

YES FOR THE YUGOSPHERE, NO FOR YUGOSLAVIA
A CASE STUDY OF DOMESTIC MUSIC AND IDENTITY IN
SERBIA AND CROATIA

By
Enikő Farkas

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ABSTRACT

This thesis explores through focus group interviews with Serbian and Croatian university students how domestic popular music and identity are intertwined in Serbia and Croatia. Domestic music includes performers from all Yugoslav successor states if they sing in Serbo-Croatian. This language unites the imagined community of Yugosphere which also rests on economic and cultural ties. This concept is often confused with Yugonostalgia. However, young listeners of domestic music from former Yugoslavia are not Yugonostalgic because they never lived in Yugoslavia. They also do not have a Yugoslav identity even though they regularly enjoy music that was written with the aim of transmitting Yugoslavism. Young Serbs and Croats are selective about political messages in lyrics and interpret them in the present context.

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Motto: ‘The Yugoslav project is finished, the song remains.’
Rasmussen¹

1 INTRODUCTION

‘My eyes are the Adriatic Sea/ My hair is Pannonian wheat/ My Slavic soul is sorrowful/ I’m Yugoslavian,’² sang Yugoslav pop-folk idol, Lepa Brena, in her 1989 hit *Jugoslovenka* (Yugoslav woman). This song has remained popular just like its performer who is often referred to as

the symbol of a time which has not passed that long ago and was not that splendid either but it has been hidden deep in one’s memory by the horrors that happened in the meantime as the last moment before the catastrophe when we [the people of Yugoslavia] were happy, carefree [...]. Just like Brena.³

Lepa Brena is not the only Yugoslav star who has remained famous in most of the successor states after the dissolution of the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (SFRY). Yugo rock performers, balladeers, and pop stars of the era still fill stadiums for their concerts. Many of the younger performers who have never claimed Yugoslav identity and did not record any songs before the dissolution of Yugoslavia also often have a transnational audience. They are all usually seen as members of the domestic music scene in all successor states.⁴

This thesis deals with the definition of domestic (in Serbian and Croatian: *domaća*, meaning domestic, home-made, native) music in Serbia and Croatia, and this definition’s implications on feelings of belonging, and national and supranational identity. In order to comprehend how this research fits into the field of nationalism studies, one has to have a solid understanding of the relationship between popular culture and national identity in general and specifically in this region. In this chapter, after a brief introduction to the matter, I give a short historical

¹ Ljerka V. Rasmussen. *Newly Composed Folk Music of Yugoslavia*. New York and London: Routledge, 2002., 202.p.

² Original lyrics: ‘Oči su mi more Jadransko/ Kose su mi klasje Panonsko/ Setna mi je duša Slovenska/ Ja sam Jugoslovenka’

³ “Poslednja Jugoslovenka.” *Nedeljnik Vreme*. June 19, 2008. <http://www.vreme.com/cms/view.php?id=642331>
Last accessed April 18, 2014

⁴ Tim Judah. “*Yugoslavia Is Dead: Long Live the Yugosphere Good News from the Western Balkans.*” Monograph, November 2009.

http://eprints.lse.ac.uk/48041/1/Libfile_repository_Content_LSEE_Papers%20on%20South%20Eastern%20Europe_Yugoslavia%20is%20Dead%28author%29.pdf Last accessed: February 5, 2014

overview of popular music in Yugoslavia, followed by a concise summary of the links between popular music and national identity in Serbia and Croatia. After that, I also clarify how I understand identity in the context of my research.

1.1 Popular culture and national identity

Popular culture, as Edensor argues, has become the most important transmitter of the power of ‘traditional’ national cultural forms and practices. There is no universal definition of popular culture but in the context of research on the construction of national identity it has been most effectively explained as ‘the culture which is most prevalent amongst the ‘people.’’⁵ Street also argues that a certain area of popular culture, music, is inseparable from politics and that it plays a vital role in the communication and representation of political ideas, ideologies, and identities.⁶ Regarding the resources that determine a sense of national belonging, Edensor claims that they are grounded in the different dimensions of everyday life, such as ‘spatial, material, performative, and representational.’⁷

This view is based on Billig’s argument that national identity is embedded in the habits and routines of everyday life through *enhabitation*, which is a term derived from Bourdieu’s famous notion *habitus*. Billig argues that nationalism cannot only take the form of social movements, but can also be observed in ordinary life, among others, through the performative use of national flags and daily routines in public schools, in the names of national currencies, or on the pages of newspapers. According to this theory of banal nationalism, these everyday forms of the representation of nations sustain national identity just as well as the celebration of national days.⁸

⁵Tim Edensor. *National Identity, Popular Culture and Everyday Life*. Oxford: Berg Publishers, 2002., p.12-14.

⁶ John Street. *Music and Politics*. John Wiley & Sons, 2013.

⁷ Edensor, 2002, p.20.

⁸ Michael Billig. *Banal Nationalism*. London: Sage Publications Ltd, 1995.

Hobsbawm's concept of invented traditions deals with the latter. This theory was introduced to the study of nationalism to demonstrate that national traditions such as national holidays or symbols, which seem to originate deep in the past actually often have a very short history and are at times invented. Their aim is to link the present to arbitrary chosen parts of the historical past which fits the purposes of their inventors, but this continuity is usually artificial – much like the traditions themselves. Traditions can be invented by states or by social groups; the former way can be called the official or political, while the latter the unofficial or social way.⁹ Anderson concentrates on the 'outcome' of these different forms of nationalism. He defines nation as an imagined political community in which the members do not know most of each other but they imagine a sort of community which is also upheld by the media. Anderson emphasizes the role of the media: print-capitalism and the development of technologies played both a crucial role in the creation of languages of power and thus in a new form of imagined communities. According to this theory, nations are both limited and sovereign: limited because they have boundaries which also mark the beginning of other nations, and sovereign because they are free from the authority of dynastic monarchies.¹⁰

There are two notions that aim at describing Anderson's concept in former Yugoslavia: Yugosphere and Yugonostalgia. The so-called Yugosphere is, as Judah argues, an imagined community of people who eat the same food, listen to the same music and live in the former Yugoslav states. Judah also takes a look at the foreign policies and economic ties of the different successor states of Yugoslavia and identifies patterns that suggest consolidation is taking place in the region. There are also popular cultural events that attract a transnational audience from the region. The performances of Croatian pop singer Severina or the Exit

⁹ Eric Hobsbawm and Terence Ranger. *The Invention of Tradition*. Cambridge University Press, 2012.

¹⁰ Benedict Anderson. *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*. London: Verso, 2006.

Festival, an annual music manifestation in Novi Sad, Serbia, are popular among the youth of former Yugoslav states, regardless of their national belonging.¹¹

A similar concept is Yugonostalgia, 'which can be broadly defined as nostalgia for the fantasies associated with a country, the SFRY, which existed from 1945 to 1991.'¹² It also analyzes the growing economic and cultural cooperation¹³ but believes to have found the underlying reasons in the longing towards Yugoslavism, the Yugoslav past, and even the Yugoslav state because this past was better than the present. Music plays a role in Yugonostalgia as well: the popularity of songs, performers, and genres from the Yugoslav era indicates, as Lindstrom argues, that many people bring back their memories from their everyday lives and the everyday Yugoslav culture through listening to them.¹⁴

Transnational consumption and production, be it because of Yugonostalgia or the Yugosphere, have grown since the war. Performances by Croatian musicians in Serbia and Montenegro had provoked some polemics and Serbian and other ex-Yugoslav musical activity in Croatia had met with greater resistance after the war.¹⁵ By now, many ex-Yugoslav artists claim they have a transnational audience and because of satellite television and the Internet, access to former domestic markets and products is easier than ever.¹⁶ Archer argues that the turbofolk scene also intercepts with numerous national cultural spaces and many musicians

¹¹ Judah, 2009

¹² Nicole Lindstrom. "Yugonostalgia: Restorative and reflective nostalgia in former Yugoslavia." *East Central Europe/L'Europe du Centre Est/Eine wissenschaftliche Zeitschrift* 32, no. 1-2 (2006): 231-242., p. 233.

¹³ Tihomir Loza. "Yugoslavia: Rising from the Ashes." *Transitions Online*. March 7, 2003. www.tol.org/client/article/18804-rising-from-the-ashes.html Last accessed: May 20, 2014

¹⁴ Lindstrom, 2006, p.240.

¹⁵ The degree of refusal varied largely based on the perception of the musical figures. In Catherine Baker. "The Politics of Performance: Transnationalism and Its Limits in Former Yugoslav Popular Music, 1999–2004." *Ethnopolitics* 5, no. 3 (2006): 275–293.

¹⁶ Baker, 2006

from the ex-Yugoslav ‘imagined community.’ Diaspora venues are also usually oriented towards a multi-ethnic audience, also hosting performers from all successor states.¹⁷

1.2 Popular music in Yugoslavia

Music was never far removed from identity in Yugoslavia. Immediately after the Second World War, political themes were encouraged in the music industry by the Yugoslav state. The struggle of the Partisan movement during the war, socialist development, and Yugoslavism were the central topics. Performing traditional folk songs and Russian songs was also supported by cultural policy. It is important to underscore that these songs had neither national nor religious traits, and the differences between the constituent nations of Yugoslavia were overlooked. While until 1948 the so-called ‘decadent’ Western music was banned, after the conflict between the USSR and Yugoslavia it was accepted at the expense of Russian music. From the 1950s, popular music festivals were organized, such as the Zagreb or the Opatija Festival. The latter was the only all-Yugoslav festival up until the 1980s, and one of the most important yearly events of the Yugoslav music scene.¹⁸ As Wachtel argues, the base of Yugoslav cultural policy, the idea of ‘brotherhood and unity’,¹⁹ became especially apparent when the development of national cultures started to gain more importance in the music market from the 1960s.²⁰

There were movements and trends that were specific to the whole country and defined its market, such as the phenomenon of Yugo rock. Its development was influenced by American and British rock, and similarly to them, they saw themselves as social critics. The main

¹⁷ Rory Archer. Western, eastern and modern: Balkan pop-folk music and (trans)nationalism. In Leccardi, Carmen. *1989: Young People and Social Change After the Fall of the Berlin Wall*. Council of Europe, 2012.

¹⁸ Dean Vuletić. Chapter 8. The socialist star: Yugoslavia, Cold War politics and the Eurovision Song Contest. In Raykoff and Tobin (eds.). *A Song for Europe- Popular Music and Politics in the Eurovision Song Contest*. Burlington: Ashgate, 2007., 83-97.

¹⁹ Andrew Wachtel. *Making a nation, breaking a nation. Literature and cultural politics in Yugoslavia*. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1998.

²⁰ Vuletić, 2007., p.85.

centers of Yugo rock were the capitals of the republics of the Federation, especially Belgrade, Sarajevo, and Ljubljana, but also Zagreb and Skopje. Tito realized the potential rebelliousness of rock music and musicians but hoped that by toleration, he could win them over. This strategy paid off and in the 1960s rock ballads even praised him and his politics.²¹ The golden era of rock music was the 1980s when some of the most popular bands sold as many as 500,000 copies. However, Yugo rock's popularity was largely limited to the urban centers. The rural youth generally preferred neofolk music, which also indicated their orientation towards the regime.²²

1.3 Popular music and national identity in Serbia

Then, during the 1990s in Serbia, as Gordy argues, popular cultures of the prewar era were marginalized and marginal cultures were popularized and instrumentalized. Neofolk had become the genre with the largest audience and the best-selling records, diffused through television and radio stations while all other cultural alternatives were destroyed by the regime of Slobodan Milošević. This was a logical step towards further strengthening their power as the authorities were aware that urban youth, the fans of Yugo rock, were the least supportive of their politics, whereas their biggest base was among the rural population whose favored genre was neofolk.²³ Artists of this genre were explicitly supportive of Slobodan Milošević, and they expressed this willingly through their lyrics as well. Agitprop neofolk compared the current leaders to heroes of the Kosovo battle, and built up artificial continuity between them.²⁴ This is the method Hobsbawm calls the invention of tradition.²⁵

²¹ Sabrina P. Ramet. "Shake, Rattle, and Self-Management: Making the Scene in Yugoslavia." In Ramet, Sabrina P., ed. *Rocking the State: Rock Music and Politics in Eastern Europe and Russia*. Boulder: Westview Press, 1994., p.111.

