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Deiana, M. A. (2017). Re-Thinking Border Politics at the Sarajevo Film Festival: Alternative Imaginaries of Conflict Transformation and Cross-Border Encounters. *Geopolitics*.  
<https://doi.org/10.1080/14650045.2017.1374247>

**Published in:**  
Geopolitics

**Document Version:**  
Peer reviewed version

**Queen's University Belfast - Research Portal:**  
[Link to publication record in Queen's University Belfast Research Portal](#)

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**Re-thinking Border Politics at the Sarajevo Film Festival: Alternative Imaginaries of Conflict Transformation and Cross-border Encounters.**

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Accepted for Publication in *Geopolitics* <https://doi.org/10.1080/14650045.2017.1374247>.

**Abstract**

EU peacebuilding efforts in Bosnia-Herzegovina (BiH) have largely contributed to further cement stark geopolitical imaginaries that on the one hand crystallise belonging along exclusionary and fixed notions of ethnonational identity and, on the other, reify civilizational differences between the EU and the post-Yugoslav space. The kaleidoscopic lens of the borderscape opens opportunities to move beyond this impasse by highlighting alternative narratives and sites of border politics that are often overlooked in institutionalised approaches. At the interface between aesthetics, cultural politics and post-conflict transformations, the Sarajevo Film Festival provides a privileged vantage point to explore border negotiations and harness opportunities for conflict transformation through the medium of cinema.

*Keywords: conflict transformation, borderscape, cinema, Bosnia-Herzegovina, ethnography*

**Introduction**

On my last day at the 2015 Sarajevo Film Festival (SFF) I attended the screening of *One Day in Sarajevo* (2015), a documentary film/project which earned Bosnian director Jasmila Žbanić the festival's Human Rights Award. Composed by fragments filmed in Sarajevo on 28 June 2014, the piece is set on the 100th anniversary of the assassination of Franz Ferdinand which sparked the beginning of the First World War. The film depicts how the celebrations held in the city attracted a large and incongruent entourage made of tourists, EU officials and funders, fans of historic re-enactments, defenders and detractors of Gavrilo Princip, anti-EU and anti-capitalist protesters, and of course local Sarajevans. Alongside the frenzy of the celebrations are scenes of ordinary life: a traditional wedding, the large shopping centres recently mushroomed in the city's precarious economy, a local memorial service at Princip's tomb, a father returning to Sarajevo for the summer with his two children. Continuously switching between multiple perspectives, the film is thought-provoking and demanding in its visualisation of complex intersections and tensions between local everyday experiences, national(ist) and transnational imaginaries converging into the city. Through shifting points of views and ambivalent perspectives, the anniversary celebrations become a catalyst for action and memory that raises questions about Sarajevo's contested history, its symbolic status as site of warfare, as well as

on Bosnia-Herzegovina (BiH)'s unresolved status in Europe. A certain dissensual energy imbues the film that unsettles conventional geopolitical imagination by stubbornly re-inserting Sarajevo's life post-conflict into the map and history of Europe. *One Day in Sarajevo* works to momentarily lift the *cage* of isolation and international marginalisation, projecting Bosnia's neglected everyday experiences and unfulfilled promises of peace at the centre stage in the complex and ambiguous European imaginary the film "scapes".

The presentation of Žbanić's film at the Sarajevo Film Festival, alongside a panel titled "Take down the Fences", made its aesthetic enactment and geopolitical re-orientation even more poignant. From a vernacular site of cultural resistance born out of the conflict and the city's siege, the SFF has now entered the international festival circuit as a specialised event for the promotion of cinema and cultural cooperation from/in Central and South-East Europe. This reconfiguration has seen a shift from its initial emphasis on international cinema for a local audience to an outward-looking regional and international platform<sup>1</sup>. Albeit temporarily, the Festival has become an annual occasion in which Sarajevo garners international spotlight not exclusively as site of (post)warfare but also as the home to the art of cinema devoted to artistic reflections on the war, cultural cooperation within and beyond the post-Yugoslav space, and the promotion of regional talents. Situated at the interface between aesthetics, cultural politics and post-conflict transformation, the festival offers a privileged vantage point to observe the negotiation of shifting cultural and geopolitical imaginaries mediated through cinema.<sup>2</sup>

I contend that the festival can be conceived as a site of border politics. More specifically, I deploy the notion of borderscape which captures the continuously (un)making of borders as occurring at multiple levels, from geopolitics and institutions to everyday life and cultural practices.<sup>3</sup> Through this multidimensional framework the Film Festival, as a film showcase and social/cultural encounter, can be seen as an interesting site to explore key border-making processes in Post-Dayton Bosnia, alongside and in productive tension with dominant imaginaries and socio-spatial processes at stake internally to Bosnia, in the wider Post-Yugoslav region, and in the construction of "borderlands of Europeanisation".<sup>4</sup> Given the post-Dayton Peace Agreement history, border imaginaries and politics are inevitably intertwined with tensions around the contested legacy of conflict and the three ethno-nationalist identities, on the one hand, and various attempts to stay attached to a Post-Yugoslav/regional sense of belonging on the other. Since the EU's presence as major international actor for the region, bordering practices are also infused with the promises of peace(building) through Europeanisation enacted both through the prospect of EU integration and through programmes of cross-border cooperation. In this context, the SFF becomes an interesting, yet overlooked, milieu to critically reflect on the geopolitics of European peacebuilding, and push the boundaries of current EU approaches to borders and conflict transformation.

My analysis focuses on interviews and documents related to the EU's approach to cross-border cooperation and peacebuilding in the region, as well as to the Festival and cinematic production in BiH since the conflict. I also draw upon an ethnographic field-trip at the 21<sup>st</sup> Sarajevo Film Festival conducted in August 2015. Combining observations, film viewing, interviews and informal conversations, I discuss the festival's heuristic potential to examine borderscape negotiations and opportunities for conflict transformation through the medium of cinema. In what follows I start by situating the paper within the critical research on cross-border cooperation as a contested instrument of EU border politics and peacebuilding. Here I contend that the notion of borderscape offers a fruitful analytical perspective to overcome limitations in current practices and discourses. Practicing its multiperspectival view, I unearth the complexities at stake in the post-Dayton border landscape sustained and kept alive by legacies of conflict and international intervention, and the promises of peace through Europeanisation. Returning to the Sarajevo Film Festival, I outline three dimensions that potentially offer avenues for moving beyond entrenched borderscape contentions: the re-imagining of key border themes -conflict, national identities/regionalism and Europeanisation- in the promotion of regional cooperation and cultural exchanges; the exhibition of war-themed films that visualise complex everyday negotiations of the Post-Dayton borderscape, and the creation of spaces for discussion where local, regional and international festival-goers make sense of these experiences.

