Cultural Neighbourhoods and Coproductions in South East Europe and Beyond 4th Conference on Contemporary Greek Film Cultures

Eleni Sideri (ed.)

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I. Introduction

Cultural Neighbourhoods and Co-productions in South East Europe and Beyond. An Introduction

Eleni Sideri, University of Macedonia

Why do we need a conference on film co-production in south east Europe?

When I started my research on film co-productions in South East Europe in 2016, I could never think the complex ways through which they interrelate with the process of Europeanisation but also, the cultural histories of the Cold War. Furthermore, observing the MA students of the department of Balkan, Slavic and Oriental Studies who study the histories and cultures of the region, I often realise how much they resist at first, the idea to study 'science' through film. For many of them, movies are for entertainment. During the semester, they go through a mind change and several of them end up writing their MA dissertations on film history and culture. In addition to that, they become genuinely surprise discovering the richness of the cinematographic traditions of South East Europe and how these traditions can teach us about regional, social and cultural histories by providing an interesting field for comparison.

The International Conference on "Cultural Neighbourhoods and Co-productions in South East Europe and Beyond. 4th Conference on Contemporary Greek Film Cultures" tried to postulate the ways contemporary cinemas have become part of the interwoven social, political, economic and cultural landscapes of Europe. The conference was the fourth in the row for the Contemporary Greek Film Cultures series of biannual conferences. By focusing on the idea of 'neigbourhood', we aspired at challenging essentialist and preconstructed ideas regarding geographies and cultures. Our purpose was to examine how this idea is generated within film co-productions through policies, cultural histories and creative choices, and not as an a priori category. Moreover, the conference tried to bring together different disciplines (cultural studies, social anthropology, film theory, economics of film industries, Media studies) but also, different kind of experts, social scientists, festival

practitioners, artists. Finally, we considered the conference as an opportunity of early-stage researchers to meet and develop a fertile dialogue with more established scholars.

The conference had to be cancelled due to the outburst of COVID-19, as it was scheduled to start in the spring of 2020. The pandemic hit hard the film industry as well. Many festivals had to be postponed, rescheduled or take place online. Shootings had to cease. At the same time, movies and TV-series through different platforms became an important source of entertainment for our new, dystopian reality. We finally managed to get together online during the last week of August 2020 due to the insistence of the Scientific and Organising Committees, especially the scientific coordinator of the conference, Fotini Tsibiridou, the people of the Lab/Cultures-Borders-Gender and the Contemporary Greek Film Cultures, the decision of the Research Committee of the University of Macedonia to extend our funding and the support of the IT centre of the University of Macedonia.

Social Anthropology and Film

Social anthropology's encounter with the 'visual' started in the Victorian Age. In a period where empirical positivism was at its peak, visual documentation of the 'primitive' life provided an extra testimony and contributed to the 'saving mission' of many ethnographic collections of the colonial era (Corbey, 1993). The introduction of film in the early 20th century paved the way to what later became known as ethnographic film (see Nikolakakis, 1998). Nevertheless, fiction films did not meet the standards of scientific objectivity and they did not draw the attention of social anthropology.

In the 1960s/1970s, the emergence of cultural studies challenged dominant perceptions regarding the distinction between High (traditional arts, like literature and painting) and Mass Culture (photography, film) (see O' Connor, 2010). Turning the 'everyday' into a legitimate category of scientific examination facilitated the gradual inclusion of the study of media and film in social anthropology. In the 1980s, the so-called crisis of representation engaged anthropology into a critical examination of the methods and methodologies applied both in the field and the process of writing an ethnographic monograph. Especially regarding writing, social anthropology re-discovered the early 20th avant-garde artistic techniques (surrealism, Dadaism), like

montage, allegory, pastiche (see Clifford, 1996), which pointed out to the subjectivity and fragmentary nature of the field (Marcus, 1998). But still in the early 1990s, the fiction films were still widely identified with entertainment and thus, they lacked ethnographic qualities[1] (see Loizos, 1992). Hence, turning fiction films to an ethnographic field was a rare thing (see the study of Steven Canton regarding Lawrence of Arabia in 1999, which stands out). Gradually, films turned from texts to contexts constructed by local categories of meaning, power relations as well as aesthetic rules (Gray, 2010, see Sideri 2016).

(Post) Cold War Co-productions

Post-war Europe turned to a field of applied developmental aid both for the USSR and the USA. In 1947, the USSR launched the Molotov Plan as an aid for Eastern Europe. Similarly, the USA introduced the Marshall Plan a year later. In 1954, the USA and the USSR signed an agreement concerning their in-between collaboration in the fields of education, culture sports, and tourism as well as the exchange of films, books, students, artists, musicians, conferences (Hixson, 1997). In this context, cultural diplomacy started to emerge as a way to improve the "negative impressions" of the economic and military violence of the war period (Bu 1999, p 393). Eleni Papagaroufali (2013, p.11-55), in her ethnographic research on different cases of cultural diplomacy since the 1990s, argued that it was the post-war period which cultivated the seeds for the future European and global cooperation not against the competitive logic of the Cold War but in relation to this logic, which gradually paved the way for the neo-liberal capitalism and the rise of a global governance.

Allowing symbolic or literal spaces of cultural exchanges was a significant step for any future political alliance, although we should not consider cultural diplomacy impermeable to the ideological propaganda of the Cold War. Moreover, what it should be stressed is the fact that cultural diplomacy did not only concerned the two superpowers. Instead, what started to become evident since the 1990s in the work of scholars studying socialism/post-socialism, was the multiplicity of the bilateral relations existing between different countries in the two blocs, which were often over-shadowed by the dominant competition between the USSR and the USA.

1 Often this quality was tied to realism and documentation.

The Cold War was the context that film coproductions emerged in Europe. According to Tony Judt (2012, p. 351-52), cinema was a highly popular entertainment for working and middle classes in post-war Europe. Nevertheless, on the other side of the Atlantic, tickets never reached the scale of the prewar period. This economic reality increased the pressure of the American studios on the European governments to open their national film markets. The penetration of the American films in Europe was not something new. But in that period, the pressure caused counter-reactions in Europe regarding the protection of cinema as part of national cultural and heritage. European governments' protectionism towards national cultures extended on cinema including foundation of national film centres, special taxes on tickets to support film production, subsidies etc. However, in that protectionism, the US. producers saw an opportunity to reduce the costs of production by outsourcing them to European locations (Jäckel, 2015).

It should be stressed that socialist countries had already established cinema as a state funded industry. Cinema was enthusiastically supported by the first Bolsheviks in the USSR as a technology which could overcome illiteracy and contribute to the propagation of their ideology to the peasant and working classes. In 1918, the regime formed the All-Russian Film Commission and it monopolised foreign films trade and gradually nationalised film studios putting them under workers' control. Furthermore, each federal socialist republic built each own studio. Unions for cinema professionals were developed (Kennez, 2010). Similarly, all socialist countries followed the Soviet blueprint for film industry and developed policies of nationalisation of the film infrastructure as well as syndicalism for the professionals involved in the industry.

The primary context where co-productions emerged in post-war period was among neighbouring countries with cultural relations like France, Italy and Spain. As Anne Jäckel (1997, p. 87) underlined "co-producers came from countries with cultural affinities, a similar industrial and institutional framework, comparable schemes of incentives and markets (...)". Co-productions were not unknown in the socialist world. Studies on cinema history often postulated a different motivation in co-productions in the western and eastern worlds. In the western world, co-productions were represented as capital driven whereas in the eastern bloc, they were considered ideology driven. Nevertheless, new archival research drew the attention to a more nuanced approach (Sierfert, 2012). Bilateral agreements among countries of the West and the USSR or other socialist countries were also signed in the post

war period. Special was the position of former Yugoslavia which due to the breach of the relations between Tito and Stalin in 1948 developed several agreements with countries of the western Europe.

However, co-produced films were widely considered of low quality by film critics who raised a concern for the risk entailed in co-productions to 'pollute' national cinema and culture. For example, Robin Buss considered "postwar film initiatives toward internationalisation to be 'disastrous for Italian cinema'" (quoted from Betz. 2008, p.10) and Susan Hayward, referred to co-productions as a "murky area" and a "thorny problem" (Ibid, p10). These derogatory terms alluded to the ways national cinema as a category was interwoven with idealised visions about 'what the nation should be' overlooking the fact that these visions were often related to the agendas of leading classes and formal culture (see Higson, 2014). As Mitric and Sarikakis (2016) underlined, this elitist socially and racially cinema, was contrasted to the 'mass' entertainment culture of Hollywood. This idea of cinema continued in the 1960s within the framework of the 'auteur' tradition[2]. This tradition fertilised the idea of a European cinema with an emphasis on an aesthetic quality, innovation and experimentation.

The gradual introduction of neoliberal politics since the economic crisis of 1973 and the shrinking of state funding, the social movements which fought for more social and cultural inclusion but also, the rise of identity politics as well as the technological breakthrough in communication and media in the 1990s turned culture to a prominent field of institutional policies (van Vick, 2011). Since the 1980s, the EU embarked on shaping a common cultural agenda. As Cris Shore (2006) argued, the development of cultural politics in the EU was entrenched in a biopolitical project of fashioning a European citizenship not only as a political category but also, as a form of belonging (see Benhabib, 2002).

In that period, the EU started building its audiovisual institutions such as the European Audiovisual Observatory in 1992 or the MEDIA programme in 1990 which complemented the EURIMAGES, a film support programme launched a year earlier by the Council of Europe. In the framework of these mechanisms, co-productions rose as prominent tools not only to share cost among different partners but also, for European identity building. According

2 The term 'auteur' as a concept was launched with a publication by François Truffaut (the seminal *Ali Baba et la "Politique des Auteurs"*, *Cahiers du cinéma*, 1955, p.45-47). The paper advocated for a cinema where the meaning of film was built within the work of the creator and her other works and not extra-filmic properties.

to Norbert Morawetz (2007, p. 4), co-productions became significant part of film markets, especially for Europe (more than 30% of the film production in Europe). But there was another shift in the EU at the same period. The process of Enlargement towards the eastern borders of Europe set out to reform and embrace in the 'European family' the former socialist states like those of the Balkans.

Neighbourhoods and Cinema

As Pamela Ballinger stressed (1999),

places located within the territorial confines of a Southeastern European space seem to potentially fall under and to stretch across several well-established classificatory rubrics: the Balkans, Eastern Europe and the Mediterranean[3]

These often interchangeable in practice categories corresponded to different but interrelated histories and power asymmetries. Especially in the 1990s and in the EU context, the parallel use of the terms 'Balkans' and 'south East Europe' put the emphasis on different temporalities. The first term alluded to the past, to stereotypes about the 'violent', 'less advanced', societies of the 'area' whereas the second term projected a different future which could be achieved only through a gradual compliance of the countries of the region with the EU and other international bodies' blueprint of economic and political transformation. Success to abide with the proposed changes and regulations was often rewarded with inclusion in programmes like MEDIA.

In this way, the re-shaping of the former socialist societies was a project embedded also in film policies generated as part of a wider, biopolitical project. Imagining the EU beyond a common European market but in social and cultural terms turned to a non-ending process of Europeanisation generated in fragmentary ways and various speeds producing different, even conflicting ideas of Europe (see Liz, 2016). Co-productions emerged in this complex and multidimensional process of Europeanisation as a multivalent space of different agendas: economic as a capital investment mechanism, political as part of the identity politics in the EU, cultural as way to shape European audiences through a wide circulation of films in the EU markets. But how were co-productions in the EU context motivated? As Jäckel underlined referring to the post-war history of co-productions, it was "affinity" that facilitated co-productions in post-war Europe. She defined affinity both in cultural terms, for example language,

3 https://journals.openedition.org/balkanologie/745

but also, in terms of a wider legal-political regulatory framework (legislation, salaries, work habits). How could affinity emerge in the extended space of the EU?

Social anthropologists for decades studied affinity as part of family and kinship relations reporting on the variety of social organisations, which shaped these systems of affinal relations. Since the 1970s, these studies stressed that affinity more than a blood relation should be understood as a metaphor, a symbolic articulation of social, political and economic needs, exchanges and networks which utilise the vocabulary of kinship in order to communicate with the 'everyday' and the 'affective', and to shape durable and extending in time and space bonds (see Carsten, 2003). What was crucial in these relations was the historically contextualised meaning but also, the question of power influencing their expression or transformations.

In order to support co-productions, MEDIA, more than EURIMAGES, which allows direct funding to film co-productions, has invested more in generating a space of producing skills, training and networking in special schools, workshops, or festivals. Through funding, in these spaces and activities of interaction and sociability, film creators learn, apart from entrepreneurial and marketing skills, how to communicate their creative vision in a 'language' understood by wider audiences beyond their national borders and film markets addressing "local issues to global audiences", as many creators and festival officials admitted in the interviews, I had with them during my research, which I will discuss below. Developing this understanding of the European and global context is a key issue believed to give a new dynamic to films to circulate in different cinemas and audiences (although the definition of 'audience' is much debated). As a result, these spaces support more than film production, they support the production of a symbolic 'common language' shaped by a shared know-how, intercultural communication and trust before any discussion regarding investment in film projects. Hence, the EU tries to institutionalise the production of cultural affinity in spaces supported by its mechanisms.

A special position in this process is given to film festivals. Film festivals are spaces connected to multidimensional agendas. They provide a meeting space for professional (creators, industry people, broadcasters and agents) as well as for audiences. Film festivals are rooted in specific locales, usually urban centres, and they contribute not only to the economy of these cities but also, to their urban culture. They contribute to the promotion of national film production as well as the education of audiences, especially young one. In addition to that, festivals and in particular, their co-production markets act as hubs for creators'

initiation to the industry's key people but also, fast track training and introduction to market skills and networking.

To be successful, festival markets, especially those located in the same region often compete for the same professional target groups and projects. In this context, creating a distinctive, niche identity could be an asset. To achieve this goal, festival officials develop a strategy of combining both local heritage and services for film industry to attract closer or more distant neighbours to their festival markets. In this context, cinematic neighbourhoods (see Appadurai, 1995) can be produced. The meaning of neighbourhoods here, is less territorially based than embedded in memories and cultural histories. As many interviews showed, collaborating with people from the Balkans provided a sense of mutual understanding. This understanding is generated both by cultural geographies but also from the specific exigencies of each film. As a result, cinematic neighbourhoods become grounded in the context of different co-productions. Nonetheless, these varied expressions of neighbourhoods draws legitimacy from the inclusion in the process of Europeanisation, as described above. Using the idea of neighborhood in the conference, we tried to shed light to the ways these interconnections between historically shaped discourses found in the European film policies and in specific cases of co-productions could put forward how identity politics and cultural affinities were shaped and still continue to be understood today.

Studying the Greek co-productions as an ethnographic field

My research in film co-production networks in south east Europe took place between 2016-2018 in Sarajevo, Thessaloniki and Tbilisi. It included fieldtrips to festivals, informal discussions and interviews with festival officials, policy makers, creators, participation in co-production markets as observer or as part of a creative team but also, data-base research. For this paper, I will try to summarise few conclusions regarding the formation of 'cinematic neibourhoods' as they are generated by co-productions drawing from my data-base research regarding the case of Greece.

The history of the co-productions for creators in Greece is rather limited in the post-war period. In 1968, *Apollon goes on Holidays* (Epikheirisi Apollo in Greek, Giorgos Skalenakis) made a co-production with Sweden (Damaskinos-Mihailidis and Inge Invarsson Productions, ABTVS). In the 1970s, Cacoyiannis, released Euripides' tragedy *The Trojan Women* (1971) as an international co-production with a mixed cast starring Katherine Hepburn, Vanessa

Redgrave, Irene Papas, and Genevieve Bujold (Karalis, 2012). However, new archival research (see Maria Chalkou in this volume) shed light to collaborations of Greek producers with other creators from the former socialist countries as well. Joining the EU in 1981 changed the situation for the Greek creators. Karalis argued (2014, p. 218; see Papadimitriou 2018) that "the shift, instead of opening up Greece to transnational trends and opportunities, seems to have led to forms of parochial ethnocentrism, cultural exclusivism, and demoralizing introspection".

During the period between 1991-1996 Greece participated in both EURIMAGES and MEDIA. As Karalis stressed above, it seemed that creators from Greece lacked an extrovert attitude drawing from the dominant perceptions of the 1980s, which considered co-productions as products of low aesthetics, but also leftist mistrust rooted in many decades of conservative and nearly authoritarian governments in Greece supported by the West (Sideri 2021 in press). This skepticism is shown in the following maps.

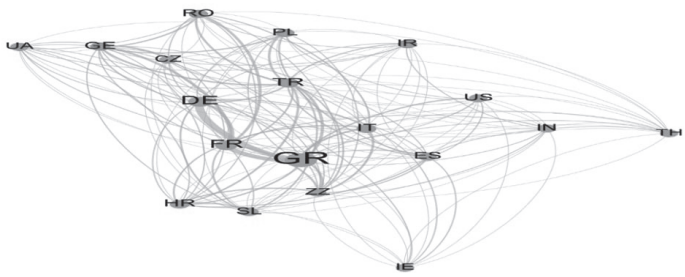
Initially, creators from Greece collaborated with only four other countries, France (Fr[4]), Bulgaria (Bu), Italy (It) and Turkey (Tr). From them, France stood out as a 'bridge' to other important co-producers like Italy, and to a lesser degree, Germany (De). Turkey and Greece joined EURIMAGES approximately at the same period, something that made them joint forces to increase their chances to get funding (see Yilmazok, 2010). Bulgaria became member of EURIMAGES in 1993, which facilitated its participation in co-productions with the neighouring Greek companies. During 1997-2006, co-productions were

4 The maps abbreviations follow Lumiere Database ISO https://lumiere.obs.coe.int/web/iso_codes/. For the visualisation of maps I used the open-access programme GEPHI.

multiplied. This becomes obvious from the thickening of the grey lines between the coloured nodes in the following map.

Turkey's presence became more significant with a peak point the success of Politiki Kouzina (2005). France also intensified its presence as chief partner for co-productions from Greece in collaboration with countries both from eastern and western Europe. Germany also started to increase its participation in co-productions with Greece teaming up at that phase with France and other Balkan countries, especially countries from the western Balkans, for example, with Croatia (HR) and Slovenia (SL). Both countries were member states of the EURIMAGES in that period.

In the last period examined in my research, 2007-2016, the network of co-productions from Greece was further pluralised. France continued to be the most important connection, but Germany's presence also became significant, as German economy suffered less by the financial recession of the last decades. Furthermore, the presence of production companies from Slovenia and Croatia gained ground and other countries from eastern and southeastern Europe like Poland (PL), Romania (RO), the Czech Republic (Cz) also became partners of Greek producers.



The timeline of the co-production networks in Greece from 1991-2016 illustrated that these networks were gradually shaped but they were intensified in the last economic crisis. Collaborations seemed to be motivated from several factors, geographic and cultural proximity, economic incentives like participation in film support mechanisms but also, the symbolic capital of a country's film industry such France or Italy. The maps above depicted the shifting geographies of these networks. Their expansion, pluralisation or decrease cannot be always predicted on the basis of historical links or only with reference to political or economic conditions. Instead, their formation is multidirectional as well as interrelated to many different factors. But also, as a Greek producer stated in one of the interviews, "finding the right producer can be a *mantepsia* (lucky guess)". Hence, studying the 'region' through co-production networks could help us question stereotypes of bounded-ness (geographic or cultural) but also, hierarchical relations which are always present but still shifting in nature. These shifts need to be decoded in their historical specificity. These different dynamic and specific histories are studied in the following chapters.

Chapters Outline

Lydia Papadimitriou revisits the notion of the 'Balkan Cinema' trying to depict the 'where' and 'when' cultural value can be detected in film co-productions. Comparing three films from North Macedonia, Romania and Bulgaria, she explores how a self-critical and reflective angle was developed in all films as their creators tried to find a way to "meet" European capitals and audiences.

The following two chapters take a historical approach to examine first, in Maria Chalkou's chapter the connection of Greeks producers in Cold War Greece with co-producers and festivals in the other part of the Iron Curtain. Moreover, her chapter explores issues of censorship in Greece in the context of cinema. Levent Yilmazok's starts his chapter with an overview of how ethnic Greeks were represented in the work of Turkish creators in post-war period and even before. Furthermore, he examines Greek and Turkish collaboration in the context of EURIMAGES.

The next three chapters focus on the post-Cold War period. Katerina Grammatikopoulou offers an exhaustive account of different co-production models and how they were adopted and changed in different European countries with a special focus in Greece. Then, Elina Kapetanaki studies through an anthropological angle, two films from Albania, one of them in co-production with Greece in order to explore issues of gender in a changing society. Konstantina

Chatzivgeri in her contribution also examines the issue of gender and queerness related in the representations of immigrant youth from the former socialist countries in different Greek co-productions. The last chapter in this section is an important testimony from a young female director in Greece, Vaya Danielidou. She offers her personal experience as an artist from the Greek periphery and her adventures to get funding for her first films.

The last part moves beyond the Greek co-productions focusing and comparing different cases of co-productions from the Balkan countries exploring financial aspects in the case of the Slovenian cinema in the chapter of Giorgos Vassiloglou and identity issues in the Serbian and Bosnian cinemas in the chapter of Themis Valasiadis. Mary Drosopoulos studies a co-production from the Swiss-Kossovar diaspora and how it can be used in the inter-cultural education.

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Co-productions and cultural value: The case of Balkan cinema

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It is well established that the value of cross-border film co-productions is both economic and cultural. Economically, co-productions enable the pooling of resources, which, in turn, engage a larger number of stakeholders who have interest in ensuring that their product reaches as wide a market as possible. The benefits, in other words, concern both production financing and distribution/exhibition. Different parties -state and private- co-contribute to the budget, while films can be promoted as "national" in different countries and thus potentially reach a larger audience. Culturally, co-productions bring together working teams from different national contexts, who aim to create films that can "speak to" cross-cultural audiences. They enhance co-operation and dialogue among industry stakeholders, enabling creative and technical teams to learn from one another, while producing cultural content that has the potential to be relevant to more diverse audiences, ultimately and potentially bringing them closer in other spheres of life. In principle, therefore, the benefits of co-productions are both economic and cultural, and possibly also social and political, as they can enhance co-operation, mutual understanding and ultimately peace across different national groups (Hammett-Jamart, Mitric and Redvall, 2018; Papadimitriou, 2018 and 2018a).

This paper focuses on Balkan cinema as a case study for examining *where* and *how* we can locate the *cultural* value of films made as co-productions. Balkan cinema offers an interesting case study for this purpose, because it is a contested and challenging entity in its own terms. Examining the cultural value of co-productions with reference to Balkan cinema can help us point both to the potentialities and limitations of such an endeavour.[1] The paper will introduce, contextualise and explore the three parameters considered here - co-productions, Balkan cinema, and cultural value - before focusing on three Balkan co-produced films in order to examine the ways in which they register and ultimately promote what we might call progressive European values.

1 For a more focused discussion on co-productions, European values and Greek cinema, see Papadimitriou 2018.

The co-productions under scrutiny here are European.[2] They take place among European partners/countries, and they are enabled by policies introduced in the late 1980s/early 1990s as part of the vision of European integration that was further intensified with the 1992 Maastricht treaty, which founded the European Union. The framework of support for European co-productions in the European context is mainly provided by the Council of Europe, an institution distinct from the European Union. Its key aims and values to "uphold human rights, democracy and the rule of law" (Council of Europe A, 2020) converge with and complement the latter's emphasis on "human dignity and human rights, freedom, democracy, equality and the rule of law" (Ec.Europa.eu, 2020).

The Council of Europe's support mechanisms for co-production are the Eurimages fund that was introduced in 1988 (Council of Europe B, 2020), and the European Convention on Cinematographic Co-production that was established in 1992 (Council of Europe C, 2020). The latter formalises and streamlines the legal framework within which co-productions take place in Europe.[3] The text of the convention offers a good starting point for examining the desired cultural value of co-productions. While its main focus is legal and technical, as it establishes "the conditions for obtaining co-production status", defines maximum and minimum participation, and differentiates between technical, artistic and purely financial participation, the convention also includes some cultural criteria for granting a film "co-production status". Article 9 (par.1, point c) of the 1992 version states as condition for a film being recognised as a co-production that it should "help to promote a European identity" (Council of Europe C, 2020). In the 2017 version, this was replaced with the condition that the film should "help to promote cultural diversity and intercultural dialogue" (Council of Europe D, 2020). The change in emphasis reflects the desire to facilitate co-productions with non-European partners (Macnab 2017). It can also be read as a marker of a broader shift in discourse within European institutions, from an emphasis to identity building to a more modular and open framing, as expressed by the EU's post-2000 motto "united in diversity" (European Union, 2020).

2 The term "co-production" can also refer to the joint participation in a film's funding and promotion of different stakeholders from *within* the same country (e.g., a national film fund, a state broadcaster, a private broadcaster and a private investor) (EDN, 2020).

3 Co-productions under the terms of this convention are often referred to as "official" co-productions (see Hammett-Jamart, Mitric and Redvall, 2018).

While European cinematic co-productions are mainly supported by the Council of Europe, the EU's Creative Europe/MEDIA programme (launched in 1991) offers support to audio-visual European projects in development. It also seeks to boost the visibility of European cinema by facilitating cross-border distribution and exhibition (EACEA - European Commission, 2020). The measure of "European added value" is utilised in order to assess the extent to which the value created by the EU intervention is higher to what it would have been without it, and therefore whether the particular projects are worthy of such support (Medium, 2020).

In order to explore the extent to which co-productions add cultural value to Balkan cinema it is important to highlight this European institutional and policy framework. Balkan cinema is very heterogeneous, and its relationship to Europe not uniform. Furthermore, as a concept it is not one that European institutions use or embrace, and therefore it is necessary here to explore what it is, what it means and why the exploration of co-productions and cultural value in relation to Balkan cinema is significant. As a supranational term, Balkan cinema designates the cinemas of a region which takes its name from the part of it that is geographically in Europe (the Balkan peninsula) – although geo-politically it exceeds Europe. Furthermore, it is a term whose meanings vary, whose boundaries are elastic, and which has no political representation as a supranational entity. In exploring the notion of cultural value in relation to cinematic co-productions made in the Balkans under the aegis of European institutions and/or with the participation of non-Balkan European countries, we are therefore looking at the ways in which European cultural values are expressed, explored and contextualised in Balkan cinema.

Let us unpack the above.

As the sum total of all national cinemas in the region, Balkan cinema is heterogeneous because the countries that it represents are widely varied both in terms of quantifiable measures - such as size (of land and population), riches, longevity - and more elusive, cultural ones, that include linguistic, religious, national, historical and other identifications. Balkan cinema represents the cinema of thirteen countries, which are either geographically part of the Balkan peninsula or/and are culturally related to other countries in the Balkans (such as Cyprus).[4] By far the largest country is Turkey, of which only the northwesternmost part is geographically in Europe (and the Balkan penin-

4 For a detailed elaboration of the criteria for defining the Balkans and Balkan cinema see Papadimitriou and Grgić (2020: 1-17).

sula). The country's area and population exceed the total sum of the other Balkan countries: it covers 780,000 square kilometres (compared to 720,000 for the remaining Balkan countries), while its population is 83 million (the rest of Balkans has 59 million). In contrast, the smallest country in terms of land mass is the Republic of Cyprus which covers just 9,200 square kilometres, while Montenegro is the smallest in terms of population, with 600 thousand inhabitants. In terms of GDP, the Republic of Cyprus tops the Balkan charts (ranking 38th globally in 2018) with almost 30 thousand USD annual per capita GDP, while Kosovo – the youngest, and as yet not fully recognised country from the former Yugoslavia – is at the bottom with a GDP of just over 4,000 USD (118th). Albania, Bosnia-Herzegovina, and North Macedonia are also ranked quite low (111th, 105th and 104th respectively) underlining the fact that a number of countries in the region are poor - indeed among the poorest in Europe (StatisticsTimes.com, 2020).

Geography gives the Balkans its name and connects the different countries despite their cultural and other differences. The role of history in the Balkans is more ambivalent, offering both unifying and dividing narratives. The legacy of Empire (mostly Ottoman, but also Austro-Hungarian) often serves as a distant unifying factor, as the populations of the region shared similar experiences (often positioning them in opposition to those in power). Waves of nationalism since the 19th century, combined with the interventions of the various competing "Great Powers" have helped define the region's contemporary national and state profiles (Glenny 2012). Given the above, the Balkans have been meaningfully explored with reference to post-colonial dispositions (Raveto, 2017; Bjelic, 2019) and "nesting Orientalisms" (Hayden and Bakić-Hayden 1992; 1995). This is an internally varied region, whose perception from outside, however, has often been reductively uniform. As Maria Todorova ([1997] 2009) has shown the term "Balkans" is laden with negative associations, which originate in Western perceptions of the region (in turn often internalised by its inhabitants) as a place of darkness, violence and fragmentation. Such negative perceptions have led to the reproduction of certain narratives about the region, which have uniformly disregarded the area and its cultural production and/or emphasised the dividing factors: the mutually incomprehensible languages, the historically determined religious differences, the conflicting ethno-national identifications and the competing political legacies from the Cold War era. Furthermore, the negative connotations of the term "Balkans" has often led to its avoidance (in favour of national, or sub-regional identifications, such as "post-Yugoslav"), or sometimes its substitution by the apparently more neutral "South Eastern Europe".

Given the heterogeneity of the region and its cinema, why then group the cinemas of the region under one category? And also, given the contested nature of the term "Balkan", why label this group category as "Balkan cinema"? The answer to both questions lies on the assertion that, despite the fragmentation and the various incontestable problems, the Balkans have a distinctive cultural layer worthy of examination via cinema. The proposition, therefore, has a polemical dimension and it has notions of culture and cultural value at its core. Defining Balkan cinema as an object of study, positions it beyond the sum total of the national cinemas of the region, and renders it as an entity defined by transnational exchanges and cross-border interactions. Since the collapse of the communist regimes in Europe, such exchanges and interactions have increased and have been formalised in the context of European institutions (as explained above). While Balkan cinema has benefitted unevenly and intermittently from such a European-led transnational drive, since 2008 cross-border collaborations have visibly increased[5] Therefore, despite the national fragmentation and even the active efforts by a number of countries in the region to use cinema for nation-building, it is now more meaningful than ever to consider Balkan cinema as a conceptual entity (complementary to, rather than competing with, country-based approaches).

Adopting the term "Balkan" rather than "South Eastern Europe" is also a polemical decision, in that while acknowledging traumatic histories and alluding to negative connotations, it makes a strong case for their re-evaluation by framing it in a positive way. By focusing on, and even celebrating, the encouraging developments in Balkan cinema – many of which are linked to co-productions – the term becomes invested with positive associations, as films project a forward-looking vision that critiques problematic aspects of the past and paves the way for a potentially better future. The aim of exploring questions of cultural value in relation to Balkan cinema, therefore is not to erase the past or disregard ongoing problems, but rather to encourage and adopt a different ethical stance towards the beleaguered region. This is particularly important in that the sense of belonging (or not) to the Balkans is ultimately "imaginary" – just like, according to Benedict Anderson (1991) nations are "imagined communities". In his book, subtitled "Reflections on the origins and spread of nationalism", Anderson argues that a nation is never

5 For a country-by-country discussion that highlights co-productions and transnational collaborations in Balkan cinema since 2008, as well as for reference tables with relevant data, see Papadimitriou and Grgić (2020). For political dimensions in the study of Balkan cinema, see Papadimitriou (2021).

a "real" community of people who know each other directly, but it is constituted by symbolic representations, carried out mainly through national institutions, discourse and the media. With the Balkans being a supranational entity with no political or institutional representation, foregrounding the positive aspects of its cinema, and supporting a unifying discourse about it as an "imagined community" can actively counter reductive representations found elsewhere.

The three co-produced films from the Balkans that will be discussed below have been chosen because the stories they tell express progressive cultural values. All three films expose and critique problematic aspects of the region, mainly concerning the repression of human rights. Specifically, they denounce the repression of women and racial minorities, whether in the present or the past. Their critique is aimed at undermining such practices, and implicitly encouraging their rejection. While recognising difficult realities, all these films (and more) project a forward-looking vision of the region and its cinema, contributing towards rehabilitating the notion of the Balkans and Balkan cinema, and creating a more affirmative imagined community.

Before looking more closely to the three films, it is useful to briefly consider the findings of a wide-ranging research project on "the value of art and culture to individuals and society" (Crossick and Kaszynska, 2018). Rather than focusing on textual dimensions of cultural artefacts, Crossick and Kaszynska place emphasis on reception, as they seek to "reposition first-hand individual experience of arts and culture at the heart of enquiry into cultural value" (2018, p. 7). By doing so, the two authors aim to reinvigorate notions such as "reflectiveness", "empathy" and "imagination" as key dimensions of cultural value, all of which, they argue, have as starting point individual experience. More specifically, they highlight "the ability of arts and cultural engagement to help shape reflective individuals", in other words, make people think; the extent to which "participation in arts and culture may produce engaged citizens" who feel socially and politically connected; and the importance of "arts and cultural interventions to help peace-building and healing after armed conflict, helping communities to deal with the sources of trauma and bring about reconciliation" (Crossick and Kaszynska, 2018, p. 7-8). They also point to the educational value of the arts and their potential to promote wellbeing.

