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The 'Narod' in Narodnjaci: Perceptions of Turbo Folk in Contemporary Sarajevo

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The '*Narod*' in Narodnjaci: Perceptions of Turbo Folk in Contemporary Sarajevo

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Abstract

Turbo Folk is often associated with the ultranationalism and violence of the Wars of Yugoslav Succession in the nineties. Working from the perspective of people who enjoy this music and/or frequent establishments where Turbo Folk is played in contemporary Sarajevo, I investigate the narratives employed by both listeners and detractors of Turbo Folk. What attributes or values are projected on the genre, in present day Sarajevo? Have these values changed from how the genre was perceived during the war in the 1990s? Is Turbo Folk political or politicized? Based on ethnographic field research conducted over the course of one month in Sarajevo, my project seeks to explore political aspects of cultural life in contemporary Bosnia and Herzegovina. I frame my research in the context of post-socialist post-conflict cultural studies, and post-conflict transformation issues; specifically if and how behaviors in consumption of culture are affected by the past. Findings suggest that the division between admirers of Turbo Folk and the genre's opponents is not as definitively demarcated as academic literature presents. Instead, the division between listeners and non-listeners is often dependent on the social context in which an individual finds him or herself.

Introduction

*“Pridji mi, pridji, nisi vise klinka
neka svi gledaju, ma, bas te briga
ljubi me, paparaco neka slika
daj, opusti se, sve je samo igra”*

*“Approach me, approach, you are no small girl anymore
Everybody should watch, I don't care
Kiss me, the paparazzi should take pictures
Come on, relax, everything is just a game”*

-From “Pridji Me” by Alen Mukovic

Bright lights and cigarette smoke cloud the air. It’s after midnight and Jež, a popular club in Sarajevo is teeming with people who have come to talk, dance, and sing along to the music. A quick survey of the room reveals a diverse crowd both in age and state of dress. *“Everything is just a game,”* Alen Matic croons as the bass thumps, the crowd enthusiastically accompanies him, and the air fills with the sound of accordions and trumpets melded with techno beats. But is it really just a game? To some, Turbo Folk music is devoid of sociopolitical significance, the perfect soundtrack for drinking, clubbing, and spending time with friends. For others, Turbo Folk is more than “just a game”. Turbo Folk is often portrayed in academic literature as an insidious form of banal popular culture whose shallow lyrics are associated with the violence and ultra nationalism of the wars of Yugoslav succession. Additionally, music was highly politicized due to its role in illuminating pro- and anti-regime dichotomies in Belgrade, Serbia, the genre’s birthplace, and in Zagreb, Croatia. Moreover, the perspective of individuals and social groups who enjoy and seek out Turbo Folk music is marginalized within the literature, which is dominated by the narratives of those who strongly dislike the music or associate it with political significance. While Turbo Folk music is popular

throughout the Balkans, there is a lack of information on Turbo Folk listeners in Bosnia and Herzegovina;¹ Belgrade and Zagreb are more prevalently discussed. As the literature on postwar Turbo Folk grows, the dearth of research exploring post-war Turbo Folk in Bosnia remains.

In this paper I explore Turbo Folk from the perspective of people who enjoy the music and people who frequent establishments where Turbo Folk is played. I conducted ethnographic field research in Sarajevo, Bosnia via personal interviews and participatory observations. Sections of this paper explore the perspectives of multiple individuals and social groups in present day Sarajevo and the ways in which these individuals and social groups interact with and relate to Turbo Folk. My aim is to engage more with audience rather than an analysis of the lyrics or music alone.

Methodology

My project is based on ethnographic field research in the form of participant observation in various social settings in Sarajevo, Bosnia. In addition, I interviewed a total of sixteen people,² using group and individual semi-structured interviews in public cafes, bars, and restaurants. Interviewing people in Sarajevo who listen to and may enjoy Turbo Folk was the foundation of my research. Informants were selected through the snowball method as well as participant observations. These interviews introduced me to the Turbo Folk audience in Sarajevo and the complex social space this audience negotiates. Through these interviews informants provided context and information surrounding their individual and social backgrounds and their perspective on Turbo Folk music and culture in Sarajevo. At present, research does not critically examine or engage

¹ Bosnia and Herzegovina will from here on be referred to as Bosnia.

² All informants' names are changed

with the Turbo Folk audience. Instead, current research provides the positions of Turbo Folk's opponents. Its listeners are perceived as "undifferentiated, unthinking, or brainwashed" (Volcic, 109; Archer, 34). According to Simic, my subjects classify as youth because of their "connection to the 'cultural industry' and the fact that popular music is commonly associated with youth" (Simic, 326). My target informant population was young people age twenty and above. My questions, which can be found in Appendix A, are centered on learning my interviewee's perspective and understanding his or her experiences. I located participants at popular Turbo Folk clubs in Sarajevo as well as through referrals by friends in the area. The main club I frequented was Jež, a Turbo Folk club in downtown Sarajevo, in the heart of the city. Because the term "Turbo Folk" presupposes a negative connotation, during my interviews I ask informants if they listen to "folk music" or "narodna muzika ". Narodna Muzika or "narodnjaci" is common Bosnian/Croatian/Serbian jargon term for new folk music, which does not carry the same negative connotations as Turbo Folk. It should be noted that terms "narodna muzika/narodnjaci" and "Turbo Folk" are contested and liminal. Different people understand these terms in different ways.

The primary lenses I will be using during this project are as a student and a researcher who is also an outsider. My identity as a college student--the same age range as many of my interviewees--may make it easier for them to relate to me, especially as someone who already has a background in the regional history. As an outsider, my position is advantageous because people may be more willing to explain things to me. However, I am at a disadvantage when it comes to foreign language skills and fully understanding the sociocultural context where I am conducting my research. I have to be

aware of how I phrase my questions, because I do not want to presuppose any ideas or feelings towards Turbo Folk, especially those that isolate it in a particular discourse or time period of analysis (i.e. that it is wholly nationalistic and political, and intimately tied to the dominant political regime).

