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Sterre Gilsing

BALKAN BEATS BERLIN

Anthropological research on the consequences of modernity

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In front of you lies my bachelor thesis, the product of four years of studying cultural anthropology at the University of Utrecht. During these years I have developed myself as an anthropologist, learning about other people and their ideas, and maybe even more learning about my own opinions and prejudices and accordingly refining my worldview. The choice of studying anthropology is one I never have regretted and I am grateful that I have the possibility of being schooled in such an interesting field of study and warm study environment.

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Sterre

Figure 1. Map of Berlin districts

Source: Berlin Barwick, districs and neigbourhoods.

Introduction

"I hate the music, I mean, if you would hear Dutch folk music, you also would not like it, would you?" - Sophia[1] [2]

In the last century, the world has changed immensely due to the numerous consequences of modernity. These consequences have been described and analyzed by numerous authors and are apparent in many aspects of life today (Appadurai 1996, Bauman 2004, Giddens 1990, Penna, O'Brien & Hay 1999). Increasing social reflexivity, globalization and detraditionalisation result in uncertainty, risk and a proliferation of lifestyle choices (Giddens 1990). Due to the conjunction of migration and mass media the world becomes ever more interconnected and worldwide social relations are intensifying (Appadurai 1996). These changes have enormous impact on processes of identification. Possibilities of identification have become numerous and this has made the study of the subject more complex (Bauman 2004). Migrants are interesting to look at when studying identity because they have hybrid identities, caused by their position in between the country of origin and the country of residence (Werbner 1997). They play a vital role in the increasing interconnectedness of the world.

This thesis deals with Balkan Beats music. It is placed in the debate about modernity and its consequences. Balkan Beats music is developed in Berlin in the context of modernity. In order to shed a light on the consequences of modernity I will discuss Balkan Beats and the way people, both migrants and non-migrants, relate to this type of music. I will do this by focussing on processes of identification in relation to Balkan Beats.

When I arrived in Berlin in February 2011, I had planned to look at the importance Balkan Beats music has in the processes of identity construction for Balkan migrants, during my three months during fieldwork. During my bachelor I had followed some courses on the topic of music, and I was looking forward to study this subject more in dept. My thesis was going to describe how music brings people

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[1] Sophia, 18.04.2011, Berlin
[2] In this thesis, I have feigned the names of my informants to secure their anonymity. Since I use sources from Rozita Dimova and Marko Valic I decided to use their real names and I choose to do the same with Robert Soko and Asmir (DJ Soko and DJ Datax) since they are known publicly and asked me to name them in my thesis.

together. It would show Balkan migrants who, through listening to Balkan Beats music and going to parties, could identify with the whole Balkan region, and could move away from identification with national identities. Balkan Beats would be the perfect example of the power of music. How very confused I was when I came to the very first Balkan party and I did not meet any people from the Balkans. When I did meet people from the Balkans, for example through playing basketball, my confusion almost turned into despair. Getting reactions accurately illustrated by the one from Sophia, quoted above, made clear that most people from the Balkans do not like Balkan Beats. Consequently, instead of finding out why Balkan migrants like Balkan Beats, I started to determine why they did *not* like it. Additionally, I had to discover who does like Balkan Beats music. Accordingly, my object of study moved from Balkan migrants to Balkan Beats.

The central issue of this thesis is how Balkan Beats music influences processes of identification in Berlin in the context of modernity. I have collected data[3] on a broad spectrum of ways of identification with Balkan Beats music. All the different meanings that are given to Balkan Beats are valuable illustrations of the way modernity has shaped, and still shapes, processes of identification. In modern times, the construction of identity can take place in numerous ways, which are dependent on the past, present and future of a person. However, this construction is not completely dependent on these factors or predetermined at all. Different motivations and desires can change the way in which identity is constructed. Consequently, identification processes are extremely subjective. The main argument of this thesis is that Balkan Beats is used in many distinctive ways by different people in the construction of identity. This shows us that not the subject of Balkan Beats, but who deals with it determines the way it is used. This subjectivity is characteristic of modernity.

Balkan Beats entered the mainstream area of music some years ago, survived its hype-years and has now a solid place in the music world. It found a niche in the Berlin nightlife. At times, there are interviews held with Balkan Beats DJ's in music magazines. Their ideas about it have become dominant when speaking about Balkan Beats music. However, it is not clear what Balkan migrants' and the German audience's opinion about the music is. Why do they like it, or not like it? On the theoretical level, this research also fills a gap. Although topics like migrant music, or

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[3] More information about my data collection and research methods can be found in Appendix 1.

ethnic music have been studied extensively, and also a lot of research has been done on music in daily life, no research has been done on where the two come together. What does migrant or ethnic music mean in daily life, for both migrants and non-migrants? What kind of influence does it have on their cultural identity? Knowledge of identity processes and the influence music has on these processes can shed a light on this issue. Furthermore this thesis is different from other studies since it combines a study of migrants with an analysis of what the migrants brought. In studies of migration, the focus is often on the people that migrated and how they cope with and adopt new situations they find in their new home. By studying Balkan Beats music, I lay emphasis on an influence and commodity that is brought by migrants and is adopted by the society they now live in. This provides a more inclusive view on consequences of migration and modernity.

Next I will start with providing a theoretical framework in which I will define the main concepts used in this thesis and where I will clarify the relation between these concepts. Then I will move to the context in which I performed my fieldwork, and after that I will turn to the data I found in the field and connect them to theories in the empirical chapters. After an overview of Balkan migrants in Berlin and how they shaped their lives and relate to their countries of origin, I will turn to the topic of Balkan Beats music. Then we will explore the different views that exist on Balkan Beats and examine the various ways people relate to the music. Last I will connect this all to processes of identification and mechanisms of disembedding and re-embedding that are a characteristic for liquid modernity. After all this I will come to my conclusion, which is followed by an outline of my methodological approach and reflection.

1. Theoretical framework of Modernity, Identity and Music.

The connection between music and identity will be clarified in the context of modernity in this theoretical framework. People interact through music and therefore music is a social action (Blacking 1995, Stokes 1994). In this social action of music, identity can be constructed and communicated. I will examine the relationship between migrant identities and music. In modern times, lifestyle choices are proliferating. Ways of identification have become numerous and consequently we have to live in increasing uncertainty (Giddens 1990). Migrants not only have multiple possibilities of identification but also have to deal with many different expectations and situations that influence their processes of identification (Bauman 2004). I address the issue of music because it is particularly relevant to the construction of identities considering its flexibility and capacity for heterophony. Furthermore, the collective nature of music makes it an accessible factor of cultural identity, meaning that many people can employ and connect it to their processes of identity construction (Blacking 1995).

1.1 Modernity

The era of modernity, or liquid modernity as Bauman (2004) calls it, has had an immense impact on the entire world and social life today. Giddens (Penna, O'Brien & Hay 1999: 6) names three interconnected processes, namely social reflexivity, globalization and detraditionalisation, that are changing social life. As a consequence of these processes, risk, uncertainty and proliferation of lifestyle choices are increasing. This can be explained as follows.

Firstly, self-reflexivity means acting, reflecting on actions, and incorporating this reflection into the action. Consequently, to be an agent means understanding oneself to be an agent (more on this will be said later when I speak about performance). Social reflexivity means making sense of substantial amounts of information that we are exposed to in society (Giddens 1999: 203). Social life is partly constituted by actors' knowledge of it. The reflexivity of modern social life suggests that social practices are constantly examined and reformed in the light of incoming information about those very actions, consequently, altering their character (Giddens 1990: 38). At the same time, many of us have the feeling of being trapped in a

universe of events we do not fully understand, and which seem in large part beyond our control (Giddens 1990: 2-3). Due to modern times and the rapidly multiplying influences, this feeling has grown and this creates uncertainty.

Secondly, due to globalisation, worldwide social relations have intensified. Migration and mass media have transformed in modern times and contribute to the world's interconnectedness (Appadurai 1996: 3-4). Local happenings are shaped by events occurring on the other side of the world, which does not mean that the world has become more homogenous, but rather that globalisation has resulted in growing heterogeneity. Hence, the situation results in numerous lifestyle choices, arriving from all parts of the world.

Thirdly, in the context of modernity, detraditionalisation has emerged. Tradition is linked to repetition and is most effective when it is not fully understood. As the information society is growing in modern times, traditions are rethought, pluralised and problematised. Traditions are now competing with other discourses and have lost their taken-for-granted status (Tucker 1998: 146-147). Tradition continues to play a role, however, it only receives its identity from the reflexivity of the modern subject (Giddens 1990: 38). This situation is leading to a greater sense of social and personal risk.

Disembedding and Re-embedding

As a consequence of these three processes, another process has evolved, namely the development of disembedding mechanisms. Prior to modernity, social relations where embedded in particular places and times, and rooted in localities. Disembedding refers to how social and cultural relations are lifted out of localities and are spread to different times and places (Bagguley 1999: 69). Due to the separation of place from space, places become thoroughly penetrated by and shaped in terms of social influences quite distant from them (Giddens 1990). As explained above, distant events and actions have a constant and constantly increasing effect on our lives (Giddens and Pierson 1998: 98-99). Disembedding mechanisms are numerous and growing due to this effect. After social relations have been disembedded, they become re-embedded, and are pushed back in a particular social situation. Relationships are reformed across time and space. Mechanisms become detached from their context and operate independently of the experts who created them (Bauman 1997).

These disembedding and re-embedding processes, the lifting out and pushing back, are also apparent in the social processes of Balkan Beats music, which is an example of these processes shaped by modernity as we will see in the following chapters.

Imagination

As a result of the change of migration and media in globalised times, we no longer experience "here" and "now" in the same way as before. Mass migration is not a new phenomenon, but in combination with the new, electronic, rapid flow of mass media images, the production of subjectivities has become instable (Appadurai 1996: 4). Not only the life of migrants is altered. Non-migrants are traveling around the world as well, or know people who are bringing stories and possibilities to other places while moving around.

According to Appadurai (1996), imagination has changed significantly in the modern world. First of all, imagination has become a part of ordinary, everyday life. Furthermore, imagination is no longer individual. The mass media create communities of sentiment, groups that begin 'to imagine and feel things together' (Appadurai 1996: 5-8). Imagination is important in the construction of group identities, as we will see later on. Consequently, this change of imagination in modern times has had important effects on processes of identification. More identification options have become available. These numerous possibilities have made life more complex and in some cases problematic.

1.2 Identity: Construction of identity and collective identity

Aristotle defined identity as one of the fundamental first principles of being (Larrain 2000: 24). After Aristotle a lot of other scholars have defined their ideas about identity. 1980s postmodernist theories, concerned with the study of identity, moved away from seeing identity as a static cultural fact and started to define it as a constantly changing construct, always in process and never completed. Given this insight, the use of the word identification is more applicable to these processes that are constantly at work. From this view the idea derived that individuals have the possibility to manage their own multi-layered identities (Driessen & Otto 2000: 15). The multi-layered nature of identity has only become more obvious in the current age

of modernity. Bauman (2004) calls this time 'liquid modernity'. As stated above, the increasing interdependence in the world is an immense transformation. It has affected all kinds of aspects of cultural life, including the relations between the self and the Other, and consequently, the process of identity construction. Possibilities of identification for individuals have become numerous and this has made the study of the process even more complex.