All the above are dimensions that the films under examination could be argued to uphold. However, the approach adopted here explores how the films *express* certain cultural values, rather than whether and how these values are experienced by individuals who happen to engage with them. An

audience or reception studies approaches of these films would require different methodologies, including potentially box office data or focus group analyses.[6] While such data is not readily available, it is also fair to highlight that these co-produced films fall within the category of "art cinema", films in other words that do not predominantly aim to entertain, and are not made with commercial imperatives in mind. "Art cinema" is a broad and varied category that is not usefully reducible to a single definition. As Geoff King (2019: 3), points out it is "an entirely relational concept, one that makes claim to certain kinds of cultural value and status that can only be understood in terms of various degrees of differentiation from more commercially-orientated ones". While cultural worthiness seems to be a constitutive element of art cinema, this point also suggests that box office receipts are not useful markers of the cultural impact of these films. These are films mostly experienced in the context of film festivals - the realm of self-declared cinephiles (de Valck, 2007) rather than broad audiences - and as a result their box office returns tend to be modest at best. Furthermore, as the methodological challenges of assessing a particular film's impact on individual members of the audience are great, it is both meaningful and important to focus on the film texts themselves to examine what cultural values they project. The assumption is that, as these films are made and remain in circulation, at least some members of their audience would engage with their values and would seek to disseminate and reinforce them more broadly in society too.

The three films that I will now focus on are (in chronological order), are the Kosovar-German co-production *Three Windows and a Hanging/ Tri dritare dhe nje varje* (Isa Qosja, 2014); the Romanian, Bulgarian and Czech *Aferim!* (Radu Jude, 2015) and the Macedonian, Belgian, Slovenian, French, Croatian *God Exists, Her Name is Petrunija/ Gospod Postoi, Imeto i' e Petrunija* (Teona Stugar Mitevska, 2019). Of these three films, two are "official" European co-productions (*Aferim* and *God Exists*) made under the terms of the Convention and supported by Eurimages; The other is an "unofficial" co-production (*Three Windows*) as it is not made under the auspices of the European Convention on Cinematographic Co-production. (Kosovo is not, as yet, a fully recognised UN member state, and therefore it is not represented by European legislation or institutions). Two of the three films (*Three Windows* and *God Exists*) are co-productions that include participation of Western Eu-

6 For reception and audience studies approaches in media and film, see indicatively Hall, 1973, Staiger, 1992 and Booker, 2002.

ropean countries (respectively, Germany, and Belgium and France), while the co-production team of the third (*Aferim*) is comprised of Eastern European countries. Two of the films' directors (Isa Qosja and Radu Jude) are based in their respective countries of origin (Kosovo and Romania respectively) while the third (Teona Stugar Mitevska) is an émigré, mostly based in Belgium (who nonetheless maintains close links with her home country, including co-owing a production company with her siblings in North Macedonia).

As such the three films represent a range of permutations with regard to production and financing conditions, as well as country of origin and topic. The Kosovar *Three Windows* deals with the legacy of the wars in the former Yugoslavia, focusing specifically on its impact on women. *God Exists* explores the lingering effects of patriarchy, the debilitating impact of unemployment and the restrictive control of religion in another former Yugoslav country, North Macedonia. Romanian *Aferim* is a historical film, set in 19th century Wallachia and offers a raw tapestry of the multinational Balkan life at the time, exposing and denouncing the then widespread phenomenon of Roma slavery. In what follows, I examine each film chronologically (by year of production) in order to identify how each expresses, explores and contextualises progressive European cultural values.

Three Windows and a Hanging is set in a Kosovar village in 2000, one year after the end of the war with Serbia. The film exposes the deeply patriarchal culture of the village and of traditional Kosovar-Albanian society more broadly, by focusing on the silencing of the women's rape during the war. As such it stages a conflict between, on the one hand, the dominant male society for which (the national and masculine value of) *honour* meant disavowing the trauma experienced by the women, and, on the other, the oppressed women who faced castigation and isolation when speaking out about their rape. The film is clearly critical of the male chauvinism and of the women's oppression – evident not only by the fact that we are mostly invited to align with the female teacher Lushe, who speaks out about her own rape, but also from the portrayal of the other female characters, most notably the one about whom the "hanging" of the title refers to. Its critique is pointed mainly towards the traditional patriarchy, and its parochial codes of honour. In this respect, it is clear that while depicting a very traditional village society, often with some degree of affection (such as in the scenes with the three elderly men under the ancient tree that frame the film), the film condemns its oppressive practices. As such it supports progressive European – and, broadly, Western - values, concerning human rights, freedom and gender equality.

The film is also an example of a film from the former Yugoslavia that acknowledges trauma as a result of atrocities committed during the war. While it represents the Kosovar-Albanian perspective, it avoids vilifying the Serbs on a simplistic ethno-nationalist basis. Evidence for this is the role of the journalist that investigates war crimes, which serves the positive role of enabling the truth to come out. While the ethnic origin of the character is not made explicit in the film, the casting of the well-known Serbian star Mirjana Karanović in the part makes this evident.[7] At the same time, the ethnic origin of the war rapists is unambiguous. However, *Three Windows*, does not dwell on the actions of the Serbian soldiers during the war, but rather on the double victimisation and repression of the women at home, following both their rape and their subsequent silencing. The war and its consequent trauma are fundamental to the story, but the main critique is addressed inwardly towards the Kosovar and Albanian society that does not allow this trauma to be addressed A number of films from the former Yugoslavia since the 1990s have drawn on the wars and its lingering traumas.[8] This is partly due to the healing capacity of the arts and their ability to bring reconciliation and build peace (Crossick and Kaszynska, 2018: 8); and partly because of the global awareness of these wars, which rendered the topic interesting to international audiences as well (Iordanova, 2001). Interestingly many of these films are co-productions, and many of these co-productions consist of collaborations among different former Yugoslav countries, putting into action the reconciliatory drive both behind and in front of the camera.[9]

If *Three Windows* explores the effects of trauma and patriarchal oppression, making a case for a more caring and open society that would respect women's rights and facilitate healing, the Romanian *Aferim!* focuses on questions of human dignity and personal freedom. The film borrows on the iconography of the Western (riders on horses, long shots against the sunset), but rather than being set in the American Wild West, it is set in the princi-

7 Karanović also played in *Grbavica-Esma's secret* [or *The Land of my Dreams*], Jasmila Zbanić's 2006 co-production (Bosnia-Herzegovina/Croatia/ Austria/Germany) that also dealt with trauma and war rape.

8 Indicatively: *Grbavica*, *The Reaper*/*Kosac* (Zvonimir Juric, 2014, Croatia/Slovenia), *The High Sun/Zvidan* (Dalibor Matanic, 2015, Croatia/Serbia/Slovenia), *Requiem for Mrs J*/*Reqvijem za gospodu J.* (Bojan Vuletic, 2015, Serbia/Bulgaria/North Macedonia/Russia/France/Germany), *The Good wife*/*Dobra Zena* (Mirjana Karanovic, 2016, Serbia/Bosnia-Herzegovina/Croatia).

9 There are of course also economic reasons behind such collaborations. For more details, see Papadimitriou and Grgić, 2020.

pality of Wallachia (currently south Romania) in the early 19th century. Shot in spectacular black-and-white, the film draws on the Balkan version of the Western, or the "Red Western" that was widespread in Eastern Europe during the communist era.[10] Generically, *Aferim* is also an episodic road movie, as we follow the two main characters on horseback for most of its duration, and their different encounters on this journey. The film is full of generic, literary and other cultural references, as a lot of the dialogue is drawn on original source materials, while the reconstruction of the time and place is full of period details.

The generic references and the spatiotemporal setting of *Aferim!* render it the most explicitly Balkan film of the three discussed here. This has largely to do with the choice of iconography, and specifically with the fact that the two central characters on horseback (the local sheriff and his son) allude to the *haidouks* - the irregular brigands, whose Greek variation were *kleftes* and *armatoloi*. Another reason is the extent to which the area (like most of the Balkans at the time) was a (metaphorical) stage for the Great Powers to compete. Early 19th century Wallachia was under Ottoman suzerainty, but also run by the local *boyars* (landowners) and controlled by the Russian Empire. It was also (just like pre-national Balkans more broadly) a place where different nationalities and ethnicities met. The film, however, does not romanticise such proto-multi-culturalism; rather it exposes very clearly (and often humorously) the rivalries and distinct sense of identities among ethnic and national groups.

At its core, *Aferim* is a critique of the exploitation of the Roma/Gypsies, who were used as slaves until the second half of the 19th century (Marushiakova and Popov, 2009). The film exposes the racism and inhumanity of their treatment, offering a strong indictment of slavery, albeit not in a didactic way, but rather in a blunt, matter of fact, ironic, and often humorous, manner. This approach is evident in the title of the film, which circulated untranslated, *Aferim!* which means "bravo" or "well done" in Ottoman Turkish. The word is often spoken by the characters, but its use in the title serves as the director's ironic commentary, and points to the way in which we are invited to engage with what is shown. While being set in the past and castigating a now (thankfully) long defunct practice, it inevitably invites us to draw parallels with the present. As the reviewer of *The Hollywood reporter* states, "Behind its attractive surface sheen of lusty humor and ravishing visuals, this Trojan

10 On the Red Western, see Lavrentiev, 2013.

Horse drama makes some spiky topical points about the lingering scars of slavery, feudalism, misogyny and racism" (Dalton, 2015).

The depiction of the two main characters in the film is indicative of the film's mode of address and of the way in which its critique functions. As we eventually find out, during their meandering horseback trip for the first half or so of the film, father and son are searching for a gypsy slave who had escaped from the local boyar's estate after having had an affair with his wife. After they find him, they return him to the boyar, knowing that he will face very severe punishment (castration). Despite having some sympathy towards the slave, rather than helping him avoid his fate, or even get upset about it, they reconcile themselves with the idea that there is nothing they can do about it and focus on imagining a better future for themselves instead. The films closing lines are "life will be better, and we will have a chance to rest". These are not positive heroes who enact welcome change, but flawed characters whom we are invited to observe and reflect on their choices. Implicitly, the director shows us the effects of turning a blind eye on injustices, but also the power structures that make action difficult at times. With no trace of didacticism, the director shares with us his denouncing gaze at these dehumanising practices of the not-so-distant past, and invites us to consider where and how similar abuses to freedom, dignity and human rights persist elsewhere – in the Balkans and not only.

The final film that I will discuss here is Teona Strugar Mitevska's *God exists, her Name is Petrunija*. Not unlike *Three Windows*, which was also set in a new country from the former Yugoslavia, *God exists* sets up a conflict between the traditional, religious and chauvinistic status quo, and the oppressed but ultimately feisty and emancipated woman who – in this case - fights for her rights. The tone here is much lighter and the film is a comedy, as the topic of discord is of a purely symbolic nature: whether Petrunija, as a woman, has the right to catch and keep the cross thrown in the water during the Orthodox Christian religious ritual of Epiphany or the Blessing of Water.

The film adopts a feminist perspective (far more explicitly than in *Three Windows*) and makes an unlikely heroine of the 32-year-old Petrunija who, despite her University degree, had never found the courage and the way to resist familial and, more broadly, societal oppression before. The film celebrates her defiance and critiques the old-fashioned and conservative interpretation of religion upheld by the priest and the status-quo. This is represented by Petrunija's parents, the men in the police station and most acutely by the male antagonists - the young swimmers who felt robbed not only of the cross

but of their masculine privileges. With its comedic tone and its sympathies clearly bent towards the female characters (Petrunjia and, to a certain degree, the journalist who tries to tell her story for the media), the film stereotypes most male characters: The young men are represented as two-dimensional unreconstructed irate thugs, the priest is compliant and fearful, the men in the police office are disingenuous and lack understanding. The one exception is the sensitive police officer, who offers tacit support to Petrunjia and eventually acts as a love interest, leading the film to conclude with a hint to a conventional happy ending. While for some reviewers this "ending undercuts its gender-equality stance" (Weissberg, 2019) there is no doubt that *God Exists* is a film that promotes a female/feminist perspective and questions the established male dominated status quo in North Macedonia, thus disseminating European and Western values concerning gender equality. It is therefore perhaps no coincidence that the film, which is also directed by a woman, won the LUX prize of the European parliament, given annually to a film that "goes to the heart of the European public debate" (Lux Film Prize, 2019).

The above three co-produced Balkan films illustrate the extent to which, irrespectively of their particular aesthetic approaches, they all align themselves with progressive cultural values, akin to those promoted by European institutions. By doing so, the films are critical of certain aspects of the Balkan societies that they depict. This paper located the cultural value of these co-produced films mainly in the subject matter and narrative texture of the films. It acknowledged that while this is not the only possible way to do so, it is a privileged one when dealing with European co-produced "art films". This is because, such films are made to encourage the three key dimensions of cultural value that Crossick and Kaszynska identified: "reflectiveness", "empathy" and "imagination". The fact that it is difficult to assess the extent to which they achieve such effects with reference to both their reach of wide audiences, and these audience's actual response to the films, does not undermine an assertion of these films' cultural value based on their textual qualities.

All three films examined here position the Balkans as a space with multiple internal contradictions but also open to constructive self-criticism and potentially change. As such they can help re-evaluate and rebrand not only Balkan cinema, but the Balkans as a social and cultural space, more broadly. At times such as the present, when the European project is facing many challenges, it may appear too idealistic to put forward an optimistic message that claims that co-productions can contribute to a revisioning the Balkans as a space full of potentialities that can help reaffirm European values. Despite

continuing difficulties, however, such films provide ample evidence of the fact that the desire to explore, express and ultimately overcome the Balkans' many contradictions exists, and that this social and cultural space is greatly supported by such transnational frameworks as European co-productions.

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II. Cold War History and Beyond

Eastern European cinemas, Greek film culture and cross-border exchange in the 1950s and 1960s: Movies, festivals, co-productions and state censorship

Maria Chalkou

It is a commonplace in film scholarship that during the 1950s and 1960s the links between the cinema of Greece and that of the former socialist countries, including the Balkans, were either non-existent or extremely limited. As a major reason for this isolation of Greece from the cinemas of communist Europe, apart from linguistic, religious and other cultural barriers, is often highlighted the deep political divide caused by the Cold War since Greece was part of the Western block.[1] In contrast to these assumptions, however, I will demonstrate that this supposed isolation and disconnectedness is a misconception and that there was a significant degree of cinematic interaction between Greece and Eastern Europe especially in the 1960s. In order to briefly explore film exchange between Greece and the former socialist countries during 1950-1967 – the first two post civil-war decades until the rise to power of the dictatorship of the Colonels – I will focus mainly on the availability of Eastern European films in Greece and their popularity with Greek audiences, the First Balkan Film Festival held in Varna in 1965 and the transnational collaborations and co-production initiatives that took place at the time. Simultaneously, I will put emphasis on the political framework that affected this exchange focusing on both Greek left-wing and governmental policies including censorship. I am fully aware that there are further crucial aspects of the phenomenon, such as the flow of Greek films to Eastern Europe, the cinema made by Greek political refugees in the host communist countries, the thematic and stylistic influences of Eastern European films on Greek cinema, or the work of Greek filmmakers who were trained in Eastern European film academies. I have to make clear, however, that these are beyond the scope of this paper which is non- exhaustive but an introduction to a topic that requires further research and detailed study.

1 See, for example, Papadimitriou, L. (2012).

Establishing connections through culture and cinema

In political terms the relationship of Greece with communist Europe in the 1950s and 1960s was highly complicated because Cold war hostility was crucially increased by shared a traumatic historical background (e.g. the Balkan wars, the Bulgarian Occupation during WWII, repatriation claims by Bulgaria), territorial and ethnic disputes with neighboring countries (e.g. Macedonian issue, Greek minority in Northern Epirus) and importantly also by domestic political tensions caused by the devastating implications of the Greek civil war (1944-1949). After the end of the conflict, the defeated leftists, who were a sizable portion of Greek society – notably in 1958 the left-wing party United Democratic Left (EDA) became the major opposition force in Parliament – were perceived by the political establishment as the major internal enemy that served the interests of the communist countries, the latter representing a significant external threat. Thus, issues of internal security and fears of communist intrusion and revitalisation of the domestic Left complicated further the possibilities for economic and cultural cooperation. Nevertheless, under problematic diplomatic relations, strict censorship, official politics of anti-communism and suppression of the Left, throughout the 1950s and 1960s took place what it could be called a "cultural paradox", namely a marked openness of Greece to the cultural products from the communist Europe.

Cultural connection with the nations of the Eastern Bloc was significantly facilitated by a number of bilateral associations of friendship operating in Greece at the time, such as the Greek-Soviet, Greek-Czechoslovakian, Greek Romanian, Greek-Polish, etc. These friendship groups – in collaboration with the respective embassies – played a central role in enabling exchange and promoting Eastern European culture by holding a wide range of educational and cultural events, including film shows. Such initiatives were encouraged by the Greek Left which paid particular emphasis on promoting through the left-wing press the culture of the communist countries as an alternative to that of the Western world highlighting its merits. At the same time, the Greek Left strongly promoted the idea of an imaging shared Balkan identity as an alternative concept of belonging and as an antidote to Greece's actual belonging to the political West appealing also for closer relations and mutual understanding. Thus, even a cursory investigation of the press of the time confirms that, during the 1950s and 1960s, took place a very rich and multifaceted cultural exchange between Greece and Eastern Europe regarding music, ballet, folk dance, literature, theatre, lectures as well as book and

art exhibitions, including also extensive exchange of visits of artists and intellectuals. The Bolshoi, Beryozka and Moiseyev ballets, folk dance groups from all over Eastern Europe, the Circus of Moscow, the Black Theatre of Prague, the Vakhtangov theatrical group, that performed in Greece throughout the 1950s and 1960s are only a few illuminating examples. Thus, cultural interaction with the former socialist countries was not restricted to cinema. It was a much wider phenomenon, connected not only to diplomatic and cold-war political agendas but also to private initiative, which deserves the attention of the scholars to be fully explored.

When it comes to cinema, we can identify a vast number of films from Eastern Europe that were shown in Greece at the time. Despite the frequent complains of the left-wing press about the limited access to films from the former socialist countries, the truth is that the Greek audience, from the mid-1950s onwards and especially in the 1960s, was very familiar with film production from Eastern Europe. As a turning point can be considered the 1953/54 season, when the first Soviet films arrived in Athens after a gap of six years since their circulation had been suspended in 1947[2]. This restart was thanks to the improvement of diplomatic relations between Greece and the USSR in 1953 and the subsequent Greek-Soviet trade agreement (July 1953) that included movies[3]. Apart from occasional screenings for limited audiences that were previously hold by the Soviet Embassy and the Greek-Soviet Association of Friendship, the first Soviet movie to be released in theaters commercially was *The Grand Concert* (Vera Stroyeva, 1951), a documentary about the performances of the Bolshoi Theatre in Moscow, shown at *Esperos* in September 1953[4]. The first Soviet feature film was circulated the next month and was the fantasy epic *Sadko* (Aleksandr Ptushko, 1953)[5]. From that point onwards and throughout the 1950s, dozens of short, animation and feature-length, new and older Soviet movies were screened regularly for the general public in Athens and around Greece, often with dance, music, circus, sports, travel and educational content, including also costume and historical dramas (e.g. *Admiral Ushakov* [Mikhail Romm, 1953]), literary adaptations (e.g. *The Grasshopper* (Samson Samsonov, 1955), *Don Quixote* [Grigori Kozintsev, 1957], *The Idiot* [Ivan Pyryev, 1958]), fairytales, romantic and contemporary stories, spy films [e.g. *Secret Agent* (Boris Barnet, 1947]), etc. Impor-

2 *I Avghi*, 7/5/1953.
3 *I Avghi*, 24/7/1953.
4 *I Avghi*, 12/9/1953.
5 *I Avghi*, 24/10/1953.

tantly, in the late 1950s and early 1960s, after the release of films made in the 'thaw' years such as *Forty-First* (Grigori Chukhrai,1956), *Cranes are Flying* (Mikhail Kalatozov, 1957), *Fate of a Man* (Sergey Bondarchuk, 1959) and *Ballad of a Soldier* (Grigoriy Chukhray, 1959), the reputation and popularity of Soviet films in Greece were significantly increased.

In the 1950s, the Eastern Bloc movies available to Greek audiences were primarily from the Soviet Union but there was also a notable number of imports from Czechoslovakia (since 1953), such as costume film *Rozina, the Love Child* (Otakar Vávra, 1945) and war drama *The Trap* (Martin Fric, 1950); Poland (since 1958), such as legendary *Kanal* (Andrzej Wajda, 1957) and Holocaust drama *The Last Stage* (Wanda Jakubowska,1948); East Germany (since 1958), such as *The Mayor of Zalamea* (Martin Hellberg,1956) and *Berlin-Schönhauser Corner* (Gerhard Klein,1957) with historical and contemporary content respectively, as well as Hungarian film *Merry-Go-Round* (Zoltán Fábri, 1956). Notably, however, films from the Balkans were a rarity.

In the 1960s – especially after the rise to power of the centrist government of Georgios Papandreou in late 1963 and the subsequent liberalization of the public sphere – a remarkable number and a wide variety of movies from all the socialist countries, including the Balkans (except Albania), entered Greece. Eastern European embassies and Associations of Friendship continued to host film shows as previously, in commercial venues there was a marked increase in the circulation of such films, while the rise of new waves in Poland (e.g. *Knife in the Water* [Roman Polanski, 1962]) and Czechoslovakia (e.g. *Loves of a Blonde* [Milos Forman, 1965]) attracted new and young audiences. Apart from Anzervos, the major distributor of Eastern Bloc movies and administrator of the theatre *Esperos*, a regular venue for audiences to see films from communist Europe, new distribution companies entered the field, not only the left-leaning Kourouniotis Brothers-M. Petrolekas, but also powerful players such as Damaskinos Michailidis, the biggest distributor in Greece. Some indicative examples of distinguished and much appreciated Soviet films, which were the vast majority of Eastern European movies screened at the time, include: *Quiet Flows the Don* (Sergey Gerasimov, 1957), *Seryozha* (Georgiy Daneliya, Igor Talankin, 1960), *The Lady with the Dog* (Iosif Kheifits, 1960), *Clear Skies* (Grigoriy Chukhray, 1961), *Ivan's Childhood* (Andrei Tarkovsky, 1962), *Nine Days in One Year* (Mikhail Romm, 1962), *The Third Half* (Yevgeni Karelov, 1963), etc.

A further development during that period was the addition of two new important outlets for Eastern European films: the newly-established an-

nual Week of Greek Cinema (1960) and special foreign 'film weeks'. The state-sponsored 'Week of Greek Cinema' in Thessaloniki (renamed as Festival of Greek Cinema in 1966), which from 1961 ran a parallel non-competitive international section – turned into a competitive event in 1966 – was particularly open to entries from the socialist countries reflecting perhaps broader governmental politics and diplomatic agreements on tightening relations through trade and art, as well as the dynamism of Eastern European film industries at the time. Thus,| from 1961 to 1966 – the last edition of the festival before the Junta – there were screened 24 Eastern European feature films out of a total of 59 foreign movies (8 were from the Balkans) and 14 shorts out of 37 (5 from the Balkans)[6]. Among them we can notice some outstanding works such as Cannes awarded *When the Cat Comes* (Vojtěch Jasný, 1963), legendary *The Peach Thief* (Vulo Radev, 1964) and *Shadows of Forgotten Ancestors* (Sergei Parajanov, 1965), as well as the Czech absurdity *Daisies* (Vera Chytilová 1966).

The practice of special foreign 'film weeks' devoted to various national cinemas was introduced in 1956 by two weeks of Spanish and Italian film[7]. In the 1960s, however, this became a major trend involving a spate of weeks, panoramas and retrospectives devoted to Eastern Bloc national cinemas. A selective list from 1963 to the pre-dictatorship 1967, which is however indicative of the number and the frequency of the practice, includes: Week of Czechoslovakian Cinema (11-17 February 1963) in Athens and Thessaloniki hold by Anzervos and the Czech Film-export;[8] Week of Soviet films (2-8 March 1964) at *Astor* organized by Kourouniotis Brothers-M. Petrolekas;[9] Student Week of Soviet Cinema (25-30 March 1964);[10] Panorama of Hungarian Cinema (2-6 May 1965) hosted by *Kinimatografiki Leshi Athinon*/Cine Club of Athens;[11] Victory Week (3-9 May 1965) releasing six Soviet films that celebrated the 20th anniversary of the surrender of Nazi Germany set

6 Curated data from lists given by TIFF (2009).

7 They took place during 12-18 November 1956 and 20-23 November 1956 respectively.

8 The program included: *The Fabulous Baron Munchausen* (Karel Zeman, 1962), *A Song About the Gray Pigeon* (Stanislav Barabas, 1961), *The Death of Tarzan* (Jaroslav Balík, 1963), *Higher Principle* (Jirí Krejcík, 1960), *The Spoiled Revue* (Zdenek Podskalský, 1961), and *The Stress of Youth* (Karel Kachyna, 1962). *I Avghi* 10/2/1963.

9 *I Avghi* 29/2/1964, *Dimokratiki Allagi* 3/3/1964.

10 *Dimokratiki Allagi* 25/3/1964.

11 The program included: *Drama of the Lark* (László Ranódy, 1963), *Treasured Earth* (Frigyes Bán, 1948), *Sodrásban* (István Gaál, 1964), *Darkness in Daytime* (Zoltán Fábri, 1963), and *New Gilgames* (Mihály Szemes, 1964). *I Avghi* 8/5/1965.

up by Kourouniotis etc. and Sov-export;[12] Festival of Romanian Cinema in Athens (20-26 December 1965) and Thessaloniki (28 March-3 April 1966)[13] hold by Anzervos; Retrospective on Classic Soviet Cinema 1924-1945 (January 1966)[14] and Week of Contemporary Hungarian Cinema (15-22 March 1966)[15] organized by *Elliniki Kinimatografiki Leshi* /Greek Film Society; Panorama of New Czech Cinema (January 1966) [16], Week of Polish Cinema (17-21 April 1966)[17], Panorama of Polish Cinema (2-6 October 1966)[18], Panorama of Yugoslavian Cinema (6-11 November 1966) [19] and Panorama of New Czech Cinema (February1967)[20] set up by Cine Club of Athens [Greek Film Archive]; and a Week of Soviet Films (23-29 January 1967) in Athens (*Cine –Opera*) and Thessaloniki (*Ilyssia*) organized by Damaskinos-Michailidis and Sov-export, and with Grigori Chukhrai and writer Victor Sytin visiting Greece to give talks on the films.[21]

12 *I Avghi* 30/4/1965, 2/5/1965.

13 The program included: *The Forest of the Hanged* (Liviu Ciulei, 1965), *Four Steps Away from Infinity* (Francisc Munteanu, 1965), *The Hawk* (Mircea Dragan, 1965), *Dincolo de bariera* (Francisc Munteanu, 1965), *Darclée* (Mihai Iacob, 1960), and *Seaside Vacation* (Andrei Calarasu, 1963). *To Vima* 16/12/1965, 23/12/1965, 24/12/1965 and *I Avghi* 19/3/1966.

14 *To Vima* 7/1/1966, 15/1/1966, 22 /1/1966 and *I Avghi* 8/1/1966.

15 The program included: *The Corporal and Others* (Márton Keleti, 1965), *Iszony* (György Hintsch, 1965), *Where Was Your Majesty Between 3 and 5* (Károly Makk, 1964), *Twenty Hours* (Zoltán Fábri, 1965), *Szerelmes biciklisták* (Péter Bacsó, 1965), and among others the short *You* (István Szabó 1963). *Dimokratiki Allagi* 27/2/1966.

16 *I Avghi* 8/1/1966.

17 The program included: *Innocent Sorcerers* (Andrzej Wajda, 1960), *The Criminal and the Lady* (Janusz Nasfeter, 1963), *Knife in the Water* (Roman Polanski, 1962), *Siberian Lady Macbeth* (Andrzej Wajda, 1962), *Adam's Two Ribs* (Janusz Morgenstern, 1964), and *Pingwin* (Jerzy Stefan Stawinski, 1965). The event was co-organized also by Yugoslavian Embassy and Yugoslavia film. *To Vima* 19/4/1966, 20/4/1966.

18 The program included: *Passenger* (Andrzej Munk, Witold Lesiewicz, 1963), *Night Train* (Jerzy Kawalerowicz, 1959), *The Saragossa Manuscript* (Wojciech Has, 1965), *Bad Luck* (Andrzej Munk, 1960), *Ashes and Diamonds* (Andrzej Wajda, 1958). *Dimokratiki Allagi* 1/10/1966.

19 The program included 5 feature and 8 short films: *Three* (Aleksandar Petrovic 1965), *Dance in the Rain* (Bostjan Hladnik, 1961), *Mad Summer* (Obrad Gluscevic, 1964), *Don't Cry Peter* (France Stiglic, 1964) and *Liar* (Igor Pretnar, 1965). *To Vima* 4/11/1966, *Dimokratiki Allagi* 4/11/1966, and *I Avghi* 6/11/1966.

20 *To Vima* 24/2/1967.

21 The program included: *Faithfulness* (Pyotr Todorovskiy, 1965), *Khevsurian Ballad* (Shota Managadze, 1966), *Alexander Nevsky* (Sergei Eisenstein, 1938), *Beware of the*

Of particular interest is a string of consecutive Weeks that highlights the rise of the Balkan film in the Greek market of the time, indicating also the gradual shift of the movies' spectatorship from the specialist audiences of film societies to commercial release, while revealing the mutual character of film exchange. The First Panorama of Greek Cinema, an initiative of the Bulgarian and Greek national film archives, was held in Sofia during 22-29 January 1964. Eight films were screened tracing the history of Greek cinema from the interwar to the 1960s[22], while head of the Greek Film Archive, Aglaia Mitropoulou, and filmmaker Nikos Koundouros attended the event. A night event dedicated to Greek cinema was organized also in Plovdiv – the second-largest city of Bulgaria – while Bulgaria TV aired a program on *The Counterfeit Coin* (Yiorgos Tzavellas, 1955).[23] In response to the Greek Panorama in Sofia, at the end of the same year, a Week of Bulgarian Cinema (29 November - 5 December 1964) took place in Athens at *Asty,* organized again jointly by the two national film archives.[24] Finally, in 1965 another Week of Bulgarian Cinema (3-9 May 1965)[25] was set up by SAKE (*Syneterismos Ethousarhon Kinimatografiston Ellados*/ Union of Greek Film Exhibitors) simultaneously in Athens (*Rex*), Piraeus (*Olympion*) and Thessaloniki (*Ilyssia*). It was a launching event, before films reaching cinemas, that introduced to the wider Greek public with great success *The Peach Thief* (Vulo Radev,

Car (Eldar Ryazanov, 1966), *There Was an Old Couple* (Grigoriy Chukhray, 1965). The event was in response to a Week of Greek Cinema that took place in 1966 in Moscow, Leningrand, and Baku. *I Avghi* 27/9/1966, 22/1/1967.

22 The program included: *Dafnis and Chloe* (Orestis Liaskos, 1931), *Bitter Bread* (Grigoris Grigoriou, 1951), *Barefoot Battalion* (Greg Tallas, 1953), *Stella* (Michael Cacoyannis, 1955), *The Counterfeit Coin* (Yiorgos Tzavellas, 1955), *The Ogre of Athens* (Nikos Koundouros, 1956), *Lagoon of Desire* (Giorgos Zervos, 1957), and *Halley's Comet* (Lila Kourkoulakou, 1960).

23 *I Avghi* 28/2/1964.

24 The program included: *We Were Young* (Binka Zhelyazkova, 1961), *Sun and Shadow* (Rangel Vulchanov, 1962), *The Peach Thief* (Vulo Radev, 1964), *The Captain* (Dimitar Petrov, 1963). *To Vima* 27/11/1964, *Dimokratiki Allagi* 27/11/ 1964, 30/11/ 1964, and *I Avghi* 27/11/1964, 28/11/1964.

25 The program included: *The Peach Thief* (Vulo Radev, 1964), *The Inspector and the Night* (Rangel Vulchanov, 1963), *Margaritka* (Gencho Genchev, 1961), *The Intransigents* (Yanko Yankov, 1964), *The Law of the Sea* (Yakim Yakimov, 1958), *A Legend of Love* (Václav Krska, 1957), *The Little Girl* (Nikola Korabov, 1959). *I Avghi* 22/4/1965, *Dimokratiki Allagi* 22/4/1965, 3/5/1965, and *To Vima* 23/4/1965.

1964). As it has been reported by the Bulgarian press the premiere of the film in Athens was attended by 1,500 viewers.[26]

Film weeks of Eastern European cinemas were hits with Greek audiences enjoying also significant publicity and coverage by the press. As it has already become evident, they were organized mainly by film societies in collaboration with national film archives, institutions, and embassies, by independent groups (e.g. students) but also, and most importantly, by commercial companies, film distributors and cinema owners, such as Anzervos, the Union of Greek Film Exhibitors and Damaskinos-Michailidis, a fact that testifies to the popularity of the events and the marketability of the films. These special weeks typically involved press conferences, visits by delegations of officials, actors and filmmakers who delivered public speeches and introduced their films, representatives of the Greek government and diplomats, while they were often repeated in Thessaloniki and other cities in commercial cinemas or through networks of provincial film societies.