Literature Review

Bosnian Context

The Bosnian War is a complex story and providing a detailed historical narrative is beyond the scope of this paper (Judt, Silber and Little, Malcolm, Atilla Hoare). The war began in 1992 after the dissolution of Yugoslavia the previous year. The rise to power of nationalists from the three largest ethno-national groups—Bosniaks (Bosnian Muslims), Serbs, and Croats—reflected irreconcilable visions for the political future of Yugoslavia's constituent republics and autonomous regions. Serb nationalists resisted Bosnia's 1992 declaration of independence, attempting to carve out a Serbian state with the assistance of the Yugoslav national army. Despite the presence of a strong antinationalist pro-Bosnian peace movement, its proponents were politically marginalized. During the war, one of the main frontlines ran through the capital city of Sarajevo, which was largely cut off from the rest of Muslim- and Croatian-controlled Bosnia for the duration of the war. Known as the longest siege in modern history, the assault on Sarajevo lasted for three and a half years and claimed 11,541 lives. The Dayton Peace Accords ended the war in late 1995, and the siege ended shortly afterward in February of 1996. By the war's end, Bosnia's economic infrastructure was devastated, society was impoverished, and thousands of civilian homes were destroyed (Bieber, 34). Nearly twenty years later, Bosnia remains highly segregated. Persistently low wages and high unemployment, coupled with the rise

of a new political elite, which controls state resources, have resulted in the increase of economic and social inequalities (Bieber, 34). In Sarajevo, post-war social cleavages are characterized more by intergroup rather than intra-group distinctions. Pre-war social cleavages were also non-ethnic, and were based instead on whether one was urban or a peasant (“seljak/seljacija/papak”) (Stefansson, 65). Urban life is associated with refinement, culture, and cosmopolitanism, whereas newcomers are perceived as uncouth and associated with criminality, corruption, and nepotism (Stefansson, 68). According to Bougarel, the most salient socioeconomic divides “native cultured locals” against “rural new comers with inferior cultural habits and knowledge” (Stefansson, 61).

Why study popular music?

Popular music is but one of the many cultural activities and commercial products which constitute popular culture. In discriminating between musical products, listeners express their social identity by making value judgments about music (Grujic, 276). Consciously or unconsciously, listeners prioritize and select meanings and pleasures by listening to one artist or another. To that end the field of pop culture analysis is the locus for “explicating political demands and markers of overall social changes (Grujic, 132). However, Volcic argues that the power or popularity of a cultural practice can be explained by looking at its “capacity to create a context for its fans” (Volcic, 105). The question then becomes, in what contexts is Turbo Folk consumed? Who are its audiences? How, if at all, is Turbo Folk politicized in Sarajevo?

The exploration and analysis of Turbo Folk music and culture in the Balkans is interesting for a number of reasons. In the former Yugoslavia, as politics pervaded the realm of entertainment, pop culture often reflected the divisions of the political climate.

Music consumption was often used to position listeners *vis-à-vis* the imagined positions of others (Simic, 339), for and against the political environment of the time. Studying the paradoxical popularity of Turbo Folk in contemporary Sarajevo will help illustrate the extent to which this genre reflects the most salient sociopolitical divisions. More broadly, I am framing my research in the context of cultural studies in post-socialist areas and post-conflict transformation issues. Specifically, I will investigate if and how behaviors in consumption of culture are affected by the past.

Pop-Folk Music in Yugoslavia

Although popular in the 1990s and early 2000s, Turbo Folk traces its musical roots to Newly Composed Folk Music in Yugoslavia. Rasmussen characterized the Newly Composed Folk Music (NCFM) as emblematic of post-1945 Yugoslavia,³ a national experiment illustrating the "nation's experience of positioning itself within European culture while maintaining/developing its own identity as Balkan subculture" (Rasmussen, 255). NCFM is a contemporary style of traditional music found in the Balkans, the auditory markers of which are "melismatic treatment of tunes [and] nasal timbre, coupled with up to date recording techniques and electronic processing and mixing of singers' parts with various reverb effects, electric guitars and drum machine" (248). Lyrically, NCFM emphasizes "regional belonging, family, patriotism, a guest worker life, the cafe, and everyday life" (250). While NCFM was a precursor to Turbo Folk, the boundary between them remains very vague. Some NCFM singers made the transition to Turbo Folk stars without changing their image or style.

In the 1970s and 80s NCFM did not serve a particular political agenda, though its

³ Rasmussen is one of the only scholars to write in detail on the subject of Turbo Folk in English

ability to express individual rather than collective community prioritized shared social origin, ethnic allegiance and sociocultural marginality. NCFM borrowed from Eastern music, “Eastern” here meaning Turkey, Iran, and Iraq. Raising the issue of the region’s East/West duality created controversy, given the often-negative perceptions of the region's Islamic legacy. This conflict manifested as tension between culturally progressive forces. According to Rasmussen, the tensions surrounding NCFM reflect and often allude to one of the most salient social divisions: the rural versus urban divide. NCFM can be used as a tool to map and potentially characterize sociocultural differentiation between workers and bureaucrats (audience) and professionals and intelligentsia (cultural opposition). Employing analysis of NCFM in such a manner, the question shifts toward class patterns: whether these actually reflect two distinctive tastes and cultures, or whether NCFM signifies underprivileged status. Whatever those attributes may be, it is the natural action of those who perceive themselves as literary or cultural intellectuals to publicly distance themselves from the genre, either through criticism or indifference toward narodnjaci (folk people; hillbillies) (251).

To Rasmussen, NCFM illustrates the rise of a populist cultural model that expresses the official and everyday drive of nationalism. However, she notes that the fluidity of expressive culture is fixed by the sociocultural context in which is found, allowing meaning to change in different political and historical moments. The historical moment of 1970s and 80s differed from that of the 1990s, and the meaning of NCFM changed accordingly. Rasmussen considers the content of expressive cultural models to be a "single theme of nationhood, varying spontaneously from region to another, with its appeals directly proportionally related to the size and ethnic makeup of the region in

question”(253). The 1990s brought about a shift within the populist cultural model and the expressive power of NCFM. Rasmussen defines current process as exclusion caused by populist radicalism, or more precisely, the utilization of available tools and ethnic symbols to disseminate a message. To that end, music was used to 'give voice' to a multiethnic “collectivity forced into contentious patterns of Serbian, Croatian, and Muslim identity” (Rasmussen 254). However it should also be noted that few artists in the 90s made explicitly nationalist claims.

Twenty years later, the topic of discussion has shifted to Turbo Folk, NCFM’s the contemporary techno-pop relative. Rasmussen identifies a moral panic in the development of internal tensions between individuals’ personal enjoyment of the music, and the negative stigmatizations ascribed to it by intellectuals, authority figures, and family members. This panic is exacerbated as the increasingly heterogeneous composition of listeners blurs distinctions between NCFM’s “associations of age, class, and ethnicity and a growing audience of casual consumers” (Rasmussen 253).

From Newly Composed to Turbo Folk

Hailed as the soundtrack to the break up of Yugoslavia, Turbo Folk is a controversial genre of popular music found throughout the Balkans and Former Yugoslavia (Archer, Baker, Gordy, Simic, Volcic). Described as “a mix of electronic dance sounds, kitsch folk music with an oriental tone” (Archer, 2), Turbo Folk is often associated with the Milosevic regime and the violence and hyper-nationalism of the 1990s in Serbia. Other common criticisms of Turbo Folk include:

1. pop-folk aesthetically poor (kitsch, banal, pornographic, violent)
2. pop-folk as rural or ‘rurban’ (a symptom of the failure to adapt to urban life and values in the city; failing to correctly adapt to modernization)
3. pop-folk as oriental (often articulated in terms of orientalist or balkanist

discourse by opponents who presuppose eastern sources to be inferior and devalue the participation of resident ethnic minorities) (Archer, 19)

Nonetheless, Turbo Folk is still massively popular throughout the former Yugoslavia. The cause of Turbo Folk's popularity continues to elude researchers. As Volcic asks, "Why and how do audiences who survived the bloody wars of the 1990s listen to Turbo Folk music that once incited and motivated Serbian soldiers?" (104). This question is complicated by the fact that the majority of current fans were either very young or not yet born during Turbo Folk's nationalistic heyday (Baker, 288).

Researchers find that the persistence of Turbo Folk in the former Yugoslavia offers clues to such topics as current understandings of masculinity and femininity, and civilian orientation towards political regimes. To Gordy, Turbo Folk in the 1990s represented "a way for ordinary people to understand divisions in the society in which they lived" (15). The genre's nationalistic tendencies have significantly decreased since the 1990s, and Turbo Folk's popularity continues to transcend political boundaries. To some, this phenomenon illustrates popular culture's ability to "frustrate attempts at creating separate, homogenous national cultural spaces" (Baker, 278). Turbo Folk can be viewed as a commodity that individuals voluntarily consume, devoid of ethnic or nationalistic identity. On the other hand, these modes of consumption and market reconciliation "leave all groups free to retain various understandings of war atrocities, while they may all flock to the same concerts" instead of engaging with conflicting narratives of the past (Volcic, 118).

Though scholarly fascination with Turbo Folk has produced many articles analyzing its significance in Serbia and in Serbian popular culture, there is a lack of

research on the presence and significance of Turbo Folk in Bosnia. Current scholars also posit a need for more studies which seriously and critically engage with Turbo Folk's audience, often portrayed as "undifferentiated, unthinking, or brainwashed" (Gordy, 34; Volcic, 109). My research seeks to correct these deficiencies.

Commercial Nationalism

In "Paradox of Ceca and Turbo Folk Audience" Volcic and Erjevac use the term "commercial nationalism" to describe the changes in ideological forms which enable the depoliticizing of the concept of nation (104).⁴ To Volcic and Erjevac commercial nationalism is defined as the shift from political propaganda to commercial appeal, appealing to nationalism as means of raising ratings and popularity" (104). This shift results in the displacement of "the citizen state nexus of belonging by the relationship between consumer and marketer" (Volcic, 104). In other words, commercial nationalism refers to the use of nationalism to raise the sales or consumption of a product, seemingly depoliticizing it in the process.

Applying Volcic and Erjavec's analysis of Ceca to Turbo Folk as whole suggests that Turbo Folk transitioned from nationalistic rhetoric and associations of the nineties into a depoliticized and banal genre of culture. However, the question remains: who are the consumers of Turbo Folk in post-war Sarajevo, and who are the marketers? What agenda, if any, is reflected by this choice of music? What is the significance, if any, of the shifts in Turbo Folk's popularity and ascribed meaning? Among researchers studying Turbo Folk, there is a tendency to ascribe too much significance to the genre. An assumption exists that the arts in the Former Yugoslavia must have a sociopolitical lens,

⁴ The term "commercial nationalism" was coined by Volcic and Andrejevic (2009).

or function as an alternative form of political engagement to critique the government and the social system. Instead we should ask, to what extent is Turbo Folk politicized? For whom, and to what end, if any? While the genre's detractors perceive it as unambiguously invested with political relevance, the narratives of Turbo Folk consumers are marginalized in academic discourse.

Banal Nationalism

Another concept introduced into the discussion and analysis of Turbo Folk is that of "banal nationalism" (Billig, 1995). Banal nationalism is the routinized reproduction and advancement of national identity and pursuits through every day pleasure habits and activities (Grujic, 134). The consumption of Turbo Folk in Sarajevo could be perceived as one such act, if doing so is indeed a practice of national identity. If this is the case, then whose nationalism is it? What, if anything is hidden or communicated to the consumer? What social context is created for the listener and why is participating in this context encouraged or discouraged?

Headings and subheadings hereafter correspond to themes addressed by informants during interviews and informal conversations. They are organized and analyzed as follows: "*A Large Tree with Roots in Serbia*": *Turbo Folk in Sarajevo*, an explanation of Turbo Folk culture and society in Sarajevo; *The Narod in Narodnjac: the Presence and Popularity of Turbo Folk in Sarajevo*, which assesses the music's popularity and significance as a site of multi-ethnicity and transnationalism; *Negative Social Associations of Contemporary Turbo Folk*, which explains the negative perceptions of the music and culture; and *Koliko Ljudi, Toliko Ćudi: Diversity of the Audience*, which analyzes the audience composition of a Turbo Folk establishment.

These sections are followed by a conclusion containing an analysis of findings, an assessment of the study's limitations, and recommendations for further study.

“A Large Tree with Roots in Serbia”: Turbo Folk in Sarajevo

From my informants' perspective, Turbo Folk slipped into Bosnia from Serbia. Informants argued that because Serbia is a larger country it has a stronger market with more developed resources for music production. Comparatively, Bosnia lacks a strong music industry in all genres. Turbo Folk is less popular in Sarajevo than in other Bosnian cities. One informant notes that "the top clubs in Mostar, Tuzla, and Banja Luka are all Turbo Folk clubs, while here [in Sarajevo] it is different; there is still a fear of not wanting to make Turbo Folk too mainstream." (Interview with the author, Sarajevo, Bosnia, 4/30/2012)

All informants agree that current Turbo Folk, or narodnjaci music, is different from the narodnjaci of the nineties. Informants argued that Turbo Folk in the nineties had more folk rhythms from the Orient and Turkey, combined with Balkan folk rhythms and synthesizers. However in music from the mid-2000s onward, producers combine club music with simple lyrics. My informants consider this new type of Turbo Folk to reflect more developed production. Producers use techno beats to adapt to the tastes of younger generations. During the nineties, stars were better singers; nowadays "anyone with financial resources to pay for an album can make one" (Interview with the author, Sarajevo, Bosnia, 4/30/2012). Either stars "are good looking and cannot sing or people can sing and have bad songs" (Interview with the author, Sarajevo, Bosnia, 4/30/2012). Regardless, Turbo Folk remains very popular among the masses. The following

anecdotes stress the pervasiveness of Turbo Folk in Bosnia and in Sarajevo as well. In the words of Denis, "In this bar, you can hear other kinds of music, but once you cross the border to some of the other cities, its a strange world. All you hear is Turbo Folk and narod--after the first border, no American music. I was traveling with my student organization and at 8:00 a.m. they were playing *Gotovo* by Aca Lukas" (Interview with the author, Sarajevo, Bosnia, 5/09/2012). Haris has a similar story: "I was traveling and we were at a bus station, on a break in a cafe for one hour, and at 9:00 a.m. I heard Aca Lukas and other narodnjaci. It was so strange" (Interview with the author, Sarajevo, Bosnia, 5/09/2012).

