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# **Divided Cities. A Case Study of Mitrovica**

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## **0. Introduction**

A city not only provides valuable insights into the connection between macro-processes and human experience on the micro-level, but also remains a place where the intensification of these processes occurs, therefore, urban space is not a reification but the focus of cultural and socio-political processes of urban lives and everyday practices (Low 1996). Since many contemporary phenomena intensify in urban space, they can be best understood in cities, making research on urban space indispensable for studying and explaining contemporary phenomena (Low 1996, Jałowiecki & Szczepański 2010). Moreover, such a situation leads to greater interest in research on cities and the emergence of many diverse research perspectives. One of the trends in research on contemporary cities is to analyse them through a series of images and metaphors, taking into consideration social relations (ethnic, divided, contested and gendered city), economics (deindustrialised, global, informational city), urban planning and architecture (modernist, postmodern, fortress city), religion and culture (sacred and traditional city) (Low 1996).

Since 1999 Mitrovica has been consistently perceived and described as a divided city, with the Ibar river serving as an unofficial border between Albanian South and Serbian North, ruptured into two parts as a result of violent conflict. In consequence, Mitrovica and Kosovo are seen mostly through the turbulent times of conflict and confrontation. Therefore, the main research problem is to examine in which aspects and to what extent Mitrovica can be perceived as a divided city.

Kosovska Mitrovica/Mitrovicë (hereinafter Mitrovica) is located in the northern part of Kosovo, and as a result of conflict in 1999 it has become an important border city between areas dominated by Serbs and Albanians. Over the centuries, until the 1990s, Mitrovica was a multicultural city, an important industrial centre, a significant communication junction, and the centre of cultural development. The process of polarisation of the urban community was observed from the late 1980s until the radical division in 1999 and is closely related to the process of political transformation, disintegration of Yugoslavia and the Albanian-Serbian conflict over Kosovo.

Not since the period of socialist Yugoslavia, when extended monographs (usually ideologically tainted) on Mitrovica were published, has a single study describing the overall situation in the city (taking into consideration both the northern and southern part) been produced. Contemporary monographs on the city, which would take into account the city as a

whole and be based on mixed methods including long-lasting empirical research are still lacking.

The value of the proposed thesis results from the multicultural and multilingual character of utilised written sources and texts of culture. The thesis is also based on data sourced during fieldwork in Mitrovica and in the region. Research conducted for the purposes of this thesis employed several methods that provided different kinds of materials: structured and semi-structured interviews (transcripts of interviews, questionnaires), unexpected conversations (field notes), observation with partial participation (field notes) and the analysis of written and visual materials (literature and documents, field notes). With this in mind, the aim of this thesis is to provide a multifaceted, comprehensive synthesis of Mitrovica, free from a single national perspective and reflecting the complexity of city structure.

The category of divided city which remains the main reference point of this thesis is undoubtedly ambiguous. Therefore, in order to conceptualise it, many aspects must be taken into consideration. Should we pay more attention to the causes or consequences of dissolution? Is it necessary to describe the dynamics of (dis)integration? What is the reason for identifying and defining the phenomenon of a divided city at all? Which features are constitutive for the category of a divided city? Is it not true that every city is in a way divided? Therefore, what kinds of divisions are important and when do they actually matter? Should we pay attention, first of all, to the divisions which led to the dysfunction of the city as a whole? In the end, who should decide this? The aim of this thesis is to face these and many other questions in regard to the case study of Mitrovica.

Research on divided cities covers a wide range of fragmentation aspects and a diversity of approaches, definitions, and methodologies (Allegra, Casaglia, Rokem 2012). Literature on the topic provides many different examples of divided cities and identifies a list of different reasons for their partition (Anderson 2008, Bollens 2012, Calame & Charlesworth 2009, Jańczak 2009, Nagle 2016, van Kempen 2007). As a result of the prevalent importance of the collapse of Yugoslavia in the region, research on cities perceived as divided in the Balkans, such as Mostar, Vukovar, Mitrovica, Sarajevo and Skopje focuses mostly on ethnic/national divisions and the conflict-ridden past of these urban centres. However, is such a perspective truly sufficient for the description of Mitrovica? Of course the prevalence of this ethnic/national aspect in the narration on divisions in the above-mentioned cities and in Mitrovica is undoubtedly justified; this thesis does not aim to challenge that. Nevertheless,

one cannot underestimate the importance of other factors which shape urban space in the context of disintegration and integration processes.

