

BROADCASTING ETHNONATIONAL EXCLUSION AND INCLUSION: TWO MUSICIANS IN TWO CROATIAS

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Marko Perković Thompson and Franci Blasković are two well-known and very different Croatian musicians who could not be more different from one another. I am using their pop personalities to tell tales of two very different parts of Croatian social and political life as mass-mediated by producers of radio programming.

I have been researching electronic media in Croatia since 1999, mapping out the nation-state as a mediascape and how that mediascape makes up a part of world media. My methods have been ethnographic and, as much as possible, I have been trying to consider the perspective of the people actually producing these media. To tell this tale of two musicians, I am using ethnographic research carried out in the small Croatian cities of Knin and Pula, each a regional center of their regions, the Kninska Krajina, where Thompson is from, and the Istrian peninsula, home of Blasković.

This article began as an aside: as is so often true when writing in the field, I was finding recurring scrawls literally and figuratively in the margins of my notes, scrawls that eventually seemed to work their way towards the center of my page. That is, this is side-information that initially seems like superfluous data, no more than a peripheral wink and only recorded for the sake of an allegiance to an idea of immersion and thick description that I read of as an undergraduate. However, these “ethnographic particulars” (Abu-Lughod 1992), these details, find their way out of the footnotes and into the main body of the text, these ethnographic details becoming my foci—which, speaking of winks, was what Geertz (1973) was getting at in delving into ethnographic details and “thick description.”

In this case, these particulars are the stories of these two very different musicians, stories that interrelate with the media producers with whom I have worked, particulars that I can unpack to give a deeper meaning to two regions of Croatia and the people who “produce locality” via mass media. As Barry Dornfeld (1998) has emphasized in his ethnographic work concerning documentary filmmakers for an American public television series, if we are going to look at media *producers*, we also have to take the time to see these producers as *consumers* of media as well. While this may seem simple enough, many studies of media production have seemed to overlook the idea that those producers, those “gatekeepers,” “agenda-setters,” and “framers” of news and media products are people who con-

sume media, in fact, they may even be *fans*. And, as fans, their choices can sway a listening public towards liking or disliking a certain entertainment or in an ideological direction, simply by creating or limiting the availability of certain sounds or ideas in a given listening area

Krajina “Borderzone”

Studying journalistic practices in a relatively new and post-war nation-state, I have necessarily delved into on-going suppositions and re-imaginings of what it means to be a Croatian national and statist entity. Throughout Croatia, these ideas have varied: in the capital, Zagreb, for example, state power is centralized and the Croatian state-as-nationality is something now seen as almost as a *fait accompli*. Other areas, however, are much more “borderzone.”

Istria’s Pula and the Krajina’s Knin are good examples of this, but in different ways. On the one hand, the Kninska Krajina is a place where ethnicity is still an important question and a reason for possible discrimination and even violence based on ethnic prejudices between Serbs and Croats. As an area that was once primarily populated by Serbs, yet designated as Croatian territory during Yugoslavia, it has been politically and militarily contested on-going. Today Croats demonstrate a need to shore up their Croatian sovereignty, especially in the face of an again increasing Serb population. The Istrian peninsula was also a place of ethnic passions, but the most volatile of these are well in the past, dating to the years following the Second World War when Tito’s Yugoslavia and successive Italian governments were vying for this area, part of what historically known as the Julian March, or in Croatian, “Julijska krajina,” in empires past. Today very many people of the region are stressing neither an exclusively Italian or Croatian identity, but instead asserting their own identity “Istrian.”

Thus, both Knin and Pula are regional capitals of “krajina” regions, or “borderzones.” These places provide the backdrop for the stories of the two musicians upon whom this paper focuses.

Thompson and Knin

When I was first conducting ethnographic fieldwork at radio and television stations in 2000, I don’t remember

hearing about either Marko Perković Thompson or Franci Blasković. Both singers had their followings, Thompson's was nationwide and Blasković's, more locally to Istria. They were not on my radar screen however, because my singular visit to Pula was brief and not focused on finding the particulars—it was more like a surveyor's junket for finding a few patterns and points of comparison with other places in the country where I had spent time. And my time in Knin was limited to typical hasty stopovers between the coast and Zagreb—I had heard people sometimes complain that any time in that backwater town was too much time. One friend rather uncharitably told me that those people in the Kninska Krajina were “crazy wolf fuckers”; another referred to the area as the Croatia's “Wild East” because they were still burdened with their ethnic hatreds and “without culture, so far from Europe.”

