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# 06



## DOCUMENTARY ACTIVISM IN POST-CONFLICT & POST-COMMUNIST SOCIETIES

### A CASE IN THE SEE REGION

Maša Hilčičin

# 17

## REPUTATION BUILDING IN ORGANIZATIONS FROM THE VIEWPOINT OF INDIRECT RECIPROCITY

Stefano Cavagnetto  
Bruce Gahir

*A corporate reputation can be considered as a set of attributes ascribed to a firm, inferred to a firm's past actions. Our aim in this paper is to present a formalized model of reputation building in organizations...*

# 27

## AN INTRODUCTION TO 'SHARED- VALUE LEARNING SUSTAINABLE UNITS' STRATEGIC APPROACH

### ANALYSING & CRITICALLY EVALUATING THE STRATEGY OF GOOGLE



Oldřich Dutý, Jr.

# 37

## DATA MINING TECHNIQUES

Jana Jarolímová

*Data mining is the process of analysing [very large amounts of] data by finding and extracting patterns and correlations, and also modeling the data to enable an easier grasp of the information. It deals with ratios and influences, and can predict and discover relationships and effects.*

# 49

## JAVA (PROGRAMMING LANGUAGE)

Michal Hlásny

*Work on Java originally began with the goal of creating a platform-independent language and operating system for consumer electronics. The original intent was to use C++, but as work progressed in this direction, the Java developers realized that they would be better served by creating their own language...*

# 56

## CLIPS (PROGRAMMING LANGUAGE)

Tomáš Laube

*Clips is a so-called production system or rule based language if you will, so we will start with simple explanation of all terms connected to clips, which could be unknown for classical C programmer.*

# PREFACE

The Prague College Research Centre (PCRC) was founded with the idea of developing interdisciplinary research crossing several fields and subject areas underlying the academic curricula at Prague College, its main purposes are:

- To promote a medium of participation and discussions by means of regular interdisciplinary workshops and seminars.
- To promote and to encourage the collaboration among different Schools and programs in the design and creation of multidisciplinary courses in the College.
- To provide a means of publishing research work for both students and staff as part of a quarterly academic bulletin and e-journal.
- To cooperate with other education institutions and organizations in the development of common projects of interest

The Centre was developed from projects initiated by Stefano Cavagnetto in the context of his role as Head of the School of Business and the School of Computing, by Bruce Gahir, Principal Lecturer in the School of Business and Computing, and by Pascal Silondi, Director of Libat and Principal Lecturer in Interactive Media. Beginning in 2009 research in the following areas has been initiated:

1. Game theory and its application to economics, business, philosophy and international relations.
2. The history of programming languages and history of computers.
3. Experimental media (Prague College and the PCRC is an associate partner for Underground City XXI, an international interdisciplinary EU project).
4. The history of cryptology and the science of enciphering.
5. Art and mathematics: a profitable relationship in history-from classical geometry to fractals and topology.

By combining academic study with practical training the PCRC aims to create an environment where personal achievement goes hand-in-hand with social responsibility. Strategically, this offers students the chance to actively collaborate in several research areas with the support of faculty members and lecturers of the College.

Since 2010 a quarterly Bulletin has been published detailing progress in relevant research activities of lecturers and students. This bulletin forms an integral part of the PCRC and provides a medium whereby the research activities of the centre can be documented. Faculty members, Lecturers and students belonging to every School of the College are welcome to submit their work for publication.

You can find the published Bulletins of PCRC in Prague college library and in six Prague's libraries (Národní knihovně, Knihovně Národního muzea v Praze, Ministerstvu kultury ČR, Parlamentní knihovně, Městské knihovně v Praze, Knihovně a tiskárně pro nevidomé K. E. Macana) and digital version in the electronic library 'Ebrary'.

Deadline for the next issue is 30th December 2011.