However, why Greek audiences embraced movies from Eastern Europe? In my view there were two main reasons: First, the undeniable quality that made many of these films festival hits and internationally acclaimed since in the late 1950s and the 1960s, Eastern European cinemas experienced remarkable vitality, aesthetic novelty and international exposure. Especially after the critical and commercial success in Greece of landmark anti-war films such as *The Forty-First*, *Kanal*, *The Cranes are Flying*, *Fate of a Man* and *The Ballad of a Soldier* – which coincided with the rise of pacifist movement as well – Eastern Bloc movies attracted greater attention and respect not only from the public but also from Greek intellectuals, and were often appreciated and reviewed not only by the press on the Left, but also by critics of different political standpoints. The satirist and chronicle writer Dimitris Psathas, for example, wrote in *Ta Nea* about Soviet documentary *The Great Patriotic War* (Roman Karmen, 1965):

> "It is a real masterpiece […] so real, so human – a heart-breaking cry against the war and the brutal aggression of Hitlerism – that at certain moments made me weep. With films like this […] cinema is elevated to such creative heights, that it becomes the highest of all arts […]." (The excerpt had been reproduced as an advertisement in *I Avghi* 2/2/1966)

26 General State Archives (GAK), General Secretariat of Press and Information, file "Festival of Bulgarian Film", Bulgarian Press (17 May 1965).

Notably *The Cranes are Flying* had the second highest Athens box-office sales in the 1958/59 season with 140,574 admissions, while *The Ballad of a Soldier* was fourth in the 1960/61 season with 124,179 admissions, dominant among all the foreign films shown during that year.[27]

The second reason is that there *was* an audience for them, a large and particularly dedicated audience: The defeated, persecuted and humiliated leftists who were in desperate need for alternative and positive images to be proud of and identify with. This is particularly relevant to Eastern Bloc films with antifascist, war, resistance, and revolutionary content. After 1957 such films reemerged massively in Greek cinemas, including new and old releases[28], beginning with *Maryte* (Vera Stroyeva, 1947), which, according to *I Avghi* (12/5/1957), was the first Soviet film about Resistance that was screened in Greece after a hiatus of ten years.[29] Importantly, as many of these movies treated the subject of WWII and Resistance, as well as that of the Russian Revolution, they provided cinematic substitutes for a repressed domestic history, filling a gap in Greek cinema, namely the absence of direct cinematic treatment of the communists and the leftist partisan movement during the Occupation, and offering images with which people on the Left could identify. Under the title "Enthusiasm in *Peroke*", film critic and later distinguished New Greek Cinema film director Tonia Marketaki commented on the 'Week of Resistance Film' (7-13 September 1964) organized by EFEE (=National Union of Students), as part of the celebrations of the European 'Resistance year', including *Kanal*, Yugoslavian partisan film *Kozara* (Veljko Bulajic,1963), Austria-Yugoslavian coproduction *The Last Bridge* (Helmut Käutner,1954), and East German *Naked among Wolves* (Frank Beyer, 1963):[30]

> "The 'Week of Resistance Film' is a great success. […]. Attendance […] exceeds expectation. People of all classes, students, ordinary people are

27 Kouanis P. (2001: 248). However, the commercial success and popularity of Eastern European films at the time of their release is hard to judge due to the lack of data from second-run cinemas, in which they were recurrently screened.

28 For example, older films, which were very successful in the post- Liberations years, such as *The Rainbow* (Mark Donskoy, 1944) and *Zoya* (Lev Arnshtam, 1944) were rereleased in the 1950s and 1960s respectively. *I Avghi* 11.2.1959 and *Dimokratiki Allagi* 3/1/1967.

29 For the success of the Soviet films in the early post-Liberation era, see Andritsos (2004: 22).

30 Also *Tutti a Casa* (Luigi Comencini, 1960) and *Un Giorno da Leoni* (Nanny Loy, 1961). *I Avghi* 6/9/1964.

> fused in one person. […]. There is the sense of a collective ritual. [...] Memory is so strong, and the desire for the recognition of the Resistance so powerful, that our people are delirious at the very sight of foreign fighters. What would happen if our own fighters appeared on the same screen, our own heroes, our own songs?" (*Dimokratiki Allagi*, 10/9/1964)[31]

The 'First Balkan Film Festival' in Varna: "Balkan cinema is a reality!"

The 'First Balkan Film Festival'[32], held in Varna from 8 to 14 August 1965, replaced that year the annual 'Bulgarian Film Festival' founded in 1961[33]. It can be considered as a landmark event that confirms the systematic efforts of the time for inter-Balkan cinematic cooperation and cultural exchange, anticipating also future developments in the orientation of film festivals in the region (e.g. the Balkan Survey section in ITFF, Balkans Beyond Borders Short Film Festival, etc.). It was a week-long non-competitive exhibition of a selection of each country's best recent films, organized under the auspices of UNESCO and under the slogan "Film art – A factor for peace and friendship in the Balkans", with the participation of all – at the time – Balkan countries: Albania, Bulgaria, Greece, Romania, Turkey, and Yugoslavia. The Festival did not emerge out of the blue as during the 1960s initiatives for creating similar professional and cultural networks – such as the Balkan Medical Union, the Union of Balkan Architects, the Balkan Mathematical Union, the first international congress of Balkan studies (Sofia, 1966), meetings of Balkan writers (since 1964), festivals of Balkan folk songs and dances (since 1965)[34], Balkan Committee of Ethnographic Film (1967)[35], etc – in a new found spirit of peaceful coexistence, was a usual practice. Moreover, ideas for a Balkan Film Festival were previously voiced during the 4th Week of Greek Cinema (1963) – there were suggestions of turning the Week in Thessaloniki into a

31 On 'film weeks' and the popularity of Eastern European films in the 1960s, see also Chalkou (2008: 69-73 and 171-176).

32 The description of the festival is based almost exclusively on information given by *I Avghi* (28/1/1965, 10/8/1965, 11/8/1965, 12/8/1965, 13/8/1965, 14/8/1965, 17/8/1965), and *Dimokratiki Allagi* (22/8/1964, 28/1/1965, 28/5/1965, 9/8/1965, 14/8/1965, 16/8/1965, 17/8/1965).

33 The predecessor of the Golden Rose Bulgarian Feature Film Festival.

34 https://www.cs.auckland.ac.nz/~cristian/millennium/Black%20Sea.pdf pp. 324-326.

35 *To Vima* 15/4/1967.

Balkan event – while the '4th Bulgarian Film Festival' (1964) in Varna organized an unofficial discussion on the topic. Officially however, the Festival was established by two conferences of Unesco National Commissions and of representatives of government film departments of the Balkan countries in May 1964 and January 1965 in Bucharest and Sofia respectively.

According to the statutes of the festival, its main mission was to tighten relations, foster mutual understanding and increase cooperation among the Balkan nations through cinema, while providing the participants opportunities to share cultural experiences and exchange films, enabling thus improvement in the artistic standards of Balkan cinema. Participants were to be allowed to exhibit material of a total duration of 350 minutes, including (maximum) two feature films as well as documentaries, shorts and animations. They could also organise exhibitions and other events related to cinema and screen more films in additional venues outside the official program. Moreover, the host country was expected to create a fertile environment that would allow filmmakers and critics to exchange their views on the participating films and on others issues about cinema. Finally, in the prospect of expanding national markets, participants were recommended to purchase all the films presented in Festival's official program.

During the Festival, official night screenings, with translated film dialogues in four Balkan languages, took place at an open-air cinema of 1,500 seats, named *Lenin*. Day screenings and the press conferences of the national delegations were hosted by the Cultural Center of Transportation Workers, while a daily pamphlet was published in French for the journalists providing detailed information on the Festival and the films. It was also scheduled the participants to attend two meetings entitled "Cinema connects us" and "New developments in cinema". Government officials, filmmakers and other representatives from non-Balkan countries such as USSR, East and West Germany, UK, Poland and Hungary, including journalists even from Japan, did also join the event.

In the opening ceremony, Prime Minister of Bulgaria Todor Zhivkov greeted the Festival emphasizing friendship and peace among the people of the Balkans and the significance of film art as a potential expression of such principles. Iconic animation *The Daisy* (1965) by Todor Dinov was made especially for the occasion to celebrate "friendship and beauty that defeats the spirit of destruction",[36] with an excerpt from it being used as the trailer of the

36 *Dimokratiki Allagi* 16/8/1965.

Festival at the opening of the official screenings. Each day was devoted to a different national cinema, with the first and the final days being dedicated to the host country. The entries ranged from some best-known today and distinguished films, such as Romanian *Forest of the Hanged* (Liviu Ciulei, 1965) and Yugoslavian *A Man Is Not a Bird* (1965) by Dušan Makavejev, to mediocre works, such as those from Turkey, as reported by the press. Notably Albania took part with four documentaries, two of which were scripted by novelist Ismail Kadare, while among Romanian entries can be found the youth film *Exams* (1965) by Romanian director of Greek origin Gheorghe Vitanidis[37].

Greece participated with Michael Cacoyannis's much older *Electra* (1962) – the choice of an old film was criticized by the Greek press as indifference for and lack of awareness of the importance of the Festival – and the short documentary *Kalymnos* (1964) by Vassilis Maros, which were received enthusiastically by a crowded and dedicated audience. On the other hand, the Greek delegation included writer and Secretary of Greek National Commission for Unesco, Stelios Xefloudas, representative of the Greek embassy in Sofia, Efstathios Vergis, and filmmaker Lila Kourkoulakou. Present were also Giorgos Varelas, director of the Union of Greek Film Exhibitors and of the professional periodical *Ta Theamata* – an indication of Festival's market potential – as well as Antonis Moschvakis and Tonia Marketaki, the only Greek journalists who traveled to Varna to cover the event for left-wing newspapers *I Avghi* and *Dimokratiki Allagi* respectively. Film director Nikos Koundouros, actress Irene Papas, and intellectual Marios Ploritis, although it was expected to attend the event, did never appear for unknown reasons.

Despite good faith efforts, however, the Festival was marked by an incident of political controversy when Albania withdrew its participation in protest of the screening in cinemas of Varna, outside of the official program, of Takis Kanellopoulos's antiwar drama *Ouranos*/*The Sky* (1962) accusing the organisational committee for violating the protocol and the spirit of the Festival by accepting the film. The Albanian delegation argued that *The Sky* supported the chauvinistic claims of the Greek government in relation to Northern Epirus on the grounds of newsreel footage –incorporated into the film– of

37 Entries included also *The Bull* (Nikola Korabov, 1965), *Troubled Home* (Yakim Yakimov, 1965) and 9 shorts from Bulgaria; *Rascoala* (Mircea Muresan, 1965), documentary *To the Sky* (Titus Mesaros, 1965) and 2 animations from Romania; *Radopolje* (Stole Jankovic, 1963) and 4 shorts (2 animations) from Yugoslavia; *Karanlikta uyananlar* (Ertem Göreç, 1964) and 3 shorts from Turkey.

Greek troops entering Korçë in 1940, during the Greco-Italian war, and of voice-over commentary about Northern Epirus becoming Greek again. This gesture of protest was condemned by the host country as baseless allegations, hostility against the government of Bulgaria (as Albanians talked of deliberate provocations by Bulgarian authorities) and as anti-Balkanism accusing the Albanians for premeditated decisions in an attempt to create impressions. From the Greek side, Stelios Xefloudas stated that the issue was non-existent because the film was by no means offensive. Nevertheless, Albanian films were still screened at the Festival.

At the end of the event an improvised jury of international critics announced honorary awards. The award for the film best representing the festival's values was given to *Forest of the Hanged*, while that of greater artistic value to *Electra*. Liviu Ciulei was voted as best director, Victor Rebengiuc (*Forest of the Hanged*) as best actor, and Irene Papas (*Electra*)[38] or Nadezhda Randzheva[39] (*The Bull* [Nikola Korabov, 1965]) as best actress, while the prize for the best animation went to *The Daisy*. Although the Festival at the time created great expectations for opening up new horizons for Balkan film and inter-Balkan exchange, making Tonia Marketaki to entitle her coverage with the enthusiastic exclamation "Balkan cinema is a reality!",[40] it did not manage to establish itself and develop into a regular event. Initially it was planned to be held annually in each country in turn – Turkey (1966), Romania (1967), Greece (1968), Yugoslavia (1969) and Albania (1970) according to the draw – nevertheless its second edition was hosted by Mamaia in Romania five years later in 1970.

Transnational co-productions and other professional collaborations

An overlooked aspect of the cinematic interaction between Greece and Eastern Bloc nations is a notable number of co-productions and professional collaborations that were arranged at the time, although most of them were never realized. Most of these initiatives resulted from the exchange of visits on the occasion of film screenings, weeks and festivals, and, from the Greek side – apart from their symbolic political value – were motivated primarily by artistic, economic and commercial concerns. It is important to note that

38 As reported by Moschovakis. *I Avghi* 17/8/1965.
39 As reported by Marketaki. *Dimokratiki Allagi* 17/8/1965.
40 *Dimokratiki Allagi* 17/8/1965.

Eastern European countries, especially USSR and Yugoslavia, exhibited at the time significant extroversion developing policies for coproducing films with Western Bloc countries such as France, Italy and US.[41] Greek film industry, on the other hand, was seeking to share costs, facilities and technical skills and to expand into new international markets (Chalkou, 2008: 102-126).

In 1955 took place the Greek-Yugoslav co-production *Gia dyo roges stafyli/For Two Little Grapes*[42] based on the play *Prin Ximerosei/Before Dawn* by actor and screenwriter Dionysis Milas[43], best known for his script for *Psila ta heria Hitler/Hands Up, Hitler!* (Roviros Manthoulis, 1962). It was a Studio Kosmos (Nikos Skulikidis & Co) and Ufus partnership directed by the prominent Yugoslavian filmmaker Mladomir Puriša Djordjevic and shot on location in Greece – and in Greek – with a transnational crew and cast, including Manos Hadjidakis (music), Michalis Nikolinakos (scenography), and Dionysis Papagiannopoulos (actor). The film, which was released only in Yugoslavia and not in Greece, narrates with lyricism and an emphasis on nature a Greek rural drama of love and class struggle, while notably features Kimon Spathopoulos impersonating Chaplin in his famous mimicry. According to Miloradović *For Two Little Grapes* was the last of six co-productions with Western bloc nations made by Yugoslavia during the 1950s (2007: 192). Although the background story of this work remains unclear it is possible that it was enabled by recent developments in diplomacy, as the two countries were signatories of the Balkan Pact of Friendship and Collaboration (1953/4) which from the early 1955 established cultural affiliations, including cooperation on the field of cinema (Hatzivassiliou, 2006: 42, 108). Moreover, in 1958, same producer Skulikidis appears to be engaged in the Greek-Czech co-production *O dromos me ta petrospita/The Street with the Stone-built Houses.* The script was written by communist writer Kostas Kotzias, who was to collaborate with Czech screenwriter and novelist Jiří Mucha, while some 'Markovich' was appointed as film director". The film, which was never realized, was about the life and the problems of post-war Greek youth and of lignite-miner workers at the outskirts of Athens[44], a story that reminds of Kotzias's well-known 1960 novel *Gallaria No7/Gallery No7*.

41 See, for example, Marsha S. (2012: 73-94), Miloradović, G. (2007: 191-194), and Bartram F. (2017).

42 For a detailed analysis of the film, see Mouratidis P. (2011).

43 *I Avghi*, 17/9/1954.

44 *I Avghi* 3/7/1958.

Between 1957 and 1959 *Iliad* appears in the Greek press as the first prospective Greek-Soviet co-production and as an ambitious, colour and cinemascope adaptation of the Greek epic. It was a collaboration between Mosfilm and Anzervos, one of the most important Greek production companies at the time and, as seen, a major distributor of Soviet movies. The first public hint about coproducing a film was made during the visit of a Soviet delegation for the premiere of the film adaptation of Shakespeare's eponymous play *Twelfth Night* (Yan Frid, 1955) in April 1956 at *Esperos*[45], comprised of actors and top officials such as Vasili Zhuravlev,[46] head of the Cinema Department at the Soviet Ministry of Culture. The initiative, however, was officially announced one year later by Zhuravlev and the prestigious Soviet actor and theatre director Nikolai Okhlopkov in the context of a week of Greek-Soviet friendship that took place in Athens in April 1957.[47] The film was to be co-directed by filmmaker Giorgos Zervos, best known for *I limni ton pothon*/*Lagoon of Desire* (1957) and Okhlopkov. The script was written by Okhlopkov himself,[48] who foregrounded antiwar views, and it was to be translated in Greek by a team of writers including Iakovos Kampanelis. The crew and the cast were also transnational with a huge number of extras. Aram Khachaturian was named as the composer of the project who was to cooperate with a Greek musician to preserve a Greek feeling in the soundtrack, while for the main roles were indicated, among others, Tatiana Samoilova and Oleg Strizhenov, the lead actress in *The Cranes Are Flying* and the lead actor in *The Forty-first* respectively. The film was to be shot on location in Greece and Crimea, and in the studios of Mosiflm in Greek to be dubbed in Russian. *Iliad* was promoted as the first film of the kind to be shot on location in Greece featuring authentic archeological and Mediterranean seaside settings similar to those described by Homer. At the same time, it was promoted as the first to respect Greek mythology and history unlike recent Hollywood films (like *Helen of Troy* [Robert Wise, 1956]) that sparked fierce public debate about abusing Greek culture.[49] For this purpose as advisor was hired the prestigious academic and archeologist Spyros Marinatos. Although much publicity was

45 *I Avghi* 13/4/1956, 14/4/1956, 18/4/1956, 19/4/1956.

46 He is best known for his 1936 pioneering science fiction film *Cosmic Voyage*.

47 *I Avghi* 30/3/1957, 31/3/1957, 7/4/1957.

48 An excerpt of Okhlopkov's script has been published in the Soviet journal *Filmscript* in 1983, available at https://chapaev.media/articles/5586.

49 *I Avghi* 1/2/1956, 14/2/1956, 23/2/1956.

given to the project by the Soviet press,[50] and although in early 1959 Zervos visited Moscow to sign the contract, and production was scheduled to begin shortly, the film was never made for unknown reasons. Notably *Iliad* was accused by the right-wing press for using Homer as a vehicle for communist intrusion into the country[51].

However *Iliad* was not the only failed attempt of Giorgos Zervos to develop a collaboration with Eastern partners. In 1962 he visited Bucharest to discuss with Romanian producers a Greek-Romanian co-production with the participation of well-known Greek and Romanian actors. It was a screen adaptation of the 1962 play by Spyros Melas *Rigas Velestinlis*, which apart from being the opening play in Greek National Theatre in the forthcoming season it was scheduled to be staged in Bucharest during that same winter.[52]

Another ambitious but aborted project was the screen adaptation of Stratis Myrivilis's antiwar novel *Zoi en Tafo*/*Life in the Tomb*, a planned co-production between actor and film director Alekos Alexandrakis and the studios of DEFA. In May 1964 Alexandrakis and actress Aliki Georgouli had visited East Germany to attend the premiere of their neorealist film *Synoikia to Oneiro*/*A Neighborhood Named 'The Dream'* (1961) in several cities around the country, and they were offered a partnership to make a film. Alexandrakis was enthusiastic about the prospective movie which was to be co-directed with theatre director Leonidas Trivizas. As reported, it was to be shot in black-and-white cinemascope in the studios of DEFA and on location in East Germany – with the exception of a few original settings described by the novel – with a Greek cast and in Greek to be later dubbed.[53] DEFA was willing to cover production costs and provide a crew, extras and technical facilities, while Alexandrakis had to secure Myrivilis's consent, and the Greek government to remove bureaucratic obstacles, as at the time there were no diplomatic relations between the two countries.

In May 1964 in Athens, in a press conference given by Vladislav Videnov, director of the Cinema Department of Bulgarian Ministry of Culture, and Emil Petrov, editor in chief of the journal *Kinoizkustvo/Film Art* and President of the Union of Bulgarian Producers, it was announced an ambitious

50 See Zhuravlov's article in *Sovietskaya Kultura* translated in Greek. *I Avghi* 26/5/1957.

51 *I Avghi*, 5/4/1957, 11/4/1957, 19/1/1958, 31/7/1958, 8/11/1958, 23/11/1958, 12/11/1958, 18/12/1958, 8/1/1959.

52 *I Avghi* 7/7 /1962.

53 *I Avghi* 2/6/1964, 7/6/1964, *Dimokratiki Allagi* 2/6/1964.

plan for Greek-Bulgarian co-productions[54]. Videnov and Petrov[55] were part of a delegation visiting Greece on the occasion of the premiere of *Stars* (Konrad Wolf, 1959), an East Germany/Bulgarian co-production about the love of a Nazi officer for a Greek-Jewish girl, which was advertised as the first Bulgarian film released in Greece[56]. They explained that they came into contact with producers Anzervos, Finos, Skouras and Foinix Films with the intention of exchanging scripts – they mentioned that a Greek script had already been applied – willing also to provide Greek producers with technical support and the studios in Bulgaria. Moreover, in July 1964 a Greek-Bulgarian educational treaty was established facilitating film exchange and collaboration[57]. Perhaps the first Greek-Bulgarian coproduction, documentary *Randevou stin Athina/Rendezvous at Athens* (1966) directed by Lila Kourkoulakou – one of the two female directors of Old Greek Cinema – was enabled by the above mentioned ongoing processes, including the Balkan Film Festival in Varna, which Kourkoulakou had attended[58]. It was a Bulgar Film and Mesogeios Film collaboration, scripted by Kourkoulakou and writer Stefan Tsanev, depicting the First Balkan Games held in Athens in 1965. Additional on-location shooting took place in all capitals of the region, including Tirana, as the closing sequence of the film portrays a day in an imaginary Balkan capital that fuses elements of all Balkan cultures after Rigas Feraios Charta ('Lila Kourkoulakou', 1979). *Rendezvous at Athens* has never been released in Greece apart from a screening for a small circle of filmmakers in Athens, before its participation in the 1966 International Leipzig Festival for Documentary and Animated Film.[59]

During 1966-67, almost ten years after the failed attempt at *Iliad*, another project, *Potamos ke Thalassa /The River and the Sea*, was promoted in the

54 *I Avghi* 27/5/1964, *To Vima* 27/5/1964, *Dimokratiki Allagi* 27/5/1964.

55 They had been invited in Greece by Aglaia Mitropoulou during the Panorama of Greek Cinema (1964) in Sofia.

56 However the first one was Soviet/Bulgarian coproduction *Heroes of Shipka* (Sergey Vasilev, 1955) released in Greece in May 1957.

57 See Stergianopoulos D. (1964).

58 Importantly Kourkoulakou published about Bulgarian cinema in the Greek press describing her experiences from her visits in Bulgaria (*Ta Theamata* 29/12/1964). Another proposal for a Greek-Bulgarian co-production was made by Alekos Sakellarios, during the Week of Bulgarian Cinema in 1965. It was an adaptation of Aristophanes's *Lysistrata*. See, General State Archives (GAK), General Secretariat of Press and Information, file "Festival of Bulgarian Film", Bulgarian Press (17 May 1965).

59 *To Vima* 8/11/1966.

Greek press as the first prospective Greek-Soviet coproduction. The contract was signed in early 1967 between Mosfilm, Kourouniotis Brothers, and Theodoros Kritas, a key person in enabling cultural exchanges between Greece and the former socialist countries, by inviting ballets, musicians, theatre groups, etc[60]. Playwright Giorgos Sevasticoglou wrote the script and the film was to be directed by Manos Zacharias, both political refugees in the Soviet Union, where they settled after the end of the Civil War. Sevasticoglou and Zacharias had already collaborated in two Greek themed, Russian-language Mosfilm productions, *I Sfougarades/Sponge Divers* (1960) and *To Stavrodromi or To Telos ke I Archi/The End and the Beginning* (1963), which were released in Greece in 1964, when Sevastikoglou and Zacharias got permission by the new centrist government to visit Greece and attend the premiere of Sevastikoglou's play *Angela,* staged by Karolos Koun and *Theatro Technis / Art Theatre*.[61] The transnational storyline – revolving around a Greek woman and a Soviet soldier acquainted during the German Occupation, only to meet again after 20 years in Moscow – was opening in contemporary Soviet Union and employed flashbacks recalling wartime memories of Greece. The crew and the cast were to be transnational – among the suggested names were Elli Fotiou, Irene Pappa, Mairi Chronopoulou and Mikhail Alexandrovich Ulyanov – while the shooting was to take place in the studios of Mosfilm and on location in Greece and Moscow. Moreover the project was assigned to the Third Artistic-Production Unit of Mosfilm then supervised by Mikhail Romm, and the two partners were to share production costs (900.000 Soviet rubles) and profit. The script was approved by Mosfilm and everything was ready for filming when the Junta came to power in April 1967 and the project to an abrupt end[62].

Finally, the widescreen, black-and-white, English-language war drama *Epitafios gia ehthrous kai filous/Epitaph for Enemies and Friends* was a collaboration between the partnership Skouras films-Klearhos Konitsiotis and two Czech filmmakers. The Greek producers sought to address international markets with a high-status film. For this purpose, they invested in an international cast comprised of Greek and German actors;[63] in a transnational

60 Kritas had announced his plans for Greek-Soviet co-productions as early as February 1964 after a return trip from the Soviet Union. *Dimokratiki Allagi* 11/2/1964.

61 *I Avghi* 29/10/1964.

62 *I Avghi* 8/11/1966, 24/2/1967, 19/4/1967, *Dimokratiki Allagi* 8/11/1966, 24/2/1967, 14/3/1967 19/4/1967, *Ta Theamata* 31/3/1967.

63 Among them Nikos Kourkoulos, Giannis Voglis, Emily Reuer, and Günther Stoll.

storyline set in the Allied-occupied Berlin involving German, American and Soviet characters; in new talent such as highly acclaimed young novelist Vasilis Vasilikos who wrote the script; and in prestigious foreign artists such as Czech director Jiri Sequens and cinematographer Rudolf Milic, known for their film *The Assassination* (1965) released in Greece in 1965.[64] The movie was shot exclusively in Greece, attempting to recreate ruined Berlin by using dilapidated buildings at the outskirts of Athens[65]. Although the resulting film was not successful either with Greek or international audiences, soon later Jirí Sequens was hired by Greek producer James Paris to direct *Erotes sti Lesvo*/*Love Affairs in Lesvos* (1967).

Regulating and censoring the cinematic political 'Other'

As early as 1925 Greek state put into practice a centrally controlled censorial mechanism for films that was further systematized during the Metaxas Dictatorship and the German Occupation, to being preserved almost intact until 1986 when preventive film censorship was officially banned by a new film law introduced by Melina Mercouri.[66] In the context of the post-civil war Greek democracy, often termed as "cachectic", cinematic exchange with Eastern Europe was treated by the Greek state ambivalently, on the one hand by encouraging it through trade and educational agreements of collaboration, and on the other by placing it under close surveillance and occasionally posing on it significant limitations. Thus, we can identify a number of typical preventive and repressive censorial practices exercised against cinematic interaction with Eastern Bloc nations varying from prohibition to restriction.

Prohibition of film weeks and retrospectives was a rare phenomenon as the only such incident was the cancellation of a Week of East German Films in April 1959. The week was organized by the distribution company Athens–Film (*Athinai – Film*) in collaboration with DEFA film studios and was scheduled to take place at *Esperos* during 6-12 April. It was a selection of six short and six feature films, such as antifascist *Lissy* (Konrad Wolf, 1957) and war drama *Duped Till Doomsday* (Kurt Jung-Alsen, 1957)[67]. An East

64 Apart from the cinemas it was also shown at the 6th Week of Greek Cinema in Thessaloniki.

65 *Dimokratiki Allagi* 25/10/1965, 3/12/1965; *I Avghi* 3/12/1965, 17/2/1966; *To Vima* 3/12/1965.

66 See Chalkou, M. (2018).

67 Also: *Don't Forget My Little Traudel* (Kurt Maetzig, 1957), *Heart of Stone* (Paul Ver-

German delegation of artists, including the lead actress of *Lissy,* Sonja Sutter, was expected to arrive in Athens in order to attend the event. Nevertheless, although the week had gotten the screening permission from the Film Censorship Board and was already advertised in the press, Ministry of Presidency, under Konstantinos Tsatsos, revoked the license while the arrival of the delegation was cancelled. According to *I Avghi*, the cancellation was caused by the interference of the embassy of West Germany in Athens which during the same period organized an exhibition of German books and saw the film week as an antagonistic event. EDA deputy Stamatis Mercouris addressed a parliamentary question to the government highlighting the inconsistency between government's declared intentions for economic relations with Eastern Europe and actions that undermined such possibilities[68].

Travel prevention was another measure taken by the Greek governments of the time in order to obstruct the mobility across national borders of either individuals or delegations that went both ways between Greece and the European communist countries. For example, in July 1958 Greece participated in the 11th International Film Festival at Karlovy Vary with a Finos Film production, *To Amaxaki* / *Horse and Carriage* (1957). However, the Greek delegation consisted of Antigoni Valakou and Dinos Demopoulos, the lead actress and the director of the film respectively, were refused passports by the Greek authorities, while only producer Filopoimin Finos was allowed to travel to Czechoslovakia to represent Greece. Film producer Vassilis Lampiris, who intended to attend the Festival for business purposes and film critic Kostas Stamatiou, who was to cover the event for the left-wing newspaper *I Avghi*, were also refused permits to cross the borders.[69]

Moreover, there was a variety of direct and indirect methods individual movies, especially those from the Soviet Union, to be censored for political reasons, such as prohibition, cutting scenes, and manipulating the content of the dialogue in the subtitles. Although film censorship was regularly exercised during the entire period under examination, I will offer a few indicative examples mainly from the last two pre-dictatorship years, a period marked by social tension and political instability after Papandreou's resignation, when various forms of government censorship against Soviet films became a routine practice.

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hoeven, 1950), *Die Premiere fällt aus* (Kurt Jung-Alsen, 1959) and *Mazurka der Liebe* (Hans Müller, 1957).

68 *I* Avghi, 3/4/1959, 5/4/1959, 7/4/1959, 8/4/1959, 15/4/1959.

69 *I* Avghi, 11/7/1958, 12/7/1958, 16/7/1958, 17/7/1958, 24/7/1958.

Thus, in November 1965 the much older biopic *Lenin in October* (Mikhail Romm, 1936) was banned after it was seen jointly by the Censorship Board and a representative of the Ministry of Internal Affairs, although, according to the film's distributors, it had been screened in Greece in 1947 – during the Civil War – without restrictions. In February 1966, the film was reexamined by the Second Degree Board of Censorship, and vice-minister of the Presidency of the Government, Takis Georgiou, announced its conclusive prohibition on the grounds of "disturbing order and security" [70]. Moreover, two compilation films dealing with historical subject matter, and more precisely with Second World War, intersecting history with politics, became also targets of state censorship. In November 1966, a cinematic contemplation on Fascism, documentary *Ordinary Fascism* (1965) again by Mikhail Romm, passed censorship after suffering extensive cuts as the Censorship Board removed voice-over commentary and images about the survival of Fascism and the rise of Neo-Nazism in the Western world, especially in Germany, UK and the US. Images and comments about United States' imperialist politics in Asia and Latin America were also cut.[71] Similarly Roman Karmen's *The Great Patriotic War* (1965), a documentary about WWII, which, by drawing on newsreel archival material, constructs a heroic narrative of the European resistance against the Nazis with a marked emphasis on the battles of the red army troops, was banned in November 1965. According to the leftist newspaper *Dimokratiki Allagi* one of the major reasons for this prohibition was that the film depicts Greek partisans and images from the Occupation in Greece filmed by painter Dimitris Megalidis and other filmmakers of left-wing ELAS (The Greek People's Liberation Army). Notably, the Censorship Board, before making a decision, asked the contribution of Ministry of External Affairs to check the historical accuracy and political neutrality of the film. It was considered that the historical truth was systematically abused as the film emphasized Eastern Front battles with the intention, as it was argued, to devalue the contribution of the Allies. Finally, however, the Second Degree Board of Censorship allowed the film to circulate although its director, Roman Karmen, did not receive permission from the Greek authorities to visit Greece and introduce his film at its premiere night[72]. Importantly, *The Great Patriotic War* was passed by the censors only after changes in the sub-titles. For exam-

70 *Dimokratiki Allagi* 15/11/1965, 26/11/1965, 5/2/1966, 7/2/1966, 9/2/1966, *I Avghi,* 25/11/1966, 5/2/1966, 9/2/1966.

71 *I Avghi,* 22/11/1966, *Eleftheria* 23/11/1966.

72 *Dimokratiki Allagi* 5/11/1965, 29/11/1965.

ple, the word "fascism" was replaced by "Hitlerism", "fascists" by "enemies" and "communists" by "allies"[73].

It is important to note that changing the meaning or omitting parts of the subtitles – or changing the dubbed dialogue[74] – was a usual practice of censoring foreign movies not only in Greece but also worldwide. A noteworthy case is also *The Optimistic Tragedy* (Samson Samsonov, 1963), a fiction film that deals with the Russian Revolution of 1917. *Dimokratiki Allagi* argued that during the screening of the film viewers protested and left in the middle of the show because of distorted or completely deleted dialogues in the subtitles. Scrutinizing archive documents from the General Secretariat of Press and Information, where Censorship Boards exercised preventive censorship on films produced or screened in Greece, in the file of *The Optimistic Tragedy*, we can identify a snippet of *Dimokratiki Allagi* with a handwritten note that refutes such accusations. However, a closer reading of the original text of the subtitles, submitted to be examined, reveals eliminations of ideologically loaded lines, such as those referring to the communist party, proletarian struggles and the communist revolution[75].