In the summer of 2002, however, on my way from the beautiful Dalmatian coast back to the greater urbanity of Zagreb, curiosity got the best of me and I decided to visit Radio Knin, the largest radio station in this sparsely populated and relatively media-scarce region. Radio Knin is a part of the state's Croatian Radio and Television (*Hrvatski radio i televizija*, HRT) and I had first heard of the station spoken about with disparaging tones from people at other HRT radio stations (most notably at a station claiming to operate in the black). Some HRT journalists were telling me that Radio Knin had been an ideological gambit of the former President Franjo Tuđman and a waste of time and a drain on the HRT resources.

A Radio Knin had existed in the town since the late 1950s with mostly Serb-speakers on air and it had persisted as a wholly Serb station during the 1991–1995 Serb rebellion from Croatia which was, in 1991, trying to break free of Serb-dominated Yugoslav control. When Croatian forces took back the Kninska Krajina region on 6 August 1995, one of the first things the government did was re-establish Radio Knin, but this time under the name *Hrvatski Radio Knin*—Croatian Radio Knin, within the HRT system. By the evening of the 7th of August, a few technicians and journalists from the nearest HRT stations on the coast, Split and Zadar, had a broadcast system up and running, limited to few hours of local programming and then carrying HRT's Zagreb-based or Split-based signal otherwise.

Today Radio Knin broadcasts seventeen or eighteen hours a day and it remains decidedly *Hrvatski*. This was apparent to me in my first five minutes at the station in 2002 as I waited for some of the journalists to figure out what to do with this American anthropologist who had called saying he wanted to visit the station. *On je antropolog? No, sto je od ovog o folkloru?* I sat on a couch in the newsroom/main office and realized I was seeing some of the Croatian state symbols that I had come to expect

on the walls of an HRT office, but this was mixed with much more Catholic iconography than usual—a crucifix, the Blessed Virgin, pictures of the Pope, and so on. I also noticed at that time that the largest poster on the wall was promoting an upcoming concert for the singer Thompson at the stadium in Split, but I did not think much more about it beyond scribbling something in my fieldnotes as I killed that inevitably awkward first five minutes in a new fieldsite.

In winter 2003 I had returned, having decided to settle in Knin for a few months in order to learn more about mass media in this back-of-beyond borderzone area with what would turn out to be the less-than-overwhelming consent of the Radio Knin staffers. During that awkward sitting around in the office hoping to revive the brief rapport I had established the summer before—OK, *vratio se, no zasto? I dokad?*—I again was looking at the wall hangings. In trying to make innocuous, yet inquisitive conversation about this pop culture figure about whom I had just read something in the news, I asked a journalist about the Thompson poster, which was still the largest thing on the wall. I was quickly told that, “Nije to nista, samo nesto glupo. It's nothing, something stupid.” He said he didn't know why someone would have put that up.

Come to find out that Thompson has been somewhat popular for the past decade, but for the past few years he has been one of the biggest drawing musical acts in Croatia. Around Knin, many Croats see him as a local hero, having been born in Čavoglava in the Krajina region. Marko Perković-Thompson had been a soldier early in the Homeland War and then had gained a strong following as a rock singer dressed in his army uniform with gun in hand and known for his fiercely patriotic/nationalistic and quasi-religious songs. In just the past two or three years, however, his celebrity has surged to new heights. His CD from 2002, *E Moj Naroda*, “O My People,” displays him wearing his trademark cross of St. Benedict in front of a sort of St. Elmo's kind of glowing scene that at once evokes a kind of earthly primordialism and a halo-like look of Catholic iconography. *E Moj Naroda*, which could also be translated as “O My Nation,” has been one of the biggest best sellers in Croatia in recent years.