### **Cross-border cooperation as conflict transformation: limitations and tensions at the EU external frontier.**

Born out of post-Cold War transformations cross-border cooperation has increasingly assumed a paradigmatic status as an EU instrument for rapprochement and development whereby borders can become resources for economic and cultural exchange.<sup>5</sup>In this process previously divided border regions can be brought together through various policies that aim at the creation of a more cohesive European space.<sup>6</sup> In this sense, it is argued, cross-border cooperation has a conflict amelioration potential because it might open opportunities for intercultural dialogue and intercommunal relationships across conflictual and contested borders and borderlands.<sup>7</sup> Yet, although the promotion of EU sponsored territorial cooperation and cross-border governance has been intensive in theory and rhetoric, in practice its success and diffusion has been much more ambivalent and uneven.<sup>8</sup> As the existing literature testifies, despite rhetorical statements, transcending borders is a much more complex and multi-layered socio-spatial process than envisioned in institutionalised EU practices and policies of cross-border cooperation, particularly when border imaginaries are entangled in the legacies of protracted conflict and competing senses of belonging.<sup>9</sup>

Ambivalences about Europeanisation and cross border cooperation as forces for border conflict transformation are further amplified at EU external boundaries. Here, cross-border cooperation increasingly emerges as double-edged instrument of EU border politics. By consolidating an idea of political community, it also reiterates geographical and cultural historical differentiation between the

present member states, prospective members, and those considered unsuitable.<sup>10</sup> Not only has cross-border cooperation at EU external frontiers become under-funded, technocratic and mundane, but in the ensuing context of enlargement fatigue and security concerns, is devoid of the transformative value it might have originally assumed in the heyday of European integration.<sup>11</sup> From the perspective of Post-Yugoslav candidate countries such as BiH, EU geopolitics of cooperation and peacebuilding emerges as a technocratic exercise that essentially privilege security and stability at the peril of conflict transformation. All rhetoric to the contrary, it also reinforces sharp civilizational differences between the EU core and prospective members.

Relying on the commonplace that increasing political, technocratic and economic cooperation necessary for the accession process will eventually have a *spillover* effect into conflict transformation, EU peacebuilding practices and discourse in Post-Dayton BiH are emblematic of the tensions undercutting the transformative potential of cross-border cooperation. At the institutional level, the need to address the necessary reforms to join the EU family has been a constant mantra in EU engagement with the local nationalist elites who have dominated political life since Dayton Peace Agreement.<sup>12</sup> While the peace settlement was arguably instrumental to put an end to the war, its complex and contested governance system has mutated into an apparatus that is dysfunctional, unresponsive and removed from everyday politics.<sup>13</sup> The overarching principle of ethnic proportionality has essentially entrenched the politics of ethnic conflict in institutions and political life, offering lucrative opportunities for ethnonationalist elites. In this context, EU efforts to push for *progress*, have largely resulted in a protracted Kafkaesque scenario whereby many of the parties that should negotiate reforms are indeed the very political elites benefiting from the Dayton status quo.<sup>14</sup>

At the local level, the logic of peace through Europeanisation has been promoted through both capacity building programmes aimed at sustaining civil society and funding for cross-border cooperation. The latter specifically targets programmes across ethnically divided areas within Bosnia-Herzegovina and for the border regions respectively between BiH, Croatia, Serbia and Montenegro (see Figure 1).<sup>15</sup> Following the *spillover logic*, the expected impact in all programmes is “both-accession driven and political” and includes the “promotion of reconciliation in the region”.<sup>16</sup> Yet, available data provided by the EU shows that rather than conflict amelioration and reconciliation, economic priorities have consistently received the bulk of cross-border cooperation funding.<sup>17</sup> The latest programme for 2014-2020 confirms this tendency with an increasing focus on economic cooperation, while reconciliation has essentially fallen off the agenda.<sup>18</sup>

This paper contends that the deterministic Europeanisation assumption, implying that increasing forms of political and economic cooperation will necessarily have a spill-over effect on reconciliation, fails to capture the transformation of border and conflict contentions as an ongoing, tortuous and often ambivalent process<sup>19</sup>. Crucially, it pays insufficient attention to the multifaceted everyday borderscape

negotiations that experiencing and surviving conflict produce.<sup>20</sup> Rather than enabling the acknowledgment of these experiences and creating opportunities to move beyond the dysfunctional post-agreement politics, EU interventions in BiH have largely contributed to further cement the eternal status quo favouring nationalist elites in the name of stability at the expenses of local demands for transformation, for instance as seen in the 2014 waves of citizens' protests.<sup>21</sup> As Aida Hozic writes in relation to the temporal and political implications of Bosnia's *post-conflict moment*: "left to its own devices as political project, Bosnia and Herzegovina floats in the European netherland, clobbered by EU demands to reform itself while straitjacketed by the Dayton Peace Agreement".<sup>22</sup> The result has been protracted political impasse and unfulfilled EU commitments to take Bosnia's post-conflict and post-agreement *everyday* challenges seriously.

To make sense of this site of impasse I propose an alternative approach that captures precisely the multi-sited and multidimensional negotiation of borders as an ongoing and complex endeavour and identifies opportunities where dominant border conflict narratives might be challenged and re-imagined.<sup>23</sup> Deploying the borderscape lens, I zoom in into the complexities at stake in border making practices in Post-Dayton Bosnia emerging from intersections and tensions between conflict, nationalist imaginaries and alternative sense of belonging, and the post-conflict and post-agreement governance.

### **Weaving through the Post-Dayton borderscape: the legacy of conflict and Post-conflict border-making**

The notion of borderscape emerges from recent moves in critical border studies to conceptualise the increasing complexity of borders in global politics, their radical redistribution, (de)construction and negotiation at the hands of multiple actors with diverse effects and in multiple spaces beyond the lines at the edge of nation-states.<sup>24</sup> The term identifies a complex border landscape displaying "cultural and political complexities, contested discourses and meanings, struggle over inclusion and exclusion, involvement of multiple actors".<sup>25</sup> Understood in its broadest sense, it captures the relations and contentions between border, identities, representations and imaginaries, as well as the concrete socio-political, spatial and cultural configurations produced by various practices of border-making constitutive of a complex border landscape.<sup>26</sup> It entails investigating borders through a kaleidoscopic view which, Chiara Brambilla writes, "is able to grasp the 'variations' of borders in space and time, transversally to different social, cultural, economic, legal, and historical settings criss-crossed by negotiations between a variety of different actors, and not only the State."<sup>27</sup>

Through this perspective, I view the problem/space Post-Dayton BiH as made and continuously kept alive by a large ensemble of border-making policies and practices, as well as imaginations and discursive strategies, emerged from and informed by a number of historical conditions and bordering processes. Significant here are the spatial, political and cultural boundaries of a-place-that-once-was Yugoslavia, the internationally drawn and highly contested external and internal boundaries of the

*Bosnian State*, the contested relationship with neighbouring Serbia and Croatia, and crucially *EUrope*'s external frontier (see Figure 1). These overlapping and entangled trajectories intimately shape contemporary figurations of/in the Post-Dayton *borderscape*.

The framing of post-conflict governance operates at different levels determining both discursive and material bordering. Driven by post-1989 Western interventionism it has seen a crystallisation of ethnonational politics and an entrenchment of political, symbolic and cultural bordering along *dominant ethnonational* fault-lines.<sup>28</sup> Materially and institutionally, this is most visible in a key component of the Dayton Peace Agreement which involved the re-drawing of BiH's borders as a sovereign state and the creation of the internationally supervised Brčko district, two separate entities, the Republika Srpska and the Croat-Bosniak Federation, made up of ten cantons, as a result of war-time ethnic cleansing and population shifts.<sup>29</sup>



**Figure 1** Post-Dayton map with key borders and places mentioned in the text, including map of the Former Yugoslavia (Map: Gordon Kavanagh, source of original: BiH map is based upon the free geodata of Openstreetmap: Geodata © OpenStreetMap, CC-BY-SA and is liable to the Openstreetmap licence, <http://www.mappedplanet.com/karten/c24/image3.png>, Former Yugoslavia's map: Courtesy of the University of Texas Libraries, The University of Texas at Austin, [https://www.lib.utexas.edu/maps/europe/fm\\_yugoslavia\\_pol96.jpg](https://www.lib.utexas.edu/maps/europe/fm_yugoslavia_pol96.jpg) )