In February 1966, distributor Kourouniotis, protesting about the prohibition of *Lenin in October* and the censorial interventions against *The Great Patriotic War*, gave a press conference foregrounding political and economic issues. He argued that the Soviet films were persecuted by the state, threatening the financial viability of the distributors. He accused vice-minister of the Presidency of the Government, Takis Georgiou, for asking statistics of the Soviet imports in comparison to those of the previous years in order to examine whether their numbers had been increased. He further accused him for requesting access to the bank account of his distribution company in order to check money transfers suspecting perhaps financial support to the outlaw Greek Communist Party. Although Georgiou denied the accusations, Kourouniotis announced that the company would appeal to the Council of State.

The Greek state at the time put under surveillance not only the films and the film events[76] related to Eastern Bloc nations but also distinguished in-

73 *Dimokratiki Allagi* 5/11/1965, 15/1/1966, 8/2/1966, *I Avghi* 5/11/1965, 8/2/1966.

74 Vandaele J. (2007).

75 *I Avghi* 25/2/1964, *Dimokratiki Allagi* 25/2/1964. GAK, file Skouras Films 13437-13674 No 13450.

76 Importantly the Ministry of Foreign Affairs was kept informed by the Ministry of Presidency about the Week of Bulgarian cinema in Athens (1964). General State Archives (GAK), General Secretariat of Press and Information, file "Festival of Bulgari-

dividuals of Greek cinema, such as head of the Greek Film Archive Aglaia Mitropoulou and filmmaker Nikos Koundouros, who organized or attended such events. Among the archival material from the General Secretariat of Press and Information at the General State Archives in Athens (GAK), and in relation to the exchange of Greek-Bulgarian film weeks between 1964 and 1965 – namely the Panorama of Greek Cinema in Sofia and the subsequent two Weeks of Bulgarian Cinema in Athens – can be found a number of documents by the Greek embassy in Sofia addressing the Greek Ministry of Foreign Affairs. They are detailed reports of the three events with special focus on the public statements of the Bulgarian officials and filmmakers published in the Bulgarian press: the warm reception of the Bulgarian delegation by the Greek public, film industry representatives and intellectuals; the response to the Bulgarian films by the Greek audience; the coverage of the events by the Greek press; the prospect for bilateral co-productions; the Greek-Bulgarian relations of friendship. Similarly, the Greek Embassy details the coverage of the Greek Panorama in Sofia by the Bulgarian press as well as the interviews given by Koundouros and Mitropoulou in Sofia. Notably, after complaining about Koundouros and Mitropoulou's reluctance to visit the Greek embassy, doing so only the fourth day after their arrival in Sofia and after requested by the embassy officers, the report asks whether Mitropoulou and Koundouros were official representatives of Greece. Perhaps expressing fears about Koundouros and Mitropoulou making cultural diplomacy independently – with their emphasis on friendship and closer relations in their public statements – the embassy's report suggests to the Greek government that such people should never represent Greece abroad again.[77].

As I have demonstrated, during the 1950s and 1960s, there was a strong and multilayered interaction between Greece and the former socialist countries on the field of cinema. Although such exchange seems paradoxical due to the particularities of the Greek political life and the Cold War, it was in line with the policy of peaceful coexistence and the cultural diplomacy introduced in the post-Stalin era by Khrushchev, when Eastern European film industries flourished, enjoying international visibility and recognition. Other developments of the time such as the rise of the anti-war sentiment and the mass movement in Greece that challenged the right-wing establishment and brought to power the centrist government of Georgios Papandreou, region-

an Film", document 26/10/1964.

77 General State Archives (GAK), General Secretariat of Press and Information, file "Festival of Bulgarian Film", 'Panorama of Greek Cinema in Sofia'.

al policies for a nuclear weapon-free zone in the Balkans, or the success of the Soviet space program (sputnik launches and Gagarin's flight into space) helped to create a more attractive image of the USSR and other Eastern Bloc nations as artistically novel, peaceful, and progressive, increasing the receptivity to their cultural products among the Greek public. Thus the films from Eastern Europe, to a certain degree, met the interests of Greek audiences of the time, primarily – but not exclusively – those on the Left, providing them with alternative and positive images, while co-productions and other professional collaborations responded to the international aspirations of Greek cinema. At the same time the Greek governments took an ambivalent stance towards these transactions: On the one hand, due to the improvement of the relations between Greece and the Eastern Bloc countries from the mid-1950s onwards (*Hatzivassiliou*, 1997), through trade agreements and treaties of cultural collaboration, they greatly facilitated film exchange; on the other, overwhelmed by anxieties that such interactions were vehicles of the Left to promote its ideological values and political agendas, exercised restrictive and preventing control over films, events and individuals, including various forms of direct and indirect censorship.

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Greek Representation in Turkish Cinema: Local Productions vs. Eurimages-funded Turkish-initiative Co-productions with Greek Partners

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Introduction

The concept of 'national cinema' has substantially been debated in academic circles and a wide range of scholar research has been made with reference to film traditions of various countries and cultures. Emphasising how minority groups differ from the majority or benefitting the 'constructive others' have gained recognition as a practice of nation making or of fabricating a nation where there is none. In this regard national cinemas – i.e. mainstream films - all over the world have widely adopted a similar approach while representing the 'nation' or its minorities on the screen. Nevertheless, a co-production, which need producers at least from two countries appropriate a different attitude to the representation of identities by its very nature; it is expected to have a much less national(ist) stance while handling a narrative.

The aim of my paper is to make a comparison between the local productions of Turkish cinema and Eurimages-backed Turkish-initiative (where the story is mainly Turkish and majority co-producing party and director are from Turkey) co-productions with Greek partners when they represent Greek identity. To provide a background I will first put forth some historical facts and milestones to convey the perception of Greek identity for the official ideology of Turkish nation-state. This will be followed by a general outlook into Greek representation in domestic Turkish films. Then some facts on Turkish-Greek co-production tradition will be provided. Finally, Eurimages-backed Turkish-Greek co-productions and Greek representation in these narratives will take the scene.

Greeks as a Minority Ethnicity in Turkey

Nation building has practically been accomplished through the exclusion of differences. In this regard, different or deviant identities that do not comply

with the ethnic core of nationalism are utilised as being the 'constitutive outside' (as Stuart Hall, [2002] puts the term) to reinforce the nation building process. That has been the founding idea behind the nation-state ideology. Since national identity needs homogenous and a unified group of citizens, those problematic 'others' (whether ethnically, religiously or simply culturally) have worked for the sake of nation states now and in the past, here and anywhere on earth.

In case of Turkey, nationalist consciousness aroused during the late Ottoman period as a reaction to the shrinkage of the empire. As a matter of fact, 'Turkish' identity was the last one to be discovered of a dozen ethnicities that composed the Ottoman empire. The overt reason behind this 'late' awakening was being the governing power of the state for which nationalism or ethnic emphasis would not reinforce, on the contrary it would undermine the unity of the empire which was extended onto three continents in an age of increasing number of independent nation-states. Balkan wars (1912-13) and the successors World War I (1914-18) and the War of Independence (1919-22) were the appropriate settings to nurture Turkish nationalism. Republic of Turkey was established as a nation-state in 1923, adopting a secular and westernised world view. Due to historical and political reasons as well as by the very nature of nationalist ideology, not only Greek but also Armenian, Jewish, Kurdish and Arab identities have been subjected to exclusion throughout the republican period.

With regard to Greek minority, some incidents or events could be noted as milestones of their discrimination or exclusion in that new period. As a starting point the population exchange agreement between Turkey and Greece under the Treaty of Lausanne (1923) projected more homogenous populations in both countries. During the World War II (actually in 1942-43) the government imposed a capital (wealth) tax on some business people (mostly the merchant class) to control wartime speculations. This turned into a weapon to punish especially non-Muslim entrepreneurs, including Greeks. A radio news in 1955 that announced the bombing of the house where Atatürk (the founder of the republic) was born in Thessaloniki provoked a pogrom against the Greek minority in Turkey but it also harmed other non-Muslim groups. Later, it became clear that that incident was organised by the Turkish deep state (unofficial power in state bureaucracy which may undertake some illegal operations). The final big expulsion of Greeks in Turkey took place during and after the Cyprus dispute of 1963-64. The result of such politics has been a gradual but significant decrease of not only minority Greek but

also other non-Muslim ethnic populations in the country. This shrinkage of minorities worked to serve to the reinforcement of nation-state ideology.

Greek Representation in Local Turkish Films

We can simply talk of three groups of film when analysing the representation of Greeks in Turkish cinema. The first group consists the films where the Greeks are portrayed as the 'enemy'. The context of such films are War of Independence, Byzantine, or Cyprus. The first film to depict the War of Independence (the war done against the powers that invaded the country after the World War I, mainly Greek army) was *The Shirt of Fire* (1923)[1], a feature made just after the war. *The Conquest of Istanbul* (1951)[2] is the first Turkish film in which we see the Byzantines (Özgüç, 2005). The theme of Byzantine was exploited widely in the prolific years of 1960s and 1970s. Those films are full of chauvinism, fights, flashing swords, and acrobatic movements of fictitious heroes, where Byzantine was represented as the historical 'enemy'. This type of films continued in lesser amounts in the post-1990 period. And finally the films that handle the Cyprus conflict started in 1959 with *The Evil in Cyprus: The Red EOKA*.[3] Since then, approximately twenty such films have been made on this issue. Among them, according to my knowledge, only *The Mud* (2003)[4] adopted a problematising approach and brought a counter-discourse to the Cyprus conflict.

The second film group refers to the mainstream narratives of Turkish cinema - from melodramas to comedies – where the Greek identity is not focused but they appear somewhere in the larger story or in the background. Non-Muslims in general, Greeks in particular (they are citizens of Turkey, i.e. local people in the film story) are given minor roles such as neighbours, landladies, artisans, servants, barkeepers, waiters, dancers, singers, or prostitutes. Instead of depicting Istanbul as a multicultural city (and the people of Turkey as a multicultural nation), these films often portray Greek characters in their minor roles as 'unlovable' (Balcı, 2013), tend to speak Turkish with broken accents, and represent them in clichéd or stereotyped manner. The actors pronounce the Turkish letter 'ş' instead as 's', 'c' as 'z', and 'ı' as 'i'. Displaying Greek characters speaking Turkish with a broken accent continues

1 Muhsin Ertuğrul, dir. *Ateşten Gömlek* (Turkish title).
2 Aydın Arakon, dir. *İstanbul'un Fethi* (Turkish title).
3 Nişan Hançer, dir. *Kıbrıs'ın Belası Kızıl EOKA* (Turkish title).
4 Derviş Zaim, dir. *Çamur* (Turkish title).

until today to be a representational practice in any type of film made from any ideological point of view. However, the documentaries *Yearning for Istanbul* (2010)[5] and *The Witness of Life: The Expulsion of Greeks-The Exiles of 1964* (2014)[6], give voice to Greek people who once lived in Istanbul before their forced migration to Greece. They have little to no accent comparable to that of their fictional counterparts in Turkish cinema.

The third group of films are those made in the last thirty years. It has become possible to question national identity and its cultural effects more explicitly in the post-1990 period of Turkish cinema. The abolition of central censorship mechanism in the second half of the 1980s and democratisation steps taken for joining the European Union have contributed significantly to the possibility of making such narratives. Among focusing on many other problematic themes, these films have given voice to problems faced by the Greek minority. Some of these films are supported by Eurimages funding and some are made with local resources. Among the local ones *Ask Your Heart* (2010)[7] tells the story of the Pontian Greeks in the Black Sea region (northern part of the country) who were forced to hide their Christianity for two hundred years. *Pains of Autumn* (2009)[8] depicts a love story set in the context of the aforementioned 1955 pogrom in central Istanbul. *The Exile* (2013)[9] treats the 1964 expulsion of the Greeks. *Photographs* (1989)[10] suggests that Greeks are not seen as genuine citizens in the case of a Greek family who feels obliged to leave Turkey because of the son's love affair with a Turkish girl. In *Fog and Night* (2007)[11], old women from the Greek minority in an Istanbul district are frightened (by a real estate agent) into selling their property and leaving Turkey. It is important to note that such questioning or problematizing narratives are proportionally low in the total number of films that represent Greek identity.

5 Lozan Mübadilleri Vakfı, prod. *Hasretim İstanbul* (Turkish title).
6 Rıdvan Akar, prod. *Hayatın Tanığı: Rumların Zorunlu Göçü-1964 Sürgünleri* (Turkish title).
7 Yusuf Kurçenli, dir. *Yüreğine Sor* (Turkish title).
8 Tomris Giritlioğlu, dir. *Güz Sancısı* (Turkish title).
9 Erol Özlevi, dir. *Sürgün* (Turkish title).
10 İrfan Tözüm, dir. *Fotoğraflar* (Turkish title)
11 Turgut Yasalar, dir. *Sis ve Gece* (Turkish title).

Turkish-Greek Co-productions

The good relations between Atatürk and Venizelos, the two leaders of the two countries, led to an agreement in 1930 that fostered cultural co-operation and Turkish-Greek co-productions began afterwards. *On Istanbul Streets* (1931)[12] was the first co-production of Turkish film history, a film made in co-operation with Greece and Egypt. That film's dialogues were in Arabic, French, Greek and Turkish; Greek stars and songs took part. This film was followed by another co-production in 1933, titled *The Wrong Road*[13], again with popular actors of Greece (Özgüç, 2005, p. 340; Scognamillo, 2003, p. 42). Both were directed by Muhsin Ertuğrul, the only filmmaker in Turkey at that time. In years, many films have been made as Turkish-Greek co-productions but there is no official data to provide an exact number. When the political climate was tense between two countries – as it has been the case very often – the making of co-productions was interrupted.

Many actors and crew members from both countries participated in Turkish-Greek co-productions. Some of these narratives were based on works by Greek writers. At the same time, Turkish citizens of Greek origin and Greek residents in Turkey contributed to Turkish cinema as actors, cinematographers, art directors and sound technicians, etc. These contributors included the following: Lazaros Yazıcıoğlu, Kriton İliadis, İoakim Filmeridis, Manasi Filmeridis, Yiannis (Coni) Kurteşoğlu, Kostas Psaras (as cinematographers), Stavro Yuanidis (as art director), Yorgos İliadis (as sound technician), Diamantis Filmeridis, Markos Buduris and Alekos Aleksandru (as editors) (Balcı, 2013; Bozis & Bozis, 2014). When co-productions could not be made due to the political climate, Greek roles (in case there exist in the films) were played by Turkish actors.

Eurimages-backed Co-productions

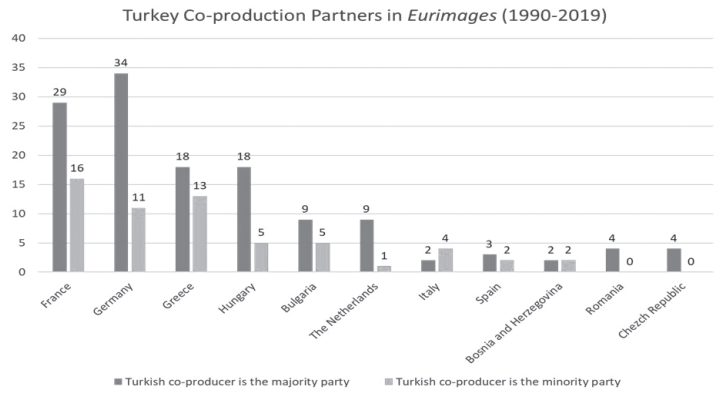
Eurimages funding, an institution of the Council of Europe, emerged in 1988 to provide support for the co-production and distribution of creative cinematographic and audiovisual works among producers of two or more member countries. The aims of Eurimages funding were specified to be as follows (Eurimages, 2003, p. 3):

12 Ertuğrul, dir. *İstanbul Sokaklarında* (Turkish title).
13 Ertuğrul, dir. *Fena Yol* (Turkish title).

- foster the co-production and distribution of creative cinematographic and audiovisual works in order to take full advantage of the new communications techniques and to meet the cultural and economic challenges arising from their development,
- intensify co-operation and exchanges for the purpose of stimulating film and audiovisual production as an important means of promoting Europe's cultural identity, and
- take concrete measures in the financial field to encourage the production and distribution of films and audiovisual works and, thereby, the development of the programme industries.

Greece was one of the founding members and Turkey joined the fund in 1990. Since then Eurimages funding has been a common place for Turkish and Greek filmmakers to co-operate. Regarding the co-productions in which Turkish filmmakers took place, Greece has been one of the top partners in the past 30 years. France and Germany share the highest rank of Turkey's co-producer partners (45 films each); they are followed by Greece (31 films) and Hungary (23 films). Details of Turkey's top partners in Eurimages co-production funding are on the graph.

In total 90 films in which Turkish co-producers were the majority party (called 'initiative-taker') and 36 films in which Turkish co-producers were the minority party received financial support from Eurimages in the first 30 years of Turkey's membership (between 1990 and 2019). Since some of the films were co-produced by more than two countries, the sum of numbers with countries is more than the films. Minor numbers (3 and less) are not included in the graph.



High number of partnership with France can be explained by this country's leader role as a filmmaker and strong co-production tradition. French producers make bilateral conventions not only with their Turkish counterparts but with many other countries as well. They keep various types of films in their portfolio to meet demands all over the world. Germany as a top partner can be explained by the Turkish population in this county. As being the biggest minority group, Turkish immigrants in Germany demand to see the land they are emotionally connected to and hear their native language in movies. So it is rational for producers located in Germany (whether their ethnic origins are Turkish indeed or not) to co-operate with Turkish filmmakers which will guarantee a certain success in the box office not only in Germany but also in European countries where Turkish speaking minorities live (such as France, Belgium, The Netherlands etc.).

When it comes to the top position of Greece as a co-production partner, my research revealed that cost advantage of post-production facilities, geographical proximity and cultural familiarity of Turkish and Greek nations are the main factors to boost the number of films made in co-operation. One of my interviewees noted that especially processing sound recorded films are cheaper in Greece while it costs 25 per cent of a film's total budget in Turkey. This cost advantage makes it a rational decision to choose a Greek partner. Geographical proximity decreases operational costs like traveling but more importantly the stories that spread to two lands (like *The Boatman* (1999)[14], *My Darling Istanbul* (2007)[15], and *Waiting for the Clouds* (2005)[16]) required Greek actors and crew, and naturally a Greek co-producer. On the cultural side, understanding each other and style of making things have significant impact on the work in a co-production process. Compared to western or northern Europe, Turkish filmmakers said that it is much easier to co-operate with Greek partners. Ömer Uğur (2009), for example, director of *Home Coming* (2006)[17], stated:

> In Turkey, we develop a story in a short period of time and want to shoot it immediately. We have neither a tradition nor a state of mind for long-term planning. We want things to go on fast, actualize now and here… We can communicate to Greeks and we understand each other easily. They think

14 Biket İlhan, dir. *Kayıkçı* (Turkish title).
15 Seçkin Yasar, dir. *Sevgilim İstanbul* (Turkish Title).
16 Yeşim Ustaoğlu, dir. *Bulutları Beklerken* (Turkish Title).
17 *Eve Dönüş* (Turkish Title).

like us; we come to an agreement immediately and make it. It takes longer, by as much as one year, with the French, German, or Swedish producers.

Semih Kaplanoğlu (2009), director of *Egg* (2007)[18], said: "We are close to the Greeks. They are more relaxed, more Mediterranean than us, indeed. There was no Eurimages support for *Milk* and I worked with French and German co-producers. It was easier to get along with the Greeks, compared to the French and Germans." On the other hand, Derviş Zaim (2003, p. 70), director of *Mud* (2003) and *Waiting for Heaven* (2006)[19], agreed with the advantages of working with producers from the Balkan countries but he also noted that co-producers from Western and Northern Europe add to the value of a project: "Nevertheless the co-producers who serve the purpose and boost a project tend rather to come from Western and Northern European countries.". Now let's proceed to the content and representation of Greek identity in Eurimages-backed co-productions.

Greek Representation in Eurimages-backed Co-productions

Eurimages does not support projects that incites the violation of human rights. In addition, Eurimages (2009) claims that it is an organisation which 'endeavors to support works which reflect the multiple facets of a European society whose common roots are evidence of a single culture'. Therefore, the films supported by Eurimages are expected to display the diversity of cultures and identities. Moreover, they may be problematising or questioning narratives by the very nature of this funding's philosophy. At least they are not expected to adopt nationalistic attitudes against their issues. In this regard it is observable that Turkish-initiative co-productions that received Eurimages support have questioned the nation-state practices of the past and today when they covered ethnic identities in their narratives. Representation of Greeks in such films can be located in this context. I will come to this point but first the 'genderisation' of Greek identity (i.e. attributing typical gender roles to Greeks) in Turkish cinema needs to be stressed.

In Turkish cinema, as a rule, male has been Turkish and female has been Greek in a love relationship (when there is a love story between two characters from both ethnicities or nations). Examples are many. A few exceptions showed such relationships the opposite way but they failed to normalise a

18 *Yumurta* (Turkish Title).
19 *Cenneti Beklerken* (Turkish Title).

'Greek male and a Turkish female' story. The exceptional examples did not alter or subvert the accustomed attitude against such a relationship but rather reinforced the societal reactions by showing these reactions as 'normal'. Besides, if a female character is 'indecent' or 'socially unacceptable' (and if the film includes non-Muslim characters), her character has been Greek. It should be noted that this type of gendering representation is not bound to past; recent Turkish cinema leaves gendered Greek stereotypes intact. This includes the erotic visuality of female body as well (Yılmazok, 2019). Though one cannot say that Euimages-backed Turkish-initiatives adopted a stereotyping representation of the Greek identity, these films covered love relationships just like the other/past cinema (Turkish male and Greek female).

When it comes to other films which cover the issue of ethnic identities or the problematic relationships between the two countries due to political issues, Eurimages-backed films adopt questioning and/or critical attitudes by no exception (as expected). Among these films *Waiting for the Clouds* narrates the story of a woman living in the Black Sea region who has to hide her Greek identity for long (almost sixty) years. At the beginning of the film we see archival footage that displays deportations in and from Anatolia. Eleni, the heroine, is known with her pseudo Turkish name 'Ayşe'. She is one of the hundreds of thousands of deportees who had to leave Black Sea region and go to the southern part of the country. The northern city of Trabzon was invaded by the Russian army during the World War I and the government decided to deport the Greek minority population of the region in order to prevent a support and collaboration from them to the occupying power. This happened when Eleni was ten years old. Her mother and sister died during the exile due to cold weather and starvation. She and her six-year-old brother Niko survived. They were adopted by a Turkish family and Eleni never spoke Greek until the adopting family's daughter passes away. Then she goes to Thessaloniki in 1975 to find her lost brother Niko. This film also satirises nationalism in a few examples through nationalist school songs and festivities.

Cyprus conflict is handled in at least three films. *My Darling Istanbul* stresses how Greeks had to leave Turkey after the conflict in Cyprus in 1963. Ali (a character in the film) explains:

> Istanbul was rescued from Greeks three times: in 1453, in 1922 and in 1964… 40,000 Greeks were deported from Istanbul in 1964 with 20kg of effects and 22 dollars at most. Then their assets were seized… Chauvinistic politics were executed step by step. I vaguely remember in my childhood the 'Shopping among Turks' and 'Citizen, speak Turkish' campaigns.

There has not been a serious study on this issue yet.

Mustafa (another character) says: "We were using Cyprus as an excuse to be rescued from the Greeks. That is it. The media added fuel to the flames at that time…" A neighbour, one of the remaining Greeks in the film states: "They had us pay for all that took place in Cyprus."

Oher two films touch upon the Cyprus conflict of 1974. *The Mud*, a film shot in the northern territory, recalls the war of 1974 not only by dialogues but through some symbols as well. Ali, a soldier in the Turkish army at that time, had survived by chance a fusillade fired by Greek Cypriot militants. Temel on the other hand, has a trauma because he shot two unarmed Greek Cypriots in 1974. In the film *Toss Up* (2004)[20], Cevher's father tells us how his marriage with his Greek wife Tasula was destroyed because of the tensions between two nations. While two Turkish fishermen beat their Greek colleague during the war of Cyprus, he condemns their fight. One of them says "you produced a child from a Greek woman". Then he goes home and asks her wife if his father was a Greek agent. Tasula leaves home with her child and comes back twenty-five years later during the big earthquake of 1999 that affected Marmara region in the northwest of the country.

Conclusion

Republic of Turkey was founded as a nation-state after a collapsed empire and her politics included many exclusionary practices for the minority groups for the sake of a 'unified nation'. Films adopted a similar approach, in terms of representation of nation and its minorities. In this regard domestic Turkish films largely presented the Greek identity as historical enemy or located them only as elements of the background in the narrative. The films of recent years, though, have questioned nation-state practices, problematised the ethnic identities and showed the issues they face. Greek identity has been an important component of these narratives.

Started as early as in the 1930s, Turkish-Greek co-productions increased significantly after the launch of Eurimages funding in the late 1980s. As Turkey became a member of this supranational fund, Turkish and Greek producers co-operated in 31 projects in the last 30 years. In many films supported by Eurimages we see characters either as Turkish citizens of Greek ethnicity or as Greek citizens. Compared to the vast majority of local Turkish produc-

20 Uğur Yücel, dir. *Yazı Tura* (Turkish Title).

tions, their representations are far from us/them dichotomy; these narratives do not display Greek ethnicity as members of an 'enemy' community. Rather, films adopt critical attitudes against controversial issues as noted above. However, filmmakers do not avoid stereotyping when the Greek characters speak Turkish with a broken accent or when there is a love relationship between a male and a female from two ethnicities.

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III. Film Policies and Greek Co-productions

Practices for approaching foreign film production and co-production models in the countries of Europe

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Making a film is an extremely expensive process and varies depending on the budget of the movie. Specifically, if it is a Hollywood film that follows the full division of labor among its specialties and goes through all stages of production (development, preproduction, production, post production, distribution), it will be highly funded. On the contrary, if it is an independent film, ie a film shot outside the studios, it follows a similar division but has a much lower budget. (Bordwell & Thompson 2004: 33-46).

Film producers, especially those not funded by major American studios, have particular difficulty financing their films. Therefore, it stands to reason that the creation of a film is completely dependent on the production cost and this is why many productions turn abroad in search of new, more economical locations.

Similarly, many countries seek to attract foreign producers due to the multiple benefits that a film offers in one place. In fact, "film production is a clean, non-polluting industry, and produces a quick injection of revenue to a local community"(Attracting Film Production 2012, p. 3). As stated in a manual compiled by the California Film Commission -in order to provide education material to the California Regional Film Offices-, an American production of major studio has an average budget of $64 million and can spend amounts in excess of $50,000 per day when shooting outside "the movie zone". All this money funnel to local professional technicians (mainly secondary crewmembers, since large productions usually bring primary crewmembers), hotels, catering and restaurants, car rental companies, dry cleaners and laundries, financial institutions, gas stations, rental machinery, timber companies for the construction of sets, telecommunications companies and other (2012, p. 3).

Thus, governments have every good reason to provide all possible public support by including the film industry in their policy area, whether it is **economic policy**, ie. a policy that focuses on "redressing market failures and

stimulating economic growth, employment, innovation, and trade", whether it is **cultural policy**, which "aims to stimulate artistic excellence, innovation, access, identity, and diversity", or even a **combination of the two**. (Hemels & Goto 2017, p. 30-31)

In a national level, the need to strengthen national cinemas by taking decisive actions was evident especially at the end of World War I. Since Hollywood spread and dominated in the international film market, not only economic issues were raised, but also cultural issues were recognized (Newman-Baudais 2011, p.8).

For many years thereafter, the nation-states of the European continent were unable to meet the high demands imposed by the American studio industry. However, the gradual unification of these countries, created the need for action at a community level.

Thus, since the 1980s, in view of "rapidly developing new technologies, the increasing number and popularity of American films and television programmes shown on European screens and the prospect of a unified Europe (with a market of 320 million people)"; it is argued that it is the right opportunity to achieve this unification through a common European film and audiovisual policy (Jäckel 2003, p. 68).

Hence, the Council of Europe and the EU decide to **supplement and strengthen national support schemes**, based on the principle of subsidiarity, **with programs** (such as MEDIA or Eurimages) quotas, grants, agreements and co-productions (Nordisk Film & TV Fund, Ibermedia et al.). At the same time, they create **funding programs** (Fonds sudcinéma, Hubert Bals Fund, World Cinema Fund) **aiming to attract film production from outside the European continent**, as it is proven that in the film market competition and cooperation coexist globally[1] (Jäckel 2003, p. 22, Newman-Baudais 2011, p. 69).

The most important programs that provide support to European film production are MEDIA and Eurimages. Along with the financing programs, the European Commission takes initiatives in order to establish the competition rules necessary for the functioning of the internal market, with regulations and directives on state aid. (Cabrera Blázquez & Lépinard 2014, p. 8-9) Particularly, the European Commission set out assessment criteria for state aid for the production of films and other audiovisual works in its 2001 Cinema Communication. The validity of these criteria was extended in 2004, 2007

1 It is noteworthy that in the 1990s, Hollywood showed great interest in Europe with film productions and with the establishment of audiovisual companies in various EU cities. (Jäckel 2003, p. 16)

and 2009 and expired on 31 December 2012. In 2013, a new one was adopted, entitles "Communication from the Commission on State aid for films and other audiovisual works" (European Commission, webpage).

It is worth mentioning that Article 4 of the new Communication refers to the high risk involved in investing in the film industry, which leads to an increase in its dependence on state aid. Furthermore, in Article 6 explains "Altogether, Member States provide an estimated EUR 3 billion of film support per year. This funding is provided through over 600 national, regional and local support schemes. The rationale behind these measures is based on both cultural and industrial considerations" (EE 2013 C 332/1-2).

It is therefore concluded that each country -in some cases and each region- is free to structure its own practices and legislation on film financing, always respecting the guidelines set by the European Commission. This, naturally, shapes different investment opportunities in the European countries and also different production conditions (payroll of professionals, provision of services, etc.) (Jäckel 2003, pp.40-43).

Sources and funding bodies for European films

European films have the potential to use and combine different sources of funding to raise the amount they have budgeted for. These sources may be private or public.

The following forms are found in private sources of financing (Jäckel 2003, p. 44):

1. Corporate finance (private investors, banks, completion guarantors).
2. Equinity finance (finance institutions, broadcasters and other media groups).
3. Pre-sales (distribution rights).
4. Co-production finance.
5. Sales of rights (television, video, etc.).
6. Other sources (sponsorship, product placement, sale of merchandising, licensing and publishing rights).

According to a report by European Audiovisual Observatory, there are eight forms of public funding (Newman-Baudais, 2011, p. 6):

1. Direct intervention in the form of subsidies and grants.
2. Tax credits and shelters, allowing relief on income taxes.
3. Loans granted at preferential rates.

4. Loan guarantee systems which reduce the risks associated with investment in production.
5. Transfers of resources from one branch of the industry to another, either ordered by or assisted by public authorities.
6. Provision of practical assistance to promote filming through the establishment of film commission.
7. Promoting film through the organisation of events such as festivals and film weeks;
8. Implementing legal and economic measures aimed at encouraging international co-operation between players in the industry.

Additionally, the funding bodies are divided into the following administrative levels administrative levels (Newman-Baudais, 2011, p. 36):

- National.
- Community.
- Regional (funding from regional authorities.
- Local (funding from local authorities).
- Supranational (covers multilateral resources).

Outside of Europe (funds funded by European countries to filmmakers from outside the continent).

Developing a national film policy: The importance of tax incentives

One of the forms of public funding, as mentioned above, is tax credits and tax havens, which belong to a broader category called tax incentives. Tax incentives are used as a reward for desirable behavior and often favor creative industries,[2] in which cinema falls into. The definition used by Hemels and Goto in *Tax Incentives for the Creative Industries* is "A provision in tax legislation that departs from the benchmark tax structure (…), resulting in a reduction or postponement of tax income for the government" (2017, p. 35-36).

These incentives are mainly divided into two categories:
a. **tax credits** and **tax shelters**, in the narrow sense of tax mechanisms andb.

2 The creative industries include advertising, architecture, arts and crafts, design, fashion, film, video, photography, music, performing arts, publishing, research & development, software, computer games, electronic publishing, and TV/radio. (UNCTAD, 2008).

cash rebates, which are related to tax regimes and often considered tax mechanisms, though some of them function as film funds with an annual budget (Cabrera Blázquez & Lépinard 2014, p. 41).

The first tax incentive for film industry was introduced in 1995 by the Federal Government of Canada, entitled *Canadian Film or Video Production Tax Credit* -which came to replace an older legislation that offered tax benefits since 1967 (Bacal, Jadd, and Thivierge 1995; 1988). In 1997, a second incentive was introduced, the *Production Services Tax Credit*, oriented toward foreign productions that were interested in shooting in Canada. As expected, these changes in tax legislation, lead most Canadian provinces to introduce tax credits or grants for attracting foreign productions (Parliament of Canada, House of Commons 2005: 2) "Since 1997 (w.n. up to 2016), this industrial model has injected $24.4 billion of new money into the Canadian economy. This new money has more than repaid the tax expenditures spent by the government on tax credit"(UNESCO, 2016).

