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CINEMA AS A REFLECTION OF CULTURAL IDENTITY: PORTUGAL AND SLOVENIA AS SMALL EUROPEAN FILM INDUSTRIES

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Abstract

This article examines cinema as a key site for the articulation and negotiation of cultural identity, using a comparative analysis of Portugal and Slovenia as small European film industries operating within global audiovisual structures. In this study, cultural identity is understood as a broader, dynamic framework encompassing symbolic practices, narratives, and meanings, within which national identity functions as one historically and institutionally grounded articulation. Focusing on Portugal and Slovenia, this article analyses how linguistic diversity, regional narratives, and institutional frameworks sustain cultural specificity despite economic and structural vulnerabilities. This study employs a comparative qualitative case study design that combines a systematic literature review (SLR), conducted in line with PRISMA guidelines, and a close textual analysis of exemplar films from the two countries. The findings reveal that Portuguese cinema rearticulates cultural identity through postcolonial memory, lusophone connections, and auteur traditions, while Slovenian cinema foregrounds post-socialist transition, nationalism, and European integration. Both cases underscore the resilience of small cinemas: they rely on public funding mechanisms administered through national film agencies and EU support frameworks, while transforming resource limitations into aesthetic innovation and preserving linguistic and cultural diversity under global market pressures. The analysis concludes that small cinemas, though structurally constrained, function as vital laboratories of cultural resilience, offering unique perspectives that resist homogenization and enrich global film culture.

Keywords: Small nation cinemas; Portugal; Slovenia; cultural identity; globalization; linguistic diversity; European film industries

INTRODUCTION

Cinema has long been a powerful medium through which nations imagine themselves, articulate cultural values, and negotiate identities in the face of social, political, and economic change. As Anderson (1983) argued in his seminal work *Imagined Communities*, cultural forms such as literature and later film serve as key instruments for the construction of national identity. Building on this insight, film scholars such as Higson (2000) and Hjort (2010) have emphasized that cinema is not only a mirror of cultural identity but also a site where identity is actively contested and redefined. Nowhere is this more evident than in the cinemas of small nations, which must navigate the dual pressures of cultural specificity and global market imperatives.

Recent scholarship has emphasized the need to contextualize small European cinemas within both national and transnational cultural frameworks. Building on the work of Leonor Areal (2011, 2014) and André Rui Graça (2021), recent scholarship on Portuguese cinema emphasizes evolving institutional frameworks and aesthetic strategies beyond earlier narratives of marginality. Similarly, studies of post-socialist and post-Yugoslav cinema caution against overly centralized interpretations of cultural production, emphasizing decentralization, self-management practices, and diverse exhibition circuits (Praznik, 2021).

This article focuses on two small European nations—Portugal and Slovenia—as case studies to explore how cinema functions as a reflection of cultural identity. While geographically and historically distinct, both countries exemplify the creative resilience of small national cinemas under global pressures. Portugal, with its deep auteur tradition and lusophone cultural connections, has a long balanced arthouse credibility with challenges of distribution and market marginalization (Vieira, 2016). Slovenia, by contrast, emerged from the collapse of Yugoslavia in the 1990s into a landscape defined by

post-socialist transitions, nationalism, and integration into the European Union (Skop, 2015). Together, these two cases provide insights into how films reflect, challenge, and reshape cultural identity in ways that both sustain and transform national narratives.

One key dimension of cultural identity in cinema is linguistic representation. As Hall (1990) observed, identity is not a fixed essence but a process, constantly being rearticulated through cultural forms. In Portugal, the Portuguese language situates national cinema within a broader lusophone community, linking it to former colonies and diasporic audiences (Cunha, 2020). Portuguese films thus resonate both locally and transnationally, projecting narratives that balance national specificity with global relevance. In Slovenia, by contrast, the Slovene language functions as a marker of survival and distinctiveness in a post-Yugoslav context where linguistic and cultural homogenization remain latent threats (Švob-Đokić, 2010). Films in Slovene not only affirm national identity but also resist pressures to conform to larger European linguistic blocs such as German, Italian, or English.

Beyond language, small cinemas also reflect cultural identity through their thematic and aesthetic choices. Portuguese filmmakers such as Manoel de Oliveira and Pedro Costa have foregrounded themes of history, marginality, and memory, using cinema to interrogate Portugal's national past and contemporary struggles (Nagib, 2011). Similarly, Slovenian filmmakers such as Damjan Kozole have explored issues of migration, nationalism, and moral ambiguity, capturing the turbulence of a society redefining itself after socialism (Pogačar, 2019). These films reveal how small cinemas use limited resources to produce works of significant cultural depth, simultaneously reflecting and shaping public discourse about identity.

At the same time, these national cinemas do not operate in isolation. The pressures of global markets, dominated by

Hollywood and increasingly by global streaming platforms, impose constraints on small industries. Market forces often demand conformity to genres and styles that are commercially viable, thereby threatening to erode cultural and linguistic diversity. As Tufekci (2018) notes, algorithm-driven media ecosystems privilege mainstream content at the expense of minority voices. For Portugal and Slovenia, the challenge lies in maintaining cultural authenticity while participating in transnational circuits of production and distribution, including European co-productions and international festivals.

This tension between cultural specificity and global market pressure raises crucial questions:

Research Questions

1. In what ways do films from smaller European nations reflect, challenge, or reshape cultural and national identity?
2. How can cinema encompass linguistic diversity and regional narratives under the pressures of globalized media markets?
3. What are the specific challenges and creative strategies evident in Portuguese and Slovenian cinemas as examples of small European industries?

Portugal and Slovenia are examined as contrasting yet comparable cases of small European film industries, shaped by distinct historical trajectories but facing similar structural constraints within global audiovisual markets. Throughout the article, references to national identity are analytically situated within broader processes of cultural negotiation, allowing comparison without reifying identity as a fixed or essential category. This article makes three key contributions. First, it foregrounds the role of cinema in reflecting cultural identity in small nations, showing how films capture linguistic diversity, historical memory, and regional narratives. Second, it highlights how these cinemas challenge and reshape identity, resisting homogenization by producing hybrid forms that speak

both locally and globally. Third, it argues that small cinemas, far from being marginal, occupy a crucial position in global film culture as laboratories of cultural resilience and innovation.

Methodologically, the paper employs a comparative case study approach, drawing on the textual analysis of selected Portuguese and Slovenian films, as well as secondary literature on small nation cinema, national identity, and cultural diversity. By juxtaposing two distinct but comparable cases, the study reveals common strategies of resilience while illuminating the particularities of each context. The article proceeds by outlining the theoretical framework, presenting the contextual and case study analyses of Portugal and Slovenia, and concluding with a comparative synthesis. By adopting a comparative approach to two small European film industries, this article contributes to film and media studies by bridging cultural identity theory with industry-oriented analysis. It extends the existing scholarship by situating national cinemas within broader European audiovisual structures, highlighting how cultural specificity is negotiated under global market pressures.