— **PART I**  
**HUMANITIES IN**  
**TODAY'S WORLD**

# DOCUMENTARY ACTIVISM IN POST-CONFLICT AND POST-COMMUNIST SOCIETIES

A CASE IN THE SEE REGION

MAŠA HILČIŠIN

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Questioning identities, nationalistic ideologies, reconstruction of the historical past and its effects on people's lives, brutal corruption, limited access to human rights, the process of reconciliation, nationalism, war crimes, ethnic cleansing, mass rape, religious fundamentalism, economical and political agonies and regressions of societies in transition – these are just some of the topics articulated in SEE documentary films within the last two decades. One of the reasons of empowering documentary film in this region was a lack of enough visibility of important social and political issues in the public space. Documentary filmmakers from this region have a tendency to take a stand and to have an ideological commitment. Political expression is very common for most of the documentary film works as a reflection on a current state. Tectonic changes in this region have transformed public space into the new historical, political, social, and cultural environment which is articulated through the 'newly' born ideologies and values. The space poses questions of political and cultural re-definition within the post-socialist and post-conflict realities along with difficulties and justifications of political and ideological struggles.

What appears as an important issue when it comes about documentary filmmaking is ethical dimension, which is mainly related to the relationship with a social subject (social subjects = people in the film). What do we do with subjects in the film? How far are we allowed to go into someone's life? How do we present a certain group of people or reality? What is the real effect of documentary film on society? Should documentary filmmakers act as an active agents in society? These questions become even more important and provocative when we discuss documentary filmmakers from fragile and politically conscientious regions such as SEE, where most of their works are an extended activity of social and human rights activism.

Another important dimension for the documentary filmmakers in the SEE region is the level of responsibility; on the one side they share information in the public and protect the subjects in the film, and on the other side, they have a responsible role towards society, to speak loudly about issues which are usually hidden or unspoken enough in a public space. There are different levels of responsibilities when it comes to documentary and video making, especially those dealing with social and political issues. Some of these levels touch ethical issues, which are mainly related to the relationship built between the filmmaker and the social subject, rather than a statement and stand posed by the documentary filmmaker. In addition, there is the desire not to harm others, which includes people in the film, and not to use any language which might cause hate speech or any other discrimination against certain individuals or groups of people. Some of the additional principles to those 'do not harm' are protection of the vulnerable and respect of audience trust.

This paper explores video and documentary cinema in SEE during the last two decades emphasizing the major changes, political and social involvement, documentary activism, as well as an ethical approach to the subjects and levels of responsibility. It is divided into the most popular subjects in SEE documentary cinema in recent history: identity, reconstruction of the past, and activism and social issues which will be discussed through a presentation of the significant filmmakers and their works. This paper just intends to research some of the already on-going discussions in documentary films and their real involvement in society by showing it through the example of the SEE cinema landscape.

## IDENTITY

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A valuable film contribution in the search and examination of the Balkan's identity is the documentary film 'Whose is this Song?' (2003) done by Bulgarian filmmaker Adela Peeva. In this film, Peeva is trying to find out the origin of a Balkan song which took her on a journey through different Balkans countries. In an almost 'naive' search for the origin of one song, the author detects and exposes powerful politics, and still a very conflicted Balkan reality, harshly determined by consequences of nationalism, hatred, and ethnic-wars. Various interpretations of this song (hymn, military march, love ballade) in each of the Balkans countries shows sensitivity of the people in the film when it comes to cultural heritage and war wounds that are still open. Peeva creates forceful documentary images on complexity and importance of historical memory, collective and individual memory, and demands for self-definition within the certain historical and cultural context. The documentary has a form of traveling through the cultural Balkan's landscape nowadays, stressing also the complexity in defining the Balkans.