Dominant ethno-nationalist discourses mobilise socio-spatial identities and imaginaries that both mirror and add complexity to the contested borders of the state. This is epitomised in challenges

to the legitimacy of BiH's sovereignty from political elites in the Republika Srpska, such as the recent decision to hold a controversial referendum deemed anti-constitutional by BiH's supreme court<sup>30</sup>. In the Federation, border controversies are often met with occasional demands for the creation of a third Croatian entity and in the staunch defence of the state from the Bosniak nationalist parties.<sup>31</sup>

Dayton's complex border imaginary is also imbued with attachments to a regional/post-Yugoslav belonging that continuously trouble official and imagined contours of the SFRY successor states.<sup>32</sup> These senses of belonging – excessive to the dominant paradigm of ethno-national identity- are officially forced out of political representation and relegated to category of “the Others” in a constitution that prioritises the Constituent People as Bosniaks, Croats and Serbs. Reflecting on the political conditions that led to widespread citizens' protests in 2014, Selma Tobudić illustrates how the implications of post-conflict/post-Dayton border-making governance reach far beyond institutions infusing everyday life with dominant tropes about identity, place and belonging:

“In every aspect of life, what one is and can be, including how one is to remember, is encompassed and encapsulated within an ethnic identity. In this country “being” has come to be thought of only within the parameters of belonging to either/or one of three “nationalities.” These “nationalities” are then (un)represented by the major avatar-like political parties. The imposed and imposing regimes of remembering have proved to be crucial, particularly since they serve as a tool to overwrite any other remembering out of the general code of belonging. This enactment of “belonging” confines it to a clearly delineated and patriarchal collective. It is this patriarchal collective which has repetitively ensured, for the past twenty years, the (re) production and (re) mobilization of the electorate, enabling the continuity of the positioning of political elites in power more or less unchanged”.<sup>33</sup>

Mirrored in the redrawing of BiH's borders, the respective nationalist geopolitical aspirations are sustained by Dayton's governance. Here ethnic representation and vetoes embedded in the power-sharing institutional apparatus not only restrict the possibilities for reform and change, but also overwrite alternative narratives and belonging.

Mobilizing the promises and logic of Europeanisation, EU interventions add further complexities to bordering practices and negotiations in Post-Dayton BiH. In their continued support for the status quo, EU efforts implicitly reproduce deterministic notions of borders, as defined exclusively within ethno-nationalist parameters. Technocratic EU programmes of cross-border cooperation privilege simplistic notions of border-crossings along the edges of Yugoslav successor states or BiH entities (see figure 1). Furthermore, *the road into EU* has a productive force that is imbued with sharp civilizational differences. The ‘Peace through EU governance’ agenda, and its attendant framing of cross-border cooperation, are intrinsically linked to the making of a European space and hence should

be understood as disparate technologies of discursive and material b/ordering.<sup>34</sup> At work here is a dominant geopolitical imaginary that upholds EUrope as the ultimate political project and space of democracy while detaining Bosnia to its backward and regressive periphery on the grounds that Bosnian society and its democratic structures are not enough functional, not professional, not European *yet*.<sup>35</sup>

Infusing the everyday, the elusive *road into Europe* imaginary yields criticism, resistance and apathy among the ordinary citizens.<sup>36</sup> Yet this imaginary also inevitably sustains aspirations to normality and investments in the promise of progress, inclusion and prosperity that a “EUrope to come” might hold for outliving BiH’s isolation and perpetual impasse.<sup>37</sup> Albeit situated in the interior part of Bosnia-Herzegovina, these complex contentions and experiences are refracted through Sarajevo, as capital of the contested Bosnian-state, symbolic site of warfare, as well as epicentre of civic and artistic reflections on the conflict such as those hosted at the Sarajevo Film Festival.

### **Re-thinking Border Politics through Cinema(tic) Encounters: the making of Sarajevo City of Film**

Situated at the interface of cultural politics, cinematic production and imagination, and post-conflict border transformations, the Sarajevo Film Festival offers an exclusive vantage point, to explore the negotiations of socio-spatial identities (local, national, regional, European) beyond institutionalised practices that privilege top-down interventions and dominant notions of borders at the outer edges of nation-state.<sup>38</sup> Discussing the relationship between aesthetics and the Norwegian-Russian border, Johan Schimanski writes, “the borderscape concept is a way of thinking about the border and the bordering process not only on the border, but also beyond the line of the border, beyond the border as a place, beyond the landscape through which the border runs, and beyond borderlands with their territorial contiguities to the border.”<sup>39</sup> This diffused understanding places greater emphasis on the creative and aesthetic dimension that border negotiations and imaginations inevitably entail.<sup>40</sup> The relationship between aesthetics and social/geopolitical imaginaries is indeed crucial to the conceptualisation of the borderscape as an assemblage of material, symbolic and discursive signification of borders<sup>41</sup> Aesthetic languages, produce the border as they “scape” its material and symbolic universe in ways that mirror, alter and possibly subvert existing imaginaries.<sup>42</sup> In their productive and dissensual energy, that is, in their potential of articulating alternative border imaginaries, aesthetic interventions are thus inherently political.<sup>43</sup> In their transnational circulation, digital diffusion and often international production, films are particularly poignant cultural artefacts for the study of bordering and borders as they are performed, narrated, visualized and crossed.<sup>44</sup>

Zooming into the SFF, thus, both as a film showcase and social/cultural encounter revolving around cinema, offers interesting opportunities to observe how shifting border-making processes at stake in the Post-Dayton borderscape are refracted, mediated and potentially transformed through cinema. Cinema here understood in its broadest to encompass cinematic narratives, film industries and cultural

institutions. I consider three key aspects that are relevant to understand the complexities of socio-spatial relations at stake and harness possibilities for transformative cross-border encounters: the mobilisation of multiple socio-spatial and cultural narratives underpinning the SFF's creative vision, aesthetic enactment of borderscape experiences in selected films, and the emergence of spaces for the articulation of "border stories from below" hosted by the Festival.

Useful here is Chris Rumford's insight into the vernacular and transformative mobilization of borders wherein ordinary people, including cultural actors, are able to capitalise on specific border histories and identities as gateways for regional and international connectivity, rather than simplistic nationalist (re)bordering.<sup>45</sup> Drawing on this insight I illustrate how key border themes of local conflict narratives, national identity/regionalism, and Europeanisation become resources that emphasise the Film Festival's uniqueness and offer opportunities to negotiate its positioning, and that of attendant films it promotes, internationally. At the SFF the emphasis on local conflict imaginaries, the promotion of national cinema and regional film production become intricately entangled with claims to a European cosmopolitan identity in ways that complicate existing cartographies and imaginaries of the region viewed exclusively through the lens of dominant ethno-nationalist contentions and relegated to "one big Oriental periphery of Europe"<sup>46</sup>. Here local, national, regional, and South-East European borders do not lose their significance, but in the making of the Festival's profile and encounters these socio-spatial imaginaries interweave in composite and often contradictory ways. Multiple border histories converging into the city are invoked and re-imagined as a gateway to the world of transnational cinema, and the opportunities this offers for minor cinematographies, such as those from the SEE region, to travel across borders.<sup>47</sup> Paying attention to the festival multifarious borderwork reveals opportunities to, even momentarily, move beyond entrenched border narratives and might highlight alternative, less technocratic, routes for conflict transformation.