Evidently, these incentives are mainly aimed at attracting the American film industry. The results are immediate and visible. Indeed, a significant number of film producers turned to Canada to reduce production costs, which in turn forced the United States to implement similar tax measures. Thus, in the same decade, American states are introducing tax incentives, in an effort to keep film production within US borders (New York Film Academy, 2017).

Consequently, given the reduction of the state budget for direct subsidies, many countries around the world are adopting tax incentives schemes for the purpose of increasing investment interest in their region (Hemels & Goto 2017,p. 1).

Some of the countries that introduce tax incentives are very successful in implementing them. Specifically, there is the typical example of Iceland, which was on the verge of economic collapse, and in 2008 managed to recover by investing, among others, in the film industry. Introducing a 20% cash rebate on expenditures in its territory, Iceland attracted a large number of commercials, movies and TV series. However, the biggest success was the production of the episode *Beyond the Wall* of the HBO television series *Game of Thrones*. This brought a net profit of more than $ 8 million to the local community, with 500 rental cars for production and 3,000 extra nights for hotels in the area (Hesse, 2014).

Today, most countries in Europe offer cash incentives for cash rebate and tax deductions. Below is a table with the form and percentage of these incentives.

Table 1 Tax Incentives in European Countries[3]
Sources: Websites of the National Film Bodies of the above countries, 2019

COUNTRY	NATIONAL BODY	CASH REBATE	TAX CREDITS/ TAX SHELTERS
Austria	*Film Industry Support Austria)*	20-25%	
Belgium	*Belgium Film Industry*		40-45%
Croatia	*Filming in Croatia*	20% (in some cases 25%)	
Czech Republic	*Czech Film Commission*	20%	
Estonia	*Estonian Film Institute*	30%	
France	*Film France, The French Film Commission*		30%
Hungary	*Hungarian National Film Fund*		30%
Iceland	*Film in Iceland, Icelandic Film Commission*	25%	
Ireland	*Screen Ireland*		32-37%
Italy	*Italian Trade Commission*		25%
Lithuania	*Lithuanian Film Centre*		30%
Malta	*Malta Film Fund, Malta Film Commission*	25%	
North Macedonia	*Macedonian Film Agency*	20%	
Norway	*Norwegian Film Institute*	25%	
Poland	*Polish Film Institute*	30%	
Serbia	*Film in Serbia*	25%	
UK-Scotland	*British Film Commission*	25%	80% (tax relief)

3 Although Germany has a significant film industry, it is not on the list as it offers incentives in the form of grants. (German Federal Film Fund, webpage)

The establishment of Film Commission

In 1949, in the Valley of Monuments in the USA, the first Film Commission was established as an offshoot of the Moab Chamber of Commerce, by the producer George White. White noticed that the area was a pole of attraction for filmmakers and thus, he realized that the existence of a local liaison would facilitate filming in the area by mediating important municipal and government services. However, the first state-run Film Commission was established two decades later, in 1969, in Colorado. (Association of Film Commissioners International, webpage).

Hence, Film Commissions are specialized offices that operate under the supervision of a public body or a Local Government Organization. They aim to promote and develop the region, through the development of the film and audiovisual industry (AFCI, webpage).

Film Commissions must provide all necessary information concerning their region and facilitate in any way possible the producers, free of charge. In particular, the California Film Commission, founded in 1985, states that it operates as a "one stop shop", "issuing permits for state-owned property and providing production and troubleshooting assistance within California"(Attracting Film Production, 2012, p. 5).

Film Commissions provide the following services (AFCI, webpage):

- Tax Incentive Navigation
- Liaison with government departments/agencies
- Logistical information regarding crew, talent, facilities, stages, equipment, and support services
- Setting standards of professionalism
- Site location photography
- Regional scouting services
- Location library
- Serving as a clearinghouse for production information

At an international level, there is no fixed and specific institutional structure, but the types vary and differ from country to country.

In conclusion, it is clear that today film producers can choose from a huge range of markets, the location where their films will be shot eventually. The decision they have to make is not obvious but they have to weigh and combine many factors in order to finally come up with the best possible choice. They take into account factors that affect production (labor costs, studios and

facilities, post production services, attractive sites), cinema policies (local incentives, favorable legal framework), the general political situation in the country, language and networking facilities. (Jäckel 2003: 24-25) Therefore, it is equally important for the State to take all of the above consider when trying to formulate a national cinema policy.

Attracting Foreign Film Productions: the case of Greece

Greece's cinema policy making:

I. through the Ministry of Culture and Sports with the bodies of the Greek Film Cinema Center, the Directorate of Hellenic Film Commission and the Thessaloniki International Film Festival,
II. through the Ministry of Digital Governance with the establishment of a National Center of Audiovisual Media and Communication and the Film Offices -which are in the process of establishment- and
III. through the Ministry of Development and Investments with the Business Financing Program-Fund for Entrepreneurship II (TEPIX II).

Greek Film Center: Financing of International Co-Producers and Partnerships

The Greek Film Center (GFC) is the main policymaking body for cinema in Greece.

It was established in 1970, when the state-owned Greek Industrial Development Bank set up a subsidiary production company under the name "General Film Investments". Ten years later, in 1980, this company was renamed Greek Film Center. In 1986, the enactment of the first comprehensive law on cinema (L.1597/86) entitled "Protection and development of cinematographic art, strengthening of Greek cinema and other provisions", provided for the full transfer of the GFC to the state in the form of a public limited company, with financial and administrative autonomy, under the supervision of the Ministry of Culture. Today, with the enactment of Law 3905/23.12.2010 (Government Gazette 219 / A / 23.12.2010) "Support and development of cinematographic art and other provisions", the body is a public benefit non-profit legal entity established under private law, while still being supervised by the Minister of Culture and Sports (GFC, website & Mpakogiannopoulos, 2002, p. 23).

According to the above law, Greek Film Center's operation aims to serve the following purposes (L. 3905/23.12.2010):

(a) The protection, support and development of film production in Greece.
(b) The showcasing, dissemination and promotion of Greek cinematographic art in Greece and abroad.
(c) The showcasing of Greece abroad as a suitable location for making films and audiovisual productions and attracting foreign film and audiovisual producers in general to Greece.
(d) The issuing of a Certificate of Greek Nationality for cinematographic works that meet the prerequisites.

Regarding the funding of the organization, a small percentage comes from state resources and grants of the EU and international organisations, while a larger percentage comes from a regular annual subsidy provided by the Ministry of Culture.(L. 3905/23.12.2010) Thus, GFC uses this funding to cover its operating costs and supply the film market through its financing programs. Although it is the national film policy body, it is considered to have a rather low budget in relation to its needs. Therefore, any shortfall, delay or reduction may exist in its budget, it also affects the film market(GFC, website).

In fact, it seems that the issue of funding complicates the smooth operation of the Film Center and there has been from time to time a field of controversy between the state and the filmmakers. A relatively recent example is the abolition of the special contribution from the cinema tickets, for example, the special tax paid through the cinema tickets, the income of which went to the Cinema Center through the Ministry of Culture. This special tax was initially introduced by Law 1597/1986 (then, by Law 1731/1987, a part of the tax corresponded to distributors and housekeepers) and was later reinforced by the law of 2010 article 5 and by the law 4049/2012 article 44. (IOBE 2014: 39-40) However, in August 2015 with the enactment of Law 4336/2015 and the "Financial Aid Loan Agreement from the European Stability Mechanism", the provisions of articles 60 of Law 1731/1987, 38 of Law 3220/2004 and 5 of L.3905 / 2010 which referred to this special contribution, were abolished (Ministerial Decision ΠΟΛ 1195 / 1.9.2015). As expected, this event provoked reactions in the film industry and caused problems in the smooth operation of the institution.

Among the goals of GFC are extroversion and the strengthening of co-productions and this is achieved through **the establishment of the directorate of Film Commission** and through **the funding programs and the development of partnerships with other countries**.

Regarding the funding programs, Greek Film Center provides support to Greek and foreign productions with ten Financing Programs. Two of them

are aimed at foreign productions: the Main Program and the Program of Incentives to Attract Foreign Productions to Greece with a Greek producer as a minority partner.

The Main Program is for Greek and Greek-initiated international co-productions, bilateral or multilateral. In addition, there are some restrictions on the participation rates of majority and minority producers which vary according to the number of co-producers. Those who are interested can apply for production development with funding that can reach up to 12,500 Euros (plus 2,500 Euros in case they participate in a script workshop or work with a script doctor) or for production with amount that cannot exceed 250,000 Euros. The participation of the GFC should not be more than 33% of the total budget (Rules and Regulations for Funding Programs, 2013, p. 17-18).

The second program aimed at co-productions is the Program of Incentives to Attract Foreign Productions to Greece with a Greek producer as a minority partner. The amount of funding depends on the degree of Greek participation (number of Greek actors, technicians, post-production services) and can reach up to 50,000 Euros, when it comes to international co-production films made by "(a) member-states of the Council of Europe which have ratified the European Co-Production Treaty[4], (b) Canada, with which Greece has concluded a transnational treaty, (c) other countries which may conclude a transnational treaty with Greece, in implementation of these treaties" (Rules and Regulations for Funding Programs, 2013, p.29-30).

In addition to the above funding programs, co-production projects can be jointly supported by the Greek Film Center and France's Centre National du Cinéma (CNC) under the convention for Greek-French cinematic co-productions (Aide à la Coproduction d'Œuvres Cinématographiques Franco-Grecques) and the South Eastern Europe Cinema Network. The Greek-French fund is a bilateral fund for supporting the Greek-French co-producers (Aide à la Coproduction d'Œuvres Cinématographiques Franco-Grecques). This is an agreement signed in 2014 and had a duration of three years. On July 18, 2017, the agreement was renewed for an additional three years (2017-2019). (Economou, 2017). However, this agreement was made mainly to support the Greek initiative co-productions, as stated by the French side, since its goal is to strengthen the Greek filmmakers (and the Portuguese respectively, since a similar agreement has been concluded between France and Portugal),

4 Council of Europe Convention on Cinematographic Co-Production (revised): The Parties to this Convention undertake the role of promoting the development of international film co-production (Rotterdam, 30 January 2017).

"whose talents are recognised worldwide and yet whose projects suffer from the economic crisis and the frailty of public funding." (CNC, webpage) More specifically, the grant addresses feature films, which fall under the co-production agreement between the two countries and are compatible with the EU State Aid Regulation. If the films meet the eligibility conditions, which are explicitly mentioned in the agreement, the grant can reach up to 450,000 Euros (a limit that cannot exceed 50% of the film budget). It is worth noting that in 2018 the total amount of the Fund was 450,000 Euros (150,000 Euros from the GFC and 300,000 Euros from the CNC). (Financial support for Greek-French co-production films, p. 1-3).

As far as the South Eastern Europe CINEMA NETWORK (abbreviated SEE CINEMA NETWORK) is concerned, it was established in 2000 in Hydra by an initiative of GFC. The members of this network are the national film bodies of the countries of Southeast Europe, namely: Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Northern Macedonia, Bulgaria, Greece, Croatia, Cyprus, Montenegro, Serbia, Slovenia and Turkey and at last Kosovo which was added in 2011 (Kosovo Cinematography Center, webpage). At the beginning of its operation, the Greek side had undertaken to cover the operating costs and to provide secretarial support and staff. Today, its funding comes from the national film institutions of its members. The Network is based in Thessaloniki and is governed by the General Assembly of National Representatives, the three-member Executive Committee and the Executive Secretary. Furthermore, it holds two meetings a year, one in June taking place in a city in the 12 Member States and one in November in Thessaloniki. (SEE Cinema Network, webpage & Seecinema, webpage).

The goal of SEE CINEMA NETWORK is to develop a cooperation network among the film professionals of its Member States, through the financing of co-productions for feature films (development stage) and short films (production stage), but also through the organization of events. Besides, it seeks to develop partnerships with other similar regional networks, as well as with neighboring southern Mediterranean countries (SEE Cinema Network, webpage & see cinema network rules and regulations, p. 2).

Thessaloniki International Film Festival - TIFF

Film Festival markets are an important meeting and networking place for audiovisual professionals and financiers. In Greece, Thessaloniki Film Festival exists, which is one of the oldest international festivals in the world. (Ministry Of Culture, webpage). Thessaloniki International Film Festival is a public limited company, has administrative and financial autonomy and is supervised by the Ministry of Culture. The purpose of TIFF is "the dissemination of cinematic art, the education, entertainment and intellectual cultivation of the Greek public, the promotion of the city of Thessaloniki as a meeting place of Greek and foreign creators with the Greek public and at the same time its promotion as a place of purchase and distribution of cinematographic works" (L.3905 / 2010).

It started operating in 1960 as a Greek Film Festival. In 1992, it acquired an international character by introducing the Competition Section which invited young creators from around the world to participate with their first or second feature film.

In 1999 a new Directorate was founded, the Thessaloniki Documentary Festival-Images of the 21st Century, where for the first time in Greece two important actions were organized a) the Agora Doc Market, an action that gives documentary professionals the opportunity to network with directors and producers and b) the Pitching Forum, an action with projects in progress from around the world which form groups under the guidance of tutors in order to improve their idea. Thus, the above two actions allow professionals "to develop collaborations in the field of documentary films, but also to promote their work on Greek television stations and find funding from European television stations." (Minister of Culture, website and Thessaloniki International Film Festival, website).

According to the same logic, in 2005 the Organization created a Market Department in TIFF, "as an umbrella for developing activities that directly support the internationalization of local film markets and facilitate a stronger financial access to the international market." (Ministry of Culture, webpage) The section is supported by MEDIA's European Creative Europe Program and includes three actions: the Agora Film Market with the Digital Video Library that includes complete films, the Crossroads Co-Production Forum and Agora Works in Progress (films in progress from South East Europe and the Mediterranean). (see relevant press releases on the website of the Ministry Culture and TIFF).

More specifically, Agora Film Market is a digital video library that networks the creators with audiovisual professionals (representatives of sales companies and festivals, distributors etc), and journalists from Greece and abroad. The selected films either have participated in older Crossroads, they are films from Central Europe, the Balkans and the Mediterranean, or they are Greek films of the last two years. The Crossroads Co-Producers Forum addresses film projects that are productions or co-productions from Central European, Balkan and Mediterranean countries or contain elements that refer to the history of these places. This forum allows creators to meet professionals in the field with the possibility to reach an agreement with them. Finally, Works in Progress includes films that have been shot in the Mediterranean, Central Europe and the Balkans and they are in the stage of production or post production. These films are shown to special guests of the Market, producers, sales agents, distributors or festival representatives. (TIFF, webpage).

National Centre of Audiovisual Media and Communication (NCAMC) – EKOME

The Law 4339/2015 established the operation of a new body for audiovisual production under the name of the National Center of Audiovisual Media and Communication (NCAMC) -EKOME. This body officially started its operation on March 26, 2018. EKOME is a legal entity of private right and has administrative and financial autonomy. Furthermore, the only shareholder of the organization is the state and is supervised by the Ministry of Digital Governance (the former Ministry of Digital Policy Telecommunications and Media). (L4339 / 2015 & Ministry of Digital Governance, website)

Regarding its financing, the new body is subsidized by the regular budget and the public investment budget of General Secretariat for Information and Communication on an annual basis. However, it can raise funding from public or private bodies, the EU and other international organizations. (L4339 / 2015)

It is worth noting that the establishment of EKOME was accompanied by additional support measures and financial incentives. In particular, there were a number of legislative regulations (see Table 2) to facilitate audiovisual production in the country, which indicates a change in the State's attitude towards audiovisual media and the willingness for cinematic development and evolution.

Table 2 Legislation on investment incentives (2020)

Law 4487/09-08-2017	Electronic system for the distribution of television advertising time, amendment of Law 3548/2007, creation of a regional and local press registry, special marking of bar code in printed publications, creation of an institutional framework for production support audiovisual works in Greece and other provisions.
Law 4563/20-09- 2018	Access of permanent residents of non-television coverage areas to Greek national free-to-air television stations and other provisions.
Law 4609/03-05-2019	Healthcare arrangements of Armed Forces, Recruitment, Military Justice and other provisions.
Law 4704/14-07-2020	Facilitation and simplification of the cash rebate procedures, enhancement of digital governance and other provisions.

"The mission of the National Centre of Audiovisual Media and Communication-EKOME is the protection, support and promotion of public and private initiatives, domestic and foreign, in the field of audiovisual media and communication in Greece" and operates through three pillars: investment-digitization-education (EKOME, website).

Thus, the body is governed by a specific strategic mission aimed at (Kouanis, website):

a) developing the local audiovisual production by attracting direct foreign investment in the sector and supporting entrepreneurship and employment (INVEST);
b) establishing a national archive policy of audiovisual material (DIGITISE);
c) promoting scientific study and applied research in the media, training media industry professionals and educating citizens in the language of visual communication (EDUCATE)"

As can be seen from the actions of the organization in this first period of its operation, its efforts are mainly focused on the promotion of the investment motivation and the search for collaborations and synergies with institutions and professionals of the international market (EKOME, Facebook).

EKOME's investment program includes:

1. 40% Cash Rebate
2. 30% Tax Relief
3. Creating a Film Offices Network

After many years of delay, in 2017 with the Law 4487/2017, a friendly institutional framework is created for foreign and domestic productions. The goal of the institutional framework is on one hand to fill the long-term gaps in the audiovisual field and on the other hand to treat culture "as a development tool for the economy", as the competent bodies often refer to in the presentations of financial incentives. The law enables the provision of financial incentives in the form of conditional cash rebate in audiovisual projects that are shot in the country or use the infrastructure during the post-production stage and is implemented through the EKOME organization.

Nowadays, a 40% cash rebate is set of the eligible costs of an audiovisual production in the country, after the amendments to Law 4487/2017 and Joint-Ministerial Decisions (JMD) (see Table 3) in order to strengthen, regulate and improve individual issues that arose during the first period of its implementation. Although the law initially provided a percentage of 25%, with the amendment of Law 4563/2108 this percentage rose to 35% and at last, to 40% with the Law 4704/2020 (L.4487 / 2017, L. 4563/2018, L. 4704/2020).

The financing of the Program comes from the Public Investment Program and reaches the amount of 75 million Euros to cover the period of five years (27.03.2018-31.12.2022). (L.4487/2017)

Also, in the financial instruments a 30% tax relief that is addressed to production companies has been added which can work in combination with cash rebate, or separately. "The tax incentive (Greek Tax Relief) corresponds to a tax relief of 30% of the eligible expenses deducted from the net taxable results of the financiers of the approved investment plan, as they result from the income tax return" (EKOME, website).

Finally, the project of creating a network of thirteen Film Offices in the central regions of the country and in municipalities of increased demand is in the process of implementation. With a budget of 5 million euros from the Public Investment Program, EKOME is responsible for the training of the staff and the technical equipment of the offices. These offices will be staffed with municipal employees (General Secretariat for Information and Communication, press release).

Table 3 Joint-Ministerial Decision for the amendment of the Laws (2019)

Joint-Ministerial Decision 923/28-03-2018	The proclamation of a scheme for the support of the production of audiovisual works in Greece in accordance with chapter D of Law 4487/2017 (Government Official Gazette A' 116) and for the clarification of special issues of this law
Joint-Ministerial Decision 128/24-12-2018	Amendment and supplementation of the Decision No. 923 / 23-03-2018 of the Ministers of Development and Investments and Digital Policy, Telecommunications and Media: "The proclamation of a scheme for the support of the production of audiovisual works in Greece in accordance with chapter D of Law 4487/2017 (Government Official Gazette A' 116) and for the clarification of special issues of this law" (B 1138)
Joint-Ministerial Decision 1007/17-01-2019	Eligible expenses, categories of audiovisual works, procedure and audit process in accordance with the terms and conditions of the provisions of article 71E of Law 4172/2013 (Government Official Gazette A' 167), as well as the conditions, the terms, the procedure and any other details concerning the application of this Article.
Joint-Ministerial Decision 59/11-04-2019	The proclamation of a scheme for the support of the production of audiovisual works in Greece, with content digital cultural and educational game, in accordance with chapter D of Law 4487/2017 (Government Official Gazette A' 116) and for the clarification of special issues of this law.
Joint-Ministerial Decision 97/07-06-2019	Implementation of the Loan Guarantee Program for Audiovisual Production Companies.

Developmental Program to support the audiovisual industry

According to the speech of the former Deputy Minister Lefteris Kretsos at the 1st Development Conference of Thessaly[5], the Greek audiovisual production will be supported through three lines of credit support, with the aim of creating liquidity in the audiovisual market.

Specifically (Kretsos, 16.03.2019):

1. Through the Business Finance of the Entrepreneurship Fund II (TEPIX II) by the National Fund for Entrepreneurship and Development (ETEAN), there is the possibility of providing a business loan at favorable interest rates to micro, small, small and medium sized enterprises, so that they can implement business plans. There are two types of loans: a. short-term up to 500,000 Euros (60 months repayment and grace period up to 6 months), b. long-term up to 1,500,000 Euros (5-10 years repayment and grace period up to 1 year). (Partnership Agreement for the Development Framework 2014-2020)
2. Through Law 2169/2019 "Implementation of the Loan Guarantee Program for Audiovisual Production Companies", a program is subsidized by the National Fund for Entrepreneurship and Development ETEAN amounting to 25,000,000 Euros with the possibility of increasing the available funds, with a guarantee of 80% on the amount of loan. (L.2169 / 2019)
3. Through "Bridge financing", the investment plan that is part of the cash rebate subsidy receives a certificate, which can be presented to the banks to apply for a loan before the start of audiovisual production.

5 The audiovisual material of his speech has been posted on the website of General Secretariat for Information and Communication.(https://media.gov.gr/l-kretsos-sto-1o-an-synedrio-thessalias-ta-megalytera-stountio-tou-choligount-echoun-idi-steilei-location-managers-stin-ellada-video/)

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The immigrant youth in Greek co-productions since the 1990s. An anthropological approach though transnational cinematographic lens

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The multiplication of nations – states, the restructuring of the capitalism through the borders and the retrenchment bring to the fore the much-discussed topic of immigration. The limits or the walls that can be accessed by the immigrant subject, the different shapes of clarification on the base of ethnicity or the gender performance and the dichotomy between a citizen who belongs to a place and a citizen who doesn't belong to a place are forming a new global treaty.

In approaching immigration through transnational terms, there is an attempt to avoid focusing on the social process of the nation – state in terms of the present phenomenon. Conversely, it struggles to go beyond national borders and connect home and host countries.

Granted that picture plays central role to the contemporary societies, art comprises an important part of the social reality. It functions as a part of a society which tries to be decrypted though the critical analysis, just like non – conscious historiography (Horkheimer & Adorno, 2005). Besides, the modern theory of cinema doesn't focus only on the visual part but also on the contest, the structure, the cinematographic language and the close relationship between the narration and the reality (Lydaki, 2016). The visual way to represent a condition (real or fictional) is underlining the existence of a civilization that revolves around pictures and no around texts with the traditional frame. It makes use of a repertoire of writing style that informs and fascinates at the same time. The viewer –just like the reader does- decodes the text using more industrial ways of analysis.

The present text is related to the representation of the 'immigrant youth[1]' in Greek film co –productions since the 1990s through cinematography lens.

1 In this project the term "immigrant youth" refers to second generation (young immigrants who were born outside Greece or as native – born children with one or both of their immigrant parents). The term "youth" defines specific group of people who

It was an attempt to build up the anthropological study of film co-production and production by gathering some significant film representations; in particular, how the migration experience has been filmed for the last three decades in Greece. I am underlining the last three decades because Greece was originally a host country for the waves of immigrants from Albania and former USSR countries, transforming its sociocultural sphere. The determining factor for choosing Greece was its geographical proximity, the easy accessibility and the lack of any alternative choice for wealthier countries (Iosifidis, 2009). Consequently, Greece was perceived as the most realistic scenario but not the most desired for those immigrants (Cavounidi, 2003).

The key word in this research is "transnationalism". It's quite important to show how the features of transnationalism emerge through the collected material. I chose five transnational cinematic texts and I tried to point out a new view of immigration, the transnational immigration. Besides when we talk about transnational cinema, we refer to about a different point of view in comparison with the one we used to know. Not necessarily more progressive, but definitely, different and wider.

In trying to understand transnationalism, the reader/viewer will face various facts about this term. Definitions vary, but in a broad sense generally this term is connected to practices and activities across borders. According to Vertovec (1999) transnationalism broadly refers to multiple ties and interactions linking people or institution across the borders of nation – states. In other words, transnationalism is a condition which defines the presence of international borders. It does not adhere to one and only place where an immigrant can exist. The transnational lens creates a greater degree of connection among individuals, smaller or bigger families, societies or communities etc. So, it can work as a key factor for immigration management. The moving subject is not only the conveyor of a single identity, in this case the conveyor of a specific model of migration pattern, but also a subject who gets involved in the transnational activities. It does not have one and specific identity, one country, one language, one home place e.tc. We could say that the subject is not "black" or "white" but it represents many shades which are included in these two edges. Besides, co – production plays a major role for this approach and discloses different perspectives of the so called local/national/transnational.

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do not exceed the age of 30. This age grouping constitutes a transitional period from childhood to adulthood (Fabietti, 1986).

The transnational perspective of immigration includes globalization and mobility. When we refer to transnationalism, we cannot exclude these two terms. They are closely related and mutually influenced and we will see how these two terms interact. Immigrant leaves the home country and moves to a place which works as a host country, so during this transfer the immigrant subject goes though the national borders. Economic, political and sociocultural processes are identified by the involvement of more than one nation. So, on the one hand transnationalism focuses on the place which immigrant comes from and goes to and on the other hand marks the retrenchment and the control that those people face at supranational level. Co –productions try to be adaptive to globalization procedures given that the material is targeted at a global market.

Co – produced films are initially based on a bilateral agreement between two or more producers from different countries. In particular, for EU funding through co-productions, belonging to a member-state (or having a special signed agreement with the EU as candidate member etc.) is necessary. This partnership is not limited to the financial part but extends to artistic and technical part. Even if the booming of co- production in Europe took place between 2007 and 2016 (European Audiovisual Observatory, 2018), Greece has interesting cinematographic texts before this outbreak. Transnational migration has been a theme often tackled in European film co – productions for the last decades and at the same time film co-produced can travel easily in the transnational landscape[2].

The cinematographic texts which have been collected for this research cover a very wide range of time bringing the lives of young immigrants who belong to the second generation into focus. All these cinematographic texts appeared almost a decade after the transnationalism's emergence in Europe, around 1990s but they are not all of them co – produced films[3].

Most of the directors have immigrant background and try to center not only on the immigrant experience as we already know but extend the point of view via sexuality, gender and class in which their main characters belong[4].

2 It is not of major importance that more and more festivals are choosing to include many international films in their repertoire. Besides, film's festival function as a distribution area as well.

3 Only "Xenia" belongs to co-productions. The films "From the edge of the city", "A bright shining sun", "Nobody" and "Liubi" are not examples of co-production.

4 The movie titled "From the edge of the city" and directed by Constantino Yiannari enters into a group of young whose parents brought them in Greece. As they mention

Almost all of the main characters were born out of Greece but there is no doubt that most of them have related their adult life or so-called reformative years with Greece. On the one hand, we have an elaborated view of the immigrant; on the other hand, we have to consider the crucial importance of the institutional and sociocultural parts. The audience is invited to attend –though the themes of these films- the complicated route that has been experienced by the moving subject at an international level.

The two main axes for this research are: hospitality in a foreign body and hospitality in a foreign place and both of them are rotating around the representation of the body, hegemonic and subordinate masculinity, language and sexuality (how the gendered and sexual language is formed by the subject) national and cultural visibility and hovering over two or more places. At this point it is quite significant to mention that something really interesting is that in order to achieve a new scope of the deep – rooted view of immigration, the film creators chose to use amateurs, less recognizable actors who are real migrants in an effort to make their films more realistic and effective to the audience. The representation of this kind of cinema is intended to stop being connected with specific values or practices we used to know until now for the immigrant until now.

In the movie "From the Edge of the City" the young Sasha returned to Greece from Kazakhstan in 1990 after the collapse of the Soviet Union. The peculiarity of this cinematographic text is that it depicts a combination of film and documentary realism in which the director works as an interviewer for the young Kazakh immigrant of Greek ethnicity. Sasha and his contemporaries get by casual jobs, take drugs, hang out in skid-row and prostitute themselves to wealthy Athenians of both sexes. They belong to the second

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many times in the movie, they brought them to their real home country. Although most of them blame their parents for doing that.

The short film "A bright shining sun" deals with the adversities that Natasha from Russia faces in Greece. Similarly, young Liubi has to cope with a difficult situation, when she came in this European country in order to live a better life.

"Nobody" is a complex of Russian and Albanian groups of people or alternatively group of youth sub-cultures in which one tries to dominate over another. However, this takes place within the framework of a love story between an Albanian girl and a Russian guy.

Last but not least we meet "Xenia" movie, which is a survival road trip/journey of two brothers, half Greek half Albanian who end up like vagabonds in an attempt to find their Greek father.

generation of immigrants, most of them are underaged and struggle to reconcile with the idea of male prostitution with the hyper- masculinity.

Constantinos Yiannaris tries to overemphasise body masculinity presenting many scenes with this group of friends shirtless or naked while they prostitute themselves and at the same time many of their conversations revolve on their non-negotiable masculinity identity. According to Sasha's words "once you are not queer, twice you are a little queer, but the third time;" He never gets "fucked" as he points out to the interviewer. He just gets paid by rich men and women but that has nothing to do with his original masculinity. It's just an easy way to earn money, because working on the construction sites is really painful and makes your body hurt. The allegory of this scene is that the director combines Sasha's displeasure for working on the construction sites while he's having hard-core sex with a young prostitute.

On the one hand, a well-built, muscular body can be depicted as a proof of matching their sex to their gender and on the other hand this body can be useful as a tool in order to raise their own value. Their physical condition seems to attract regular costumers for his services or more money. Sasha perceives this life as modern. He dreams of the end of this life with the marriage of his countrywoman Helena, pure Helena, Russopontian[5] Helena who has to stay virgin until get married[6]. However, as regards his male customers he underlines that he has always had active sexual role and never passive, which keeps him real man in contrary to the others who hang out and are called by someone as faggots.

The sexual roles are strictly separated into masculine and feminine, into "passive" and "active". The active man, the gay man is equated with a woman. He is the one who accepts, the one who deserves being subordinated. Bodies carry and transfer a wealth of complex information for ourselves (Goffman, 1963) and at the same time consciously or non – consciously the body allows

5 This term refers to repatriated immigrants and is used more often in everyday life. According to Voutira (2006) these immigrants come theoretically with full political, social and cultural rights but their "behavior" still differs from the native's. They face problem at the level of language communication. Taking a second look at the film "From the edge of the city" the linguistic aspect concerns Sasha and his friend because of their difficulty of becoming part of the Greek society.

6 As the viewer can observe, there is a crash between his Kazakh and Greek identity. Sasha seems to adopt very specific parts of these two different worlds. He feels Greek so he makes the most of the easy money Greece can offered to him but at the same time he feels Kazakhs as well and he wants his wife to be pure according to the Kazakh's tradition.

information to be exposed. Interesting information is encountered in Panos Koutras movie, Xenia.

Dani and Odi will be eyewitnesses of a racist assault in the center of the Greek capital. Dani seems annoyed at this unpleasant situation. He knows he could be the victim but his brother demands that he stays focused on the road.

"We don't look like Albanians" Dani would mention.

"Yes, but you look like faggot and that's worst" will be Odi's response.

"Yes, mountain and sea at the same time" Dani replies.

Dani is almost sixteen and has eccentric, colorful clothing. According to his brother who has just reached adulthood but faces the risk of deportation, the style of his younger brother is a dangerous proof of his sexuality at that time. This can get them into trouble. The body position, the gestures, the motions acknowledge the "right" and the "wrong" presentation of self. Even in the center of this European country[7] it is common being in trouble just because of the youth sub – culture you belong to. Dani's sexuality is far away from the masculinity standard. He has no father (which is pretty significant as director states because fraternal love is very important for the gay culture), her mother has just died, he is foreign[8], with no financial background or social class. He gathers all the criterions for being invisible.

According to Hatty (2000) some parts and functions of the body seem to step in the cultural construction of the "pure" body considering the "infected" body as a human material which belongs nowhere. Besides, as Butler (2008) mentions the body has no ontological existence without all the social

7 It's interesting to be mentioned that in the film "From the edge of the city" includes many details which promote this new Greek reality. It's a breath away from entering millennium and the director who spends many years abroad seems to promote this transition. It's no coincidence that the viewer can observe bikes to move behind the character. It's a proof of this European scent which gradually appears in Greece. Similarly, Panos Koutras depicts this new reality almost 20 years later. Reality shows has been appeared so anyone has the chance to follow his dream but at the same time financial crisis emerged so labors relations are getting worst and the institutional framework continues to reject people like Odi and Dani turning a blind eye to them.

8 Dani does not know any other place as home than Greece. Even though, he is considered as Albanian just because of his dead mother origin. His oldest brother Odi faces the danger of deportation despite he has never been to Albania and his birthplace is Greece.

practices which constrain it to follow the compulsory heterosexuality. Dani is going nowhere without his favorite white rabbit, Dido; his insistence to carry it to any place he goes can make his brother furious. However, despite the disagreements of two brothers, the oldest seems happy with Dani who refuses to adjust his life according to what is right and what is wrong. Besides as the director underlines it's quite hard to remove the childhood from a child in order to make him behave as an adult.

