

# **Generic panels and small cinemas: Scandinavian and Eastern European examples**

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# introduction

- “We can no longer lock ourselves in the national cinema box. A global, digital revolution has already taken place. The audience knows it and acts accordingly. The national film cultures need to get moving and to find new ways of taking both traditional and new platforms into consideration in a national, regional and global perspective –the future is already here.”

*(A Small Region in a Global World. Patterns in Scandinavian Film and TV Culture. Iv Bondebjerg and Eva Novrup Redvall, 2011, [http://filmthinktank.org/fileadmin/thinktank\\_downloads/Patterns\\_in\\_Scandinavia\\_4\\_November\\_2013](http://filmthinktank.org/fileadmin/thinktank_downloads/Patterns_in_Scandinavia_4_November_2013), p. 12)*

# introduction

- Possible comparison of two regional film canons in contemporary Europe, based on their conceptualization as small cinemas that may be characterized by film genre usage different from mainstream modes
- “There can be little doubt that film studies today requires models that go well beyond conceptions of the nation as a monadic entity involved at most, perhaps, in an unfortunate relationship with a single dominant other, Hollywood (Morris et al. 2005; Nagib 2006).”

(cited by Mette Hjort – Duncan Petrie: *The Cinema of Small Nations*, Edinburgh UP, 2007: 1-2)

# introduction

- Three “regional” canons compared: Hollywood, Scandinavian, Eastern European
- “(...) world cinema as a polycentric phenomenon with peaks of creation in different places and periods. Once notions of a single centre, primacies and diachronicities are discarded, everything can be put on the world cinema map on an equal footing, even Hollywood, which instead of a threat becomes a cinema among others (...).” (Nagib et al *Theorizing World Cinema* 2012: xxiii)

# small cinemas

- “blurring the distinction between the idea of a small country that produces films and the idea of a country that produces a small number of films.” (Hjort – Petrie 2007: 3)
- “*The Cinema of Small Nations* presents a multifaceted working definition of small nationhood encompassing four indicators of size.” (Hjort – Petrie 2007: 6):

**population**

**area**

**GNI per capita**

**domination**

# small cinemas: **population**

- “(...) we did make a point of ensuring that our cases span the full spectrum, ranging from Bray and Packer’s microstates to what Vital would call a developing small nation, with a clear concentration in the population range of 4-10 million.” (Hjort – Petrie 2007: 4)
- Taiwan **23,036,087** to Iceland **309,699**
- Hungary: 9, 942, 000: “ideal” (~ Bulgaria in Hjort-Petrie)
- Romania: 20, 121 641: faraway end of the scale (~Taiwan, Burkina Faso in Hjort-Petrie)

## small cinemas: **area**

- “We have opted to follow the lead of Gellner and many other scholars in taking geographical scale seriously as an indicator of small nationhood.” (Hjort – Petrie 2007: 5)
- **Burkina Faso** 273,800 square km to **Denmark** 42,394 sq km
- **Hungary 93 030 square km**: “typical” (~ Bulgaria in Hjort-Petrie)
- **Romania: 238 391 square km**: higher extreme of the scale (smaller than , but close to Burkina Faso, New Zealand in Hjort-Petrie sample)

# small cinemas: **GNI per capita**

- “This particular variable is held to be an ‘indicator of military potential’ relevant to the study of political power’ (Olafsson 1998: 10).” (Hjort – Petrie 2007: 5)
- [World Bank website](#) (the 30<sup>th</sup> of October 2013), 2008-2012: Denmark, Hong Kong, Iceland increased (59 770 US\$ to ~36 000), Burkina Faso or Tunisia has dwindled to half the amount signaled in Hjort-Petrie 2007 (670 US\$ to 4500 US\$)
- [Hungary: in the past four year around 12 000 US\\$](#) (no real counterpart in Hjort-Petrie sample), currently ~ Brazil, Croatia, Latvia, Lithuania, Russian Federation and Turkey