²² Eric D Gordy. *The Culture of Power in Serbia. Nationalism and the destruction of alternatives*. University Park: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 1999., 108-110.p.

²³ Ibid, 103-105.

²⁴ Ibid, 112.

The epic poems were also revived and the use of the gusla restored for a short while.²⁶ The gusla, a bowed instrument with one string is the traditional instrument that accompanies the epic folk poetry that is one of the key transmitters of the symbols and narratives of Serbian ethnic identity. The Kosovo battle in 1389 has been one of the central motifs, and it contains the themes of victimization, the experience of being a warrior folk, God's chosen people, and also the struggle against the Turks. The songs from the First World War also operate with similar pictures. Hudson argues that turbofolk performers can be seen as postmodern gusle players as they also connect music and politics just like their forebears. He adds that other well-known songs of the 1990s, such as Bajaga's *Moji drugovi*, which was popular amongst the soldiers of the Bosnian Serb Army, often were soldiers' songs, even if they had no reference to fighting.²⁷ As Čolović put it, the success of these musical styles, among other factors, was due to the specificity of Serbia where speaking politically [became] the same as speaking poetically'.²⁸

The promotion of agitprop neofolk, which happened during the period of nationalist mobilization, did not last long. Nevertheless, the genre survived and a new type of it became popular: turbofolk,²⁹ which was a combination of 'neofolk, with varying degrees of success, with images of consumer high life, synthesized and amplified sounds, beats borrowed from Western commercial dance music, and styles of presentation borrowed from MTV.'³⁰ The umbrella term for neofolk and the styles which later developed from it is newly composed folk music (NCFM). The emblematic figure of turbofolk is Ceca, the widow of Arkan, the

²⁵ Hobsbawm, 2012

²⁶ Xavier Bougarel. "Yugoslav Wars: The 'Revenge of the Countryside' Between Sociological Reality and Nationalist Myth." *East European Quarterly* 33, no. 2 (June 1999): 157–175.

²⁷ Robert Hudson. "Songs of Seduction: Popular Music and Serbian Nationalism." *Patterns of Prejudice* 37, no. 2 (March 2003): 157–176.

²⁸ Ivan Čolović. *The Politics of Symbol in Serbia. Essays in Political Anthropology*. London: Hurst&Company, 2002., 149.p.

²⁹ The term was coined by the Montenegrin rock artist Rambo Amadeus as an ironic expression but he soon lost any control over the use of it. In Gordy, 1999, 116.p.

³⁰ Gordy, 1999, 133.p.

leader of the Serbian paramilitary forces, assassinated in 2000.³¹ Tarlac uses the example of their marriage to demonstrate how the criminal elite of the 1990s and the turbofolk scene were in fact inseparable in Serbia. The aesthetics of turbofolk, such as the megalomaniac kitsch, echoed the ideal of the fearless Serb who quickly became rich with shaky businesses and engagement on the fronts.³² Archer argues that this musical style should be understood not only in the Serbian context, but wider post-socialist trends from the Balkans should be taken into account. Turbofolk as a value category is located between conservative nationalist and liberal pro-European politics, and at the same occupies the space of the Ottoman cultural legacy.³³

1.4 Popular music and national identity in Croatia

Baker examines how popular music is intertwined with politics, nationalism, war and national identity in Croatia during the Tuđman regime (1991-2000) and after it, until 2008. The creation of ‘Croatian’ popular music was based on the presidential narrative of the Homeland War, and the exclusion of Eastern, Oriental, and Serbian folk influences.³⁴ This is in line with the concept of nesting orientalisms, developed by Bakić-Hayden. Nesting orientalism is based on the theory of orientalism by Edward Said. The main idea of the concept is that every region tends to regard its Eastern and Southern neighbors as more primitive and conservative than themselves. There is an opposition between Western and Eastern Europe, and within Eastern Europe the Balkans are another negative reference point. The same logic continues

³¹ Catherine Baker. “The concept of turbofolk in Croatia: inclusion/exclusion in the construction of national musical identity.” In *Nation in formation: inclusion and exclusion in central and eastern Europe*, ed. Catherine Baker et al. London: SSEES Publications, 2007.

³² Tarlac, Goran. Turbo Folk Politics. *Transitions Online*. 7 May 2003. <http://www.tol.org/client/article/9442-turbo-folk-politics.html> Last accessed: 11 May 2014

³³ Archer, Rory. “Assessing Turbofolk Controversies: Popular Music between the Nation and the Balkans.” *Southeastern Europe* 36, no. 2 (January 1, 2012): 178–207.

³⁴ Baker, Catherine. *Sounds of the Borderland: Popular Music, War, and Nationalism in Croatia since 1991*. Ashgate Popular and Folk Music Series. Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2009.

within the Balkans through the ‘othering’ of the Eastern former Yugoslav republics by the more Western ones, by eventually reaching the ultimate Others, the Muslims.³⁵

During the Tuđman era between 1990 and 1999, Croatian popular music was highly politicized and used to support the official presidential narratives of the country’s independence from Yugoslavia, including the strictly defensive nature of the war. The beginning of the 2000s was marked by media pluralism and reforms in the national broadcaster’s (HTV) programming policy. The recording industry was also pluralized, along with radio stations. However, access to radio channels depended largely on location. While the politicization of music decreased after the death of Tuđman, patriotic popular music gained popularity. Performers such as Thompson or Škoro sing about the veterans’ experiences in the Homeland War and praise politicians and military leaders. Another notable change in the Croatian music industry was that Serbian musicians started to perform in Croatia.³⁶ Kürti rightly argues Hungarian national rock bands can be linked with Croatian patriotic singers and an interesting parallel can be drawn between Hungary and other post-socialist states. According to him, social change brings with itself change in the music culture as and gives the example of the Hungarian rock music scene after 1989 where national rock developed.³⁷

While, as Baker argues, turbofolk as a conceptual category was excluded from the Croatian cultural space because it was usually seen as foreign to the myth of Croatian popular musical tradition, four types of music were rediscovered, or even reinvented in a Hobsbawmian sense: ‘central-European schlager, singer-songwriters and pop-rock’ artists, Dalmatian light music [...], and Slavonian tamburica music.’ The definition of ‘Croatianness’ through music is

³⁵ Milica Bakić-Hayden. “Nesting Orientalisms: The Case of Former Yugoslavia.” *Slavic Review* 54, no. 4 (December 1, 1995): 917–931.

³⁶ Catherine Baker. 2010. “Popular Music and Political Change in Post-Tuđman Croatia: ‘It’s All the Same, Only He’s Not Here?’” *Europe-Asia Studies* 62 (10): 1741–59.

³⁷ László Kürti. “Twenty Years After: Rock Music and National Rock in Hungary.” *Region: Regional Studies of Russia, Eastern Europe, and Central Asia* 1, no. 1 (2012): 93–130.

based on multiple oppositions: Croatia vs. Serbia, Europe vs. the Balkans, the East, and the Orient; hence turbofolk represents everything that is the ‘Other.’³⁸ The case study of the ambiguous media reception of Croatian pop singer Severina’s song for the 2006 Eurovision Song Contest, *Moja štikla* (My High-Heel) illustrates very well that cultural traits perceived as Serbian or Eastern could not be accepted as parts of an authentic Croatian performance; no overlap was allowed between Croatian and Serbian cultural identities. The song brought to the surface the contradictions within the Croatian cultural space.³⁹

1.5 A note on identity

When we discuss identity, it is crucial to first define it. As Brubaker argues, identity as a category of practice and as a category of analysis should not be confused.⁴⁰ In the context of my research, I will follow Fox and Miller-Idriss on the employment of the term national identity. They combine the approaches of Billig and Calhoun.⁴¹ Billig argues that

[national identity] is embedded in routines of life, which constantly remind, or ‘flag,’ nationhood. ...[T]hese reminders, or ‘flaggings,’ are so numerous and they are such a familiar part of the social environment, that they operate mindlessly, rather than mindfully.⁴²

In Calhoun’s view, nations are discursive constructs where the production of a collective identity serves the goals of mobilization for collective projects, and of evaluation of peoples and practices.⁴³

Supranational identification is able to take over the role of national identification, as it happened in the case of Yugoslavia. However, the Yugoslav project of ‘brotherhood and

³⁸ Catherine Baker. 2007. “The Concept of Turbofolk in Croatia: Inclusion/exclusion in the Construction of National Musical Identity.” In *Nation in Formation: Inclusion and Exclusion in Central and Eastern Europe*. London: SSEES Publication.

³⁹ Catherine Baker. “When Seve Met Bregović: Folklore, Turbofolk and the Boundaries of Croatian Musical Identity.” *Nationalities Papers* 36, no. 4 (2008): 741–764.

⁴⁰ Rogers Brubaker and Frederic Cooper. 2000. „Beyond ‘identity.’” *Theory and Society* 29: 1-47.

⁴¹ Jon E Fox. and Cynthia Miller-Idriss. 2008. „Everyday nationhood.” *Ethnicities* 8 (4): 536-576.

⁴² Langer, E. J. *Mindfulness*. Rading: Addison Wesley, 1989. In Billig, 1995, p.38.

⁴³ Craig Calhoun. *Nationalism*. Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press, 1997.

unity' failed, and, among others, Godina argues that the break-up of Yugoslavia can be partially attributed to the major changes in the identity matrix from supranational to national identification because of the activity of ethnic entrepreneurs.⁴⁴ Primary Yugoslav self-identification was ever expressed only by a relatively small proportion of the inhabitants of Yugoslavia; it rather coexisted with the national identities of the country.⁴⁵ There are several models about the relationship of supranational and national identities; the most notable are the conflicting identities, the nested identities, the 'marble cake' and the growing branches models.⁴⁶

To sum up, I approached everyday nationhood in order to examine the Croatian and Serbian national identities and the Yugoslav supranational identity. National identity is 'in established nations [...] remembered. [...] The remembering, not being experienced as remembering, is, in effect, forgotten.'⁴⁷ Through focus group interviews, I uncovered how national and supranational identity is embedded in everyday musical practices. In the following chapter, I elaborate on the methodology of my research. In Chapter 3, the analysis part, I present and analyze my findings from the focus group interviews. First, I concentrate how my respondents define domestic music, then I elaborate on the imagined community related to the countries of the performers that produce it. After that, I examine whether the popularity of domestic music among young people in Serbia and Croatia can be due to their feelings of Yugonostalgia or to Yugoslav self-identification. Chapter 4 concludes the thesis by repeating the hypothesis and comparing it to the findings, with the summary of the methodology. The most important songs I use as illustration are listed in Appendix 2.

⁴⁴ Vesna V. Godina. "The Outbreak of Nationalism on Former Yugoslav Territory: A Historical Perspective on the Problem of Supranational Identity." *Nations and Nationalism* 4, no. 3 (July 1, 1998): 409–22.

⁴⁵ Dusko Sekulic, Garth Massey, and Randy Hodson. "Who Were the Yugoslavs? Failed Sources of a Common Identity in the Former Yugoslavia." *American Sociological Review* 59, no. 1 (February 1994): 83. doi:10.2307/2096134.