As discussed in earlier sections, conflict experiences and narratives of identity are fraught with antagonisms between the three (dominant) ethno-nationalist communities whose geopolitical aspirations are mirrored in the complex administrative system of post-Dayton governance and its material demarcation. Significant here is how these narratives emerge at the festival in ways that trouble the neat categories of this division, attempting to negotiate and project a more fluid identity for the Festival. The emphasis on the socio-spatial imaginary produced by the conflict emerges through screenings in locations that have assumed iconic status during the siege, and in the selection of local films and public discussions that encourage reflection and debate on the region's recent history. The online presentation and vision of the festival also continuously highlight its roots in war-time cultural resistance. The trope of "Made in War"<sup>48</sup>, as a unique feature of the SFF, thus implicitly evokes existing border contentions that focus on the Yugoslav conflict, while at the same time mobilising its war-time inception to produce the festival's *civic and cosmopolitan* identity.

The festival denotes a clearly-defined national focus exemplified in a dedicated programme for BiH films, which account for least fifty per cent of the regional selection. Identifying media and political pressures that might have led the organisers to fulfil the Festival's *patriotic* duty as a promoter of national (i.e. nationalist Bosniak) culture, Kristine Kotecki points out that the increasing focus on national cinema compromises and complicates SFF's self-portrayal as a regional, cosmopolitan event.<sup>49</sup> In this respect, however, the SFF is not unique. Rather, a national/cosmopolitan tension is inescapable to the phenomenon of film festivals, wherein ideas about universal cinematic communication, transnational film diffusion and production rub against the continued reliance on national frameworks for selecting and classifying films.<sup>50</sup> In a way, the national turn at the festival could be seen as an example of (re)bordering that mirrors nationalist territorial logics and existing borderscape contentions.<sup>51</sup> Analysing the Festival's multiple cultural narratives, Kotecki suggests that the category "national" camouflages that filmmakers represented at the Festival have been mostly based in the Federation, which is also the entity that figures among the sponsors unlike Republika Srpska.<sup>52</sup> While this might situate the festival in proximity to ethnonational disputes, the possibilities of a narrow ethno-nationalist identification are less significant than the networking and economic potential offered by its well-established narrative as symbol of "the cosmopolitan spirit of the city"<sup>53</sup> It is notable that, at the 2015 edition, the BiH programme featured *Bosnian* films produced across the ethno-nationally-defined entities, regional co-productions, as well as films by Bosnian directors not-longer based within (contested) state borders. This suggests SFF's self-portrayal as an attempt to project a more fluid *Bosnian and Herzegovinian* identity alongside its emphasis on regional cooperation.

A defining feature of SFF's international profile, the promotion of transnational regional cooperation involves the institution of a regional film competition programme, the composition of a regional forum and the creation of Cine-link, the flagship co-production programme offering funding, networking and developing opportunities for regional cinematographers. From Cinelink promotional material to the festival's online presence, the narration of SFF's regional identity complicates deterministic cartographies of the region and dominant border contentions. An interview with long-standing organiser and SFF programmer Elma Tataragić describes the Festival's regional reconfiguration as resulting from ongoing negotiations of identity and cultural memory in the aftermath of war, as well as the more practical pursuit of economic interests. As she explains, the political and cultural impetus of promoting regional cinema underscore an attempt at countering "the falling apart of the country" in the breakup of Yugoslavia<sup>54</sup>. With the loss of available funds for cinema and culture resulting from both post-conflict and post-socialist transformations, regional cooperation has also assumed an increasingly economic dimension which is crucial for the sustainability of SEE *peripheral* cinemas. The significance of such a regional re-orientation for a potential critical re-imagining of belonging should not be understated given SEE's history and the entrenchment of nationalist politics outlined earlier.<sup>55</sup>

Not only are the boundaries of the *SEE region* the Festival represents shifting from an initial focus on the former Yugoslavia, to encompass post-communist and post-soviet countries, as well as Greece and Turkey, but the socio-spatial imaginaries invoked illustrate a complex historicity that exceeds dominant ethnonationalist framing of the region. For example, an interview featured in the 2015 Cinelink brochure evokes a complex historical narrative. Here regional documentary practices are captured as engaging with “new identities, new realities, starting from the newly formed states, new established regimes, new faces of Europe” and “the transition to liberal capitalism, searching for identity and overcoming the trauma of war and of the Communist regime”<sup>56</sup>. These openings to a wider regional scenario are revealing as they could intensify the possibilities for cultural exchange and contacts within and beyond the immediate Post-Yugoslav space. Drawing together Yugoslav, Balkan, and Post-socialist identities with the new political realities and claims to *Europeanness*, cultural politics and artistic production with marketing strategies, the regional socio-spatial imaginary (re)produced at the festival complicates deterministic cartographies of the region that mask and dissolve its complex history. To the contrary, the festival’s vernacular signification of borders relies precisely in foregrounding the complexities of socio-spatial relations in the post-Dayton borderscape and its deep entanglement in post-socialist and post-conflict border transformations of South East Europe to challenge its continuous political and economic marginalisation. In doing so, South East Europe’s contentious history becomes a resource for regional cultural exchanges and contacts, as well as international connectivity.

Through its new trajectory as a regional platform for cinema, the SFF has gained a place in the international film festival circuit, developing a growing network of funders and partners, as diverse as the Berlinale, the British Council, the Council of Europe, as well as Creative Europe, which also provides funds for film production. Reflecting investments in the promises of a “EUrope to come” discussed in earlier sections, themes consistent with the logic of Europeanisation emerge in the festival’s creative vision: not only its neoliberal promotion of economic and cultural cooperation, but also in the inclusion of events that focus on themes increasingly associated with EUropean values, such as human rights and civil society activism. The implications of such efforts to “Europeanise the Balkans” are ambivalent as they resonate with the mantra of transition to neoliberal EUrope, and implicitly invoke its attendant geopolitical imaginary that detains Bosnia and the region to its backward and regressive periphery.<sup>57</sup> Yet, precisely because of the history of marginalisation and post-Cold War transformations that access to European networks of production, distribution and consumption becomes so important at the Festival: these are the networks through which local stories and imaginaries might travel and remain in circulation internationally. Despite this uneven cultural terrain, it would be misleading to read the Festival simply as a problematic vehicle for Europeanisation. Rather, I view these efforts as part of moves in the region that, as Dina Iordanova suggested, are beginning to “capitalise on the togetherness that is bestowed on them and try to turn the undistinguished qualification of ‘being Balkan’ from liability into an asset”.<sup>58</sup> In a process that resonates with Rumford’s discussion

of vernacular borderwork, the complex histories of local, national and regional borders are not erased.<sup>59</sup> Rather, they are reinvented and mobilised by SFF organisers and participants as instruments of regional connectivity that potentially allow local/national/regional films, as well as the imaginaries they foster to “jump” across the EU external border and the world beyond. In the process, the divisive tropes of nationalist identity as all-encompassing framework of belonging might be even momentarily reconsidered in relation to a more dynamic sense of regional mutuality.