Even within Sarajevo's Turbo Folk set, people are perceived differently depending on the particular clubs they frequent. Although most Turbo Folk clubs play the same artists and songs, informants agreed that the club's location often indicates the type of people one can find in the establishment. Amila explains that people who go to Illidza or Barlotti are less likely to be educated or classy. "They are not aware of the important things in life--like they would not able to have a conversation with you in English". (Interview with the author, Sarajevo, Bosnia, 5/07/2012). At Jež, on the other hand, there is a mix of people; you can see Turbo Folk aficionados alongside those with diverse musical tastes. Jež is a small narodnjaci club in down town Sarajevo, whereas most Turbo Folk clubs are in the suburbs. The urban location of Jež makes it more accessible for people in the city, though Denis warns, "Some people they're from Sarajevo, when they're really not. At least thirty percent of people in Jež are not from here; they're from outskirts and other neighborhoods" (Interview with the author, Sarajevo, Bosnia, 5/09/2012). Others have alluded to this division as well, with some interviewees

referencing people whose conception of Sarajevo is from Bascarsije to Marijin Dvor.

The delineation of Sarajevo is clearly more complex than a matter of cantonal and municipal boundaries. People from smaller towns are referred to by the urban residents of Sarajevo as "*seljaci*," a term often associated with division between city life and non-city life, and one which carries negative connotations.

This division is further expressed as opposition between *Sarajevska Raja* and *seljaci*, or *Papci*. In Sarajevo the term '*raja*' is understood to mean a group of friends. As Jasmina explains, "it means you are interesting to hangout with, funny." '*Sarajevska Raja*' refers to people from the city of Sarajevo who are suitable to hang out with. People who are *Sarajevska Raja* "know our jokes, are polite to everyone, listen to different kinds of music, and don't always think about money all the time" (Interview with the author, Sarajevo, Bosnia, 5/11/2012). Anesa adds, "You have to live here, hangout with people here--our parents are *raja* as well" (Interview with the author, Sarajevo, Bosnia, 5/11/2012).

Comparatively, '*papak*' or '*papci*' and sometimes the term '*seljak*' or '*seljaci*' are Sarajevan slang for peasant. This does not refer to someone who works the land, but rather someone who exhibits rude or impolite behavior. Elvir describes *papak* a guy with a Cristiano Ronaldo hair cut and lots of gel, a fake gold necklace, and who wears a lot of fake brands. But he will act like they are real, for us to see that he wears Armani" (Interview with the author, Sarajevo, Bosnia, 5/11/2012). Informants stressed that the divisions between *raja* and *papci* do not fall along geographic lines. "It's not about where you live or go to school, because people who live in the center can be *papak* as well" (Interview with the author, Sarajevo, Bosnia, 5/11/2012).

Also people are conflicted over whether being considered *papak* inhibits one's social mobility. To some, being '*papak*' is what "someone is in their heart and soul, they cannot change it," while others say that you can look like a *papak* and still be accepted. Regardless, all agreed that being a *papak* does not automatically make one a bad person, rather it signifies a different perspective and social outlook, "that you are not influenced by the West, and have no knowledge about culture or the outside world," as Elvir says (Interview with the author, Sarajevo, Bosnia, 5/11/2012). Elvir's anecdote reveals a reoccurring notion that other interviewees alluded to, that western influence is conflated with being cultured and socially acceptable whereas people who are considered *seljaci* or *papci*, or not influenced by the west is conflated with being uncultured. But either way, Jasmina says, these divisions and terms are used primarily among young people: "My parents probably think everyone is normal" (Interview with the author, Sarajevo, Bosnia, 5/11/2012).

The Narod in Narodnjac: the Presence and Popularity of Turbo Folk in Sarajevo

Although Turbo Folk is commonly linked to Serbian nationalism, some informants invoked it as a site of multi ethnicity. For example, argues Ademir,

“Kemal Malkovic had a concert in Novi Sad—do you think 8000 Muslims went to Novi Sad, really? No. And don't forget most people in Novi Sad are ethnic Serb refugees, and they go to see his concert, and I don't remember a single incident being reported there, and for that matter, in most of these concerts they have the power to cross boundaries (Interview with the author, Sarajevo, Bosnia, 4/30/2012).”

Most artists cross ethnic boundaries, with the exception of Ceca. Many people don't listen to Ceca because of her marriage to Arkan, a Serbian War criminal. However, although many profess not to listen to or support her music, and there are Turbo Folk

clubs that don't play her songs, I heard Ceca's music often during my participatory observations and people never seemed to stop dancing or having fun. Amna, 25 says, "It's not like people don't recognize her voice, they'll listen to it and sing along—they know it by heart, even mimicking her mannerisms" (Interview with the author, Sarajevo, Bosnia, 5/08/2012). Mario argues that people are aware of Ceca's music, and while he has seen some people leave, or relax their behavior for a short time, individual responses to hearing her music in a club are different. But what Mario and Tarik suggest is that continuing appreciation of Ceca is emblematic of a wider phenomenon. Tarik explained it as a complex, in which the victim identifies with the person who has attacked them. "It's not limited to Ceca, you see it a lot. Young kids look up to Serbian football stars and want to idolize them and stuff. They don't remember the war that was here twenty years ago. Maybe it's like that with Ceca" (Interview with the author, Sarajevo, Bosnia, 5/07/2012). This anecdote alludes to the diversity of the audience, and the way that active and passive audience members interpret and act within the Turbo Folk space. One could infer that active audience members wouldn't necessarily change their behavior in a club when Ceca's music is played, because whether the audience member is or is not aware of the negative historical or political associations with Turbo Folk and the region's recent history, active audience members are choosing not to listen to Turbo Folk through the lens of politics take a political of club music, passive audience members may or may not change their behavior. Active and passive audience member identities are not strict categories; instead these fluid identities are constantly internally negotiated within audience members in different social situations.

Despite Turbo Folk's associations with Serbian nationalism, for certain audience

members, the musical style is something that transcends ethnic boundaries and is perhaps transnational as it is national. The music "connects us, my Bosnian and Serbian friends" Amila argues, presenting this personal anecdote: "I met a few of them in the Czech Republic and we were in the park one moment and we wanted to sing some of those songs—it connected us then. It's easier to find a *narodnjak* (folk song) that we all know than another one" (Interview with the author, Sarajevo, Bosnia, 5/07/2012). Faris also adds that, from his travel experience, people are more likely to listen to Turbo Folk outside of the Balkans: "People prefer to listen to Turbo Folk over there, because they don't feel pressured or judged by society" (Interview with the author, Sarajevo, Bosnia, 4/27/2012).