⁴⁶ Thomas Risse. „The Euro Between National and European Identity." *Journal of European Public Policy* 10:4 (August 2003), pp.487-505.

⁴⁷ Billig, 1995, p.38

2 APPROACHING MUSIC AND IDENTITY

2.1 Research question

The introduction of this thesis dealt with theoretical issues related to the background of my research. As briefly explained in the previous chapter, (national) identity should not be understood as a rigid analytical category and ethnic groups should not be seen only as bounded entities. This is also the starting point of one of the most fundamental and relevant research for my topic, Brubaker's study of the Transylvanian town of Cluj, and how everyday ethnicity works there. As he argues, '[e]thnicity and nationhood (or "nationness") "happen" every day in Cluj,'⁴⁸ and this can be extended to all parts of the world.

My research question is based on this foundation and is concerned with everyday ethnicity in Serbia and Croatia in terms of domestic music. It is interesting to look at how media frames local musicians and artists from other successor states of Yugoslavia. For instance, a Slovenian radio station defines the music played by Serbian, Croatian, Bosnian, Montenegrin, and Macedonian artists as 'bivša domača' (former domestic).⁴⁹ In other words, in this radio station's understanding all Yugoslav music counted as domestic in Yugoslavia, while in independent Slovenia this becomes the past and domestic music is defined as music from Slovenia. This inspired my research to look into domestic music in the region.

'Domača' in Slovenian and 'domaća' in Serbian and Croatian⁵⁰ mean domestic or home-made, and are often used in expressions referring to homework ('domaći rad'), home-made rakia ('domaća rakija,' a popular alcoholic beverage in Southeastern Europe), and, among others, music ('domaća muzika' in Serbian and 'domaća glazba' in Croatian). It is important

⁴⁸ Brubaker, 2000, p.6.

⁴⁹ Baker, 2006, p.8.

⁵⁰ There are debates about these two languages and whether they can be treated as different languages. In the analysis of the interviews, this topic is more deeply explored.

to note that when it is used to describe music, *domaća* (domestic) is not a technical term as in English but part of the vernacular.

Several popular radio stations in Belgrade and one of the most popular ones in Zagreb claim to exclusively play domestic music or have a program that contains exclusively domestic songs. Belgrade radio station Radio Jat's slogan is 'The best domestic music' ('Najbolja domaća muzika')⁵¹ and their repertoire consists of songs by Serbian, Croatian, Montenegrin, Bosnian, and eventually Macedonian artists in several languages of the Yugoslav successor states. Serbian stations Radio Naxi has a program named 'My 50' ('Mojih 50') in which celebrities can choose their 50 favorite domestic songs. Celebrities and the songs they choose are not exclusively Serbian but include artists from Yugoslavia and its successor states.⁵² Both Radio Jat and Radio Naxi are within the ten most popular radio stations in Belgrade between the ages of 15 and 69, and while the former only broadcasts in the capital, Radio Naxi is also in the country-wide top 10.⁵³

In Croatia, one of the most popular radio stations, Narodni Radio ('National Radio') defines itself as a radio that only plays domestic music. It is the only Croatian stations with this profile that broadcasts in the whole country.⁵⁴ Despite its name, it is a commercial radio station, just like the Serbian ones from above, and it is also in the top 5 in Zagreb for all age groups.⁵⁵ Narodni Radio also plays songs from the Yugoslav times.⁵⁶ Based on Narodni

⁵¹ Radio JAT. Listen live (Slušaj uživo). http://www.radiojat.rs/jat_player/ Last accessed: 15 March 2014

⁵² Radio Naxi. My 50 (Mojih 50). <http://www.naxi.rs/mojih-50>. Last accessed: May 12, 2014 See for instance <http://www.naxi.rs/spisak-o-miljenih-50-pesama-zdravko-colic#.U2vTLihcLAF>, <http://www.naxi.rs:8080/severina-u-mojih-50>

⁵³ Results of the Popularity of Radio Stations in Serbia. (Rezultati slušanosti radio stanica za celu Srbiju). RabSrbija.

<http://www.rabsrbija.com/istrazivanje/194/Rezultati+slu%C5%A1anosti+radio+stanica+za+celu+Srbiju.html> Last accessed April 4, 2014; Still on Top. (I dalje u vrhu!) Radio JAT.

<http://www.radiojat.rs/site/index.php/marketing/statistike> (accessed: April 13, 2013)

⁵⁴ About us (O nama). Narodni radio. www.narodni.hr/o-nama/ Last accessed: 12 April 2014

⁵⁵ MEDIAplus popularity research (MEDIApuls istraživanje slušanosti). Multimedijски Centar. <http://www.mmcgrupa.hr/hr/info/research/> (accessed: April 10, 2014)

⁵⁶ This can be easily seen from the Top 20s for instance. Top 20. Narodni Radio. http://narodni.hr/#tab_program Last accessed: 20 April 2014

Radio's, Radio JAT's and Radio Naxi's repertoire, domestic music is more than music from the respective country: it includes music from the successor states of Yugoslavia.

The concept of domesticity on these radio stations implies the basic question of my research: *why is the definition of domestic music so broad?* I looked at issues of languages, ethnicity, self-identification on both national and supranational levels, and the phenomenon of nostalgia in order to answer this puzzle and to find out whom domestic music includes and whom it is defined against.

2.2 Hypotheses

Based on the literature I reviewed in the previous chapter, I hypothesized that the music my respondents call domestic and their feeling of a community and self-identification have a connection. My hypothesis has five different levels that are logically connected and each one represents a stronger affiliation with Yugoslavia.

1. They have a broad definition for domestic music that includes not only music from their respective countries but also from other successor states of Yugoslavia
2. They see an (imagined) community within the successor states that produce domestic music
3. This (imagined) community is based on common history, political, economic, and cultural ties
4. They are nostalgic for this (imagined) community that once was called Yugoslavs and shared a state, Yugoslavia (Yugonostalgia)
5. They identify themselves with Yugoslavia and claim Yugoslav identity

2.3 Methodology

2.3.1. Methodological introduction to focus group interviews

In order to test my hypothesis, I conducted focus groups interviews in Belgrade, Serbia, and Zagreb, Croatia. Wodak et al., following the definition of Lamnek, treat focus groups, group interviews and group discussion as ‘a discussion among a number of participants on a certain topic predetermined by a moderator..., which serves to collect information.’⁵⁷ Flick makes a difference between these three methods and narrows the definition of focus group interviews by referring to Morgan.⁵⁸ As Morgan argues, the main advantage of this method is that it enables the researcher to observe group interactions and also to use them to produce data.⁵⁹ Focus groups can be used on their own and also can be combined with other methods.⁶⁰ In Croatia, I only conducted one focus group interview but in Serbia, I also organized a smaller interview for the two latecomers who missed the originally planned focus group.

In the field of nationalism studies, focus groups are mostly used to collect information on everyday ethnicity and identities. Wodak et al. used this method to learn more about the semi-public discourses on Austrian national identity and praise the method because they were ‘able to gain powerful insights into how meanings of important concepts such as “nation” are jointly shaped and negotiated, or “constructed”, during the interview.’⁶¹ Focus groups are a widely used qualitative method in marketing and media research as well but they have also gained popularity in other fields of social sciences quite recently.⁶²

Puchta and Potter suggest that the researcher take ‘the single group as a unit and compare it with other groups [... so that c]omparison focuses on the topics mentioned, the variety of

⁵⁷ Siegfried Lamnek. *Qualitative Sozialforschung Band 2: Methoden und Techniken*. Munich, 1989. in Wodak, Ruth et al. *The Discursive Construction of National Identity*. Edinburgh University Press, 2009., p. 106.

⁵⁸ Uwe Flick. *An Introduction to Qualitative Research*. London: SAGE, 2006, p.197.

⁵⁹ D. L. Morgan. and R. A. Krueger. *The Focus Group Kit*. Thousand Oakes: SAGE, 1998, p.12.

⁶⁰ Flick, 2006, p.197.

⁶¹ Wodak et al., 2009, p.107.

⁶² Flick, 2006, p.197.

attitudes towards these topics among the members in the group, the stages the discussion ran through, and the results of the discussion in each group.’⁶³ This is how I dealt with the Serbian group’s statements. The Serbian respondents, being the firsts interviewed, could not reflect on the Croatian group’s opinions; I nevertheless asked about their expectations regarding their peer group’s answers.

In the following subchapters, I deal with the different stages of the research, such as sampling, interviewing, and the analysis of the collected data. Finally, I also point out the limitations of my research.

2.3.2. The sample

The issue of sampling has come up during my research several times: while case sampling, I had to make a decision about which persons I will interview while sampling groups of cases meant choosing the groups these persons should come from.⁶⁴ In the context of my research, I aimed at respondents who like to listen to music and are able to talk about this hobby of theirs, including their attitudes towards domestic music, regardless of their opinion of it. The other criteria I specified were the age group, the nationality, and the number of years spent in the home country. There were different concepts of gradual selection I took into account, such as maximal variation in the sample or the integration of extreme or deviant cases.⁶⁵

I was looking for young people in Belgrade and Zagreb between the ages of 18 and 28 so that they have the overwhelming majority of their memories from Serbia and Croatia as newly independent countries, and not Yugoslavia, and therefore do not have experiences from the time when Yugoslav popular music was produced. When it comes to nationality, I was

⁶³ Flick, 2006, p.199.

⁶⁴ Ibid, p.122.

⁶⁵ Michael Q. Patton *Qualitative Research and Evaluation Methods*. London: SAGE, 2002.

looking for interviewees who see themselves as Serbs or Croats and have spent most of their lives in Serbia and Croatia as independent states or member republics. This way I could exclude influences stemming from belonging to another ethnic group or having lived abroad.

I found seven respondents in Belgrade and four in Zagreb that fit all criteria. They were university students from different backgrounds, such as law, political science, international relations or were working, for instance an administrative job. This is in line with Patton's suggestion about maximal variation within the sample.⁶⁶ While most respondents generally liked domestic music, I also included an interviewee who only listened to classical music in order to have extreme cases as well. All eleven interviewees have signed a consent form before participation and have agreed that the interviews be recorded. The sample consent form can be found in the Appendix.

2.3.3. The structure of interviews

Puchta and Potter suggest that the researcher create a balance of formality and informality in the discussion so that the respondents openly contribute, freely express their views and opinions but do not wander too much from the subject with anecdotes or unrelated chatting.⁶⁷

In order to produce this atmosphere, I started the focus group interviews with a warm-up phase about the respondents general attitudes towards music and habits connected to listening to music and radios. I asked whether they like to listen to music, what genres of music they enjoy, and in what circumstances they listen to music the most.

In the second part of the interviews, I explored the respondents' views on domestic music. I started with more general questions as direct continuations of the first phase about their

⁶⁶ Patton, 2002

⁶⁷ Claudia Puchta and Jonathan Potter. *Focus Group Practice*. SAGE, 2004., in Flick, 2006, p. 198.

attitudes and habits related to domestic music and also asked them to mention performers of domestic music they like and dislike. This way I could have a basic understanding of what they consider as domestic music and could relate to their examples when asking what makes the different musicians or their songs domestic. As the nature of focus group interviews allows both intra- and intergroup comparisons, I could contrast the single participants' opinions within their own group and also in the peer group from the other country in the case of the Serbian respondents with whom I talked first.

After I had made sure that they do agree with the broad definition of domestic music, also suggested by the radio stations I mentioned in this chapter, I could explore what 'home' means in term of domestic music for them, if 'home-made' music comes not only from their country. We discussed how they felt about the region of domestic music, what connects them to this region, and finally we also talked about the interviewees' feelings towards Yugoslavia and Yugoslav popular culture in particular. I also investigated whether they have a certain level of identification with Yugoslavia, or if they feel nostalgic about it.