THEORETICAL AND CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

The study of cinema as a reflection and reconfiguration of cultural identity is deeply rooted in cultural theory, film studies, and communication scholarship. For this paper, three interconnected frameworks are central: national cinema theory, small nation cinema studies, and cultural identity frameworks. These are enriched by perspectives on linguistic diversity and decolonial critiques of cultural production. Together, these provide a lens through which the cases of Portugal and Slovenia can be analyzed.

National Cinema and Imagined Communities

The concept of national cinema has long been a key analytical category in film studies. Anderson's (1983) theory of

imagined communities provides a starting point, framing nations as socially constructed through shared cultural practices. Film, as one of the most powerful media forms, contributes to the "imagining" of the nation by narrating histories, traditions, and values. Higson (2000) further developed this by arguing that national cinema is not a fixed category but an ongoing negotiation shaped by cultural flows, transnational influences, and industrial conditions. Portugal and Slovenia exemplify this tension. Portuguese cinema often reflects lusophone identity and postcolonial ties (Vieira, 2016), while Slovenian cinema negotiates its post-Yugoslav and European Union identities (Švob-Đokić, 2010). In both contexts, national cinema operates as both a mirror and a site of contestation, where identity is reflected, debated, and reshaped.

Small Nation Cinema Studies

The framework of small nation cinema provides a crucial lens for understanding how countries with limited resources nonetheless produce films of global significance. Hjort (2010) defines small nation cinemas as industries constrained by market size, budgets, and infrastructural limitations, yet often uniquely positioned to tell culturally specific stories. These cinemas, she argues, are "laboratories of resilience," producing distinct aesthetics and narratives that would not emerge from larger, more commercially driven industries. For Portugal, small nation cinema theory explains the persistence of auteur-driven filmmaking in spite of global competition. For Slovenia, it highlights how limited domestic capacity compels the reliance on co-productions and film festivals while still maintaining a national identity through language and themes of transition (Skop, 2015). Thus, small nation cinema theory is not only descriptive but explanatory: it frames limitation as a catalyst for cultural specificity.

Cultural Identity in Film

Stuart Hall's (1990) influential work on cultural identity underscores the dynamic and non-essentialist nature of identity. He distinguishes between two conceptions: identity as

a "shared culture" reflecting common historical experiences, and identity as a process, constantly reconstructed through representation. In cinema, this means that films both draw on cultural memory and actively reshape identity. Portuguese cinema demonstrates this duality: Oliveira's and Costa's films draw on Portugal's colonial past and marginalized communities to construct narratives that both reflect and critique identity (Nagib, 2011). Slovenian cinema similarly reflects the fluidity of identity in a post-socialist context, where narratives oscillate between national affirmation and critique of nationalism (Pogačar, 2019). Hall's theory provides a framework for understanding how identity is not merely represented but is also reconstituted through film.

Linguistic Diversity and Regional Narratives

Language is a central marker of cultural identity in small nation cinemas. Anderson (1983) stressed the role of print-language in forming national consciousness; in film, spoken language carries similar weight. For small nations, retaining linguistic specificity is both an aesthetic and political act. Research on European cinema shows that linguistic vitality is essential for sustaining minority cultures (O'Connell, 2010). Portuguese cinema uses language as a transnational bridge to the lusophone world (Cunha, 2020), while Slovenian cinema uses Slovene as a form of cultural resistance against regional homogenization (Švob-Đokić, 2010). In both cases, language affirms identity, even under pressure from English-dominated markets and subtitling conventions.

Constructivist and Decolonial Perspectives

Constructivist media theory emphasizes that technologies and media forms are shaped through social negotiation rather than technological determinism (Couldry, 2012). Applied here, it suggests that Portuguese and Slovenian cinemas appropriate film technology within their own cultural and institutional frameworks, producing hybrid forms that balance global influences with local traditions. Decolonial perspectives further enrich the analysis by critiquing the asymmetry in

global film markets. Couldry and Mejias (2019) describe this as data colonialism, where cultural production is subordinated to global platforms and algorithms. In film, this manifests as pressures from Hollywood and global streaming services to conform to homogenized formats. Small cinemas, however, resist this through narrative specificity, linguistic diversity, and regional authenticity.

Intersection of Frameworks

Intersections between institutional frameworks, cultural identity, and global/platform pressures shaping small European film industries.

Figure 1 illustrates the interaction between institutional frameworks, cultural identity, and global/platform pressures in shaping the conditions under which small European film industries operate. Institutional frameworks encompass national film policies, public funding systems, EU support mechanisms, and regulatory environments that structure production, circulation, and exhibition. Cultural identity refers to the symbolic, linguistic, historical, and narrative dimensions through which cinema articulates collective belonging and

cultural specificity. Global and platform pressures capture the influence of transnational markets, dominant distribution systems, and digital infrastructures on visibility, access, and audience formation.

The intersections between these domains highlight how cultural identity is continuously negotiated rather than autonomously expressed. Within this framework, artificial intelligence and digital platforms are conceptualised as infrastructural mediators embedded within global pressures, shaping discoverability, circulation, and visibility without determining cultural content. Consistent with critical perspectives on technological determinism (Williams, 1974; Feenberg, 2002), technological dynamics are understood as socially shaped and institutionally mediated. For small film industries such as Portugal and Slovenia, algorithmic visibility regimes and platform infrastructures are negotiated through selective adoption, public support structures, and culturally grounded production strategies, allowing resilience to emerge at the intersection of institutional support, cultural identity, and global audiovisual systems.

METHODOLOGY

Research design and rationale

This study uses a comparative qualitative case study design to examine how small European cinemas reflect, challenge, and reshape cultural identity through film (Yin, 2018). We combine (a) a systematic literature review (SLR) to map the scholarly and policy debates around national/small-nation cinema, identity, and linguistic diversity (Moher et al., 2009; Snyder, 2019), along with (b) close textual/visual analysis of exemplar films from Portugal and Slovenia (Bordwell & Thompson, 2010; Rose, 2016). The mixed design allows us to link institutional and historiographic context to aesthetic practices on screen.

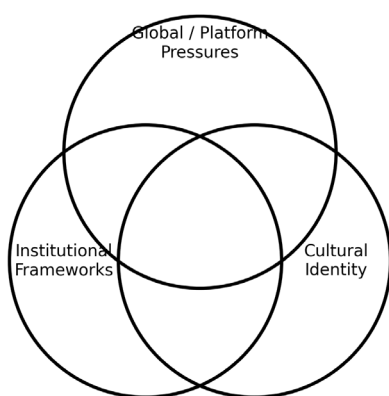


Figure 1 Intersection of Frameworks

Scope and period

To capture post-Cold War transformations, EU integration, and contemporary festival/streaming dynamics, the review covers 1990–2025. The film corpus focuses on canonical and internationally circulated works from this period that explicitly engage national identity, memory, and language.

