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European Cinema as Public Diplomacy in International Youth:
How Film Festivals Mediate Cultural Distance and Perceptions
of Values

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Abstract

The circulation and admission of European films in international markets remain limited despite institutional support from the European Union (EU). This study examines how European cinema functions as a tool of public diplomacy for international youth and how cultural distance and film festivals influence their perceptions of European values. Using a mixed-methods approach, the study combined survey data and semi-structured interviews with international youth residing in the EU, along with an expert interview with a European film festival organiser.

Four themes emerged from a reflexive thematic analysis, supported by descriptive statistics from the survey: access and structural visibility of European cinema, cultural distance and perceived foreignness, youth agency in selective engagement, and the interpretation of European values through cinematic narratives. The findings reveal that limited distribution and visibility remain as key barriers to the global reach of European cinema, while cultural distance shapes audience engagement through relatability. Meanwhile, international youth demonstrate active agency in navigating these barriers, seeking engagement through cultural curiosity. Film festivals emerge as important intermediaries that facilitate access and contextualise European cinema for international audiences. The potential of European cinema as a tool of public diplomacy lies not in institutional efforts or production output, but in enabling audiences to actively interpret and reflect values conveyed through film.

Key words: film festivals, European cinema, public diplomacy, cultural distance, youth engagement

Zusammenfassung

Die Verbreitung und der Zugang zu europäischen Filmen auf internationalen Märkten sind trotz institutioneller Unterstützung durch die Europäische Union (EU) nach wie vor begrenzt. Diese Studie untersucht, inwiefern das europäische Kino als Instrument der öffentlichen Diplomatie für internationale Jugendliche fungiert und wie kulturelle Distanz sowie Filmfestivals deren Wahrnehmung europäischer Werte beeinflussen. Unter Verwendung eines gemischten Methodenansatzes kombinierte die Studie Umfragedaten und halbstrukturierte Interviews mit in der EU lebenden internationalen Jugendlichen sowie ein Experteninterview mit einem europäischen Filmfestivalveranstalter.

Aus einer reflexiven thematischen Analyse, gestützt durch deskriptive Statistiken aus der Umfrage, ergaben sich vier Themen: Zugang und strukturelle Sichtbarkeit des europäischen Kinos, kulturelle Distanz und wahrgenommene Fremdheit, die Handlungsfähigkeit junger Menschen bei selektivem Engagement sowie die Interpretation europäischer Werte durch filmische Erzählungen. Die Ergebnisse zeigen, dass begrenzte Verbreitung und Sichtbarkeit weiterhin zentrale Hindernisse für die globale Reichweite des europäischen Kinos darstellen, während kulturelle Distanz das Engagement des Publikums durch Identifizierbarkeit prägt. Gleichzeitig zeigen junge Menschen aus dem Ausland aktive Handlungsfähigkeit bei der Überwindung dieser Hindernisse und suchen Engagement durch kulturelle Neugier. Filmfestivals erweisen sich als wichtige Vermittler, die den Zugang erleichtern und das europäische Kino für ein internationales Publikum kontextualisieren. Das Potenzial des europäischen Kinos als Instrument der öffentlichen Diplomatie liegt nicht in institutionellen Bemühungen oder Produktionszahlen, sondern darin, dem Publikum zu ermöglichen, die durch Filme vermittelten Werte aktiv zu interpretieren und zu reflektieren.

Schlüsselwörter: Filmfestivals, europäisches Kino, öffentliche Diplomatie, kulturelle Distanz, Engagement junger Menschen

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We are connected in life through art and culture. Therefore, we must preserve and cherish these uniquely human creations. Knowledge should never be lost, rather carried onwards for future generations through kindness, perseverance, and intellectual curiosity.

Statement

Non-English text included in this thesis has been translated through DeepL Translator.

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1. Introduction

Over the past decade, the share of admissions to European films has fluctuated between 5-10% of the total global theatrical movie attendance (Fioroni, 2024). Although this consistency indicates a moderate global presence, this stagnation poses a threat to European audiovisual media's role as an asset to promote European values to a global audience. Initiatives promoting European films beyond the national markets play a crucial role in the cultural aspect of public diplomacy, particularly in engaging youth audiences. The perspective of international youth living in the European Union (EU) is especially highlighted in this study. Beyond assimilation and familiarity with European culture, these individuals can provide valuable insights into how narratives and values presented in European films are perceived by international youth outside the EU. Their experiences also reveal the role of cultural specificity in fostering interest in European media content, both in personal engagement and among peers in their home country.

1.1. Background of the study

Among the 29 million non-EU citizens residing in the EU in 2024, at least 1.76 million are enrolled in a tertiary-level program, amounting to about 8.4% of all students in the EU (Eurostat, 2025a, 2025b). Given their limited numbers, international students' perspectives are often overlooked in studies on European media preferences and consumption. Many previous studies fail to consider that international, non-EU youth are able to engage with media content from a different viewpoint in providing perspectives as students, citizens of their home country, or as fellow residents of the EU.

This lack of comprehension is reflected in the European Film Industry's (EFI) struggle to achieve commercial success beyond Europe's borders. Although there are many initiatives geared towards funding and supporting film productions within the EU, it leaves a critical

gap in the distribution and promotion of these films, resulting in poor performance due to inaccessibility to a wider audience even within EU borders (Alaveras et al., 2018). The lack of distribution and promotion of European films to an international audience contradicts the EU's goals of public diplomacy through culture, where a positive perception is central to achieving Europe's foreign policy goals in many sectors (Cross, 2014).

Film festivals have long been a platform for European films to be screened for non-European markets. While these festivals are not on the scale of their more prestigious European predecessors in Berlin, Sundance, Venice, and Cannes, they offer new filmmakers and films from smaller European markets an opportunity to gain funding and an audience (Iordanova, 2015). The EU has long established and funded film festivals in various global markets to ensure the distribution of European films to a global audience. However, the statistics of attendance and reception of these film festivals remain underutilised in developing effective strategies of distribution and promotion of the EFI.

In recent years, European film and television productions have reached international markets through alternative methods of distribution, particularly from the growing prominence of Streaming Video on Demand (SVOD) platforms such as Netflix and Amazon Prime. While this improves the global circulation of European productions, it also shifts attention away from theatrical releases, as indicated in the 4% decline in admissions to European films outside of Europe in 2024 (European Audiovisual Observatory, 2024).

Taking these factors into consideration, this study aims to explore the perspective international youth have towards the EFI and what can be done to increase interest in their home country. Alongside that, this study will also delve deeper into the real-world impacts the EFI brings to the global market through local film festivals, bringing attention towards their role as a cultural export of European values.

1.2. Research significance and objectives

The main objective of this study is to examine how international youth engage with European films and the role of film festivals as spaces where cinema can function as a tool of public diplomacy. In line with this, the study explores how cultural distance and specificity shape how international youth interact with the EFI. The following section introduces existing literature on cultural distance and specificity, the role of the EFI in public diplomacy, and subsequently the theoretical framework on which this study is based.

To capture both patterns and individual interpretations, a mixed-methods approach is employed, combining survey data with in-depth interviews to investigate how the EFI shapes perceptions of Europe and engages the international youth with European values. Additionally, this study aims to contextualise the role of international youth in the circulation of European films through film festivals.

With these objectives in mind, the study aims to examine how the EFI functions as a form of public diplomacy through international youth and film festivals. This leads to the research question:

How does European cinema function as a tool of public diplomacy for international youth, and how are their perceptions of European values influenced by cultural distance and film festivals?

2. Literature review and theoretical framework

2.1. Export and global reception of European cinema

Richeri (2016) noted two main objectives of the EU's vision for the EFI in the global market: first, to foster cultural integration among member states through cinema, and

second, to strengthen the EFI's industrial and commercial structures. To achieve these goals, the EU has been consistently involved in creating policies and funding initiatives surrounding the export and promotion of EU films in international markets. Most notably, the Media Programme aimed to strengthen the competitiveness of the European audiovisual industry, supporting measures to train professionals, develop production projects, and distribute and promote cinematographic and audiovisual programmes produced in the EU (de Turégano, 2006). Aside from EU-wide support, national policies by member states also provide additional support both in production and export. Fiscal incentive schemes are methods long used by EU member states to encourage investment and production of audiovisual media; these schemes include tax cuts, production cost shelters, and rebates (Olsberg & Barnes, 2014).

Aided by these initiatives, the number of European films available in theatres has been steadily rising over the years, with 3349 films available theatrically in 2023 compared to 2578 in 2014 (European Audiovisual Observatory, 2024). This report indicates that more films are being funded and produced within the EU. The European Audiovisual Observatory further reported an increasing trend of admissions to European films within the EU, noting that 23% of admissions occurred outside the film's national market in 2023 (European Audiovisual Observatory, 2024). Despite interest within EU borders, global interest in European films remains stagnant, with the European Audiovisual Observatory reporting a 4% decline in admissions to European films outside of Europe in the same year (European Audiovisual Observatory, 2024).

The relative lack of interest in European films from the global market can be attributed to the market fragmentation within local European film markets. Although the EU has long taken an interest in the industrial and commercial aspects of filmmaking, they have continued to maintain its member states' traditional approach to cinema (Harcourt, 2005).

While this has helped in protecting local cinema, it strengthens the narrative of a non-definitive European cinema. Elsaesser (2005) argued that the term European cinema is defined depending on where one places oneself, both in time and in space. Similarly, Bergfelder (2005) also stated that the concept of a European cinema can be defined by the simultaneous agencies of dispersal and recentering, referring to the diverse cultural identities found within Europe and how filmmaking approaches may differ among countries.