### *Research perspective*

This study proposes a perspective different from focusing on conflict and ethnic/national discourse on a divided city. Its aim is to point to the other dimensions of divisions, to reveal common cultural traits of groups described as different, to present periods of mutual contact and coexistence together with turbulent times and to challenge the idea of fixed and unchangeable identities dominated by ethnic/national component.

Firstly, it is crucial to focus on intragroup relations and on other dimensions of relations between groups and individuals, which might be determined by gender, level of education, profession, age, economic status, political affiliations, origins, place of birth, personal character, etc. Of course not every component of identity will be equally relevant, but none should be glossed over. Based on his field tests conducted in Kosovo in 1990, Ger Duijzings stated that in daily life and local contexts other divisions have been much more salient than the ethnic ones (Duijzings 2001). He provides examples of dimensions, such as clan or tribal loyalties, religion, urban-versus-rural dichotomy, language (which is not always coterminous with ethnic divisions), gender, political or ideological divisions (for instance, between communists and ‘counter-revolutionaries’ in the 1980s) which may lead to diversity in a society (Duijzings 2001).

Secondly, despite many works emphasizing the differences between conflicted groups and the long-lasting nature of Albanian-Serbian conflict<sup>1</sup>, there are many contemporary works which state the opposite. At least two recently published books that describe common past and cultural traits resulting from centuries of mutual interactions and coexistence should be mentioned: *Naród i jeho pieśni. Rzecz o oralności, piśmienności i epice ludowej wśród Albańczyków i Serbów* (*The Nation and its Songs. On Orality, Literacy and Folk Epics among Albanians and Serbs*) by Rigels Halili and *Srbi i Albanci kroz vekove* (*Serbs and Albanians Through the Ages*) by Petrit Imami. A collaborative work of researchers and intellectuals from Albania, Kosovo and Serbia published in two language versions, which deals with the most

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<sup>1</sup> In ‘Religion and the Politics of Identity in Kosovo’ Ger Duijzings points to several examples of Serbian (Djoko Slijepčević, Dimitrije Bogdanović, Dušan Bataković) and Albanian researchers (Skënder Rizaj, Ismail Kadare, Rexhep Qosja) who picture conflicted relations between both groups within their own national historiography.

common issues of Albanian-Serbian relations, is also worth mentioning – *Figura neprijateljja (pre)osmišljavanje srpsko-albanskih odnosa/Figura e armikut: ripërfytyrimi i marrëdhënieve shqiptaro-serbe (Figuring out the Enemy: Re-Imagining Serbian-Albanian Relations)*. ‘Religion and the Politics of Identity in Kosovo’ by Duijzings and ‘Kosovo. The Politics of Identity and space’ by Denisa Kostovicova should be mentioned in this context as reference points for this thesis.

Thirdly, it is crucial to pay attention to the complexity of the multicultural environment of Mitrovica and Kosovo. The proposition regarding fluent, complex and unobvious identities, in contrast to fixed ones dominated by the ethnic/national component, can be supported by the existence and changeable nature of identities of minorities, the so-called ‘ethnic anomalies’ (Eriksen 1993) in relation to other groups and within particular political context, as will be presented in this thesis. It is true that nowadays Mitrovica is predominantly inhabited by these two communities: Albanian and Serbian, but also by Ashkali, Bosniaks, Gorani, Montenegrins, Romani, and Turks, while several sources also mention Egyptians (either as a separate group or as part of RAE community<sup>2</sup>) and, finally, by foreigners. This multicultural environment and changeable social composition have been characteristic of Mitrovica for centuries, due to its geopolitical location and the urban character that the settlement gained over time. The overview of minorities provided in this thesis allows us to notice that certain minorities are no longer present in Mitrovica (like Croats, