Abstract: This paper explores how approaches based on emotion and ‘affect’, and approaches based on language and discourse, may complement each other in understanding the relationship between music and spatio-temporal collectivities in Yugoslavia and its successor states. The study of popular music in this area has concentrated particularly (though not exclusively) on two kinds of collectivity, one of these being ‘the nation’ and the other being ‘Yugoslavia’ as a transnational collectivity that may still exist culturally although no longer exists politically. Accounting for the affective or emotional dimension of music casts attention on another level of collectivity, the ‘zavičaj’ (‘birthplace’), which exists simultaneously as material landscape and a web of directly experienced social relations, through which notions of origin, ancestry and home can all be evoked. To remember the zavičaj is not to access a fixed impression of this space in the past but to construct a present memory of the past space. The emotions this evokes may be easily transferable on to the nation or may perhaps place the intimate zavičaj and the abstract nation in an antagonistic relationship. Evaluating textual and ‘affective’ approaches to understanding one particular mode of remembering the zavičaj in ex-Yugoslav/post-Yugoslav popular song, the paper argues that musicians and songwriters from the regions discussed here established a coherent set of emotional discourses that invited active remembering. Although during and after the break-up of Yugoslavia these practices became open to co-option as a means of evoking the nation (an abstract collectivity made up of multiple zavičaji), the zavičaj should still be
recognised as a distinct form of collectivity that music researchers should treat as a level of analysis in its own right. More research is, however, needed on the differences in how emotional discourses of the zavičaj have been expressed in popular music from region to region.

Keywords: belonging, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Croatia, music, emotional discourses, nationalism, Yugoslavia

The relationship between music and spatio-temporal collectivities such as the nation has been a constant theme in the study of post-Yugoslavia, with research beginning while the post-Yugoslav conflicts were already taking place and reshaping directions of inquiry that had already been opened in the study of popular and folk music during the 1980s. During the fiercest stages of the Homeland War in Croatia, ethnomusicologists from the Institute of Ethnology and Folklore Research in Zagreb were documenting the effects of conflict on music in the Croatian media and in everyday life (Čale Feldman, Prica and Senjković (ed.) 1993; Pettan (ed.) 1998; Ceribašić, Hofman and Rasmussen 2008: 37); simultaneously, the political anthropology of Ivan Čolović (1994) identified newly-composed folk music and what was becoming known as ‘turbo folk’ as a key source in his investigation of the political uses of folklore in the post-Yugoslav wars. Throughout what now constitute more than two decades since the violent disintegration of Yugoslavia began, music has remained a focal point of researchers’ attention, not only for ethnomusicologists but also for linguists, historians and others who are interested in the ideas and language that music can convey. It has been viewed as a means of expressing national identities at moments of crisis (Ceribašić 1995; Laušević 2000; Sugarman 2010), and also as a means of shaping them by attempting to fix a certain interpretation of the nation’s culture as the national mainstream (Baker 2010) or
to close down space in which alternative cultural–political linkages could be manifested (Gordy 1999). Music emerges as a potential vehicle for promoting a set of social relations that are simultaneously nationalist and patriarchal (Kronja 2004; Grujić 2009), and an effective tool for promoting the nation abroad through international contests and ‘nation-branding’ strategies (Mitrović 2010; Vujačić 2013). These dynamics have also been discussed in relation to the Yugoslav era itself, both with reference to Yugoslavia as a whole (Rasmussen 2002; Vuletić 2011a) and particular nations (Vuletić 2011b) or cultural movements (Mišina 2010) within it.

Yet the nation is not the only type of collectivity that can be understood through the study of music in this space. Much of the popular music that was produced when the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (SFRY) still existed has become a resource for remembering and re-interpreting the everyday experiences and sometimes the socio-political contexts of life in that country (Volčič 2007b; Velikonja 2009), even on occasion feeding into certain post-Yugoslav nationalisms (Stanković 2001). The flow of more recent music between post-Yugoslav states and communities – to, from and among the various post-Yugoslav diasporas, as well as within the post-Yugoslav territorial space itself – has often also been considered a means by which cultural connections among these people and places have been maintained even though the political entity of Yugoslavia has been destroyed. The most widely discussed expression of this argument over the last few years has been Tim Judah’s concept of the ‘Yugosphere’, which he defines as a reconnection of Yugoslav-era social, economic and cultural links that does not seek to undo the individual sovereignty of the successor states (Judah 2009: 18). Shared tastes in popular music form, for Judah, a key element of the evidence that such a ‘Yugosphere’ exists:
Despite its often nationalist overtones, turbofolk music remained popular everywhere. Today all the ex-Yugoslav favourites such as Lepa Brena, Hari Mata Hari and Dino Merlin perform to packed audiences everywhere, and lingering nationalist opposition to one or another of them for this or that statement or action from the 1990s has become little more than ineffective whimpering. Post-war musicians such as Severina from Croatia or the Damir Imamovic Trio play to packed houses too, as they did for example during the ‘Sarajevo Days’ festival in Belgrade in May 2009. Anyone on Facebook with friends in the region can see people from one end of the Yugosphere to the other selling or looking for tickets for big bands playing anywhere from Ljubljana to Skopje. (Judah 2009: 9)

Behind every sentence in this passage there lie developments and contradictions that could be worthy of more detailed research and indeed have often received it. The protests by war veterans’ groups over the Bosnian and Croatian performances of Lepa Brena in particular, as ‘ineffective’ as they might ultimately have been, reveal those movements’ attempts to determine the framework of public discourse by invoking an ethic of national sacrifice, but also point to a wider multiplicity of discourses among the public in those countries (Hofman 2012). Social media makes transnational and translocal connections faster and easier, but the extent to which any of its effects to this end are fundamentally new is still an open question. The re-constitution of post-Yugoslav territory as a space which can be moved through for the purpose of attending concerts evokes the frequent travel between republics for the same purpose at the height of the Yugoslav ‘new wave’ of rock (Volčič 2007a), but is also a very different proposition as a result of scarcer and more precarious employment, higher travel times and costs, and, for some potential travellers, difficulties in mobility arising from the continued unresolved status of Kosovo or their own irregular status in their country of
Obstacles to the coalescence of this ‘Yugosphere’ have nonetheless eased since the 1990s or even the beginning of the 2000s, when the gradual process of reconnection could still damage those who engaged in it too early.