The re-examination of identities, questioning the importance of belonging or not-belonging, identifying or not-identifying with particular historical and cultural codes, the collapse of totalitarian regimes, the rise of nationalism, and recent war are all important themes. It comes from the re-writing of histories, languages, and national identities modified in most of the SEE countries according to the dominant political forces; therefore the idea of SEE cinema should be also perceived within the complexity of building new identities and their ambiguity. Peeva is showing a politically fragile Balkan post-war landscape. Unlike observational documentarists, she is very interactive with social subjects in the film, and sometimes she is a presence in



*Europe Next Door (2005)*

front of the camera as well, questioning and communicating with the subjects. The film is led by music, a nice melodic song, yet through the music it shows how these elements of culture powerfully create national identities. During her journey, Peeva also shows everyday life of the Balkan people, cultural and other habits, sensitivity, mentality, and colloquial languages. The film even shows, at the beginning, a certain easiness, and the more it progresses, the more it reveals an earnest perception of historical and cultural space. The level of responsibility is paramount in this film as Peeva is approaching subjects spontaneously most of the time, without previous arrangement or scheduled interview. As she touches cultural heritage she never knows what is going to happen, what kind of reaction she will encounter, and how to escape a possible uncertain situation where subjects can get emotionally hurt, and maybe even aggressive. This journey was especially sensitive during her stay in former Yugoslavia, especially in communication with war veterans who are still dealing with hard war traumas and ethnic based animosity. Besides significant anthropological documentary work produced with this film, a powerful dimension of Peeva's approach is humor, which helps her to communicate with others despite war damages. It also helps to devictimise the image of the Balkans by showing optimism; people are still singing despite all historical quakes.

A similar journey was done by Slovenian filmmaker, Maja Weiss, in the documentary 'The Road Of Fraternity And Unity' (1999), that explores post-Yugoslav national identities. She took the road through different countries, this time post-Yugoslav countries showing a wide spectrum of emotions of different subjects – from harsh nationalism towards other ethnic groups, to struggles with trauma and loss of beloved ones, to the still strong belief in Yugoslav identity and 'unity.' Symbolically, Weiss shot interviews on the road that was at one time called The Road of Fraternity and Unity, which was the highway built between Ljubljana and Zagreb, and Belgrade and Skopje. The film was based on a number of interviews which Weiss was doing on the road with accidental passer-bys, local people, and some famous people from cultural and political life, who were trying to deal with war and nationalism through their works, and who gave significant articulations of such issues: *'For me, the phrase fraternity and unity was not empty, though it had lost its import in the political vocabulary. It was mentioned often enough, particularly as the peg upon which to hang lies... War in Yugoslavia, the army that we'd been building and richly financing for years on end in order to have protection from enemies from without... that this same army that we'd funded with enormous resources should be used on the territory of Yugoslavia, to my mind, was contrary to any sane logic'* (from the interview with Bosilja Pušić, ('The Road Of Fraternity And Unity', 1999), 48:41 – 49:45). Responsibility in taking statements and sharing people's experiences in the film, Weiss respectively sometimes has a more observational role, especially with subjects who are dealing with animosity towards other ethnic groups.



The film was built between the private and public space as well as confrontations which are conceived through several layers:

- 'unity' and 'brotherhood' vs. an ethnically divided society
- collective conscious or 'guilty' vs. individual grief and pain
- nostalgic past vs. disillusioned present
- political vs. personal experience.

The film was shot in 1999 when most of the post-Yugoslav countries were still cut off from the rest of the Europe and under complicated administrative visa's regimes. Space in the film is very personal and it can be said it overtakes, yet at the same time it brings up wider political issues while depicting post-war society. Weiss concluded the film with her own statement: *'Why the slogan 'brotherhood and fraternity'? Why the road of fraternity and unity? One must have a reason in order to make a documentary. Also, I was one of those who lived more than half their lives in a country that was cemented by this slogan, forcibly, as we know now and as some people have known from the very beginning. When we were younger, some of us realized it when we entered high school and the punk movement began to spread. This trip was probably my search for a time gone by, for some... for some...'* ('The Road Of Fraternity And Unity', 1999, 101:23 – 102:22).