2.3.4. Stages of analysis

The interviews first have to be transcribed before they can be analyzed. In the case of taping, the most important requirements are that the interview be 'in fact recorded [...and] audible.'⁶⁸ The interviews I made fulfilled these two requirements and were therefore relatively easy to be transcribed. I did the transcription myself which, according to Seidman, has a great advantage: the researcher this way becomes better acquainted with the material.⁶⁹ When it

⁶⁸ Steinar Kvale. *InterViews: An Introduction to Qualitative Research Interviewing*. SAGE Publications, 1996.

⁶⁹ Irving Seidman. *Interviewing as Qualitative Research: A Guide for Researchers in Education and the Social Sciences*. 2nd ed. New York: Teachers College Press, 1998., p.68.

comes to the analysis of the transcription, Silverman suggests that the researcher focus on one problem, otherwise the findings would be too diverging.⁷⁰

There are several ways to come to findings that answer the research questions. Kvale lists five main approaches to the analysis of the meaning of interviews: condensation, categorization, narrative structuring, interpretation, and ad hoc methods. The method of condensation looks for natural meaning units and main themes while categorization has an emphasis on the quantification of these topics. According to narrative structuring, interviews can be seen as a form of narration with temporal and social dimensions, and a meaning that makes the story complete. The interpretation of the interview is based on hermeneutical philosophy and tries to explore meanings that are not directly apparent in the text. Finally, ad hoc methods are a combination of different techniques, with occasional quantifications and also the use of metaphors and visual aids such as flow diagrams.⁷¹ Using Kvale's terms, through condensation I identified main meanings and shortened the interview texts.

Flick has developed the procedure of theoretic coding which is a multi-stage method: first, the researcher needs to treat the cases involved as a series of case studies. A description should be produced about each of them, including a motto that is a statement from the interview and sums up its content in a short form. The central topics mentioned that are relevant to the research question should also be presented. This thematic structure makes it easier for the researcher to make comparisons between cases and groups.⁷² In my research, I treated the countries as single cases with the occasional contradictions because of the different opinions of the respondents. This way, while preserving the diversity of opinions within the group, I could also contrast the differences within the Serbian and Croatian group's answers.

⁷⁰ David Silverman. *Doing qualitative research. A Practical Handbook*. Sage, London, 2007., p.29.

⁷¹ Kvale, 1996, p.187-209.

⁷² Flick, 2006, p.307.

2.3.5. Research limits

There are several aspects that this thesis can only partially take into account, such as class or gender. While there will be occasional references to the above mentioned categories, the throughout analysis of them is beyond the scope of the current research.

The method I chose has limitations: interpretation of focus group data can be problematic because of the differences in the dynamics of the different groups. There can also arise problems during the identification of individual speakers, especially when parallel speakers make statements.⁷³ I overcame these difficulties by orientating the discussion as the moderator so that the dynamics do not differ too much, and I also took notes during the interviews: this way I could identify all speakers and follow their arguments.

Generalization is central to the qualitative research process.⁷⁴ Mayring argues that there are different types of generalization, such as universal laws, statistical laws, description or rules, context specific statements or recording similarities and differences.⁷⁵ While I aimed at great variation in the sample, my single case study cannot be seen as representative. However, my explorative study⁷⁶ helps to develop statements and hypotheses that can be tested and reflected on in following studies.

⁷³ Ibid, p. 199.

⁷⁴ Ibid

⁷⁵ Philipp Mayring. "On Generalization in Qualitatively Oriented Research." *Forum Qualitative Sozialforschung* / *Forum: Qualitative Social Research* 8, no. 3 (September 30, 2007)

⁷⁶ Ibid, p. 12.

3 THE EMPIRICAL RESEARCH

In this chapter, I explore how my respondents define domestic music and why they include or exclude certain performers, with a special interest in how this relates to their feelings of belonging to a community and their national and supranational self-identifications. I go through the hypotheses I defined in the previous chapter and develop my theory about the different aspects of the imagined community they believe they belong to. Finally, I look at Yugonostalgia and Yugoslav identity and explore my respondents feelings about Yugoslavia.

3.1 A linguistic community: ‘Our language, our music’

My Serbian informants expressed a very clear and unified view on the language of domestic music. As one of them put it, *‘domestic music is music in the language we all understand in this area, Serbo-Croatian or however you call it,’* and other respondents nodded when they heard this definition. They agreed that the music of former Yugoslavia, ‘their’ music is in ‘their’ language that was once called Serbo-Croatian and now has four different names. *‘I see it as one language; there are some different words, but they are more like dialects’* said one of my respondents and the whole Serbian group agreed with her. *‘In this area, we all understand this language,’* added another interviewee, and the whole group nodded again. They had a hard time finding a name for the language of domestic music: they started listing the successor languages of Serbo-Croatian, Serbian, Croatian, Montenegrin, and Bosnian but became more and more skeptical whether they really see them as separate languages and concluded that it is *‘Serbo-Croatian or however you call it.’*

The Croatian respondents expressed the same opinion: they said that domestic music is music in the language they all understand. As one of them put it, domestic music *‘can come from anywhere from former Yugoslavia, not only from Croatia, when it is in this language that I*

speak and understand, it is domestic.' Similarly to the Serbian informants, they stayed away from giving one name to the language and mostly defined it by referring to the language on which former Yugoslavia was based or just explained it as the language everyone understands as successor languages are mutual intelligible. Thus, both for Croatian and Serbian respondents language is the main criterion for the domesticity of music, and the language is clearly connected to the area of Former Yugoslavia where Serbo-Croatian was not the only language spoken. Therefore the first hypothesis is confirmed: my respondents share a broad and inclusive definition of domestic music that includes performers from several successor states of Yugoslavia, regardless of whether they share the ethnicity of the interviewees or not.

While the respondents agreed that the successor languages of Serbo-Croatian are rather dialects than different languages, their consent is in sharp contradiction to the language policies of Croatia and Serbia which treat these languages as separate ones since the break-up of Yugoslavia.⁷⁷ However, the break-up of Serbo-Croatian had started decades earlier. In Yugoslavia from the 1970s onwards, the two leading dialectologists of the country, Serbian Pavle Ilić and Croatian Dalibor Brozović both supported the Croatian linguistic secessionism, Ilić, naturally, with the clause that Serbs in Croatia adopt Serbian as their language parallel to Croatian swift. At the same time, interest in Serbian dialects from outside the territory of the Serbian member republic has started to emerge. Their study had considerable political motivation: instead of regional dialects, 'ethnic' dialects, especially of mixed regions, became the focus while dialectical differences were manipulated in such a way that they defined ethnic identity and boundaries.⁷⁸ In other words, differences in the spoken language were used as ethnic markers in order to differentiate between ethnic Serbs and Croats both in ethnically mixed Vojvodina in Serbia and the Krajina region in Croatia.

⁷⁷ Robert D. Greenberg. "Language politics in the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia: The crisis over the future of Serbian." *Slavic review* (2000): 625-640., p.625.

⁷⁸ Robert D. Greenberg. "The politics of dialects among Serbs, Croats, and Muslims in the former Yugoslavia." *East European Politics & Societies* 10, no. 3 (1996): 393-415, p.405.

The Croatian parliament, the so-called Sabor adopted a new constitution in December 1990. A section of it declared Croatian to be the official language of the republic.⁷⁹ After that, Croatian linguists wanted to differentiate their language from Serbian and Bosnian and exclude 'Eastern' elements of it in order to create a more European national image. Therefore they eliminated 'Orthodox' (Serbian), Arabic and Turkish (Bosnian) lexical elements. The missing lexical items were replaced by neologisms or old native Croatian words were revived. A notable example of the latter process is the name of the new Croatian currency, the kuna, which was also the currency used by the fascist Croatian state during the Second World War.⁸⁰ This is also one of Billig's example of banal nationalism.⁸¹

In 1992 as a response to the Croatian constitution, Serbian became the official language of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (FRY), that is, of the country created from Serbia and Montenegro after the collapse of the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia. Greenberg identifies three main factions of linguists in the FRY: the first group (status quo linguists) who saw modern Serbian as the continuation of Serbo-Croatian have been dominating the discourse about the future of the Serbian language. They approved the adoption of both the ekavian and the ijekavian pronunciations as official Serbian – the former is the eastern Serbian variant while the latter is characteristic for Montenegrins and Serbs from outside Serbia. The second group (Neo-Vukovites) wanted to rediscover the language of the 19th century and Vuk Karadžić, that has the ijekavian pronunciation, while the third group, made up by extreme nationalists, were pursuing an 'Orthodox Serbian' language and orthography. The Orthodox faction was backed by the Serbian Radical Party of Vojislav Šešelj and gained some influence during their coalition government.⁸² In 1998 they published their Declaration

⁷⁹ Greenberg, 2000, p.625.

⁸⁰ Robert D Greenberg. *Language and Identity in the Balkans : Serbo-Croatian and Its Disintegration: Serbo-Croatian and Its Disintegration*. Oxford University Press, 2004., p.124.

⁸¹ Billig, 1995, p.42.

⁸² Greenberg, 2000, p.625-626.

of the Serbian language (*Slovo o srpskom jeziku*) which is the linguistic analogue of Šešelj's Greater Serbia ambitions: in essence, they both aim at expanding Serbia and the Serbian language for all the territories of former Yugoslavia because, they argue, inhabitants of those lands are Serbs and speak Serbian.⁸³

All in all, with the prevalence of the status quo linguists only a few significant changes have been made to the new Serbian standard language. However, the community of linguists has remained divided. In the meantime, politicians also express their opinion in the debate over the successor languages. For instance, Milorad Dodik, the president of the Republika Srpska entity of Bosnia-Herzegovina denies the existence of the Bosnian language and sees the advocates of it as supporters of Bosnian centralization.⁸⁴ Linguists' claims also often have indirect or direct political messages: according to Dragoljub Petrović, who belongs to the third group from Greenberg's classification, the Croatian language does not exist because it is based on the dictionary of the Serbian linguist Vuk Karadžić.⁸⁵

My respondents did not feel that language would divide Serbs and Croats; on the contrary, they saw it as the most important common trait of the two ethnic groups: '*What's common in us? We speak the same language,!*' '*Language definitely unites us.*' or '*we share a lot, most importantly language.*' They talked about a sense of community: '*we are not the same nation but we do form some kind of community, based on language, common history, and mentality.*' As it can be seen from the answers above, when asked about this imagined community, the first and most confident responses talk about a linguistic community. This confirms my

⁸³ Bojić, Vera et al. *Declaration on the Serbian language*. (*Slovo o srpskom jeziku*). 1998. <http://www.svevlad.org.rs/srbistika/slovo.html> Last accessed: May 10, 2014

⁸⁴ "Dodik: the Bosnian Language doesn't exist (Dodik: Ne postoji bosanski jezik)." *RTS* August 16, 2013. <http://www.rts.rs/page/stories/sr/story/11/Region/1378800/Dodik%3A+Ne+postoji+bosanski+jezik.html> Last accessed May 14, 2014

⁸⁵ "Dragoljub Petrović: Serbhood and the Serbian Language are being Sofficated. (Dragoljub Petrović: Zaperci Guše Srpstvo I Srpski Jezik.)" *Večernje Novosti Online*. November 9, 2013. <http://www.novosti.rs/vesti/naslovna/drustvo/aktuelno.290.html:462946-Dragoljub-Petrovic-Zaperci-guse-srpstvo-i-srpski-jezik> Last accessed May 31, 2014

second hypothesis, the existence of an imagined community with people from the other successor states of Yugoslavia, first and foremost based on a sense of linguistic unity. However, speaking almost the same language does not mean that they do not have a special connection to the ‘dialect’ that is their mother tongue. In the following subchapter, I explore the respondents’ relations to their version of Serbo-Croatian.