Systematic literature review: Sources, search, and screening

We searched Scopus, Web of Science, JSTOR, Film & Television Literature Index (EBSCO), FIAF International Index to Film Periodicals, and Google Scholar, plus selected national policy/industry documents (e.g., ICA Portugal; Slovenian Film Centre). Search strings combined controlled and free terms, e.g.:

- "national cinema" AND (Portugal OR Portuguese)
- "Slovenian cinema" OR "Slovene film" AND identity
- "small nation cinema" OR "small national cinemas"
- "linguistic diversity" AND film AND Europe
- (festival OR co-production OR Eurimages) AND (Portugal OR Slovenia)

Inclusion criteria: peer-reviewed articles/chapters, reputable film journals, and policy/industry reports addressing national/small-nation cinema, identity/linguistic diversity, institutions/policy, or aesthetics in Portugal and/or Slovenia. Exclusion criteria: items not about cinema (e.g., television only), purely technical pieces without cultural/identity analysis, or items from outside 1990–2025 (unless seminal). Two-stage screening (title/abstract; full-text) followed the PRISMA procedures (Moher et al., 2009). The systematic literature review produced a core corpus of 38 scholarly sources addressing national cinema, small-nation cinema, cultural identity, and European audiovisual policy. Additional institutional reports (e.g., European Audiovisual Observatory 2023; CresCine Project 2023) were consulted during the interpretative stage of the research to contextualize contemporary industry developments. These sources are therefore

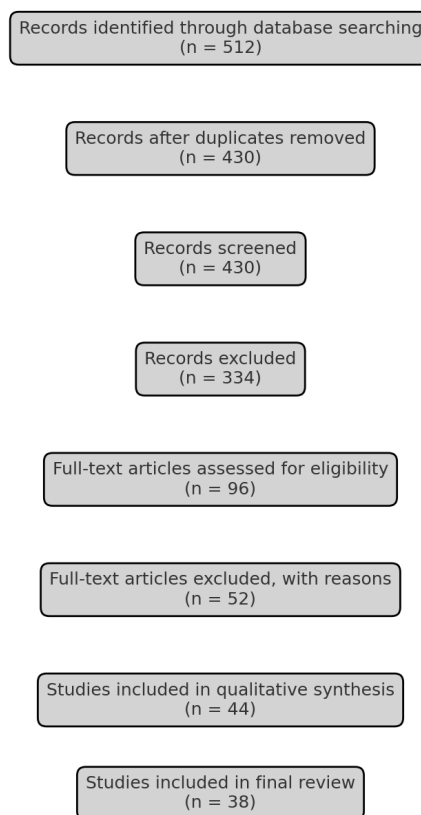


Figure 2 PRISMA flow diagram summarizing the identification, screening, eligibility, and inclusion of studies.

cited as contextual industry references rather than as part of the original SLR dataset. A full list of the studies included in the systematic literature review is provided in Appendix A. The systematic literature review produced a core corpus of scholarly sources addressing national cinema, small-nation cinema, cultural identity, and European audiovisual policy. General methodological works cited in the article (e.g., Yin 2018; Braun & Clarke 2006; Bordwell & Thompson 2010) are used to support the research design and analytical procedures but are not part of the SLR dataset presented in Appendix A.

Film corpus construction

Using the SLR, festival catalogues, national film bodies, and scholarly consensus, we purposefully sampled exemplar films that: (1) achieved notable festival circulation and/or national prominence; (2) explicitly stage questions of identity, memory, and language; and (3) are frequently cited in scholarship on Portuguese or Slovenian cinema.

- Portugal (illustrative set): Manoel de Oliveira's *Non, ou a Vã Glória de Mandar* (1990), Pedro Costa's *In Vanda's Room* (2000) and *Vitalina Varela* (2019), Miguel Gomes's *Tabu* (2012).
- Slovenia (illustrative set): Damjan Kozole's *Spare Parts* (2003) and *Slovenian Girl* (2009), Janez Burger's *Idle Running* (1999) and *Silent Sonata* (2011).

The set is not exhaustive; rather, it is a theoretically saturated sample suited to analytical generalization (Yin, 2018), not statistical inference.

Analytical procedures

1. *Contextual coding (documents/policy)*: We conducted a thematic synthesis of the included literature/policy texts around four axes - history/memory, language/region, institutions/policy, global circulation (Braun & Clarke, 2006).
2. *Textual/visual analysis (films)*: Guided by film-analytic conventions (Bordwell & Thompson, 2010; Rose, 2016), we coded:
 - Narrative structures (e.g., memory work, migration, post-socialist transition).
 - Aesthetic form (e.g., long-take realism, slow cinema, minimal dialogue; sound/language use; intertitles/subtitling).
 - Identity staging (e.g., lusophone/postcolonial links; Slovene linguistic assertion; nationalism/Europeanization).
 - Paratexts and circulation (festival framing, co-production credits, institutional acknowledgments).

3. *Cross-case synthesis*: We compared patterned findings across Portugal/Slovenia to identify convergences (state/EU dependence, festival visibility, linguistic specificity) and divergences (postcolonial vs. post-Yugoslav trajectories), aligning evidence with the theoretical framework.

The analytical procedures outlined above informed the development of a thematic coding framework that structured both the literature synthesis and the comparative case study analysis.

Derived Coding Framework (SLR and Film Analysis)

To ensure analytical traceability between the systematic literature review and the case study findings, the analysis employed a thematic coding framework derived inductively from both the SLR corpus and the close textual analysis of selected films. Across the reviewed literature and film texts, recurrent analytical codes included: (1) dependence on state and EU funding mechanisms; (2) festival circulation as a primary mode of international visibility; (3) linguistic specificity as a marker of cultural identity; (4) historical memory and postcolonial or post-socialist legacies; (5) national and regional narratives of belonging; (6) auteurism as a strategy of cultural distinction; and (7) structural pressures arising from global markets and platform-based distribution. These codes guided both the within-case analysis and cross-case comparison, enabling the systematic identification of convergences and divergences between Portuguese and Slovenian cinemas. A summary of the studies included in the SLR and the applied coding framework is provided in the supplementary materials.

Trustworthiness & Ethics

This study ensured methodological rigor through transparency, triangulation, and ethical research practices. Transparency

was maintained by documenting the search strategies, inclusion and exclusion criteria, and analytical procedures in line with PRISMA guidelines, allowing the review process to be traceable and replicable (Moher et al., 2009). Triangulation was achieved by integrating evidence from peer-reviewed scholarship, policy documents, and the close textual analysis of films, strengthening the validity of the findings through cross-verification of the sources (Bryman, 2016). Ethical considerations were addressed by relying exclusively on publicly available materials, including published literature, officially released films, and institutional reports; no human subjects were involved, and formal ethics approval was therefore not required.