Another, not less important dimension in re-defining identity, is imposing it within the European cultural space. Even knowing they – SEE - belong to Europe, very often they feel left outside alone. Most of the cinematographies are, at first place, recognized as national cinemas through their specific historical, cultural, and political context, and then, at the second place, as a part of a wider European space. Additionally, for most of the SEE countries, they still consider themselves as 'others' within the context of Europe which also reflects subjects dealt in documentary cinema. Serbian filmmaker Željko Žilnik dedicated several of his documentaries dealing with physical and mental borders, questioning Europe and 'others', in films like 'Europe Next Door' (2005), 'Fortress Europe' (2000). In 'Europe Next Door' (2005) Žilnik shows the effects of borders with the *Schengen* border on domestic trade. An ordinary farm family were cut off from their financial source because they were not able to sell their products to Hungary after Hungary was accessed into the *Schengen* zone. Anica, whose brother is running the farm, decided to get married in order to get papers and a work permit in Hungary. Žilnik was following the whole story and her attempt to find a false groom, with the elements of sarcasm and irony showing still the very strong isolation of some of the countries from the rest of the Europe, and the physical and mental borders among people. With sarcasm and irony, he questions belonging to the particular space and sole existence. Which kind of space we belong to? Is it space defined stronger mentally than geographically? What is the effect of space on people lives? What is the effect of space on identity? How to define 'others' within the European space if those 'others' are feeling isolated and left 'outside'? In a documentary search of these issues, Žilnik is using his very well known method of re-creating the real scenes in documentary film, adding feature elements, where subjects 'play' their own roles from their life and their own experiences. Space is transformed again, but now with even more intensity.

The categorization of 'other' and 'otherness' and the complexity of the individual and a collective identification with particular geographical, cultural, and historical spaces was widely discussed by Maria Todorova. In her book 'Imagining the Balkans' Todorova (1997, p.14) posed, for example, the term *Balkanism*, which presents stereotypes of the Balkans usually perceived from the outside, with Balkans signified as 'others', stating 'a specter is haunting Western culture – the specter of the Balkans'. Todorova discussed *Balkanism* through the 'outside' seeing a vision which is sometimes interpreted through the culture of tribalism and other negative connotations. Torsten Källemark in his research on cultural heritage and its influence on peace and reconciliation, stresses Todorova's theoretical impact and contribution in examination of problems of manipulation of memory and identity in Balkan conflicts. Todorova (Todorova, 2011, cited in

Kälvemark, [http://www.chwb.org/dokument/pdf/CHwB\\_evaluation.pdf](http://www.chwb.org/dokument/pdf/CHwB_evaluation.pdf)) stresses effects of intense history where 'unedifying stereotype portrays the Balkans as a region cursed with too much history per square mile with an excess of historical memory, protracted hatreds, and a proliferation of obstinate and incompatible ethnic and religious identities.' Identity, and the need for self-definition within the certain space, deals a lot with searching and the reconstruction of the past, which is a very large subject presence in SEE documentary cinema – the composing of lost pieces or trying to search for historical truths.

### 'RECONSTRUCTION(S)'

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Thematically, most of the subjects which are dealing with the reconstruction of the historical past or certain events, such as Romanian, Albanian, or Bulgarian cinematographies, are dealing with the period of the totalitarian regimes and their effects on people's lives. Other cinematographies, such as those of former Yugoslavia, deal with more the recent war which took place during the 90's. In documentaries where the focus is on reconstructing historical events, it is very common for filmmakers to combine archive footage with interviews which brings together historical TV reportage, collecting stories, facts, and memories from survivors of certain events. This method and approach can be grouped within the expository mode, introduced by Bill Nichols (2001, p.105) which connects to the viewer directly with 'titles, or voices that propose a perspective, advance an argument, or recount history'. Voice-over is present in most of the cases. Interviews are usually done with people, survivors or victims of totalitarian regimes. Reconstruction is also a way to build or to empower collective memory. As history is a memory, it can be a very powerful and dangerous tool when modified and manipulated by official ruled politics. Reconstruction of history is very common for the SEE region, and documentary is usually made according to the following framework:

**Presentation of the main problem + introduction to historical past using archive video and photos + interviews with social subjects [survivors/victims] + interviews with social subjects [survivors/perpetrators] + director's main statement and political stand of the film.**

A reconstruction of a totalitarian past was shown in the documentary 'Divorce Albanian Style' (2007) by Bulgarian filmmaker Adela Peeva. It is a film in a surreal world and its political regime is in Albania during the 1960's and Enver Hodža's dictatorship (1908-1985). Peeva reconstructs the lives of people who were suffering while living under the regime of the longest-serving dictator of the 20th century in Europe, who, among other things, applied different brutal mechanisms in the separation of families. The director uses the method of historical overview in the period illustrating with TV archive footage and the narrator, combining interviews with families who were survivors of that period. There is plenty of evidence in the film which shows the ugly face of the totalitarian regime and its consequences. Most of the audience cannot be indifferent to such images. Additionally, the documentary exposes the fact that one in every three Albanians was either in prison or in a labor camp or was at least interrogated by security offices, where Peeva stresses that it is hardly known the exact number of the people killed with or without trial or sentence. She is opening the film with archive footage of Albania during the 1960's when the Communist party was ruling the country. Albania became the most absurd state in Europe. Enver Hodža, who was ruling the country, was the most fanatic pupil of the Soviet leader Stalin. There were thousands of victims of his regime. Footage also contains the killing of people including civilians who did not support his regime. Peeva does not show direct violence, except in a couple of archive images, but she rather shows it more spontaneously through the people who share their life stories and their recollection of events which affected and changed their whole life. Hodža's administration in that time was identifying foreign women as the enemy of the state or spies. Dozens of people were deported outside of the country, including imprisonment, and forced separation



*Divorce Albanian Style (2007)*

of mothers from their children. Some of the families never get back together again. Those who refused to leave were kept in labour camps in terrifying human conditions: total isolation, with no normal beds, water, or electricity, and surrounded by barbed-wire.

The film reconstructs these historical events through the story of three couples - only three of many couples of Albanian men married to foreign women. The last people who were released from prison were released only in 1987. Film is an interesting critical and ethical discussion in approaching the 'other' side. Confronting the other side was powerfully shown in this film, especially when doing an interview with a former state prosecutor. The filmmaker in this case avoided ethical procedure when announcing the interview. It is clear from the film that the prosecutor did not know what was the film about shooting. At the beginning of the interview, Peeva showed the former prosecutor documents which show names of the people who were in prison along with their statements. The prosecutor expresses his discomfort and anger: *'Who gave you access to these verdicts? I cannot understand this. How did you obtain these verdicts? Who gave them to you? Tell me... Because such documents can't be given just anyone. If I had known you would ask me about them, I wouldn't have come. I came only because I learned you were making a film. What kind of film is it - about politics? You can make a political film only about Enver Hodža, because he was the great leader of the Party and the Albanian people'*, (from the interview with former prosecutor, (*'Divorce Albanian Style'*, 2007), 38:38 - 39:24). According to the surviving victims, he committed many crimes. In this case, when the filmmaker is 'catching' the subject in order to get more information from the 'other' side, critical discourse follows another dimension to justify viewers trust and to reveal the facts as much as possible.