Judah’s perspective is partially echoed by the writer and musician Ante Perković in his recent book on popular music during and after the break-up of Yugoslavia, Sedma republika: pop kultura u Yu raspadu (Seventh Republic: Pop Culture in the Yu Break-Up). Perković echoing Greil Marcus’s description of the ‘mythic, invisible America’ contained in Bob Dylan’s music as an ‘invisible republic’ (Perković 2011: 38) – that is, an imagined space shaped through sonic experience and emotional attachment triggered by sound. He goes on to describe the music of bands such as Indexi and Bijelo dugme as a ‘seventh republic’ that sat beside the six administrative–political republics of the Yugoslav state and has outlasted it:

The seventh republic was never anational; it’s just that those sort of arrangements were boring and unnecessary for it. It was ruled by an aesthetic, that was the key criterion for gaining citizenship. [...] As it turned out, both in political and in generational terms, new-wave nostalgia could easily serve as a new connective tissue for the Yugo-sphere, the Region, the Western Balkans, however they decide to brand our relations.¹ (Perković 2011: 41)

¹ The term ‘seventh republic’ has also been used to refer to the idea of the Yugoslav National Army (JNA) as a unifying force that would transcend the boundaries of Yugoslavia’s republics (for instance, the phrase forms the subtitle of an episode of the JNA in Luka Mitrović’s documentary series Jugoslavija: država za jedno stoljeće (Yugoslavia: State for A Century); however, Perković’s framework does not involve this comparison. Thanks to Christian Axboe Nielsen for this point.
Nostalgia, to which Perković both alludes and contributes, is a central theme in the cultural studies of post-Yugoslavia and indeed in those of the much wider post-socialist region in Europe (see, e.g., Lindstrom 2006; Velikonja 2009; Luthar and Pušnik (ed.) 2010; Todorova and Gille (ed.) 2010; Bošković 2013). In the post-Yugoslav context, it may be a means of making sense of the ruptures that residents or ex-residents of former Yugoslavia have been experiencing since the late 1980s, but has also become fodder for the ‘emerging commercial culture’ of post-socialism, which Zala Volčič (2007b: 25) argues has drawn on nostalgia in ways that often amount to commodification. The extent to which the study of post-Yugoslav popular music should be based around the concepts of nostalgia and memory is an open ontological question – a question of what is available to be known about – within the contemporary discipline. While a number of musical practices and texts are self-consciously or even parodically nostalgic, one might also raise a note of caution: does every act of playing, listening to, watching or singing music from a different ex-Yugoslav state, or music marked by the symbols of a different ethnopolitical identity, constitute a definite expression of nostalgia on the part of the person who carries it out, or are these various connections now widespread enough that they can go unmarked? Judah’s ‘Yugosphere’ is sketched out rather than a deeply theorised construct, but foregrounds present practice with an everydayness that is not always easy to accommodate within the frame of nostalgia and a conscious remembering.

The framework of postsocialist nostalgia sets up, for post-Yugoslav popular music, at the very least, a tension between the national level of analysis and a transnational post-Yugoslav level (whether it is to be thought of as the ‘Yugosphere’, the ‘seventh republic’ or something else). There are, however, many other layers of collectivity that are also significant in how music is being made and used, such as the post-Ottoman ‘Balkan cultural circuits’ in popular music that run across south-east Europe as a whole (Buchanan 2007: 44), or the musical
expressions of sub-national collectivities that do not claim political recognition as states but still demand recognition of their cultural distinctiveness (and sometimes greater political rights) within a larger nation-state. Studying popular music within the post-Yugoslav space thus challenges the researcher to avoid the pitfall of ‘methodological nationalism’, that is, of ‘the reduction of the analytical focus to the boundaries of the nation-state’, as Andreas Wimmer and Nina Glick Schiller (2002: 307) put it in their intervention into the anthropology of migration. This focus is sometimes meaningful, for instance when studying nationalist movements or discourse, but where music is involved the object of research necessarily spills across contemporary borders as a result of the after-effects of the larger musical economy that used to exist within the borders of Yugoslavia, and longer-term musical legacies in south-east Europe. Too dominant a focus on the current national, in terms of the scope and/or the content of what is analysed, would thus make it difficult to incorporate the currently transnational, ‘Yugospheric’, level which is of great importance to ethnomusicology, the political economy of music, and the understanding of nostalgia and memory (Baker 2010: 175–209).

Even by taking in the ‘Yugosphere’, moreover, there would be a certain danger of methodological nationalism in the sense that Yugoslavia between 1918 and 1991 also provides a set of boundaries within which analysis can conveniently focus, with the risk of

2 In Croatia, for instance, the opportunity to use regional dialect in rock has been used to make visible first Istrian regional identity and then the identity of the Adriatic coastal islands within Croatian popular music as a whole (Kalapoš Gašparac 2002; Piškor 2011). Bosnian hip-hop, which articulates a discourse of multi-ethnic and secular sociality that rappers argue is absent from the mainstream politics of post-war Bosnia-Herzegovina, is often also grounded in the experiences of a specific city and its performers’ understanding of social relations there (Mujanović, in press).
missing developments that have taken place on other scales. Music research in and about the post-Yugoslav space therefore needs to keep pace with several things. It must incorporate how space and spatio-temporal collectivities of people are being understood through research on other topics within post/Yugoslav/south-east European studies; it must engage with and ideally contribute to the framework of ethnomusicology and popular music studies in general; and it must also think through the co-creation of sound and space through affect and emotion, incorporating fresh directions in contemporary social theory.

