" (Rondely 2013: 146).

It was in the United States that the magic of the movie star was first discovered and then systematically exploited. This magic comes from the attractiveness of the hero, shining on the silver screen with all the colours of their character. The popularity of movie stars, coupled with the attractiveness of the characters they play, has become a powerful synergistic factor in the cross-border "soft power" of American cinema. The hero embodies the values of a given society. The movie star, thanks to the parasocial relationship that fans have with them, actively promotes these values to the mass consciousness of various societies.

In Russia, the participants in a sociological survey carried out in the city of Kirov in 2016 were asked to rank their favourite movie stars. American actors dominated the list: Johnny Depp (60% of respondents had him among their favourites), Leonardo DiCaprio (58%), and Angelina Jolie (58%). A similar study carried out two years later in Yekaterinburg produced a slightly different top three: DiCaprio (58%), Depp (56%) and Jackie Chan (54%; he scored 45% in the Kirov survey). Note that these actors scored significantly lower among those respondents who consider themselves afficionados of Russian cinema, at 37%, 33% and 42%, respectively. For this section of society, the most popular actors were Svetlana Khodchenkova (52%), Danila Kozlovsky (52%) and Konstantin Khabensky.[12]

[12] Both studies were carried out as part of the research activities of the All-Russian State University of Cinematography (VGIK). Participants were moviegoers aged 11 and older. The Kirov study used a combined sample that was compiled using directed and probabilistic selection. Only three of the city's six movie theatres were selected as venues for the survey – two in the city centre and one on the outskirts. Information was collected in the form of a written survey. Over the course of a week, every fourth person who purchased a movie ticket and met the criteria was asked to fill out a questionnaire. The researchers did this before 117 screenings of 12 films. A total of 461 moviegoers took part in the survey. A imilar methodology was used in the Yekaterinburg study: every third visitor was asked to take part in the survey before the screening of 34 films (367 screenings in total in five cinemas). The sample included 477 moviegoers.

The production of glitzy Hollywood films is streamlined. The filmmakers are provided with serious research and consulting services. The film's concept, synopsis, script, and possible titles, as well as the names of the actors attached to it are all tested on potential viewers. Test screenings are carried out as a way to get feedback from the public and identify ways to increase its appeal in the final version.

Hollywood's dominance in the global film market does not mean that it does not have its opponents in certain countries, supporters of their respective national cinemas. Russia is one such example. Three new segments of the cinemagoing public emerged in the country during the 1990s, a time of transition in the domestic film industry. Differing in the degree of communicative and emotional commitment to national cinema, they can, with a certain degree of convention, be called: 1) "loyal" viewers (those who feel a closer spiritual connection to Russian films); 2) "lost" viewers (those who would prefer to watch films that are not Russian); and "neutral" viewers (those who did not care where the film was produced; they just want to watch an interesting story).

When Russian cinema was actively developing in the 2000s, a number of sociological surveys were carried out to determine the size of these segments among cinemagoers aged 11 and over.[13] According to the results of the study, 22% of the cinemagoing public could be considered "loyal" viewers, 39% "lost" viewers, and 39% "neutral" viewers. The 2016 VGIK study in Kirov revealed a somewhat different picture, with 15% of the audience being loyal, 58% lost, and 27% neutral. The study carried out in Yekaterinburg in 2018 (i.e. before the pandemic) confirmed the reliability of these figures: loyal (19%); lost (55%); neutral (26%). According to these figures, approximately one in five Russian cinemagoer prefers to watch homegrown films. The responses of moviegoers in Yekaterinburg to the question "Would you like Russian directors to make films in the American style?" are telling: 25% of respondents said "yes," while 27% said "no." The rest could not give an answer one way or the other.

Nine per cent of the respondents who can be described as "loyal" viewers said they would like Russian filmmakers to imitate their American counterparts, while 48% said they would not. These figures were 26% and 32%, respectively, for the so-called "lost" segment of the cinemagoing public. This is interesting for the fact that one in three respondents in this segment called for Russian films to be Russian, and more people oppose the idea of imitating Hollywood than support it.

The study carried out in Yekaterinburg also gives us an insight into which segments of the cinemagoing public prefer American films to Russian films. We are particularly interested in the "lost" audience here, who make up 55% of all people attending movie theatres in the city. The study did not separate respondents by gender. As for age distribution, the 19–29 group made up 47% of cinemagoers in this segment,

[13] The authors of the present article took part in a 2008 survey conducted jointly by the Informkino agency and VGIK, with the support of the Ministry of Culture, in several Russian cities (Moscow, St. Petersburg, Kazan, Chelyabinsk, Kursk, Vladivostok, Chita, Magnitogorsk, Troitsk, and Snezhinsk). The cities were selected according to geography, size, and level of cinema attendance.

compared to 23% for the younger audience (11 to 18). All other cinemagoers were over 30. Students made up 40% of the respondents, skilled and unskilled workers 9% each, and businesspeople 13%. As we can see, the sociodemographic makeup of those who prefer American films is quite broad.[14]

* * *

Global film communication is marked by a striking contradiction. There are a great many national cinemas, but the products of only a few of them are able to travel across borders. In most countries, American films easily outperform domestic productions. The spectrum of intercultural cinematic communication is extremely narrow.

Appealing to UNESCO's position on the value of cultural diversity,[15] which is as necessary as biological diversity, national cinemas around the world are attempting to increase the share of their cultural product in the domestic market. Hollywood, which treats films as any other commodity, is resisting this with all its might. And this ideological struggle – film as a commodity versus film as a culture – will ultimately be settled by the filmgoing public. Right now, their choice is clear: Hollywood.

This raises some rather worrying questions. "For what is a national cinema if it doesn't have a national audience?" (Higson 1989: 46). What are the prospects for national cinema in intercultural communication if the domestic public turns away from it? The answers should be sought in practical activities, based on a deep understanding of the logic and mechanisms of the globalization of intercultural film communication, in scientific knowledge and in the rational use of the existing horizon of possibilities.

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[14] The study is described above.

[15] Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions. URL: https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000142919.

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