Furthermore, market fragmentation within local European film markets has made it easier for Hollywood films to dominate movie theatres in the EU. In 2024, the 10 films with the highest rate of admissions in Europe were all Hollywood productions, ranging from the animated film *Inside Out 2*, ranked first with over 50 million admissions, to the romance drama *It Ends With Us*, ranked tenth with over 11 million admissions (European Audiovisual Observatory, 2025). The highest admissions by a European film was ranked eleventh, with the French production *Un p'tit truc en plus*. These statistics show that, despite the EU's efforts to enhance the EFI's competitiveness within and beyond the EU borders, Hollywood's dominance in theatres persists. Beyond addressing Hollywood competitors within their own borders, the EFI also has to assert their position in the global film market (Richeri, 2016).

Yet, current statistics suggest that the EFI continues to struggle to achieve a meaningful global reach. Over the past decade, global admissions for European films outside the continent have remained low at 18% (European Audiovisual Observatory, 2024). There is a notable lack of admissions in America and Asia, two continents with the largest box-office markets globally, including the United States, China, Japan, and South Korea (The Motion Picture Association, 2022). These low admissions can be attributed to the fact that only 7% of European films were theatrically distributed to more than 10 countries during 2014-2023

(European Audiovisual Observatory, 2024). While market reports about the EFI continue to disregard the obvious unavailability of European films in major global film markets, there is little known about global audience insights towards European films. This lack of audience insights underscores a critical gap in how European films are received beyond their domestic markets within the EU, suggesting that competitiveness depends on global market access and resonance with global audiences.

2.2. Cultural factors shaping international youth audiences

In addition to industrial and commercial structures hindering the global circulation of European cinema, cultural factors also significantly contribute to the reception of European films among global audiences. Cultural discount is the diminished appeal of the audience once they find it difficult to identify with the style, values, beliefs, institutions and behavioural patterns of the material they are viewing (Hoskins & Mirus, 1988; Hoskins & McFayden, 1991). Jones (2016) demonstrates its role in the export of non-English European films to international markets, noting a disinterest among audiences in the United Kingdom. Lee (2008) further argued that cultural discounts operate in both directions between any two countries exporting and importing a movie, although the extent varies based on context and genres (Lee, 2006; Fu & Sim, 2010; Volz et al., 2010). While it remains relevant in recent studies, cultural discount has been increasingly mediated by the ease of access to international media content through SVOD services and how it shapes the way modern audiences are more open to foreign media content in their encounters (Chalaby, 2025; Chen, 2025).

Cultural discounts contribute to cultural distance, a term used by scholars across different fields of study to discuss the impacts of crossing borders and internationalisation (Beugelsdijk et al., 2018). In the film industry, cultural distance can be used to explain

export patterns: European films are able to travel better within the region in comparison to exporting the same film to a market with a larger cultural, economic, and institutional distance, such as Southeast Asia (Wang et al., 2021; Higson, 2018). The cultural distance theory is an important factor in understanding why Europe alone accounts for 82% of admissions to European films from 2014 to 2023 (European Audiovisual Observatory, 2024).

However, films that travelled further cultural distances are perceived as more artistically acclaimed than films that travelled within proximity of similar cultures (Kim & Jensen, 2014). Although artistic acclaim is important in exporting films to a foreign market, it does not always ensure market success. Other factors, such as foreign distributors and film festival appearances, also impact box-office performance and reception (Kim & Jensen, 2014). Consequently, films considered mainstream in their home market may be seen as art films abroad.

Although these theories are able to contextualise the structural and cultural barriers shaping the global reception and performance of European cinema, it often frames the global audience as passive recipients of European cinema. In contrast, a study of international students' intercultural adaptation challenges this assumption by establishing that cross-cultural exchange is neither linear nor only influenced by external factors, but also shaped by the students' individual experiences. Instead, intercultural adaptation is a dynamic amalgamation of linguistic mastery, social interaction, personal development and academic achievements, mediated by both individual agency and institutional support (Gu et al., 2009). Similarly, recent studies emphasise that audiences can actively interpret and negotiate foreign media through their own experiences of intercultural exchange (Jenkins, 2018; Iwabuchi, 2015). These results are particularly relevant to the experiences of international youth living in the EU as they navigate multiple cultural systems, affecting the

way they interpret and relate to European films in relation to cultural and identity navigation. As a result, the engagement of international youth with European films reveals a complex and dynamic exchange of cultural factors as well as personal identity beyond the existing models can account for.

Despite the increasing demographic of international youth residing within the EU, data concerning their engagement with the EFI and European media content in general remains scarce. According to Eurostat (2025), at least 8.4% of tertiary-level students in the EU are international students, accounting for at least 1.76 million individuals. This subset is often subsumed within research of the wider student population, therefore overlooking their distinct perspectives as cultural participants and potential intermediaries of European values among their peers.

By highlighting international youth as an active audience of European cinema, this study recognises that their encounters are shaped by personal experiences of intercultural adaptation as well as external factors of cultural distance and specificity. Thus making international youth an understudied demographic whose interactions with the EFI may contribute to the global outreach of European values represented in European films. Taken together, this study emphasises the importance of European cinema beyond an artistic or commercial product, but also as a tool of public diplomacy.

2.3. European cinema as a tool of public diplomacy

Public diplomacy is defined by the EU as the process by which a country or entity seeks to build a relationship by engaging with foreign publics beyond the usual diplomatic efforts with government officials (Isar, 2014). To achieve these objectives, the EU has long invested in cultural engagement initiatives, including events and festivals in music, art, culinary, education, and film to foster positive perceptions of Europe and therefore, achieve

Europe's foreign policy goals across different sectors (Cross, 2014; Basker, 2006). The message and narrative delivered may differ depending on the target audience; additionally, it is also met with varying levels of reception, even though the norms and values delivered remain the same (Song & Fanoulis, 2023). The EFI is a key instrument within this strategy, as it provides a diverse range of artistic products as a medium where European values and culture can be communicated to an international audience.

Structural mechanisms such as the Creative Europe programme (formerly MEDIA) and co-productions were developed to facilitate the circulation and visibility of European films beyond the EU borders. Co-productions allow financial risk-sharing, market expansion, skill exchange, and the promotion of cultural diversity from collaborating states (Parc, 2020). Similarly, the Creative Europe programme is funded to reinforce cultural diversity, digital innovation, and sustainability within the sector while increasing the circulation and viewership of European audiovisual works inside and outside the EU (European Union, 2006: Article 1, para. 2; European Commission, 2021).

Film festivals, as part of these initiatives, function not only as venues of screening productions, but also as spaces where intercultural dialogues and exchanges occur. These initiatives constitute cultural diplomacy, aligned with the EU's goal of strengthening the EFI. Within cultural relations, cultural diplomacy is the engagement and empowerment of local actors to facilitate the creation of spaces for mutual understanding via intercultural dialogue; it also facilitates reconciliation and fosters peaceful inter-community relations, reinforces the role of culture as an engine for sustainable social and economic development and promotes cooperation on cultural heritage (European Commission, 2016). Although these objectives emphasise the potential of European cinema in public diplomacy to foster engagement and dissemination of European values to an international audience, current

statistics indicate that current initiatives are primarily maintaining, rather than increasing, admission levels to European films globally (European Audiovisual Observatory, 2024).

2.4. Film festivals as public diplomacy platforms

Since the establishment of major film festivals in Europe in 1932, they have given the EFI a central role in setting cultural precedents in providing a platform for non-Hollywood films to attain international recognition and interest (Vallejo, 2020). However, between the inauguration of the Venice Film Festival in 1932 and the establishment of the Cannes Film Festival in 1946, the concept and function of film festivals underwent a significant transformation, shaped by Europe's shifting geopolitical agendas and the aftermath of the Second World War. While only European productions were screened in the inaugural Venice Film Festival in 1932, the newly established Cannes Film Festival in 1946 was imagined as a festive and immediate post-war event (de Valck, 2009). The French government invited 19 countries to participate and included the screenings of American productions from the six previous years in which they were prohibited from having a European release due to the war (de Valck, 2009). In the modern major film festival circuits, these events have evolved beyond their purpose of screening new films, but also in securing funding, productions, and distribution rights for productions from all over the world (Iordanova, 2015).

As film festivals within Europe extended their international outreach and partnerships, their programming also shifted to showcasing more international productions. These changes are brought forth due to calls for independent film festivals from those in the global film industry. Rather than being a place to showcase just European cinema, major film festivals have shifted into becoming institutions for the promotion of cinema as art, surpassing boundaries of national cinemas (de Valck, 2009). Although this has become the case for major film festivals within Europe, the EU has taken measures to support the creation of

film festivals screening European productions outside the EU. In 2018, the European Commission began the European Film Festival (EFF), a project managed by a consortium of the Goethe-Institut, the Institut français, and Cineuropa to support the creation and enhance the quality of European film festivals organised by EU delegations worldwide (European Film Festival, 2024).

These initiatives have helped extend the circulation of European cinema to international audiences, allowing Europe to be imagined beyond merely a territorial entity but as a dynamic cultural sphere rooted in shared values and ideals associated with the EU. European film festivals outside the EU, by showcasing European cultural narratives through European productions, are public diplomacy platforms. European cinema has become beyond art or entertainment, rather as a medium through which values and ideals are communicated. Audience perspectives and engagement are therefore central in achieving broader public diplomacy objectives through the EFI.

2.5. Theoretical framework

The global circulation of European films is shaped by both structural and cultural factors that influence how audiences engage with foreign media. Cultural specificity is the extent to which a film typifies a specific culture and thus, a specific audience (Kim & Jensen, 2014). In this study, European films are defined as films produced in European countries and circulated within the EFI, reflecting cultural and institutional contexts of the EU. When screened outside their domestic markets, films tend to exude a higher level of foreignness, potentially limiting their international appeal (Lee, 2006). This relates to cultural distance, which suggests that audiences tend to prefer media reflecting familiar norms and values (Fu & Govindaraju, 2010). Simultaneously, a subset of the audience actively seeks out culturally

distinct content (Chuu et al., 2009). Therefore, cultural specificity shapes engagement with foreign films, rather than preventing them.