Based on my interviews and informal conversations, Turbo Folk is subject to the same tropes and characterizations, which are applied to American pop music in attempts to explain the genre's popularity. Informants agreed that the "songs are catchy and the lyrics are stupid, and the songs go well with dancing" (Interview with the author, Sarajevo, Bosnia, 5/08/2012). Amna says, "I think that for some people, they feel like it's 'theirs' because it's in their language. When people sing it, they really, really sing it. They get touched by it and have an emotional attachment to it" (Interview with the author, Sarajevo, Bosnia, 5/03/2012). Amila raised the point that it's common knowledge that many artists steal music from other countries, and this means that sometimes they have "good music with shitty lyrics, and that's good to dance to" (Interview with the author, Sarajevo, Bosnia, 5/07/2012). Amna also points to the genre's addictive atmosphere, explaining that a lot of people "divide their lives [into] work life and personal life. People go to Turbo Folk clubs to separate their lives for three to four hours and then they get

hooked" (Interview with the author, Sarajevo, Bosnia, 5/08/2012). The clubs are also a popular place to meet people. Girls go there to meet boys, and vice versa, because a lot of people are in these places.

Many of my interviewees discussed ways in which the Turbo Folk atmosphere intensifies people's emotions. Alisa says "it can take you from sad to happy in seconds." (Interview with the author, Sarajevo, Bosnia, 5/09/2012). She adds that people identify with it and with the music. Heavy drinking is common, and while some people find the songs relaxing, for others it's depressing. Alisa clarifies that, though it's not the music per se, the music can make a sad or bad day worse. Denis adds "people start fights, breaking glasses and beating people. Once I was so drunk I threw my glass on the ground and broke it with my foot...you can see the scar right here" (Interview with the author, Sarajevo, Bosnia, 5/09/2012).

Other informants have alluded to the alluring and enjoyable atmosphere of some *narodnjac* clubs. Vildana says, "I have some friends, people who just enjoy the atmosphere--they tell me, 'oh, I went to Bosna, [a night club?] I like to go, to get into it and drink a little. I get into it you know, ecstasy, enjoyment, nirvana'" (Interview with the author, Sarajevo, Bosnia, 4/24/2012). Amila partially explains it through an analysis of the term "*narodnjak*." Turbo Folk, she says has a negative connotation, and is not seen as inclusive. However *narodnjak* is a suitable term "because the songs are for the *narod* (the people), regular people listen to narodnjaci--and when you do, you don't listen to it when you're alone, but with *narod* (people) having fun, singing and being happy" (Interview with the author, Sarajevo, Bosnia, 5/07/2012). For Faris, the music is also popular because some of has merit, and the rest is so cliché that anyone can identify with it when

feeling down or depressed. "Yes, the lyrics bring out banal sentiments, but everyone can relate to it. Its not like *only* Croatians suffer in love" (Interview with the author, Sarajevo, Bosnia, 4/30/2012).

Negative Social Associations of Contemporary Turbo Folk

Turbo Folk is more than a genre. It is also a conceptual category imbued with social relevance which has become a locus for a range of discussions. Among informants, reoccurring negative themes were the contemporary state of affairs in Sarajevo, culture of lethargy, and the relationship between individuals associated with the Turbo Folk scene and political elites.

Informants used the discourse around Turbo Folk as a platform to describe and discuss the current state of Sarajevo's society. Vildana describes Sarajevo as functioning in a state of organized chaos:

"Sarajevo functions very well considering the circumstances, but it's anarchy here, pure anarchy here. You can kill a person and only go to jail for three years. You can get slapped around and no one will help you. Do you know how many murderers and rapists are walking the street right now? Because the jails are full! They go every weekend to go and check in and they say no, come again next weekend. But we function really well" (Interview with the author, Sarajevo, Bosnia, 4/24/2012).

"People are getting dumber," Vildana continues. "Most of the intellectuals or people who had some knowledge immigrated during the war, and have not come back" (Interview with the author, Sarajevo, Bosnia, 4/24/2012).

Amna adds, "I don't want to be someone who talks about morals all the time, but to young and vulnerable people, they're singing about things that are unsustainable for their lives. Things like 'push up your tits and I'll drive you around in my BMW'" (Interview with the author, Sarajevo, Bosnia, 5/03/2012). Faris corroborates Vildana and Amna's

claims, arguing that the essence of Turbo Folk culture is trying to get money. “People go and gamble away all the money their parents give them, people to gyms, not for fitness but to become a strong guy, get drunk and get into fights” (Interview with the author, Sarajevo, Bosnia, 4/30/2012). To Amna, the problem is not just the music; the problem also comes from a lack of community values. “Life isn't like those songs. The songs can be really aggressive, and girls get hit by guys and in songs it ends happily ever after. That's not real”(Interview with the author, Sarajevo, Bosnia, 5/03/2012). Many informants referred to the genre as an infectious disease. Amna says, “We're raised like sheep, we have a shepherd, and it's the club and music and everyone goes there” (Interview with the author, Sarajevo, Bosnia, 5/03/2012). She adds that people no longer invest what money they have in long-term things: “Guys and girls will spend all the money their parents give them to get perfumed and dressed up and to go clubbing for one month” (Interview with the author, Sarajevo, Bosnia, 5/03/2012). Informants argue that this exemplifies part of a wider trend, relating to the residual effects of the war on people's everyday lives.

Culture of Lethargy

Many informants express frustration with the fact that although people may dislike Turbo Folk, little is being done to change it; there is a lack of local as well as national mobilization. Amna attributes this lack to a “culture of lethargy” in which “people just aren't interested in that. After everything that's happened here, people are just tired” (Interview with the author, Sarajevo, Bosnia, 5/03/2012). Faris also alludes to the difficulties of community mobilization in the context of his university:

“At my school, it's easy to get people around the idea that we need another term for the exam, so they were ready to block the streets, but it's hard for them to jointly

demand that one professor who was engaged in sexual affairs with students [be] suspended. It's hard. And the basis for this is a whole culture of not caring about anything" (Interview with the author, Sarajevo, Bosnia, 4/27/2012).

Although Amna uses the term 'culture of lethargy' Faris also alludes to a notion of apathy amongst some members of the population:

"You see a low number of people getting opportunities. Few know about opportunities and some don't even care, go to faculty, try and finish, find a job as a result of a bribe, and that's their lives. People rarely think about it." (Interview with the author, Sarajevo, Bosnia, 4/27/2012).

Moreover, Faris attributes the lack of community mobilization in part to the cultural atmosphere in which they live. He argues, "while people aren't into music that will encourage rebellion, they are part of an Average Joe society of Bosnians who don't want to do anything to change their lives" (Interview with the author, Sarajevo, Bosnia, 4/27/2012). If the atmosphere in which people go about their daily lives does not encourage critical awareness of their surroundings, it is unlikely for a culture of activism to develop. Many informants argued that Bosnia needs more socially conscious bands and music to encourage change and bring coolness to rebellion.