# small cinemas: GNI per capita

- **Romania: 8000 US\$** (similar to Hjort-Petrie's Bulgaria and Tunisia), currently ~ Panama, Montenegro, Mexico, Malaysia, Colombia, Suriname, South Africa, and Bulgaria
- “(...) small nationhood, at least with regard to some of its facets, refers to a situation requiring change. This is particularly true of low GNP and domination as features of the small nation phenomenon. A second motivation for the development of a comparative analytic of small nationhood has to do with the possibility of identifying strength in apparent weaknesses, and solutions that might be transferable.”  
(Hjort – Petrie 2007: 7)

# small cinemas: **domination**

- “(...) Hroch foregrounds domination as a core component of small nationhood: ‘We only designate as small nations those which were in subjection to a ruling nation for such a long period that the relation of subjection took on a structural character for both parties.’ (Hroch 1985: 9).’“(Hjort-Petrie 2007: 6)
- Hungary and Romania being subjected to various entities bigger and nationally different: the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy, the Third Reich, the Russian Empire, the Soviet Bloc

# small cinemas: **domination**

- “Subjection” in(to) the EU: “Small nationhood need not be a liability nor a clear sign of sub-optimality, and the task in any analytic of small nationhood associated with film is thus a dual one: to identify those factors that are genuinely debilitating and caught up with questionable power dynamics; to pinpoint strategies that ensure access, visibility and participation; and to transform these strategies, through analysis, into cultural resources that can be appropriated in, and adapted to, other circumstances.” (Hjort – Petrie 2007: 7)

- the constant rise in the number of films produced in the first five-year period (2004-2009, and 2007-2011 respectively) following the accession, and then an unprecedented boom could be registered in the first two years of the second five-year period (2010-2014 for Hungary, and 2012-2016 for Romania), that is 2010-2011, and 2012-2013 followed, in Hungary's case by a serious decline as far as the number and type of films produced are concerned.

- “However, in Europe, the traditional sense of bounded and differentiated national cinemas has always been more difficult to maintain in the case of small nations, and consequently, in addition to nationally specific initiatives, filmmakers have benefited from sources of pan-European support (MEDIA, Eurimages), regional initiatives (the Nordic Film and TV Fund) or co-production sources often located in the metropolitan centres (Channel Four, Canal +). Former colonial relationships (...) have also ensured a source of external funding for filmmakers in some small nations, predicated in each case on a cultural or linguistic bond.” (Hjort – Petrie 2007: 16)

# Small cinemas: melodramas

- Examples of the “textual” analysis: *Written on the Wind* (Douglas Sirk, 1955), *In the Mood for Love* (Wong Kar Wai, 2000), *Mildred Pierce* (Todd Haynes, 2011); *Down by Love* (Tamas Sas, 2004), *A Soap* (Pernille Fischer Christensen, 2006), *Tuesday, after Christmas* (Radu Muntean, 2010)
- Michel Foucault (“crisis heterotopias”) and Kristin Thompson (“cinematic excess”): marital and couple quarrel and/or fight scene compared

# Small cinemas: melodramas

MAIN DIFFERENCES (Hollywood vs.

Danish/Hungarian/Romanian examples) may be established between

- vertical and non-vertical possibilities of movement
- issues of visibility and non-visibility
- evocation of multidimensional (opera, theatre, sculpture) vs. two-dimensional (frieze, embossment) artistic correspondents

# Melodramas: *Tuesday, after Christmas* (Radu Muntean, 2010)





# Melodramas: A Soap (Pernille Fischer Christensen, 2006)



# Melodramas: Written on the Wind (Douglas Sirk, 1955)



# Melodramas: *Tuesday, after Christmas* (Radu Muntean, 2010)



# Melodramas: A Soap (Pernille Fischer Christensen, 2006)



# Melodramas: Down by Love (Sas Tamás, 2004)



# Melodramas: Written on the Wind (Douglas Sirk, 1955)



- THANK YOU FOR YOUR ATTENTION.

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