Contextual Background: Portugal and Slovenia

Understanding how small European cinemas reflect and re-shape cultural identity requires situating them within their historical, political, and institutional contexts. Portugal and Slovenia, while geographically distinct and with different trajectories of statehood, share important characteristics: small domestic markets, strong state involvement in film policy, and persistent struggles to balance cultural specificity with global market pressures.

Portugal: From Dictatorship to Lusophone Connections

Portugal's film history has been profoundly shaped by its political trajectory. Under the *Estado Novo* dictatorship (1933–1974), cinema was tightly controlled, serving as both a propaganda tool and a vehicle for conservative cultural values (Vieira, 2016). Filmmaking was constrained by censorship, and national identity was often articulated through folkloric, ruralist imagery that aligned with the regime's nationalist agenda (Ribeiro, 2013). During this period, auteur voices such as Manoel de Oliveira emerged, but their work was marginalized and censored. The Carnation Revolution of 1974 radically transformed Portuguese cinema. Filmmakers

gained freedom of expression and began exploring themes of colonialism, revolution, and social transformation (Nagib, 2011). Cinema became a space for revisiting Portugal's colonial past and interrogating the myths of national identity. The revolution also triggered a wave of Third Cinema-inspired works that aligned film with social and political liberation.

Institutionally, Portuguese cinema has long relied on public funding mechanisms administered through national film agencies such as the Instituto do Cinema e do Audiovisual (ICA). The Instituto do Cinema e do Audiovisual (ICA) remains the central funding body, supporting national productions, co-productions, and festival circulation. Despite funding constraints, ICA policies have sought to preserve linguistic and cultural specificity in an era dominated by Hollywood imports and, more recently, global streaming services. Portugal also participates in Eurimages and MEDIA (EU Creative Europe Programme), which enable co-productions and distribution across Europe (Cunha, 2020). One distinctive feature of Portuguese cinema is its lusophone dimension. Portuguese-language films circulate within the broader community of Portuguese-speaking countries, including Brazil, Angola, and Mozambique. This gives Portugal's cinema a transnational identity, allowing it to reflect cultural ties across continents while reinforcing the role of language as a central marker of national identity. At the same time, the reliance on festival circuits (Cannes, Berlin, Venice) means that Portuguese cinema often reaches wider recognition abroad than at home, where Hollywood continues to dominate box offices (Vieira, 2016).

Slovenia: Post-Yugoslav Transition and European Integration

Slovenia's film history is marked by its experience as part of Yugoslavia and its transition to independence in 1991. Under socialist Yugoslavia, cinema was state-funded but ideologically guided, producing films that reflected both socialist ideals and Yugoslavia's unique position as a non-aligned

state (Švob-Dokić, 2010). Slovenian filmmakers contributed to Yugoslav cinema, but the Slovene language and regional narratives were often overshadowed by Serbo-Croatian dominance. The disintegration of Yugoslavia and Slovenia's independence in 1991 reshaped the cinematic landscape. Film became a tool for asserting national identity, articulating the distinctiveness of Slovene culture and language (Pogačar, 2019). Early post-independence films often addressed themes of nationalism, war, and transition, reflecting the anxieties of a small state redefining itself in a volatile region. Damjan Kozole's *Spare Parts* (2003), which explored migration and exploitation, captured Slovenia's complex position at the crossroads of Eastern and Western Europe. Institutionally, Slovenia established its own national film body, the Slovenian Film Centre (SFC), in 2011, succeeding earlier state structures. The SFC manages state subsidies, supports film education, and promotes Slovenian films internationally. Like Portugal, Slovenia relies on EU support mechanisms such as Eurimages and MEDIA, which are vital for financing and distributing films in a domestic market too small to sustain an independent industry. Co-productions, often with neighboring Austria, Italy, or Croatia, play a crucial role in enabling Slovenian films to be made and seen (Skop, 2015).

Culturally, Slovenian cinema reflects the country's post-socialist and European Union identity. Themes of transition, identity crisis, and European integration recur in films, mirroring wider social debates. The Slovene language is central: its use in film affirms national identity, distinguishing Slovenian cinema from the multilingual heritage of Yugoslavia. Yet this linguistic specificity also poses challenges in international distribution, requiring subtitling and limiting audience reach beyond Slovenia. Slovenia's small industry faces structural constraints: limited cinema screens, weak domestic demand, and competition from global streaming platforms. However, the international festival circuit has provided visibility. Slovenian films, though few in number, often gain recognition in regional and European film festivals, reinforcing the role of

cinema as both cultural expression and as a diplomatic tool of soft power (Pogačar, 2019).

Comparative Observations

Both Portugal and Slovenia highlight the paradoxes of small nation cinemas. Politically, both emerged from authoritarian or socialist systems that tightly controlled cultural production. The transition to democracy in Portugal and independence in Slovenia opened spaces for cinematic expression, but also exposed both industries to the structural challenges of small markets. Institutionally, both rely heavily on public funding mechanisms administered through national film agencies and EU support frameworks. Without subsidies and co-production networks, national cinema in either country would struggle to compete with Hollywood imports or sustain independent production.

Culturally, both emphasize linguistic and regional identity as central to their cinematic distinctiveness. Portuguese cinema leverages lusophone connections to project a transnational identity, while Slovenian cinema foregrounds the Slovene language as a marker of post-independence cultural survival. Economically, both face similar challenges: low domestic market share, reliance on co-productions, and dependence on festival circuits for visibility. Yet these constraints foster aesthetic innovation and cultural resilience, with filmmakers often producing works that resonate deeply within their respective national contexts while appealing to international audiences seeking alternative non-Hollywood narratives.