Individual and collective identities

A distinction is made between individual and collective identities. However, these identities are mutually necessary and interrelated. According to Larrain (2000: 30) we cannot talk about one without talking about the other. Culturally defined collective identities are shaping individual identities, but they cannot exist without individuals. A collective identity is a 'cultural artefact', in which imagination plays an important role (Anderson 1983). Since identity is not a given fact, it can be only created through imagination. Collective identities are not mutually exclusive and concur in individual identities, since an individual becomes involved in different social spheres and has different roles in these spheres. The identity changes with these spheres and in different situations different parts of identities are stressed. This explains the fragmented and fractured nature of identities. Talking about processes of identification emphasises the constantly changing nature of identity. In this thesis I will talk about music and identity, and in particular about cultural identity. There is inconsistency in the use of the concept of cultural identity and ethnic identity and no unanimity about how to operationalise cultural/ethnic identity (Góis 2010: 271). Ethnic identities are connected to ethnicity. The concept of ethnicity is highly debated and recent debates have even explored whether the concept is at all useful (Westin 2010). I will not discuss this debate here, because I choose to use the concept of cultural identity in my thesis[4]. Although music sometimes deals with ethnicity as well, as the term 'ethnic music' points out, it is better to speak about cultural identity when speaking about music and identity, because it is a more inclusive concept. This choice is also supported by my experiences in the field, where I found that Balkan migrants do not perceive Balkan Beats as a type of music belonging to their ethnicity.

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[4] For more information about the ethnicity debate I would recommend to read the chapter Identity and inter-ethnic relations by Charles Westin, in Westin, Bastos, Dahinden & Góis (eds.), 2010, *Identity processes and dynamics in multi-ethnic Europe,* Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press

Construction of identity

People in Berlin, like in other parts of the world which are all influenced by liquid modernity, have multiple possibilities and ways of identifying themselves with different groups, depending on different roles they have in social spheres. The construction of identity is strategic and positional (Hall 1997: 4). It is a dialectical process in which a person shifts between internalisation and externalisation of identity. Identity is part of the self 'by which we are known to others' (Altheide 2000: 2). However, although there is a lot of space for individual construction of identity, the cultural environment, on which individuals depend for meaningful interaction with others, has a big part in the process of identity construction (Driessen & Otto 2000: 20). As a result, identity is both achieved and ascribed, the public process in which identity is constructed involves the 'identity announcement' by the individual, and, on the other side, involves the 'identity placement' by others who endorse the claimed identity (Stone 1981: 188). By talking about Balkan migrants I take part in the process of identity placement. By examining the issue, I give importance to the subject of identity. Talking about identification simultaneously means constructing ideas about Balkan identity by communicating opinions.

Siebers (2000) characterisations of identity construction as handcuffs or a travel guide make the contradictions in the concept clear. Different identities can give people freedom and access to resources but they can also limit people in various ways. Particularly in the construction of group identities this becomes clear, since identification with certain group identities can strengthen a position and can be used as a power resource. A strong sense of group identity can help a group to use elements of their shared cultural capital to gain economic resources, and, in this way, secure their survival as a group (Driessen & Otto 2000). However, although group identities are not mutually exclusive, certain group identities can reduce the individual's freedom because of standards or mores that are considered important in the group.

Furthermore, differences are important when studying the construction of group identities. Since everything is interconnected in the globalising world, goods, people, meanings, information and symbols are flowing across the world without being stopped by borders. Consequently, differences are fading. However, identification implies disidentification. Differences are constructed to make disidentification possible. For this, the perception of differences is important. This perception is influenced in two ways: on the one hand differences within the group are

de-emphasized, while on the other hand differences with other groups are stressed (Driessen & Otto 2000: 21).

To conclude, in most cases identification is a complex process, which became even more complicated in the age of modernity. Imagination has changed due to the juxtaposition of mass media and migration (Appadurai 1996). Constructed differences are important in the process of identification. Identification is at times particularly problematic for migrants, since they have to make choices, or are pushed into positions in terms of identification on a more frequent basis then non-migrants, as we will see in the following part.

The construction of migrant identities
In the context of modernity identity has been perceived as 'a bunch of problems' (Bauman 2004: 12). The modern way of life changed most people's lives from living in a strongly connected 'real' community to imagined communities that are kept together solely by ideas and principles. Because of this people constantly have to make choices about identity. One's own decisions have become increasingly important in identity construction. These choices have to be defended against the ideas of others (Bauman: 2004). Especially migrants have to deal with issues to defend themselves frequently.

McChristiand (2000: 207), following Robert Cohen, advocates the use of the term 'diaspora identities' instead of the term 'migrant identities'. Being part of a diasporic community means recognizing a link with a past migration history. Consequently, diaspora is a more inclusive term since it not only defines migrants, but also their children, and grandchildren whose identity is strongly influenced by their parents' background. However, I decided to use the term migrants while speaking about migrants from the Balkan and their family in Berlin. I made this decision because the term diaspora implies a homogenous group which has strong connections to the country of origin. I have noticed that the time of departing the country of origin, or having lived in the country at all, does not determine the intensity of the connection felt with the country. Feelings of attachment are very different for different migrants, according to their experiences in the country of origin and the country of arrival and their dealing with these experiences. First, second or third generation migrants may be connected in their experiences of discrimination on the base of physical appearance, but their way of dealing with it and giving meaning to those experiences may be

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completely different. In order not to deny the differences in the lives of migrants I will use the term migrants referring to first, second and third generation migrants.

The migrant subject is posed between cultures and has to redefine its identity constantly. According to Appadurai (1996), migrants challenge boundaries of the local, regional and national. They are exposed to different identifications and are confronted with multiple possibilities of identification. A Balkan migrant who lives in Berlin can identify with the Balkan region, the nation where he or his parents came from or with Germany. In different situations he or she might choose differently. Furthermore, migrants also have to deal with the fact that their identity is constructed differently from all sides, the own choice of identity might not coincide with ideas from others. Migrants often have to deal with contesting ascribed identities, to a greater extent than people who do not have a connection to past migrant histories. Bauman (2004) states that this situation of being wholly or in part 'out of place' everywhere may be an upsetting experience. 'There is always something to explain, to apologize for, to hide or on the contrary to boldly display, to negotiate, to bid for and to bargain for; there are differences to be smoothed or glossed over, or to the contrary made more salient and legible' (Bauman 2004: 13).

1.3 Identity construction and performance in music

Given the complexity of identification with national identities for migrants, and the 'in-between' feeling that comes with this, other ways of identification to be able to feel part of and be accepted into a group have gained importance. Music can play and has played a role in this definition of new identities; it is an important factor of cultural identity, not only for migrants but also for others (Kaemmer: 1993). To be able to study the concept of music in relation to identity processes, it is needed to define it first.

What is music

Blacking (1995: 223) describes music as a modelling system of human thought and part of the infrastructure of human life. This means that music can help people to categorize, or model, the world and consequently plays a role in group identification processes. According to Blacking music making is a social action which can have important consequences for other kinds of social action. Because people come

together and interact trough music it can be called a social action, and during this social action other social processes are going on, like the construction of identity.

Music has two sides, on the one hand it is an observable product of intentional action but on the other hand it is also an embodiment of a basic mode of human thought by which any other kind of human action may be constituted (Blacking 1995: 224). This is a critical realization that lies at the heart of studying identity and music, because when processes of identification are at work through music, this can both happen in an intentional way, but also in a more unconscious, natural way. Furthermore, music can be seen as non-verbal communication which underlies but also transcends categories and social groups that are defined and sustained with words, which helps transcending national identities (Blacking 1995: 232). Merriam (1964), however, stresses that music cannot be seen as a universal language. Although musical languages have important characteristics in common, cross-cultural communication through music seems doubtful because music is perceived differently by different societies according to cultural defined ideas. He defines this as the problem of understanding. Music, the sounds, patterns of melody or harmony, or groups of instruments do not have unchangeable meaning in themselves. The meaning of certain music is assigned by a group: an instrument of joy in one case may be an instrument of sorrow in another. We can not simply assume that specific types of music have similar effects on people from different social groups (Blacking 1995: 41). Important in the problem of understanding is the desire to receive the presented material. This desire will be a lot higher for an academic studying music than for a person in a bar who is confronted with music that he or she has never heard before. However, if this desire is high enough, music may even be useful to understand other things about other groups. Identification processes at work in a musical setting are thus problematic, and cultural differences still have to be taken into account.

In short, music does not reflect underlying patterns or the essence of a culture. Rather it generates, manipulates and ironises meanings (Stokes 1994: 4). Music is often seen as a subordinate part of social life. Blacking (1995) advocates another way of looking at music, namely to see some aspects of social life, e.g. identity, as products of musical thought. In this way he gives music a bigger importance. Kaemmer (1993: 21) agrees by stating that music is not solely the by-product of technological, social or ideological forces, but related to all three of the sociocultural components. This is, according to him, best explained through an interactionist

approach and he agrees with Merriam's model (1964: 32-33) in which music is the product of behaviour of people (social, physical and verbal). In turn, this behaviour is underlain by conceptualization done by an individual to determine what kind of behaviour is desirable. Furthermore, the process of making concepts about music, by the individual through interaction with other people, is influenced by the musical experiences and the behaviour of these individuals (Kaemmer 1993: 24-25). This model is an inclusive reflection of the discourse on music in anthropology that is represented by all these scholars.
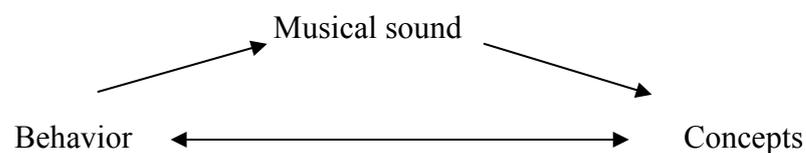
Figure 2. A model of musical process. (Kaemmer 1993: 25)

This is a useful model for the study of identification and music because it shows the close connection and interdependence of music and human thought and action.

Music and identification processes
Concluding from the above, music is a social action, through which non-verbal communication can take place and through which meanings can be generated, manipulated and ironised. In this research I deal with questions about how identity is communicated, manipulated, negotiated and transformed. Identification with certain music can be important for people to belong to a group since music symbolizes cultural boundaries. Music not only expresses boundaries, but also helps to create them. Music therefore is very important in this creation of group identities since the creation of difference is an important issue for group identities as we have seen above. Balkan Beats music creates a boundary between people who like the music and those who do not. It is used in both affirmative and unaffirmative ways by people to negotiate their identity.

Social identity is embodied in music and through music relationships can be made possible and be activated. Music brings people together, whether as musicians, dancers or audiences (Stokes 1994). Furthermore, listening to music and lyrics can

give the comfort of having the idea of not being the only one with certain experiences or emotions and thus create a feeling of connection (Hamarneh 2008: 382). Music can also be a way for a group to assert difference or disagreement in an appropriate way (Stokes 1994: 12). In this respect one can think of political, religious or social differences. Hamarneh (2008: 389) gives the example of youth culture that, with use of music, gives youth the possibility to differentiate from some and affiliate with others, and in this way dissociate themselves from the rest of society. Here we can see the construction of a group identity through the construction of boundaries, expressed by music.

Performance

Music thus has many functions and appears in numerous social situations. Performance is a useful concept in the study of social situations, and especially in the study of musical social relations whereas in musical situations experiences are not put into words and communication often takes place through the music, body and movements. All groups are potentially given voices through social performance (Wade 2009). Performance is a term used in anthropology to describe social processes. In these processes ideas and images are communicated through both verbal and non-verbal media (Turner 1986: 80-84). By emphasizing process the agency of subjects is made more visible. According to Beeman (1997) performance is one of the most basic ways to study human interaction. He thinks the most important part of performance is that 'it is the means--perhaps the principal means--through which people come to understand their world, reinforce their view of it and transform it on both small scale and large scale' (Beeman 1997). He states that the study of performance helps anthropology strengthen a view of culture in which individuals have an essential role. In performances of the self in everyday interactions and life we can see the construction of identity and processes of identification (Goffman 1959). Performance gives meaning to experiences (Kapchan 1995). Turner (1986: 81) explains performance in this way:

> "[…] man is a self-performing animal--his performances are, in a way, reflexive, in performing he reveals himself to himself. This can be in two ways: the actor may come to know himself better through acting or enactment; or one set of human beings may come to know themselves better through

observing and/or participating in performances generated and presented by another set of human beings" (Turner 1986: 81).