For many informants, Sarajevo's sociopolitical problems are intimately connected with the negative aspects of Turbo Folk culture. Faris views these problems as linked to music, a general lack of knowledge, and an absence of skillful pop culture. "We're building a generation of idiots who are useless for any attempt to reform the country because they just march to whatever happens" (Interview with the author, Sarajevo, Bosnia, 4/27/2012). Multiple informants mentioned that while alternative musical options are present, the scene is not as big, and the quality of other genres of music has decreased.

Political Elites and Turbo Folk

Many interviewees alluded to a relationship between Turbo Folk and politicians, such as that observed by Gordy in his 1999 study of Turbo Folk and the longevity of the Milosevic regime in Serbia. While, Turbo Folk may have political messages for those who choose to pay attention to them, the messages are not explicit. Amna says:

"They're subliminal. It supports your lifestyle because you're part of the nation and the society, and your lifestyle supports the current political situation because of how you're behaving. For example, when you throw your energy into clubbing and drinking coffee, you're not paying attention to what institutions are doing or not doing to improve your state of living." (Interview with the author, Sarajevo, Bosnia, 5/03/2012).

Another informant argues:

"They're all connected, the singer and the politician. They are profiting from your lifestyle, from people not going to work, having health care—the situation in Europe affects Bosnia too, Bosnia is in debt and no one is paying it off. Living in a short-term lifestyle suits them, because you are not considering your existential state" (Interview with the author, Sarajevo, Bosnia, 4/30/2012).

Selma argues that “people are aware that singers and politicians have coffee, but when they are together they are sending the same message: that they are not doing anything constructive with society” (Interview with the author, Sarajevo, Bosnia, 5/08/2012). They have a political interest in maintaining the status quo. Many informants agree that Turbo Folk avoids politically charged subjects which would cause listeners to question the status quo, a positive aspect for casual social situations. However, they also argue that art should be utilized to make something different and encourage a different view of society. Although the relationship between the political scene and Turbo Folk culture is not an explicit one, the agenda of the political elites is served when people think about lyrics but don't think about anything else. When people are not thinking actively about daily life, the government is not held accountable.

Koliko Ljudi, Toliko Ćudi: Diversity of the Audience

Currently, although Turbo Folk appeals to a specific crowd, its audience is as diverse as Sarajevo's club-goers. A common presumption is that enjoying an establishment's music factors into people's decisions to frequent it, but I've found that what constitutes an enjoyable environment is more complex. Some people go because they like the music, while some go to the clubs and listen to the music even though they are critical of Turbo Folk music and culture. Still others refuse to go at all. The competing narratives I heard during my interviews and informal conversations can be categorized as active audience narratives, passive audience narratives, and non-audience or opponent narratives. I would characterize active and passive audience members as people who enjoy the music, though they may or may not endorse Turbo Folk culture. Informants compared the overall message of Turbo Folk to the 'bling-bling' style of American hip-hop: money, cars, women, and partying. Despite the generalizations of stereotypical Turbo Folk listeners as unintelligent people with narrow worldviews, many informants argued that these cultural generalizations are not entirely true. They may apply to some segments of the population, but not to all Turbo Folk listeners.

For example, Ademir is a 30-year-old employee of the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) who will be attending law school in the United States. "When we have a party and there's a play list and thousands of mp3s on the computer, if I play one or two [Turbo Folk] songs people get really surprised: 'You listen to this crap?! But you're so cool! We wouldn't have guessed, how come?'" Ademir goes on to say that he listens to Turbo Folk because "some of it is good, most of it is crap, but

for me it's about being able to enjoy the music as such. Honestly, I don't know why I can do it and others can't" (Interview with the author, Sarajevo, Bosnia, 4/30/2012). Amila, a 23-year-old Master's student at the Economic and Business Faculty at the University of Sarajevo says, "its just music. I like music, I went to music school when I was younger, and when I'm drunk, I like to sing and dance—but Turbo Folk is not music I listen to at home. I listen to other things as well" (Interview with the author, Sarajevo, Bosnia, 5/07/2012). Both Ademir and Amila consciously enjoy the music; however, this does not mean that they are unaware of the negative perceptions, which surround it. Amila says that "lots of people, particularly Muslims who were hurt during war--and I was one of them--choose not to listen, but I don't want to put negativity in it. Its just music" (Interview with the author, Sarajevo, Bosnia, 5/07/2012). Amila's anecdote indicates a conscious decision to avoid making the personal political, reinforcing the fact that to some, Turbo Folk is just music which should remain separate from these associations.

Another informant argues that the general Turbo Folk audience is hypocritical:

"People will tell you they don't like the music, don't listen to it, but everyone knows all the words. People are embarrassed to say they know it. It's most of what they listen to anyway. You know never really know if people like it or not; it's like playing with double agents". (Interview with the author, Sarajevo, Bosnia, 4/27/2012).

Among Turbo Folk opponents, who criticize and strongly dislike the music, there are two types of passive audience members: those who criticize the music and occasionally go to clubs, and those who strongly dislike the music and do not go to the clubs. Semina, a 25 year old university student says:

"If you're with the right people you can have fun, as long as the atmosphere and energy are fine. Personally, I don't like *narodnjaci*. It is superficial and artificial music. I do feel like a hypocrite though, because I don't like it, but I go anyway. There are many people who feel the same way I do, and still go. But in Sarajevo,

you don't really have much choice. It's everywhere. If you go on YouTube in our language, you get song recommendations in the side bar. In clubs you are really doomed to it, take it or leave it." (Interview with the author, Sarajevo, Bosnia, 5/08/2012).

Sandra, a 21-year-old college student, corroborates Amna's argument that there isn't much variety in Sarajevo club life:

"Eight out of ten clubs in Sarajevo play *narodnjaci*, and some will play foreign music until midnight, and then after that it's all *narodnjaci*. Personally, I don't like it, I like more house, alternative rock, and dub step. But Turbo Folk is massive culture, so you adjust to it." (Interview with the author, Sarajevo, Bosnia, 5/08/2012).

Like other informants, Faris also has a diverse musical taste:

"I have been to a variety of festivals in the region, including those with drum and bass and ethno-fusion, but in the end, I know a lot of Turbo Folk songs. The music isn't tasteful, and is of questionable quality, but you can't say that you don't know it. But if people enjoy something, fuck it, if it's good tonight, then it's good tonight." (Interview with the author, Sarajevo, Bosnia, 4/27/2012).

