

# Zuzana Točená

## On the Globalised Film Industry – in Detail

The film industry has played a significant role in the lives of many generations since its birth and prevalence in the 20<sup>th</sup> century, which implies the need for constant scientific research on its specifics in the fields of humanities and social sciences. The reviewed monograph examines Hollywood film production, which dominates the international film distribution markets. As the authors briefly state, this has not yet changed despite the economic potential of the Chinese or Indian filmmaking businesses. The monograph aims to offer a comprehensive set of theoretical knowledge about internationally distributed film production. It consists of seven main chapters and includes an English-written resume. The researched sphere of interest, currently being all but irrelevant, suggests the monograph's relevance throughout the academic fields of media, communication studies and film studies. The authors managed to fulfil the main objective thanks to directing their focus at the individual aspects of the film industry, specifically on production, distribution, thematization and

perception.

The publication, as the authors declare, is based on the thesis of the equivalence of media and communication studies to the perspective of a more technocratically oriented media economy. However, economic realities mentioning individual film revenues are often included as arguments, which helps to determine whether the product managed to meet the expectations of its creators. The specifics of the economic background of some of the highest grossing films of the past decades suggest that genre and/or theme are important features determining the potential of a product. The stated argument certainly relates to the fact that contemporary Hollywood is economically dependent on the production of blockbusters and the creation of franchises. As the authors accurately mention, exploring the economic aspects of film production is one of the most fundamental problems of a systematic study of the media industry due to the scarce availability of up-to-date information

on real profits and production operations. The economic aspects of internationally distributed films are examined in detail in one of the chapters. The authors explain the importance of media convergence and its development by referring to works of prominent scholars such as Henry Jenkins. One of the focal points of the economic reality of the industry segment analysed in the monograph, is that the number of viewers visiting cinemas is declining while ticket prices are invariably rising. These facts allow the authors to look at the connections between the two variables, underlining the specifics at the cultural or thematic levels but also with regard to the formal quality of filmmaking. Theoretical and empirical data regarding marketing and the subsequent distribution of films are situated in the second chapter, and as its title indicates, the authors analyse selected challenges present in this area of interest, such as segmentation of target audiences, implicit forms of film promotion and current questions around global distribution. The dependence of Hollywood film production's success on international distribution opportunities is unambiguous. This statement is widely supported by theoretical and empirical findings throughout the book. Although, if we wanted to determine the degree of accuracy of the predictions or measure the success of a particular movie, we would have to mention some important findings noted within the reviewed monograph. Despite the fact that producers try to ensure the future success of

their films in advance (by casting the currently most famous actors, choosing previously successful themes and popular genres) recent experience shows that international audiences are unpredictable and investments, no matter how huge they are, often cannot and will not create returns.

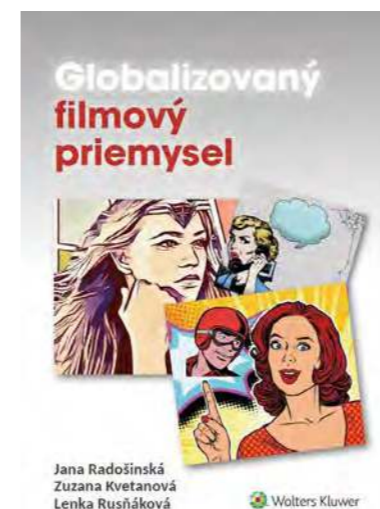
The publication suggests that the American mainstream film industry leans towards conservatism in relation to its political-ideological dimension (the central discourse revolves around issues of race and gender). This widely contradicts liberal views of Hollywood producers on using simple humour, obscenities and explicit violence. The authors claim that stronger diversity could be achieved by seeking some content consensus within film production in the United States. The importance of gender equality discourse in the researched field is also reflected by the inclusion of creative profiles of female directors, whose films have been able to make their mark in this typically male-dominated environment. The chapter of the book mentioned earlier explores the personal level of the globalised film industry. The authors draw attention to the potential of successful directors to create artistically valuable works that can engage mainstream audiences. In the case of directors, we learn about their motivations and the themes they often choose to bring to life through camera lenses. These stories often deliver specific cultural characteristics or problems of specific minorities closer to the

international audience. Directors are divided in the chapter by the time periods during which their work achieved momentum. The mentioned overview is not as detailed as it could be, but overall, it represents the importance of the director's part in the filmmaking process and also provides insight into the process, which signifies that motion pictures are always, in part, products of human experience and living conditions. The authors also point out that studying the director's role in the industry is closely related to the principles of celebrityization. The collection of knowledge about contemporary actors and actresses, including internationally known celebrities, poses an important question of whether the status of a celebrity corresponds to the real acting talents of individuals. The last chapter presents a set of findings concerning the content and formal structure of those feature films which have resonated worldwide since 2015. The text partly employs discourse and narrative analysis, which supports the theoretical knowledge and creates the reflection of contemporary trends in the globalised film industry. Profitability rate is not included among the factors on the basis of which the authors have chosen the mentioned films, although the chapter as a whole gives an overview of what is currently wanted among movie audiences and praised by film critics. Despite the fact that the publication does not use theoretical knowledge about the functioning of the media economy, its main topics include

the economic aspects of the film industry. Furthermore, we have to agree with the authors that both the economic potential and the marketing and transnational distribution of blockbusters are closely linked to episodic television production and digital games. The publication reveals the consequences of this mentioned convergence on several levels. The direct consequence is that film industry professionals are better able to evaluate preferred experiences and stories. Moreover, importantly enough, they have the opportunity to reach new viewers. As previously mentioned, the core of the reviewed monograph is theoretically based. The use of empirical data in combination with theoretical fundamentals results in creating a complex set of knowledge on internationally distributed films. The authors employ several procedures of logical thinking (an analysis of available theoretical frameworks, synthesis, inductive and deductive reasoning, comparison and several case studies). Throughout the publication the authors are looking for answers to the most important questions concerning the origin and subsequent effect, the meaning and influence of film works for mainstream audiences, working mainly with theoretical knowledge, but partly using empirical research methods as well. Through this combination of both theoretical and empirical approaches, a body of knowledge has emerged that enriches the scientific debate on the international film industry and helps

us to understand the products of globalised cinema. The monograph is beneficial and especially useful in the domestic, Slovak academic environment, as many authors here deal with the topics reflected on in the monograph only marginally. The conclusion is that the presented monograph is a thoroughly elaborated work, which could be helpful to scholars studying media and communication, as the authors presuppose. However, thanks to the already mentioned combination of theoretical and empirical approaches to the subject matter, we believe it can be a useful information resource for professionals in the film industry. One of the strengths of the text is the used language, which meets the quality standards of a monograph, but also allows a part of target group readers (film industry professionals) to properly understand and work with the text for their desired purposes without having an academic background. The monograph reflects a wide range of topics, which all require further in-depth research, especially given the ever-changing nature of the contemporary globalised film industry. The reviewed text is a proper resource of information for understanding the basics of the contemporary film industry and also serves as a body of valid suggestions as to what should be scientifically examined in years to come.

### Reviewed Book



RADOŠINSKÁ, J., KVETANOVÁ, Z., RUSŇÁKOVÁ, L.: *Globalizovaný filmový priemysel*. Praha : Wolters Kluwer, 2020. 284 p. ISBN 978-80-7598-950-5.

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