A Radio Knin journalist who began relating the Thompson story for me told that the very person saying that Thompson was stupid might have been the one who had put the poster up in the first place. I quickly found out that Thompson's name is loaded with value judgments and my “innocuous question” was far from it. It seems, in the town of Knin, which had been the Serb capital during the 1991–1995 Serb Krajina Republic, besides ethnonational population shifts (Serbs fled en masse, Croats came in), two new other distinct social groups came to town following the Croatian re-taking. On the one hand,

a strong Croatian military presence was now garrisoned in this contested town. With this part of the population, soldiers and their families, Thompson was “one of theirs” as a former soldier and singer of pro-Croat and right-wing lyrics. On the other hand, a large international aide organization presence arose in order to assist displaced people, work on de-mining projects and help rebuild the war-damaged area. Amongst this community, if they had heard of Thompson (some people would not have, because they knew little about the people they were serving), they would know Thompson as “that nationalist singer” and scowl at his popularity. I therefore came to realize that my asking about Thompson was serving as my inadvertent and clumsy cultural litmus test. I, as that test’s administrator and so clearly a foreigner and thus associated with the international aide community, was predisposing a negative answer with regards to Thompson. Radio Knin journalists knew how the international aide community members often saw the world in black-and-white and realized that anyone praising Thompson would be looked down upon.

While I was trying to look at the Thompson phenomenon with nuances and not just with kneejerks, I can see Thompson’s dubious nationalist reputation as at least somewhat deserved. Thompson’s first hit, released during the war was “Bojna Čavoglave” (“The Berets of Čavoglava”). The song praised his comrades-in-arms defending Croatia from the Serbs; it opened with the slogan of these Croat volunteers, “Za Dom spremni” (“For the homeland, ready”). Ustaše fascists used the phrase as a salute during the Second World War when Croatia was nominally independent, but was actually a Nazi puppet state. For this reason, while some consider the slogan a simple patriotic phrase, others consider it, especially when coupled with a fascist salute, the Croatian equivalent of the Nazi’s “Sieg Heil.”

A decade on, Thompson’s fans attend his increasingly popular concerts sometimes wearing a mixture of Catholic, Ustaše and Nazi symbols. Indeed in the winter of 2003, when I was just arriving to start fieldwork, the Croatian handball team had won the world championship and a celebration was to be held in Zagreb’s Jelačić Square. The championship team members apparently requested that Thompson play at this celebration concert and, true to form, Thompson began his performance with “Za dom spremni,” prompting many fans to respond with fascist salutes.

Another controversy occurred in September 2002 surrounding the Split concert promoted in Radio Knin’s poster. Slavko Lozina, a District Court judge in Split who was presiding over the case of eight alleged war criminals who had served as prison guards in a Croatian military prison, attended that concert that evening and made no effort to hide his enthusiasm for Thompson’s nationalistic message.

The trial was in progress at that time, causing many to speculate about that judge’s partiality to Croatian soldiery. Indeed, the trial ended in acquittals two months later.

Despite my attempts to subtly find out who put up the poster and who likes Thompson at Radio Knin, I have never directly found out. The more nationalistic Radio Knin people knew full well that the NGO people, if they had heard of Thompson, were usually dismissive of, or disgusted with, Thompson and his ilk. I believe that, because I seemed to be at least initially categorized with Western international aide workers, everyone at Radio Knin told me, when I asked, that Thompson’s songs were simplistic and that somebody else must have put up that poster, that they had not. One person’s brother had gone to that concert in Split, but he claimed that this brother had gone more out of curiosity, “not as a fan, but to see the event and see what the people would look like.” He was “shit” I was told and “wouldn’t be around in two years, because he has no talent.” Radio Knin was playing his music because “people like him, so we have to play him.” After asking everyone in the small radio station about him, I had effectively “saturated” my fieldsite—everyone knew I was interested in Thompson, so now I, indeed, did seem like one of those international aide workers disapproving of Thompson by my too-frequent questions, so I stopped asking.

Of course, as an ethnographer, I was learning by observation, not just questions. And I very obviously heard Thompson frequently during my time listening to, and in the studios of, Radio Knin. Music programming at the station was the work of music editors who had about 2,500 CDs at their disposal. Not having songs as files on the computer, they had to manually carry stacks of CDs and printed-out playlists from the music room to the soundboard every day. One of the music editors had been “ethnically cleansed” from her hometown in Serb-controlled Western Bosnia and was clearly partial to Thompson’s strong Croatia message. Another music editor, who was low in station hierarchy and the one person at the station married to a Serb, played the music resignedly, saying that that was what people want to hear.