3.2 Linguistic identity

Bugarski examines the relations between language and national consciousness, language and a nation in time and space, and how nationalistic elements can be found in a language. He states that ‘no fundamental link should necessarily exist between a language, nation and state’ and ‘language and ethno-national consciousness do not have to be inextricably linked.’⁸⁶ This is also in line with other contemporary theories, for instance that of Eriksen,⁸⁷ on nationalism according to which language is not a privileged element of ethnicity. Bugarski calls the attitudes that reject these statements and claim that language guarantees the uniqueness of ethnic groups and nations linguistic nationalism.⁸⁸ He does not mention the contrary of this expression; “linguistic cosmopolitanism” has been coined⁸⁹ but as it is a rather misleading term, I avoid using it. In this subchapter, I shortly explore the links between ethnicity and language in Yugoslavia, Serbia, and Croatia, and supplement the results with findings from my focus group interviews.

Eriksen gives examples when language is one of the most important ethnic markers such as Yoruba in Sierra Leone but also shows that it is not necessarily so, for instance in the case of

⁸⁶ Vladan Pavlović and Miloš Jovanović. ““Language Nationalism” vs. “Language Cosmopolitanism”: Divisions in the Attitudes towards the Relation between Language and National Identity.” In Ivana Spasić and Predrag Cvetičanin: *Us and Them. Symbolic Divisions in Western Balkan Societies*. Niš: CESK, 2013., p.168.

⁸⁷ Thomas Hylland Eriksen, *Ethnicity and Nationalism: Anthropological Perspectives*. Pluto Press, 2002.

⁸⁸ Pavlović and Jovanović, 2013, p.60.

⁸⁹ *Ibid*, p.168.

former Yugoslavia.⁹⁰ In Yugoslavia, apart from the imposed supranational identity of being a Yugoslav, ethnic identities such as Croatian or Serbian have also prevailed. However, these ethnic boundaries did not correspond to the borders of languages. In the 1981 census, there were some considerable discrepancies between the reported ethnicity and mother tongue. For example, there were Serbo-Croatian speaking Slovenes, Italian and Slovenian speaking Croats, and Vlah speaking Serbs. In Bosnia, the three main ethnic groups spoke hardly distinguishable or at times even identical dialects.⁹¹

In Serbia, one of the most important linguistic markers is the Cyrillic script which can be used both for the ekavian and the ijekavian pronunciation of the language. The use of the Cyrillic script links Serbs (and Montenegrins) to other Orthodox Slavic people. However, the Latin script is also in use in Serbia (and Montenegro) which can be seen as a favor towards minorities in the country, such as Croats, Hungarians, and Albanians, who consider Cyrillic ‘to be the part of Orthodox Slavic heritage and a rallying call for nationalists.’⁹² Even though both the ekavian and the ijekavian pronunciations are officially accepted, speakers of ijekavian who very often are refugees from Kosovo, Croatia or Bosnia, can face discrimination and are sometimes seen by the indigenous ekavian speaking population as ‘other’ or less Serbian.⁹³

The Serbian respondents also emphasized the importance of Cyrillic, the script which they described as ‘unique’ and ‘their own.’ They talked about Cyrillic as a source of pride. They see it as a marker of difference: even though the languages of former Yugoslavia are almost the same, Serbian stands out for them by having a special script. However, they did not connect it to their religion or any other Orthodox Slavic people. When it comes to

⁹⁰ Eriksen, 2002.

⁹¹ Ranko Bugarski: “Language and Boundaries in the Yugoslav context.” In Busch, Birgitta, and Helen Kelly-Holmes. *Language, Discourse and Borders in the Yugoslav Successor States*. Multilingual Matters, 2004.

⁹² Greenberg, 2004., p.60.

⁹³ Bugarski, 2004, p.34.

pronunciation, all of my interviewees were speakers of ekavian but all of them reported that they have friends or family who speak the ijekavian version. During the interview, they talked about the latter variant as an equivalent of the ekavian one which has a geographic connotation.

In Croatia, the Cyrillic alphabet has also been central to identity-related issues – but as a marker that has to be avoided as it is Eastern, Orthodox, and Serbian.⁹⁴ Tensions rose high in 2013 after the Croatian government had passed a law that allowed ethnic minorities the use of their languages for official purposes in towns where they constitute more than one third of the population. About 35 percent of the inhabitants of the town of Vukovar are Serbs and therefore Serbian Cyrillic signs were also put up.⁹⁵ Vukovar's 3-months siege in 1991 by the Serb-dominated Yugoslav army and local Serbian paramilitary troops had more than five thousand victims. Signs in Cyrillic, as local protesting Croats argue, remind them of the aggression and while it is a means of preserving Serbian identity they see it as a threat.⁹⁶

My Croatian respondents did not echo these attitudes towards Cyrillic. They can all read it. They said they see Cyrillic as another alphabet for the same language, used in Serbia. They never use it, it is rather passive knowledge. As they all live in Zagreb and have almost no memories from the war because of their age, they could not relate to the Vukovar language debate. While some of them understood the underlying tensions, other supported the rights of the Serbian minority and saw the protests as outbursts of nationalist politics. To sum up, both groups expressed the importance of linguistic markers that differentiate Serbian and Croatian. While they do not think of these two versions as separate languages, they do think of certain differences as ethnic markers, such as Cyrillic used only by Serbs. These statements do not

⁹⁴ Greenberg, 2004, p.124.

⁹⁵ Novosad, Anna et al. „Around the Bloc: An Alphabet Conflict Erupts in Croatia, Georgian Wine Could Flow Into Russia.” *Transitions Online*. May 2, 2013. www.tol.org/client/article/23581-an-alphabet-conflict-erupts-in-croatia-georgian-wine-could-flow-into-russia.html Last accessed: May 13, 2014.

⁹⁶ “Vukovar: Divided by an Alphabet.” *Euronews*. November 8, 2013. <http://www.euronews.com/2013/11/08/vukovar-divided-by-an-alphabet/> Accessed May 24, 2014.

claim that language is a privileged part of ethnicity therefore their views do not qualify as linguistic nationalism.

3.3 Music and language

When it comes to music, the example of the songs of Zdravko Čolić illustrates well that the language of the music has little to do with its popularity. Čolić is a pop performer from Sarajevo who was mentioned both in Serbia and Croatia as a notable domestic artist. He sings in the ijekavian version of Serbian that is typical to Serbs from Bosnia, just like himself. His songs are also featured on Narodni Radio⁹⁷ which shows how widely accepted and praised his art is, and provides an interesting contrast to the fact that nationalist Croatian singer Marko Perković Thompson also owns part of the radio station.⁹⁸

Other languages of former Yugoslavia were also mentioned during the interviews. The Serbian interviewees said that it is mostly through music that they hear these different languages. They have the scarcest contact with Macedonian and Slovenian. They hardly ever hear Slovenian, not even as the language of music while they could name only one singer who used to occasionally perform in Macedonian as well. They said they more or less understand Macedonian but do not understand Slovenian. When I reminded them of Albanian and Hungarian, the largest non-Serbo-Croatian languages of the SFRY,⁹⁹ they refused to consider Albanian in a discussion about domestic music and admitted they do not know much about Hungarian music either but they could recall *starogradska* songs that have Hungarian musical influence.¹⁰⁰ Croatian informants similarly claimed to have very low contact with other languages of former Yugoslavia such as Macedonian or Slovenian. While they had absolutely

⁹⁷ Top 20. Narodni Radio. http://narodni.hr/#tab_program Last accessed: 20 April 2014

⁹⁸ "Thompson became an owner of Narodni Radio (Thompson postao suvlasnik Narodnog Radija)." *Index*. April 14, 2004. <http://www.index.hr/vijesti/clanak/thompson-postao-suvlasnik-narodnog-radija-/196520.aspx> Last accessed: 25 May, 2014

⁹⁹ Greenberg, 2004., p.39.

¹⁰⁰ Starogradska music is a genre that was produced in towns in the 19th and early 20th century on the territory of present Serbia and has remained popular since. In Miša Đurković. "Ideološki i politički sukobi oko popularne muzike u Srbiji." *Filozofija i društvo* 2 (2004): 271-279., p.274.

no opinion or information on music in Hungarian or Albanian, just like my Serbian respondents, they could mention performers from Macedonia and Slovenia. They also said they approximately understand the former but do not understand Slovenian.

The Macedonian singer mentioned by the Serbian respondents is Toše Proeski. Proeski, apart from singing in his mother tongue, also recorded songs in both Serbian and Croatian during his short career that ended with his sudden death in a car accident in Croatia. His decease was followed by ‘transnational mourning’ in the successor states of Yugoslavia where he was equally popular.¹⁰¹ It is telling about the extent of his stardom that he was organized an official state funeral.¹⁰² Proeski had entered the Croatian market with duets with Croatian singers, for instance he worked together Toni Cetinski or Antonija Šola. Several of his albums were released in more languages simultaneously: his 2003 record “When you look into my eyes” had a Macedonian and a Serbian version, just like the 2004 album “A day for us” and 2005 “I follow you.” The 2007 album “Game without borders” was released both in Macedonian and Croatian.¹⁰³

Proeski even had a posthumous hit in Croatia, and his last, best of album was released earlier last year in Serbia, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Montenegro, and Macedonia.¹⁰⁴ After all, it can be concluded that Toše Proeski’s music is a very appropriate example to show how important a factor is the language of the performance. My informants understand Macedonian more or less and see all songs of Proeski as domestic music, regardless whether they are in Macedonian, Croatian, or Serbian. His performances in English are harder to categorize:

¹⁰¹ Baker, 2010, 1753-1754.p.

¹⁰² “State Funeral for Macedonia Star.” *BBC*, October 17, 2007, sec. Europe. <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/europe/7048444.stm>. Last accessed: 1 May 2014

¹⁰³ “Toše Proeski – Biograpy and Discography – Music – Region – News. (Toše Proeski - Biografija I Diskografija - Muzika - Region - Vesti.)” *Svet Plus*. October 16, 2010. <http://www.svetplus.com/vesti.asp?vid=4218> Last accessed: 11 May 2014

¹⁰⁴ “Proeski’s album on sale (Album Proeskog U Prodaji).” *Večernje Novosti Online*. March 4, 2013. <http://www.novosti.rs/vesti/spektakl.147.html:422706-Album-Proeskog-u-prodaji> Last accessed May 31, 2014

while they see him as a domestic performer, English-language music is generally not regarded as domestic music, so they defined his songs translated to English as something in-between.

It is not surprising that neither Macedonian (with the exception of Toše Proeski and a few songs of Leb i sol) nor Slovenian language songs have come to the attention of the members of my focus groups in Serbia and Croatia and the other two interviewees. Ramet points out that the overwhelming majority of the Macedonian Yugo rock group Leb i sol's (Bread and Salt) songs were in Serbo-Croatian, and the Slovenian band Buldožer (Bulldozer) of the same era could also take up a large audience because they chose to sing in Serbo-Croatian about political themes.¹⁰⁵ My informants both from Belgrade and Zagreb mentioned Leb i sol and rightly referred to them as a Macedonian Yugo rock formation but later during the conversation they all admitted that most of the songs they know from this band are actually not in Macedonian.

Despite the dominance of Serbo-Croatian in the music of the 1970s and 1980s, there was also a Slovenian language scene. One of my Croatian interviewees mentioned Lačni Franz (Hungry Frank), a Slovenian band that sang in Slovenian but they explained their lyrics in Serbo-Croatian during the concert between the songs.¹⁰⁶ My respondent said she likes the music of this band but does not consider them domestic as she does not understand their songs. However, she has looked up the translations of some of the lyrics and knows that thematically Lačni Franz is near the Serbo-Croatian Yugo rock scene and that they draw upon the similarities and the differences between the languages. This is a valid observation: in the song Kandidati za čestitke (Congratulation to the Candidates, also called as White Shirt and Ties) of Lačni Franz, there is a word game because the line 'Kandidati volimo' means 'We

¹⁰⁵ Ramet, 1994, p.108-109.