Case Study 1: Portugal

Portuguese cinema represents one of Europe's most distinctive small nation film cultures, defined by its auteur tradition, postcolonial memory, and capacity to negotiate between local specificity and global circuits. Although Portugal's domestic market is small and heavily dominated by Hollywood

imports, its cinema has achieved significant international visibility, particularly on the festival circuit. This evolution aligns with Portuguese film scholarship that has moved beyond narratives of marginality toward analyses of institutional consolidation and aesthetic strategy (Areal, 2011, 2014; Graça, 2021). This section examines how Portuguese films reflect and reshape national identity through three key dimensions: *historical memory and colonial legacies, aesthetic innovation and authorship, and institutional reliance on state and European support mechanisms.*

Historical Memory and Colonial Legacies

A defining feature of Portuguese cinema is its sustained engagement with history, particularly the legacies of dictatorship and colonialism. Under the Estado Novo regime (1933–1974), film was tightly censored and often used to reinforce conservative nationalist ideologies (Ribeiro, 2013). After the Carnation Revolution of 1974, Portuguese filmmakers seized the opportunity to use cinema as a vehicle for political reflection, revisiting themes that had been suppressed under censorship. One example is the work of Manoel de Oliveira, often considered the patriarch of Portuguese cinema. Films such as *Non, ou a Vã Glória de Mandar* (No, or the Vain Glory of Command, 1990) revisit Portuguese colonial history and interrogate myths of national greatness. Oliveira's meticulous style, blending theatrical dialogue with historical tableaux, foregrounds cinema as a space for collective memory and critique. Similarly, João Botelho and António-Pedro Vasconcelos explored Portugal's revolutionary period, reflecting the social upheaval of the 1970s and 1980s.

More recently, Pedro Costa has redefined Portuguese cinema's relationship to history and identity by focusing on marginalized communities, particularly Cape Verdean immigrants in Lisbon. His films, such as *In Vanda's Room* (2000) and *Vitalina Varela* (2019), foreground lives on the periphery of Portuguese society, linking questions of national identity

to Portugal's postcolonial realities (Nagib, 2011). Costa's aesthetic choices—long takes, minimalist narratives, and collaborations with non-professional actors—emphasize authenticity while re-inscribing immigrant voices into Portugal's cinematic self-portrait. These films challenge the dominant narratives of Portuguese identity by centering the experiences of racialized and working-class communities.

Aesthetic Innovation and Authorship

Portuguese cinema is globally recognized for its strong auteur tradition. From Oliveira to Costa, directors have crafted distinctive cinematic languages that foreground aesthetics as central to cultural identity. Oliveira's oeuvre, spanning from the silent era until his death in 2015, exemplifies continuity and experimentation. His works often juxtaposed Portugal's cultural traditions—Catholicism, rural life, classical literature—with modernist cinematic techniques (Vieira, 2016). Oliveira's insistence on slowness and contemplation distinguished Portuguese cinema from faster-paced commercial genres, positioning it firmly within European arthouse traditions.

Costa represents a different but complementary aesthetic trajectory. His focus on marginalized communities extends beyond content to form. The stripped-down realism of *In Vanda's Room*, shot digitally in the slums of Lisbon, demonstrates how aesthetic experimentation can also serve ethical and political purposes. Costa's films are celebrated at international festivals (Locarno, Venice, Cannes), giving Portuguese cinema visibility while reinforcing its reputation for rigorously artistic, socially conscious filmmaking (Nagib, 2011). Other contemporary directors, including Miguel Gomes, have expanded this reputation for innovation. Gomes' *Tabu* (2012), for example, reimagines Portugal's colonial history through a playful mix of nostalgia, melodrama, and surrealism. The film combines silent cinema aesthetics with contemporary themes, highlighting how Portuguese cinema blends heritage

and experimentation. Such films are emblematic of what Hjort (2010) calls the aesthetic resilience of small nation cinemas: the ability to transform resource limitations into distinctive artistic signatures.

Institutional Frameworks and Industry Structures

Portugal's cinema industry is marked by chronic underfunding and a reliance on public funding mechanisms administered through national film agencies alongside European co-production funds. The Instituto do Cinema e do Audiovisual (ICA) plays a central role in sustaining production through grants, while European initiatives such as Eurimages and MEDIA (Creative Europe Programme) enable co-productions and distribution (Cunha, 2020). Without these supports, Portuguese cinema would struggle to exist in a market where Hollywood films dominate domestic screens. Despite these constraints, state and EU support mechanisms enable Portugal to preserve linguistic and cultural specificity. Portuguese-language films not only maintain national identity but also connect to the wider lusophone world, particularly Brazil, Angola, and Mozambique.

This transnational lusophone dimension gives Portuguese cinema a unique position compared to other small European cinemas, embedding it in a global linguistic community (Vieira, 2016). The downside of this system is that domestic box office performance remains weak. Portuguese audiences overwhelmingly consume foreign (especially U.S.) films, with national films rarely surpassing 2–3% of the market share (Ribeiro, 2013). As a result, filmmakers orient much of their work toward the international festival circuit, where Portuguese cinema enjoys prestige but limited commercial reach. This reliance on festivals as an alternative distribution structure underscores the imbalance between artistic recognition abroad and limited visibility at home.

Portuguese Cinema as Cultural Negotiation

The interplay of historical memory, aesthetic innovation, and institutional dependency demonstrates how Portuguese cinema functions as both a reflection and reconfiguration of national identity. Films serve as cultural mirrors, articulating Portugal's history, language, and social realities. They also actively reshape identity by including marginalized voices, experimenting with form, and projecting lusophone connections into global circuits. Portuguese cinema thus exemplifies the double role of small nation cinemas: constrained by market size but empowered to assert cultural resilience. As Hjort (2010) argues, such cinemas turn their limitations into defining strengths, cultivating aesthetics of authenticity, reflexivity, and critical engagement. In Portugal's case, these strengths manifest in auteur-driven works that confront colonial histories, highlight immigrant experiences, and experiment with cinematic form.

Case Study 2: Slovenia

While cultural production in Yugoslavia was subject to ideological and institutional constraints, the existing scholarship demonstrates that decentralization policies introduced in the 1970s, together with self-management models and amateur film clubs, enabled a more plural and diverse audiovisual landscape than is often assumed (Praznik, 2021). Slovenian cinema represents one of Europe's youngest national film cultures, shaped by the country's post-Yugoslav independence, post-socialist transition, and integration into the European Union. Although the domestic industry is modest, producing only a handful of films annually, it plays a critical role in reflecting and renegotiating Slovenian identity. This case study examines Slovenian cinema through three main dimensions: historical and political transitions, aesthetic and thematic innovation, and institutional frameworks that sustain film production.

Historical and Political Transitions

Slovenia's cinema is deeply intertwined with the country's turbulent twentieth-century history. Before independence, Slovenian filmmakers worked within the structures of socialist Yugoslavia. Yugoslav cinema was notable for its ideological role, producing "partisan films" that glorified resistance during World War II and promoting socialist values (Švob-Đokić, 2010). While Yugoslavia's non-aligned position allowed for more artistic freedom than other socialist states, film production remained heavily centralized. Slovenian voices, though present, were often subsumed under a broader Yugoslav identity, and the Slovene language was marginal compared to Serbo-Croatian dominance.