What these three narratives have in common is their concurrence with arguments about the pervasiveness of Turbo Folk music in the Balkans. These narratives affirm that Turbo Folk's popularity extends to Bosnia as well as Croatia and Serbia; they also posit that there are few musical alternatives to Turbo Folk. While there are house and techno clubs, and people listen to rock music, these alternatives are marginalized regardless of the enthusiasm of the audiences they attract, due to quantity—namely, the fact that Turbo Folk is mass culture. All three narratives also insist that Turbo Folk can be fun; people's dislike of the music does not preclude the possibility of going to clubs and having fun with friends at least some of the time. These narratives also illustrate the diversity of people who listen to Turbo Folk. Likewise, they reinforce that the polarization for or against the music is not as clearly demarcated as it is often presented.

When discussing critics of Turbo Folk, many types of people were mentioned. In

my interviews, Turbo Folk's detractors were generally characterized as disliking it for political reasons. However, many informants made the distinction that 'regular people' do not focus on the political reasons, because they are not "prejudiced or narrow thinking--people who involve politics in everything and don't listen to other opinions." This quotation demonstrates that many members of the Turbo Folk audience can in fact display more cultural tolerance in some areas than their liberal opponents.

My informants brought up two classifications of people in Bosnia who criticize Turbo Folk, and these categories of groups do not seem mutually exclusive.

1. The first group are "urban fascists [who] think, just because they're from the city, born and raised in Sarajevo . . . mostly from well to do families—it's not about wealth, as not all of them are quite rich, but it's a class sort of thing, your background—who believe that somehow gives them the right to judge the tastes of others."

2. The second group is "the strong alternative of civil society. They are not huge in number, maybe about 500 of them, but they are strong. It's the strong voices of 500 people in Sarajevo, who are involved in everything. Most have international experience, speak English very well, and are well aware of pop culture and social media, and they think it is okay to judge the tastes of others, particularly when, for all of Turbo Folk's negative effects, they have not made real attempts to engage with the people who listen to Turbo Folk." (Interview with the author, Sarajevo, Bosnia, 4/30/2012).

A common point made by multiple informants is that many of Turbo Folk's strongest critics have never even listened to the music. It is worth noting that hypothetical explanations of opponents' objections to Turbo Folk do not address critiques of its perceived Orientalist influences, an argument to which scholars have alluded. To Admir, the judgmental attitudes of the urban fascists, who consider themselves an alternative social elite and therefore believe they have the right to judge the tastes of others, represent a cultural double standard. He argues that many Turbo Folk listeners don't care

about the alternative music scene as much--you could almost argue that they are more tolerant of other spaces and genres because they don't care, and you can listen to whatever you want" (Interview with the author, Sarajevo, Bosnia, 4/30/2012). However, other informants dispute the idea that some Turbo Folk listeners are more tolerant, arguing that many of them are unaware of or may simply refuse to listen to music that is not *narodnjaci*.

Ademir's anecdote further illustrates the cultural double standard of the country's cultural and intellectual elites:

"A lot of them will listen to American country stars like Patsy Kline, who sings about love and men leaving their girlfriends for other women, and they say that it is a poetic and tragic picture of heartbreak in rural America--but when Indira Radic sings about love it's primitive and rural crap. I don't understand how people draw the line. To me it's cultural fascism" (Interview with the author, Sarajevo, Bosnia, 4/30/2012).

Ademir argues that people ignore the progressive actions of some Turbo Folk stars, citing Seka Aleksic, who sings about unexpected lesbian love, and Jelena Karleusa, who has spoken out in support of the LGBTQ community in Belgrade.

Moreover, many informant argues that the perspectives of detractors who refuse to listen to Turbo Folk are unfair, saying, "I also believe the role of culture is to educate people and promote certain values, but many of the criticisms of Turbo Folk claim this very strong link with power and culture. The most influential publication on Turbo Folk was written in '99 by Eric Gordy" (Interview with the author, Sarajevo, Bosnia, 4/30/2012). Ademir claims that, to an extent, Gordy is correct; however, his works do not reflect the complete truth, as he devotes insufficient time to the socio-historical context immediately preceding the time in which he wrote. During the 70s and 80s,

urban spaces grew as more of the rural populations relocated to the cities. This population shift resulted in a culture clash, and the folk genre grew as the cities grew. (Interview with the author, Sarajevo, Bosnia, 4/30/2012).

Many informants assert that culturally, during the former Yugoslav era, cities had the advantage; as such, NCFM was not played as much during the 70s. To that end it is understandable that the media would play music that majority of people love and enjoy. Influential artists of the period collaborated with studio musicians and rock bands. One such band, five-singer group Juzni Vetar released five albums per year and managed to sell many records despite high taxes on their earnings. These earnings enabled them to employ studio musicians to come and be studio musicians for their albums--that was also how Turbo Folk started picking up steam.

Other interviewees allude to the close-mindedness and cultural elitism prevalent in Sarajevo. Many elites, though well-meaning, are out of touch, argues one informant:

“They think of Sarajevo as running from Bascarsije to Marjin Dvor. They're trying to be positive, but they lack basic comprehension of our society and they don't make an effort to understand and find common ground with people. They don't really try to go there, and understand the music and the people who listen, 'cuz if you leave it alone, it will grow even more and become a disaster. You can't just give up on people who are considered the negative groups.” (Interview with the author, Sarajevo, Bosnia, 4/27/2012).

In reference to Turbo Folk's divisive nature, Alisa says, "I had two teams of friends, one who listened only to *narodna* (lit. people's music) and the other did not" (Interview with the author, Sarajevo, Bosnia, 5/09/2012). Alisa went on to explain that of her friends who listened to *narodna* many--though not all--were a little close-minded. Her anecdote about the two groups of friends was a microcosm of a bigger division to which many of my interviewees alluded, namely that some people like or listen exclusively to

narodna. However, there is little overlap between exclusive listeners and others, in spite of the greater variation found in any given club audience.

Unlike listeners, audience members in club settings adapt their tastes to accommodate differing music styles. Many informants alluded to this concept. In the words of Amna, "I don't change myself, but I do change my behavior." Alisa compares this adaptability to "going out with two friends. One wants water, the other says water, and the third wants juice or water, but gets water with everyone else" (Interview with the author, Sarajevo, Bosnia, 5/09/2012). Alisa furthers this notion of adapting, saying, "I can adapt in general. There are people who can adapt to any situation and people naturally, without thinking. It depends on who I'm with--but there are also some who don't [adapt]" (Interview with the author, Sarajevo, Bosnia, 5/09/2012). My research suggests that people who criticize the Turbo Folk genre and refuse to listen to it are consciously choosing not to adapt. How do people decide when to adapt and when not to? Do certain values or circumstances need to be involved for this to take place? Is a certain mindset necessary?

Alcohol and drinking are strongly associated with Turbo Folk. "You can't drink without it," Alisa says. "When I go out, I do drink more. I don't know why; it's not tradition, it's *navika*," habit (Interview with the author, Sarajevo, Bosnia, 5/09/2012). Other informants stressed the fact that drinking is not about *narodnjac*, so much as it is about enjoying the company of friends, meeting new people, and distracting oneself from the stress of everyday life. These are among the positive associations of Turbo Folk.