The concept of performance is of use in my study of identification processes of Balkan Beats listeners. By using this concept I will be able to interpret how Balkan Beats listeners see others and their own processes of identification, how the self is performed. I will be able to describe the social process of identification that happen both on a verbal and non-verbal level.

Performance, music and identity

Frith (1998) connects music to the concept of performance. He states that performance is at the heart of how we listen to music. Not just in listening to music we are listening to a performance, but the listening itself is a performance. He also links music and identity by defining music as a metaphor for identity (Frith 1996). According to him, music is a way of living ideas, not of expressing them. A person can experience the self through music.

We have seen that music making and listening are social actions. Through music identity can be communicated, boundaries can be created through which differences can be expressed and it can create a feeling of connection. But music is not just a means through which all of this happens, but it is a performance in itself, meaning all of this is embedded in music.

1.4 Diasporic groups, identification and music

Above, I have made clear the consequences of modernity for the process of identity construction. In modern times, people have become more mobile and more people have started to move across the world. These people who move from their homelands to a new place that they will call home have a transnational lifestyle, since they are rooted in one place but now live in another. The term presumes attachments of desire, allegiance and practicality to homelands elsewhere. It constitutes a narrative of a restless presence 'here' and really being 'there' (Soysal 2004: 64). The concept of hybridity has often proved very useful in this difficult situation, since it moves beyond the exclusionary, fixed and binary notions of identity (McChristiand 2000: 219).

Hybridity and music

As stated, migrant identities have to come to terms with the complex position between here and there. The term cultural hybridity is used here to define the position between cultures. In hybrid identities different objects, languages and signifying practices from various and normally separated domains are juxtaposed and fused (Werbner: 1997). Following Bakhtin, Werbner (1997: 4-5) distinguishes between unconscious, 'organic' hybridity and conscious, intentional hybridity to show the difference between more natural unnoticed changes and hybridization that is used to shock, change, challenge or disrupt through fusions. The distinction explains why both cultural change and resistance to change exist. According to Werbner (1997: 12) transnationals are cultural hybrids in the unconscious and organic way. They construct communities to shield themselves from racist rejections, but also to enjoy themselves.

Music has a privileged status in the study of hybridity because it has a 'capacity for simultaneity and heterophony, it has a collective nature and music has a capacity to go beyond the linguistic domain' (Stokes 2004: 59). Musical hybridity provides evidence of migrant cultural and political strategies in which people that are 'out of place' situate themselves in global flows and create new homes for themselves (Erlmann in Stokes: 2004). Music is one of these new homes, because, on the one hand, it can constitute a shared space, which is important in the construction of group identities (Soysal 2004: 64). On the other hand, music can construct boundaries that are needed in identity construction.

By connecting social processes of music to identification processes it is possible to gain insight to identification processes of the Balkan migrants in Berlin. Migrant groups are constantly constructing their identities in new ways, which is a complex process because migrants live in between cultures, in between 'here' and 'there'. Therefore, people who are connected to past migrant histories are constructing hybrid identities that are constantly challenged and changed. In the construction of identities boundaries are important, but migrants are challenging these boundaries since they are constantly crossing them. Music is especially valuable in studying these hybrid identities because it has a collective nature but still has the capacity for heterophony (Stokes 2004). Music is essential for people's sense of themselves, their own experience of identity since it is connected to feelings. On the other hand, music is also a means of communicating meanings and therefore is vital in communicating identity to others.

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Music and processes of identification in times of modernity

This theoretical framework deals with three interconnected social processes, namely modernity, processes of identification and music. Modernity has had irreversible consequences on processes of identification. Migration, juxtaposed with mass-media has made the world increasingly connected. Accordingly, possibilities of identification proliferated. Processes of identification deal with fluid a construction, which makes the study of identity complex. Music is a flexible and inclusive social action that is important for construction of identity, especially for migrants because their identification processes are often complex and problematic. Furthermore, music has a collective nature and therefore can express and create cultural boundaries. These boundaries are valuable for construction of identities.

Balkan Beats is connected to these social processes of modernity, identification and music. Firstly, it is a type of music, and through this people interact. Secondly Balkan Beats is shaped by modernity. And thirdly, Balkan Beats plays a valuable role in the construction of identity. This will all be illustrated and explained in the following chapters.

2. Context: Balkan Beats Berlin

In Berlin, the increasing interconnectedness of the modern world is clearly visible. After the fall of the Wall in 1989, the combination of migration with mass media, has changed the city increasingly. Nowadays the capital of Germany is known worldwide for its creativity and multiculturalism. Through the discursive, legal and organisational resources available in the city, diversity is facilitated and authorised (Soysal 2004). Liquid modernity is visible, taking the abundance of lifestyle choices into account.

Berliners often call their city poor and sexy. Everyone seems to be an artist, at least part-time. Many people come to Berlin because of the artistic possibilities. Consequently roughly fourteen percent of the city's residents is of a foreign nationality. Another twelve percent are non-ethnic German nationals (Open Society Foundations 2011). However, people have not only come to Berlin because of the artistic climate. In the seventies the capital became the home of growing numbers of guest workers, from Eastern and Southern Europe. This migration of guest workers and their families has been of significant importance in the emergence of the multicultural character that the city has today. Nowadays, these people live in neighbourhoods like Kreuzberg and Neukölln (Figure 1), where the percentage of people with a non-German nationality is around thirty-five, and this does not even take into account the non-ethnic German nationals (Monitoring Soziale Stadtentwicklung 2006). The migrants bring influences from other parts of the world with them and constitute transnational connections while keeping in contact with their families and friends in their country of origin. Developments in mass media, makes maintaining contact evermore facile. These transnational connections have an immense impact on the character of the city. The migrants live next to the artists who moved to these areas because they are cheap. This combination of influences from all over the world and artistic mindsets have as consequence that in these neighbourhoods many possibilities and a large space (literally, but also in the sense of open-mindedness) to create and develop new ideas, art and music are available. It is in this environment that Robert Soko started playing Yugoslav music at parties as a mix of irony and nostalgia under his stage name DJ Soko in 1993. Born and raised in Bosnia he came to Berlin in 1990 and began visiting the Arcanoa, a little club in

Kreuzberg. Here a kind of leftist scene of self acclaimed artists came together[5]. He saw that all sorts of people played music and decided one day that he could do that as well. By making use of the diverse musical climate, Soko mixed old and new Balkan music with modern western beats and Balkan Beats was born (Piranha music: no date). Robert combined his past with his present, creating a new lifestyle for himself. This development of a new music style demonstrates the possibilities and opportunities that have become numerous in this time of liquid modernity.

Defining the Balkans is a difficult task. It is a geopolitical and cultural region in southeastern Europe, which has come to be known as the Balkans since the nineteenth century (Todorova 2004: 14). The countries that used to form Yugoslavia are situated in the region, but also Greece and Bulgaria and sometimes Turkey, Romania and Albania are included in the region. This region is shaped by the legacy of the Ottoman Empire (Todorova 2004: 12). Over time, a lot of people from the Balkans have come to Berlin. A bit less than half of the 603.900 migrants living in Berlin, 246.700 people, are from the Balkan region (Amt für statistik Berlin-Brandenburg: 2009). Most of the migrants in Berlin live in the Mitte area, and in Neukölln (Figure 1) (Amt für statistik Berlin-Brandenburg: 2010).

For most German people, the Balkans is not a clear region. Often Poland or even Russia is included when talking about the Balkans, and sometimes it seems like Balkans is used as a synonym for Eastern Europe. These new meanings given to the word 'Balkan' by Germans reveal that the term has become disembedded and re-embedded in new ways. Balkan Beats contributes to this process. A festival[6] about the Balkans in Berlin, Balkan Black Box, used to take place every year. Due to financial reasons and lack of time of the organizers, the festival could not continue to exist. Lack of money is a problem that occurs often in Berlin. There are so many ideas that finding funds in this city on the edge of bankruptcy is difficult.

Money seems to become more of an issue in the last years, signaled by the development of the Media Spree. Media Spree is the name of investment plans, which the senate firmly believes Berlin needs to grow and develop. Known for the establishment of the German MTV headquarters, in 2004, it seeks to set up communications and media companies along parts of the Spree river bank. The plans come mainly from the 1990s, and have slowly been developed since then. The

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[5] Film Balkan Beats Berlin, Hering & Valić 2005
[6] Sophia, 19.03.2011, Berlin

initiators of the project see a great opportunity for East Berlin. However, many Berliners are against these plans. They argue that with the building of all these companies along the Spree Berlin will lose its special and creative character and Kreuzberg and Friedrichshain (Figure 1), the two districts on both sides of the Spree, will become victims of gentrification. The MegaSpree collective and an organization called 'Spreeufer für Alle!' try to change the tide with demonstrations. However, already many creative places and clubs are running out of possibilities to stay open, like Tacheles, a place where artists had their workshops and which was one of the most important symbols of Berlin's creativity. Balkan Beats seems to have developed as well is this capitalist way. Robert used to play the music just for fun, for his friends, in exchange for free drinks. Now, however, the music has spread all over the world and has become a commodity where a huge amount of money is involved.

With all this going on in Berlin it is clear that times are changing. For some, money is becoming more important. However, there are still so many fighting against the changes, and every day new ideas pop up to keep the city poor and sexy. Berlin still has the capacity to function as a playground, providing opportunities and possibilities. We will see what happens but in the future definitely more will happen,… after all "*It's Berlin!*"[7]

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[7]" It's Berlin!" is a quote often heard in Berlin, used by residents and people who live there for a shorter time, to express the possibilities, open-mindedness and not-caring about appearance attitude that is present in the city.

3. Berlin Calling: Global flows

My baby came down from Romania
She was the queen of Transylvania
But now we live in suburbia
without any friends buzzing you

Disko Partizani - Shantel[8]

As pointed out above, over time, people from the Balkans have had a great variety of reasons and motivations to come to Berlin. Though the years, people came to Berlin for political reasons, as war refugees, to work, to study or for adventure. However, migrating to study in another country often implies having an adventurous nature, and going to Berlin for adventure entails finding a job there as well. I have mostly talked to people who had one of the last three reasons, work, study and adventure, as the main motive to come to Germany. These people are well-educated cosmopolitans, who see themselves more as citizens of the world than Balkan migrants. In this chapter I will describe the different groups of migrants that came to Berlin, how they shaped their lives there and how they relate to their countries of origin. We will get to know the background and motivations of people who came to Berlin. Knowing about their backgrounds and motivation, we can later turn to the influence these two things have had, and still have, on the way migrants relate to Balkan Beats music.

Migration histories

In the seventies a large group of Balkan people migrated to Berlin. This was possible, because Yugoslavia was the only communist country that allowed its citizens to migrate. This group was not a homogenous group, but very diverse in backgrounds and motivations to come to Berlin. Some people were Bosnian, Serbian, Croatian, Macedonian or Slovenian nationalists and had to move away, being enemies of the Yugoslav system of *'Bratstvo i jedinstvo',* 'Brotherhood and unity'. Because of their

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[8] Shantel, or Stefan Hantel, is a German DJ and producer of Romanian descent. His song 'Disko Partizani' is one of the most famous Balkan Beats songs, and a guaranteed success on Balkan Beats parties.

political beliefs their life was not safe in Josip Tito's Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, hence they moved to other parts of Europe, including Berlin.

Other migrants included people who came to Berlin to work. Those people were not interested in nationality and considered themselves Yugoslavs. In Berlin, they mingled with other Yugoslavs in bars and restaurants owned by Yugos. They got children and those children mixed as well.