The collapse of Yugoslavia and Slovenia's independence in 1991 marked a turning point. Cinema quickly became a medium for articulating national distinctiveness and reasserting the Slovene language as a cultural marker. Early post-independence films often addressed themes of nationalism, war, and transition, reflecting both pride in sovereignty and anxiety about identity in a volatile regional context (Pogačar, 2019). Films such as Damjan Kozole's *Slovenian Girl* (2009) have captured the contradictions of post-socialist society—between liberation and exploitation, modernity and precarity. Cinematically, this period revealed Slovenia's dual orientation towards affirming national culture and towards integration into broader European and global circuits. This tension remains a defining feature of Slovenian cinema, shaping its thematic and institutional development.

Aesthetic and Thematic Innovation

Slovenian cinema is characterized by its sharp social realism, moral ambiguity, and willingness to confront uncomfortable truths. Filmmakers use aesthetics not only to tell stories but also to interrogate identity, migration, and globalization. Damjan Kozole is among the most internationally recognized

Slovenian directors. His film *Spare Parts* (2003) starkly portrays human trafficking across Slovenia's borders, reflecting the nation's geographic position as both gateway and buffer between Eastern and Western Europe. The film's bleak realism and focus on marginalized figures highlight Slovenia's encounter with global flows of migration and exploitation (Pogačar, 2019). Similarly, *Slovenian Girl* critiques the commodification of identity in a neoliberal society, with its protagonist navigating survival through sex work in Ljubljana.

Other filmmakers, such as Janez Burger, also explore Slovenia's post-socialist condition. His film *Idle Running* (1999) depicts youth disillusionment in a society adjusting to capitalism, while *Silent Sonata* (2011) employs minimal dialogue to narrate wartime trauma. These films illustrate Slovenia's aesthetic duality: realist, socially-grounded cinema on the one hand, and experimental approaches to narrative and form on the other. Thematically, Slovenian films frequently grapple with issues of nationalism, European integration, and globalization. The Slovene language serves as an important identity marker, but films often confront the fragility of this cultural survival in a multilingual Europe. Migration, borders, and Slovenia's liminal status between East and West emerge as recurring motifs. Slovenian cinema thus reflects both internal struggles—corruption, nationalism, disillusionment—and the external pressures of European belonging and globalization.

Institutional Frameworks and Industry Constraints

Like Portugal, Slovenia's film industry is heavily reliant on public funding mechanisms administered through national film institutions such as the Slovenian Film Centre (SFC). After independence, Slovenia established national bodies to oversee film production, culminating in the creation of the Slovenian Film Centre (SFC) in 2011. The SFC manages state subsidies, supports film education, and promotes Slovenian cinema internationally. Its budget remains small, limiting the number

of films produced annually (Skop, 2015). European support mechanisms are essential for Slovenian cinema. Participation in Eurimages and MEDIA (Creative Europe Programme) enables Slovenian filmmakers to engage in co-productions, often with Austria, Italy, or Croatia. These partnerships expand the available financing options and ensure broader distribution. Without co-productions, Slovenia's domestic market—too small to sustain independent filmmaking—would not generate sufficient demand to justify production.

Film festivals are also central to Slovenia's visibility. Events like the Ljubljana International Film Festival (LIFFe) showcase both Slovenian and international works, positioning the country within the European festival circuit. At the same time, Slovenian films often depend on international festivals (Berlin, Venice, Karlovy Vary) for recognition. This underscores the paradox of small nation cinema: international prestige is often stronger than domestic popularity, with national films competing against Hollywood imports for local audiences (Švob-Đokić, 2010). Cinemas and screens remain limited. Like many small European markets, Slovenia faces strong competition from U.S. studio films, while streaming platforms increasingly shape consumption patterns (European Audiovisual Observatory, 2023; CresCine Project, 2023). Yet Slovenian filmmakers continue to use state and EU frameworks to sustain production, with cultural policy emphasizing the protection of national language and identity in film.

Slovenian Cinema as Cultural Negotiation

Slovenian cinema reflects cultural identity not as an unchanging essence but as an evolving negotiation. On one level, films affirm the Slovene language and depict local realities, reinforcing national distinctiveness. On another, they confront the uncomfortable truths—migration, exploitation, and corruption—that complicate the simplistic narratives of national pride. The aesthetic choices of filmmakers like Kozole demonstrate how small nation cinemas transform constraints into

innovation. Limited budgets encourage stripped-down realism, while thematic focus on marginalized groups underscores Slovenia's liminal status between East and West. This resonates with Hjort's (2010) theory of small nation cinema as a site of resilience, where resource constraints catalyze distinctive cultural expressions. Moreover, Slovenian cinema exemplifies Hall's (1990) idea of identity as a process. Films do not merely reflect "Sloveneness" but actively reshape it by interrogating its vulnerabilities, contradictions, and aspirations. Whether exploring post-socialist disillusionment (*Idle Running*), migration and trafficking (*Spare Parts*), or commodified identity (*Slovenian Girl*), Slovenian cinema resists homogenization and insists on telling stories rooted in its specific cultural and historical context.

Comparative Discussion: Portugal and Slovenia

The case studies of Portugal and Slovenia reveal how small European cinemas reflect, challenge, and reshape cultural identity under conditions of structural constraint and global market pressure. These findings draw on evidence from a systematic literature review of 38 peer-reviewed studies and policy reports, combined with the textual analysis of exemplar films. Together, these methods allow for a triangulated understanding of how national cinema operates both as cultural expression and as a response to global forces.

The review identified recurring themes across the literature: state dependency, festival circulation, and linguistic resilience as the core features of small cinemas. The textual analysis of Portuguese works such as Oliveira's *Non, ou a Vã Glória de Mandar* and Costa's *Vitalina Varela*, and Slovenian films such as Kozole's *Spare Parts* and Burger's *Silent Sonata* confirmed and enriched these patterns by showing how aesthetic strategies are mobilized to negotiate identity. While distinct in their histories and linguistic communities, both countries exemplify the paradoxes of small nation cinema: politically vulnerable yet culturally resilient, economically constrained

yet aesthetically innovative. This section synthesizes the comparative insights into three overarching themes: *historical trajectories and cultural memory*, *linguistic and regional identity*, and *institutional frameworks and global positioning*.

Historical Trajectories and Cultural Memory

Portugal and Slovenia's cinemas are shaped by their distinct political histories but converge in terms of using film as a vehicle for negotiating identity in periods of transition. Portugal's cinema reflects a long struggle with authoritarian control and colonial legacies. Under the Estado Novo dictatorship (1933–1974), film was censored and used to reinforce nationalist myths. After the Carnation Revolution, filmmakers re-appropriated cinema as a tool for critique and memory, confronting Portugal's colonial past and rethinking identity in a post-revolutionary context (Ribeiro, 2013; Vieira, 2016). Works by Oliveira, Costa, and Gomes demonstrate how film became central to revisiting Portugal's fraught relationship with empire, modernity, and social inequality. Slovenia, by contrast, emerged as an independent state only in 1991, after the collapse of Yugoslavia.