Wang et al. (2021) further differentiate cultural specificity into two independent yet interrelated elements: Content-based Specificity (CSC) refers to the values, philosophies, and norms presented in the film, and Aesthetic-based Specificity (ASC) refers to the sensory and stylistic elements of the film, such as cinematography and narrative form. Previous studies found that films with higher ASC are less affected by cultural specificity than films with higher CSC (Wang et al., 2021; Kim & Jensen, 2014). Corroborated by these findings, this framework suggests that engagement with European films is mediated not only by familiarity with the content but also by how audiences interpret visual elements.

These considerations are particularly relevant to international youth residing in the EU, who navigate multiple cultural identities daily. Their adaptation to their surroundings involves a dynamic negotiation of linguistic mastery, social interaction, personal development and academic achievements, mediated by both individual agency and institutional support (Gu et al., 2009). This nonlinear process allowed them to develop competence that influences how cultural products are interpreted. Thus, European films serve as a medium where they encounter and reflect on cultural factors, contributing to identity negotiation and intercultural understandings. Film festivals provide spaces where European films can be experienced by international youth. These spaces allow them to engage with narrative and aesthetic elements, facilitating exposure to European values.

At an institutional level, the promotion of European cinema as a part of public diplomacy forms a part of the EU's broader agenda. The Lisbon Treaty articulates the importance of upholding and promoting EU values globally (European Union, 2016). Lucarelli and Manners (2006) argue that while these core values of human dignity, freedom, democracy,

equality, the rule of law, and human rights are not unique to the EU, the distinctive interpretation of these values shapes its external policies. Through perceptions and interpretations within film festival settings, films can contribute to broader public diplomacy goals by having audience engagement as a mediating factor.

Within this framework, European cinema is viewed beyond art or entertainment, but as a medium through which social values and cultural narratives are communicated and interpreted. By examining how international youth encounter European films in festival settings, the analysis explores how aesthetic appreciation, cultural interpretation, and identity negotiation intersect with the circulation of European values.

This study draws on the analytical concepts of cultural specificity (CSC and ASC) and cultural distance. Cultural specificity examines how participants interpret narrative values and aesthetic elements, while cultural distance observes perceived familiarity or foreignness of cultural representations. Taken together, these concepts guide the thematic analysis of audience responses, highlighting how cultural interpretations and perceived values shape the ways international youth engage with European cinema, and how it supports EU public diplomacy.

3. Methodology

3.1. Research design

Given the study's emphasis on perception and interpretation based on cultural frameworks, a mixed-method design was adopted, combining quantitative and qualitative techniques (Johnson & Onwuegbuzie, 2004). This method allows a comprehensive exploration of measurable trends and deeper insights. Surveys provided a broad overview of preferences and perception, while semi-structured interviews explored nuanced insights on personal experiences (Knott et al., 2022). This approach allows consistency by linking broader patterns with in-depth insights, which aligns with the study's aim.

Qualitative data were analysed through Braun and Clarke's (2022) six phases of reflexive thematic analysis: (1) familiarising, (2) coding, (3) extracting initial themes, (4) developing and reviewing themes, (5) refining and defining themes, and (6) writing up. The analysis allowed the exploration of how narrative and aesthetic elements were interpreted and how they relate to intercultural engagement and public diplomacy. To triangulate the findings, a semi-structured expert interview was conducted with the co-director of a European film festival in Indonesia, providing an institutional perspective on the role of film festivals as a space for cultural engagement.

3.2. Sampling and data collection

The study targeted individuals meeting the following prerequisites: (1) aged 18-30, (2) currently residing in a European Union/European Economic Area (EU/EEA) member state, (3) does not currently reside in their home country, and (4) does not hold a EU/EEA member state citizenship. This demographic was selected due to their high cultural mobility

and exposure to European values, making them valuable for understanding perceptions of European cinema.

Data collection occurred in two stages. The first stage involved an online survey of 39 questions administered through SurveyMonkey. This survey comprised multiple-choice, Likert scales, and open-ended questions. It explored participants' general film habits, European cinema preferences, and their engagement with the film industry. Snowball sampling was employed for the online survey, with participants being recruited from various sources, such as personal networks and online student community groups.

The second stage comprised nine semi-structured interviews with international youth selected from survey follow-ups, and supplemented by convenience sampling. This sample size provided nuanced, detailed insights into the interpretative experiences of international youth. While small, this number was sufficient to explore variation in experiences while simultaneously allowing in-depth discussions of personal experiences, with each interview lasting between 25 and 50 minutes. The interviews were conducted through Zoom, where the sessions were audio-recorded and transcribed verbatim for analysis.

Prior to their participation in the study, participants were informed of the purpose and ethical considerations of the study. Survey participants were notified of the anonymous and voluntary nature of the survey, and interview participants also signed a consent form ensuring the ethical precautions. All data were stored securely in accordance with institutional ethical guidelines.

3.3. Expert interview with the Co-director of *Europe on Screen*

To complement youth perspectives, an expert interview was conducted with Meninaputri Wismurti, co-director of *Europe on Screen*, the longest-running European film festival in

Indonesia. The film festival screens 50-70 European films through cultural centres, universities, and cinemas across the country, drawing in 20,000-30,000 audiences annually. Wismurti was selected through purposive sampling due to her role in curation and collaboration with EU representatives. The interview gave insights into curation, youth engagement, and institutional support from the EU.

3.4. Data analysis

Close-ended survey questions were analysed using descriptive statistics to identify patterns in participants' film viewing habits and general attitudes towards European cinema. These results presented an overview of international youth's engagement with the EFI, establishing a broader context in understanding behaviour towards European cinema within the sample.

Meanwhile, qualitative data consisted of open-ended survey responses, interview transcripts with international youth, and an expert interview with Wismurti, which were analysed using reflexive thematic analysis according to Braun and Clarke (2022). This method was chosen for its flexibility in identifying patterns of meaning in qualitative datasets while also allowing participants' interpretation within the theoretical framework.

The analysis was guided by a primarily deductive approach informed by the concepts of cultural distance and cultural specificity, particularly the distinction between content-based specificity (CSC) and aesthetic-based specificity (ASC). The analysis also remained open for any emerging themes based on the participants' own experience. The process began with becoming familiar with the dataset through repeated readings. Initial codes were then developed to capture recurring ideas related to film viewing habits, perceptions of cultural factors, and interpretations of European values within film narratives.

Codes were then grouped into broader themes that reflected shared patterns. These themes included participants' film viewing habits, perceptions of foreign cinema, engagement with European films, interpretations of European values, and experiences with film festivals. Alongside the interviews with international youth, the expert interview was also analysed to provide an institutional perspective on how European cinema is curated and presented to international audiences.

Findings from the thematic analysis were then compared with patterns identified in the quantitative survey results. By integrating these findings, the analysis captures both the prevalence of audience behaviour and interpretive frameworks. It shows how international youth engage with European cinema, perceive cultural distance and specificity, and interpret the values communicated through film festivals within the broader context of EU public diplomacy.

4. Findings

Four overarching themes related to the relationship between European cinema and international youth were identified through thematic analysis guided by the theoretical framework and refined during the analytical process. These themes highlight the role of cultural factors when engaging with audiovisual media and the importance of access and visibility to foreign media among youth audiences. Furthermore, these themes reinforce the role of European cinema as a tool of public diplomacy through communicating European values and the presence of institutional initiatives.

The four themes that emerged from the analysis are:

1. Access to European cinema and structural visibility through film festivals,
2. Cultural distance and navigating foreignness,
3. Youth agency and selective, aesthetic-based engagement, and
4. Interpreting European values through cinema.

4.1. Access to European cinema and structural visibility through film festivals

Access refers not only to the availability of European cinema to an international audience, but also to its distribution and marketing. To understand why participants struggle to access European cinema, their film consumption habits must first be considered.

Across the survey and interviews, participants are more likely to watch films through SVOD services, with 77.5% stating they usually watch films on their television through an SVOD service. All interview participants were subscribed to Netflix, with 92.5% of survey participants also citing Netflix as their most used SVOD service, making Netflix the most used SVOD service among participants of this study. The participants are subscribed to Netflix due to the convenience of accessing the subscription:

“Currently, I'm sharing my account with some other people, like, [my] family.”

“Because my family is subscribed to it, and I get to use it for free.”

Despite European productions making up to 30% of Netflix's library in the continent (Ampere Analysis, 2022), most participants are not actively seeking out these titles. Rather, the survey indicated that 77.5% of participants highly depend on peer recommendations, and 70% depend on suggestions from social media to decide on which films to watch. This finding is further supported by interview participants who described film watching as a social activity, preferring to watch films with other people, such as their friends and family. This suggests that participants' awareness of European cinema is closely shaped by the viewing habits of their closest social circles.

Some occasions of exposure occurred within education settings. Several interview participants stated that during their time as students, European films were shown to them as a tool of cultural and language exposure. For these participants, exposure that happened within language-learning contexts in educational settings further alienated European films from their preferences, as they were viewed out of necessity and not by choice.

In contrast, a small number of participants purposely sought out European films for language learning purposes outside of education settings. One participant described Netflix's audio and subtitle change feature as one of their main reasons for being subscribed to the SVOD service. This contrast suggests that forced exposure to European films in education settings may position them as alienating and foreign, while self-driven engagement can reframe them as personally valuable resources.

“I did two degrees for a bachelor's, and one of them was on German Studies, and our professors [...] made us watch [German films], and they weren't bad films, I just wouldn't watch them on my own.”

“I used to watch this German movie to learn German, and it's kind of annoying, so I don't think I've ever watched any other German movies.”