In 1991 war started in Yugoslavia. This caused the migration of many refugees to Berlin. These people were affected by the ideology of nationalism and traumatized by the war events. However, not only more people from Yugoslavia came to Berlin as a consequence of the war, but the conflict also resulted in a change for the Balkan migrants who already lived in Berlin. The arrival of refugees, but also the stories from family and friends in the Balkans caused the emergence of more nationalism in Berlin. Yugoslav bars and restaurants turned into Croatian bars and Serbian restaurants. Families scattered and friendships dissolved, everybody was affected by the nationalism that was enunciated through the Balkan wars. More emphasis was laid on national identity, and common history, lives and work all became less important[9].

Hybridity: turning Berlin into a home.

However, there where still people who kept their own cross-national friendships. Some people who fled from the war did not want to fight, they were antinationalists. Music was a strong binding factor for them in these times. Some of these people, mostly young refugees but also some former antinationalist immigrants, met at a club called Arcanoa. Here a subculture of young people, who liked punk and rock, came together. These types of music were broadly represented in the Yugoslavian music scene, and were played in Berlin in the context of 'culture recycling'. In this environment Robert Soko[10] developed his style called Balkan Beats. Robert found a home in the Arcanoa, spending evenings with likeminded people. At first, he played old Yugoslavian rock songs, in a way recycling the Yugoslavian culture. Later on, he started mixing traditional folk music with beats, developing his profession of being a DJ and later on adjusting his style in a commercial way so he could make a living with this new music.

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[9] Marko Valic, 11.03.2011, Berlin
[10] Robert Soko, 01.02.2011, Berlin

Dimitri[11] is part of the Yugoslav academic and cultural elite. This will be explained more in dept later. After living in Rome for about twenty years, where he moved to study, he came to Berlin, in search of adventure. Dimitri states that he is one hundred percent Croatian. However, his father is American and he has often travelled to the US, has many friends there and has photos of these trips on his Facebook account. He seems to be proud of this background. Dimitri speaks fluent English with a strong American accent and makes a living by teaching English. Having lived for twenty years in Rome also adds to this hybrid identity. When cooking pasta he refers to his Italian 'roots', when playing basketball he speaks Italian to the Italian guys. Now living in Berlin he feels like a Berliner, meeting people in the street he knows all the time, and he cannot imagine leaving the city one day. Dimitri's processes of identification are a perfect example of unconscious hybriditization as opposed to conscious hybridity, in the distinction made by Werbner (1997). Werbner's point of the unconscious fusion of objects, languages and signifying practices from different and normally separated domains, is clearly visible in Dimitri's life.

For Sarita[12], this hybrid identity means a more problematic position between here and there (Werbner 1997). Unlike Dimitri, who seems to feel at home almost everywhere, she on the contrary feels at home almost nowhere. On the one hand, she feels like she does not belong in Serbia anymore, because mentalities changed so much there. On the other hand, it was also hard for her to find a place in Germany to feel safe. Being uncertain of being able to stay in Germany, she focused on studying and working most of her time, since this was her only assurance of being allowed to live in Germany. Her social life suffered from this immensely, and she feels as if she has put her life on hold for all these years. Fortunately, she has now acquired German citizenship and this can help her to pick up her life and start making a home for herself in Germany. Also, her move to Berlin has had a positive impact on her home-making process. Before she lived in Dortmund and over there she did not feel at home at all. She found it hard to connect to people, to make friends. Now, in Berlin she has no troubles with this at all. According to Sarita, Berlin is a much more open and friendly city.

All of this implies that these identification processes are processes in which the individual can decide what part of his identity to stress and that he or she plays an

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[11] Dimitri, 12.02, 13.02, 15.02, 24.02, 26.02, 09.03, 13.03, 15.03, 19.03, 20.3, 25.03.2011, Berlin
[12] Sarita, 16.02, 26.02, 02.03, 08.03, 12.03, 19.03, 26.03, 03.04, 14.04.2011, Berlin

active and determining role in the process of identity announcement. Although this is true in some sense, and maybe even more in modern times than that it used to be, the surroundings, and mostly, surrounding people who take part in identity placement, also play a role. As already said, for Sarita moving to Berlin was a positive change because the people there are more open, and it is easier to become friends with them. Accordingly, the process of identity announcement was made easier. This is a positive influence other people have had on Sarita's identification with Germany. Nevertheless, Sarita has had some bad experiences, in which she could not control the way other people put a label on her. Once, a man told her he would never be able to marry her, not that he thought she was not nice or something like that, but just because she was from Serbia. The guy, in this situation, takes part in identity placement and Sarita felt like she could not do anything against that. Nonetheless, Sarita also takes part in identity placement. When she sees someone from the Balkans she can very easy recognize them because of their physical appearance. She then says '*Das ist ein von uns*'. Anyhow, we must consider the differences between these two examples of identity placement. In the first case there are negative principles connected to the identity placement and it has negative consequences. The second case is much more innocent, and the identity placement is not connected to prejudices.

Connection to the country of origin

Robert[13], know as DJ Soko behind the DJ booth, opens the door of his apartment in the Möckernstrasse, located in the more expensive part of Kreuzberg, where the traces of the old underground bars that had to make place for more expensive café's and restaurants are still visible. "I'm sorry for the smell, I am cooking some food" he says while entering his living room slash office slash studio. Two desks with enormous flat screen computer - one shows a music mixing DJ programme, the other later on shows a call from Belgium through skype - are located in the cozy room. The room is decorated with an old trumpet, tambourines and a small African drum. A big photo of Robert's hometown Zenica in Bosnia hangs above a comfortable couch. Does he ever go back there? All of his friends moved away, and also his mother moved to Belgrado, living there on her own since his father passed away. But he does go back to see the

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[13] Robert, 01.03.2011, Berlin

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place where he came from. To see how it changed? No, to see how much it stays the same, he says smilingly.

According to Robert not much has changed in his hometown. However, he also states that most of his friends moved away from the town. Robert came to Berlin before the Balkan wars started. During and after the wars the Balkan region has changed immensely. By describing his hometown as not changing, Robert shows how he thinks about the place. For him, the town forms a large contrast to the rapidly changing city of Berlin. Robert perceives as if nothing has changed, and by describing Zenica accordingly, he puts a label on Zenica, thinking of it as an old town where not much is going on. However, he does state that all his friends left. This already gives away that something did happen in the town. The consequences of the exodus of all these young people are interpreted by Robert as that the town stays the same.

When listening to Sarita's stories about her country of origin[14], we get an idea of the transition that took place in the region in recent times. According to her, the former Yugoslavia, and particularly its people, have changed immensely in the last decades. She, like Robert, left her home country when it was still Yugoslavia and came to Germany to study. In the last years she has been going back to her hometown Novi Sad in Serbia less frequently, because she does not feel at home there anymore. She sees that people have become more capitalistic and does not agree with the dominant mentality of materialism and the importance given to physical appearance.

This mentality is represented through Turbo-folk music. Most people I spoke to describe Turbo-folk as a horrible kind of music. Milošević used this kind of music during his rule as propaganda. Consequently, some of the music is Serbian nationalistic and a large part is sexist. The music is usually sung by women with long hair, lots of make-up and jewelry and with rarely any clothes on. Turbo-folk on the one hand shows the division in the Balkan region between people, in which the struggle between punk/rock music and Turbo-folk mirrored the larger class struggles (Dimova 2007: 226), and on the other hand the difference that exists between different groups of Balkan migrants. It is a manifestation of the values of liberal capitalism[15]. People who do not like the music and who are mostly the academic and cultural elite distinguish themselves from the people who do enjoy it by identifying

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[14] Sarita, 16.02.2011, Berlin
[15] Nataša, Film Balkan Black Box Festival, 19.03.2011, Berlin

the music as a low, tasteless, postindustrial, mass cultural trend[16]. Furthermore, the nationalistic texts in Turbo-folk are strongly in contrast with the Yugoslav, sometimes idealistic, rock and punk music. In this way difference is created and the groups can experience each other as Others because of the process of disidentification (Driessen & Otto 2000). I will return to this in chapter five.

Both Robert and Sarita take distance from the Balkans. The one by describing it as staying the same, and himself as changed, the other by characterizing the region as changed, and herself being different from this. However, *'If you grew up there you can't pretend you didn't'*, as Robert[17] states. Like stated above, migrants still have attachments of desire, allegiance and practicality to homelands. Most Balkan migrants have family in the Balkans, keep contact with these people, and go back there every once in a while. Balkan migrants are still affected by their region of origin and are situated between here and there. In managing their identity, they always have to find a place for their past in their present. However, it is important to take notion that not only migrant identities are connected to the past, but all processes of identification are shaped by the past.

In this chapter the ways lives of Balkan migrants took shape in Berlin have been elucidated. Different backgrounds have had influence on different ways of making a home in Berlin and different ways of identifying with the Balkans. Balkan migrants make a distinction between people who have an affiliation with turbo-folk culture and a group that is more intellectual, leftist and cosmopolitan. On the last group I will focus in the rest of this thesis. Knowing this we can now move to the theme of Balkan Beats music and see how it has become disembedded from the Balkans.

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[16] http://milicatomic.wordpress.com/works/alone/
[17] Robert, Film Balkan Beats Berlin, Hering & Valić 2005

4. Disembedding: Lifting out

Munchen, Frankfurt, Germania,
Roma, Napoli via Italia,
New York business America,
All around the world my familia,
Vodka, Russia, Transiberia,
Twenty four hours to Australia
Here and there and everywhere
All around the world my compania

Hir aj kam hir aj go
Hir aj muv hir aj gruv

London Paris Skandinavia,
Marihuana Tirana Albania,
Export import diaspora,
Everybody now turbomania,
Rio, Maracana, Brasilia,
Africa, India al Arabia,
Here and there and everywhere,
Oo Magnifico and compania

Hir aj kam, hir aj go - Magnifico[18]

In the previous chapter we have seen that migrants from the Balkans have different backgrounds, possibilities and ways of dealing with living in Berlin and making a home there. I focused on the construction of hybrid, cosmopolitan identities. Robert, Dimitri and Sarita all experience the possibilities and hardships liquid modernity has brought in terms of identity management. Music can play a big role in all of these identity issues. It can be useful in reconnecting with the country of origin, or in

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[18] Magnifico is a Slovenian singer, who exposes stereotypes against machismo, xenophobia and homophobia in a provocative way. He uses humor and all kinds of music, mixed with Balkan sounds to convey his message.

connecting to the country of destination. Possibilities and chances can be created through music. In this chapter we will see how one kind of music, Balkan Beats, means various things to different people. People have situated themselves in different ways in relation to Balkan Beats, reacting to the music in ways that fit their own identification. First we will see what Balkan Beats music is, how it developed and found a place in Berlin. Later on we will move to how the audience of the parties perceive the music, and after that what the meaning of the parties and music is for Balkan migrants. Furthermore, we will see that Balkan Beats has become disembedded from its original meanings.

BalkanBeats and Balkan Beats

When talking about Balkan Beats music, the first person that has to be named is Robert Soko. This 'inventor' of the name BalkanBeats describes the music as his baby. BalkanBeats is his trademark and no-one else can use this name. He[19] describes himself as a bridge-builder, connecting the East to the West with Balkan Beats. On the Balkan Beats website emphasis is laid on the fact that Robert is from the Balkans and this seems to be a legitimization of playing the music.