In the 'Children of the Decree' (2004), done by Florin Iepan and Razvan Georgescu, a similar brutality was shown of another totalitarian ruler, Nicolae Ceaușescu. This reconstruction follows Nicolae Ceaușescu and his issuing of the Decree 770 in 1966 in which he banned abortion and birth control for all women in Romania, except for women over 40 years old or who already had four children. Ceaușescu had a vision to build a 'new nation' with his followers, with no identity, no history, who will be created according to his political agenda. This huge demographic boom was caused by more than a million babies born in the next two years after the issuing of the Decree. At the same time, the death rate among pregnant women was the highest in Europe. The film contains a lot of unseen archive footage, revisiting the period of oppression, interviews with famous people and testimonies of survivors of such a regime, uncovering one of the darkest and the most brutal periods of the Communist regime. Interviews are done nowadays to show the agony of people, especially women, who experienced back-alley abortions. In that time, all gynecologist practices were watched and monitored by militia. Because of the huge children boom, the nation was endeavoring to build thousands of kindergartens and schools in an effort to build the future of the state. On the other hand, children who were born with disabilities were kept in horrible human conditions in children houses where they were dying of hypothermia and starvation or even eaten by rats. Reconstructing the history as any other subject in documentary goes along with the trust which appears as an important element for the documentary in general. Therefore, for the SEE region the element of the truth is crucial, and documentary film serves as a platform for the construction of this value, either through an examination of history or present social contexts, the element of truth is very important in building the story and relationship with the subjects, especially when presenting someone else's discourse. Dealing with someone else's discourse means we share opinions, thinking, attitudes, and values with the outside world, creating a forum for further discussions of such issues. This is where documentary social involvement as an active agent in society comes into play. There are various levels of trust; 'between filmmaker and social subject, filmmaker and viewers, and filmmaker and his artistic vision'. (Center for Social Media, 2011).

The region of former Yugoslavia shows different examples as it deals more with recent history, conflict and the latest ethnic war. Most of the documentary films deal with the recent war in way by researching past events, consequences on society, and possibilities for reconciliation. All of these elements were shown in the film 'Statement 710399' (2006) by Refik Hodžić. It deals with a particular case of war crime committed in Bosnia during the war 1992 – 1995. This documentary film is a story of a father who is trying to find his son who disappeared during the genocide in Srebrenica (July 11 – 22, 1995). Shot eleven years after the war, the film outlines and questions 'justice' and deals with war crimes by emphasizing the inability of society to deal with such kind of issues, which leaves society on one side the destroyed lives of survivors of war, and on the other side perpetrators of war crimes. One item of proof that the boy was alive during and after executions is in his statement taken under the number 710399 by Serb military police. The filmmaker is covering the reconstruction parts with feature elements, reconstructing the events when they were happening during the Srebrenica genocide. Hodžić uses the method of recreating the scenes when the boy was missing, including the arrest from the Serbs police. He created the scenario according to the documents and statements of the people he had. Ethically, this is very sensitive in order to show true and real facts. Another level of responsibility here is to protect the families and their feelings when showing and exposing this kind of material in the public.

Hodžić uses the testimonies of people and families who are looking for their relatives who disappeared during the Srebrenica genocide, stressing also the importance of the dealing with war crimes in one society naming a legacy of war crimes as a 'malign tumour' of society, adding in his personal statement to the film that '*most of our political and economic problems have their roots in the atrocities committed during the war and our inability to deal with them. So, we create brands for sadness like the Srebrenica anniversary, which allows us to feel compassion for the victims of war crimes once a year while we tolerate further victimisation of those people throughout the rest of the year and their lives. We watch them go hungry, live in squalid conditions as returnees, we watch mothers*



*Statement 710399 (2006)*

*die waiting for any DNA identification for their murdered children, we make them think that what happened to them is normal, we tolerate the state employing those who took their children into the death. We don't see them as people, equal members of this society but as faceless, burdening mass of people whose problems are too great for the society to deal with, excellent material for political manipulation who can be wheeled out in front of world public once a year to remind everybody how much we suffered...' (XY Films, 2006).*