As a film showcase dedicated to the promotion of cinema from/about BIH and the SEE region broadly defined, the Sarajevo Film Festival regularly hosts cinematic narratives that engage creatively and critically on the region’s history and contemporary lived experiences. The exhibition of film on the war, its aftermath, as well as post conflict and post-socialist border contentions entails a transformative potential, whereby socio-spatial imaginaries and cultural identities at stake in the conflict might be rearticulated but also challenged. Films and documentaries presented at the 2015 Festival’s edition thematise various aspects of the conflict reflecting an unescapable emphasis on the divisions brought up by the war and the unresolved legacy of nationalism. In this respect, the films’ deep entanglement with war narratives might also continue to feed in the trope of Balkanization by continuously reproducing the imaginary of violent and conflict ridden Balkans that conforms to the expectations of Western markets and public.<sup>60</sup> Yet, local conflict films are also powerful vehicles for creative self-expression and signification that enact complex experiences and engage multiple senses.<sup>61</sup> In this sense, they might allow for new affective connections and challenge given assumptions about the conflict, by fostering new attitudes towards one’s own identity and culture and those of others.

Several war-themed films presented at the 2015 festival share an underlying concern with complex everyday negotiations of identity ushered in by the conflict. In a similar vein to Žbanić’s *One day in Sarajevo*, other cinematic narratives confront the audience with dramas, hopes and failures that undergoing and surviving conflict engenders across the region and beyond.<sup>62</sup> The transformative potential of these films lies in enacting *small stories* of border conflict, that is, those multifaceted negotiations and deeply personal war/post-war experiences often foreclosed in competing projects of collective of nation(list) belonging. Dalibor Matanić’s *High Sun* delves into three love stories tainted by ethnic divisions across Serbian/Croatian communities. In a co-production between Bosnia-Herzegovina, Serbia and Croatia, Mladen Mitrović’s *Chasing a Dream* narrates the director’s quest to get school friends and former actors re-united in Sarajevo decades after having been displaced because of the war. Vladimir Tomic’s *Flotel Europa* offers autobiographical accounts of a group of Bosnian refugees resuming everyday life in an improbable home, a giant boat harboured in Copenhagen, while divisive echoes of the siege reverberate. Documentaries such as Marija Ristic & Nemanja Babić’s *The Unidentified*, and Samir Mehanović’s *The Fog of Srebrenica* engage with unresolved contentions of transitional justice in the region. Overall films of this kind offer imaginative interventions where local

ordinary people's experiences take centre stage and viewers, including those from the region, bear witness to their longings for hope and redemption, as well as to the divisions and conflict still fracturing their communities in the everyday. Screenings at the festival are often followed by a Q&A discussion where the audience can share impressions and discuss the films with directors and crew members.

This Festival's participatory approach opens even momentarily a space for dialogue, encounters and discussion for attendees, film industries' participants and other accredited guests, international, local and from the region. Among these events, poignant is the Docu Corner organised in cooperation with the regional organisation *Youth Initiative for Human Rights*.<sup>63</sup> Involving students, aspiring film directors and young activists from the region, as well as any interested accredited guests, this event revolves around a series of discussions, talks and Q&A with directors of the documentaries included in the SFF programme. The functioning of these spaces is ambivalent. For example, it raises questions about the festival's ability to attract a specific "privileged" audience who might be already inclined to engage in dialogue and cultural exchange. Furthermore, initiatives such as the Docu Corner resonate with top-down EU interventions that aim at fostering human right and developing civil society, bringing into question how participants/organisers negotiate international norms in their activities. While untangling these dynamics would require further research, here I suggest that zooming into the micro-politics of encounters offers a glimpse into exchanges that might enable acknowledgement of reciprocal experiences of grief and critical reflections on the legacy of war.<sup>64</sup> In the 2015 edition, for instance, Q&A discussion revolved around questions that are integral to the divisive and contentious politics of memory around the conflict, such as the legacy of the Srebrenica genocide and other unresolved war crimes in the region, but also the place of Sarajevo in European geopolitics and history, and its identity as a cosmopolitan city.<sup>65</sup>

Responses to the films and to the discussions were often emotional which attests to the complex ramifications of conflict and violence for the communities affected even after generations. In my observations, participants commented that those difficult conversations felt "healthy", in contrast with the politicisation of any aspect of everyday life, from memory to language, to culture.<sup>66</sup> Attendees at the post-screening Q&As expressed an interest to learn more about issues affecting communities perceived as "other", even if it meant acknowledging atrocities committed in their own name. Reflecting on the quest for outliving the legacy of grief and trauma after conflict, Emma Hutchinson and Roland Bleiker write that "embracing concrete practices that refuse the habitual, reflex-like push to memorialise (and gloss over) the traumas of war, and instead enable the potentially alternative expression, acknowledgment and acceptance of the profound and frequently reciprocal emotional impact of violence and suffering, is [...] key"<sup>67</sup> I view cinematic interventions, cultural exchanges and spaces for discussion promoted at the festival as privileged, yet interesting, *laboratories* of border-crossings where glimpses of a critical politics of grief might emerge and alternative conflict transformation imaginaries could thrive.

## **Conclusions**

With its focus on state building, capacity-building and economic cooperation, EU peacebuilding efforts in BiH pay insufficient attention to the multifaceted everyday borderscape negotiations that experiencing and surviving conflict produce. Rather than enabling the acknowledgment of these embodied and emotional experiences and creating opportunities to move beyond the dysfunctional post-agreement politics, EU interventions in BiH have largely contributed to further cement stark geopolitical imaginaries. In this landscape belonging remains delineated along exclusionary and fixed notions of ethnonational politics, while civilizational differences between the EU and the post-Yugoslav space are (re)produced. The logic of Peace through EU governance and cross-border cooperation essentially works to constitute the post-Dayton borderscape as a liminal space: unable to move post-conflict, not either quite in Europe.<sup>68</sup>

The kaleidoscopic lens of the borderscape opens opportunities to move beyond this impasse by highlighting alternative narratives and sites of border politics that are often overlooked in institutionalised and technocratic approaches. Situated at the interface between aesthetics, cultural politics and post-conflict transformations, the Sarajevo Film Festival provides a privileged vantage point to explore border negotiations through the medium of cinema. Focusing on the promotion of regional cooperation and cultural exchanges, the exhibition of war-themed films, and the creation of spaces for discussion, I have attempted to outline the SFF's heuristic potential to engender critical reflections on the legacy of war and imaginative practices of conflict transformation. My research suggests that the festival produces a unique, albeit temporary and privileged, site where to experience and sense everyday border negotiations through cinema's aesthetic and creative energy, and where film-lovers<sup>69</sup> come together and make sense of these experiences. Although a short article cannot provide a full picture of the complex and ambivalent dynamics shaping the making and un-making of borders and cross-border encounters at the festival, I suggest that paying attention to the Sarajevo Film Festival as an interesting laboratory of border crossings and aesthetic engagements might enrich our imaginaries and practices of conflict transformation.

## **Acknowledgements**

Research for this paper was made possible by the EUBORDERSCAPES project (FP7-SSH-2011-1-290775), financed by the European Commission. I wish to thank Giulia Carabelli, Milena Komarova and Cathal McCall for their feedback on an earlier draft and Gordon Kavanagh for technical support. I also wish to thank the editorial team and the three anonymous reviewers for their insightful comments and productive suggestions. I am indebted to Elma Tataragić and the Youth Initiative for Human Rights activists I met in Sarajevo and Prishtina for their contribution. Any mistakes I have made are my own.

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<sup>1</sup> Kristine Kotecki, 'Europeanizing the Balkans at the Sarajevo Film Festival', *Journal of Narrative Theory* 44, no. 3 (2014): 344–366.