One of these is the so-called ‘affective turn’ in the social sciences, which has been positioned as a response to, and a departure from, the supposed limitations of post-structuralist and deconstructive analytical approaches (Clough 2007: 1). Some authors conceive of ‘affect’ as a type of embodied response to stimuli which bypasses cognition, with the implication that models of action and thought that emphasise cognitive processes would not constitute a sufficiently full account of human behaviour (Thrift 2008: 6–7). Others identify a set of affects, such as ‘shame–humiliation’ and ‘enjoyment–joy’, that stimulate embodied reactions (Probyn 2004: 26). In contrast to research based on narratives, texts and meanings, affect-based research requires very different objects of analysis; in Nigel Thrift’s terms it is explicitly ‘non-representational’, and charges cultural theory with being too opaque to be fit for purpose (Thrift 2008). Steve Goodman (2010: 10), similarly, considers that ‘[t]he linguistic, textualist, and social-constructivist perspectives that dominated cultural theory in the 1980s and 1990s are of little use’ in his study of the uses of sonic affect to exert force (that is, ‘sonic warfare’). Moving between representational and non-representational approaches and their very different, mutually exclusive, ontologies can be difficult. To a researcher accustomed to narrative and textual methodologies (as I am), the language of affect risks appearing as opaque as Thrift, from a non-representational position, finds critical theory. What is more, the affect literature’s depiction of critical theory has arguably flattened
out the complexity of approaches (among them post-colonialist and feminist contributions) within critical theory in making the case for the novelty and value of its own approach (Hemmings 2005).

Though some tensions between affective and discursive approaches exist, there is also potential for them to complement each other through the concept of ‘emotional discourses’ (Svašek and Skrbiš 2007). Marie Thompson and Ian Biddle appear to be thinking in somewhat similar terms when they write that, although ‘affect [...] can represent a radically different structure of political and social connectivity and distribution’ that supersedes older notions such as ‘authenticity’, ‘affiliation’, or ‘identity’ (2013: 16–17), it can actually be used as a means of thinking about them more holistically. This paper explores this potential complementing of approaches by considering the idea of emotional discourses around the ‘zavičaj’ in ex-Yugoslav and post-Yugoslav popular music. ‘Zavičaj’, a word with no direct translation into English from Bosnian, Croatian, Serbian or Montenegrin, connotes one’s home region or one’s region of origin. It is a space more immediate and intimate than a region, and much more immediate and intimate than the abstraction of the nation; if the nation is an ‘imagined community’ whose members will never actually meet (Anderson 1983), the zavičaj is both a material landscape and a web of directly experienced social relations, invoking notions of origin, ancestry and home. In a modern European context, where all such sites should normatively be contained within the territory of a nation-state, the zavičaj is inseparable from yet not clearly identical to the nation. Indeed, the nation – which, since there is no direct translation, this paper will also use the words ‘zavičaji’ (the plural of zavičaj) and ‘zavičajni’ (the adjective derived from zavičaj, with an ending that will vary depending on the gender of the noun it modifies). Although this may be somewhat linguistically alienating for readers who do not speak the source language, it enables more precision than simply writing of ‘the local’ and is therefore worth using here.
in political orders based on the principle of nationalism, is the spatio-temporal collectivity of
the highest order – must accommodate multiple zavičaji in order to account for its own
internal diversity. The nation and the zavičaj thus exist in structural tension with each other:
can the zavičaj and nation be identified, or do the intimacy of the former and the abstraction
of the latter make them antagonistic? The examples used in this paper help to illustrate this
tension in practice by considering how, and what, popular music about the zavičaj might
invite its listeners to remember.

The zavičaj is, perhaps inherently, a space of the past. Through socio-economic pressure
and/or wartime displacement, often a person is no longer inhabiting the space of their zavičaj.
Even if the spatial location of their residence has stayed the same, social, political and
technological change are themselves likely to have made the space being evoked through
memory different from the space being lived in. The process of remembering the zavičaj
should not be thought of as accessing a fixed impression of its space in the past but as the
construction, in the present, of a memory of that past space. It has been argued that, out of all
the sensory stimuli, sound is better suited than any other sensory stimulus in producing the
‘emotional engagement’ necessary for memory to work (Voegelin 2006: 14). This makes it
possible for musicians and sound artists to use a variety of techniques, including the re-use of
pre-recorded sound from the past, to trigger this emotional engagement (ibid. 15). This paper
will argue that songs about the zavičaj also seek to trigger active remembering and do so
through an established set of discursive practices. As a result, during the break-up of
Yugoslavia, these practices became open to co-option as a means of evoking the nation,
attempting to transfer the emotional meanings of the zavičaj on to this larger and more
abstract collectivity. However, drawing on the work of Hariz Halilovich (2013), the zavičaj
can be regarded as an experiential, embodied collectivity very different from the abstraction
of the nation. This distinction justifies the inclusion of the zavičaj in the study of popular
music as a level of analysis in its own right. This paper does not claim that these are the only ways in which the zavičaj has been represented in the popular music of the ex-Yugoslav/post-Yugoslav space and does not claim to grasp all the possible ways of representing it; rather, it discusses one specific mode of representing the zavičaj in certain musical genres (such as newly-composed folk music, light [zabavna] music and pop-folk) and considers how textual and ‘affective’ approaches might both add to our understanding of this cultural phenomenon and the tension between zavičaj and nation that it has set up.

**Zavičaj and nation in ex-Yugoslav popular music**

The initiatives in 1950s–60s Yugoslavia to create new popular music inspired by the language, vocal practices, rhythms and/or instrumentation of folk songs made the zavičaj a well-covered topic in ex-Yugoslav popular music from the start; over several decades of musical and political change, the zavičaj has never lost this position. The very song that is often considered to have ‘marked the beginning of the “market history” of [...] NCFM’ (Rasmussen 1995: 241), Lepa Lukić’s 1964 single *Od izvora dva puta ča* (Two paths [lead] from the spring), is a classic evocation of the zavičaj: the woman contemplating the waning of her love as summer turns to autumn is gazing down a path ‘through the orchards above our village’ (‘kroz voćnjake iznad našeg sela’), where her lover’s mother had once caught them in an embrace. Although many people among the audience for NCFM were no longer living in a village, as a result of the large-scale internal economic migration in SFRY at this time, the village remained a major theme in NCFM as a remembered zavičaj. Indeed, the zavičaj continues to be constructed as rural in the bulk of the examples that will be discussed below.

The genre of newly-composed folk music or pop-folk now contains thousands of songs that evoke a particular place, which – given the importance of the pop-folk musician’s own
biography in giving authenticity to their performance persona (Stojanović 1988) – is normally somewhere to which the vocalist or band is personally connected, that is, their own zavičaj.