¹⁰⁶ Zlatko Jovanovic. ""All Yugoslavia Is Dancing Rock and Roll": Yugoslavness and the Sense of Community in the 1980s Yu-Rock." PhD diss., Københavns UniversitetKøbenhavns Universitet, Det Humanistiske FakultetFaculty of Humanities, Saxo-Instituttet-Arkæologi, Etnologi, Historie oSAXO-Institute-Archaeology, Ethnology, Greek & L.

choose/vote for the candidates’ in Slovenian but it can be understood as ‘We love the candidates’ in Croatian. This already adds to the sarcastic effect of the lyrics:

*White shirts and ties
We vote for you/We love you.
Golden watches and wise thoughts
We vote for you/We love you.
You fight for our clear heart and mind.
We vote for you/We love you.
Conductors of our happiness,
We vote for you/We love you.¹⁰⁷*

3.4 The exception: when language is not enough

‘If I like the music of the performer, I do not care about his or her personal thoughts,’ said a Serbian respondent and also gave two examples where he disagrees with the musicians’ political statements but enjoys their music nevertheless. First, he mentioned Đorđe Balašević, a Serbian singer and songwriter who is known for maintaining very good relations with the public of all Yugoslav successor states. He said on a concert in Croatia that he sings in his mother tongue that is Croatian. Then he added, ‘There is a small problem in all this. I speak a corrupted version of Croatian, the so-called Serbian.’ While the Croatian audience greeted this statement with ovation, many members of his Serbian audience and numerous articles criticized him,¹⁰⁸ just like my informants.

However, this does not affect the popularity of Balašević who is, for instance, often chosen as the most popular person in his hometown, Novi Sad in yearly polls.¹⁰⁹ While the Serbian respondents did not agree with his personal political thoughts, they talked highly of his music

¹⁰⁷ Ramet, 1994, p.115.

¹⁰⁸ “I Sing in Croatian, I speak in so-called Serbian. (Pevam Na Hrvatskom, Govorim Tzv. Srpski!).” *Kurir*. December 17, 2008. <http://www.kurir-info.rs/pevam-na-hrvatskom-govorim-tzv-srpski-clanak-19099> Last accessed May 12, 2014

¹⁰⁹ “Balašević: I don’t court the Croatian public (Balašević: Ne Udvaram Se Hrvatskoj Publici).” *Press Online*. September 8, 2010. <http://www.pressonline.rs/zabava/dzet-set/132484/balasevic-ne-udvaram-se-hrvatskoj-publici.html>. Last accessed May 12, 2014

that is also not apolitical. His song ‘Sloboda-ne’ plays with the different meanings of the words in the title, when pronounced differently: it can be a way to address Slobodan Milošević (Slobodane is the vocative version of the name Slobodan), or it can also mean: freedom – no. It brilliantly contrasts the actions of Milošević with his name. This song was also broadcasted from large speakers on the Terazija square in Belgrade during the 1992 demonstrations as it summed up very accurately the underlying reasons:

*Slobodane!
Freedom – no!
Don’t protect us anymore
Your concern will bury us all.*¹¹⁰

The other example of my Serbian respondent was Bosniak singer Dino Merlin who has shared very negative opinions about Serbs several times during his career. For instance, in 1994 Merlin answered to the question whether he can imagine a life together with Serbs that ‘God does not like people who make trouble and will remove them with our guns.’ In 2001, he said ‘Serbs should take medication for their illnesses because it is evident that they are sick. The majority of them are sick [...]’¹¹¹ While these statements are remembered and some called for the boycott of his Belgrade concerts in 2011 exactly because of these opinions,¹¹² he still managed to fill Belgrade Arena three nights in a row.¹¹³

One Croatian respondent mentioned Toni Cetinski’s name during the interviews. Cetinski’s career and reception are very similar to that of Dino Merlin. His songs are often featured on the radio station Radio Jat as domestic music. However, his political activity was related to the Croatian Democratic Union (Hrvatska Demokratska Zajednica, HDZ) who used a photo of

¹¹⁰ Brana Mijatovic. "(Com) Passionately Political: Music of Djordje Balasević." *Anthropology of East Europe Review* 22, no. 1 (2004): 93-102.

¹¹¹ “Dino Merlin: Serbs are Sick. (Dino Merlin: Srbi Su Bolesnici!).” *Kurir*. October 8, 2011. <http://www.kurir-info.rs/dino-merlin-srbi-su-bolesnici-clanak-115313> Last accessed May 11, 2014

¹¹² “Dino Merlin: Remove the Guns from the Serbs (Dino Merlin: Srbe Ukloniti Puškama!).” *Vesti Online*. October 8, 2011. <http://www.vesti-online.com/Scena/Estrada/169990/Dino-Merlin-Srbe-ukloniti-puskama> Last accessed May 11, 2014

¹¹³ “Dino Merlin: Serbs are Sick. (Dino Merlin: Srbi Su Bolesnici!).”, 2011

him wearing a military uniform to promote the Party in 1997.¹¹⁴ The picture was taken during Cetinski's army service in the same year which was highly covered in the press. Later, he stayed away from politics. Born in Rovinj, he touched upon his Istrian identity in some of his songs but he always claimed being Istrian for him did not mean that he was less a Croat.¹¹⁵ He also held a successful concert in Belgrade in 2011.¹¹⁶

As my informant quoted above said and the whole group agreed, as long as they like the music of the performers, they do not pay attention to their political statements. However, when their music becomes political, their perception also changes. 'If the song is about hating Serbs, it is definitely not domestic music,' summed up a Serbian interviewee how they saw performers like Thompson. Marko Perković Thompson was a soldier in the Homeland War and is known for his patriotic and nationalistic themes. During his performances he often wears military uniforms or army symbols.¹¹⁷

His song 'Lijepa li si' ('How beautiful you are') has two different versions: one is sang by him alone, while the other features other male singers from Croatia and Herzegovina. The song's lyrics made clear the until then implicit message of Thompson's music: he is an integralist who gives 'equal status to 'Herceg-Bosna (the integralist name for Herzegovina) with other Croatian regions.¹¹⁸ Thompson starts his song 'Bojna Čavoglave' ('Battalion Čavoglave,' where Čavoglave is a Dalmatian village) with the Ustaša salute 'Za Dom - spremni' ('For the homeland – ready')¹¹⁹ and then continues with a threat to Serbs:

¹¹⁴ Baker, 2008, p.741-764,, p.756.

¹¹⁵ Baker, 2009, 78.p.

¹¹⁶ "The Night of Music: Toni Cetinski Held Concert in Belgrade Arena. (Veče Muzike: Toni Cetinski Održao Koncert U Beogradskoj Areni.)" *Svet.rs*. Accessed May 11, 2014. <http://www.svet.rs/najnovije-vesti/vece-muzike-toni-cetinski-odrzao-koncert-u-beogradskoj-areni>.

¹¹⁷ Dickie Wallace. Broadcasting Ethnonational Inclusion and Exclusion. Two Musicians in Two Croats. In *The Anthropology of East Europe Review* (22:1). 2004, pp.77-84.

¹¹⁸ Reana Senjković and Davor Dukić. "Virtual homeland? Reading the music on offer on a particular web page." *International journal of cultural studies* 8, no. 1 (2005): 44-62. in Baker, 2009, 46.p.

¹¹⁹ Michaela Schäuble. "Contested masculinities: discourses on the role of Croatian combatants during the 'Homeland War'(1991–1995)." *Gender Dynamics and Post-Conflict Reconstruction* (2009): 169-97.

*Hear it, Serbian volunteers, a gang of četniks,
Our hand will reach you even in Serbia!*¹²⁰

These lines can be understood as a message to those Serbs who had to leave Croatia during the war.

To sum up, according to my Serbian respondents almost everything falls into the category of domestic music as long as it is in Serbo-Croatian or in one of its successor languages. The political opinions or activity of the performers does not have an effect on their perception as long as their anti-Serbian views are not expressed in their songs. My Croatians respondents have never heard of musicians who expressed negative views about Croats or Croatia. Therefore they could only speculate that they would not call that music domestic. When it comes to artists whose songs praise Croatia and are for instance anti-Serbian such as Thompson, they said it is domestic music, even though they all expressed they despise him.

3.5 The Yugosphere concept

The imagined community my respondents talked about was first of all based on language. Later on, they added other traits, such as ‘*common history*,’ ‘*economic ties*,’ or ‘*the same mentality*.’ The concept that describes this kind of community in the successor states of Yugoslavia is the Yugosphere which was introduced by Tim Judah in his 2009 paper ‘Yugoslavia is Dead. Long Live the Yugosphere.’ The title is already telling: the Yugosphere is not a project aimed at reconstituting a new Yugoslavia. On the contrary, it does not only not involve the goal of rebuilding Yugoslavia but it also cannot be seen as a project, more like an interplay of different dynamics and relationships in the countries of the former Yugoslavia. Judah argues that the Yugosphere is the region of former Yugoslavia where ‘Serbs, Croats, Bosnians and Montenegrins all speak the same language with minor dialectical variations’

¹²⁰ My own translation

and where ‘with every passing month, ever more economic links broken during the 1990s are being restored.’¹²¹

Mazzucchelli notes that this concept recalls the semiosphere theory of Lotman, according to which ‘a semiosphere is a homogeneous cultural universe.’¹²² While Judah himself does not talk about homogeneity within the Yugosphere, he does argue that what comes from inside is less ‘foreign’ and that ‘the vast majority of people, including young people who do not remember Yugoslavia, do not regards other parts of the former Yugoslavia as ‘abroad’ in the same way they might regard other neighbors.’¹²³

This is exactly what interviewees both from Croatia and Serbia expressed. One of them summed up the groups’ thought on music from their country, domestic music, and foreign music the following was: ‘*What comes from former Yugoslavia is certainly not foreign music. Foreign comes from elsewhere.*’ There was no argument in any of the groups about domestic meaning more than just Serbian or Croatian music and they all agreed that former Yugoslav cultural products are by no means coming from abroad, even if there are borders they have to cross. Therefore my third hypothesis is confirmed: there is an imagined community in former Yugoslavia according to my respondents, and it is based on common history, and political, cultural, and economic ties.

Economy, more precisely trade is one of the main aspects of Judah’s Yugosphere: he demonstrates the importance of economic exchanges with several examples. There are numerous companies both from the countries of the former Yugoslavia and from outside who treat the region as a whole again, most notably in the car industry. There are regional television channels such as Pink TV whose programming is almost entirely marketed for the

¹²¹ Judah, 2009, p.3.

¹²² Francesco Mazzucchelli. "What remains of Yugoslavia? From the geopolitical space of Yugoslavia to the virtual space of the Web Yugosphere." *Social Science Information* 51, no. 4 (2012): 631-648., p.632.