<sup>2</sup> For an overview of relevant literature on film festivals as complex and multifaceted events see for example Kenneth Turan, *Sundance to Sarajevo: Film Festivals and the World They Made* (University of California Press, 2003); Dina Jordanova, *The Film Festival Reader*, 2013; Marijke de Valck, *Film Festivals: From European Geopolitics to Global Cinephilia* (Amsterdam University Press, 2010); Owen Evans, 'Border Exchanges: The Role of the European Film Festival', *Journal of Contemporary European Studies* 15, no. 1 (2007): 23–33; Aida Vallejo and Maria-Paz Peirano, *Film Festivals and Anthropology* (Cambridge Scholars Publisher, 2017).

<sup>3</sup> Chiara Brambilla, 'Exploring the Critical Potential of the Borderscapes Concept', *Geopolitics* 20, no. 1 (2 January 2015): 14–34, doi:10.1080/14650045.2014.884561; Chiara Brambilla et al., *Borderscaping: Imaginations and Practices of Border Making*.

<sup>4</sup> Marta Zorko, 'The Construction of Socio-Spatial Identities alongside the Schengen Border: Bordering and Border-Crossing Processes in the Croatian–Slovenian Borderlands', in *Borderscaping: Imaginations and Practices of Border Making*, by Chiara Brambilla et al., 2015., 99.

<sup>5</sup> James W. Scott, 'Bordering, Border Politics and Cross-Border Cooperation in Europe', in *Neighbourhood Policy and the Construction of the European External Borders* (Springer, 2015), 27–44, [http://link.springer.com/chapter/10.1007/978-3-319-18452-4\\_2](http://link.springer.com/chapter/10.1007/978-3-319-18452-4_2).

<sup>6</sup> Ibid.

<sup>7</sup> Cathal McCall, *The European Union and Peacebuilding: The Cross-Border Dimension* (New York: Palgrave/McMillan, 2014).

<sup>8</sup> Scott, 'Bordering, Border Politics and Cross-Border Cooperation in Europe'.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid.; Gabriel Popescu, 'The Conflicting Logics of Cross-Border Reterritorialization: Geopolitics of Euroregions in Eastern Europe', *Political Geography* 27, no. 4 (2008): 418–438; Etain Tannam, 'Cross-Border Co-Operation between Northern Ireland and The Republic of Ireland: Neo-Functionalism Revisited', *The British Journal of Politics & International Relations* 8, no. 2 (1 May 2006): 256–76, doi:10.1111/j.1467-856X.2006.00202.x; Cathal McCall, 'European Union Cross-Border Cooperation and Conflict Amelioration', *Space and Polity* 17, no. 2 (2013): 197–216.

<sup>10</sup> Scott, 'Bordering, Border Politics and Cross-Border Cooperation in Europe', 49.

<sup>11</sup> James Wesley Scott and Henk van Houtum, 'Reflections on EU Territoriality and the "bordering" of Europe', *Political Geography* 28, no. 5 (June 2009): 271–73, doi:10.1016/j.polgeo.2009.04.002.

<sup>12</sup> A prominent example of this logic is the yearly monitoring exercise documenting developments and gaps in implementing reforms required for EU access. The 2014 document reported Bosnia "at a standstill" in the process. The 2016 document flags some progress, yet it also continuously highlights key challenges in cooperation, coordination and policy harmonisation across entities and levels of governance. Arguably these challenges are enabled and exacerbated precisely by Dayton's governance regime. See 2014 and 2016 Progress Reports [http://ec.europa.eu/enlargement/pdf/key\\_documents/2014/20141008-bosnia-and-herzegovina-progress-report\\_en.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/enlargement/pdf/key_documents/2014/20141008-bosnia-and-herzegovina-progress-report_en.pdf) (accessed 12 October 2015) and [https://ec.europa.eu/neighbourhood-enlargement/sites/near/files/pdf/key\\_documents/2016/20161109\\_report\\_bosnia\\_and\\_herzegovina.pdf](https://ec.europa.eu/neighbourhood-enlargement/sites/near/files/pdf/key_documents/2016/20161109_report_bosnia_and_herzegovina.pdf) (accessed 2 August 2017)

<sup>13</sup> Eric Gordy, 'Dayton's Annex 4 Constitution at 20: Political Stalemate, Public Dissatisfaction and the Rebirth of Self-Organisation', *Southeast European and Black Sea Studies* 15, no. 4 (2 October 2015): 611–22, doi:10.1080/14683857.2015.1134132.

<sup>14</sup> Ibid.; Andrew Gilbert and Jasmin Mujanović, 'Dayton at Twenty: Towards New Politics in Bosnia-Herzegovina', *Southeast European and Black Sea Studies*, 2016, 1–6.

<sup>15</sup> Personal Interviews with EU officials, Sarajevo 21 & 27 August 2015

<sup>16</sup> Personal Interviews with EU officials, Sarajevo 21 & 27 August 2015

<sup>17</sup> See <http://projects.europa.ba/About> (accessed 6 November 2015)

<sup>18</sup> See [http://ec.europa.eu/enlargement/instruments/funding-by-country/bosnia-herzegovina/index\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/enlargement/instruments/funding-by-country/bosnia-herzegovina/index_en.htm) (accessed 17 October 2016)

<sup>19</sup> McCall, *The European Union and Peacebuilding*; Emma Hutchison and Roland Bleiker, 'Grief and the Transformation of Emotions after War', in *Emotions, Politics and War*, by Linda Åhäll and Thomas Gregory (Routledge, 2015).

<sup>20</sup> On the relevance of the everyday in peace/ conflict, see for example: Roger Mac Ginty, 'Everyday Peace: Bottom-up and Local Agency in Conflict-Affected Societies', *Security Dialogue* 45, no. 6 (1 December 2014): 548–64, doi:10.1177/0967010614550899; Helen Berents, 'An Embodied Everyday Peace in the Midst of Violence', *Peacebuilding* 3, no. 2 (4 May 2015): 1–14, doi:10.1080/21647259.2015.1052632; Feminist scholars have long drawn attention to the everyday life in war, these texts are but few examples Swati Parashar, 'Anger, War and Feminist Storytelling', in *Emotions, War and Politics*, by Linda Åhäll and Thomas A. Gregory

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(Routledge, 2015); Carol Cohn, *Women and Wars: Contested Histories, Uncertain Futures* (John Wiley & Sons, 2013); Cynthia Enloe, *Maneuvers: The International Politics of Militarizing Women's Lives* (Univ of California Press, 2000); On the relevance of bottom-up border-making see also Chris Rumford, 'Towards a Vernacularized Border Studies: The Case of Citizen Borderwork', *Journal of Borderlands Studies* 28, no. 2 (2013): 169–180; Nira Yuval-Davis, 'A Situated Intersectional Everyday Approach to the Study of Bordering', *Euborder-Scapes WorkingPaper*, no.2(2013), [http://www.euborderscapes.eu/fileadmin/user\\_upload/Working\\_Papers/EUBORDERSCAPES\\_Working\\_Paper\\_2\\_Yuval-Davis.pdf](http://www.euborderscapes.eu/fileadmin/user_upload/Working_Papers/EUBORDERSCAPES_Working_Paper_2_Yuval-Davis.pdf).

<sup>21</sup>One of the responses to citizens' protests saw EU representatives entered lengthy negotiations with the local elite which eventually led to the acceptance of BiH candidacy in September 2016. It remains unclear whether this will enable any meaningful political and social change given that many of Bosnia's alleged inherent "deficiencies" remain unresolved. Rather than supporting citizens' demands for political transformation it has been suggested that this *new* approach will merely see a shift from a state of permanent crisis to that of perpetual candidacy. For an analysis of the protests and international responses see Daniela Lai, 'Transitional Justice and Its Discontents: Socioeconomic Justice in Bosnia and Herzegovina and the Limits of International Intervention', *Journal of Intervention and Statebuilding* 10, no. 3 (2 July 2016): 361–81, doi:10.1080/17502977.2016.1199478; Cera Murtagh, 'Civic Mobilization in Divided Societies and the Perils of Political Engagement: Bosnia and Herzegovina's Protest and Plenum Movement', *Nationalism and Ethnic Politics* 22, no. 2 (2016): 149–171.