Masculine and feminine standards vary. The man's body is more acceptable when it looks brawny in comparison to woman's body which is related to thin and delicate poise. It makes a huge difference if a wide back belongs to a man's or a woman's body. In the movie "A bright Shining Sun" Natasha is forced to work as a prostitute in order to help her countrywoman and roommate to pay her bills. In order to accomplish this, she goes to a specialised photographer to create her portfolio. The photographer looks dissatisfied when checking out the way young Natasha poses in photos because, as he mentions, he is not enough feminine to manage this job.

Natasha seems to face a serious problem to show discipline to woman's standards and resorts to make up and encouraging herself. She spends hours and hours every day learning the Greek language and surviving doing financially ineffective jobs in order to make her living but that's not enough to support herself, even if she doesn't belong to the first generation of immigrants. It doesn't matter if she tries to learn the language or find a decent job. Her sexuality, her gender, her origin and her general situation doesn't give her the right to figure this out. For most of the natives she is just a girl from Russia who came to Greece for very specific work activities and that's proved by the majority of her bosses who make proposition to her. However, she is in touch with her family in Russia and affirms that she is perfectly fine in Europe.

Migrants in countries of destinations can maintain bonds with family members who are living in the countries of origin and vice versa. Therefore, the connection to two or more places can be reinforced through globalisation. However, the things are totally different from the pattern they have in mind in terms of for working as a foreign in Greece.

In the same way, Liubi from Russia is treated by her employers as a foreign house worker even though she lives in the same home, and takes care of the oldest bedridden woman. When she has a love affair with the youngest member of the family and gets pregnant for the second time, the whole family objects to this relationship and focuses on how they can get rid of her and her child because obviously the Greek man got trapped by the immortal

Russian. Dimitris informed by his family finds the solution transferring the responsibilities to the Russian employee who works in his gas station. It's unbelievable for this Greek middle-class family to accept something like that. Dimitris has an affair with the Russian –as they called her– and it's obvious that the same mentality has been followed by Dimitris who thinks that he has offered everything to his worker in order to disclaim his own paternity of Liubi's child. Nobody asks Liubi what she wants to do with her life, how she feels about maternity or for Dimitris she is in love with. She is a foreign 'burden' which is necessary to be returned. She has no health insurance, no place to go, no right to fight for her own life and according to Dimitris she should be cheerful leading a happy life with his worker, raising his own child with Dimitris who is going to be in and out of her life. The only person who seems to understand Liubi's situation is the old woman she takes care of, an old woman who had probably faced many unpleasant situations like a war.

A similar type of reality is encountered by the young Albanian Julia when she fell in love with Goran from Russia in the film "Nowbody". The Albanian Muslim woman is not allowed to have a relationship with the Russian guy because according to her brother's words he doesn't belong to the same tribe, they don't have the same religion; the only thing he wants from her is to humiliate her. All that he wants is to make fun of her and abandon her just because he wants to show that he can do this to an Albanian girl in order to punish her brother for his attitude. Hegemonic masculinity gathers features like heterosexuality, dominance, competition, aggressiveness and belittling of others man's sexuality (Canakis, 2011) Even if Julia's brother is heterosexual, masculine requisite behavior demands constant domination over the woman and over the other males.

Bodies are involved in power relations and are divided into normal and abnormal based on various social criteria like the gender and class (Makrynioti & Kouzelis, 2004). In this case woman's sexuality works as a field of competition in which the man winner claims for her control. One of the most remarkable parts of this cinematographic text is the chance that co – production offers to the viewer. The narrative spotlights stereotypes, remnants and behaviors which are connected and interacted with more than one place, identity or consciousness. It brings into the fore how all these can co – exist in an already complex subject with the immigrant experience on its shoulders.

Cinematography does not always depict the reality but it transfers the echo of the changes through the moving pictures, in this case it transfers the echo of the new scope of immigration. Cinema –as we used to know it- was

connected with a specific representation of an immigrant most of the times at local level. Nowadays the creators have changed the way of filming. Sasha is not only a Russopontian who is repatriated but he is also a young guy who doesn't even know the right use of the language of the country he lives in; he dropped out of the school; his family barely finds money to survive and he deals with drugs, prostitution and illegal activities in order to survive and enjoy life.

Liubi and Natasha are two young girls who came to Greece for a better life but they are not recognized as equal for the local society. According to the cinematic text you have two options if you come from Russia, becoming either a prostitute or a housekeeper. You can't skip this. It's like you are "pre-programmed" to do something very specific.

Julia can't disengage herself from the oppressive and religious family, either. Even if she belongs to the second – generation of immigrants which means that she is able to get involved in various transnational activities; her family reminds her every single day how important it is to be an Albanian Muslim woman in Greece. However, she ends up with Goran travelling to an unknown place with the "nobody" as he called himself with her mother being her life boat. Respectively, the two siblings from "Xenia" movie are the two sides of the same coin. They complement each other and seek for their biological father who can assure them the residency permit and the part of the puzzle which is missing. On the one hand the audience watches this absence encountering the dangers they should face though homophobic, xenophobic and racist adventures. On the other hand, the audience becomes a spectator of an emotionally powerful journey of these two siblings.

Despite the fact that only one film is co-produced, all the movies as a whole seem to "embrace" co-production in the sense that they follow similar logic of the representation and the values they try to display. As a result, almost all of the collected films are able to communicate with the audience that co-produced films do even if most of them don't belong in this category. Co – production is a chance for a viewer to rethink; not necessarily in a more progressive way but definitely different from the one we used to know before millennium.

The present films deals with immigration and the dynamic interaction between the host and the home country of the subject. Otherwise, it can function as a way of analysing immigrant experience though comparative pattern taking the advantage of the mobility and globalisation which are included in co-production. All these cinematographic texts look at a vanishing adoles-

cence and their exclusion from the sociopolitical sphere but not only because of the immigrant minority have they belonged to but because of their overall entity. Transnationalism takes on the responsibility of presenting all the visible or invisible engagement of a subject who tries to co-exist in more than one place, in more than one body, in more than one reality.

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On gender, nation and mobility through the gaze of two co-production films concerning Albania and/or Albanian cinema

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To my beloved friend Dritan and his family

"I am nothing outside of these mountains"
Sais Hannah/Mark In "Vergine Giurata", (Laura Bispuri, 2015)

Why should somebody be no one if he/she moves outside of a specific region? What if a specific region or a person' s mobility signifies much for his/her femininity or masculinity? In this article I will discuss gender, through mobilities from Albania to Italy and Greece. Two films, "Mirupafsim" (Korras, Voupouras, 1997) and "Vergine Giurata" (Bispuri, 2015), from which I extract representations of fragments of the everyday experience, will be the field for my analysis, focusing on the affinities of power, performances of gender[1], and ethnicities for people on the move.

These two visual documents will be analysed in relation to my previous ethnographic research in Albania in regards of the movement of ethnic Albanian migrants from Greece to Albania after the Greek financial crisis of 2010. In this paper I will work over my ethnographic findings, on the basis of a conceptual analysis that connects movement in space with manifestations of gender and nation[2].

1 Performativity is connected to the procedure that a gender identity is being produced via the repeating of practices, bodily movements and gestures. This takes place within a certain cultural environment and with the influence of discourses founded in this cultural context (Butler, 2006, p. 236-237. Also, Makrynioti, 2004, p. 22).

2 My ethnographic research in Albania took place as part of my PhD dissertation that was focused on the study of the massive movement of population with Albanian origins from Greece to Albania after the Greek financial crisis of 2010. I examined the sense of self for the ones on the move in connection to Anthropology of time and space.

In terms of the theoretical analysis of cultural critique, films -including film co- productions- are texts created by an author -or multiple authors in the case of co-productions- (Fischer, [1998] 2011, p. 110-111). Thus, by watching or "reading" these texts we can trace competitive relations or inclinations of dominance and enactments of power among persons, nation-states, companies or other configurations of human activity (Tsibiridou, 2018; Gefou-Madianou, [1998] 2011). In this context, the movies chosen at the basis of this paper present interesting manifestations of such relations. Vergine Giurata" ("Sworn Virgin") focuses on identity questions and practices of a sworn virgin woman, dressed and performing herself as a man, who moves from the mountainous region of northern Albania to northern Italy. Mirupafsim ("See you") focuses on the everyday life, the manifestations of the self, nation and masculinity as well as the friendship of three young men that moved from Albania to Greece with a Greek teacher who becomes their companion. The two movies refer to different periods of Albanian migration. More specifically, "Mirupafsim" concerns the first period after the fall of socialism in Albania -mid 1990's, while "Vergine Giurata" concerns the movement of people in 2010's from Albania to Italy. Despite their historic distance, these films were chosen as emblematic co-productions on gender migration from Albania to neighboring countries, as they attempt to challenge stereotypes on patriarchy and nationalism, or gender and national racism, even though, sometimes they may fall into the traps of stereotypical imageries they tend to oppose[3],

The reason that I chose co-produced films as a basis for my analysis is that I was triggered by the encounter of the international gaze with the local experience. What is more, in regard to Albania, the critical economic condition of the country for several years became an obstacle for a vigorous growth of the Albanian cinematography. Thus, co-productions seemed to be a solution towards film production[4]. As a matter of fact, there are some cinematographic co-productions between Albanian film companies -or the Albanian state-

3 For example, maybe on purpose, we see that somehow it is reproduced the ideal of the middle aged leftish male of Greek origins, that on the one hand seems to have certain views on religion -he does not want to baptize his daughter since he believed that baptism is an action of violence, while on the other hand he confesses that for a long time he "hated", as he mentions, the fact that he was a father of a daughter and not of a son.

4 It seems that International film shootings as well as film co-productions are increasingly being realized during the last decades in Albania, since taxation and wages for the shooting of the movies in Albania seems to be low, compared to central European tax incentives.

and companies founded in other countries of southeastern Europe from the end of the Second World War and on. An example is the big co-production that took place in 1953, between Albania and the ex-USSR, for the movie "The Great Albanian Warrior Skanderbeg"[5]. For this film, the principal funds provider was USSR, while the movie constituted a tool of the soviet propaganda in Albania, presenting a strong socialist pattern and ideal of everyday life. According to Burrows (2016), the movie targeted to formulate dominant attitudes, inspiring to male Albanians the qualities that a strong, socialist Albanian man should bear.

It is interesting that after the fall of socialism in southeastern Europe, social scientists, as well as entrepreneurs or governments faced Albania and the Balkans in general as an uncharted and exotic territory to be discovered. The theory of transition of the former socialist countries to the capitalist world, was considered as the only path to progress. Nevertheless, this belief was connected with this exotic gaze towards an unknown territory.[6] According to this wide- spread perception during the 1990's, transition was synonym of the concept of progress.[7] In the context of this "transitory" study of the "unknown" societies and economies, the Balkans witnessed numerous business investments, social researches, town twinning projects of towns and cities of different countries, as well as film co- productions concerning this geographical territory[8].

5 According to Burrows, due to the isolation that Albania was found during the cold war period, the Albanian cinema is so far one of the less studied European cinemas. However, due to the special geopolitical location of the country, other countries invested via "culture" -reconstruction of buildings, financing of programs and events- so as to create their own cultural ties to Albania and thus to highlight their own national identities. Older co-productions, such as "The Great Albanian Warrior Skanderbeg" of 1953 or "Lamerica" -an Albanian-Italian film co-production of 1994- they indicate this special oriental gaze towards Albania based on cinema (Burrows, 2016, Duncan, 2007).

6 According to Pine (1998, p. 3-7), the use of the concept of transition meant the implicit condition of the linear movement of a society and economy from one point to a specific other point. More specifically, it seemed to mean the movement from socialism to capitalism, a shift that concerned entire societies on a scale of progress and achievements given from somewhere outside these ex socialistic societies.

7 For a short genealogical presentation of the concept of progress, connected to the field of Social Anthropology, see Edelman and Haugerud (2005, p. 5-21).

8 Aggelidou ([2009] 2011) talks about the intensive research activity connected to the "exotic" Balkans during the decade of 1990's.

Interestingly, both in film co-productions and in ethnographies of non-local anthropologists such as those referring to Albania, there is always the risk that our works bear our own cultural dominant views on history, politics, culture, everyday life. Thus, even though cinematographic co-productions and ethnographies are cooperative practices, they may, however, carry a gaze of exoticism and dominance of some of the participating members, mainly of the ones that write, record or film a story[9]. Aiming to reduce the impact of the underlying tendency of dominance caused by the act of writingabout and thus representing a community, I will describe in brief my main methodological lines in this essay.

My PhD fieldwork research that was conducted both in Albania and Greece began in 2009 and lasted until 2014. During these years I spent several months in central and northern Albania, where it was common for my informants to talk about "the women dressing and acting as men" alias the "sworn virgins" ("burnesha"). The phenomenon of women performing themselves as men is mostly found in the region of Mirdita, in northern Albania, close to one of my residences during my fieldwork. The repetitive mention of these women possibly took place in the context of a folkloric valuation of my research, for which my friends and informants wanted to reveal something different compared to my experiences. According to one of my informants, Benard: "*in the books, the writers say it is something important. But now there are only a few of them. Maybe it is not so important anymore. It is not something massive*". According to Benard, the study of these women was connected to the exotic gaze of some writers focusing now on a phenomenon that was gradually fading. On the other hand, this fading regularity of life and gender could be, to some degree, emblematic of manifestations of gender and performativities of the self within the Albanian society that are interesting to be studied.

At the same time, during my research I was informed by the media and discussed with my informants about the deaths of women often committed by family members -femicides that were recorded almost on a weekly basis. I was also impressed that in several villages or smaller cities of northern Albania, women in the public spaces seemed to be a minority compared to men. This polarity between public and private space or between women and men constitutes an old and maybe obsolete discussion within the anthropological

9 On the power of writing and the hegemony of the scientific/research centers of northern Europe and USA writes Gefou-Madianou ([1998] 2011, p.368-382).

theory (Madianou, 2006, p.116-119)[10]. On the other hand, to me it was interesting the fact that there are discussions about tradition and the customary law regarding the Albanian society and its past but actually, we know little about the continuously shaping of gender dynamics within the Albanian society nowadays.

In this background, I decided to combine my fieldwork experience with the material of two coproduced films in order to talk and mostly question of cultural dynamics that formulate gender in association to power in Albania, especially for those on the move.

Historical background / On the move

It is useful to make a brief mention, at this point, to the historical and spatial context of the two movies that constitute the core material of this analysis. The death of Enver Hoxha in 1985, leader of the Albanian socialistic party and the Albanian state for almost forty years, can be viewed as a turning point for the Albanian society and its modern history. The first five years after Hoxha's death became a period of crisis for the Albanian society and state. During this period, mass demonstrations took place, as many Albanian citizens asserted rights to the privatisation of the public land, the change of the Constitution, the right to a multi-party parliamentary system and to the transformation of the Albanian state and society into something new (Vickers and Pettifer, 1998, p. 25). The Albanian state tried to make reforms (Vickers and Pettifer, 1998) to regenerate the Albanian nation-state. However, despite the creation of a multi-parliamentary system, from 1992 and on, the country found itself again in a severe condition of crisis after the collapse of the financial pyramid schemes in 1996-1997. This financial collapse caused mass demonstrations, bringing the Albanian society to a degraded condition. It is interesting that Mirupafshim, the first of the two movies examined in this paper, was filmed during this great social upheaval in Albania and released in 1997. The movie

10 Bibliographically, aspects of Albania as a patriarchal society can be traced to anthropological researches on the so-called 'traditional' societies in rural southeastern Europe and the Balkans, from the 1960's and on. Often, these researches were focused on the study of the concepts of honour and shame (Nitsiakos, 2004), private and public, nature and culture (Gefou-Madianou describes this scientific trend, 2006, p. 113-126). However, should we only focus on these binary concepts, we may to generalise on gender issues missing important voices and practices of people that these conceptual schemes are unable to describe.

connects migration flows in southeastern Europe with violence, crisis, ethnicities, gender and the quest for the legalisation of everyday life through the strategies to gain travel documents necessary for legal inter-state movement.

At the same time, while the Albanian state was heading to a reformist horizon, in 1990, Albania witnessed something that the Albanian society would be relate with for a long period ever since: it was the exodus of many Albanian citizens from the country. There were massive waves of Albanian people attempting to reach other countries, often lacking legal travel or residence documents in these countries. The migratory Albanian wave is very impressive: almost all families in Albania have at least one member that migrated.

However, in spite of this massive wave of people being on the move, for a long time, and mostly during the first years after the collapse of socialism in Albania, the mobility of people outside their country seemed to be a practice concerning mostly men. According to King, Vullnetari and Papailias (2012 and 2003) migration in Albania was traditionally connected to the practice of 'kurbet', namely the movement of people for reasons of work. Thus, to begin with, movement was a 'heroic' practice of the male body, through which a male would offer himself to his family. King, Vullnetari and Papailias assume that the difficulties witnessed during the first period of migration without documentation, combined to the rhetoric of 'kurbet' prevented a lot of women from leaving Albania to another place during the early 1990's (King and Mai, 2008).

The limited number of women on the move is possibly also connected to practices of patriarchy that seemed to be strengthened even more after the death of Enver Hoxha in 1985 (Christidis, 2003, p. 17). According to Tsibiridou (2018) patriarchy is described as the placement of women's practices and life under the male control and the power that men normatively exercise to women. Aspects of patriarchy can be traced in people's everyday practices that stress tendencies of dominance and power. Indeed, as King and Vullnetari argued, during the socialist governance (2012), Hoxha was thought to be the 'father' and the absolute 'guardian' of the Albanian nation a role that, nonetheless seemed to be contradictory to the position of the Communistic Party in Albania on gender equality and on the liberation of women.[11] Enver

11 It is interesting that for the Albanian Socialistic Party women's emancipation was connected to education. Thus, Gjioncxa et al. state (2008) that before the end of the Second World War the 90% of women in Albania were illiterate. In the same period only 3% of the young women were studying in the University. But, after the fall of

Hoxha became the personification of male power in all aspects of life, forming a state patriarchy which was continued during the years of the democratic governance of the country.[12] This ideal of Hoxha as an absolute 'father' of the Albanian state can etymologically be associated to the word of patriarchy itself. As a matter of fact, according to Brysson (2005, p. 259) the roots of patriarchy derive from the Greek word 'patriarches' that means the head of a tribe.

About patriarchy in rural northern Albania: Hannah / "Besides, we are the kind of men who drink"

Hannah, the main character of the movie is in the house of her stepsister Lila in northern Italy. She smokes and drinks alcohol with Lila's husband. When he asks his wife to bring them some more rakija, he adds that: "besides, we are the kind of men who drink". But who are these men? In the next sequence of the film, we watch Hannah in an earlier stage of her life, when she decides to be given a male name, to be dressed as a man and to perform a man's role. After her stepsister left for Italy with the man she loved, Hannah decided to escape the gender-imposed power of her cultural environment by becoming the one who would always take care of her family in the mountains. Her aunt asked her to leave for Italy as well, to avoid to "be petrified", but Hannah decides that her destiny is her family. In a gathering of the older male members of the community, she promises that she will always be a virgin, she has her hair cut and she is named Mark. From that point on she is regarded to be a man.

The above-mentioned custom of sworn virginity is a practice documented in northern Albania, in the region of Mirdita and in Kosovo[13], referring to the customary law of kanun. This law was regulating the everyday life of communities, families and the private lives of people at the north of the river Skoubi and was primarily followed by the clans of Gheks in Albania. During the socialist period of rule in Albania, it was attempted by the governance to present kanun as an obsolete remnant of the local folklore. However, some-

socialism in Albania it was only the 8% of women that were illiterate.

12 See also Tsibiridou who examined the empowerment of the patriarchy in ex U.S.S.R. countries after the fall of socialism (2018).

13 According to Young (2000, p. 55-56) sworn virginity is a custom that maybe derives from the pre-Christian period. However, only during the last 150 years there are systematic researches on this practice.

times this modernisation of everyday life was difficult to be internalised by the Albanian society. Thus, according to Bardoshi (2012) in specific areas in northern Albania kanun continued to exist in disguise, in the context of the community and family relations, while according to Mangalakova (2007, p. 525-527) in some cases kanun returned intensively and violently, to regulate the lives of people in some areas of the country after 1990. These local dynamics of kanun are displayed in the film Vergine Giurata, where the societal changes on work, property, social and gender relations are negotiated under the customary law.

In the film "Vergine Giurata" we notice expressions of patriarchy connected to the customary law of the Albanian region that is the set of the movie. Regarding patriarchy, the word is used as a vehicle for analysis since it can be indicative of cultural-gender dynamics within the Albanian society, showing that norms are cultural and political formations prone to continuous change by the human activity. Thus, some of the characters seem to negotiate their terms of everyday life with the norms of the local society. The heroine, who gradually decides to "become a man" in order to be able to decide her actions by herself takes this decision with the agreement of her uncle. Her decision seems to feature the patriarchal norms of the local society, since it seems to be double tied to the power of men and to the dominance of the elder people of her community (Brysson, 2005, p.259-260). It is this decision that gives her the freedom to walk on the mountains, carrying a gun, smoking, drinking alcohol and socialising with other people. At the same time, she is the one who will protect the uncle and aunt since they have no more children in Albania.[14]

14 According to Young (2000, p.13) the rural regions of northern Albania are described as patriarchal, patrilocal, and exogamic. Thus, it is common that brides settle close to the patrilocal house of the groom. Sometimes the new family resides in the same house with the groom's family, while there is also a tendency that the house of a family is inherited by the sons of this family. Often different households of the brothers of a family may be cooperating orco-located in the same building in the context of the extended family. This mode of housing, in combination to patrilocality and to the practices of heritage, highlight the patriarchal social organization analyzed by Young (2000).

"Sexual act as emancipating practice (?)"

"How is it to have sex?", Hannah asks her stepsister. Before the end of the movie Vergine Giurata, Hannah finally experiences sex for the first time. She also finds a job and a flat in Milano and finally she unties her breasts from the cloth she used to hide them, and she wears a bra. Hannah's sexual act is emblematic of the life she chooses to live from this time onwards. Her need for sex is revealed from the first shots of the film. When she reaches the level of sexual duality, this unprecedented sexual activity becomes an emancipatory practice against her vows for eternal virginity. These vows, as noted before, were part of the customary practice of kanun in the context of the patriarchal community in which Hannah used to live. Breaking the vows meant her death in the mountainous region. In this sense, her movement to Italy minimised the pressure put on her. The importance of her spatial movement is shown from the beginning of the film when her stepsister Lila admits that she does not visit Hannah because it is painful to see her as an unhappy man. In this way she criticises the oppressive regularity of Hannah's daily life.

On the other side, as Young says (2000, p. 7) the phenomenon of Sworn Virgins that gradually fades within passing time should not be thought as a "bizarre" practice or a "sacrifice". Since it is a cultural practice taking place in the context and ideals of a specific time and place. Thus, while according to Young (2000, p. 6) Sworn Virgins may "spark little interest" in the Albanian society nowadays, the oath of eternal virginity can be conceptualised by virgins themselves according to their cognition, experiences, cultural environment, fears and ideals of life.

At the same time, the co-produced film that depicts fragments of life of a Sworn Virgin, apart from a fiction can also be indicative of the social and political dynamics of gender within the rural communities of northern Albania. The movie indicates the status of dressing connected to the dynamics of the local rural economy, where it is important to undertake the role of a male in a family with no male members at all.

The latter seems to be essential for the decision of Hannah to take the oath: On the one hand taking the oath means that she is able to act as she wishes, such as to go for a walk alone in the woods, while on the other hand she helps the reproduction of her family and community as a male (Federici, 2004, p.10). Thus, Hannah performs what is thought as a male presence and activity within the local community that she resides. In this way, she can work outside her home, protect her family with the use of guns, negotiate and communicate with men in public, while she also has the right to inherit her ancestors.

It could be argued that a cinematographic co-production as Vergine Giurata is an 'oriental'[15] gaze towards a society shown to be somewhere in between modernity and tradition. However, this co-production as a point of view may conceptualize even as a fictional story issues such as gender, diversity, class, labor, and power within the cultural environment of rural northern Albania. Thus, Hannah's question on how sexual act is, reveals not only the local gender dynamics in connection to customary law but maybe something common to other people experience regarding the discipline of human bodies (Foucault, 2006, p.126). These can be bodies that their performance as such facilitates employment relationships and special roles that many times they are addressed to men. As Athanasiou underlined (2006, p.28) they are the kind of human bodies that participate in a division of labor connected to gender which become useful and symbolically reproduce androcentricity.

On gender, nation and mobility: travelling from Albania to Greece

"*-I like her. Will I get a passport if I 'll marry her?*
-Go and ask her from her father.
- I will take the woman I marry by force,
Even with a knife!"
A dialogue from "Mirupafshim"

In the early 1990 's, the legal documentation for many citizens of former socialist countries to enter Greece was an uncharted territory. It was only some years after the fall of socialism in southeastern Europe that the first changes in legal code in Greece gave the right for the people on the move to legalise their presence in Greece. This experience of living and moving without legal documents was captured by several film co-productions, usually showing the movement from former socialist countries to countries with capitalist economies. The cooperation of different film production companies was actually portraying new spatial movements, needs, deadlocks and crises rising in Europe.

15 Said (1978) talks about the hegemonic gaze of Europe and northern America and the power this geographical regions impose to the eastern and southern geographical zone of the world.

The above extract from "Mirupafshim" raises the issue of the encounter of two societies after forty years of compulsory absence of contact between them. At present the relationship between the two countries could be legalized with a wedding, where the participants seem to perform their gender subjectivities on the move.

However, some of the those who participate in "Mirupashim's" encounter of the two countries are rather speaking low while they sometimes withdraw from the foreground of the movie. Women's lower voice is combined with male narrations about life on the move, family, and racism, with a masculinity fighting for legalization of everyday life through legal documentation. This lower voice of women's narration is interesting, since it does not mean their silence, but it challenges us to investigate those hidden dynamics connected to the volume of the voices within the specific community of people.

The narration in Mirupafshim is close to the gaze of a documentary film. It is interesting that Mirupafshim succeeds in describing very thoroughly expressions of racism, nationalism and of the status of living without legal documents. However, even documentaries are, as it was stated earlier (Fischer, [1998] 2011, p. 110-111), texts written by authors. Within these texts the ones who direct, shoot and thus write a story can be selective of the volume of the voices that participate in the story. Thus, some voices can be louder than others. Regarding the low voices in Mirupafshim, through the character of Aphrodite, we may follow the connection of the national to the gender identities. Aphrodite 's bodily movements and words seem to be controlled by her family. Being one of the main characters of the film, she is chosen to be Christian, multilingual, and educated. She is described by her husband as "*good compared to the others*". At the same time, she has the right to speak and negotiate with the other males of the family, among them her brother-in-law, another main character of the film. Contrary to Aphrodite 's low voice in the movie we may follow masculinities with louder voices that make their own decisions about her future life.

Aphrodite 's ethnic identity and religious faith are depicted as suppressed, simultaneously to her gender and her human identity. She notes that "*my family didn't want this marriage. They don't talk to me anymore because they didn't want me to marry a Muslim*". At the same time Aphrodite is represented as being suppressed not only by the pursuits of her blood family but also by her husband's family. Her mother- in -law takes the cross she wears, while at the same time Aphrodite hides her desire to openly kiss a cross, as Orthodox Christians do. I would say that in Mirupafshim her everyday life as a

married woman is depicted as that of a minority group member (Tsibiridou, 2009), not because of her religious faith or due to the fact that she is bilingual, but because this seems to be reflected as a context of normalization of the everyday life for women that resided in southern Albania during the early 90's. Such kind of norms and normalisation of the everyday life on regards of gender can also be traced in "Sworn Virgin". At the same time, it would be interesting to trace nowadays gender norms that people actively formulate within the Albanian society. Then, co-productions could be a field for further social analysis and a text to be studied, compared or rewritten.

In other instances, gender seems to be performed in the context of belonging in an ethnic group. The Greek protagonist of the film Mirupafshim, Christos, visits his Albanian friends in their places of origin. In one of their excursions an unknown man reaches Christos and talks to him in Greek: "*What am I now? An Albanian or a Greek? I am in between the two countries. I speak Greek but I was also taught Albanian and I am Christian*". After this confession Christo's friends beat the unknown man. They are Albanians and Muslims believing that the unknown man was describing them as "Albanians", in an attempt to gain Christo's favor. As they say: "It is good to have a Greek friend"- "He wanted to take you from us". At the same time Christos is being informed by Aphrodite that this exercise of violence by her husband's family to the "unknown man" did not happen accidentally. It seems that the reason of the quarrel was Aphrodite, a woman that according to her family should not be married to a Muslim. In parallel, this depreciation towards the family of her husband affects severely its honor and provokes the violent reaction of its male members.

Regarding nationalism, ethnic minorities and identities, conceptualized and expressed through the media and the film Mirupafshim, it is interesting that in the beginning of the massive movement of people from Albania to Greece, the people on the move were welcomed as "brothers". Numerous reportages were presented in the Greek media during the first months of the migratory flow to the northern borders, showing the excitement of local Greeks for the arrival of their "brothers". Very soon, this brotherhood of the people from 'northern Epirus' (as southern Albania was often called in Greece in that period) was reduced to descriptions of them as being "just Albanians" (Baltsiotis, 2003).

Indeed, the characterisation of people as "Albanians" during the early 1990's in Greece often exposed the suspicion of the Greek society towards the newcomers, leading to alternative descriptions of origin by the Albanians in

their attempt to gain approval: "We come from Northern Epirus". It was an expression that might turn these people on the move to familiar persons due to the annexation doctrine of a big Greece with ethnic minority groups that reside in from southern Albania, otherwise northern Epirus (Μπαλτσιώτης, 2003).

Conclusions

The symbolic power of a film co-production seems to be very strong. Through the articulation of power from different geographical places, companies and states of different cultural and economic backgrounds decide how a story will be told. The kind of movies to be produced, as well as the aspects of the story to be filmed, together with the targeted public of each movie are choices of special important. The study of these choices can help us decode the dominant discourses in the cultural context of a cinematographic co-production, as well as trace the procedures for the construction of people's subjectivities. Particularly in southeastern Europe, after the fall of socialism, a film co- production can be seen as a glance to stories of the everyday. However, it can also be a way for a story to be re-invented and history to be envisaged again.

Through the film co-productions used as field material for this paper, we noted performativities of gender and subjectivities on the move of persons living in the borderline and chased from the law due to lack of documentation. At the same time, they may also be chased by a customary law with which they feel bound. Thus, a state of exception becomes, sometimes, their perpetual condition of life (Tsibiridou, 2013, p. 29).

As a narration about gender dynamics, emancipation and patriarchy in specific areas of rural Albania, these two co-productions seem to imply that the power connected to gender and exercised to human bodies is a cultural construction. The enhancement of the power imposed over the bodies and the construction of gender identities in Albania and the Balkans is a field that the specific co-produced films appear to conceptualize while making critical questions regarding gender discourse (Athanasiou, 2006, p. 19-20). The stories being told need to be understood in the cultural and historical context of the Albanian society during the decades of 1990 's to 2010 's. At the same time there is the need to associate these stories to new and old research works on regards of gender dynamics in Albania, as well as to norms, experiences and practices referred to the human body elsewhere.

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"The Miracle Garden Situation"

MA Vaya Danielidou, Filmmaker – Educator.

My name is Vaya Danielidou, I'm a freelancer filmmaker, founder of 24plus1 (www.team24plus1.com) and that's the adventure of Greek independent cinema through our case study that is still in progress. It is a story that you can narrate only with humor and sincerity. It is a story of passion, it is a story of pain, it is a story of long-lost expectations… regarding the financial part at least…

I have also prepared some audiovisual material concerning our film… that is called "MIRACLE GARDEN". I am co-directing along with Konstantinos Topalis and also producing it… somehow.

Let's watch the trailer…

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IGsTJaVh6uQ

Let me emphasize that our film is an independent Greek production with collaborators mainly from Thessaloniki and with an associate producer from London. Thessaloniki is the city that hosts the Official Greek Film Festival as well as the State Film University… a piece of information for those who do not know that… Unfortunately, after the crisis almost all of production companies moved to Athens or just collapsed…

The problems and difficulties of Greek cinema are known and its old news… Long delays for answers or approvals from official bodies, few production companies (most of them in Athens of course) with waiting time of 3 to 5 years on average, meaning up to 5 long years for an experienced production company to take over your film and 3 years again on average to see if you will get funds from Greek Film Center or ERT. For example: 10 years in order to complete his film Zizotek… I am talking about Vardis Marinakis… and I believe the film Afterlove by Stergios Paschos got distributed first and a year later he received funds… no need to continue… And of course, you never know for sure that you will be funded… Delays, delays, delays… and again delays…

I should also add that we, meaning we as 24plus1 have participated in several film festivals, both international and local, received some awards, distinctions and our latest short film "Free Camping" participated in Cannes Film Festival in 2014 and managed an international distribution.
Let's get back to our case study and run through some main headlines…

- Producing - Directing your first independent Greek feature film.
- Making a feature film from scratch… Shooting as a freelancer. Film Festivals' boost and the start-up funds.
- Sponsors. "To be or not to be"?
- The production companies' situation. Making a feature film that's not in Athens. "Run Forrest Run" …
- Waiting for approvals: the script approval, the production approval, the post production approval etc. Greek Film Center, ERT & private institutions approval… If you are not a "celebrity" filmmaker… yet.
- The fund-raising factor: using web for raising money, what's the case with an Independent Greek Feature film. Cast and crew reactions… Raising Facebook Posts and not money. Hire a pro and get the job done.
- Alternative ways of promoting and financing a feature film in the "districted area" … How artists can support each other if they want to: EMILIA ART EVENT. Succeeding finally. "God save France and Artists".
- Is Independent Cinema or Cinema an important part of Culture & Civilization nowadays in Greece… or elsewhere…?