However, this does not mean that nobody else can make the music. According to Dimova[20] (2007) Berlin's urban space has produced the contemporary Balkan Beats musical network as a neo-liberal commodity par excellence, in which politics of branding, copyright and profits become crucial for its contemporary outlook. Balkan Beats has become a product. The music has spread all over the world and also in Berlin it is possible to dance to Balkan melodies mixed with beats at different parties, like BalkanSka or Balkantronika. More and more DJ's adopt the style which has as a consequence that the music is not only played at Balkan parties but also at parties with different music styles. Balkan Beats has become a popular, widely known type of music. When talking about Balkan Beats parties in Berlin, it seems that everyone has been to this type of *Veranstaltung* at least once. But what ís Balkan Beats music?

BalkanBeats is an international DJ event founded in 1993 by Robert Soko. It has expanded from Berlin to many other cities and is now a worldwide phenomenon. BalkanBeats is on the one side a trademark, but on the other side a collective noun, used to describe a certain kind of music. I will use the name in this thesis as the

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[19] Robert, 01.02.2011, Berlin and www.balkanbeats.de
[20] Rozita Dimova, 15.04.2011, Berlin

collective noun, describing all kinds of parties with this kind of music. Further, I will make a distinction between BalkanBeats, being Soko's trademark, and Balkan Beats, the name of the music type. Robert[21] describes the music as follows:

"Now, what we have on the dance floors nowadays, this is traditional music, traditional elements from the Balkans which is another story as well, you know saying Balkan music means a lot of varieties in there, it means Oriental influences, Jewish, Slavic, Western influences, a whole range of musical and cultural influences coming together at the Balkans and creating something that we can call Balkan music (...) and, let's see, Balkan music, traditional music, and modern beats, what you create with all those machines nowadays, boom boom, in order to make it danceable and acceptable by the western European audience, yeah that's it in a rough way. Modern styles meeting traditional styles combining in making it danceable, making it, how to say, capable of being used in a club."

Balkan Beats music thus is a mix between traditional Balkan melodies and, so to say, Western beats. As Robert describes, he uses the beats to make the music acceptable for a western (European) audience. For him, it is a bridge to bring Balkan music to a wider audience. In the beginning he mostly used to play the music he liked himself, but later on he would also play music that was not particularly his cup of tea. Consequently, it can be said that the German audience has had, and still has a big role in shaping Balkan Beats. The DJ tries to play what the audience wants to hear, he wants to keep the room going and make his listeners happy. This process of shifting influence on the music can be linked to the disembedding process of Balkan Beats. Since it has moved all over the world, people have given different meaning to the music. Balkan Beats has been lifted out of its context of the Balkans and is no longer connected to the region by everyone. The music is re-embedded in different ways, as we will see for a part in this chapter and also in the next chapter, where the process is connected to processes of identity construction.

For DJ Datax[22] the development of his music took a somewhat different course then for DJ Soko. At the age of thirteen he moved from Macedonia to Berlin. Asmir started as a Drum 'n' Bass DJ, but after ten years he met Igor who mixed traditional Balkan music with electronic sounds. Together they founded Balkantronika

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[21] Robert, 01.02.2011, Berlin
[22] Asmir, 02.04.2011, Berlin

Productions. They describe their music as being completely different from DJ Soko's tunes, being innovative and underground[23]. For Asmir, this was a process of discovering how he could fit his past into his present, in what he likes doing now. It is combining the old with the new. For him, his music is still somehow connected to the Balkans, by his past, but it has also become disconnected because now it fits in his life in Berlin. It is given a new place in his profession and hobbies, creating possibilities for him, and consequently now is part of his identity. Being Balkan fits in his way of constructing his identity in being new and innovative, because that is what he does with Balkan sounds.

DJ Spery talks about Balkanizing a night. She is a DJ in Athens and is now invited by other DJ's to play all over Europe. A Balkanized party is characterized by wildly dancing people, a good atmosphere and happy faces. The only thing it has to do with the Balkans is that Balkan Beats music is played. A DJ does not have to be from the Balkans to be able to Balkanize a night, he or she just has to have the capability to respond to the needs of the audience and react on their responses.

All DJ's agree that the music should not be something political[24]. DJ Tommi looks up the lyrics of the songs he uses to make sure they are not nationalistic, DJ Spery disagrees with the fact that many people in Greece do not like Balkan Beats music because they connect it to countries like Albania and Macedonia and the political problems they have with these regions. According to her music and politics are two different things. DJ Soko explains it like this:

"What I am doing is not a political statement, I am not trying to change anything, I am not trying to regain any political system, I am just trying to create an atmosphere we can enjoy. And of course, nowadays, it's my business and I do my business, but this is not the matter of fact now, it's about having a good time. If you want to go to BalkanBeats, you want to dance. You want to be surrounded by people like you are, new people, you can flirt with them, you can dance with them. You can have fun. And you can enjoy dancing yourself. This is the main aim, the main goal of BalkanBeats."

Robert sees that his audience just wants to have fun and wants to dance. For him, the parties and music have no political meaning. Denying the political meaning of the

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[23] http://balkantronika.de/history.html
[24] Robert, 01.02.2011, Berlin & Tommi, 31.01.2011, Utrecht & Spyridoula, 13.03.2011, Berlin

music is another way of disembedding the music and disconnecting it from the countries of origin.

The Audience

It is Saturday night[25], eleven thirty. Young, and not so young Berlin, gathers in the U-bahn, the metro system that runs all night on Fridays and Saturdays. They get off in Kreuzberg 36, the cool, trendy and poor part of Kreuzberg, where a lot of Berlins famous clubs are located. Half of the people are carrying a bottle of beer on the go and some others are drinking Club Mate, a typical Berlin drink, which is popular for its high caffeine content. In U-bahn stations bands are trying their new songs, or cello players try to make some money. Sometimes a metro passes by with a loud thumping. A group of party machers brought their own sound system and decide to start the party early in one of the compartments. Exiting the station, everyone chooses his own direction, spreading out over Kreuzberg, looking for the best and best hidden parties. This night it is time for the monthly Balkantronika party. The party is held at the Privatclub, a place easy to recognize by the red sign with white letters, but walking through the door a newcomer might think he or she walked into the wrong place: all that can be seen is a deserted café with chairs on tables. Walking straight ahead, through a door with 'toilets' on it, brings the visitor to the right place: a desk where the entrancefee can be paid and stairs to go down to the party area. The room is not too big, on the one side a bar is located and on the bar a little TV. It shows funny little videos of men playing trumpets in black and white with a vague red glance. On the other side the dance floor is to be found, surrounded by lounge sofas. All the way in the back is a little stage, with on the right two chairs and on the left the DJ booth. At twelve the room starts to fill a bit more, entrance is only three Euros before midnight, after that the fee rises to five Euros. A tall guy, wearing a blue t-shirt with 'RAKIA connects people' on it, walks in. Rakia is a typical alcoholic beverage from the Balkans, and the slogan is typed in a particular font that belongs to Nokia, the mobile phone brand that advertises with 'NOKIA connects people'. The guy, stopping in the middle of the dance floor, spreading his arms wide and shaking his hips to two or three beats, walks up to the DJ's and greets them while drinking a few shots with them, of what must be Rakia. The room starts to fill and after three boys start to dance

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[25] Privatclub, 05.02.2011, Berlin

on the dance floor, more people follow and soon the room is filled with people dancing, some at first a bit careful, in little groups, others more enthusiastic, jumping around and sweating heavily. The guy with the blue t-shirt is dancing on the mini stage, completely in his element. Sometimes he closes his eyes and has a big grin on his face. At times he forgets how tall he is, wanting to lift his arms, but hitting the roof or the pipes on the roof. As the night continues, one of the DJ's regularly dries these pipes with a towel. Because of the sweating people the pipes get wet and there is the risk that the DJ equipment gets wet. The Rakia guy starts to talk to a girl in a blue dress, who is also dancing on the stage. They can barely understand each other because the music is so loud, so they mostly smile, and then turn to watch the trumpeters that start to play along to the music of the DJ's.

Similar to the DJ's, for the Berlin audience, Balkan Beats does not seem to have a political meaning either. As can be concluded from the description of a typical Balkan night above, people just go to the parties to have fun and dance. Robert[26] describes the crowd with three words: intellectual, multilingual and sexy. With this he means *'young people, urban people, open minded, who are studying who are speaking at least one foreign language, who want something new'*.

The audience consists literally of all kinds of people, young and old, trendy and not caring about appearance, and most of the people who come seem to like to dance.

The girl in the blue dress is Tina[27], a high school student, who comes to the Balkantronika parties regularly. She likes the parties because they have a special atmosphere. She likes the sounds, because her father is from Russia and she connects the melodies of the Balkans to this. She especially likes to dance while going out and she finds Balkantronika parties particularly good for this.

Lucy[28] confirms this, describing Balkan Beats music as danceable, *Gute Laune*[29] music. She moved from the Netherlands to Berlin two years ago and at one point she had enough of the dominant Berlin Techno and Electro scene. As an alternative to this music, Balkan Beats music is a good new sound. Techno and Electro are both very danceable and most other alternative music is not, according to Lucy. Balkan Beats, however, is very danceable. Once, when she went to Sysiphos, an

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[26] Robert, 01.02.2011, Berlin
[27] Tina, 08.03.2011, Berlin
[28] Lucy, 24.03.2011, Berlin
[29] Good mood

alternative, underground club in Berlin, there was a party with two rooms. In one room there was an Electro DJ and in the other room Balkan Beats music played. Parties in these kinds of places usually go from Saturday night until Sunday night, so at the off-peak hours one room closes. When Lucy was there and a room had to be closed, in the Electro room only ten people where dancing, while the Balkan Beats DJ still had a huge audience. This is unthinkable in the Electro capital of Berlin, any kind of music 'beating' Electro music. This shows the popularity of Balkan Beats.

Christian[30] also describes Balkan Beats as an alternative for Electro. He calls it colorful music. Christian plays in a band called Il Civetto, which tries to mix all kinds of music but all these influences are Balkanized by them. With this, Christian means that a certain Balkan rhythm is mixed into all the songs. Christian uses the term differently than DJ Spery. This disparity stresses the constructed nature of the term, different people use it in different ways, there is not one way to 'Balkanize'.

According to Christian, most Germans do not know anything about the Balkans. Thus, the popularity of Balkan Beats music does not mean that Germans are interested in the region. Christian wants to travel through the region this summer, to make music together with people, to find out where the music comes from. He thinks this is important because he feels like it is not right to play music not knowing where it comes from, it feels a bit like stealing. He does not know if it is legitimate to play the music, and he finds it hard to deal with these problems. Together we decided that traveling to the Balkans and talking with people who live there might be a good solution to the problem.

Three different people, three different ways of re-embedding Balkan Beats music. All three place the music in the Berlin nightlife, where it now belongs for them. For Lucy it is an alternative, new sound, fitting with her cosmopolitan, alternative identity. It does not really matter that the music is from the Balkans, she likes the music because it is danceable. For Tina the music is connected to a geographical region, but this can better be described as Eastern Europe then the Balkans. Christian seems to struggle with where the music comes from and is very conscious about that it is from the Balkans. However, by playing the music himself, during parties in Berlin he also gives the music a new place.