Journalists doing magazine-like issues programming often directly and indirectly selected music. Sometimes this would be done simply by telling the tech at the board what they wanted to hear. A music editor also told me, however, that she would choose music according to who was on-air. Therefore, one journalist/announcer often had certain favorite songs by John Lennon (i.e., the borderless idealism of “Imagine”), followed by Thompson’s none-too-subtle irredentist lyrics. [1]

Also, when time had to be filled or one of the music editors did not have music prepared, technicians running the soundboard would very often choose discs or would grab

from whatever was at hand. Needless to say, Thompson's CDs, particularly the then-current *E Moj Naroda*, were often within arm's reach.

Beyond the regular airplay Thompson's songs had as part of Radio Knin's pop music programming, the strains of one immediately recognizable song could be heard every hour or two because of an advertisement for a store in nearby Strmica just across the Bosnia-Herzegovina border. The shop owner was a Croat who saw Strmica as an extension of Croatian territory more than as Bosnia-Herzegovinan and he had asked for Thompson's ideologically loaded "Iza devet sela" to be the beginning and the background music in the radio spot. Thus the words, "Daleko, daleko, iza devet sela..." ("Far, far, from nine villages..."), [2] metonymically signaled that the lyrics that would follow, in the background of the Radio Knin advertisement, would be metaphors warning of the dangers of communism and calling for the strength of Croatia.

Effectively, the song signaled to Croats, particularly Bosnian Croats, that the owner was Catholic and Croat and deserving of their support. Any Serbs knew, if they had not known already, that this was a claim to Croatian territory, a broadcast marking of Knin, the Kninska Krajina and even parts of Herecegovina as Croatian. [3]

Pula and Thompson

By contrast, on Istria, Thompson had much more difficulty finding airtime. He performed a concert in the coastal city of Pula in 2002, but I was told this with a measure of disgust very early on in my fieldwork in the city, the place where I relocated to in late spring 2003 after my time in Knin. Istria provided a very different kind of "borderzone" for my research that sometimes felt like it was on the other side of the world from Knin.

Far from being a "sore spot" like Knin, Pula is considered a desirable place to be. Telling friends in Zagreb that I would be on Istria prompted some to write down the name of a favorite restaurant or "a village that you just have to see!" Istria is the peninsula jutting into the upper Adriatic that makes up the northwest corner of Croatia. The region's north is bordered by Slovenia and just beyond Slovenia's narrow corridor to the sea lies the Italian city of Trieste. The entire peninsula is thus much closer to Trieste than it is the Croatian capital of Zagreb. Istrian culture today reflects this proximity to Italy and its strategic place by the sea. Peripheral to the central economic and political power of Zagreb and with borders that have changed five times in just the last century, Istria is another *krajina* or "borderzone," part of what was known as the Julian March or "Julijska krajina." As a region celebrating its diversity and border status, Istria seemed to be an antidote for the "Kninska krajina," a place where Croatian identity was not

treated exclusive of all other identities. Instead, I saw the scars of the Second World War's battles between Italian fascists and Yugoslav partisans as having healed in a positive way, albeit within a Yugoslav, then Croatian statist framework. [4] On Istria people actually were willing to claim a regional and non-statist Istrian identity that was built on a hybrid identity, incorporating Italian and even some German background into its distinctiveness as a region.

Pula is the undisputed economic and cultural center of Istria. Known as Pola in Italian, it is a bilingual and multicultural city, according to its signposts and most of its residents. Fieldwork at Pula's two radio stations, the state-run Radio Pula and the private Radio Maestral, led me to see the city as espousing an idea of "unity in diversity." Both radio stations have Italian departments producing news and programming in Italian. And at Radio Maestral, many of the DJs and journalists made it a point to tell me how they had been playing Serb music since the station's founding in 1996, playing Belgrade bands that had been opposed to the war.