So, we rapped our shooting at the end of 2016 and since then MG has been touring both in public and private bodies to raise the remaining capital and finally enter film festivals. This is our goal. Film festivals, the promotion of the project and its distribution of course.

Well… You can also see some indicative photos of this period…

Photo 01. Shooting

Miracle Garden is the first feature film almost for all team members… We had our own start-up funds and a few sponsors. An extensive presentation of the project was made to the key contributors. Almost all of our cast, crew and production team had collaborated on previous short films. The shooting took place in Thessaloniki, or rather in a bourgeois suburb of Thessaloniki, Panorama, in a villa that was actually for sale, at least at that time. The owners were not always consistent with our agreement or the program… to be completely honest… So, the schedule was quite tight or even… flexible I would say if… I want to stay… descent. The shooting lasted about 3 months, late summer to early autumn.

The Miracle Garden project (formerly "Emilia") started in 2016 as I said before…

Sadly, we haven't achieved much in terms of financial result. However, we managed to connect with our potential audience and highlight as much as we could our problematic not only in relation to the specific film but also in relation to the independent cinema in our country. And of course, to discover some alternative ways of promoting and financing a feature film…

The film is under the auspices of the French Institute, French Consulate in Thessaloniki and General Secretariat of Youth… Many thanks to Babis Papaioannou the special force of Youth…

We can watch some videos from the "EMILIA Art Event" that took place at the French Institute of Thessaloniki.
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aFoPQjAzrvw
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GopfZmUex3o

It was surely an incredible hit with more than 1500 people attending that night, like a music concert we could say… An auction was held in collaboration with Myro Auctions and over 100 paintings were bought by the public to support our film.

Photo 02. Art Event Poster

It should be noted that there was an open call to artists and painters and all paintings were given voluntarily and were not pre-purchased. And then, as I said before, the auction followed. Many thanks again to dear Mr. Philippe Ray and the French Institute of Thessaloniki and Marianthie Paschou and of Mr. Stavros Myronidis and his dynamic team, who were responsible for the auction.

Of course, I will not refer to the very large volume of work, the anxiety and the frustration... The indifference from the official bodies… The disappointment and the lack of decency from some individuals (surely the ancient Greek term «idiots» refers to them) that committed to support the project financially… and then retreated… Unfortunately, it is a sad phenomenon nowadays. I will not expand more unless you have some questions you want to discuss…

I will insist on the fact… If Cinema is an important part of Culture and Civilization (and not syphilization) then it should definitely be redefined with more sympathy the least, certainly more seriously and above all with much more responsibility. I imagine that as laws are passed and implemented in the middle of the night, the same thing can be done in a more efficient way regarding younger filmmakers and of course Culture itself.

Solidarity, not only as a slogan… and that's in one word let's say… the message of our film "Miracle Garden" …

I must inform you that while we are still waiting for funds… fortunately a small amount… we are at the stage of developing our second feature film, in collaboration with another filmmaker – producer and his team, from Thessaloniki too. And with a British associate producer and Art Factual as usual. This time we aim for a French – Greek co-production… Let's see… Fingers crossed.

Thank you for your time. I hope I did not tire you or disappoint you… and that… there was some kind of film… enlightenment about what is happening in our field today.

If you want to contact me on the 24plus1 page now or later for questions, queries or possible collaborations I would be more than happy to reply or discuss everything with you.

Miracle Garden

A story of "non adulthood". A story of goals.

Coming soon!!!

https://24plus1.weebly.com/miraclegarden.html

IV. Co-productions in Balkan Countries

The relations amongst Transnational and European cinema in SouthEastern Europe

George Vasiloglou, University of Macedonia

Introduction

One could argue that cinema is an essential component of nowadays life. Indicatively, its significance lies in Gordon Gray's (2010, p. 11) notion that cinema has such an inherent place in socially active subjects that it is difficult to answer unilaterally the simple question: "What is Cinema?". The representations, and in particular, the way in which people choose to re-interpret and re-tell issues of the past, coming to the present, to serve their needs, are of a particular anthropological interest (Eriksen, 2001, p. 9).

In cinema, from the 1990s onwards, the emergence of the term 'transnational'[1] and, at the same time, its comparative position on the concept of 'national'[2], created the conditions for social and cultural studies to better understand, through this analogy, the frameworks of production, consumption and depiction of cultural identities (Higbee & Lim, 2010, p. 8). A common feature of transnational cinema is the making of films as products of international co-productions. The gradual connection of the central film industry with the regions and the implementation of financing policies by the Euro-

1 About the term 'transnational', it is appeared -within the discipline of film studies- in footnotes and subtitles of books "to indicate cross-border cinematic connections" (Higbee & Lim 2010: 8; Chan 2009; Hunt and Leung 2008; Kaur and Sinha 2005; Morris, Li and Chan 2005).

2 Regarding the concept of national cinema, it is useful to note that there is no globally accepted discourse for national cinema. More specifically, the conditions that define the national cinema can be found in the observation of the fields of *consumption* and *production* of films. Therefore, national cinema is a complex subject that needs to be studied beyond the context of examining films produced by or within a particular nation state. It is important for the national cinema to be studied in the broader context of cinematic culture (Higson 2014: 176, 187, 188).

pean Union, determined the evolution of Balkan cinema and its relationship with major European film festivals.

Nowadays, new data, which emerge from this transformation in the field of film studies incited a new way to see the conditions of production, distribution and narration of two films from Balkans which were released in cinemas, during the 2000s. These two films present, in the historical – cultural – political context, a critical approach to the local condition of everyday life, in a 'different way' of both Bosnia and Herzegovina and Slovenia, in a period of transition from war and poverty, to an early gradual 'Europeanisation'.

Thus, this paper, in the reasoning of the broader field of study of the relationship between the 'political' and 'cultural', tries to explore the relation amongst transnational and European cinema, by tending to find answers to the following question: what is the relation between transnational and European cinema, through the examination of the elements of production, distribution and storytelling of "*Grbavica: Land of my dreams*" (2006) and "*Slovenka: A Call Girl*" (2009)?

Theoretical framework

Initially, the theoretical axes on which the content of the work is built are shaped on two levels; On the one hand, interpretive approaches from the field of film studies are extremely important in the broader process of understanding the points that distinguish transnational cinema. At the same time, taking into account the exploratory concerns that arise, regarding its relationship with European cinema and, consequently, with national cinema, special attention is paid to the fact that behind the process of creation, financial support, production conditions, advertising and commercial distribution of the films embodies a relational framework, between artists, production companies and the Ministries of Culture of European countries, which will be analyzed as a tool of economic anthropology. Therefore, critical approaches, which present a figure of strategies in transnational cinema, are fruitful theoretical tools to see how geopolitical intentions are hidden in the process of shaping relations between production companies and government agencies for the making of co-productions.

At a second level of analysis, in order for the interpretation of the data to backs up the arguments of this paper, it was deemed appropriate to follow an interpretive effort, combined with economic indicators of the films, in order to highlight issues which reflect the ways social subjects are organised. And

also, the ways that production and reproduction of material terms define their action (Narotzky, 2007, p. 13). In addition, a number of contemporary critical approaches are used to conduct a reception of film narrative, through the prism of two analytical currents of the theory of representations. To achieve this personal research expectation, two essential theoretical models of social theory functioned as useful methodological tools: the 'semiotic' approach by Ferdinand de Saussure and Roland Barthes is a constructive analytical tool for studying how to realize a depiction. Also, it was fruitful to observe the processes followed, in order to produce meanings from the perspective of poetics. At the same time, this interpretive strategy is enriched, with the valuable contribution, of Michel Foucault's 'discursive' approach, which seeks, in the results of a representational process, the factual elements that connect speech with the conceptual armory of power (Mpounia, 2006, pp. 146-150).

Then, for a holistic understanding of the context that comprises transnational cinema, it is useful to refer to some of the positions that outline the genealogy of European cinema. From the results of critical perceptions of the historical course of film production in Europe, there are conjunctions between politics and culture. At the level of political interpretation, through the historical review of European idealism[3], it is understood that an idea was supported in public discourse by the leading minds of the European political scene, with the aim of implementing a supranational formation. This formation is not based only on political and economic terms, but also on the moral evocation of a common heritage. This strategy, which began to be implemented, gradually since the 1990s, during the period of the collapse of existing socialism, goes back to an early level, in the years following the end of World War II, when the idea of a European Union it was publicly supported in 1948 by the British politician Winston Churchill. The idea was based on the prospect of the emergence of a "United Europe", which would be based on the mutual renunciation of traditional perception of national sovereignty, with the aim of forming common institutions of policy. One channel for achieving this political agenda has been culture and consequently cinema. Thus, on this political expediency, since the 1980s, and in connection with global competition and the speed of economic developments, a number of transnational economic policies, related to culture were pursued. Howev-

3 Idealism is a philosophical movement emerged in the Europe's eighteenth and nineteenth century. Commonly, the political ideas projected by David Hume, Immanuel Kant and (in Germany) Friedrich Nietzsche during the nineteenth century contributed to the European modernity (Guyer & Horstmann, 2015).

er, as reflected in some critical approaches that raise well-founded concerns about the intentionality of the transnational cinematic policies pursued, early transnational steps have been limited to economic sector.

Hence, it is clear that after the end of World War II, a coherent traditional competitive economic policy continued to be pursued, in terms of cultural synergy (Rivi, 2007, pp. 12-20). In this context, the European cinema has gone through a period of creating cinematic narratives, which have emerged beyond the narrow confines of the nation-state, laying the foundations for the gradual construction of transnational cinema. The influence of refugees and post-colonial cinema, which began to highlight issues of memory, minorities, gender-based violence and anti-war content, also played a key role in this change (Iordanova, 2010: 51).

In addition, another dimension of the transformation of the European cinema and its shift to the emergence of co-productions that led to transnational cinema is purely due to the economic conditions of the late 1980s and early 1990s. In particular, economic indicators of the world entertainment industry capture a picture of the emerging economic dynamics of the American film industry in Hollywood, placing it (in fact) out of competition, in relation to economic rates of the European film industry. Thus, European funds pushed European cinema in search of new economic strategies, in order for the European film industry to stand up to the equally growing film productions of Great Britain, due to its linguistic dominance[4]. Hence, from 1990 onwards, the European Community promoted a number of filmmaking strategies through the Eurimage program, which aimed to enhance the development of film co-productions between the countries of the European Union (Wayne, 2002).

In transnational cinema and its critical approach, it is useful to process the data of "transnational" in cinema and the critical view of Will Higbee and Lim Song Hwee (2010), who suggested moving away from a Eurocentric approach to the process of reading films with transnational character. Through the recording of case studies in the cinema of post-colonial Asia, they highlighted the positive and negative points of transnational cinema in its relationship with "national" as a field of better understanding -in Higson's definition- of cultural and economic formations, engraved within national boundaries and, thus, giving an important proposition of a global perspec-

4 It is worth noting that the ease of diffusion of British and United States films into the global film industry market is due to the predominance of English as a commonly accepted language in world trade.

tive, beyond the myopic view of West-centered approaches to non-Western cultural ensembles (Higbee & Lim, 2010, pp. 1-3).

The production of the film "*Grbavica: Land of my dreams*" (2006)

By examining the conditions of production of the film "Grbavica: Land of my dreams" (2006) a figure of interest facts is revealed, regarding the collaborations that were developed, and the financial framework of the film. The location of the script and shooting of the film is Sarajevo; the capital of the state of Bosnia and Herzegovina. According to the website *Cineuropa* (n.d.) the film was produced substantially by companies based in Austria and Germany. The film is produced by Barbara Albert, Martin Gschlacht, Antonin Svoboda and Jessica Hausner. Their professional is mostly identified with art-house cinema films, in other words, a category of films with prospects for promotion at European film festivals.

At the level of production companies, the Austrian company *coop99* and the German production companies *Noirfilm Filmproduktion* and *ZDF* occupy a central position. Furthermore, the independent production company *Deblokada Filmproduction* based in Slovenia took on a supporting role in the production. The main producer of the film was Barbara Albert, who is characterised for her significant contribution to the rise of Austrian cinema (Prot, 2006). As the producer herself stated in an interview on the website *Cineuropa* (2006), since 1996, when she met the director of the film Jasmila Zbanic, she wanted to undertake the production of her first film, as she admired her both for her directing skills and personality. For the production conditions, the film had to fill the technical gaps that existed in Bosnia, through the know-how and facilities, which were available in Germany, Austria and Croatia. The decisions of the stockbrokers played a decisive role for a co-production of four countries.

The Austrian company *coop99* had a dominant position in production and financial stocks of the film. Deblokada worked on the script, while Germany assisted in the development of the scenario and ensured most of the technical staff. The film studio was in Zagreb, the capital city of Croatia. As the producer (2006) points out, the production company's goal was to address the film to friends of art-house cinema and to the rest of the audience in parallel, in order to communicate a film about Bosnia – Herzegovina, even with those who did not know about the war in the region. A very important role in the promotion of the film was played by the German television company

ZDF, which undertook the co-production of the film and made it known to a television audience, which could hardly be approached by an art-house film production company alone.

The production of the film "Slovenka: A Call Girl (2009)"

According to the film website *Cineuropa*, the production of "Slovenka: A Call Girl" was undertaken by a number of companies from four countries. More specifically, the responsible production companies of the film were the firms from Slovenia *Vertigo*, *Viba Film* and *RTV Slovenija*, the German production company *Neue Mediopolis Filmproduktion GmbH*, the Hungarian company *4 FILM* and the Serbian production company *Film House Bas Celik*. According to International Movie Database (IMDb), the main producer was the Slovenian producer Danijel Hocevar and Jörg Rothe, Jelena Mitrović, Anita Juka, Amra Bakšić and Alexander Ris. For a wider understanding of the conditions of production it is of particular interest the fact that *FTT-Frenk* assisted in the transfer of the technical staff and actors, the film's legal insurance was covered by the German *Gothaer Allgemeine Versichrung* and the Slovenian *Zavarovalnica Triglav*, equipment from *RTV Slovenija* staffed the workshop, while *Viba Film* assisted in the cameras, sound and lighting. The shooting of the film took place in Ljubljana and in the Slovenian cities of Kranj and Krsko, according to the script of the film: in the place of origin of the protagonist. By the research for factual material in the conditions of production of this film a gap is identified in the lack of recorded interviews, both by the persons of the production, as well as by the director and the actors. Judging by the first data from the *IMDb* and *Cineuropa* online movie databases, production companies from different partner countries show that the films they choose to take over are primarily aimed at the audience of art-house cinema films. However, transnational co-productions and cooperation with the European Center of Germany reveal that the consumer orientation of the production companies was not limited to this narrow quantitative category of films.

The distribution of the movie "Grbavica: Land of my dreams" (2006)

Going to the level of distribution, the picture regarding the framework begins to become clearer, which led to the establishment of cooperative networks, which liquidate the boundary between the 'local' and 'global', the 'national' and 'transnational'. More specifically, through the research for the financial

information of the film "Grbavica: Land of my dreams" (2006), arises the fact that a number of promotion companies have been added to the field of film distribution, aiming at the global market. According to *Cineuropa*, the film, as a major art-house material, which is widespread among a fairly large British audience, was financially supported by the UK Film Council. The responsible companies for promoting the film were the Italian cultural institute *Istituto Luce Cinecittà*, the Austrian company *Polyfilm*, the Dutch *Cinemien*, the Belgian *ABC Distribution*, the French *ID Distribution*, the Portuguese *Vitória Filmes*, the Czech *Trofon Films* and *Trigon Films Pictures* and the Spanish *Golem Distribución*.

The director of the film, Jasmila Zbanic, gives an interesting aspect of the processes, which were followed at the financial level, for the support and promotion of the film, in an interview on the film website *Cineuropa*. Her husband Damir Ismahilovic, a banker, helped her financially to set up a small production company named *Deblokada*. The aid went to the accumulation of capital, which was quite difficult for the first years of the film. Then, with the success of the film at festivals, the company was able to form a team of human resources and consequently proceed to the production of short films and documentaries (De Marco 2006). Following in the footsteps of the film, the movie was first released in Austrian theaters on March 3, 2006. It was then played in Germany on 6 July 2006, while in the Netherlands on 7 September 2006 and in France on 20 September 2006. The following month it was screened in Italy on October 6th and in Serbia on October 13th, while in November the film was screened in Portugal (November 23rd), Spain (November 24th) and Poland (November 24th). In December of the same year, the film was screened in art-house cinemas in Belgium (December 6) and the United Kingdom (December 15) (Zbanic)[5].

Obviously, according to the financial data provided by the electronic database of *IMDb* (etc.), the film "Grbavica: Land of my dreams" belongs to a category of small budget films. In other words, this is a film of low economic performance. The financial indicators give $5,974 profits during the

5 The reason why the dates were placed in this passage this way, is due to the fact that details of the ethnographic data can, through the quantitative factual materials, give qualitative data, regarding the time and the period of distribution of the film in different European states. The frequency and the time gaps capture a picture of strong financing of the film; a fact that is either due to the budget from the financial support companies, or to the acceptance and the positive comments by the art-house audience.

first week of the film's screening, while in the total box office, as recorded by *IMDb* box office data, the film received a total of $43,060 (data of June 10, 2007). Another dimension, regarding the level of diffusion of the film in an international cinematic audience is the selection of different titles from the distribution films. In particular, the film was released in Bosnia and Serbia under the title "Grbavica". In Central European theaters, such as Germany and Austria, but also in the art-house audience of Great Britain, the film was presented under the title "Grbavica: Esma's secret", while in the art-house theaters of the United States of America the film brought the title "Grbavica: Land of my dreams", as reflected in the IMDb catalog (Wikipedia 2019). Moreover, the film has won numerous awards at international film festivals. It won the Golden Bear for Best Picture at the 56th Berlin International Film Festival in 2006. According to IMDb, it also won the following awards: Peace Film Award - Berlin Film Festival 2006, Prize of the Ecumenical Jury - Berlin Film Festival 2006, Kosomorama Award - Best Film, Reykjavik Film Festival - Best Film, AFI Film Festival - Narrative grand jury prize, Brussels European Film Festival - Prize TV Canvas for Best Film and Award Best Actress (to Mirjana Karanović), Ourense Film Festival - Award Best Actress (to Mirjana Karanović), Portland International Film Festival - Audience Award, Thessaloniki Film Festival - Woman & Equality Award, Bosnian-Herzegovinian Film Festival in New York - Audience Award, Sundance Film Festival - Grand Jury Prize and European Film Award - Best Film and Best Actress. Subsequently, the significant strategies followed both in European, American and Balkan audiences by the collaboration of geographically different promotion companies, shows that the movie marked a prominent place in critical film festivals.

The distribution of the movie "Slovenka: A Call Girl" (2009)

Regarding information from distribution of the film: "Slovenka: A Call Girl", the film was promoted in cinemas and festivals over a wide period of time, between 2009 and 2012, by virtually five film distribution companies. *Amstelfilm* in the Netherlands, *Epicentre Films* in France, *Farbfilm Verleih GmbH* in Germany, *Pirámide Films Distribución* in Spain and *Cinemania groop* in Ljubljana, Slovenia. According to the *Cineuropa* website, the film was first screened in Slovenia in September 2009, a year later, on October 21, 2010 in the Netherlands and in Hungary in December of the same year. In France, the film premiered in February 2011, in Germany it began to be released in

cinemas gradually from April to June 2012, while in the same month, the film was promoted in Spain.

The film also received a significant number of positive reviews in very important magazines of large readership and with strong international influence such as *Variety*, *Le Figaro*, *Moving Pictures Magazine* and *Screen Daily*. Possibly, this successful communication strategy of the film promotion companies is due to the fact that the film was screened, at least, in seventy international film festivals, it won eight international film awards, including the Grand Prix for Best Picture, Best Director and Best Actor in 2012 at the Girona Film Festival in Spain, and the European Academy Award for Best European Film in 2010, the Audience Award and Best Actor Award at the Essonne European Film Festival in France, and the Best Actor Awards at the Mostra de Valencia Film Festival in Spain and the Les Arcs European Film Festival in France in 2009 (Wikipedia 2019).

However, the financial data form a picture similar to the results of the film "Grbavica: A land of my dreams", as due to the many transnational collaborations, there was a relatively good amount of funding for the film. Regarding IMDB database (e. g.), the budget of the film was at 1.500.000 €. However, the film's profits add up to $ 37,319 in Global Gross Box Office Data. In addition, it is worth noting that the same gap, which appeared in the factual material of the production conditions, is also found in the data of distribution conditions of this film. The absence of the voices of people who participated in the creation of the film leaves a blur on our view for the qualitative data. A further material from possible interviews by the film's actors, it would help in strengthening research conclusions combined with the economic indicators recorded by the digital film databases.

The narration of the movie "Grbavica: Land of my dreams" (2006)

An important dimension for exploring the content of the script of films by the category of transnational cinema is the way in which filmmakers choose to narrate, with historical as well as social content based on them. In the case of "Grbavica: Land of my dreams", filmmaker Jasmila Zbanic wrote the screenplay for the film, by following a series of interviews with rape victims, during the battlefield at the occupation of Sarajevo in Bosnia. The words of the screenwriter and director are of particular interest about the choices and the purpose of narration:

> I began writing this story when I had my daughter, Zoe, in 2000 and was shocked by the number of cases of raped women in Bosnia. For me, having a child was a positive upheaval in life. I wondered how they felt about a child they hadn't wanted. In this case, their love isn't pure, it's a very complex emotion. Women are asked to go through a long emotional process in being able to love that unwanted child. It is an experience that involves the woman wholly, along with her entire femininity (De Marco 2006).

The film stars are Esma and her teenage daughter, Sara, who live alone in post-war Sarajevo, Bosnia. On the occasion of a school trip on the subject of war heroes, Sara asks her mother for a state document of her father, in order to be given funding for the trip. In the script, the mother's answers and the constant postponements for the submission of that document, gave the feeling that Esma is keeping a severe secret; the disclosure of which she is trying to avoid. In the narrative present of the film, the unruly and provocatively aggressive behavior of the daughter towards her mother leads to a climax of drama, when Esma reveals to her daughter that she does not know her father, as she was a victim of gang rape when she was imprisoned in a military camp, during the Bosnian war.

In addition, extremely important meanings derive from the signifiers of the narrative process of the film. As argued by film critics, the way the script is portrayed, includes elements of the stream of realism. Apart from the central role played by the plot and action of the film, through the special performance of the experienced actress Mirjana Karanovic in the role of Esma, the audience receives a broader perspective of the place and society of post-war Bosnia. The restaurants, the school, the bars and the outdoor shots in Sarajevo do not capture a beautiful picture of the city. Instead, we see a town with the tangible imprint of war, old buildings, demolished apartments and ruins, while people are experiencing a multitude of financial problems, which are evident in the faces of the action, as they are forced to work in more than one job and with flexible ways of employment (Pinto, 2006).

The narration of the movie "Slovenka: A Call Girl" (2009)

On the other hand, the narrative of "Slovenka: A Call Girl" has a different content in terms of plot and action, with clear allusions and critiques of the modernizing effects of capitalism in Balkan peninsula at the end of the late 1990s and early 2000s. First of all, considering the factual data of the narra-

tion of the specific film, the choice of the place of this film is not at all accidental. The heretical Slovenian director Damjan Kozole chooses to represent a series of issues of Slovenian society, through the choice of Ljubljana as the place that acts the young film star Alexandra.

In 2008, the year that Slovenia was anointed the presidency of the European Union, the author chooses to show a picture of the internal crisis of the subject of modernity in a period of gradual western-based 'development' and 'modernization'. Alexandra, a young student from a small provincial town of Krsko, lives in Ljubljana, studying English literature. Amid the protagonist's growing expectations and ambitions against a challenging economic reality, the young Alexandra, having received a loan for her studies and her large modern apartment in the center of the capital, works as a call girl at night. The creator has chosen to trigger the action of the narrative present of the film, through the original scene of the script, during which the young student goes as a call girl to an expensive hotel in the city center. One of her clients is an old politician from a European country - a fact attributed to the fact that she speaks English - and dies of a heart attack in front of her from an overdose of pills. From that moment on, the life of young Alexandra flows between delinquency and the image of a good student, through a series of psychological fluctuations and episodes. It could be said that there is no clear end to the action of the script, choosing the director to emphasize the element of duration of the meteoric psychological chaos of the young student (Wikipedia, 2019).

Intersections of Greek and European cinema at the level of co-production

Respectively with the co-productions mentioned above, it is important to note that the Greek cinema has also gone through a period of transition, by evolving the physiognomy of their films through the creation of co-productions and the meeting of traditional Greek cinema with European cinema. Regarding Greek cinema and its relationship with European cinema at the level of co-productions, Lydia Papadimitriou (2018) records the change that took place in the productions of Greek cinema during the decade of 2010. More specifically, her recent research highlights the financial increase of co-producing Greek artists by central European institutions and the significant reduction of the cinema's financing from national state funds (Papadimitriou, 2018, pp. 1-2).

This economic transition to a more international financing model, according to the work mentioned above, also defined the way of storytelling by Greek producers since 2010. Aspects of the economic crisis in Greece created a series of young directors, who moved to a 'Europeanised' cinematic form, managed to reach the top of European and global film competitions. A typical example is Yorgos Lanthimos with "The Lobster" (2015) film, used a technique that transcended the directorial boundaries of European cinema, by reaching the symbolism of a 'global art cinema' (Papadimitriou 2018, pp. 10, 11; Galt & Schoonover, 2010).

Synopsis

In conclusion, taking into account all the data gathered from the films of the present case study, it appears that the boundary between the categories of European and transnational cinema in films of the 2000s is extremely thin. The multifaceted corporation between states and private companies reflects the tendency to turn to a transnational filmmaking effort as well as the content of the implementation of a series of political and economic strategies. In the dimension of the cooperation of many production and distribution companies, in both films a capital position of the companies from the geographically central - big countries of Europe, such as Germany, Austria, the Netherlands and France, was observed. Obviously, this reality is due to the financing possibilities of European companies, in contrast to the low budgets of small businesses from post-Soviet states.

Therefore, the existence of best possibilities of a director-creator, to communicate films, with particular social, political and historical issues. This is achieved through the utilization of the know-how and the experience of the cinematic creation in the European space. Thus, a series of possibilities arises for the production of films of high aesthetics within the artistic field of arthouse cinema, especially for creators, who wish to raise issues of memory and gender, as we saw in the films "Grbavica" and "Slovenka", which have a perspective beyond the anachronistic artistic anchorages of traditional national cinema.

The production and distribution of the two films show that the success of these films was marked by the transnational diffusion of critical artistic narratives, on issues such as the post-war local silence on mass rapes of women during the Bosnian war and the social corruption of a developing country in a small capitalist economy, which creates conditions of vulnerability for a

young female pupil. The dissemination of these transnational messages has been successful in terms of acceptance at numerous world-class film festivals. However, economic indicators showed that such films were limited to a particular public art-house and not to the masses. The screening of the films in question took place in cinemas of international scope in key urban centers of Europe. Thus, one sees transnational cinema as a field, which is formed and evolved through places of production and distribution of European cinema. In conclusion, trying to speak in terms of economic anthropology, these films as objects are part of broader consumption processes that form and reconstruct social bonds (Narotzky, 2007, p. 74). According to the typology followed by Polanyi, in the conditions of production and distribution of films we saw that in the effort of an ecumenical diffusion of the films of transnational cinema, the economic processes were followed in a rational economic choice, due to the limited local means to achieve ecumenical economic goals (Narotzky, 2007, p. 83; Polanyi, 1957, p. 250).

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The Balkan Cinema beyond Balkanism, and Co-productions

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Introduction - Historical Framework

The term of Balkanism, which was introduced by Maria Todorova in 1996, studied the Balkans through the perspective of 'uncivilized', 'savage' and 'unprogressive' image of them. Therefore, according to Todorova (1996), interpretive approaches of Balkans often draw from discourses full of stereotypes. These stereotypes are embedded in the Western hegemony of the Balkan region since the 19th century. They remained powerful also due to the western media reproduction. In fact, after the outbreak of Yugoslav war, media propagated the Western stereotypes about the Balkan region.The purpose of this paper is to demonstrate the existence of such stereotypical conceptions in the Balkan cinematography. The selected films are "Lepa Sela Lepo Gore" and "No Man´s Land", as both deal with the Serbo-Bosnian war. This war was one of the reasons that urge for a new conceptualisation regarding stereotypes. Hence, in both films chosen, we can find a major reproduction of stereotypical ideas about the Balkan region, its inhabitants and the way that Balkans face the West and vice versa.

During the last decades in Yugoslavia, nationalist movements, which contributed to the outburst of wars, were developed It is difficult to determine exactly when dissolution begins, if it started with Kosovo's independence, or with the continuous border disputes between Croatia and Slovenia, etc. However, it seems that the causes of the dissolution began in the 1980s after the death of Josip Broz Tito, the Yugoslav leader. In fact, after his death the nationalist feelings led to lack of tolerance towards the national Other.

The consequences of this dissolution shocked the public opinion. Some of them are the national liquidation in Srebrenica of Bosnia, (1995) additional national ethnic cleansing in Bosnia, Croatia and Kosovo and finally, the NATO bombing of Serbia. These facts, which led to thousands of deaths and destroyed towns and villages, had a significant impact on culture of those areas. The federal state of Yugoslavia was divided into independent states,

which were competing and introduced structures of the western, free economy. All these rapid and violent changes and conflicts became mixed in the memories and traumas of the previous wars (the World War I and World War II), which turned to a fertile ground for the depiction of this trauma and memory in the film culture of the new countries (Beronja and Vervaet, 2016). The question is in what way these memories were fictionalised and how these 'fiction' co-produced the knowledge of the 'neighbours' for the Greek audiences in relation to what was 'consumed' from mainstream media? This paper will focus only on the way two of the first films drawing from the war in Bosnia-Herzegovina dealt with the conflict.

Through the films of "No Man's Land" and "Lepa Sela Lepo Gore" (Pretty Village, Pretty Flame) two different views of the same war are represented Specifically, both films deal with the Serbo - Bosnian war but they approach it in a different way. In Danis Tanovic's, anti-war and satirical, film "No Man´s Land", the plot focuses on three characters, who were trapped in a battlefield. One of the most important characteristics of the film, is the way in which the relationship between the three soldiers is build up. The second one, is about the interwoven feelings of humor, absurd realism and the horror of war, blended together in each moment of the film. The immediacy and realism of the movie "Lepa Sela Lepo Gore", results from the historical moment the film was shot that is, at the end of the war. In fact, the movie was an opportunity for the Greek audience to get to know the Balkan neighbors, through a different prism in comparison to what was presented by press and media. My paper will discuss the two films by showing how co-productions is connected to the promotion of specific values.

Theoretical Framework

The Balkans seems to become sketched as a kind of a ghost, situated in Southeastern Europe. This ghost is oriented in an extensive ideologically evolving space[1]. The Westerm world, especially Europe, promotes the viewpoint of the developing Balkan region, against the formerly perspective of Balkans[2]

1 For the Balkan region as a 'ghost' has written Maria Todorova in her book, "Imagining the Balkans" and Robert Kaplan in "Balkan Ghosts: A journey through history". For Kaplan Balkans are Yugoslavia, Romania, Bulgaria and Greece.

2 Balkan in a strict sense is often tied to Balkanization. Balkanization alludes to political violence and ethnic conflicts. Through Europe's perspective about the foreign policy towards the Balkans the incorporation of the region in the EU provided the

in a strict sense. Many writers tried to analysed and theorised the Balkan's case, but Maria's Todorova work "Imagining the Balkans" (1997) stood out. Todorova successfully presented the issue of the separation of the "wild and dark" Balkans towards "civilized" Western Europe, throughout her book. She disagrees with the case that the Balkans are a dark corner in Europe and the conviction, that the characteristics, often attached to this region are able to differentiate them from the rest Europe. In the same work, she also takes distance from the theory of Orientalism fully applied in the Balkans, which developed by Edward Said (1978). In contrast to the East, the Balkans were never part of an explicit western colonialism[3].

The Balkans constitute a place with different historical condition from the one represented by Western Europe[4]. However, because they have these distinctive historical facts, they cannot easily be placed in the East[5]. In that case, the special nature of the Balkans is produced, according to Maria Todorova. The case of Balkanism is integrated into the critique against the theory of Orientalism, developed by Edward Said. The main contention of this critique is that the Balkans do not belong geopolitically in the Near East among other things because of their Christian character. Additionally, the construction of the national identities of the Balkan people, took place against the "Oriental Other" and the "Great Turk". In parallel, the influence of the western Enlightenment on the Balkan countries is substantial. We could say that the people of the Balkans would like to imagine themselves as part of the the West. Thus, the Balkans constitute an "inner Other"; they belong to the geographical area of Europe inhabited by Christians and Muslims, therefore they are not "distant" and "foreign"[6] on the one hand, but on the other hand, the region still produces exoticism due to its historical legacies for example the Ottoman

opportunity of security and stability in South-Eastern Europe (Simic, 2001).