In Sarajevo, many types of people hear Turbo Folk music, including people who refuse to listen to it, people who dislike it and still go to clubs where it is played, and the

people who enjoy the music. What all informants agree upon is that something about the music attracts people, regardless of how they may feel about it. Turbo Folk possesses an appeal powerful enough even to cross ethnic boundaries.

Conclusion

This paper is the result of my investigation into perceptions of Turbo Folk in contemporary Sarajevo. My informants spanned a range of ages, social circles, musical tastes, and education levels. Interview participants were found over the course of one month, using a combination of the snowball method and participatory observations at Turbo Folk establishments. The purpose of my interview questions was to allow people to share their personal experiences and thoughts on Turbo Folk and its role in contemporary society. Upon compiling and analyzing a total of sixteen interviews and many more informal conversations, a number of common themes emerged.

Who listens to Turbo Folk in Sarajevo? Why?

Many people are exposed to Turbo Folk in Sarajevo, though this is mainly due to the strong presence of Turbo Folk in daily life, being played in nightclubs and cafes throughout the city. On a personal level, some people listen to the music only socially when spending time with friends, while others seek it out because they enjoy it. Still others dislike the music so strongly that they refuse to listen to it or frequent establishments where it is played.

What values and attributes are projected onto the genre?

It is popular consensus that most Turbo Folk music is of poor quality, shallow, with little to no aesthetic value. Instead, Turbo Folk is valued for the social function it fulfills

for some listeners, though recognition of its social value does not necessarily preclude other negative associations. Some informants specified that the music is often associated with people perceived as uncultured. To others, Turbo Folk's lack of artistic merit stems from the genre's failure to generate politically or socially conscious music, which encourages people to critique institutions in everyday life.

To what extent is Turbo Folk political or politicized?

With the exception of the genre's detractors, most listeners consider Turbo Folk to be neither political nor politicized. Many informants stressed that the decision of whether or not to consider Turbo Folk political is in the hands of the listener, a stance exemplified by Amila's anecdote: "many Muslims who were hurt by the war hate the music—I am one of them, but I choose not to hate the music because I do not want to inject negativity into every aspect of my life." The relationship between Turbo Folk and political elites is unclear and was contested among informants. Some argued that there is no relationship, while others insisted upon the existence of an indirect relationship best characterized as "subliminal." The latter posit that there is a connection between the singer and the politician, though the degree and nature of this relationship remain unclear. Some informants argued that present political elites are well served if the public is fed music, which discourages questioning the current political establishment.

What narratives do listeners employ?

All informants provided me with positive and negative opinions, anecdotes, and narratives extolling Turbo Folk's positive attributes and negative social associations. In nearly all interviews, conversations about Turbo Folk preceded discussions concerning contemporary Sarajevo's social problems. It is important to note that there are no

homogenous narratives; all informants interviewed expressed a range of nuanced views. The heterogeneity of the Turbo Folk audience is underplayed in academic literature.

The relationship between Turbo Folk music and its transnational audience, and particularly its audience in contemporary Sarajevo, is not as clear-cut as many opponents suggest. My interviews reflect a broad demographic range in terms of age, as well as academic, music, and extracurricular interests, suggesting that the relationship between audience and the music is complex and fluid; at times the social context in which Turbo Folk is played outweighs its cultural association in recent regional history. Furthermore, the audience is more critically aware of the implications and associations, both positive and negative, than many academics will admit. All of my informants were quick to address positive and negative aspects of the genre and to discuss Sarajevo's current social problems. They required no prompting to address concepts such as cultural and urban fascism, the culture of lethargy, the difficulties of social mobilization in Sarajevo, and the city's existing social divides.

Finally, as a genre, Turbo Folk encompasses a wide range of concepts, including nationalism, stars advocating for the LGBTQ community, satirical reference to Balkan culture and society, and self-exoticism. In most instances I found people having a damn good time.

Limitations of Study

Although I was able to collect sixteen interviews in four weeks, this time constraint limited my ability to conduct a thorough research project. Additionally, as a student studying abroad, I had limited financial resources at my disposal for the duration of my

research project. Time also limited the depth and variety of fieldwork and observation locations; by the time I developed a rapport with some of my interviewees who had offered to take me out with them, the period available for my research was over. Though it is far from shallow, my research reflects the fact that it was a project conducted in a short time span with limited financial resources, and available research destinations limited by ability to achieve a certain standard of comprehensive research. Although I have been studying the regional language for much of the semester, I am not fluent enough in local languages to conduct interviews, which in turn limited the pool of potential informants who spoke English. While most of the people I met have spoken English, conducting interviews in English limited the types of people I could interview without the assistance of a translator.

Recommendations for Further Study

There are many options for topics within paper that could benefit from more advanced study. One such subject is the social connotation of the terms '*papak/papci*' and '*seljak/seljaci*,' a study of which would illuminate how they are employed and interpreted by young people. Contrasting these findings with the perceptions of adults could be used to gauge if or how these classifications are reinterpreted over time. Another potentially rewarding topic is the "culture of lethargy," namely how this concept manifests in regions affected by the Wars of Yugoslav succession, and in Sarajevo in particular. Finally, it would be fascinating to see the concepts of "urban" or "cultural fascism" further developed theoretically and investigated in the former Yugoslavia.

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Appendix: Interview Questions

Question Set 1

1. Introductory questions: Who are you? Where are you from? Can you tell me a little bit about yourself? Are you interested in politics?
2. What type of music do you listen to?
3. Do you listen to Narodnjac/Turbo Folk?
What do you define as Narodnjac/Turbo Folk?
4. Why is Narodnjac/Turbo Folk popular?
5. In your opinion, are there any political aspects of Narodnjac/Turbo Folk (in 2012 Sarajevo)?
6. Why do you listen to Narodnjac/Folk?
 - a. Why don't you listen to Narodnjac/Turbo Folk?
 - b. Why do you dislike Narodnjac/Turbo Folk?
 - c. Does the ethnicity of the artist matter?
7. How and when do you listen to Narodnjac/Turbo Folk? Where?
8. Does music connect people? Does Narodnjac/Turbo Folk connect people?
9. What are society's perceptions of people who listen to Narodnjac/Turbo Folk or go to Turbo Folk clubs?
10. Do you think people who listened to Narodnjac/Turbo Folk in the 1990s are different from the people who listen to it now?
11. Has Narodnjac/Turbo Folk changed at all since the war? Since Dayton?

Question Set 2

1. What type of photos do you take?
2. How do you choose whom to photograph?
3. How did you start taking pictures of Turbo Folk artists?
4. Do you take photos on location?
 - If so, where are they/what types?
 - If photos are taken at concerts, what's the audience like?
5. What images do you have of Turbo Folk?
6. Do you like the music?