For this reason I was actually somewhat surprised to hear that Thompson had performed in Pula. His concert was held on the edge of the city on the grounds of a bus company whose owner was described to me as "a big Herzegovinan gangster type" who liked Thompson. Dana, a director at Radio Maestral, Pula's leading independent station (that is, privately financed, not receiving government/public funding) told me that Thompson's manager wanted to advertise with Maestral but they had refused to take their money, asking the manager if he had any idea what kind of station Maestral was. "We couldn't do a Thompson spot because we'd have a backlash from our listeners," she said. Over 3,000 people attended the Thompson concert anyway. She said that she realized that there were enough refugees from the war regions and Serb-occupied Bosnia still living on Istria and they would be into what she referred to as "that garbage." Another Radio Maestral DJ told me with an ironic smile that "tolerant" Istrians had difficulty tolerating "intolerant" Bosnian Croats.

Franci Blašković

Much more to Dana's taste was an Istrian musician, Franci Blašković, who was described to me "as our Frank Zappa." Franci was an Istrian institution, fronting his band *Gori uši winnetou* ("Hello, Winnetou") and various jam sessions for over two decades, putting out albums like *Istra ti materina* ("Motherfuckin' Istria") and *Ich Bin, Du Bist, Und Amen* ("I Am, You Are, and Amen"). His most recent album, *Etnocid* ("Ethnocide") was released with only 333 copies for no other reason, apparently, than because that seemed like a good number. Franci has played almost exclusively

on Istria over the past two decades, only playing art-music festivals in Slovenia, Budapest, and Western Europe occasionally. For a long time, he had refused to play any concert “preko Učka,” that is, off the Istrian peninsula in Croatia over the Učka Mountains that mark the geographic and symbolic border between Istria and the rest of Croatia. His sixteen-year ban, I have been told, occurred because he was happier in Istria and had a dislike for the “crazy Hrvati.” He finally played the Zagreb club Mocvara in late 2002. [5]

At the two Pula radio stations where I conducted my fieldwork in 2003, the above-mentioned independent Radio Maestral and the state system’s HRT Radio Pula, most journalists and technicians refer to him as Franci. He is their local fixture, a part of what they claim to be proud of in what makes Pula, Pula.

Accepting a last minute invitation, I attended Franci’s come-one, come-all 2003 Easter morning concert in Kanfanar, a quaint interior Istria village, along with an HRT Radio Pula journalist and her boyfriend. An Easter morning rock concert? I reckoned “why not?” In a place where I had only been living for two weeks I would not be able to do any useful ethnographic fieldwork very easily on such an important family-oriented and rather somber day of religious observance, would I?

As it turned out, Easter was a watershed for my research in Pula. Sitting on a wall in the village square, sometimes dancing, and one time running to the pub across the street to bring back a round, I saw more than a dozen people from or at least associated with both Radio Maestral and from Radio Pula. I came to know them on a social basis, seeing who knows who and who can dance and who cannot (but tries anyway). The concert also helped establish me as someone more than that odd *antropolog* who had been hanging around the newsroom and as more of a social being.

Set deliberately on Easter, Franci’s annual performance has become an irreverent tradition “in place of Mass” because of what he considers an increasing Croatian Catholicization and with it, increasing hypocrisy. Rocking in a courtyard off the village square and with young and old dancing and singing, the highlight of the concert is always the song “Addio Pola,” “Goodbye Pula,” sung in an Italian-Croatian-German mix, or what is also described as “Istrian.” More than one radio person described the song, a ballad about an Italian prostitute, as “our anthem,” because the song evokes a sense of place for Radio Maestral and Radio Pula journalists because Franci sings “our language.”

Franci’s wife, Arinka Šegando-Blašković, and poet Danijel Načinović wrote the lyrics to “Addio Pola.” I met Načinović, an Istrian poet well-known in Pula cultural circles, at a press conference for the promotion of a particularly Istrian book, Mate Belota’s *Tijesma Zemlja*, from

the late 1930s. The book was being introduced to grade school curriculum across Croatia as representing Istrian within a Ministry of Education initiative to have various regional cultures being read by all Croatian schoolchildren. [6] While talking about Istrian cultural issues, Načinović seemed to speak politically, once for example discussing how, within the context of globalization when Croatia “entered Europe,” Istria needed to be doing so “with a strong regional identity.”