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[30] Christian, 29.03.2011, Berlin

Balkan Migrants

Nataša agrees with Christian that Berliners have no idea about the Balkans. She used to organize the Balkan Black Box festival. Nataša states that Germans are crazy about the Balkans, about the gypsy culture stereotype, but this does not represent the real Balkans. With the festival, she and her co-organizers tried to show the real face of the Balkans by inviting writers, filmmakers, musicians, and actors from the Balkans. The festival was very popular but had to be stopped due to lack of funding and time of the organizers. So now, there is barely any other representation of the Balkans than Balkan Beats music. Marko[31] draws attention to the stereotyping that is at work at Balkan Beats parties. He understands the opinion[32] that Balkan Beats is a more positive sound from the region, in stead of all the stories of war and conflict people in the West heard in the last decades, but he agrees with Rozita Dimova's[33] critical view that Balkan Beats transports a negative image of the region:

> *"If you imagine the stereotype of the Balkans, it's not only like war and cruelty but also wildness (...) being drunk, being kind of out of it. That comes back in a way from the parties as well. It for sure has this positive connotation, which says, look, people don't just kill each other but also dance together. But it also says Balkans are wild, like a bit furious. And the music, in a way, enhances this stereotype." - Marko*

All of this can be seen at an evening in the Lovelite, a club in Friedrichshain, together with Kreuzberg the most popular area to go out in Berlin. Every month DJ's get invited to play at a party called BalkanSka (Photo 1&2). After seeing the movie Transylvania, in which the gypsy theme is strongly represented, the visitors get a shot of vodka at the door and the DJ's start playing. Two friends start to dance wildly at the middle of the small dance floor and imitate playing instruments like drums and trumpets. The place warms up easily and maybe it is because of the heat that guys start taking of their shirts while dancing on the stage, but this also demonstrates the wild and furious atmosphere. The crowd goes crazy and it seems like the music makes all that is happening possible. A certain spirit is created in which people can act like they would not act normally. Alcohol plays a role in this but the drunken vibe is certainly enhanced by the pumping beats and loud trumpet melodies.

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[31] Marko Valic, 11.03.2011, Berlin
[32] www.balkanbeats.de
[33] Rozita Dimova, 15.04.2011, Berlin

Photo 1. Klub BalkanSka DJ's

Photo 2. Klub BalkanSka audience

Dimitri, however, links other things to this type of music. The first time I talk to him, he makes sure to tell me right away that he does not like the music at all, actually, he hates it. Before the Balkan wars broke out he was in the army, being from the Croatian part of Yugoslavia. It was compulsory to attend military service for all young boys, never the less, many richer, urban men went to university or found other ways of avoiding their obligations. This resulted in a situation in which mostly poor boys, from rural areas, especially from Serbia, attended the military service. These boys brought Turbo-folk music with them, and Balkan Beats music reminds Dimitri strongly of this kind of music, and consequently of this time in the military. Dimitri came to the army from Split, one of the bigger towns, and likes rock and hardcore music. Therefore, he did not feel at home with the rural boys and their music, and this did not make his time in the army very positive. He tells proudly about the times he escaped from the army at night, to go to Hardcore concerts.

Balkan Beats music also reminds Sarita of her past. She grew up in the Serbian part of Yugoslavia, before coming to Germany twelve years ago. Sarita thinks of her grandmother, singing in the women's choir, when she was younger. Some Balkan Beats songs use songs of these women's choirs and it makes Sarita happy to hear this. Furthermore, it makes her feel proud that people from Germany are having so much fun dancing to music from her *Heimat*.

Another element that has influence on the way the parties and the music are perceived is the lyrics. A large part of the audience can not understand the texts of Balkan Beats songs because the lyrics are in Servo-Croatian. This causes a difference in perception of the music for people who can and can not understand where is sung about. Sarita[34] sometimes laughs about the lyrics she hears, which makes clear she experiences it differently from the way I listen to the music. According to DJ Spery[35] it is not needed to speak the language, because she thinks that by just listening to the music people will understand where the lyrics are about. This, however, does not mean that the experience of the music will be the same.

We have seen all kinds of different opinions on Balkan Beats music, and different ways of dealing with the music. Balkan Beats has become a product, it evolved from the experience of a Balkan migrant, fitting in his past in his present and future, to a worldwide phenomenon. For the German audience, on the one hand

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[34] Balkan Beats Lido, 12.03.2011, Berlin
[35] Speridoula, 13.03.2011, Berlin

Balkan Beats is disconnected from the region it comes from and an alternative for the mainstream electro and techno scene. On the other hand, Balkan Beats portrays a strong stereotype of the Balkans for this audience. This might seem to be a contradiction but can be explained by the disembedding and re-embedding processes: Balkan Beats is lifted out of the region and accordingly is disconnected from the Balkans. It is pushed back in a German context and here connected to the stereotypes that exist of the Balkans. Balkan migrants, however, reconnect the music to the Balkan region, by referring to past experiences. The next chapter will build on this disconnection and reconnection and the relation between Balkan Beats music and identity will be elucidated.

5. Re-embedding: Pushing back

Music is like water,
sometimes peaceful,
sometimes making waves,
sometimes cold,
sometimes warm,
sometimes deep and sometimes shallow,
sometimes beautifully blue but sometimes very black,
so black it makes you afraid…
and somehow it always gets us wet

DJ Soko

After examining the lives of Balkan migrants in Berlin and discussing the development and meaning of Balkan Beats music for different people we can now turn to the topic where the two subjects come together, which is identity. Identity is an ever changing process of construction, by both the self and by others. What role does Balkan Beats play in processes of identity construction, for both Balkan migrants and other people from Berlin? How do re-embedding processes connect to identity construction? In this chapter I will discuss Balkan Beats music and move to the question of what music means for processes of identification in modern times.

Creating the Balkans

As quoted above, Robert describes people who like Balkan Beats music as intellectual, multilingual and sexy. For Germans, or tourists, who come to Balkan Beats parties, the attendance of these parties is for them an affirmation of their open-mindedness. The people who like Balkan Beats music give a positive meaning to this type of music, for them it means happiness, having fun. These people see the whole world as their playground and are always looking for new sounds and special music[36]. They actively construct their cultural identities by turning away from the dominant techno and electro parties in Berlin and by looking for alternatives[37]. Through dancing

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[36] Christian, 29.03.2011, Berlin
[37] Lucy, 24.03.2011, Berlin

on Balkan Beats music, they perform these identities. They do not necessarily have to speak about it, but by enjoying this music and letting themselves go they make this music part of them, they become one with the music. They have re-embedded Balkan Beats in a way that fits their cosmopolitan identity. The message is transported to the other people who are at the parties. By living up to the expectations that are present at parties, which are having fun, dancing at least a bit, maybe drinking, and being open, visitors can get accepted to this subculture. A group identity is being constructed through the party and the music is one of the main features of the parties. Music has the capacity for simultaneity and heterophony, it has a collective nature and it has a capacity to go beyond the linguistic domain (Stokes 2004). Because of these features, it is easy for many people to identify with a type of music.

Mass media connected to Balkan Beats enable new ways of imagination for the Balkan Beats audience (Appadurai 1996). Imagining that in Rio the Janeiro and Melbourne people also dance to the same music strengthens the possibilities to identify with the cosmopolitan identity that Balkan Beats audience aspires. This is what makes music so valuable in identity construction.

While reading the flyer of the BalkanSka party in March (Figure 3), we get an idea of how the Balkan is reconstructed to create the atmosphere of the party:

Figure 3. Flyer BalkanSka party, backside.

With the Balkans, everything is more beautiful,

E.g. cleaning, driving the car, making up a marriage contract, speeding, divorcing,

watching television (watch out: turn off the sound!), writing flyers and reading flyers,

reading anyways, schlawinern, thesis plagiarism, give a high five, cooking, thinking,

sleeping, scratching oneself, … (put here your favourite activity) and… DANCING

until the plastic socks melt. (own translation)

Through referring to plagiarism and Schlawinern[38] the Balkan is constructed as a corrupt and criminal region. The fact that this text mentions getting divorced refers to the ideas of debauchery often linked to eastern European regions and the presumed laziness of people from the Balkans is named by 'scratching oneself'. Lastly the region is perceived as poor and cheap through referring to plastic socks in the publicity of the party. Once again, the danceability of the music is stressed with the printing of the word dancing in capital letters.

With making and distributing this flyer, the organizers of this party engage in identity placement of Balkan people, and while adopting these stereotypes and verbalizing them they have an influence on how the Balkans are imagined by the audience of the parties. This constructed identity is very homogenous and rigid, and through this it can be pretended that the whole region is the same. Furthermore, later on, the Flyer talks about Ukraine, Poland and Russia, as if those countries are part of the Balkans. The stereotypes mentioned earlier are connected to the whole of Eastern Europe. This is even more stressed by the Russian Matryoshka dolls, which have nothing to do with the Balkan region, shown at the front of the flyer (Figure 4). This flyer shapes the imagination of the Balkan region by the public and people on the street, who pass by the posters. Imagination is important in the construction of identity, consequently it can be said that the designers of the flyer take part in the construction of Balkan identity, by enabling Berliners to imagine the Balkans.

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[38] Ein Schlawiner is a nickname for an unreliable man
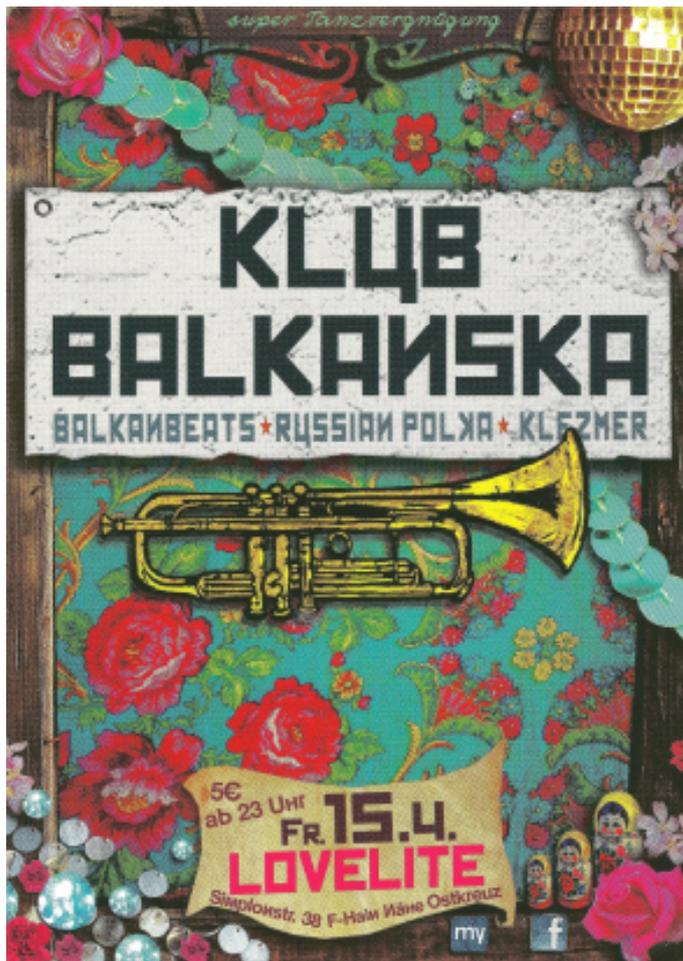
Figure 4. Flyer BalkanSka party, frontside.

Rejecting the image

This stereotype of the Balkans described above, is partly the reason why many people from the Balkans do not like Balkan Beats music. For them, this typecast does not match their lives at all. Furthermore, it is a quite negative image that is portrayed here, although the lazy, drinking, not worrying about rules kind of life may look attractive to the visitors of Balkan Beats parties, the corruption and criminality in the region is for Balkan migrants more a reason for sorrow than a situation to laugh about. Sarita[39] refers to the corruption and messed up situation in the Balkans, as does Robert[40]. They both confirm that the situation is distorted. By talking about the Balkans like this they link these negative images to the region, but do not connect them to themselves. That is to say, they left the region and thus are different and these stereotypes do not apply to themselves. Sarita, however, does confess that she is hot-tempered and that this was

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[39] Sarita, 16.02, 12.03.2011, Berlin
[40] Robert, 01.03.2011, Berlin

at first a problem when she came to Germany. Now she has adapted to the German mentality and shows her emotions less than before.

Dimitri[41] and Sophia[42] both have an aversion to Balkan Beats music. For Dimitri, the music is similar to Turbo-folk music. Consequently, he connects the melodies to his time in the army. For Sophia traditional music from the Balkans is old fashioned and not her taste. It was clear she differentiates herself from this kind of culture when I asked her if she would talk to me. She replied to my message by saying 'I'm not sure if I can help you, I am not into the Balkan scene at all'. This can be perceived as at least a little strange, coming from a girl who took part in the organization of a Balkan culture festival for three years. Both Dimitri and Sophia associate Balkan Beats with people from the Balkans who are materialistic, who have values connected to liberal capitalism, people who are narrow-minded and nationalistic, in short people who like Turbo-folk culture. By distancing themselves from the music, Sophia and Dimitri also distance themselves from these people and at the same time create differences between their own group and the others. This process of constructing differences is needed to create a strong group identity (Driessen & Otto 2000: 21).Though disidentification with Turbo-folk identity, Sophia and Dimitri can create a more cosmopolitan and urban identity. As one of the bands say that performed during the Balkan Black Box festival: *"We are much more urban than Balkan, we are not interested in anything called ethno in that way it is popular right now[43]"*. The fact that Dimitri and Sophia despise Balkan Beats music does not mean that music has no part in their identity. On the contrary, they both strongly identify with a trans-national identity of Punk and Hardcore lovers. Dimitri used to play in a Punk band and Sophia makes a strong statement with her physical appearance. Half of her hair is shaved and her face is full of piercings. When I ask her about Turbo-folk she replies:

"It is very interesting, because me, we are called second generation, children of guest workers, many of them really identify with this culture. For me it is really nothing, and they don't like me. They criticize me, like why do you wear your hear like that? Look at you, it is embarrassing."

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[41] Dimitri, 12.02, 13.02, 15.02, 24.02, 26.02, 09.03, 13.03, 15.03, 19.03, 20.3, 25.03.2011, Berlin
[42] Sophia, 18.04.2011, Berlin
[43] Film Balkan Black Box Festival, 19.03.2011, Berlin

It is clear that two groups are created here. One group is constituted of people whose values are represented through Turbo-folk culture, and the other group is composed of people who are cosmopolitan, urban, multi-lingual, often vegetarian or vegan and socially engaged. Balkan Beats is something that lies on the borders between these two groups. The sounds remind of Turbo-folk music, but the values represented at parties, by the DJ's and the audience correspond to a certain extent to the constructed identity of cosmopolitanism. Therefore, both groups of Balkan migrants do not incorporate Balkan Beats in their identities. For both, it is too much of the Other, that they see in Balkan Beats. Consequently, both groups reject the type of music by re-embedding it with the other group.

Nonetheless, Sarita[44] did find a way to incorporate Balkan Beats music in her identity. When she came to Germany she started listening to Funkhaus Europa, a radio station 'for global pop and news in the languages of the world' (Funkhaus Europa 2011). This is where she first heard of Balkan Beats music in a weekly broadcast of Danko Rabrenovic, also known as 'Der Balkanizer'. At first she reacted like Sophia and Dimitri. The music reminded her of Turbo-folk and she did not like it. But then she heard what kind of music Shantel had made from it, and this she actually liked. She went to one of the Balkan Beats nights where DJ Soko played and where Shantel came to perform. From then on, for Sarita Balkan Beats was part of the World music scene, which she likes so much. Her cosmopolitan, not being German, but also not feeling at ease with what has become of her country of origin, world citizen identity is perfectly reflected by Funkhause Europa. Whether it is Cumbia, Reggae or Balkan Beats that is played, the radio fills the hole that had appeared. With Funkhause Europa she feels at home.

From all of this we can conclude that different people handle Balkan Beats music differently. How they relate to it defines their identity. They can move away from the type of music more strongly by re-embedding it with another group than themselves. Identification processes can take place in uncountable ways, and how identity is constructed by people is not dependent on the music they relate to, but depends on the person itself, as we have seen in the example of Balkan Beats music. The music is subject to how a person chooses to adapt it in his or her life. Sarita choose to accept the old sounds she heard in a new form, but Dimitri rejected them.

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[44] Sarita, 16.02, 26.03.2011, Berlin

Shown is how subjective and flexible processes of identification are. Identification is also reactive, Sarita, Dimitri and Sophia were confronted with the music and had to decide how to react to it. Identity is thus not just constructed by a person and people around this person, but also shaped by influences from outside, when a person needs to decide how to relate to these processes and to determine how to react to them.

Disembedding and re-embedding

As a result of globalisation, these influences from outside have become numerous. Before, a society was more of a closed entity, with limited influences from outside. In modern times, the world has become increasingly connected. But not only the influences have become numerous, also the rapidity with which these influences reach us and change has augmented. As a result of modern times, social relations have become disembedded, as mentioned before. This is exactly what has happened with Balkan Beats. The music has become re-embedded in Western Europe and other parts of the world as we have seen above. Balkan music has become disconnected from its roots and is not connected to its original musicians, who wrote the music or played music connected to their region or families for a long time. With the process of re-embedding, the music is now operating independently from its Balkan context and is given new meaning by its audience. By them, Balkan Beats is re-embedded in the World music category, which is demonstrated by the names of some of the parties where the type of music is played, which are called 'Globo Club' and 'Terra Beats'.

However, Sarita still thinks of her grandmother singing while dancing to the music at these parties, so the music is re-embedded by her in a different way. As Bauman (1997: 32) states, re-embedding is linked to individual self-construction. German visitors of the parties where Balkan Beats plays want to construct their identities as cosmopolitan, multi-lingual and alternative. Sarita on the other hand, can not deny her past and consequently lets her memories of her grandma play a role in the re-embedding of the music. Yet another way of re-embedding is practised by Michaela[45]. She is a Mexican girl and came to Berlin after studying in Spain for half a year. She enjoyed the Balkantronika party very much, because it brought her back to the time she had spent in Spain. "*When I was in Spain we always danced to this kind of music and I have not heard it back since then*" she says, dancing and smiling

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[45] Michaela, 02.03.2011, Berlin

enthusiastically. For her, Balkan Beats music is connected to Spain and her experiences there. From these examples we can conclude that social events and actions can be re-embedded in numerous ways, dependent on the person who takes place in the re-embedding process. Overall the point can be made that processes of re-embedding are remarkably subjective.

This point of subjectivity can be connected to the point Stokes (1994: 4) makes. According to him, music does not reflect underlying patterns or the essence of a culture. It rather generates, manipulates and ironises meanings. The fact that these meanings can be influenced by music means that they are subjective. The meaning of the Balkans is manipulated by Balkan Beats. As Sarita says: "*Now people think we always listen to this kind of music*". With this thought comes the idea that Balkan people act like people at Balkan Beats parties act: wild, drunk and crazy. The music generates this meaning that is now connected to the Balkans.

That Balkan Beats ironises the Balkans is accurately represented by the flyer (Figure 5) of a party where Balkantronika DJ's played. We see a girl that is wearing a dress that is seen as typical and traditional for the Balkans. She looks very lovely. What makes the picture shocking is the fact that she is holding a Kalashnikov. The gun refers to the up-tempo beats used in the music, which sometimes sound like the firing of a Kalashnikov. However, another interpretation can connect the gun with the Balkan wars. This can result in the perception of the Balkans as a violent area. It refers to the connection visitors of the party make with the Balkans, because often, the conflict is the only thing they know about the region. By putting the Kalashnikov in the hands of an innocent girl these meanings are ironised.

Figure 5. Flyer of Reclaim the Beats vs. Balkantronika party

In this chapter the consequences of modernity in relation to Balkan Beats music have become clear. Balkan Beats is a product of modernity and the way people deal with the music is influenced by modern times. The disembedding and re-embedding of Balkan Beats are characteristic for liquid modernity and enabled by the increasing interconnectedness of the world. Furthermore, we have seen that processes of identification can take place in numerous ways and are extremely subjective. Identification and disidentification processes take place as reactions on situations caused by modernity, like the emergence of Balkan Beats. People have to relate to it in a way that fits the identity they want to achieve. From this example, we can conclude that music is an extremely flexible factor of cultural identity that can be used in many different ways. As Blacking (1995) says, music can help people to categorize, or model, their world. Music belongs to everyone. It is such a flexible concept that everyone has the chance to re-embed it is different ways. This makes it also complex. As we have seen, Balkan Beats means different things for different people. Here we can clearly see the uncertainty that is characteristic for liquid modernity.

Conclusion: Consequences of Modernity

In this thesis, I have explored Balkan Beats music as a consequence of modernity. Also, the relationship between the music and processes of identity construction has been elucidated.

Bauman (2006) describes identity as 'a bunch of problems', which have become even more complex in these times of modernity. Overall, this thesis has given a reflection of the problems that are related to identity, and we can conclude that it is a complex topic of study. In the construction of identity, various factors have to be taken into account. The past, present and future of individuals all have influence on their identity construction. The past, a person's background, country of origin, memories and experiences determine for a part how a person relates to certain situations and accordingly constructs his or her identity. In the present, people have to react to situations and have to deal with influences from outside, which have an impact on their identification processes. Furthermore, identification processes have to deal with wishes of individuals for the future, since identification for a part can shape possibilities for this future.

Identity is influenced my multiple factors, therefore it is not a rigid fact but a constantly changing construct. Migrants are situated in between cultures and therefore have hybrid identities (Werbner 1997). Migrants from the Balkans construct their identities in different ways. The group of people I mostly had contact with, namely well-educated, multi-lingual migrants, wants to obtain a cosmopolitan identity. They disassociate themselves from the Balkans, by connecting the area to turbo-folk, nationalism and materialism. All of these traits are the opposite of how they construct their own identities. These differences help with constructing an own group identity (Driessen & Otto 2000). Constructing a group they do not want to belong to as different from them, enables them to emphasize their own identity. Also, through the disidentification with the Balkans, Balkan migrants can manifest a cosmopolitan identity. Disidentification with the Balkans also means rejecting Balkan Beats. This type of music is associated with the Balkans. Furthermore, it resembles turbo-folk music and the corresponding materialistic, lower, working class.

However, music is also used in an affirmative way for this cosmopolitan identity. Dimitri and Sophia identify with the transnational punk and Hardcore scene, Sarita feels at home listening to World music from Funkhause Europa on the radio. Actually, in a sense, Balkan Beats music seems to be a contradiction. As we have seen, for Balkan migrants the rejection of the music confirms their cosmopolitan identity. However, for others, who go to Balkan Beats parties, this is an action affiliated with the construction of their cosmopolitan identity. By listening to this music they communicate that they are multi-lingual, socially engaged and open-minded, which are all traits connected to cosmopolitanism.

At the same time, at the parties, through the promotion of the parties and through the music a new image is constructed of the Balkans. This stereotypical image of the Balkans enables the Berliners to have fun at the parties. The atmosphere of 'everything goes' and open-mindedness attracts many people and contributes to the popularity of the parties. However, this stereotypical image of the Balkans being a raw, corrupt and debaucherous region full of alcoholics, makes the parties even less attractive to Balkan migrants.

What has happened here is that the traditional music of the Balkans has become disembedded through Balkan Beats music and is now re-embedded in different ways, corresponding the different ways of individual self construction. This process is very subjective and can happen in multiple, contradictory ways, just like the construction of identity as I explained earlier.

We can thus conclude that music is an important and valuable factor in creating identity, especially in the uncertain times of modernity in which many options and possibilities are available. Music can help people to categorize, or model, the world (Blacking 1995). Identification with certain music can be important for people in belonging to a group since music symbolizes cultural boundaries and it has a 'capacity for simultaneity and heterophony, it has a collective nature and music has a capacity to go beyond the linguistic domain' (Stokes 2004: 59).

And now, how can we relate this all to the consequences of modernity? Balkan Beats is a perfect example of what is happening in liquid modern times. The music is a product of migration and mass-media, associated with globalisation. Balkan Beats is constructed and given meaning to in affirmative or negative ways, according to the wishes and situations of individuals, fitting in the construction of their identity.