The zavičaj continues to be imagined as rural or at least as a small town where inhabitants are directly socially connected with each other, rather than a space with the complexity of the modern city. Importantly, the centrality of the zavičaj is also visible in popular music genres that do not self-define as NCFM or pop-folk; it is equally important in Dalmatian light (zabavna) music or the Slavonian tamburica repertoire, even though musicians and producers in both genres put great distance between their own music and ‘folk’. In former Yugoslavia, the theme of the zavičaj was well suited to a musical economy where royalties from radio airplay contributed an important source of income and where dedication-and-request shows (‘Pozdravi i želje’) on radio were common – helping to account also for the large number of songs about occasions such as weddings, and about personal names (Čolović 1985).

Simultaneously, songs about the zavičaj which could trigger the effective process of memory through their instrumental and vocal sounds were an asset when performing at clubs in the diaspora, an audience on which many musicians relied and continue to rely, and which grew dramatically in size after the first ‘guest worker’ programmes under which Yugoslav labour migrants travelled to Western Europe. A change took place, however, during the break-up of Yugoslavia: musicians’ existing modes of expressing attachment to the zavičaj were extended into expressing attachment to the nation – the level of collectivity that nationalist movements desired to make primary among the public they addressed.

This transfer is illustrated particularly well in the songs of Mišo Kovač, an exceptionally popular singer of Dalmatian zabavna music who was born in the coastal city of Šibenik and

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4 See Daniel 2007. For emigrants, the spaces remembered during a song about the zavičaj might be at least twofold: a village or town of origin, but also the country as a whole that had been left behind.
was the best-selling zabavni vocalist in former Yugoslavia (Biti and Grgurić 2010: 65). The laid-back Dalmatian male constructed in Kovač’s songs is a great lover of women, music and the sea. Often the character has emigrated – whether to an inland city or a foreign country is unclear – but still retains his affection for Dalmatia whether or not he expects to be able to return. His 1984 song *Dalmatinac (Dalmatian man)*, like many others, invoked the soundscape and natural landscape of this imagined Dalmatia (evoking a space much smaller than the town of 50,000 people that was Šibenik):

Dalmatinac pamti ljubav staru
Sanja barku, rivu i gitaru
Dalmatinac čuva noću, danju
Svoju pjesmu, maslinovu granu

Though Kovač was not the lyricist of these songs, he rather than his lyricists (who included Željko Sabol and the poet and shipbuilder Krste Juras) was generally thought of as primarily responsible for expressing the ideas they contained, since as a singer it was his vocal practices that added emotion to the language. Similarly to much 1980s NCFM produced in other parts of Yugoslavia, Kovač’s songs described a space where something of what they imagined as traditional life still remained underneath the social change that was transforming the everyday experience of living in Dalmatia. In *Dalmacija u mom oku (Dalmatia in my eye, 1982)*, for instance:

Govore mi čemu priče

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5 A Dalmatian remembers old love / he dreams of a boat, an esplanade and a guitar / a Dalmatian keeps hold of, night and day / his song, [and] the olive branch’.
Ljudi drugi život žive
Odvezane sve su barke
I brodovi s tvoje rive

Ali negdje zvona zvone
I skidaju ljudi kape
I dok dječji plač se čuje
Sastaju se nove klape

This kind of space is explicitly framed as the zavičaj in the title of a later song by Kovač, *Svi me znaju u mom zavičaju* (*Everybody knows me in my zavičaj*, 1989) (about a man who has left and been abandoned by his lover – the only person in his zavičaj who now does not know him).

With the break-up of Yugoslavia and then the outbreak of war in Croatia – when Dalmatia and its hinterland found itself on the front line – Kovač, like most other musicians who lived and worked in Croatia, began to sing music that was patriotic rather than regional in focus. The extent to which Croatian musicians would have preferred to sing patriotic songs in the 1970s and 1980s if the Yugoslav authorities had not taken measures against the expression of Croatian nationalism (see Vuletić 2011b) is an open question, though Kovač’s own biography

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6 ‘They tell me stories / people are living a different life / all the boats are tied up / and the ships from your esplanade / But somewhere bells are ringing / and people are taking off their hats / and while children’s crying is heard / new klapas are forming’. ‘Klapa’ is a Dalmatian dialect word for a group of friends and for an a cappella vocal group (originally supposed to be a group of friends singing for enjoyment, but now increasingly a showbusiness product).
was more complex than that of a frustrated nationalist. When Dalmatian villages and their Croat populations came under direct attack from the Yugoslav National Army and Croatian Serb forces, however, Kovač released the song *Grobovi im nikad oprostiti neće* (*The graves will never forgive them*, 1991). This seemed to draw directly on the language of his Dalmatian repertoire, but set it within the context of war and national mourning that was constituting the Croatian *svakodnevica* (everyday experience) at the time:

Bilo je i vrijeme maslinova grana

Kao simbol mira iz mog rodnog kraja

Sada jaju djece i plač sa svih strana

Životna je slika moga zavičaja

Bilo je i vrijeme kao galeb mira

Sad Hrvatska moja trpi, stenje, plače

Svaka topla suza srce moje dira

Što je više lome, to je volim jače

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7 Kovač had refused to sing in a Croatian club in Canada where a picture of the Ustaša leader Ante Pavelić had been on display, and in 1989 had talked about emigrating if Croatian nationalists were to win the multi-party elections (Luković 1989: 244; Pogutz 1993).

8 ‘There was also a time of olive branches / as a symbol of peace from my birthplace / now children are crying, and weeping from all sides / is the lifetime picture of my zavičaj / There was also a time like the dove of peace / now my Croatia is suffering, moaning, weeping / every warm tear touches my heart / the more they break it, the more I love it’.
This is an especially clear example of a process by which the personal associations connected
to the zavičaj were invited to be applied to the nation, at a time of threat. Songs by many
other Croatian musicians in 1991–2 also used the zavičaj in the same way. Nenad Vetma’s Za
jedan novi hrvatski dom (For a new Croatian home, 1992), for instance, uses the typical
zavičajni scene of a wedding celebration where the husband and wife are about to move into
a new house and binds it directly into the nation, including the phrase ‘svoj na svome’ that is
significant in Croatian nationalism as a territorial–political aspiration for autonomy (see

Nek’ našu pismu daleko čuju, neka se širi glazbala glas
Vesele naše nek’ svi odsjete, barjak se fešte vije kod nas
U novi život mladenci kreću, stvaraju danas novi svoj dom
Neka im pisma bude za sriću, da uvijek budu svoji na svom^10

Here, the song’s lyrics (apparently written by Ivo Cvitić, the lyricist of the better-known Od
stoljeđa sedmog i.e. Since the seventh century^11) allude to a way in which the level of national

^9 ‘Svoj na svome’ literally translates as ‘one’s own, on one’s own [land]’. In the translation
below I have expanded it to ‘free on their own land’ to better reflect its connotations of
autonomy and liberty.