“I'm mostly subscribed to Netflix because it provides you the opportunity to change the language and this is how I try to learn German. For example, I watch something in German with Russian subtitles and also, it's nice if I watch something in English and it's very specific, and I don't understand something, so I can put Russian subtitles.”

Participants reported that they rarely see European films being screened in theatres in their home country, with some also noting the lack of international marketing around European films to the public. This suggests a lack of visibility of European films in foreign markets, reducing their competitiveness in global film markets. Additionally, like other foreign films, European films also face barriers to entry in some countries, such as China and Russia, due to sanctions and censorship laws, further limiting access and audience reach.

“Censorship [...] from Russia [aiming] to minimise European and American influence. [...] and the second one is sanctions, because, of course, like, we don't get the new European and American films [...] due to limitations of working in [the] Russian market.”

Wismurti noted the reluctance of European filmmakers to engage with audiences through social media, which influences the reliance of the EFI on institutional initiatives, suggesting minimal interactions between filmmakers and audiences. The lack of interaction also

contributes to the lack of visibility of their films to the international audience, a difference that is most noticeable when participants compare the EFI with other film industries.

Since European films are rarely released theatrically outside Europe, international access to European cinema is usually through institutional efforts such as film festivals. However, these initiatives were found to be limited among participants. Survey data indicated that only 34.14% of participants have ever attended events related to films, such as film festivals or screenings. Examples included the Rathaus Film Festival in Austria, the Granada Short Film Festival in Spain, and university-based screenings. Notably, most events attended by the participants were free of charge, suggesting that cost may play a role in facilitating access to audiences who might otherwise be less inclined to attend.

Most interview participants were aware of film festivals, though to varying degrees. Some participants primarily associate film festivals with large-scale events such as the Cannes Film Festival and described the exclusivity in accessing such events. Although many of the interview participants were aware of film festivals in their current place of residence, only a few participants were aware of film festivals screening European films in their home countries. These findings reinforce the importance of film festivals in facilitating exposure to new productions; however, this purpose remains under-recognised by youth audiences.

“I think there's never really... I don't want to say negatively. It's more like it's for rich people [...] I know they do have access to film festivals, especially in Vienna, because one of my friends has gone to them. But I'm just thinking that it's more for rich, really artsy, filmmakers.”

“There were just small ones in my home city, but not, like, huge ones. And I think it's a nice event. You can explore new directors, new films, you can

connect [with] people, you can discuss your thoughts, your insights, your thoughts from the movies.”

While participants' accounts suggest that film festivals are perceived as exclusive spaces, Wismurti's institutional perspective reveals that such initiatives are deliberately designed to improve access and visibility. She highlighted the scarcity of European films in Indonesian theatres and described *Europe on Screen* as a unique opportunity for Indonesian audiences to engage with European cinema.

“It's very rare to screen European films in Indonesia. [...] That's why it's very special to have Europe on Screen, because within that period of 11 days of the festival, everyone could see the latest [...] European films for free in several places. The venues are scattered, not only in Jakarta, but also other cities [...] we collaborated a lot with cultural centres, embassies, and also universities, [...] and the screenings are free.”

Altogether, these findings suggest that access to European cinema is shaped less by formal availability, but rather by structural visibility, social mediation, and institutional efforts, with Europe-focused film festivals serving as important, yet under-recognised, intermediaries.

4.2. Cultural distance and navigating foreignness

The second theme that emerged from the analysis was the role of cultural distance in navigating foreign films. This theme was derived from how the participants' personal experiences shaped their definition of foreignness and how it influences their perceptions when viewing films, either domestic or foreign. Through this analysis, cultural distance is understood beyond structural differences between cultures, but also as a perceived and

experiential construct shaped by the participants' cultural familiarity, media diet, and lived experiences.

During the interview, participants were asked to assess their own definition of foreign movies. All participants stated that all films originating outside their country of nationality are considered foreign, although to some, productions from certain countries were perceived as less foreign than others. This finding demonstrates the relevance of cultural distance in shaping film consumption, as participants associated lower levels of foreignness with films from culturally similar countries than with films from countries with greater cultural distance.

"I mean, foreign movies can also indicate, like, Asian movies and stuff like that, but because I'm Asian, it's not very foreign to me. But European movies, you know, these kinds of films, [...] they are immediately what comes to mind with foreign films."

Lower perceived foreignness was reported by a few participants when assessing European cinema. This perception was attributed to two factors: (1) participants' countries of origin were culturally similar to Europe, or (2) they experienced increased exposure to European cultures after moving to their current country of residence. In the case of increased exposure to European cultures, these results suggest processes of cross-cultural exchange and identity negotiation, aligning with Gu et al.'s (2009) conceptualisation of intercultural adaptation as a dynamic process between external factors and lived experiences.

"I think when I watch European movies, especially [...] Austrian, German or Eastern European movies, I can find myself more in them than in American or Asian movies [...] because the routine is the same. I can understand the

cultural code, their practices, what they do, how they live, what kind of problems they face.”

“Nowadays, because I'm in Europe, European movies are also very close to me, [...] because it's available everywhere.”

One outlier in participants' definition of foreignness in films was American cinema, specifically Hollywood productions. Several participants reported being accustomed to an America-centric media diet, stemming from extensive exposure to Hollywood productions since they were young, and growing up in English-speaking environments in their home countries. As a result, such exposure was associated with lower levels of perceived foreignness, even though this exposure is mediated by cultural distance.

“I watch [Hollywood productions] a lot, and it's technically foreign [...] But, it doesn't feel foreign to me, if that makes sense. Because [...] if I see movies, they're most likely American.”

“With America, it's a bit different. I'm still not that familiar with their cultural things, but I'm more familiar with that [...] I've seen so many things when I was growing up.”

“[Bollywood] is very foreign for me, and also very, distant for me. Like, I never got to know about this movie industry in India. [...] Compared to [Hollywood], I've been watching [Hollywood] movies since I was young. I think I'm very familiar with those movies”

A number of participants reported barriers keeping them from engaging with foreign films, particularly European films. Beyond barriers of access, several participants described difficulties in resonating with narratives of European films, citing a lack of emotional

connection due to differences in lived experiences. When asked if peers in their home countries would enjoy European films, participants expressed similar concerns, suggesting that this perceived emotional distance goes beyond personal experiences. This finding is further corroborated by 47.5% of survey respondents preferring to watch films with main characters similar to them, indicating that audiences are more likely to watch films that personally resonate with them.

“I think that could also be a factor; but also, like, I feel like they just don't relate. As in, like, the lifestyle is, like, completely different.”

In line with this finding, 67.5% of survey respondents found it difficult to watch films with topics they were not interested in. However, only 12.5% of survey respondents explicitly cited that cultural differences make films difficult to watch, suggesting that cultural distance is often internalised rather than consciously recognised. These findings align with Wang et al.'s (2021) argument that films with higher levels of content-based specificity (CSC) tend to be less appealing to foreign audiences who lack cultural context.

“It doesn't mean that it's negative, but I cannot feel [...] the emotions, because it's too far away from my own experience.”

Wismurti addresses cultural differences in *Europe on Screen* through purposeful curation that resonates with the local audience. By shaping the festival lineup, she ensures that the films are both accessible and engaging to the audience. She also emphasised the importance of genre diversity in the selection process, aiming to fairly represent the EFI while appealing to diverse preferences. This strategy aligns with survey findings: 62.5% of respondents identified comedy as the most popular genre among peers their age, and Wismurti similarly noted that comedy films were often chosen by first-time audience members as a safe entry point to European cinema.

“That's why we try to change that [mindset of European films being boring]. Like, we bring musicals, we bring more colourful films, even from Scandinavian countries, which is usually just snow, and then cold. And then we also bring humour, zombies. This year, we brought a film from Croatia about [...] a man who becomes a zombie because he ate tomatoes [Salsa, 2024].”

“I can see some first-timers in Europe on Screen would go for, like, a safe option, like comedy, [...] and then, oh, if they see a big name in the European film industry, they would go, of course.”

The findings from this theme indicate that cultural distance and specificity can limit international youth's engagement with European films, but institutional efforts can help mitigate these barriers by thoughtful curation and diversifying genre options. Concurrently, accounts from international youth also suggest that engagement is not based solely on access and curation, but also self-agency in selecting films that align with their own preferences.

4.3. Youth agency and selective, aesthetic-based engagement

Building on the role of cultural distance and specificity, the third theme to emerge was youth agency in engaging with European cinema. While previous themes highlighted how the lack of access, emotional connection, and cultural differences can limit engagement, this theme explores how these limitations were navigated. Rather than disengaging entirely, participants demonstrated agency through selective viewing practices such as aesthetic or genre-based preferences to engage with European cinema on their own terms.

Participants reported a sense of cultural curiosity when engaging with European cinema, discovering aspects of previously unfamiliar European cultures. This finding aligns with 45% of survey respondents who prefer movies with characters coming from different

cultural backgrounds and 35% of respondents preferring films with stories from different countries. For participants who are living in an international environment, this curiosity suggests an openness to other cultures, and perceived foreignness becomes a source of interest rather than a deterrent.

“Since I'm not a French person, so I don't have this, like, cultural code. Like, [...] I just recognise them, like, as a piece of art, [...] [as a piece of] French culture [...] So, for me it's really interesting to discover.”

“Watching movies [adds] values to my life. So without going somewhere far, I think movies can also help to expand my experience.”

Wismurti added that local Indonesian audiences of *Europe on Screen* similarly navigated cultural differences by focusing on the films' central topics, indicating the active role of audiences in interpreting European cinema beyond passive consumption.

“People always think that there is a lot of difference between Europe and [...] Asia. But it's not. It's just the people who look different. The topic is still about humans, it's still about social justice, freedom of expression, and [...] it's just different in geography. Different people, but the situation, the stories, the humanities, the social justice, everything is quite similar.”