Here, cinema has become immediately instrumental in asserting national distinctiveness, affirming the Slovene language, and addressing the uncertainties of post-socialist transition (Švob-Đokić, 2010; Pogačar, 2019). Films by Kozole and Burger articulate the anxieties of a society negotiating between nationalism, European integration, and globalization. Despite these differences, both cinemas demonstrate how film mediates between past and present. Portugal uses cinema to reflect on colonial histories and postcolonial identities, while Slovenia uses it to explore post-socialist uncertainties and the search for belonging in Europe. In both, cultural memory becomes a central cinematic theme, affirming Hall's (1990) notion of identity as an ongoing process of representation and rearticulation.

Linguistic and Regional Identity

Language emerges as a defining feature in both Portuguese and Slovenian cinemas, though in contrasting ways. Portuguese cinema leverages the Portuguese language as a transnational bridge. The Lusophone dimension connects Portugal's cinema to Brazil, Angola, Mozambique, and diasporic communities (Cunha, 2020). This gives Portuguese cinema a global reach beyond Europe, positioning language as both national marker and international connector. Slovenian cinema, by contrast, uses language defensively as a tool for cultural survival. The Slovene language distinguishes Slovenian cinema from the dominant Serbo-Croatian of Yugoslavia and affirms its sovereignty in a small domestic market. At the same time, this linguistic specificity limits distribution, making subtitles essential for festival and co-production circulation (Pogačar, 2019). Both cases highlight the tension between linguistic diversity and global accessibility. While Portuguese benefits from a large global linguistic community, Slovenian cinema reflects the fragility of linguistic survival in a multilingual Europe. Both illustrate that preserving language in film is central to resisting cultural homogenization and maintaining distinct identities.

Institutional Frameworks and Industry Structures

Economically and institutionally, both Portugal and Slovenia demonstrate the vulnerabilities of small nation cinemas. Neither has a domestic market capable of sustaining a film industry independently, and both rely heavily on state subsidies and EU frameworks such as Eurimages and MEDIA (Skop, 2015; Cunha, 2020). Without this support, its national cinema would be eclipsed by Hollywood's dominance in local markets. Portugal's Instituto do Cinema e do Audiovisual (ICA) provides vital funding, ensuring the continuity of production despite weak box office performance. Slovenia's Slovenian Film Centre (SFC) plays a similar role but with an even smaller budget and higher

dependency on co-productions. In both cases, the state functions as the guardian of cultural cinema, ensuring that films reflecting national identity can still be made.

International festivals serve as alternative distribution circuits for both. Portuguese films like *Vitalina Varela* and *Tabu* gain prestige at Cannes or Berlin, while Slovenian films such as *Spare Parts* or *Silent Sonata* circulate through Berlin, Karlovy Vary, and Venice. This reinforces Hjort's (2010) argument that cinemas from small nations achieve visibility not through domestic commercial success but through aesthetic distinctiveness on global cultural stages.

Global Positioning and Market Pressures

Both Portugal and Slovenia operate within asymmetrical global markets dominated by Hollywood and, increasingly, streaming platforms. This creates a pressure to conform to global genres and formats, risking the erosion of cultural specificity (Tufekci, 2018). Yet both industries resist through strategies of selective adoption and hybridization. Claims regarding limited exhibition capacity, Hollywood market dominance, and the growing influence of streaming platforms in Portugal and Slovenia are supported by recent European audiovisual industry research. Studies indicate that small national cinemas typically capture between 2–5% of the domestic box office share, with visibility increasingly mediated by global distributors and platforms (European Audiovisual Observatory, 2023; CresCine Project, 2023). Where precise national data is unavailable, the present analysis adopts a contextual interpretation grounded in EU-wide small-market trends rather than absolute national metrics.

Portuguese cinema, for instance, often combines arthouse aesthetics with historical or postcolonial themes, appealing simultaneously to domestic memory and international audiences seeking alternative narratives (Nagib, 2011). Slovenian cinema uses social realism and moral ambiguity to reflect its

post-socialist reality while remaining legible to European festival audiences (Pogačar, 2019). These strategies illustrate Couldry's (2012) constructivist argument that technologies and cultural forms are not passively adopted but actively appropriated within social contexts. Portugal and Slovenia filter global influences through their own histories, languages, and institutional frameworks, creating hybrid cinemas that preserve identity while engaging with global circulation.

Convergences and Divergences

The comparative analysis reveals convergences and divergences that are primarily structural rather than cultural in nature. Both Portugal and Slovenia operate within asymmetrical global audiovisual markets characterized by a limited domestic exhibition capacity, dependence on transnational distribution networks, and an increased reliance on international festivals for visibility. In both cases, cultural identity is articulated through strategies of selective adoption and hybridization, allowing national cinemas to negotiate global pressures while maintaining symbolic specificity. Divergences emerge mainly from historical trajectories and institutional arrangements. Portugal's cinema has been shaped by post-authoritarian cultural policies and sustained engagement with European co-production frameworks, while Slovenia's film industry reflects post-socialist decentralization processes and a different configuration of state support mechanisms. These differences influence production cultures and modes of circulation, yet they do not fundamentally alter the shared structural constraints faced by small European film industries.

Taken together, these convergences and divergences suggest that the negotiation of cultural identity in small cinemas is less determined by national tradition alone than by the interaction between local institutions and transnational market forces.

Rather than presenting convergences and divergences as discrete categories, the comparative analysis reveals patterns

that cut across both case studies. Portugal and Slovenia share structural conditions typical of small European film industries, including a dependence on public and European funding mechanisms, limited domestic exhibition capacity, and a reliance on festival circulation for international visibility. In both contexts, cinema operates as a cultural practice through which identity is negotiated in response to global market asymmetries, demonstrating forms of resilience that transform constraint into creative strategy. Divergences emerge primarily from historical trajectories and institutional configurations: Portugal's cinema reflects post-authoritarian and lusophone cultural legacies with outward-oriented identity narratives, while Slovenian cinema is shaped by post-Yugoslav transformations, European integration, and inward-facing reflections on sovereignty and national cohesion. These differences influence aesthetic orientation and thematic emphasis, yet they do not override the shared structural pressures shaping cultural production.

Conclusion

This article examined how cinema functions as a site for negotiating cultural identity within small European film industries, using Portugal and Slovenia as comparative case studies. The analysis demonstrates that cultural identity in cinema is not a fixed national essence but an ongoing process shaped by historical experience, linguistic practice, institutional frameworks, and asymmetrical global audiovisual markets. Across both cases, cinema operates simultaneously as a reflection of cultural memory and as an active agent in reshaping collective self-understanding.