¹²³ Judah, 2009, p.12.

whole region.¹²⁴ Serbian channels, such as TV Pink, were available on satellite in Croatia, and vice versa.¹²⁵ One of the main illustrative point is music: for instance, turbofolk music has preserved its popularity everywhere in the region.¹²⁶ Archer also argues about the turbofolk scene that this musical style has become from an instrument of nationalist mobilization a popular product on a transnational market. According to him, national cultural spaces of former Yugoslavia have intercepts with the turbofolk scene and many ex-Yugoslav performers belong to it.¹²⁷

Ex-Yugoslav pop and rock icons, for instance Lepa Brena, Hari Mata Hari and Dino Merlin also perform in packed stadiums, and musicians who gained popularity after the war, such as Severina from Croatia, sing to packed audiences everywhere as well.¹²⁸ Baker sums up very well that nowadays several artists from the successor states of Yugoslavia see their audience in terms of a transnational market. Both transnational production and consumption has seen a quick increase. However, ‘tensions of identity observed during this earlier period were by no means resolved, but continued to affect the reception of transnational music despite the opening-up of national media spaces.’¹²⁹

Croatian and Serbian respondents both mentioned turbofolk as the best known cultural product of their region, something that they are known for also outside. While Croatian interviewees claimed to not listen to this kind of music, some Serbian informants admitted that even though they find the quality of turbofolk really low, they occasionally listen to it, especially when they go to a *kafana*.¹³⁰ Lepa Brena was also mentioned in Serbia, as well as Dino Merlin but the musical style all of my interviewees were fond of and said they listen to it

¹²⁴ Judah, 2009, 7-9.

¹²⁵ Baker, 2006

¹²⁶ Judah, 2009, p.7-9.

¹²⁷ Archer, 2012

¹²⁸ Judah, 2009, p.7-9.

¹²⁹ Ibid

¹³⁰ A *kafana* is a typical Serbian bar or club where NCFM is played.

on an almost daily basis was rock, and especially its Yugoslav version, Yugo rock. As one of the respondents put it, *'you just simply cannot live without Yugo rock.'* Even though respondents tended to make a clear choice between Yugo rock and turbofolk, the history of the two genres cannot be separated from each other.

The Yugoslav rock and roll culture had its peak at the end of the 1980s when the most popular bands regularly toured all over the country in around 60 cities and towns, and they had some albums sold in 500,000 copies. The Yugoslav rock scene was internationally recognized: for instance, the students' club Akademija in Belgrade and the punk-pop group Električni orgazam were listed as one of the best music clubs and bands in Europe. Local musical scenes also developed, especially in the urban centers of Belgrade, the capital, Zagreb, Ljubljana, and Sarajevo, but also in other towns such as Pula, and these bands were very often more popular in republics other than their own. However, its dominant sphere remained to be the urban centers, while in the rural parts of Yugoslavia, the neofolk music was the popular musical variant, and taste was already an important indicator of identity and orientation towards the regime.¹³¹ During the 1990s in Serbia, Yugo rock marginalized and marginal cultures were popularized and instrumentalized. Neofolk was played on radios and television while cultural alternatives, along with media and political alternatives as Gordy argues, were destroyed. Neofolk, associated with the rural population who were also the supporters of Milošević, had become the best-selling genre.¹³²

Yugo rock seems to be present in the everyday life of my interviewees from both countries: they regularly listen to Yugo rock songs, on the Internet, on radio, downloaded tracks while commuting, or they occasionally even go to a concert of these bands. They do not connect it to political views or events but generally see it as *'enjoyable, good quality music but it has*

¹³¹ Gordy, 1999., 108-110.p.

¹³² Ibid, 103-105.

nothing to do with politics of Yugoslavia, ‘*socially engaged,*’ and ‘*relevant because it deals with issues we also have everywhere in former Yugoslavia.*’ My informants stressed several times this social aspect of Yugo rock and one of them summed the phenomenon this way: ‘*it is not only in our language but also talks about the same fears and worries we have nowadays.*’

The main topic that appeared in Yugo rock and respondents felt it was still, or again, relevant is the wish to leave the country and find one’s luck abroad. Zabranjeno pušenje’s (Smoking Forbidden) 1987 song Dan Republike (Republic Day) contained the following passage that was later unsuccessfully censored:

It bothers me that some people think
that life is somewhere different,
and that people there do not dream the old dream,
and wait for their passports so they can leave.

The censors criticized the band for singing about people who wanted to leave Yugoslavia. However, the way they covered this part of the lyrics on the album actually only made the undesirable words more visible.¹³³ Another artist who was mentioned several times is Rambo Amadeus who, as ‘the idiot-savant peasant rapper,’¹³⁴ criticized the neofolk and turbofolk culture in his sarcastic lyrics.¹³⁵ This is what my Croatian informants also worried about: bad quality NCFM music with low aesthetic value has remained popular and they fear that for many youngsters, this is domestic music and not Yugo rock.

Yugo rock is not the only form of music from the countries of former Yugoslavia that engages is social issues. From post-war musicians, my Croatian respondents praised Dubioza Kolektiv for touching upon social and political problems. My Serbian respondents also spoke highly of

¹³³ Ramet, 1994, 111-112.

¹³⁴ Gordy, 1999, p.116.

¹³⁵ Ibid

this Bosnian band. Dubioza Kolektiv is known for promoting a prejudice-free society that does not distinguish on the basis of ethnicity or religion:

‘I am sick of the eternal
Nationalist trends
That someone puts me in the box of
Bosniaks, *balije*¹³⁶ or Turks.’¹³⁷

My Croatians respondents said that they see Dubioza Kolektiv more as a domestic band than Croatian performers whose music is not at all concerned with the region’s social and political problems and future. One of them summed this up the following way: *‘even though Severina or Jelena Rozga are Croatians and sing in Croatian, they follow global trends of pop that are not typical or special for us. At the same time Dubioza comes from Bosnia but I see them as much more domestic because I do not only understand the language but also what they mean – the situations they sing about are more than familiar.’* One of the issues they mentioned is the Dayton system in Bosnia and Herzegovina that the Dubioza Kolektiv song Volio BiH criticizes. The title means ‘I would like to’ but it is also a wordplay with the abbreviation of Bosnia and Herzegovina (BiH) and the word ‘would’ (bih) which sound the same. The song refers to the case of Sejdić and Finci:

I wish that Palestinians lived in peace
And Sejdić and Fenci were constitutional.¹³⁸

In the Sejdić and Finci v. Bosnia and Herzegovina case before the European Court of Human Rights, ‘a Bosnian Jew and an ethnic Roma successfully challenged the discriminatory provisions within Bosnia’s Constitution and electoral law’ that excludes ‘non-Bosniak, Serb or Croat citizens of Bosnia and Herzegovina from both the opportunity to stand for president

¹³⁶ The word *balije* (plural: *balije*) is a derogative term for Bosniaks, meaning primitive, savage, and uncivilized.

¹³⁷ My own translation, from the song All in strike (Svi u štrajk)

¹³⁸ My own translation

and for election to the House of Peoples, seriously hampers their ability to participate and be represented in the political and democratic process.’¹³⁹

3.6 Yugonostalgia

The concept of Yugosphere, especially because of its cultural features, is often confused with Yugonostalgia. While the Yugosphere is about maintaining or restoring economic and cultural ties within the region of the successor states of Yugoslavia, Yugonostalgia is nostalgia for the SFRY and for fantasies associated with it.¹⁴⁰ Boym differentiates two forms of nostalgia, ‘restorative’ and ‘reflective.’¹⁴¹ Both concepts can be applied to Yugonostalgia. The former is a sort of longing for the Yugoslav past and Yugoslavism because the past appears to be better than the present. Restorative Yugonostalgia can go as far as the feeling of nostalgia for the ideal of the Yugoslav state. The latter form, reflexive Yugonostalgia, is an ambivalent and critical reaction to the forgetting of the Yugoslav past, forced by the nationalist agenda.¹⁴²

As already explained, music is a crucial part of the Yugosphere concept.¹⁴³ Lindstrom argues that it is also a common site of Yugonostalgia as it helps to remember the everyday culture. She argues that artists such as Balašević or Čolić still fill stadiums when they sing their hits from 40 years ago that are based on Titoist ideology. She admits that ‘it is difficult, if not impossible, to ascertain the intentions of these balladeers or the different ways in which the audience interprets the music.’¹⁴⁴ This is the most problematic point of her argument: she calls this kind of music, its performers and fans Yugonostalgic based solely on the fact that these

¹³⁹ “Refworld | Discrimination and Political Participation in Bosnia and Herzegovina: Sejdic and Finci v. Bosnia and Herzegovina.” *Refworld*. March 12, 2010. <http://www.refworld.org/cgi-bin/texis/vtx/rwmain?docid=4b9e17b92>. Last accessed May 30, 2014.

¹⁴⁰ Nicole Lindstrom. "Yugonostalgia: Restorative and reflective nostalgia in former Yugoslavia." *East Central Europe/L'Europe du Centre Est/Eine wissenschaftliche Zeitschrift* 32, no. 1-2 (2006): 231-242., p. 233.

¹⁴¹ Svetlana Boym. *The Future of Nostalgia*. New York: Basic Books, 2001.

¹⁴² Lindstrom, 2006, p.239.

¹⁴³ Judah, 2009

¹⁴⁴ Lindstrom, 2006, p.240.

songs have remained popular, having no information on how they are understood now, in a different political and cultural context.

Most of my respondents regularly listen to Čolić, Balašević, Lepa Brena, and other performers who started their career in the SFRY and had songs that supported the ideology of the state or talked about Yugoslav identity such as Lepa Brena's song from the introduction. However, they all denied they would be Yugonostalgic. *'How could I be nostalgic for a time period I did not even experience?,'* one of my Croatian respondents asked. Another added: *'I don't have any memories from Yugoslavia, not even from the war... therefore I think Yugonostalgia is something that our parents' generation can have.'* My interviewees agreed that they cannot feel nostalgic and cannot be longing for something they have not experienced. *'We enjoy the music, the lyrics, maybe also a concert but we do not connect these to Yugoslavia.'* They explained that the political ties of the region for them mean the common fate of their countries: debates about the war and the EU accession for instance. This is why my fourth hypothesis about nostalgic feelings for Yugoslavism and Yugoslavia as an imagined community was not confirmed.

My respondents made it clear that they are very selective about the political messages of the songs they listen to. Very often, especially in the case of performances from former Yugoslavia, they enjoy the music but do not think deeply about what the music means in political terms and usually do not connect to its original historical context. This selectiveness and occasional distinction between politics and music puts into perspective the many considerations of cultural studies and political science that often only look at the aims of politicians and lyrics of musicians and fail to take into account that listeners of the music can have a different interpretation of the same texts.

Volčić tried to look at both sides and also talked to concert-goers and visitors of Yugonostalgic exhibitions. However, she only asked members of a generation that lived during Yugoslavia so her findings reveal close to nothing about youth in Serbia and Croatia. However, she makes an interesting point that through Yugonostalgia, the politics of Yugoslav identity are used to manipulate ‘for both nationalistic/populist and/or commercial purposes.’¹⁴⁵ In the next chapter, I look at the Yugoslav supranational identity and examine my respondents’ relations to it.

3.7 A regional supranational identity: the Yugoslav identity

Language was the most important criterion the interviewees from Serbia and Croatia mentioned for the domesticity of music. Apart from language, they talked about a sort of special connection to the region. As one of the Serbian respondents put it, ‘*we were, after all, one country.*’ When confronted with the fact that he himself never lived in Yugoslavia, he immediately responded: ‘*but my parents did and they acquainted me with Yugoslav music.*’ Most respondents agreed that they had first heard Yugoslav music from their parents who had showed them the music of their younger years. Also, as both Croats and Serbs agreed, radio stations regularly feature songs from the time of Yugoslavia, and it is another source of getting to know this music. If they liked something or wanted to look for more, they usually used the Internet to find other songs or performers.

Several respondents continued their train of thought from belonging to one country to having had ‘*the same history, some common cultural heritage, and [...] the same mentality: the Yugoslav spirit.*’ They explained this as a sense of belonging together among the people of the successor states of former Yugoslavia. They talked about a sort ‘imagined community’ in the

¹⁴⁵ Zala Volčić. “Chapter 15. Post-Socialist Recollections: Identity and Memory in Former Yugoslavia.” In Anheier, Helmut K., and Yudhishtir Raj Isar. *Cultures and Globalization: Heritage, Memory and Identity*. SAGE, 2011., p.197.