Rather than relying on cultural context, participants relied on elements of aesthetic-based specificity (ASC) to justify engagement. Many noted that visual cues were important factors in identifying European productions, distinguishing them from Hollywood productions set in Europe. Visual presentation, shooting methods, and pacing often drew the participants' attention, even when factors of CSC did not resonate.

“I think they really made it very good with, like, great tools. But [...] the story is not very good. But if they make it better, or [...] if they make it more interesting, I think it will work.”

“The production is different in different countries. The way you conduct the shooting, it's different. [...] The pace, for example. How fast or how slow the movie is. Or what kind of images you have inside. I think it also matters, and [it] differs in different parts of the world.”

In the context of engaging with European cinema as international youth, agency is navigated within constraints of access and cultural barriers. Hence, the importance of institutional support in the curation of film festivals goes beyond providing access to international film markets. These findings posit international youth as a potentially receptive audience to the European culture and values presented through European cinema, of which are important aspects of public diplomacy.

4.4. Interpreting European values through cinema

The final theme examines how European cinema became an intermediary of European culture and values, particularly when interpreted by international youth audiences. Within this framework, European cinema functions beyond its purpose of entertainment, but as a medium where European values are communicated as a tool of public diplomacy. Rather than acting as passive audiences, international youth engage with European cinema through a combination of agency, access, cultural factors, and their own lived experiences.

Several interview participants mentioned equality, freedom, and democracy as values they strongly associate to the European Union (EU). In addition, many also associated history, art, and cultural diversity to Europe as a continent. These associations act as indicators of

the participants' broader perception of Europe and European values, which in turn shape how they approach and interpret European cinema.

Participants reported that they recognise these values through narrative themes, character dynamics, and interactions that occur within European films. This suggests that European values were encountered implicitly, allowing for interpretations based on the audience's personal experience instead of direct instructions. Indirectly, the audience was able to discern European values presented to them through cultural diplomacy, and European films became cultural texts where international youth are able to encounter, negotiate, and re-evaluate their roles as active audiences.

"I think every value and every part, like the cinematography, also, the characters, [...] I think everything should work together. I think it cannot just be one [value or aspect]. I think what makes great movies is they [...] [combine] these values into one movie, but I think what really matters is the message they are trying to say, [...] the purpose of the film."

52.63% of survey respondents reported neutrality on associating European films with racial diversity, and 36.84% reported likewise on associations of ethnic diversity. These responses suggest that diversity is currently not perceived as a defining attribute of European cinema. However, when interview participants reflected on what they expect to see from European cinema in the future, they expressed greater expectations of casting and genre diversity in films, allowing for diverse narratives in the EFI. Participants' expectations of diversity were shaped by their lived experience as international youth living in the EU, and the presence of institutional efforts, whose involvement helped mediate how European values are represented to an international audience.

“The diversity of actors. Also, I noticed, like, in German movies, I keep seeing the same actors all over and over again. I know that's normal, [...] but yeah, I guess, like, racial and ethnic diversity. [...] I don't just want to see a bunch of, like, white people in all the movies. I want to see other ethnicities.”

Within this theme, institutional efforts emerged as key intermediaries in the mediation and transmission of values. Wismurti noted that the European Union representatives were also active contributors of the festival curation. Following initial selection processes, Wismurti and co-director Nauval Yazid presented the representative films to the respective embassies for review, allowing both parties to mitigate concerns such as cultural differences before finalising the festival lineup. Although the contribution of each embassy differs depending on institutional priorities and the presence of a cultural attaché, these contributions nonetheless constitute efforts of public diplomacy as it actively shapes the representation of the respective countries to an international audience.

“In terms of the programming, the EU has stated that it is... it is our (Wismurti and Yazid) rights [...] as the film curators, that is the one that's going to make the decision about films. So it's a tough battle sometimes with the embassy, [...] and sometimes we have to compromise. [...] [If] some embassies wanted to have A film, [...] but we wanted to have B film, in the end, we just screened those two films.”

Additionally, the embassies also contributed a participation fee to get films from their countries screened. This financial commitment suggests that EU representatives perceive value in investing in *Europe on Screen* as a means to promote European films internationally and advance public diplomacy efforts. In turn, financial commitment by the EU representatives, along with occasional funding by private sponsors, allows *Europe on*

Screen to operate as a film festival with free admission and without censorship, providing unfiltered access to European cinema to the widest audience possible.

“Since we don't do it in commercial cinemas, [...] we clear all the screening rights with the owners of the rights, like the distributor, the filmmakers. And then after that, we brought the film here, and then we screened it in these selected venues. And we don't have to provide censorship”

Several participants acknowledged similar efforts in their respective home countries, supported by cultural centres such as the French Institute and Goethe Institute. While some participants find these efforts too centralised and exclusive, others have also never heard of these efforts in their home country.

“I get these emails of, like, movie screenings, [and] we get, like, free access to some German movies through email. I think they also do it offline, I think it's from Goethe [Institute] or something.”

“Some diplomatic representations organised cinema-related events, for instance, the French Institute, the Goethe Institute. They try as much as possible [by] doing projections [...] [But] they are generally not that accessible to the masses.”

Despite these efforts, several interview participants emphasised that European cinema remains relatively unpopular in their home countries. These findings suggest that institutional approaches alone are not sufficient to enhance the popularity and visibility of European cinema, particularly in the context of competing with other international film industries.

5. Discussion

European cinema functions as a tool of public diplomacy not only through the content of films, but also through the broader structures of the EFI. The findings of the study indicate that European cinema is rarely discovered organically by international audiences. Participants were consistent in reporting the lack of access to European films in their home countries, emphasising the lack of mainstream distribution and international marketing. Although European films are available on streaming services, survey results reinforced that respondents primarily watched movies through SVOD services (77.5%), and most also relied on peer and social media for film recommendations (70%), highlighting the limited direct exposure to European cinema.

Limited mainstream distribution makes European cinema dependent on institutional initiatives, as Richeri (2016) notes; visibility was created through long-term investments in institutional efforts, such as film festivals, facilitated by partnerships and supported by distribution networks. Film festivals serve as rare points of access outside Europe, despite often being viewed as exclusive, as the survey indicated that only 34% of respondents have attended film-related events. This perception highlights the importance of Europe-centric film festivals, such as *Europe on Screen*, which provide free, specifically curated screenings to international audiences beyond Europe.

Furthermore, the presence of cultural distance also influences how international youth engage with European cinema. Participants described foreignness as relative: long-term exposure to certain media, such as Hollywood productions, increased familiarity despite cultural differences. CSC is also a key factor in engagement, as culturally specific films are less immediately relatable to international audiences, as iterated by Wang et al. (2021). Survey results further show that almost half of the participants prefer films with main

characters similar to them (47.5%), supporting the idea of relatability affecting engagement. In contrast, European cinema was often regarded as emotionally distant due to the lack of visibility, with participants feeling an additional emotional disconnect from the unfamiliar cultural specificity in the lifestyle and social contexts presented.

However, cultural distance is not always perceived negatively. Participants have stated that cultural distance has instead piqued their curiosity about European cultures and social customs. Few found European films to be reflections of their own identity as they navigate cultural differences in Europe. These findings indicate that the presentation and curation of European cinema to international youth highly dictates its effectiveness as a public diplomacy tool.

Despite cultural barriers, international youth were also able to engage in aesthetic preferences through agency. As argued by Wang et al. (2021), ASC is less affected by cultural distance than CSC. Audiences rely on cinematography and visual presentation to connect with European films, highlighting their role as active interpreters rather than passive viewers. As indicated in the survey, 35% of respondents report actively seeking foreign films due to cultural curiosity. This demonstrates international youth as active audiences who can interpret and assign meaning based on their lived experiences and preferences. Public diplomacy through cinema is therefore co-constructed by institutions that provide access and by international youth audiences who determine what resonates.

This co-construction is evident in how international youth audiences were able to implicitly discern values central to the European Union according to the Lisbon Treaty (2016) and Lucarelli and Manners (2006), such as freedom, democracy, and equality through narrative themes and character dynamics. Visual attraction and emotional resonance matter more than explicit persuasion tactics to international youth audiences. At the same time, international

youth used European films to assess the authenticity of the values being represented, particularly in relation to diversity. Institutional actors shape these representations by being active participants in selecting European films being screened internationally, such as the role of embassies in festival programming. Wismurti's account of negotiating selections further illustrates that public diplomacy through cinema is strategised.

In the context of public diplomacy for international youth, European cinema plays a meaningful yet unrealised role. Its impact depends on the interplay of accessibility, cultural resonance, youth agency, and institutional mediation. When these conditions are not met, its role in public diplomacy becomes limited. Ultimately, European cinema is only able to function as a public diplomacy tool through international youth's individualised approach in navigating values, cultural norms, and their own identity.

5.1. Limitations

It is important to acknowledge the limitations that arose from the process of conducting this study, and the limitations of the results found. By employing Braun and Clarke's (2022) reflexive thematic analysis, the process of the study was inevitably shaped by the researcher's interpretative perspective. The coding process and development of themes were informed by the theoretical framework of studies on cultural specificity and public diplomacy, as well as the researcher's own academic background.

While the researcher's identification with the demographic studied provided rapport and personal contextualisation of the participants' accounts during the in-depth interviews, it also carries the risk of over-identification or assumptions of meanings. Reflexive awareness and ongoing critical reflection were maintained throughout the study. The findings should therefore be understood as a co-constructed interpretation rather than an objective recount of the participants' experiences.

The study's sampling method may also limit the results, as snowball and convenience sampling can reduce sample diversity, leading to a sample linked by similar networks and backgrounds. Sample selection centring on student networks potentially attracted a more culturally engaged subset of the demographic, limiting representation and potentially introducing response bias among survey respondents. Additionally, the survey relied on self-reported responses rather than behavioural observations. The small sample of interview participants also limits the generalisability of the study's findings. Although insightful institutional perspectives were gained from the expert interview, it may not be representative of the general international network for European cinema, as further information may be classified.