<sup>22</sup>Hozic, Aida "The Origins of Postconflict", in Chip. Gagnon and Keith. Brown, *Post-Conflict Studies: An Interdisciplinary Approach*, 2014.

<sup>23</sup>For analysis of Europeanisation and cross-border cooperation that draw on the borderscape concept see McCall, *The European Union and Peacebuilding*; Cathal McCall and Xabier Itçaina, 'Secondary Foreign Policy Activities in Third Sector Cross-Border Cooperation as Conflict Transformation in the European Union: The Cases of the Basque and Irish Borderscapes', *Regional & Federal Studies*, 2017, 1–21.

<sup>24</sup>See for example: Nick Vaughan-Williams, *Border Politics: The Limits of Sovereign Power* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2009); Chris Rumford, 'Towards a Multiperspectival Study of Borders', *Geopolitics* 17, no. 4 (1 October 2012): 887–902, doi:10.1080/14650045.2012.660584; Anke Strüver, *Stories of the 'Boring Border': The Dutch-German Borderscape in People's Minds* (LIT Verlag Münster, 2005); Anne-Laure Amilhat Szary et al., 'The Evolving Concept of Borders State of the Debate Report I', 2012., [http://www.euborderscapes.eu/fileadmin/user\\_upload/EUBORDERSCAPES\\_State\\_of\\_Debate\\_Report\\_1.pdf](http://www.euborderscapes.eu/fileadmin/user_upload/EUBORDERSCAPES_State_of_Debate_Report_1.pdf); Thomas M. Wilson, *A Companion to Border Studies* (John Wiley & Sons, 2015); Corey Johnson et al., 'Interventions on Rethinking "the Border" in Border Studies', *Political Geography* 30, no. 2 (2011): 61–69; Noel Parker and Nick Vaughan-Williams, 'Critical Border Studies: Broadening and Deepening the 'Lines in the Sand' Agenda', *Geopolitics* 17, no. 4 (1 October 2012): 727–33, doi:10.1080/14650045.2012.706111.

<sup>25</sup>Prem Kumar Rajaram and Carl Grundy-Warr, *Borderscapes: Hidden Geographies and Politics at Territory's Edge*, vol. 29 (U of Minnesota Press, 2007), ix–xl.

<sup>26</sup>Rajaram and Grundy-Warr, *Borderscapes*; Chiara Brambilla, 'Exploring the Critical Potential of the Borderscapes Concept', *Geopolitics* 20, no. 1 (2 January 2015): 14–34, doi:10.1080/14650045.2014.884561; Chiara Brambilla et al., *Borderscapes: Imaginations and Practices of Border Making* (Ashgate Publishing, Ltd., 2015).

<sup>27</sup>Brambilla, 'Exploring the Critical Potential of the Borderscapes Concept', 25.

<sup>28</sup>For a discussion of international intervention in BiH see David Campbell, *National Deconstruction: Violence, Identity, and Justice in Bosnia* (U of Minnesota Press, 1998); For an analysis of Dayton's ethnopolitics see Dejan Guzina, 'Dilemmas of Nation-Building and Citizenship in Dayton Bosnia', *National Identities* 9, no. 3 (2007): 217–234; Maria-Adriana Deiana, 'Citizenship as (Not) Belonging? Contesting the Replication of Gendered and Ethnicised Exclusions in Post-Dayton Bosnia-Herzegovina', in *Beyond Citizenship?* (Springer, 2013), 184–210, [http://link.springer.com/chapter/10.1057/9781137311351\\_9](http://link.springer.com/chapter/10.1057/9781137311351_9).

<sup>29</sup>See Dayton Peace Agreement full text available <http://www.nato.int/ifor/gfa/gfa-home.htm> accessed 10 May 2016

<sup>30</sup>'The Serbian Referendum in Bosnia and Herzegovina', *EurActiv.com*, 30 September 2016, <https://www.euractiv.com/section/enlargement/opinion/the-serbian-referendum-in-bosnia-and-herzegovina/>.

<sup>31</sup>Danijela Majstorović, Zoran Vučković, and Anđela Pepić, 'From Dayton to Brussels via Tuzla: Post-2014 Economic Restructuring as Europeanization Discourse/Practice in Bosnia and Herzegovina', *Southeast European and Black Sea Studies* 15, no. 4 (2 October 2015): 661–82, doi:10.1080/14683857.2015.1126093; Gordy, 'Dayton's Annex 4 Constitution at 20'.

<sup>32</sup>Damir Arsenijević, *Unbriable Bosnia and Herzegovina: The Fight for the Commons* (Nomos Verlagsgesellschaft, 2015); Radmila Gorup, *After Yugoslavia: The Cultural Spaces of a Vanished Land* (Stanford University Press, 2013).

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<sup>33</sup> Selma Tobudić “Plenums and Protests: a Remembering, in Arsenijević, *Unbriable Bosnia and Herzegovina*.pp.156-157

<sup>34</sup> Luiza Bialasiewicz, ed., *Europe in the World: EU Geopolitics and the Making of European Space*, Critical Geopolitics (Farnham, Surrey, England; Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2011),

<sup>35</sup> Useful here is the work that interrogates European integration as a multifarious process of governmentality. In this sense, “Peace through EU governance” can be read as one of the complex often incoherent and contingent techniques of governmentalization. These undergird a specific geopolitical, social, cultural and economic vision for and material demarcation of Europe as framed by the EU. Operating at different levels (e.g. state-building, civil society, cultural cooperation, cross-border-cooperation), through different actors (e.g. EU delegation in BiH and EU commission) and with different registers/themes, these assemblages ultimately work to legitimise the idea of Europe as a political project and international peace actor, make (potential) European citizens and ultimately uphold it as a model and space of democracy, progress and normality. See Jens Henrik Haahr and William Walters, *Governing Europe: Discourse, Governmentality and European Integration* (Routledge, 2004).

<sup>36</sup> Stef Jansen, *Yearnings in the Meantime: ‘normal Lives’ and the State in a Sarajevo Apartment Complex*, vol. 15 (Berghahn Books, 2015).

<sup>37</sup> My research in BiH suggests ways in which various local/international institutions and local/international actors normalise, reproduce, but also experience and constantly negotiate the “road into the EU”. For many I have encountered during my fieldwork, European integration represents the possibility to conduct a normal life versus being “stuck” in the post-Dayton impasse. In one occasion, I asked a local EU official if they could express a personal view on what, if any, could be the value of investing in the project of EU integration. The response poignantly stated: “European integration is the way of living normal”. During my ethnographic fieldwork in Sarajevo in 2010 and 2015, friends, activists and other research participants I interviewed often expressed similar aspirations to a transition to normality and out of the never-ending post-conflict trajectory.