^10 ‘May our song be heard from afar, may the voice of the instruments spread wide / may
everyone feel our joy, the banner of a feast is waving where we are / the newlyweds go into a
new life, they are making their own new home today / may this song be for happiness for
them, that they are always free on their own land’.

identification has become embedded at the level of zavičajni ritual and the everyday, not only in textual terms but in the embodied experience of being part of a wedding ceremony: a man at the head of the wedding procession waves the national tricolour, a custom which is also known over the wider south-east European area. Croatian colours also recur on the belts or hats of many folk costumes and in the decoration of gusles.\(^\text{12}\) The presence of the national in these traditions suggests that at some earlier moment, likely during the growth of movements aiming to raise national consciousness among the public in the 19\(^{\text{th}}\) or early 20\(^{\text{th}}\) century, a decision was made to alter some previous customary practice so that the idea of the nation would be worked into them and made everyday.\(^\text{13}\) Indeed, in the history of the gusle this can be observed with reference to Serb as well as Croat national movements (Čolović 2002; Žanić 2007). Changes like this have sought to establish a link between zavičaj and nation which can then be strengthened through everyday practice using techniques which are both rational and affective.

**Zavičaj and nation during and after ethnopolitical conflict**

Although the examples above come from Croatia, this mode of representing the nation through representing attachment to the zavičaj was far from solely a Croatian practice. Similar illustrations could be found in Bosnian pop-folk. Šerif Konjević’s 1980 song *Najljepši je na svijetu moj rodnj kraj* (*The most beautiful in the world is my birthplace*) works in similar terms to Mišo Kovač’s songs above. It similarly identifies the zavičaj as its frame.

\(^{12}\) The gusle is a one-stringed instrument found in the highland regions of Croatia, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Serbia and Montenegro and is used to accompany performances of epic poetry.

\(^{13}\) See Billig 1995.
of reference, and suggests how important zavičajne songs were and are in migrant experiences:  

Najljepsi je na svijetu moj rodn kraj  
Vratit će se svome domu, u svoj zavičaj  

Sjećanje na sunce iznad naše gore  
Divne noći što su k’o plavo more  
Zovu me da dođem u svoj rodn dom  
Da zaplačem tiho na ognjištu svom  

During the war in Bosnia-Herzegovina, Konjević would sing many songs in support of the Army of Bosnia-Herzegovina and the defence of Bosnia. Among them was Vukovi (Wolves, 1993), which took the typical setting of a man’s departure from his family but depicted a situation in which the attack on Bosnia had forced him to take up arms:

Kud si pošo, babo, sa puškom u ruci  
Idem, sine, gori Bosna, napali je bjesni vuci

14 Complementing this type of song were those in the voices of relatives and lovers who had been left at home while a migrant worker was away, which Dragoslav Dević refers to as ‘pečalbarske pesme’ (Dević 1970: 35).

15 ‘The most beautiful in the world is my birthplace / I’ll go back to my home, to my zavičaj / Remembering the sun above our mountains / the glorious nights that are like the blue sea / call me to come to the home of my birth / to cry softly at my own hearth’. 
A wider observation can be drawn from this example: in post-Yugoslav popular music, there is a shared language of talking about the attachment to the zavičaj and linking this to the nation that cuts across many internal territorial and ethnonational boundaries. In the context of the break-up of Yugoslavia into nation-states, the nations are separate and sometimes competing, yet the vocabulary for mediating a sense of belonging to each nation is common, at least to some extent.

Creating a link between the collectivity of the nation and the space through which one moves, the space in which one lives, is necessary for any territory-based nationalist movement. The need ‘to reconcile a heritage of localized political traditions with the ideal of a single, transcendent nationality’ was resolved in 19th-century German nationalism through the idea of Heimat, an idealised landscape of pastoral beauty which, in wartime, became that which must be protected by the Heimat’s sons (Applegate 1990: 11, 116). Since the 1950s, at least two waves of German popular music with folk elements have represented Heimat to

16 ‘Where have you gone, daddy, with a rifle in your hand? / I’m going, son, Bosnia is burning, raging wolves attacked it / The wolves have crossed the [river] Drina, dear son / if I should die – you, grow up, avenge me / when you find out their name’.

17 I do not speak Albanian and cannot make claims about how far these discursive practices are shared by music in Albanian-language space.
their listeners (von Schoenebeck 1998) in comparable ways to the representations of the zavičaj in ex/post-Yugoslav NCFM-type genres. Heimat and the zavičaj are not identical, not least because, unlike the combination of dissimilar landscapes often necessary to constitute national territories in the South Slav area, one landscape appears to be able to do service for the whole of the German nation. Both Heimat and the zavičaj were, however, deliberately connected to the nation during the promotion of national consciousness by the respective movements.

The nation, however, cannot be simply an extension of any one zavičaj. For one thing, the concept of the nation needs the inhabitant of every possible zavičaj within the national territory to be able experience the same level of belonging to it; moreover, Yugoslavia (in as far as there was ever a Yugoslav national identity) and other South Slav nations have been imagined as the sum of different, equal landscapes, which need to be incorporated in the imagining of national space. The duality of plains and coast recurs in both the Yugoslav and Croatian imaginaries; the Slovenian nation must incorporate not only the Alps but also the Adriatic. There is of course room for contestation within this, not least in the representations that seek to establish the Dinaric mountains as the home of Croats who are more authentic than their fellows in Zagreb; variations from region to region in how the zavičaj is imagined must not be overlooked, but the wider idea of a nation of zavičaji still stands.