5.2. Implications and recommendations

Although structural and cultural barriers continue to shape the international distribution networks of European films, positive attitudes of international youth provide opportunities to strengthen the role of European cinema in public diplomacy. This may be done by increasing international access and visibility through both mainstream distribution channels and film festivals. To circumvent difficulties in funding and potential cultural barriers, European filmmakers may also explore co-production schemes with countries beyond EU member states.

Even without mainstream distribution, access and visibility can be enhanced. This can be achieved through thoughtfully curated film festivals focusing on European cinema, such as *Europe on Screen*. The curation of such film festivals transcends cultural barriers by making them secondary aspects of the films, instead highlighting their strengths, such as their cinematography and central themes. By reducing perceptual and structural barriers while expanding access, international youth audiences become incentivised to engage with

European cinema. In this way, European cinema can be understood to function as a tool of public diplomacy, extending its influence by attracting international youth audiences beyond national and linguistic barriers.

Increasing the sample size of the study would allow for better generalisability, while a larger-scale survey designed with reinforced parameters of stratified sampling could better capture the demographic studied. Future research could also extend the analysis to youth residing in their home countries. This examination would allow for a more comprehensive assessment of the effectiveness of European cinema in public diplomacy. A further comparative cross-contextual study would then help determine if this level of receptiveness translates to youth audiences with less cultural exposure.

Future studies could also adopt a longitudinal or experimental research design to assess whether long-term exposure to European cinema similarly produces less perceived foreignness than participants in the study did with Hollywood productions. Combining survey data and behaviour-tracking could reveal whether changes in film-viewing habits influence perceived cultural distance. Tracking attitudes over time, or pre- and post-exposure, would also provide clearer measures of the effectiveness of European films in public diplomacy.

Finally, further research on film festivals could examine curation, programming, and audience outreach to better understand how cultural specificity and institutional mediation shape international youth's engagement and perceptions of European values. Thus demonstrating how European cinema functions as a tool of public diplomacy by providing access, fostering engagement, and conveying values beyond perceived and structural barriers.

6. Conclusion

This study examined how European cinema functions as a tool of public diplomacy for international youth and how cultural distance and film festivals influence their perceptions of European values. The findings of this study found that European cinema's public diplomacy potential is not realised solely through production output or institutional initiatives, but also the audience's active interpretation of films within specific structural and cultural contexts.

Limited mainstream distribution and lack of visibility remain the greatest barriers to European cinema's global outreach, while cultural distance emerged as a flexible barrier for international youth residing in the EU. Foreignness is dynamic, shaped by exposure, identity negotiation, and lived experiences. Therefore, engagement with foreign cinema, such as European cinema, is influenced by multiple factors, including aesthetic appeal, thematic appeal, narrative familiarity, and personal curiosity.

Through selective engagement with European films and active interpretation of their content, international youth were able to independently discern themes such as freedom, democracy, and equality. Film festivals further mediate this process by curating European cinema to their audiences, though their impact remains constrained without barrier-free access. The strength of the European film industry as a public diplomacy tool is not in its production output or distribution alone, but in enabling youth audiences to recognise, interpret, and reflect upon the values they encounter through European films, connecting them to their own personal experiences.

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Appendices

1. Interview questions for international youth

No.	CATEGORY	QUESTIONS	
1	Introductory - Film viewing habits	1	What is your favourite movie?
		a.	Why?
		2	Where do you typically watch movies?
		3	Do you prefer watching films in a theatre or at home?
		4	Do you watch movies alone or with others?
		5	Do you remember when was the last time you saw a movie in a movie theatre?
		6	What was the last movie you watched?
		7	When you watch a movie, what draws you into seeing those films?
		8	SURVEY indicated that ACTION, COMEDY, and HORROR are the genres most popular among youth in your age group. Would you agree with this?
		9	a. What genre of movies do you watch the most?
		10	Are you subscribed to any streaming services? If yes, which ones and why?
		11	How do you decide which films to watch?
		12	From what country do you watch the most movies from?
2	Perception of foreign movies	1	What comes to mind when you hear the phrase “foreign movie”?
		2	Do you like watching foreign movies?
		a.	What about foreign movies interests you? OR
		b.	What about foreign movies do you not like?
3	Watching European movies	1	What can you tell me about European films and the European film industry?
		2	Have you ever watched a non-English European (EU) film before?
		a.	Why/Where did you watch it?
		b.	Why have you never seen one?
		3	Would you be willing to see one/again?
		4	Do you think European films are popular amongst peers your age in your home country?
		5	What do you think can be done to increase interest in European films?
4	Perception of European values	1	When you hear “Europe”, what values do you associate it with?
		2	Based on what you know about European movies, do you think they convey these values?
		3	How do you think European values are presented through films?

		4	Do you think peers in your country would be interested in European films that convey European values?
5	Initiatives to promote European cinema overseas	1	Have you ever heard of an initiative or events about European films in your home country?
		2	What do you know about film festivals?
			a. Have you ever heard of them?
			b. Do you know any being held near you?
			c. Would you be interested in attending one?
		3	Would you be interested in watching a European movie in a film festival?
			b. [IF NO] What would incentivise you to go to a screening?

2. Expert interview questions

No.	CATEGORY	No.	QUESTIONS
1	General - getting to know the festival	1	Can you tell me more about Europe on Screen?
			a. How does the festival differ from regular cinema releases?
			b. Is there anything special about EoS that you would like the general public to know about?
		2	How are the movies being screened selected?
		3	Are there any notable demographics who are present in these screenings?
2	Audienceship - Focusing on youth	1	How would you describe the demographics of festival attendees in recent years?
		2	How would you describe the level of engagement of young adults (18–30) with European films and festivals?
			a. Are there particular patterns in attendance, participation in discussions, or engagement online?
		3	From your experience, what are the impressions or attitudes of young adults (18–30) toward European films?
3	European films and values	1	How would you describe a European film? What characteristics, themes, or storytelling elements make it “European”?
		2	Drawing from your experience of being an organiser to a film festival screening European movies, how are European values presented in these films?
			a. Are they implicit in storytelling, or highlighted through discussions, workshops, or Q&As?
		3	During the last festival, were there any films that stood out to you?
			a. How might young adults aged 18–30 perceive these films?
		4	How do you think European films influence young adults’ perceptions of Europe and European culture?
4	Reception of EU films by global youth	1	How would you describe the engagement of young adults (18–30) in Indonesia with the European film industry?
		2	How do young adults in Indonesia connect with European films?
			a. Are they able to identify with themes or topics, even though the films are geographically or culturally removed from them?
		3	What types of European films or genres tend to attract more young audiences in Indonesia, and why do you think that is?
		4	From your perspective, what factors or approaches influence young adults’ interest and participation in European films and festivals in

			Indonesia?
5	Initiatives to promote European cinema overseas	1	Beyond festivals, what other approaches or initiatives could support the promotion of European cinema overseas?
		2	Has there been support from the EU or EU countries in promoting European films in Indonesia?
			a. In what form has this support been provided, and how does it contribute to audience engagement or youth participation?
		3	Do you see EoS as primarily a platform for European cinema, or as a means to engage audiences with European values, or both?
6	Future Outlook	1	Where do you see the European film industry in the next 5–10 years regarding popularity outside the EU?
			a. Do you think festivals and youth engagement will play a role in this development?
			b. How might it compare to global industries like Hollywood?
7	Last comments and additional thoughts	1	Is there anything else you would like to add about European films, EoS, or engaging young audiences that we haven't discussed?

3. Survey questions

Demographics and Qualifying Questions

1. **Disqualifying question:** Please indicate your age: _____ (*please note: you must be between 18-24 to participate in the study*)
2. **Disqualifying question:** Which country are you from?
3. **Disqualifying question:** Do you currently live in your home country? (yes/no)
4. **Disqualifying question:** Do you live in Europe? (yes/no)
5. How long have you lived in an EU country? (1-3 months, 4-6 months, 6 months - 1 year, 1 year-5 years, over 5 years)
6. Which country do you live in? (_____)
7. Have you watched the film *Anatomy of a Fall*? (yes/no) (Watched film means watched the entire movie.)
8. What is your gender? (male, female, other, I don't want to say)
9. Are you currently in school? (yes, no, other: _____)
10. If you are currently in school, where do you currently study? (secondary school (high school), university (bachelor's), university (master's), other: _____)

Film Viewing Habits & Preferences

11. How often do you watch films? (every day, every week, a few times a month, a few times a year, more rarely, never, I don't know., other: _____)
12. How do you usually watch films? (cinema, television channels, video on demand/streaming service on television, video on demand on computer, video on demand on tablet, video on demand on phone, I don't know., other: _____)
13. How often do you visit a cinema? (weekly, monthly, every couple of months, yearly, never)
14. How satisfied are you with the variety of films offered ...
 - in local cinemas (1 very dissatisfied / 2 dissatisfied / 3 neither dissatisfied nor satisfied / 4 satisfied / 5 very satisfied / 6 I don't know.)
 - in local cinemas (1 very dissatisfied / 2 dissatisfied / 3 neither dissatisfied nor satisfied / 4 satisfied / 5 very satisfied / 6 I don't know.)
 - in television channels (1 very dissatisfied / 2 dissatisfied / 3 neither dissatisfied nor satisfied / 4 satisfied / 5 very satisfied / 6 I don't know.)
 - on streaming services (1 very dissatisfied / 2 dissatisfied / 3 neither dissatisfied nor satisfied / 4 satisfied / 5 very satisfied / 6 I don't know.)
 - in television channels (1 very dissatisfied / 2 dissatisfied / 3 neither dissatisfied nor satisfied / 4 satisfied / 5 very satisfied / 6 I don't know.)
 - in streaming services (1 very dissatisfied / 2 dissatisfied / 3 neither dissatisfied nor satisfied / 4 satisfied / 5 very satisfied / 6 I don't know.)