Arinka Šegando-Blašković is a musician in her own right having led a cabaret-type band, *Tingl-Tangl*, in the 1980s for which Franci Blašković was initially the bass player. With Arinka, Franci has done a weekly radio program off and on for more than a decade, “Šjora Špija” (“Mrs. Spy” in Italian [“Šjora”] and Croatian [“Špija”] slang). Arinka takes on various gossipy persona in various dialects that can be heard around and about Istria, beginning commentary on weekly events with the words, “som čula...,” “I heard...” and the couple improvises parodies of anyone or anything in the news.

Most recently Franci and Arinka were making radio spots to promote ecological awareness on the Istrian peninsula, where “Šjora Spija” would take on the persona various tourists who come to the region. During a conversation one day, various Radio Maestral people could not stop laughing as they tried to imitate a “Šjora Spija” take on a Serb tourist, saying “Kad čes bre doči na more...” As Franci also has been famous for his facetiously blasting of touristic development on Istria, the irony was particularly acute. It was explained to me that while the piece was having fun at the expense of Serb speakers, it was with good humor and that they would never have recorded it to be malicious.

“Šjora Spija” began at Radio Pula during the war in the early 1990s, but the free reins of their improvisation were too much for the rather autocratic regime of Franjo Tuđman. With Tuđman’s party in control of HRT, “Šjora Špija” was forced off the air. Franci and Arinka therefore went to Radio Maestral, which was just starting out in 1996, helping the new independent station gain an immediate and popular local identity for being counter to Tuđmanist ideology. [7] Later a disagreement with the then-director of Radio Maestral, a person known for his prickly personality, led to “Šjora Špija” leaving Maestral.

With the end of the Tuđman’s regime in Croatia’s 2000 elections, the HRT Radio Pula management that had opposed Franci and Arinka also ended. A newly appointed director, veteran journalist and accomplished poet, Budimir Žižović brought “Šjora Spija” back. This was fitting; it was a way of showing the change in Radio Pula as it moved away from the nationalist politics of the Tuđman-manipulated HRT. Besides, Žižović himself had penned a few songs for Franci over the years.

Broadcasting Place

Both Radio Knin and the radio stations in Pula, Maestral and HRT Pula, broadcast “soundscapes” for their communities and in doing so, they direct their listeners or “frame” their lives. Radio Knin looks to a strong Croatia as Knin’s future, to Zagreb as its benefactor in its slow postwar recovery and with Thompson, the station takes on an integral Croatian cause, calling for and representing a powerful Croatia that still feels weakened by occupation and does not fully trust the West for its lack of support during the war. He sells and is sold by a virulent Croatian and Catholic identity, [8] particularly to people who feel displaced and are embracing a national identity that reaches into Bosnia-Herzegovina and places once inhabited by (then occupied by) a predominantly Serb population. Thompson stands up for the Croat angered by Serb aggression and the left-wing politics that once were and have come back—thus Thompson is a Radio Knin favorite.

Franci, on the other hand, is a longer established regional favorite who has stood for Istrian identity and in doing so he has stood up against the right-wing government of the Tudman years. Franci’s work embodies a meshed identity that accepts Croatian and Italian (and even some German and English) together, mixing the words of whatever languages seem fit in his lyrics and, fittingly, Radio Maestral and Radio Pula have shared in, and even competed for, Franci’s humor and music. While utterly rejecting Croatian nationalist politics, he has, in his own way, been a political figure standing for Istria in defiance of Zagreb’s centralism and Croatian integral nationalism. [9] In contributing to an Istrian identity, Franci provides his fans working in Pula radio with material for broadcast and with a symbol for a cosmopolitan and European identity, a West towards which they are gravitating ideologically while remain firmly rooted in their Istrian place.