Certain songs indeed take on the explicit work of linking multiple smaller places into a collective homeland, but still rely on the discursive practices of zavičajni music which offer familiar emotional discourses to the listener. Marko Perković Thompson’s Ljepa li si (How beautiful you are, 1999) joins seven or eight areas – Zagora, Slavonia, ‘Herceg-Bosna’, Dalmatia, Lika, the Neretva region, Istria, and Zagorje – into a Croatian nation that exceeds the boundaries of the actual state to take in the name given to the hypothetical Croat entity

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within Bosnia-Herzegovina.\(^{19}\) Mate Bulić’s *Narodno veselje* (*Popular merriment, 2003*) consists of an invitation to more or less as many male friends from across Croatia and Herzegovina, with names and traits typical of their areas, to join a party that Bulić is hosting. More succinctly, and for a different collectivity, the same connective work is done in Indira Radić’s 2004 version of Drugi način’s song *Piši mi* (*Write to me, 1982*). Radić’s version is retitled *Rodni kraj* (*Birthplace*), which simultaneously acts as a euphemism for Yugoslavia. It also contains an introduction where Radić recites the words ‘Ljubljana, Zagreb, Sarajevo, Banja Luka, Podgorica, Skopljë, Novi Sad, Beograd [Belgrade]’ – but not, however, Priština – over a techno beat. The Zagreb band’s original song about friends from an unspecified town or village divided by absence is thus put into an explicitly post-Yugoslav framework. It is also transposed into ekavica, the language variant (coded since the break-up of Yugoslavia as Serbian) in which Radić sings. In songs like these, the degree of abstraction from the zavičaj grows ever greater, yet their discursive practices still originate in this method of inviting an affective response.

Certain affective dimensions of the zavičaj/nation link thus emerge. To perform songs that relate to the zavičaj or that link multiple smaller places into a collective homeland through the same discourses is to evoke memories and emotions among listeners who are present (for a live performance) or presumed (if the performance is for a studio recording); in all these styles of music the vocals should also communicate the emotion that is being conveyed, and the singer is likely to draw on their own memories and emotions of attachment to a place – or

\(^{19}\) *Lijepa li si* describes each region in, at most, a line or two. Some other songs in Thompson’s repertoire, such as *Vjetar s Dinare* (*Wind from Dinara, 1998*) and *Moj dida i ja* (*My grandpa and me, 2007*) have constructed a more immediate, familial zavičaj drawn directly from Thompson’s own family history and his relationship to his home village of Čavoglave in the Dalmatian hinterland.
leaving a place – to at least some extent. A performance could then be thought of as an assemblage of emotion with sonic and linguistic content. These are personal, communal, celebratory, mournful, friendly, or familial moments, but within those moments zavičajni songs bring the emotions of those occasions together with affects relating to a place. For instance, gathering to remember the place(s) left behind through listening, singing and dancing is one of the purposes of attending performances in the context of a diaspora club. These embodied responses will not be captured by a purely text-centric approach.

The link between the zavičaj and the nation would thus be all the stronger for being achieved through this affective, embodied circuit, as Celia Applegate has implied in the context of Germany:

Like most ‘traditions’ of dubious antiquity, the modern idea of the Heimat originated in a period of rapid social transformation. Those who created and promoted Heimat, consciously or not, were suggesting a basic affinity between the new, abstract political units and one’s home, thus endowing an entity like Germany with the emotional accessibility of a world known to one’s own five senses. In reality, of course, Heimat’s nostalgic evocation of a closed and close-knit community reflected its replacement by

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20 In her study of the transmission of affect, Teresa Brennan investigates the process by which people responding to a shared stimulus sense and feel the affects of each other, terming this ‘entrainment’ and exploring the roles of sight and smell (2004: 9–10). Though Brennan attributes entrainment to physiological reactions to the transmission of pheromones, thinking about musical performances suggests that sound – including the hearing of meaning-bearing language modified by the affective content of the voice – also needs to be considered as a means by which people gathered together experience this.

21 See Hobsbawm 1983.
these larger and less personal forms of political and territorial belonging. (Applegate 1990: 10–11)

Creating and reshaping this link is, however, a process with consequences that can be, and for some authors are necessarily, troubling. For Sara Ahmed (2004: 12), for instance, nationalism is an inherently exclusionary process, manifested through the attachment of certain emotions to certain objects through affects, where ‘you become the “you” [that is being addressed] if you accept the invitation to align yourself with the nation, and against those others who threaten to take the nation away’, and where for certain of those others the invitation to identification is not even open. The more complex three-way link between the zavičaj, the nation and the marital unit in some of the songs discussed above suggests that a critical understanding of this articulation also requires questioning the concept of the home. Whereas the home is normatively imagined in nationalism as a place of transcendent peace (that the nation as a whole should then resemble), in feminist thought the home and the family are themselves sites of unequal power relations and conflict (Hill Collins 1998). This too must be taken into account when re-approaching the idea of the zavičaj in the ways that contemporary theoretical and empirical work has made it possible for us to do.

The experiential zavičaj

In the anthropological research of Hariz Halilovich (2013) on the impact of war and displacement on Bosnian communities, the meaning of the zavičaj is rethought and restated to give it meaning as an experiential object and to argue against its use as an abstraction. Zavičaj, for Halilovich, comes to stand for the very opposite of the linkages between place, identity and belonging that have been imposed on Bosnians during and after the war. The
things that give the zavičaj meaning are rooted in experience and embodiment, creating a potential for multi-ethnic identifications that does not exist in the dominant modes of identification on offer in Bosnia-Herzegovina today:

While killings and the expulsion of the ‘ethnic other’ from places and strategic territories, that were remade into exclusive ethnic homelands, were a key feature of the conflict in BiH, the emphasis on ethnicity as a natural and political group identity of Bosnians has come at the expense of shared place-based local identities – defined by local geography, cultural norms, dialect, kinship, neighbourliness, a common way of life and embodied relationship with the place and social networks – or zavičaj, a term encompassing the wholeness of person-in-place and place-in-person. (Halilovich 2013: 10, my emphasis)

Very often in Bosnia-Herzegovina, the zavičaj is what has been deliberately destroyed by war fought in ethnonationalist terms – destroyed both as a physical site and as the set of affective responses that it was capable of evoking before the war, since today it can no longer be remembered without the memory of its destruction in its pre-war form. This is not to say, however, that the zavičaj has ceased to matter. Halilovich (ibid. 11) argues that before the war the experiential and potentially multi-ethnic zavičaj was ‘more powerful by far than the exclusivist claims of religion and ethnicity’ in Bosnian towns and villages, and that even today, ‘the zavičaj continues to coexist as an experiential reality despite its physical destruction and forced displacement’ – even when this has to be recreated through practices of sociability and remembering. Halilovich also makes the case that the framework for understanding displacement should be trans-local rather than trans-national (ibid. 132–37). It is the people who could constitute the same zavičaj that Halilovich’s respondents are most
interested in maintaining links with; nationhood, whether ethnonational or multi-ethnic
Bosnian, is not their frame of reference to the same extent.