The documentary 'Scorpions - a Home Movie' (2007) by Lazar Stojanović was made from home video, and it is one of the examples of documentary films and the way how the same material can be used in the court procedures. In this case that was used in the charging for committed war crimes in Bosnia (1992 – 1995). The film depicts the life of the Scorpions, a unit of the Serbian Ministry of the Interior. The same unit committed a number of crimes during the war in Bosnia including the brutal murders of six Srebrenica Bosniaks in July 1995, and other killings committed in Kosovo in 1999. 'The film includes the infamous footage of the execution of the six Bosniaks, shot by the unit's cameraman, and footage of the trial conducted before the War Crimes Trial Chamber of the Belgrade District Court, as well as interviews with former members of the Scorpions themselves' ('Scorpions - a Home Movie', 2007). 'Scorpions - a Home Movie' (2007) was released on the day (April 2007) that the verdict was pronounced at the War Crimes Council of the Regional Court of Belgrade for the war crimes committed in Bosnia. In this case, home video was used as the material during the court procedure and later produced into documentary film form. It was stressed in the film statement that 'by using the statements of former members and the materials recorded by the unit itself in course of its campaigns, this film demonstrates the functioning of a typical combat unit organized by the security service to do dirty jobs in the Balkan wars. This is an example of the practice mushrooming in a half of the world for decades. This film is also an attempt to cast light on the personal, intimate aspect of crime'. (Humanitarian Law Center, 2007). The film was produced by the Humanitarian Law Center, which released a video tape found in a home archive, recorded by Scorpion's former members. This tape showed and revealed Serbia's involvement in war crimes in Bosnia. It is again the responsibility to protect the families whose families were murdered in front of the camera. How does one deal with this kind of material which was important enough to be part of the media, yet it contains a very personal moment and pain?

*Invisible (2005)*

## SOCIAL

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As a result of political turmoils and wars, there were a number of activists movements, organizations and groups who have been growing during the 90's (Women in Black, Networks for Human Rights Education...). Along with organizing activists of movements and groups many documentary filmmakers have been dealing with various political, social, and cultural issues, trying to use video and documentary form as an instrument for advocacy and social changes. These issues are mainly dealt through the enormous corruption, and high rate of unemployed as it was shown in Željimir Žilnik latest film 'The Old School of Capitalism' (2009), or the desperate condition of society and lives of young people who ended up abusing heroin, observed in the documentary 'Invisible' (2005) by Konstantin Bojanov. Željimir Žilnik is one of the most important filmmakers in the region of SEE. His presentation of political and social reality in documentary form contain a lot of feature elements and it is used sometimes as even grotesque. Still his films strongly communicate with today's reality showing political non-conformism and confronting ruling political regimes. Žilnik's newest film 'The Old School of Capitalism' (2009) traces new-born capitalism in Serbia. As a background for his story, Žilnik uses a number of strikes that took place in Belgrade in recent years and introduces us to several people involved who are allowed to 'play' themselves. That leads to explosive situations. The main focus of the film is the strike of the workers from the cities Sremska Mitrovica and Zrenjanin who lost their jobs caused by post-war corruption. In his method, Žilnik, uses real subjects 'transforming' them into the actors; they are playing their own roles from their own life, just the scenes are played again, or reconstructed for the documentary form. Žilnik also involves the other side, with 'actors' by transforming the whole scene from real life into the documentary film. It is very adeptly 'playing' with reality but at the same time with elements of game showing its real, revealed face. With feature elements and in a grotesque way, he constructs reality where new born managers stand against their workers, and communicates a very real political reality in Serbia. Workers entered the factory by force. The film was opened with the protest in Niš with slogans – Niš – City of Humiliated. Žilnik is very well known for his social and political activism.