3 Said's analysis of Orientalism in 1978 changed the way we perceive the East-West dipole. The Western characterized as rational and developing world in all of its features. On the contrary, the East presents the opposite of those (D. Stamatopoulos & F. Tsibiridou, 2008 σ. 241).

4 The difference refers to Balkan's stereotypical characteristics, which developed by the Western. Especially, the Western world and Europe considered as superior than Other regions cause of financial and mercantile development (Asad, 1973).

5 The East presented by Western as a mysterious place with exotic characteristics and memories. In the opposite direction, Balkan region considered as uncivilized and savage (Said, 1996).

6 The terms of 'foreign' and 'distant' are just constructions and imaginary ideas.

conquest, the way religious and ethnic minorities were developed under the socialist modernity and political federalism.

Part of this modernity was the development of the cinema industry. Yugoslavia was a country with rich cinematography since the post-war period. There. the war film, the so-called partisan films, had a special position in the formation of a coherent Yugoslav identity but also to tie particular stereotypes to ethnic communities. After the 1990s, Yugoslav war included the sufferings of the Serbo-Bosnian war films, started to become filmed in several works, such as "Pretty village, pretty flame" (Lepa sela lepo gore) by Srdan Dragojevic, which was filmed in 1996 while the war in the surrounding area was captured and more recently in his work like in the film "St. George shoot the dragon" (2009), but also "No man's land" by Danis Tanovic (2001). Although it is often believed that these wars are relatively recent, they attached to the premise of the eternal, mythical hatred between the Balkan people. The hypothesis which mentioned above ignores the fact that nations are a contemporary phenomenon of a modernist society (Anderson, 1991). The movies that were created in the 1990s period constitute a fixation on trauma, resulting in exploring the impact on collective national and ethnic level.

Lepa Sela Lepo Gore

According to Dina Iordanova (2001), a film has much greater influence than that written on captured painting or literary writings and for this reason, the reality is more pronounced there. In the case I examine, the over-accentuation of certain characteristics as 'Balkan' is not unrelated to preconstructed ideas and imageries. In the opinion of Said (1996), the East is submissive and sensual, while the Balkans, for the West, are often depicted as savage, with primitive barbaric instincts. This case was assimilated into several post-Yugoslav films, therefore the characters portrayed as violent. According to Iordanova (Ibid, p. 71-86), this is due to the western perspective[7] of these producers, who relished to be closer to the Hollywood's standards. The creators of these two films are more interested in the approval of the western societies rather than their own community living in the area for whom the content of these movies is more familiar. The creators of these two films are either trying to reproduce the stereotypes of the Balkans or they try to challenge

7 The Balkan cinema productions tried to serve the western perspective that the Balkans are savage, barbarian and unprogresive. This worked as a tool for the release of the Balkan films to the western cinemas.

them through their films. A careful analysis of both films considered necessary. The main subject - war - is not treated in the same way by the entire cinematographic production of Southeastern Europe. For example, according to Iordanova, the Serbian cinema avoids dealing with sensitive issues, conversely the Bosnian deals with post-war trauma and memory. Even the movies, which do not deal with the trauma at the first point, in fact, they are influenced by it. Films that deal with the perspective of the Balkans is the film "Lepa sela lepo gore" (1996, Srdjan Dragojevic) and the Oscar-winning "No man's land" (2001, Danis Tanovic), which delve into the post-war everyday life, where the consequences of violence are evident, and people appear to be trying to return to normalcy.

The scenes of the battles presented in an appropriate way, usually by an additional person through his own point of view. In other words, it presented what the creator imagined and not the exact facts. The narratives are constructed in a way to serve the various warring parties. It is a fact that the Serbo-Bosnian war shook the waters of cosmopolitan Europe. It was such a fierce war, which broke out in a ′modern′ period, something that the average European citizen could not comprehend. The images from the battlefields were being watched through the television in a specific way, as mentioned above, in order to serve various interests. However, as a result, the tragedy of the war was transferred to everyone's home. Naturally, several questions were raised about the necessity for the intervention by European forces, such as national cleansing in the Bosnian enclave of Srebrenica in the summer of 1995. The massacre took place was not unknown by the United Nations, which did not hesitate to help the Serbs by separating children and women from men, who were executed, burned and buried in mass graves. This incident became a stepping stone for the critique against the hypocrisy of the ethical values of the western world. According to Slavoj Zizek (as reported in Elsaesser, 2005, p.358), in the postmodern society, which constantly changes, there are ethical values, rules and boundaries, but the expectations growing on an ongoing basis, so the people are never satisfied and feel frustrated because they can never reach these imagined goals of a constant self-improvement.

The western's media perspective about the war used sensationalist depictions and symbols. For example, the cameras lead showed the victims in theatrical recreations of the situation, saving for the journalists and western mediators the role of saviours. Because of this depiction, the peacekeeping forces in the Bosnian region adopted a completely different standpoint, about the situation in the battlefield. Most of the films related to the Serbo-Bosnian

war as the main case scenario, will focus on the work of the peacekeeping forces, which was controversial, if we consider their inaction and absence in tragic situations like that of Srebrenica. It is worth mentioning that the Bosnian Serbs were particularly contemptuous of peacekeepers and believed that they were completely ineffective. The feeling of shame and responsibility by the peacekeeping forces was so great, that what seems to stick out in the fact that they are the main characters in these films.

The movie "Lepa sela lepo gore" was created in the end of Serbo-Bosnian war (1996), therefore the memories of what was described above, were very recent for the audiences. The title, according to film's director Srdan Dragojevic, is a paraphrase of Louis's Ferdinard Celine novel "Voyage a bout de la nuit", which refers to burning villages during the World War I. The main characters of the film are two brotherly friends, the Bosnian Christian Milan (Dragan Bjelogrlic) and the Bosnian Muslim Khalil (Nikola Pejakovic), who grew up in Tito's era and they evolved into enlisted young men, their mission was the religious and national integration. Shortly before the outbreak of war, they were working in a car repair shop. As the war begun, 'fate' brought them to the same group of Serbian soldiers. In this, group there are several character personalities, who roll back to the image of 'wild' and 'exotic' Balkans. Velia, for example, led the army astray and enlisted instead of his brother, (excerpt 1:53:30). Laza and his brother-in-law 'Fork'[8] were victims of television's propaganda and they have been so influenced by the image of the media that they want to fight against their enemies - neighbours. A typical example of a supporter of the former Yugoslavia is Guzden, who walked 350 kilometers, on the day of Tito's death, to attend to his funeral, holding his portrait, (excerpt 1:48:00). The costumes of the film are excellent, they represent faithfully the image of paramilitary Serbs and the military uniforms of the Yugoslav army. Moreover, they were presented in accurate ways all the military scenes and weaponry such as copies of weapons and vehicles, revealing that this movie was an expensive production for that period.

Through the depiction of the relationship among the two protagonists, the director of the film wishes to emphasise how the war can come to breach an emotional connection between them, like their friendship. From the beginning of the film, the director presents an allegorical scene, where the hands of a politician are covered with blood and stained all who were present, while

8 The character 'Fork' got this nickname because he carries a fork wherever he goes because he wants to remind to the others that the Serbians ate with forks before all the others.

he is cutting the ribbon in the inauguration of the "peace tunnel"[9] under the oversight of the West. This fact – scene is also the beginning and ending of the film. It is essentially a symbolic scene arguing that the politicians should be hold accountable for the massacres and war crimes that will follow. The film does not follow a linear course, but in the process of editing there were flashbacks mainly from the hospital, where there are hospitalised the injured protagonists are used Most of the scenes were shot outdoors and in natural landscapes, located in Visegrad of Bosnia in the Serbian part. In many of these settings, military combats actually took place during the civil war. The main location of the film is the tunnel of Visegrad area, which ironically called the "tunnel of brotherhood and unity" and there the Serbs fought the "invisible", like ghosts, Bosnians. The directing practices, such as editing, function as a tool, with which the enemy is not presented an entity in the battle, but only as a shadow, a type of imaginary depiction (40:15, 56:20, 1:45:30). Through the direction, we are transported in the same tunnel several times in the film, in Milan's and Khalil's childhood, who as children were afraid to go inside in the tunnel as they believed that a demon lived in it. This act stands as an allegory of the demon which grew and evolved into the civil war that burst out. This symbolism is evident in the scene (2:02:25), where Khalil asks Milan if this dragon killed his mom and burned their crew. As the film unfolds, an American journalist gets trapped in this tunnel with Serbian soldiers (45:40). This fact is important because through this the director represented the gap in the understanding between the Balkans (East) and America (West). The perspective of Balkanism is pervasive in the film.

First, there is the stereotype regarding the image of the barbarian warrior, who does not respect the opposite gender and even more the 'westerners'. (45:16, 47:10). This narrative could not be considered as accidental, because through this incident the Western image of the Balkans is presented In addition, the anti-Serbian sentiments against the 'West' are presented through the character of the journalist. The journalist is a depiction of the West and its beliefs. The film "Pretty village, pretty flame" is an image of the West for Balkans and a representation of the war, based on the perception that Balkans

9 The peace tunnel and the tunnel of brotherhood and unity is actually the same. A significant scene about the meaning of tunnel's names is at the beginning of the film (excerpt 00:30). During the opening of the peace tunnel, in 1971, by Tito, had a small accident. Specifically, President Tito injured his hand while he cut the ribbon on the ceremony, as a result he covered his hands with blood. Ironically, at the movie-present time there, there were no peaceful events.

are a trigger place for Europe, where savagery and war are cultivated This is also evident from the Serb's belief about the Western media and the image they present to the world as "the evil children of war" (1:12:30). This view is presented aptly, through some ironic scenes, such as the destruction of a decorative Eiffel Tower, a symbol of the Western civilisation, or when the protagonist, Milan drinks his own urine due to lack of water, from a bottle of Coca Cola, and a soldier ironically sings the song from the American's company commercial, (1:26:00).

We could say that in the movie there is a picture of self-Balkanisation of the heroes. For example, when one soldier says "We are just like that and indeed, we are even worse than you imagine and we like it "[10]. The Serbian war is presented in the film as a fight to protect the religious and ethnic identity and for this reason, under the effect of alcohol, Serbs burn Muslim villages without thinking about the consequences of their actions, perspective on which the title of the film is based. In fact, the ideas are presented to them, through the words of the character 'Fork', as he speaks to the American journalist, to whom he relates through a pseudo-historical narrative that the Serbian nation is the oldest in the world. This legend circulated in the propaganda that was intensified in the 1980s and the character 'Fork' wants to be featured in the western media through the journalist commentary. For these reasons, the Karadzic government exercised censorship at the film and did not allow its release. Furthermore, the film received several negative review. It was accepted by the western media as a propaganda film, but also by the Bosnian media as a film that promotes nationalism and misogyny.

At this point, it would be useful to cite some typical examples of Balkanism, which contained in the film. In a flashback, in the beginning of the film, Milan and Khalil play basketball in a backyard with pigs. The scene ends in a cafe where they drink alcohol in an early hour. This is an exotic image for the western viewers, in which the Balkans are presented as people who drinks alcohol all day and lives exclusively in agricultural societies. In another scene, the United Nation defense section, responsible for peacekeeping, appears. There, the Serbian attendees when they see the modern vehicles of the Swedes who serve in the UN they say, "look what the Swedes are driving". At the same time, in the frame, there is a tractor and another man who is trying to sell used TVs. The scene is completed, with an obviously older, Serbian military vehicle, from which the driver shouts at his comrades in arms.

10 Through this phrase seems that the soldier espouse the perspective of the western world regarding the savage behaviour and gruffness of the Balkans.

This is a clear depiction of the naive unmannerly and savage inhabitant of the Balkans in contrast to the gentle western men of the UN, who are simply observers of the events.

No Man's Land

In Danis' Tanovic film, No Man's Land (2001), we could say that in a small piece of land, practically in a hole of trench, we see the situation that prevailed in the Balkans in the decade of the 1990s. It is a co-production between Bosnia – Herzegovina, France and Great Britain among other countries, starring an international cast. The movie was filmed in Slovenia. The success of the film was great and even won the Oscar for best foreign language film. There is a theatricality as the setting is mainly limited to the trench, which is reminiscent of a theatrical scene and that differentiates it from many Balkan war films. The plot of the film is about two soldiers, a Serb Nino and a Bosnian Ciki, who are trapped in a trench, which receives crossfire from the Serbian and the Bosnian army. The reason that led them to this impasse, was the dense morning fog as we see at the beginning of the film. Nino's friend, Cera, is trapped in this trench from a mine of a Bosnian veteran soldier aiming to kill as many Serbs as possible. As it turns out, the salvation of his Serbian colleague Nino it will not be an easy task as it requires the cooperation of the Bosnian Ciki with whom are enemies.

The ditch where they are trapped is essentially their temporary home, until they are released by the French UNPROFOR UN forces. The conversation between the two rival soldiers, Nino and Ciki, demonstrates the hatred between Serbians and Bosnians, which presented during the entire film. A typical figure is the English colonel, who reflects the view of the West about the Balkans. He is the one who decides that the inhabitants of the Balkans do not deserve help and resources of the West. He is a tough bureaucrat who does not want the United Nations to have problems in the process of releasing the soldiers from the trench. Characteristic is the scene, in the first part of the movie, where the Serb and Bosnian soldiers start chatting about which country started the armed conflicts. Through the discussion it seems that the western media have formed their views. The quality of script of this film although connects specific, nationalist narratives, to communities and characters, challenge them through the absurdity and tragedy of the situation.

In the above scene we see the anti-war character of the film, but we could say that there is a deconstruction of Balkanism. The film does not only chal-

lenge the 'regional' ethnic stereotypes but it explores also how western stereotypes about the Balkans and the war conflicts of the 1990s shaped the 'Western perspective' by over-emphasising and exclusively reporting burned villages and rapes, perpetuating images of 'wild' and 'savage' people. It also reveals through the words of Ciki, that in this war whoever has the weapon has also the power, something that I will discuss in relation to subsequent scenes. The above scene is staged with humour which penetrates all the conversations among the characters, even in the most tragic situations. This humorous tone gives an anti-war vibe to the film. In No Man's land, there are also several situations where the line between the victim and perpetrator, shift depending on who holds the only gun as it was mentioned above. This is a symbolic representation presented with sarcasm, which reveals that the one who has the military power also has the authority. The element of humor makes easier for the fill to access bigger audiences who might be overwhelmed to watch with hard war reality[11].

Danis Tanovic seems interested in creating multiple perspectives of the war. Thus, in one scene Ciki finds a weapon and shoots Nino, when he falls to the ground, the vision of the camera is from a high point (20:35). Then, the camera goes to a lower angle from Nino's point of view, looking at Ciki, who marks him with the weapon, and from behind this situation is contrasted with the blue sky. As Nino waits his death, closes his eyes and when he reopens them, Ciki is missing and only blue sky is visible. Through this scene, we see how pliable the boundaries in a war are but also, an anti-war message emerges, which challenge the image of the "exotic" "Other", which originates from the Balkans and is belligerent and violent. The director creates similar situations in several parts of the film, in order to criticise the circumstances that gave rise to the war. For example, in the scene where two soldiers listening to music and reading a newspaper they say "What a mess in Rwanda …" something that is unnatural because a similar chaos unfolds around them, but on the other hand, it is also a western look at the Balkans soldiers, who are not disciplined during the battle, while reading newspapers (38:20) and without realizing what takes place in their home.

Another key character is the active and tough journalist Jane Livingstone, who is the western perspective inside the Balkans. She seems to want to reduce the distances between West and Balkan, to get to know the people and the causes of this war, however, in the end she is depicted rather naïve (or she doe not to understand and become accountable of the situation) regard-

11 http://www.cinephilia.gr/index.php/tainies/europa/792-no-mans-land-danis-tanovic

ing the power relations involved in the situation. Similarly, senior militaries express their interest for the region only in front of the cameras, in order to promote their public image. Despite the reaction of the British Colonel, the French head of the UN represents the humanitarian values of the Organisation, as he wants to take action to save those who are trapped in the trench, but this is impossible due to commands he receives. The power of the film lies in the fact that two seemingly rivals finally agree that journalists and the West are only concerned about projecting the image they want to the world. Despite the ethnic hatred because of the circumstances, they share a common fate. At the end of the movie, the death of all three characters, who are abandoned trapped in the trench, to die alone unite them beyond ethnic borders and religions. Nevertheless, there is a contrast, as the film begins with fog and darkness, but it ends with sunshine, which could symbolise the redemption of the two heroes.

Conclusion

This paper was based on the theory of Balkanism as introduced by Todorova in 1996, in response to Said's theory of Orientalism in 1978. It is noteworthy that Said's work was written during the domination of the political Islam. In a related way, Todorova's study attached at a time of the repositioning of the relations between Balkan and Western relations. Additionally, the end of the 20th century signified the beginning of the westernization in the Balkan region (Stamatopoulos & Tsibiridou, 2008).

The two films present different aspects of Balkanism, as in "Lepa sela lepo gore", there is a sophisticated internal Balkanisation in order to serve the western perspective and gain a larger audience. Contrariwise, in the movie "No man's land" there is a constant alternation of perpetrator and victim in order to present the different facets of war, while the Westesrn opinion for the Balkans is depicted negatively in order to send an anti-war message and attract the public's attention and entice them to cinemas. The heroes share common beliefs, despite their ethnic hatred, conversely of the first film, in which the Bosnian enemy, is exclusively a threat to Serbs. Being a co-production opened for the film the perspective of meeting wider audiences and contributed to the way the script was constructed: multivocal and polyphonic, pointing to different views and revealing the power relations beyond stereotypical representations but also projecting the common human fate. This perspective made the film an international success as, it was compatible to discourse of human rights and western values usually propagated by inter-

national organisations and the EU, but also by film support mechanisms like the EURIMAGES.

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Teaching principles of intercultural education through cinema: a case study

'The Kosovar Switzerland': the hybrid identity of the modern Albanian diaspora in Europe as presented in Fisnik Maxhuni's[1] documentary film *Zvicra*

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The duality of Kosovar society, culture and cinematography

Two decades after the end of the war in Kosovo[2], dire economic straits, unemployment, corruption, but also contamination and lack of infrastructure still force Kosovars, [3] just like many other people from states that once used to form Yugoslavia, to flee their country in quest of better living and working conditions. Twelve years after the declaration of Independence on the 17th of February 2008, young Kosovars do not see many reasons to stay in their country and prefer, instead, to migrate to economically prosperous countries offering more opportunities and a better quality of life, with Switzerland being the first choice, followed by Germany and France.

Kosovar migration to Switzerland has a history that dates from the times of Tito's socialist Yugoslavia. During the '60s, for instance, people from the wider Yugoslavian region would work in Swiss companies as 'guest workers' (Dahinden 2005: 2-3). Especially in periods of socio-economic instability and even more after the war, large masses of Kosovars would seek asylum in Switzerland. Back then, immigration rules in Switzerland would be more liberal compared to Germany, for instance, which would oblige Kosovar asylum seekers to return to their country after the end of war (ESI 2006: 4-5). Eventually, Swiss law on migration became stricter during the 90s, narrowing down the admission criteria for foreigners from non-EU or EFTA countries[4];

1 The artist formerly known as 'Fisnik Maxhuni' is now called 'Fisnik Maxville'

2 All references to Kosovo, whether the territory, institutions or population, in this text shall be understood in full compliance with United Nation's Security Council Resolution 1244 and without prejudice to the status of Kosovo.

3 By *Kosovars* (juxtaposed to *Kosovans),* I mean Kosovar-Albanians, who form the majority of the population in the territory of Kosovo.

4 Switzerland has co-signed the *Agreement on the Free Movement of Persons,* therefore

this is a policy which continues until today. Swiss admission policy is quite strict towards economic migrants from the 'third countries'[5]; not to mention the process of acquiring Swiss nationality, which is long and often complicated (OFS 2020:1). Admission to the Swiss labour market is based on a demand-driven system, according to which only "qualified workers from third countries who are absolutely needed" can enter (Swiss Federal Council 2002: 3473 cited in Drosopulos 2021). The Swiss law, however, still offers the possibility for third-countries nationals to enter Switzerland in order to rejoin their families under 'family reunification' schemes. This opportunity is often used to the fullest, if not exploited, by citizens of poor countries like Kosovo, who would go as far as having arranged marriages with people (mainly from their ethnic diaspora) (Drosopulos, 2021:83), who are holders of swiss documents and can, therefore, help them justify and consolidate their presence on swiss ground [6]The latest migration and mobility report issued by the Federal Statistic Office of the Swiss Confederation identifies family as a key factor in mobility patterns (OFS: 2020:14).

Kosovar migrants in Switzerland maintain strong bonds with 'Kosova', their homeland, and tend to preserve customs and traditions, many of which clash with European values and standards. Patriarchy and abidance by ethnic and religious traditions- even if these contradict one's personal choices and actual lifestyle- is seen as the cornerstone of 'Albanianism',[7] a notion linked

it is quite flexible to accepting people from EU/EFTA member-states.

5 Countries that do not belong to the European Union (EU) or European Free Trade Association (EFTA), as is the case of the Western Balkans (WB6).

6 Such cases are often featured in local Swiss news portals. I am indicatively citing this article published in 2018 at the 'Local' under the title 'Glance around Switzerland: fake marriages': https://www.thelocal.ch/20181109/glance-around-switzerland-fake-marriages-ebike-dangers-rabbit-killers-martin-suter-censored-twitter-sbb-train-wash. See also: https://www.swissinfo.ch/eng/love-may-lose-out-under-marriage-law/999616

Furthermore, some years ago, Jeton Musliu has made a research on the case of Kosovar Albanians who divorce local wives in order to temporarily marry foreigners and obtain resident status in the West. His findings are presented in the 2010 documentary film entitled *Kosovars Turn Blind Eye to Fake Foreign Marriages: http://fellowship.birn.eu.com/en/fellowship-programme/topic-2010-tabboo-kosovars-turn-blind-eye-to-fake-foreign-marriages*

7 In Schwandler-Stevens and Jurgen, *Albanian Identities: Myth and History*, page 61:"From the beginning, national ideologists propagated a kind of 'civil religion' of Albanianism, which was epitomized in Pashko Vasa's famous and influential nationalist poem O moj Shqipni ("O poor Albania"): "Awaken, Albanians, wake from your slumber. Let us all be brothers, swear an oath not to mind church or mosque. The

with the idea of worshipping the Albanian nation and motherland with the same passion that characterises religious faith. Within the realm of 'albanianism', acts and attitudes that serve the nation and help preserve cultural norms are seen as noble and praiseworthy. In this context, young generations of Albanians are encouraged to keep their language, religion and traditions alive and to ideally maintain the 'purity of their blood' (Paca, 2016: 19) through endogamous marriages.

Kosovars' eagerness to preserve their identity is probably linked with the trauma of persecution and segregation that they suffered during Serbian regime. It was especially during that time that education and arts became tools aimed at gradually starting a revolution.[8] In 1989, the Slobodan Milosevic regime ended Kosovo's autonomy within Yugoslavia, depriving, thus, Kosovo of all legislative and executive powers and initiating a process of ethnic assimilation, starting with schools:

> Decisions on curricula were now made in Belgrade. Curricular changes ensued, affecting mostly subjects of history, geography, Albanian language, and music. References to Albanian culture, literature and history were removed and replaced with Slavic or Serbian references, which in human rights discourse is called a "cultural genocide – the deliberate process of non-physical destruction of a nation."
>
> (Shahini in Prishtina Insight, 14.10.2016)

In an attempt to preserve their identity, Kosovar Albanians had reacted by developing a parallel education system, where classes would take place at private apartments, basements, even garages. The 2016 documentary film *The Drums of Resistance* by Mathieu Jouffre and Besa Luci depicts through personal testimonies how a parallel society was established in Kosovo during the 1990s.

Kosovars' struggle to oscillate between two realities, two parallel societies and two cultures has been a repetitive motif in the Kosovar cinematography, even until today. Duality is a key notion in the Kosovo realm, interconnected with the history and mythology of the place itself. Kosovo, the legendary

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faith of the Albanian is Albanianism! (Feja e shqiptarit është Shqiptaria')"

8 See the documentary film 'Changing the Story' conducted within 'BOOM Zine' – a qualitative research project that looks at the development of music, particularly at the rock and roll scene in Kosovo in the 1980s, drawing a connection between music trends, space and underground political ideology. https://vimeo.com/339739790

golden apple of discord between Serbs and Ottomans, Christians and Muslims, continues being a topic of controversy.

Controversy and duality refer firstly to the way Kosovars see themselves and their country, today, more than a decade after the declaration of independence. Nowadays, Kosovo is trying to find a balance between two divergent orientations: on the one hand, there is the ambition of being a modern, European, secular state, in which different ethnic and religious communities can co-exist in harmony, as foreseen by the new constitution; on the other hand, more conservative voices from both inside and outside Kosovo promote a neo-Islamist sociopolitical model, adopted to the principles and values of a rejuvenated Albanianism.

Kosovar society, in this sense, is quite polarised; divided between a cosmopolitan and well-educated elite, located mainly in the capital, Prishtina, and a conservative mass residing in the rural areas of Kosovo. Let us keep in mind that Kosovar diaspora consists mainly of people coming from the countryside, meaning that the image of Kosovo travelling with them to Europe reflects their own, often radical, values and practices.

Duality also refers to the way Kosovars introduce themselves and their country artistically. Findings of research[9] conducted recently indicate that young Kosovars are eager to rebrand their nation worldwide through positive narratives and to detach themselves from the drama of war and conflict connected with the tragedy of former Yugoslavia. At the same time, modern Kosovar artists and activists exhibit an ardent need to speak about the past, no matter how painful this might be. The majority of Kosovar films that have traveled outside the country in the last five years touch upon controversial and taboo issues, ranging from distressing topics connected with Serbian occupation and war to more recent problematics, related with the agony of being a modern Kosovar, living inside or outside of Kosovo; in the first case, trying to claim one's place in a divided and often hypocritical Kosovar society and in the latter, negotiating one's identity in another country, which might be culturally divergent, yet can offer a better life quality.

9 See the outcomes of the project entitled 'ACT- Arts, critical thinking & active citizenship", conducted with the long-term project 'Changing the Story' launched by the University of Leeds in cooperation with local actors and partners in Kosovo. https://changingthestory.leeds.ac.uk/act-kosovo/

Also, see findings of research conducted by myself with the priceless guidance of Dr. Stephanie Schwandner-Sievers within the project 'Building Knowledge about Kosovo', supported by the Kosovo Foundation for Open Society (KFOS).

A case study: Zvicra

The documentary film *Zvicra*, by Fisnik Maxhuni, explores the inner dilemmas and strategic self-representations of Kosovars living in Switzerland. The film, which has won, among others, the Arte award at the Thessaloniki Film Festival, touches upon a number of issues connected with our contemporary, multicultural societies: hybrid or dual identity, xenophobia, islamophobia, idealization of the West, national stereotypes.

The following description is taken from the original website of the film:

> With its massive immigrant population, Switzerland has always been a place of a double search: first, how is the country's DNA evolving as it constantly redefines itself? Second, how do these foreigners articulate their search for identity in the midst of uncertainty and constant need to define the "self" in tangible terms? "Zvicra" (which means "Switzerland" in Albanian) highlights the complexity of lost and rediscovered identities in Switzerland, a country that is destined to adapt to ever-increasing population arrivals. The film tackles the question through 7 Albanian characters whose community is one of the most important of the country[10].

Through the words of seven different characters, *Zvicra* discusses how Kosovar Albanians[11] in Switzerland manage their identities in relation to different audiences and their expectations, torn between individual aspirations and opportunities in the host country, on the one hand, and often conservative family expectations and standardized ethnonational affirmations affecting them from home, on the other.

Theoretically speaking, presenting different aspects of oneself to fit different occasions is a universal social practice that members of a community ac-

10 https://fisnikmaxhuni.com/Zvicra-2018-documentary

11 Albanian migrants at large have previously been documented to adjust their face-work to the host conditions at social micro-level (Schwandner-Siever 2008, 48). The status or the 'reputation' that their country of origin has within the host country defines the scope for individual choices on how to present oneself and one's ethnic background. As true not just for Albanian migrants and their experiences and practices in different host countries (Mai, 2003; Kretsi, 2002a; Schwandner-Siever, 2008; Kokkali, 2015), when faced with negative ethnic stereotypes in a new environment, hiding, negotiating or shifting one's identity can be some of the strategies employed in order to avoid social exclusion and discrimination, or to obtain certain privileges or a more favorable treatment. (Drosopulos, 2019)

quire and develop in their interaction with others (Goffman 1955/1972 cited in Drosopulos, 2019):

> Adjusting to the 'norms' of each social occasion means putting on different 'fronts' that, project selected (and often idealized) aspects of oneself (Thompson 2015, 93). In social interactionist framework, human social interaction can be understood through comparison with a theatrical play performed in front of an audience (Goffman 1955, 19). People put on different 'faces' in order to adjust to the social setting, just like actors on a stage (ibid: 1955/1972, 5). Erving Goffman defines 'face' as an image of the Self which depends, on the one hand, on the norms and values of a society and on the other, on the situation in which a social interaction is taking place. Through 'face work', people adjust their image situationally; just like acting on a big social stage, they manipulate the space, their appearance, their words and their 'co-actors' in order to make a performance in response to the expectations of the audience (Goffman 1955, 5-14).

Having a dual identity and employing it strategically to respond to different occasions can be a matter of choice, as in the case of the young athlete, for instance, who proudly presents himself among friends as an 'Albanian', yet, during a police control, chooses the safer choice of presenting himself as 'Swiss'. In other cases, however, like that of the young girl, it is the people of her environment who label her in a certain way, making her feel that she is 'somewhere in-between', or, to quote Dafina Paca (2016), 'neither here, nor there', as suggested in her homonymous thesis on the discursive construction of identity by Kosovo Albanians.[12] This is what is meant by the girl in the film who says verbatum: *Over here they say I am Albanian and over there they say I am Swiss.*

Her phrase reminds me of a similar statement that I had heard in another film, a Greek-Turkish production, that was released a few years ago. In the 2016 drama film *Roza of Smyrna* (*Η Ρόζα της Σμύρνης*), directed by George Kordelas, the protagonist, Roza, recalls her first days in Greece as a refugee from Izmir, commenting sadly that in Turkey, her people would always been by Turks as 'Greeks', whereas, in Greece, they would be seen by their compatriots as 'turkish breed' ('τουρκόσποροι'). A very similar phrase had also

12 See also: http://magazine.erstestiftung.org/en/not-without-my-schatzi/

been heard in the 2003 blockbuster film *A Touch of Spice (Πολίτικη κουζίνα/ Bir tutam baharat),* by Tassos Boulmetis.

What I am suggesting here, is that watching 'Zvicra' in parallel with domestic film productions tackling similar issues of dual identity and ethnic division could be an opportunity to revisit and discuss controversial social issues in one's own context. It is perhaps easier to grasp and explore a sensitive topic firstly as a third person, rather than as someone directly involved. In this sense, a film presenting a similar phenomenon, but in another context, may become a vehicle to be employed by educational practitioners for a smoother transition into domestic taboos and issues of controversy.

Given the strong emotional impact that images and oral narration have on viewers, documentary films like 'Zvicra' could be used in parallel with other educational and/or audiovisual materials to teach principles of intercultural dialogue in classroom, preferably using a multisensory approach, combining audiovisual input with self-reflection and solid debriefing techniques. It is suggested that a constructive, question-and-answer based dialogue between educational practitioner and students, can lead to creative ideas over the current state and desired future of our societies, triggering a conversation over how we view ourselves and others, how resilient we are and what needs to be done in order to have more democratic and peaceful societies.

In this process of exploring the film creatively, as food for thought and open dialogue, it is essential that the educational practitioner acts more like a facilitator rather than a traditional teacher. Practitioners might find it useful to employ some of the techniques used in non-formal learning, starting from practical tips, such as arranging the classroom setting in such as way that allows eye-contact and active interaction among all people in the room, to more methodological tips, such as motivating students to think 'out of the box', by creating a safe space, where students are allowed to express their opinion without been negatively judged or directed towards a certain set of 'acceptable' answers. Students can also be encouraged to re-create or act-out dialogues or scenes from the movie, so as to consolidate learning via an experiential methodological approach.

Conclusions

Films can be a very useful tool when it comes to discussing sensitive or controversial social issues within the realm of intercultural education. Used within the context of a multisensory educational approach, encouraging in-

teraction and experiential learning, films can act as a platform for constructive dialogue on a number of contested topics affecting our modern societies. Juxtaposing our own society to the one depicted in a film allows us to perceive a situation in more objective terms. By drawing a parallel line between the reality experienced by the characters in the film with our reality, a film can become a vehicle to revisit and explore in classroom a number of topics. Fisnik Maxhuni's documentary film *Zvicra* discusses the 'quest for identity' by exploring the way Kosovar Albanians in Switzerland strategically present themselves. The clash between the way we perceive ourselves in relation to how we are perceived and labeled by others, is, in fact, a universal problematic that can be seen through a wider perspective in order to discuss stereotypes connected with ethnicity and language. The paper suggests watching the film in parallel with domestic film productions tackling similar issues and using an open, communicative approach, encouraging creativity and cooperation in classroom.

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