During my short period of time in the field I could only perform a limited amount of research. It would have been interesting to study the ways Balkan migrants, who do not like Balkan Beats music used other types of music, like Punk and Hard Core, to confirm their cosmopolitan identity. Furthermore, the view from Germans of the Balkans could be analysed more in dept, why is so little known about the region? Another topic of interest would be the construction and consequences of stereotypes. I have explained why differences are needed in processes of identification, but this topic could be elaborated more extensively. Concluding, I can say that finding answers always leads to more questions.

This thesis has given a glimpse of the consequences of modernity by describing one phenomenon. It has shown the complex situation individuals have to deal with when it comes to constructing their identity. Furthermore, with writing this work I have contributed to a more inclusive view on migration. Unlike other scholars, I did not focus on the people that came to Berlin, but on a thing they brought with them: Balkan Beats music. The way the meaning of this commodity has developed, and still is developing, gives us insight in the processes at work in liquid modern times.

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Appendix 1: Methodological approach

By studying the new and modern phenomenon of Balkan Beats in a modern Western city I have taken part in the trend described by Moore and Sanders (2009: XV). They state that anthropology has come home. This not only means that non-western anthropologists now study their own societies, but that western anthropologists also start studying their own societies. Berlin is (very like) my own society, and the situations in which I was doing fieldwork were very much like home.

Given that my fieldwork location was much like home, I was confronted with a situation the traditional fieldwork guides and examples had not prepared me for. Doing fieldwork in a big city influenced by globalisation and migration, inhabited by highly individualist people made gathering data a somewhat difficult task. It was not a problem to meet with people and talk with them: in Berlin people are most of the time very flexible, interested in research and open. The problem was more: who to talk to? It was hard to find Balkan Beats lovers, it seemed like everyone had heard of the music and had once been to a party but I could not find people who were totally crazy about it. So who should I talk to from all these three million Berliners? Also, there seemed to be no field to get access to or a place to, using the much loved word by anthropology students, 'integrate'. Parties were once every month, so by the time I got to know some regular visitors and the DJs of e.g. Balkantronika, this was the third time, it already was time for me to leave Berlin. Furthermore, Balkan Beats music seemed to be everywhere. Which parties did I have to choose to see the right things and meet the right people? In the end I felt empowered by thinking of the article by Stacia Zabusky, about ethnography in transnational processes. Zabusky (2007) describes her research in a big organisation in which she followed the projects that moved through different departments, in stead of staying with a certain department and consequently certain people for a longer period of time. Like Zabusky (2007: 369), I found that there were no clear-cut communities or definitive social fields in which I could pursue fieldwork in any traditional sense. I decided to look at parties as being 'Gyres', ever new centres being created at a night and then dissipating again after a party has ended (Zabusky 2007: 368). I traced the development of Balkan Beats, starting at the creation, by interviewing DJ Soko. Then looking what it is now

at parties, and even talking to a Greek DJ to see what it is like in places where it moved to.

Doing this, however, I did use the traditional methods of anthropological fieldwork. When going to the parties I used participant observation, and also while building rapport with my informants I tried to participate and observe their normal doings by taking place in their daily lives. Trying to ask the right questions at the right times helped me gather a lot of information, thanks to the openness of my informants. I found it very important to comply with the anthropological research's requirement of informed consent, everyone I talked to knew I was doing research about Balkan Beats music and identity. However, when once someone asked me 'Why do you ask such strange questions, why do you want to know?' I did not know what to answer other then that I was interested in the topics. Only then I understood that my four years of anthropological schooling could not be explained and understood as easy as I thought. The practice of doing research everywhere and all the time might have been logical for me, but for some of my informants this seemed a bit strange and not fitting with the idea they have of scientific research. Although it was not my job to explain the nature of social research or anthropological theory, this misunderstanding was sometimes unpleasant (De Walt & De Walt 2002: 44).

The interviews were a more known research strategy. I mostly used semi-structured interviews, using a list of topics to make sure that I talked about everything I wanted to discuss. This type of interviewing suited me and my research, because it shows respect for what the informant has to say (Boeije 2010:63). Furthermore it enables the informant to talk freely and in this way I could get to see their views on their social world. Unstructured interviews have also been essential for my research. By talking to people at parties, during basketball, dinner and u-bahn rides I was able to gain insight in daily life in Berlin and the perception of Balkan Beats.

While picking places for participant observation and people to interview, I used both opportunistic and judgement sampling (Boeije 2010: 35-39, De Walt & De Walt 2002: 104) Especially the opportunistic sampling has contributed immensely to my final argument, because in this way I got to know people who did not support the hypothesis with which I entered the field (see introduction). Had I not participated in playing basketball, and had I only gone to Balkan Beats parties, I would not have met the Balkan migrants who do not like Balkan Beats music.

In order to give my informants more insight and influence on my research I made use of member validation. Clifford (2007) advocates giving informants a stronger voice in ethnographies in his article about ethnographic authority. According to him, this can be a solution to avoid portraying 'abstract, ahistorical 'others' (Clifford 2007: 477). Clifford suggests using long quotes of informants or even letting informants participate in the writing process of the ethnography to achieve this stronger voice for them. Both of these ideas do not really fit with the practicalities of writing of a bachelorthesis. However, I tried to deal with this issue of ethnographic authority by discussing my research, ideas and findings so far with some of my informants. In this way I could get feedback from them, more data on how they saw the issue and I was able to check if I had understood them right. This is less thorough than Clifford's proposed methods but I hope I have been able to give my informants a strong voice in this way.

Appendix 2: Reflection

There I was, after four years of preparation, anxiety and excitement I finally arrived in my field for my rite de passage of becoming a real anthropologist.

Although I had prepared myself thoroughly for the research period by reading books, listening to stories of friends who had already done research and discussing how I would go about collecting data, it was not always easy. Every field and every research is different. And grass is always greener on the other side. Sometimes I was extremely jealous of my fellow researchers in other places of the world, who did research in an organization or in a small community. This all seemed so comforting, compared to my big, anonymous, scary city of three million people. But of course, doing research in other situations also had its setbacks and disappointments, and surely was not easier. Just different. Another difficulty I struggled with in the field was my topic. 'Balkan Beats?' People would ask me, 'So, what do you do? You go to parties all the time?'. I was confronted with a lot of scepticism from others, and this at times made it difficult for me to take myself serious. What was I doing? How would I be able to write a serious thesis about this all? Will I have anything of importance to say? These doubts made my participant observation experiences unnecessarily difficult. When going out to parties I was extremely conscious of my role as researcher. Especially the first times I had enormous difficulties persuading myself to talk to people, let alone to have fun. De Walt and De Walt (2002: 198) state that participant observers want 'people to forget that we are outsiders'. For me this was no problem at parties, people would not even imagine that I was an outsider. For me, however, it was extremely difficult to forget that I was an outsider. I perceived a huge gap between me and the people at the parties. I was all the time thinking of the difference in reasons why we were there, looking around me who to talk to and observing what was happening. The audience just wanted to have fun, but I was there to do scientific research. This threshold kept me from interacting with the people at the parties, I was more of an observer then a participant. I worried about this lack of participation, I am an anthropologist after all, isn't participating one of the most important things we do? Only when I started to visit parties with other people, I could cross my self-made boundaries and talk to people. At these situations I gathered a lot more information then at the times that I was there by myself. Furthermore, I got positive reactions, so there was nothing to be afraid of.

Noticing this, however, did not make it more facile to approach people the next times I was there by myself. Therefore, I made sure that I could go to parties with people most of the times, since this made the data collection easier. Luckily, there were other situations where I felt more at ease and could participate in the daily lives of my informants. I do know that for my next research I will pay closer attention while picking a field to the participant observation possibilities.

Not only the practical side of doing research was the cause of anxiety, also the shaping of my theoretical argument caused worries at times. Dhareshwar (2007: 547) writes about theories which emerged as a result of the West's attempt to understand its own experience but which impinge on others. Often, these constructed theories are not suitable for non-Western experiences. I want to move beyond this dichotomy of West and non-West and extend this argument to what anthropologists theorize and the experience of their informants. Sometimes I felt that I was talking about theories that did not fit with the world people I was talking about. Sophia reacted strongly stating 'I don't give a shit from what country somebody is' when I asked her if she had contact with other people from the Balkans. Furthermore, this feeling was strengthened the night that I went to a discussion between Roma women. Although they all agreed that they were Roma women, and called themselves this, they denied that there was even one thing typically Roma. They rejected the idea of a group identity and dismissed our question for clarity about Roma identity with stating there is no Roma identity. Despite the fact that anthropologists enunciate the ideas of everything being a social construct or a process, I still felt that effectively we are still labeling people by talking about subjects such as identity. This, however, is hard to overcome. I noticed that being open for changes in ideas and hypothesizes can make a researcher aware of these tendencies to move back to a ridged view. In the field, I realised how focussed I was on finding evidence for my argument, and thereby ignoring all the clues that pointed to other views. Becoming conscious of this error helped me open my perspective and set aside the assumptions I had.

However, it was not all doom and gloom. I immensely enjoyed the freedom in the field. I visited places I would never see without doing research, sometimes pushed myself beyond my limits in new experiences and thoroughly appreciated living in the wonderful and exiting city that Berlin is. But not just the places I got to know made my first fieldwork experience successful. The people I met are responsible for the great time I had in Berlin. Once again I noticed that I am an extremely social person,

in need of human contact. Being new in a city can be lonely. Luckily I soon enough found people to get to know and I realized that it does not matter where you are, it is the people that count.

Photo 3. Me as an anthropologist

Appendix 3: Summary

The subject of this thesis is Balkan Beats in Berlin, studied in the context of modernity. During three months of anthropological fieldwork in Berlin in the beginning of 2011, I gathered data about the topic. Qualitative research methods were used, namely semi-structured interviews, unstructured interviews and participant observation.

In the theoretical framework the three interconnected processes of modernity, identification and music are examined. In modern times, identification processes have become more complex. A good illustration for these complex identities is how migrant identities are constructed. Migrants have hybrid identities because they are situated in between societies. They are connected to their countries of origin, but also have to find a connection to the country they now live in. To deal with hybrid identities, music can come of use. Music is a social process and has the capacity for heterophony and has a collective nature. Therefore, music can play a role in the construction of identity for many people, it is a flexible and inclusive factor of identity.

To understand Balkan Beats music and processes of identification in modern times, first the background of migrants from the Balkans is studied. Migrants came to Berlin for different reasons. In the seventies many people found their home in Germany being guest workers, and later on people left the former republic of Yugoslavia to flee from the war. Others came to Berlin for studies or adventure. In making a home in Berlin, migrants had to deal with their position between 'here' and 'there'. Often they try to take distance from the Balkans, however, in managing their identity they always have to find a place for their past in their present.

Balkan Beats music is a certain type of music that was 'invented' and now is spread all over the world. As a consequence of modernity, it has become disembedded. It has been disconnected from its origins and now is being re-embedded in various ways. For German audience, going to Balkan Beats parties means a confirmation of their cosmopolitan identity. Some people from the Balkans, however, take distance from Balkan Beats music in constructing their cosmopolitan identity, because for them, Balkan Beats is connected to Turbo-Folk culture, which entails materialism, nationalism and is connected to the rule of Milosevic.

This example of Balkan Beats is an illustration of what is happening in the age of liquid modernity. The world is increasingly interconnected, due to migration and the effects mass-media has on the consequences of migration. Consequently, processes of identification have changed. Construction of identity has become more hybrid and complex, because lifestyle choices are proliferating. Mechanisms are disembedded and re-embedded in numerous ways. All of this has as consequence that people have more possibilities in the modern world, but life has also become more insecure.