Using the observational method, Bulgarian filmmaker, Konstantin Bojanov, made 'Invisible' (2005), a documentary about six heroin addicts who live on the streets of Sofia. Bojanov does not intervene, he is letting the subjects speak for themselves, and there are almost no questions or interviews. He follows them on the streets and to rehab clinics, and their attempt to recover from drug abuse. The subjects in the film are aged 17 – 39. They live in basements and abrasive flats, in the shadow of society. In the film they are not afraid to show their faces. There are also explicit scenes of the preparation and injection of heroin, and the shock and look right after the dose was taken, with pale faces and barely opened eyes. Bojanov reflects on one example of an SEE country. Similar examples can be seen in most of the SEE, as by the end of the 90's, drug abuse for the whole region became a kind of plague. Most of the countries failed to provide proper help for drug addicts due to a bad economic situation, a lack of rehab clinics, and a lack of education on how to act. The filmmaker was showing his subjects as an 'invisible' part of society who were dying from overdosing and nobody knows about them and their lives. As one of the subjects describes in the film: *'We wander the streets, shoot up in basements, places like this...We are cast away by society, in a way. To get high is as easy as drinking a glass of water...In reality we don't have a choice. When I get up, I have no other place to go except for the Spot. And If one grew up being high all the time, than what else is left?'* (from the interview with Kamen, ('Invisible', 2005), 15:03 – 16:15).

Bojanov observed his subjects for three years. Since he was a drug abuser himself, he could approach them more friendly, and in the film the viewer can easily see that they are comfortable to talk in front of the camera, not only to talk but to take drugs, and expose their fears and weaknesses. The filmmaker is transforming his personal space and personal experience through the film and its subjects. He is also taking a more observational role, letting subjects talk for themselves. That is a characteristic of most of the observational documentaries, especially those where the filmmaker uses the long-term method of following a person or group of people during a certain period of time. A characteristic for observational documentary in general is its specific approach to social issues where it applies techniques such as synchronized speech, a 16mm camera that could move freely about the scene, no voice-over commentary, no music or additional sound effects, sometimes not even interviews. Observational mode of representation was introduced by Nichols (2001, p.109) who defined observational documentary as the mode which 'observing what happens in front of the camera without overt intervention'. The film 'Invisible' (2005) represents one of the most significant documentaries in the SEE which address the subject of drug abuse.

'Invisible' (2005) also opens various ethical questions. What influence can this kind of film have on society? When showing the explicit scenes of drug abuse, how does it affect a young audience? Does it make it better or worse for people in the film? Their faces are exposed. What if they are recognized on the street, how does it affect their lives? These questions can be posed in most of the films which are dealing with similar issues; they are almost generic questions. But what is specific for this film is when it comes to its ethical approach is actually at the end of the film when one of the subjects almost overdoses in front of the camera, and for more than a couple of minutes the film crew does not react, but just continues with filming. This is especially related to the social subject. When and how to make this border between film making, filmmaker, and a subject in the film? In her analysis of documentary film and filmmakers role, Vanessa Roth stresses that "many documentary filmmakers passionately believe that their role in a subject's life is to be an inconspicuous observer no matter how difficult their subject's life become". (Public Broadcasting Service, 2005). But really, how far are we allowed to go with someones life?

Analysing ethics in the film, and levels of responsibility is still part of many theoretical debates. Theoreticians are making efforts in order to define 'tools' which can be used in documentary film. At the same time it shows the complexity in using such tools when doing documentary film as every documentary is a different experience and brings up new questions depending on the story and subject. The more documentary has social and political involvement, the more complex is the apparatus for a 'clear ethical' approach and responsibility. And if we pose question 'why film' as an action for social change, the only relevant answer

can be given through the powerful effects we can get from the visual. Dina Iordanova (2001, p.5) stresses the significance of these effects explaining from the one side the role of visual which has a 'crucial role in discourse formation at any level and because the informative power of transmitted images is at least as influential as the exchange that takes place in spoken and written language'. From the other side, she emphasizes the dimension of electronic media which reach much more and wider audience than writing expression ...[...] Nowadays it is the moving image rather than the printed word that carries more persuasive weight.' It is the visual which is powerful and which transforms cultural and political public space and brings important debates into its form. Most of the documentaries produced in the SEE region are also an attempt to examine and discuss question on what kind of society have we become. ■

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