15. With whom do you usually watch films? Choose the most typical option(s) for you. (friends, family, boyfriend/girlfriend/partner, alone, I don't know., other: _____)
16. Which streaming service/platform do you use the most? Pick up to 3. (Netflix, Amazon Prime Video, Disney+, Hulu, HBO Max, Apple TV+, Peacock, Paramount+, YouTube Premium, I don't know., other: _____)
17. Based on which kinds of information do you choose a film? You can choose multiple options. (recommendation from a friend or family, recommendation on social media, film review, film poster, trailer, commercials on television, I don't choose a film based on any particular information, I don't know., other: _____)
18. What was the most recent film you saw (no matter where you saw it)? (_____, I don't know.) *Optional:* If you know the film's director and the production country, please write them here. (_____)
19. What are your three most favorite films? Please write the names of the films. (_____, _____, _____, I don't know.)
20. What aspects of film are important for you You can choose multiple options. (topics/themes, narratives/stories, emotions, diversity of characters, filmmakers, actors/actresses, costumes, special effects, soundtrack, location, nothing in particular, other: _____, I don't know.)
21. Which of the following genres do you think are most popular among all age groups in your country? (pick 3) (list of genres: Action, Adventure, Animation, Comedy, Crime, Documentary, Drama, Family, Fantasy, Historical, Horror, Musical, Mystery, Romance, Science Fiction, Thriller, War, Western, I don't know.)
22. Which genres do you think are most popular *among your peers in your country (aged 18-24)*? (pick 3) (list of genres: comedy, horror, drama, adventure, action, crime, romance, sci-fi, fantasy, thriller, war, historical, musical, Western, documentary, animation, anime, other: _____, I don't know.)
23. Which country do you think Europe's best films come from? Please write the name of the country or countries here. (_____/I don't know.)
24. When watching films in which people speak languages you do not understand, how do you prefer to watch them? Choose one option. (as dubbed into my native language(s), in their original language but with subtitles in my native language, in their original language but with subtitles in some other language, in their original language without subtitles, I do not like watch films in which people speak languages that I do not understand., I don't know.)
25. If you find a film difficult to watch, what could be the reason? You can choose multiple options. (It tells about a culture unfamiliar to me., The story is located in a place unfamiliar to me., The story happens in a historical period unfamiliar to me., The film includes dialogue in a language unfamiliar to me., The film's plot is too complicated., The style of the film is unfamiliar to me., I have no interest in watching the topic the film is about., Usually, I do not find films difficult to watch., I don't know., Other: _____)

26. I prefer films: (You can choose multiple options.) (Where the main characters are like me, Where the main characters are like my family and friends, Where the main characters come from different backgrounds, Where the main characters tell stories about different countries, Where the main characters have the same gender as me, Where the main character is a boy/man, Where the main character is a girl/woman, Where characters with disabilities are included, Where there are no characters with disabilities, None of the above, Other: _____)
27. Do you create videos yourself (on social media or elsewhere)? (yes, no, I don't know.)
28. *Optional:* If you create videos yourself: What kind of content do you create? (fictional content, such as films or narrative videos, non-fictional content, such as documentaries, news, or educational videos, other content, I don't know., other: _____, Tell us more about your content (*optional*): _____)
29. *Optional:* If you create videos yourself: Which devices do you use to create your content? You can choose multiple options. (phone, computer (any kind), tablet, video camera, other: _____)
30. *Optional:* If you create videos yourself: which language are your videos in? (You can put more than one language: _____, _____, _____, _____)
31. *Optional:* If you create videos yourself: Where (in which platforms, social media or other) do you share your content? Please do not reveal your account names. (Platforms: _____)
32. Have you received lessons on films? You can choose multiple options. (Yes, I was required to take lessons on film at school., Yes, I chose to take lessons on film at school., Yes, I took lessons on films at a film club in my free time., Yes, I taught myself how to create films., No, I have not had lessons on films., I don't know., Other: _____)
33. Have you attended any event dedicated to films during the past year, such as a film festival in your city or similar? (yes, If yes, please tell us more about the event (*optional*): _____, no, I don't know)

Prior Interest in International Film and Ideas Regarding European Values

Read each statement and decide how strongly the statement applies to you and your thoughts. Rate your answers from 1 to 5 based on the following guide. (1= applies the least, 5=applies the most)

		1	2	3	4	5	I don't know.
1	<i>I am interested in European films.</i>						
2	<i>I am interested in North American films.</i>						
3	<i>I am interested in South American films.</i>						
4	<i>I am interested in Asian films.</i>						

5	<i>I am interested in African films.</i>						
6	<i>I am interested in Australian films.</i>						
7	<i>I associate European values with religious diversity.</i>						
8	<i>I associate European values with tradition.</i>						
9	<i>I associate European values with racial diversity.</i>						
10	<i>I associate European values with green energy.</i>						
11	<i>I associate European values with education.</i>						
12	<i>I associate European values with freedom.</i>						
13	<i>I associate European values with political restrictions.</i>						
14	<i>I associate European values with gender equality.</i>						
15	<i>I associate European values with ethnic diversity.</i>						
16	<i>I associate European values with innovation.</i>						
17	<i>I associate European values with corruption.</i>						
18	<i>I associate European values with conformity.</i>						

Post-Stimuli Survey: Questionnaire Part B

Read each statement and decide how strongly the statement applies to you and your thoughts about the film based on the clips that you saw. Rate your answers from 1 to 5 based on the following guide. (1= applies the least, 5=applies the most)

		1	2	3	4	5	I don't know.
1	<i>This film is realistic.</i>						
2	<i>This movie interests me.</i>						
3	<i>I would watch the entire movie.</i>						
4	<i>The characters in the movie have a culture that is similar to my own.</i>						
5	<i>This film is different from the movies that I typically watch.</i>						

6	<i>The camera focused on the characters' faces.</i>						
7	<i>The camera focused on the characters' bodies.</i>						
8	<i>The camera focused on the background.</i>						
9	<i>Nature was present in the film.</i>						
10	<i>Racial diversity was present in the film.</i>						
11	<i>Gender diversity was present in the film.</i>						
12	<i>Age diversity was present in the film.</i>						
13	<i>A man directed the film.</i>						
14	<i>A woman directed the film.</i>						
15	<i>The film is funny.</i>						
16	<i>The film is inspiring.</i>						
17	<i>I would watch other movies in French.</i>						
18	<i>This film is a comedy.</i>						
19	<i>This film is a thriller.</i>						
20	<i>I typically watch films similar to this one.</i>						
21	<i>This film reflects the value of religious diversity.</i>						
22	<i>This film reflects the value of tradition.</i>						
23	<i>This film reflects the value of racial diversity.</i>						
24	<i>This film reflects the value of green energy.</i>						
25	<i>This film reflects the value of education.</i>						
26	<i>This film reflects the value of freedom.</i>						
27	<i>This film reflects political restrictions.</i>						
28	<i>This film reflects gender equality.</i>						
29	<i>This film reflects ethnic diversity.</i>						
30	<i>This film reflects innovation.</i>						
31	<i>This film reflects innovation.</i>						
32	<i>This film reflects corruption.</i>						

33	<i>This film reflects conformity.</i>						
34	This film is distinctly European.						

35. *Optional:* If you want to add something about your opinions and/or thoughts regarding the film, please write it here: (_____)

36. *Optional:* Would you like to receive the results of the study? (yes/no)

37. *Optional:* Do you want to be interviewed about this topic? (yes/no)

Send your responses by clicking the button.

Thank you for participating in the study!

4. International youth interview consent form

Information for participants and declaration of consent to participate in the study:

Exploring global youth's relationship with European cinema

Dear participant,

We would like to invite you to participate in the study mentioned above. More information can be provided should you request them.

This study is necessary to gain new, reliable *academic* research results. Please take the time to read the following information carefully, and do not hesitate to ask questions.

1. Purpose of study

This study is a part of a master's degree thesis aimed to analyse the impact of the European film industry as vessels of cultural exports of European values. The main demographic observed in this study are youth aged 18-30 years old living in the European Union with a non-EU member state citizenship (students, researchers, and other qualifying persons). Alongside that, festival organisers of film festivals screening European films outside the EU are also interviewed to measure the impact of the influence of the European film industry, and what can be done to improve it. The main objective of this study is to provide more insight on how to improve the structure and increase the popularity of European cinema to the global youth market, which will in turn foster an interest in European values and other European audiovisual media.

2. Procedure of the study

To participate in this study, you should be (1) between the ages of 18 to 30 years old, (2) live within the EU/EEA, while (3) holding a non-EU/EEA citizenship. Your

participation includes an in-depth one-on-one interview that would last for approximately 30-50 minutes. During the interview, you will be asked about your film viewing habits and your opinions towards European cinema. You are not required to prepare any materials beforehand. The interview will take place virtually through Zoom, and the audio content will be recorded and further transcribed. The transcript of the interview will then go through a process of qualitative analysis to draw out themes and statements relevant to the research topic.

3. What your participation entails

This study contributes to the overall knowledge of the European film industry and the participation of global youth in shaping initiatives surrounding intercultural communications within the EU regions. Furthermore, this study also adds to the scientific knowledge that can be used to grow the European film market globally by recommending effective methods.

4. Voluntary participation

You will not receive any reimbursement or remuneration for your participation. Your participation is done voluntarily without coercion. Please do note that the researcher also does not incur any additional costs from conducting this study.

5. Participation and withdrawal

You are free to withdraw from the study at any given time with no consequences and reason. Please do note that any withdrawal should be informed directly to the researcher. During the interview, you are free to refuse questions that you do not feel comfortable with without consequences. Additionally, you may request for the

omission of statements or responses that you do not want included in the study. Along with a copy of the consent form, you may also request for the summary of the study's results once the study is concluded.