While it would be wrong to characterize everyone in the Kninska Krajina as Thompson fans and everyone on Istria as Franci devotees, their respective relationships to their home communities are telling because they represent and thereby serve to reproduce and reinforce regional identities and ideologies. Both are *krajina*, “borderzone” regions, politically and culturally, where ethnonational identity plays a significant role in local politics and civic life, yet they are in marked contrast to each other—Knin looks to be *exclusively* Croatian, while Istria looks to be *inclusively* Istrian. Local media personalities in these places are fans of music and personalities. They make choices based on their personal likes and dislikes and use these popular figures to signal their beliefs and values in their broadcasts. Radio Knin marks Croatian-ness in its broadcast range with Thompson hooks, while the Pula radio stations signal

their multi-ethnic inclusive Istrian ideal with Franci’s songs and broadcasts, and in looking at these singers and these singers’ fans as media producers we see the range of the Croatian ideological field.

ENDNOTES

1 Sitting in the studio one day, I saw how a journalist’s musical taste could sometimes hold sway over others at Radio Knin. A younger music editor doing his afternoon show, had put on a chart-climber from a newly-arrived “Euro Hits” compilation, the song “Beware of the Boys,” a techno/Banghra song by DJ Punjabi, an ethnic Indian from the British Midlands. The clearly “Eastern” flavor of the song prompted a senior journalist to come storming in, effectively asking, “what the hell is this?” He was clearly hearing it as sounding akin to Bosnian Muslim folk and he let it be known that he thought Radio Knin listeners would not like it.

2 The melody at the beginning of “Iza devet sela” is a copy of Abba’s 1970s hit, “SuperTrouper.” On the album Thompson notes that the song was “inspired by Abba.” Radio workers who told me that “Thompson was shit” used this as part of their evidence, but I heard this most vehemently argued by people not in Knin, but elsewhere.

3 Elsewhere (Wallace 2003), I have referred to this broadcast marking as an ethnonational “aural flag.” That is, “planting” a radio station is a political act demonstrating sovereignty (or in other cases, resistance) and facilitating communication for a community, while also serving symbolically as an assertion of territory, creating a “soundscape” that claims a landscape to all within in listening range (cf., Feld 1990, 1996; Tacchi 2002).

4 Much of the Croatian coast, from Istria to Kvarner to Dalmatia, was in Italian hands between the World Wars and almost wholly Italian controlled leading up to and the start of World War II. Notably, with the victory of Tito’s partisans, Yugoslav/Croatian postwar development occurred with far less input from the Italian population, many of whom had been sympathetic to Mussolini’s fascists or who were afraid of being seen as such by communists bent on revenge. In other words, Istria’s Italian population today is a fraction of what it once was and some Italians whose families who were displaced might find my characterization of Istria as affirmatively multi-cultural as decidedly reflecting a Croatian viewpoint—or just plain naïve. Through her ethnographic research, Pamela Ballinger (1996, 2003) shows the narrative constructions of collective identities that resulted from personal trauma generated through the exile of Istrian Italians. Ballinger’s work, based much more on the Italian exile perspective, is a marked contrast from my Croatian participant observation angle.

5 For this reason, Franci has not been known very well in other parts of Croatia. The reader will note that I have not included a “Franci and Knin” header for a section of this paper; Franci was not known to people I talked to in Knin. One person was pretty sure he knew the name from some compilation album, but when he searched for it amongst Radio Knin’s CDs, he realized that he must have been thinking of someone else.

6 By comparison, I do not know of any book proposed to represent the Kninska Krajina region, possibly due to the fact that Serbs have been the predominant people of the region.

7 Franci has taken stands in favor of free speech over the years. At some of his performances he has taken collections to fund the on-going libel defense of the famously irreverent a satirical Croatian weekly, *Feral Tribune*, a paper that throughout the 1990s held the strongest anti-Tuđman stance and still calls for the investigation of possible war crimes perpetrated by the Croatian Army. For example, *Feral Tribune* was the first paper questioning the behavior of the above-mentioned district court judge at the 2002 Thompson concert.

8 American pop culture watchers may find obvious parallels in Thompson to crass exploiters of American patriotism like country singer Toby Keith whose latest album, *Shock'n Y'All* played off the Bush administration’s attack on Iraq.

9 Istria is Croatia’s one region that has the regional party representation: the Istarski demokratski sabor/Dieta Democratica Istriana (Istrian Democratic Assembly) is the one political party with enough support in its region that it passes the threshold required to hold seats in parliament. While largely a symbolic gesture, Istrian politicians have on a number of occasions taken steps towards declaring independence from Croatia.

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