Andersonian sense that speaks the same language and shares history and politics to a certain extent as well as many cultural products: ‘*domestic is not only Serbian: we were one country, we share a lot.*’ These comments suggest that there is a sort of supranational identity that has prevailed since Yugoslavia. In this subchapter, I shortly examine the different models of the co-existence of national and supranational identities and argue that these models do not capture the situation sketched by my interviewees.

Regional identification is possible on several levels: one can identify themselves with their nearest settlement, their region, be it within the country or transborder, their country, or even their continent. There has been an ongoing debate on the relationship between self-identification with the nation-state and supranational communities. There are several models that try to capture the complexity of this connection, for instance the concept of conflicting identities, that of nested identities, the ‘marble cake’ and the growing branches model¹⁴⁶ Most has been written related to European identity but these models can be used to explain other feelings of supranational belonging as well.

Smith, in his summarizing piece on European identity, shows how it can come into conflict with national identity as it happened ‘when the states of Europe [...] were in disarray over foreign policy over the Gulf War and then over Yugoslav conflicts.’ He also argues that this conflict can be minimized if we accept the situationality of the identity of individuals.¹⁴⁷ The nested identities model which can be imagined ‘as concentric circles or Russian Matruska dolls, one inside the next¹⁴⁸, suggests that there is a hierarchy between the different belongings according to people’s perception. For instance, self-identification as a Spaniard or a German can already ‘contain’ a regional self-identification, while it is nested in the person’s

¹⁴⁶ Thomas Risse. „The Euro Between National and European Identity.” *Journal of European Public Policy* 10:4 (August 2003), pp.487-505.

¹⁴⁷ Anthony D. Smith. „National Identity and the Idea of European Unity.” *International Affairs* Vol. 68, No. 1 (January 1992), pp. 55-76.

¹⁴⁸ Risse, 2003, p. 490.

Europeanness. Diez Medrano's book *Framing Europe* gives several examples on how, in one way or another, more local identities support the European one.¹⁴⁹ In the context of my research, this would mean that self-identifying as a Serb or a Croat is nested in being a Yugoslav, in other words, feeling Yugoslav suggests several national belongings.

The 'marble cake' model incorporates the possibility that the different components of identity blend into and influence each other.¹⁵⁰ The metaphoric name of the concept vividly illustrates for instance that European identity and national identity coexist and their full separation is impossible.¹⁵¹ If we translate this model to the Yugoslav case, that would mean that self-identifying as a Serb or Croat and also having a sort of Yugoslav identity cannot be separated from each other fully. According to the 'growing branches' model, certain branches of national identity are European, either in linguistic, cultural, territorial, or religious sense.¹⁵² Along this logic, certain branches of being a Serb or a Croat are Yugoslav, for instance the shared language or the cultural heritage and products of Yugoslavia that are still popular. However, the same cannot be said about territory or religion.

These models complement each other and correct each other's flaws and weaknesses. In empirical work, some of them are more popular than others. However, my interviewees always stayed away from self-identifying as Yugoslavs. When we discussed their feelings of belonging and their different levels of self-identification, several of my Serbian respondents answered with 'Serbian,' 'Orthodox' or 'European.' The Croatian informants also answered with their national identity, 'Croatian,' and while they never mentioned religion, some of them also reported 'European' self-identification. For them, Yugoslavs could only exist on Yugoslavia. Nevertheless, they expressed some sort of community and solidarity with other

¹⁴⁹ Juan Díez Medrano. *Framing Europe: Attitudes to European Integration in Germany, Spain, and the United Kingdom*. Princeton, N.J. : Princeton University Press, c2003.

¹⁵⁰ Risse, 2003, p. 491.

¹⁵¹ Díez Medrano, Juan and Paula Gutiérrez. „Nested identities: national and European identity in Spain. ” *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 24 (2001), pp. 753-758.

¹⁵² Smith, 1992

post-Yugoslav ethnic groups which is best described in the concept of Yugosphere by Tim Judah. This is why my fifth hypothesis of self-identifying as Yugoslav cannot be confirmed.

4 CONCLUSIONS

The study of popular music and identity has been of interest for researchers for a long time, especially in the successor states of former Yugoslavia. Much has been written on how musical identities have been formed in these countries, mostly in Serbia and Croatia. In this thesis, I looked at the relations between domestic music and national and supranational identities. My research was inspired by a Slovenian radio stations slogan which categorized music from former Yugoslavia as ‘former domestic.’ I looked at Serbian and Croatian radio stations and found that they define the same music still as domestic. In order to learn if this definition was only upheld by the media or also shared by fans of music, I organized focus group interviews with seven Serbian university students from Belgrade and four Croatian university students from Zagreb. During the interviews, we discussed how they define domestic music and why they do so.

My respondents all agreed that domestic music can come from any of the successor states of former Yugoslavia but there are some criteria to be met: it has to be in the language they all understand and should not express negative views on their own ethnicity. Language was a central issue during the interviews: despite the language policies of the past 25 years or even the earlier attempts at separating Serbian and Croatian, my respondents agreed that the two languages are more like dialects. They talked about an imagined community that is kept together most importantly by speaking the same language: Serbo-Croatian or its successor languages, Serbian, Croatian, Bosnian, or Montenegrin. At the same time, my interviewees talked about specific elements of the language that are ethnic markers: for instance the Cyrillic script was a source of pride for the Serbian respondents but was regarded as foreign or different by the Croatians.

This imagined community they talked about had other common traits than language: they said they share a common past and mentality and have economic, political, and cultural ties. This

is what is referred to as Yugosphere, an imagined community of people who live in the successor states of former Yugoslavia, who ‘speak the same languages [...], do not regard other parts of the former Yugoslavia as “abroad” in the same way they might regard other neighbors, such as Greece, Austria or Romania [...] and they like the same music as much as they do the same food.’¹⁵³

However, this concept should not be confused with the idea of Yugonostalgia which is longing for fantasies associated with former Yugoslavia.¹⁵⁴ My respondents claimed to have no such feelings, mostly because they never lived in the SFRY. This finding points to a gap in the literature: most studies on popular culture and Yugonostalgia assume that people listen to music from former Yugoslavia because they are nostalgic about it. Most of my interviewees were fans of Yugo rock bands, but for very different reasons: they like the music, the lyrics, and think these songs are still relevant. This shows that they are very selective in how they understand the lyrics: they do not connect it to Yugoslavia but interpret the political message in the present context, just like they do it with songs from nowadays. Listening to songs from the Yugoslav era or from other successor states also did not mean that respondents would have a Yugoslav identity: all of them self-identified with their country and as supranational identity some of them claimed to be European but no one claimed to be Yugoslav.

To conclude, three of my five hypotheses were confirmed: my respondents had a broad and inclusive definition of domestic music; they felt they belonged to an imagined community which was primarily based on common language; and they felt that this community had other elements such as economic and cultural ties which is also what the concept of Yugosphere describes. However, they were not Yugonostalgic and they did not have Yugoslav identity. My case study can serve as an exploratory study for further research about the relationships

¹⁵³ Judah, 2009, p.1-8.

¹⁵⁴ Lindstrom, 2006, p.243.

between the perception of Yugoslav music and Yugonostalgia, and about the perception of Yugosphere as well.

5 APPENDIX 1

The consent letter for Serbian participants

Dear Participant,

You are being asked to take part in a research study of how young Serbs see domestic music ('domaća muzika'). Please read this form carefully and ask any questions you may have before agreeing to take part in the study.

What the study is about: The purpose of this study is to learn about the concept of domestic music in Serbia. You need to be Serbian and need to have lived in the country for most of your life. Age group: 18-25.

What we will ask you to do: If you agree to be in this study, we will conduct a focus group interview with you and your peers. The interview will include questions about your taste in music, your opinion about different radio stations, songs and performers. The interview will take about 60 minutes to complete. With your permission, we would also like to tape-record the interview.

Compensation: During the interview, you will receive refreshments and sweets.

Your answers will be confidential. The records of this study will be kept private. In any sort of report we make public we will not include any information that will make it possible to identify you. Research records will be kept in a locked file; only the researchers will have access to the records.

Taking part is voluntary: Taking part in this study is completely voluntary. You may skip any questions that you do not want to answer. You decide not to take part or to skip some of the questions. If you decide to take part, you are free to withdraw at any time.

If you have questions: The researcher conducting this study is Enikő Farkas, an MA candidate at Central European University, Budapest. You can reach her by e-mail at farkas_eniko@student.ceu.hu or at enikofarkas89@gmail.com. You can call her on +36 20 5176019. You will be given a copy of this form to keep for your records.

Statement of Consent: I have read the above information, and have received answers to any questions I asked. I consent to take part in the study.

Your Signature _____ Date _____

Your Name (printed) _____

In addition to agreeing to participate, I also consent to having the interview tape-recorded.

Your Signature _____ Date _____

Signature of person obtaining consent _____

Date _____

Printed name of person obtaining consent _____

Date _____

This consent form will be kept by the researcher for at least three years beyond the end of the study. It is based on Cornell University's Sample Consent Form (<http://www.irb.cornell.edu/forms/sample.htm>).

The consent letter for Croatian participants

Dear Participant,

You are being asked to take part in a research study of how young Croats see domestic music ('domaća glazba'). Please read this form carefully and ask any questions you may have before agreeing to take part in the study.

What the study is about: The purpose of this study is to learn about the concept of domestic music in Croatia. You need to be Croatian and need to have lived in the country for most of your life. Age group: 18-25.

What we will ask you to do: If you agree to be in this study, we will conduct a focus group interview with you and your peers. The interview will include questions about your taste in music, your opinion about different radio stations, songs and performers. The interview will take about 60 minutes to complete. With your permission, we would also like to tape-record the interview.

Compensation: During the interview, you will receive refreshments and sweets.

Your answers will be confidential. The records of this study will be kept private. In any sort of report we make public we will not include any information that will make it possible to identify you. Research records will be kept in a locked file; only the researchers will have access to the records.

Taking part is voluntary: Taking part in this study is completely voluntary. You may skip any questions that you do not want to answer. You decide not to take part or to skip some of the questions. If you decide to take part, you are free to withdraw at any time.

If you have questions: The researcher conducting this study is Enikő Farkas, an MA candidate at Central European University, Budapest. You can reach her by e-mail at farkas_eniko@student.ceu.hu or at enikofarkas89@gmail.com. You can call her on +36 20 5176019. You will be given a copy of this form to keep for your records.

Statement of Consent: I have read the above information, and have received answers to any questions I asked. I consent to take part in the study.

Your Signature _____ Date _____

Your Name (printed) _____

In addition to agreeing to participate, I also consent to having the interview tape-recorded.

Your Signature _____ Date _____

Signature of person obtaining consent _____

Date _____

Printed name of person obtaining consent _____

Date _____

This consent form will be kept by the researcher for at least three years beyond the end of the study. It is based on Cornell University's Sample Consent Form (<http://www.ird.cornell.edu/forms/sample.htm>).

6 APPENDIX 2

Playlist

Lepa Brena: Jugoslovenka

Zdravko Čolić: Druže Tito, mi ti se kunemo

Toše Proeski: Ako me poglednes vo oči/Ako me pogledaš u oči

Leb i sol: Čuvam noć od budnih

Lačni Franz: Kandidati za čestitke

Đorđe Balašević: Sloboda-ne

Đorđe Balašević: Računajte na nas

Thompson: Bojna Čavoglave

Zabranjeno pušenje: Dan Republike

Dubioza Kolektiv: Svi u štrajk

Dubioza Kolektiv: Volio BiH

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