6. Confidentiality

Your participation will be kept confidential throughout the whole process of the study. The results of the study will be included in the researcher's master thesis and be considered for possible publications, but you will remain unidentifiable to persons outside the study. All digital files pertaining to your information (interview recordings, consent form, transcripts, etc.) will be kept in a hard drive that can only be accessed by the researcher's person. Once all the interview recordings have been transcribed, all audio recordings of the interviews will be permanently destroyed. The transcript will only include a pseudonym to differentiate the participants and data relevant to the study, which includes: age, nationality, country of residence, and your interview responses. All of the data pertaining to the study will be destroyed three months after the completion of the study.

7. Possibility to discuss further questions

Should you have any further questions or issues you would like to discuss regarding the study, please do not hesitate to contact the researcher.

Name: _____

Email: _____

8. Declaration of consent

Name of the participant: _____

I agree to participate in the study **Exploring global youth's relationship with European cinema.**

I have been provided clear and detailed information about the objectives, significance, and scope of the study, as well as about the requirements resulting from my participation in the study. I have also thoroughly read this information text for participants.

All my answers were answered sufficiently and in a comprehensible manner. I have taken the time to consider my decision to participate. I understand that my participation is voluntary, and I have the right to end my participation at any time without consequences. To withdraw from the study, I should contact the person in contact either in writing or verbally.

At the same time, I agree that my data collected in this study are recorded and analysed. I agree that my data is saved electronically in a pseudonymised form. The data are saved in a form that is only accessible to the researcher and are secured via a password protected folder in a hard disk. I understand that my data pertaining to the study will be permanently deleted three months after the conclusion of the study.

I have received a copy of this information for participants and declaration of consent. The original remains with the study coordinator.

Date: _____

Signature: _____

5. Expert interview consent form

Information for participants and declaration of consent to participate in the study:

Exploring global youth's relationship with European cinema

Dear participant,

We would like to invite you to participate in the study mentioned above. More information can be provided should you request them.

This study is necessary to gain new, reliable *academic* research results. Please take the time to read the following information carefully, and do not hesitate to ask questions.

9. Purpose of study

This study is a part of a master's degree thesis aimed to analyse the impact of the European film industry as vessels of cultural exports of European values. The main demographic observed in this study are youth aged 18-30 years old living in the European Union with a non-EU member state citizenship (students, researchers, and other qualifying persons). Alongside that, festival organisers of film festivals screening European films outside the EU are also interviewed to measure the impact of the influence of the European film industry, and what can be done to improve it. The main objective of this study is to provide more insight on how to improve the structure and increase the popularity of European cinema to the global youth market, which will in turn foster an interest in European values and other European audiovisual media.

10. Procedure of the study

To participate in this study, you should be involved as an organiser for a film festival screening European films outside the EU. Your participation includes an in-depth

one-on-one interview that would last for approximately 30-50 minutes. During the interview, you will be asked about film festivals and the current landscape for European films in the country the film festival takes place. The interview will take place virtually through Zoom, and the audio content will be recorded and further transcribed. The transcript of the interview will then go through a process of qualitative analysis to draw out themes and statements relevant to the research topic.

11. What your participation entails

This study contributes to the overall knowledge of the European film industry and the participation of global youth in shaping initiatives surrounding intercultural communications within the EU regions. Furthermore, this study also adds to the scientific knowledge that can be used to grow the European film market globally by recommending effective methods.

12. Voluntary participation

You will not receive any reimbursement or remuneration for your participation. Your participation is done voluntarily without coercion. Please do note that the researcher also does not incur any additional costs from conducting this study.

13. Participation and withdrawal

You are free to withdraw from the study at any given time with no consequences and reason. Please do note that any withdrawal should be informed directly to the researcher. During the interview, you are free to refuse questions that you do not feel comfortable with without consequences. Additionally, you may request for the omission of statements or responses that you do not want included in the study. Along

with a copy of the consent form, you may also request for the summary of the study's results once the study is concluded.

14. Confidentiality

Your participation will be kept confidential throughout the whole process of the study. The results of the study will be included in the researcher's master thesis and be considered for possible publications, but you will remain unidentifiable to persons outside the study. All digital files pertaining to your information (interview recordings, consent form, transcripts, etc.) will be kept in a hard drive that can only be accessed by the researcher's person. Once all the interview recordings have been transcribed, all audio recordings of the interviews will be permanently destroyed. The transcript will only include a pseudonym to differentiate the participants and data relevant to the study, which includes: age, nationality, country of residence, and your interview responses. All of the data pertaining to the study will be destroyed three months after the completion of the study.

15. Possibility to discuss further questions

Should you have any further questions or issues you would like to discuss regarding the study, please do not hesitate to contact the researcher.

Name: _____

Email: _____

16. Declaration of consent

Name of the participant: _____

I agree to participate in the study **Exploring global youth's relationship with European cinema.**

I have been provided clear and detailed information about the objectives, significance, and scope of the study, as well as about the requirements resulting from my participation in the study. I have also thoroughly read this information text for participants.

All my answers were answered sufficiently and in a comprehensible manner. I have taken the time to consider my decision to participate. I understand that my participation is voluntary, and I have the right to end my participation at any time without consequences. To withdraw from the study, I should contact the person in contact either in writing or verbally.

At the same time, I agree that my data collected in this study are recorded and analysed. I agree that my data is saved electronically in a pseudonymised form. The data are saved in a form that is only accessible to the researcher and are secured via a password protected folder in a hard disk. I understand that my data pertaining to the study will be permanently deleted three months after the conclusion of the study.

I have received a copy of this information for participants and declaration of consent. The original remains with the study coordinator.

Date: _____

Signature: _____

6. Survey consent form

Informed Consent Form

REBOOT - Perception of European Films by International Youth
This project is funded by the European Union

Purpose of the Study

This project (as a part of REBOOT) aims to explore how European films are perceived by international audiences, specifically youth aged 18-24 from the USA, Indonesia, and India living in the European Union. The goal is to understand the kinds of films this demographic watches and their perceptions of European films, which will help in identifying cultural impacts and value interpretations associated with European cinema.

Project Elements

1. Pre-Viewing Survey: This initial survey collects data on participants' demographics, film viewing habits, preferences, prior interest in international films, and opinions regarding European values.
2. Film Viewing: Participants will watch several clips from a European film. These clips do not contain nudity but include minimal violence and are legally sourced from public YouTube videos.
3. Post-Viewing Survey: After viewing the clips, participants will complete a survey to assess their thoughts on the film and the values they believe it reflects.

Why We Want to Find Out What People Think

Understanding the perceptions and preferences of international youth regarding European films will provide valuable insights into the cultural exchange facilitated by cinema. The data collected will be used in a research report for the European Commission and in scholarly publications, contributing to a better understanding of cultural dynamics and the promotion of European cinema globally.

Consideration of Participant Safety

- Voluntary Participation: Participation in this study is entirely voluntary. Participants can withdraw from the study at any time without any consequences.

- **Anonymity and Confidentiality:** The survey is completely anonymous. Participants should not include any personally identifiable information in open-ended responses. Data will be managed carefully and protected according to the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR). Individual responses will not be shared with any third party, and participants will not be added to any mailing lists as a result of taking this survey.
- **Content Warning:** The film clips include minimal violence. Participants are informed of this to ensure they are comfortable with the content before proceeding.
- **Ethical Handling of Data:** Researchers will handle responses ethically, ensuring confidentiality and data protection. The collected data will only be used for general analytical purposes.

Consent

By signing this form, you acknowledge that you understand the purpose of the study, the procedures involved, and your rights as a participant. You agree to participate in the study voluntarily and understand that you can withdraw at any time without any consequences.

Participant's Statement

I have read and understood the information provided above. I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any time, without giving any reason and without cost. I agree to take part in this study.

Participant's Name: _____

Participant's Signature: _____

Date: _____

Researchers' Statement

I/We have provided the participant with the information above and believe that the participant understands the purpose, procedures, and risks involved in this study.

Researchers' Name: _____

Researchers' Signature: _____

Date: _____

Focus Groups

In addition to the survey, we are conducting focus groups to gain deeper insights into participants' perceptions of European films. These focus groups will involve a moderated discussion with a small group of participants, allowing for more detailed and nuanced feedback.

Procedures for Focus Groups

1. Invitation to Participate: Participants who complete the survey will be invited to join a focus group discussion.
2. Discussion Topics: Topics will include film viewing habits, perceptions of European films, cultural values, and the impact of European cinema.
3. Duration: Each focus group session will last approximately 60 minutes.
4. Confidentiality: All discussions will be recorded for research purposes only. Recordings will be transcribed and anonymized to ensure confidentiality. Participants' names and other identifying information will not be included in the transcripts.
5. Voluntary Participation: Participation in the focus groups is voluntary. Participants can withdraw at any time.

Purpose of the Focus Group

To discuss in detail your perceptions of European films and the cultural values they

represent. Procedures

Participate in a moderated discussion lasting approximately 60 minutes. The discussion will be audio-recorded and transcribed for research purposes.

Voluntary Participation & Confidentiality

The participation is voluntary, and you can withdraw at any time. All data will be anonymized, and confidentiality will be maintained according to GDPR guidelines.

Consent

By signing this form, you acknowledge that you understand the purpose of the focus group, the procedures involved, and your rights as a participant. You agree to participate voluntarily and understand that you can withdraw at any time without any consequences.

Participant's Statement

I have read and understood the information provided above. I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any time, without giving any reason and without cost. I agree to take part in this focus group.

Participant's Name: _____

Participant's Signature: _____

Date: _____

Researchers' Statement

I have provided the participant with the information above and believe that the participant understands the purpose, procedures, and risks involved in this focus group.

Researcher's Name: _____

Researcher's Signature: _____

Date: _____