Despite distinct historical trajectories, Portuguese and Slovenian cinemas share structural conditions typical of small nation film industries, including limited domestic markets, reliance on state and European support mechanisms, and a dependence on festival circulation for international visibility. Portugal's cinema articulates identity through post-authoritarian

memory, postcolonial legacies, and lusophone connections, while Slovenian cinema reflects the post-Yugoslav transition, linguistic survival, and negotiations of European belonging. In both contexts, filmmakers transform structural constraints into aesthetic and narrative strategies that resist cultural homogenization. Overall, the findings underscore the resilience of small European cinemas. Rather than being marginal, they function as critical cultural spaces where identity is negotiated, contested, and rearticulated under global market pressures.

Theoretical Contributions

This study contributes to film and media studies in three main theoretical ways. First, it reinforces cultural identity theory by demonstrating that identity in cinema is processual and negotiated rather than essentialist, supporting Hall's (1990) conception of identity as continually produced through representation. In both Portugal and Slovenia, films do not merely reflect identity but actively reshape cultural meanings through narrative, language, and aesthetic form.

Second, the findings extend the scholarship on small nation cinema by empirically illustrating Hjort's (2010) argument that small cinemas are sites of resilience rather than marginality. The comparative analysis shows how structural limitations, such as small domestic markets and constrained distribution, are transformed into sources of aesthetic innovation and cultural specificity.

Third, the study contributes to constructivist media theory by showing that global technologies and platforms do not determine cultural outcomes. Instead, Portuguese and Slovenian cinemas selectively appropriate global distribution infrastructures and circulation regimes in ways aligned with the local institutional and cultural priorities, supporting critiques of technological determinism (Couldry, 2012; Couldry & Mejias, 2019).

Future Directions

This study opens up several avenues for further research. Comparative analyses could be extended to other small European film industries—such as those in the Nordic or Baltic regions—to assess whether similar patterns of cultural negotiation and resilience emerge across different historical and institutional contexts. Future research could also examine audience reception to better understand how national films circulate and are interpreted within domestic versus international markets.

In addition, the growing influence of global streaming platforms warrants closer empirical investigation. While this study conceptualizes platform dynamics as the structural mediators of visibility, future work could explore how algorithmic recommendation systems shape the circulation, reception, and cultural impact of small national cinemas. Interdisciplinary approaches combining film studies, cultural policy research, and media economics would further enrich the understanding of how cultural identity is negotiated under rapidly evolving global audiovisual conditions.

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Appendix A: Studies Included in the Systematic Literature Review (n = 38)

This appendix provides the complete list of peer-reviewed journal articles, books, and policy reports included in the systematic literature review (SLR) underpinning the comparative analysis of Portuguese and Slovenian cinema. The sources were selected in accordance with the inclusion and exclusion criteria outlined in the Methodology section and were screened following PRISMA guidelines.

Table A1 Included Studies

| Author(s) | Year | Title | Publication / Source | Analytical Focus |
|---------------------------|------|---|--------------------------------------|--------------------------|
| Anderson, B. | 1983 | Imagined communities: Reflections on the origin and spread of nationalism | Verso | National identity theory |
| Couldry, N. | 2012 | Media, society, world: Social theory and digital media practice | Polity | Media theory |
| Couldry, N., & Mejias, U. | 2019 | The costs of connection | Stanford University Press | Digital capitalism |
| Cunha, P. | 2020 | Portuguese cinema and lusophone identity | Journal of Lusophone Studies | Portuguese cinema |
| Hall, S. | 1990 | Cultural identity and diaspora | Lawrence & Wishart | Cultural identity theory |
| Higson, A. | 2000 | The limiting imagination of national cinema | Screen | National cinema theory |
| Hjort, M. | 2010 | Small nation, global cinema | University of Minnesota Press | Small nation cinema |
| Moher, D. et al. | 2009 | PRISMA statement | PLoS Medicine | SLR methodology |
| Nagib, L. | 2011 | World cinema and the ethics of realism | Continuum | World cinema theory |
| O'Connell, S. | 2010 | Linguistic diversity in European cinema | European Journal of Cultural Studies | Language & cinema |
| Pogačar, M. | 2019 | Slovenian cinema in transition | Studies in Eastern European Cinema | Slovenian cinema |
| Ribeiro, A. | 2013 | Censorship and national identity in Estado Novo cinema | Studies in European Cinema | Portuguese cinema |
| Skop, J. | 2015 | The Slovenian Film Centre and national cinema policy | Journal of Media Policy | Film policy |
| Snyder, H. | 2019 | Literature review as a research methodology | Journal of Business Research | SLR methods |
| Švob-Đokić, N. | 2010 | National identity and small cinemas in the Balkans | Cultural Policy Review | Balkan cinema |
| Tufekci, Z. | 2018 | Algorithmic harms beyond Facebook and Google | Colorado Technology Law Journal | Platform power |

| Author(s) | Year | Title | Publication / Source | Analytical Focus |
|----------------------------------|------|---|----------------------------------|----------------------------|
| Vieira, P. | 2016 | Portuguese cinema and national identity | Cinema Journal | Portuguese cinema |
| Areal, L. | 2011 | Cinema Português: Um país imaginado (Vol. I) | Edições 70 | Portuguese cinema |
| Areal, L. | 2014 | Cinema Português: Um país imaginado (Vol. II) | Edições 70 | Portuguese cinema |
| Graça, A. R. | 2021 | Portuguese Cinema: Consumption, Circulation and Commerce | Boydell & Brewer | Portuguese film industry |
| Praznik, K. | 2021 | Art Work: Invisible Labour and the Legacy of Yugoslav Socialism | University of Toronto Press | Yugoslav cinema |
| Williams, R. | 1974 | Television: Technology and Cultural Form | Fontana | Technology & culture |
| Feenberg, A. | 2002 | Transforming Technology | Oxford University Press | Critical technology theory |
| European Audiovisual Observatory | 2023 | European audiovisual market trends report | EU Observatory | EU film industry |
| CresCine Project | 2023 | Innovation and sustainability in small film markets | EU Horizon Project | Small film markets |
| Elsaesser, T. | 2005 | European cinema: Face to face with Hollywood | Amsterdam University Press | European cinema |
| Iordanova, D. | 2003 | Cinema of the other Europe | Wallflower Press | Eastern European cinema |
| De Valck, M. | 2007 | Film festivals: From European geopolitics to global cinephilia | Amsterdam University Press | Festival studies |
| Rancière, J. | 2006 | The politics of aesthetics | Continuum | Aesthetics & politics |
| Hesmondhalgh, D. | 2019 | The cultural industries (4th ed.) | Sage | Cultural industries |
| European Commission | 2022 | Creative Europe programme impact report | European Commission | EU cultural policy |
| Kanzler, M. | 2018 | Distribution challenges in small European film markets | European Audiovisual Observatory | Film distribution |