Indeed, for Halilovich, the zavičaj is incompatible with the nation in the way that the
nation is publicly understood in contemporary Bosnia-Herzegovina. Halilovich sees the
1992–95 war ‘as part of a much longer campaign to unmake zavičaj in Bosnia’ and argues
that ‘for ethno-nationalist political elites it was fashionable to regard zavičaj as an outdated
pre-modern concept of home, incompatible with the ideas of greater ethnic homelands and
exclusive nation states’ (ibid. 11). Nationalist movements accordingly empty out the zavičaj
of content. An example is the ‘appropriation’ of commemorations of the Srebrenica massacre
‘for broader political, ethno-religious and nationalist agendas’ that Halilovich describes in a
chapter on the memories of survivors of ethnic cleansing (ibid. 93); the survivors he has
interviewed express justified anger at attempts ‘to turn Srebrenica into the main pillar – a
memory site – of the new Bosniak nationalism’ on the part of some who do not have personal
memories of the dead (ibid. 97). This tension may be appearing in music as it has in other
kinds of social practices. The ethnomusicologist Badema Softić (2011) suggests that music
has been important in the mourning and remembrance of Srebrenica in several ways,
including a renewed interest in ilahije (Islamic spiritual songs) among some survivors, and
music therapy projects based on sevdalinke (traditional Bosnian urban songs); there have also
been several new songs dedicated to Srebrenica in Bosnian popular music, by musicians who
are not necessarily from Srebrenica. Reading Halilovich’s discussion of the Srebrenica
commemorations, I wondered how his interviewees might have responded to, for instance,
the song Srebrenice, nježna ljubavi (Srebrenica, tender love), which was recorded in 2005 by
Hanka Paldum and Nazif Gljiva, two musicians who were present in Sarajevo during the war
and have been closely connected to Bosniak nationalism. Depicting a mother’s prayers for
her missing sons who are likely to have been killed, there would be grounds to consider it a
song that opens up space for commemoration within national popular music, but also – since its composer and singer were survivors of the war, but not of Srebrenica – an appropriation of mourning in the same way that has so frustrated the relatives interviewed by Halilovich.\textsuperscript{22}

One of Halilovich’s ethnographic vignettes does involve music, within a discussion of the Podrinjci community in Sweden (i.e., the community of people from the Podrinje region of Bosnia, which includes Srebrenica). Podrinjci in the town of Norrköping have established a monthly social night, ‘Podrinje zabava’, that Podrinjci from other nearby towns travel to attend and help to fund. Music from Podrinje, in its post-war form, is the sonic background to the gathering:\textsuperscript{23}

Bringing local Podrinje bands and performers from Bosnia to \textit{Podrinje zabava} in Sweden has increasingly become a popular trans-local trend. These bands perform a distinct Podrinje style of folk music, also known as \textit{izvorna muzika}. Podrinje \textit{izvorna muzika} involves instruments like \textit{saz}, \textit{tambura}, violin and accordion, but it also revolves round very distinct \textit{zavičaj} themes like the river Drina, names of villages in

\textsuperscript{22} A response by the journalist Irham Čečo (2005), who lived through the siege of another ‘UN Protected Area’, Goražde, expressed a similar critical perspective and accused Paldum and Gljiva of profiteering: ‘I want Srebrenica to be remembered through the trials at The Hague and through books such as \textit{Razglednice iz groba} [the memoir of Emir Suljagić, who survived the genocide because he was employed as an interpreter by UNPROFOR], as Goražde is remembered through Joe Sacco’s comic strip, and not through third-rate schlager songs [\textit{šlageri}] by withered showbusiness artists, who sell other people’s pain for small change’.

\textsuperscript{23} On traditional music from Podrinje, see Golemović 1987.
Podrinje, and old local rituals, as well as more recent themes like the Srebrenica genocide and forced migration from Podrinje. (Halilovich 2013: 210–11)

Talking about ‘listening’ to music would not begin to depict the emotional dimensions of memory and sociability that would be present in such a setting. If a researcher’s object of interest at ‘Podrinje zabava’ was the music rather than, as with Halilovich, the remaking of the zavičaj in itself, it might make more sense to think of the musicians’ performance as participatory – there to make possible the communal affective experiences of the audience rather than to presentationally perform – though even then one would also want to know which songs, what words, were being heard. Here, then, is an example of how questions grounded in very contemporary post-Yugoslav experiences can be opened up for researchers of music.

**Conclusion**

This paper has made the case for the zavičaj as a layer of collective space and object of memory that deserves just as much attention as the national and Yugoslav levels on which much, though not all, research on post-Yugoslav music has been based. In doing so, it has also explored how understanding songs about the zavičaj would need to incorporate dimensions that cannot fully be accommodated by the study of music as texts, such as the experiential approach to the zavičaj itself, and the turn towards studying the affective or even the ‘non-representational’ in one field of social research. To ethnomusicologists, and

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24 The *saz* and *tambura* are stringed instruments of Ottoman origin used in folk music.

anthropologists for whom participant observation is a central method, this is not new, but to linguists and historians whose affinity rests more with textual, narrative or documentary sources it poses more of a challenge. I say this not to attempt to fix some kind of binary between text/narrative and experience,²⁶ but more to acknowledge my own methodological and perceptive limitations: although I recognised in my previous research on Croatia (Baker 2010) that textual/linguistic analysis and participant observation needed to go hand in hand, conscious of my many limitations as a participant observer I have not built new research around that method since.