<sup>38</sup> Johan Schimanski and Stephen Wolfe, ‘Cultural Production and Negotiation of Borders: Introduction to the Dossier’, *Journal of Borderlands Studies* 25, no. 1 (2010): 38–49; Chiara Brambilla, ‘Navigating the Euro/African Border and Migration Nexus Through the Borderscapes Lens: Insights from the LampedusaInFestival’, *Borderscapes: Imaginations and Practices of Border Making*, 2015, 111; Michael J. Shapiro, ‘HBO’s Two Frontiers: Deadwood and The Wire’, *Geopolitics* 20, no. 1 (2 January 2015): 193–213, doi:10.1080/14650045.2013.847431; Elena dell’Agnese and Anne-Laure Amilhat Szary, ‘Borderscapes: From Border Landscapes to Border Aesthetics’, *Geopolitics* 20, no. 1 (2 January 2015): 4–13, doi:10.1080/14650045.2015.1014284.

<sup>39</sup> Johan Schimanski, ‘Border Aesthetics and Cultural Distancing in the Norwegian-Russian Borderscape’, *Geopolitics* 20, no. 1 (2 January 2015): 35–55, doi:10.1080/14650045.2014.884562.

<sup>40</sup> Schimanski and Wolfe, ‘Cultural Production and Negotiation of Borders’; Brambilla, ‘Navigating the Euro/African Border and Migration Nexus Through the Borderscapes Lens’; Shapiro, ‘HBO’s Two Frontiers’; Dell’Agnese and Amilhat Szary, ‘Borderscapes’.

<sup>41</sup> Brambilla, ‘Navigating the Euro/African Border and Migration Nexus Through the Borderscapes Lens’; Brambilla, ‘Exploring the Critical Potential of the Borderscapes Concept’.

<sup>42</sup> Dell’Agnese and Amilhat Szary, ‘Borderscapes’; Schimanski, ‘Border Aesthetics and Cultural Distancing in the Norwegian-Russian Borderscape’; Alan Ingram, ‘Art, Geopolitics and Metapolitics at Tate Galleries London’, *Geopolitics* 0, no. 0 (12 December 2016): 1–21, doi:10.1080/14650045.2016.1263186.

<sup>43</sup> Brambilla, ‘Navigating the Euro/African Border and Migration Nexus Through the Borderscapes Lens’; Roland Bleiker, ‘In Search of Thinking Space: Reflections on the Aesthetic Turn in International Political Theory’, *Millennium*, 20 January 2017, 0305829816684262, doi:10.1177/0305829816684262.

<sup>44</sup> Michael J. Shapiro, *Cinematic Geopolitics*, 1 edition (New York, NY: Routledge, 2008); Maria Rovisco, ‘Towards a Cosmopolitan Cinema: Understanding the Connection Between Borders, Mobility and Cosmopolitanism in the Fiction Film’, *Mobilities* 8, no. 1 (1 February 2013): 148–65, doi:10.1080/17450101.2012.747774; Ana Cristina Mendes and John Sundholm, ‘Walls and Fortresses: Borderscapes and the Cinematic Imaginary’, *Transnational Cinemas* 6, no. 2 (3 July 2015): 117–22, doi:10.1080/20403526.2015.1073490.

<sup>45</sup> Rumford, ‘Towards a Vernacularized Border Studies’.

<sup>46</sup> Dina Iordanova, *The Cinema of the Balkans* (Wallflower Press, 2006), 9.

<sup>47</sup> Aida A. Hozic, ‘Between “National” and “Transnational”’: Film Diffusion as World Politics’, *International Studies Review* 16, no. 2 (June 2014): 229–39, doi:10.1111/misr.12134.

<sup>48</sup> Mirza Redzić, ‘Made in War (Boomed in Peace): The Sarajevo Film Festival’, accessed 13 May 2016, <http://www.narratives.eu/s/Made-in-war-boomed-in-peace-SFF-pxtz.pdf>.

<sup>49</sup> Kristine Kotecki, ‘Europeanizing the Balkans at the Sarajevo Film Festival’, *Journal of Narrative Theory* 44, no. 3 (2014): 354–56.

- <sup>50</sup> Hozić, 'Between "National" and "Transnational"'; Sandra Ponzanese and Verena Berger, 'Introduction: Genres and Tropes in Postcolonial Cinema(s) in Europe', *Transnational Cinemas* 7, no. 2 (2 July 2016): 111–17, doi:10.1080/20403526.2016.1217641; Dina Iordanova, *Cinema at the Periphery* (Wayne State University Press, 2010), Lydia Papadimitriou and Jeffrey Ruoff, 'Film Festivals: Origins and Trajectories', *New Review of Film and Television Studies* 14, no. 1 (2 January 2016): 1–4, doi:10.1080/17400309.2015.1106686.
- <sup>51</sup> After all the focus on national cinema has been a central element of the festival since organisers began to show documentaries in the midst of the siege. Personal Interview with SFF Elma Tataragić, Sarajevo 18 August 2015.
- <sup>52</sup> Kotecki, 'Europeanizing the Balkans at the Sarajevo Film Festival'. I. SFF Elma Tataragić points out that local government's funding is rather limited, accounting for around 15% of the Festival's overall budget. Personal Interview with SFF Elma Tataragić, Sarajevo 18 August 2015.
- <sup>53</sup> <http://www.sff.ba/en/page/about-the-festival>
- <sup>54</sup> Interview with Elma Tataragić, Sarajevo , 18 August 2015
- <sup>55</sup> Iordanova, *The Cinema of the Balkans*.
- <sup>56</sup> Interview with Rada Sesic and Martichka Bozhilova, Heads of Docu Rough Cut Boutique programme, reproduced in CityLink Industry Days -Where art meets Business, 19-22 August 2015. The brochure was included in the welcome pack for accredited guests.
- <sup>57</sup> Kotecki, 'Europeanizing the Balkans at the Sarajevo Film Festival'.
- <sup>58</sup> Iordanova, *The Cinema of the Balkans*, 9.
- <sup>59</sup> Rumford, 'Towards a Vernacularized Border Studies'.
- <sup>60</sup> It is often through *conflict films* that the respective post-Yugoslav industries can enter international cinematic production networks, even though this might contribute to reify troubling stereotypes that satisfy the Western gaze, see also Kotecki, 'Europeanizing the Balkans at the Sarajevo Film Festival'; Iordanova, *The Cinema of the Balkans*.
- <sup>61</sup> Shine Choi and Maria-Adriana Deiana, 'Questioning the International: (Un)making Bosnian and Korean Conflicts, Cinematically', *Trans-Humanities Journal* 10, no. 1 (13 March 2017): 5–30, doi:10.1353/trh.2017.0000.
- <sup>62</sup> There is a rich repertoire of independent local films that provide critical/artistic reflections on the war. See for example, cinematic productions from and about Bosnia-Herzegovina such as Ademir Kenović's *The Perfe Circle* , Jasmila Zbanic's *Grbavica*, Pjer Zajlic's *Gori Vatra* and Aida Begic's *Snijeg*. Full listings and film synopsis for the various editions of the Festival are available at <http://www.sff.ba/en/page/about-the-festival>, accessed May 13 2016.
- <sup>63</sup> Personal Interview with Timohir Popovic, YIfHRBiH, Sarajevo 25 August 2015
- <sup>64</sup> Mac Ginty, 'Everyday Peace'.
- <sup>65</sup> Author's participant observation, Sarajevo 16-22 August 2015
- <sup>66</sup> Author's participant observation and personal communications with Docu Corner attendees, Sarajevo 16-22 August 2015
- <sup>67</sup> Hutchison and Bleiker, 'Grief and the Transformation of Emotions after War', 210.
- <sup>68</sup> Jansen, *Yearnings in the Meantime*.
- <sup>69</sup> I am grateful to Giulia Carabelli for suggesting this term as an interesting and fluid category of identity at the festival.