Taking Halilovich’s anthropology and a linguistic or discursive reading of the language of songs, for instance, it is possible to approach the zavičaj/nation link in more depth. Halilovich’s introduction to the concept of the zavičaj suggests that it is something that nationalist movements have found ‘outdated’ and sought to ‘unmake’, which would imply that the intense emotions associated with the zavičaj would also be discarded and unmade. Yet the history of nationalism suggests that these emotional discourses are not unmade so much as transferred: many expressions of nationalism themselves attempt to draw into themselves what the zavičaj is supposed to evoke, and to play on the affective responses that songs about the zavičaj are capable of eliciting when it is heard by someone to whom that place has meaning. Although the examples of the zavičaj being drawn into the nation through popular music that I discussed above come from the years of the post-Yugoslav wars, when ethnonationalist politics and the new nation-states were still in the process of consolidation, musicians who describe their songs as patriotic continue to mix these two levels of collectivity in a way that depends on evoking or imagining a very immediate zavičaj and the affective technologies that go along with it. The video for a recent single by Miroslav Škoro,²⁶ Which need not exist: Sara Ahmed’s study of affect and emotion (Ahmed 2004), for instance, is based on the concept of emotions circulating between bodies through texts.
Zašto lažu nam u lice (Why are they lying to our faces, 2013), for instance, is filmed as a one-take tour around a Croatian village, showing a young man reluctantly setting off to emigrate and the population of the village waving him farewell.

Škoro’s song is intended to criticise Croatian politicians for bringing about economic conditions that (according to a caption at the end of the video) forced 110,000 people to leave Croatia between 2001 and 2012; its lyrics and video both illustrate this point by dramatising this abstract statistic about the nation in the form of its effects on a particular zavičaj. In fact, however, the video was made at the ‘eco-etno village’ of Stara Kapela in Posavina, with a cast of well-known Croatian actors playing the villagers. The ‘eco-etno village’ concept, Ivan Čolović (2006: 271) suggests, represents an ‘amalgam of soil and culture’ which marks cultural sites as ‘the heritage of one ethnic community’ while also serving as a form of ‘touristic marketing’. Although Stara Kapela is not Škoro’s creation in the same sense that Mokra Gora/Drvengrad (and the more recent ‘Andrićgrad’) were created by the film director Emir Kusturica (see Čolović 2006: 273–4), Škoro’s choice of it as a film set still draws the site temporarily into a particular body of authorial work which has aimed to connect nationhood, ethnicity and territory through emotional discourses invoking the zavičaj (see Baker 2009).

Rather than post-Yugoslav nationalisms having unmade the zavičaj completely, then, one might say that the nation depends on the zavičaj as what is most likely to produce an affective sense of belonging among nationals. Scholars are asked, in one exposition of non-representational theory, to think about a ‘politics of ordinary moments’ (Thrift 2008: 20) rather than the deconstruction of language. Yet even these ordinary moments have the nation in them: certain forms of movement, certain forms of sound, are promoted by nationalist movements, and are at their most successful precisely when they have settled into the everyday, becoming part of public common sense (Fox and Miller-Idriss 2008). These
embodied and more abstract levels of collective identity, related to political entities, gain coherence from the meanings of the zavičaj insofar as they are able to appropriate them. Yet this project is always at risk of emptying the imaginary zavičaj of content and undermining its own capacity to evoke emotion through remembering.

This paper discusses similarities of language and discourse across spaces and historical times which are partial and which are not predetermined. For a Croatian song in 2013 to construct the zavičaj in the same way as discourses from the early 1990s, for instance, does not suggest that this mode of representation must necessarily follow; rather, it shows that a lyricist and musician has elected to represent space and collectivity in a particular way. Similarly, while several shared strategies of shaping emotional discourses can be observed both in Croatian and Bosnian contexts, the specifics of multi-ethnicity in Bosnia create patterns of their own. Moreover, networks of musical production that intersect with some or all of Bosnia-Herzegovina’s territorial space are transnational within the ex-Yugoslav region, translocal in relation to Bosnian communities abroad, based around a particular city and/or stimulated by the media of a particular entity, yet there is remarkably little that can be identified as the distinct space of ‘Bosnian’ popular music except in the activism of rappers who argue for a multi-ethnic Bosnia or in the music programming of the state-level broadcaster BHRT.

In terms of collectivities, the predominance of research into music in post-Yugoslav space has defined its terms with reference to the national and the post-Yugoslav, layers of abstraction that are greater than the zavičajni. This may be so however much we have critiqued the national frame of reference in our research findings. There are exceptions, such as the work of Carol Silverman (2012) on Romani musicians, whose practices mean that her research (like Halilovich’s) is forced to be trans-local, and thus to be more difficult, longer-
lasting and more expensive; projects of this nature require a greater degree of planning, funding, and employment stability than is always possible in the academy today.27

It would be hard to deny that researching music and memory politics in post-Yugoslav space should be grounded in an appreciation of experience and embodiment, which would allow (but would not force) ideas such as affect to be discussed. What implications does this have for the levels of analysis around which popular music research is designed? The argument could be made that resisting the primacy of the national level of analysis – or even the Yugoslav level of analysis, to the extent that Yugoslavs were addressed as co-nationals during the time of the Yugoslav state – allows a greater focus on the ‘how’ and ‘where’ of the lives of people who feel belonging to any part of this territory. Yet the deliberate embedding of the nation in the zavičaj, a process that originated with the mobilisation activities of nationalist movements in the 19th and early 20th centuries and continues today, means that they cannot be separated. It is not just through sound in itself, but also through the sonic expression of language, that this becomes apparent.

27 If in conceiving of the objects of research we are still drawn to the national, this may account for the relative lack of research on music in Bosnia-Herzegovina, which appears harder to conceive of as a research object in the sense of deciding what should be included or excluded within it. Musicians from Bosnia-Herzegovina are sometimes discussed in research on other successor states, and indeed may themselves be integrated into a music business centred in one of those other states (to say nothing of those who have settled permanently outside ex-Yugoslav territories), such as Lepa Brena (born in Brčko), Indira Radić (born in Doboj) or Mate Bulić (born in Čitluk). Some of these, such as Bulić, are part of systems that circulate the ethnonational symbols of a kin state: does and should the idea of ‘Bosnian’ popular music incorporate them?
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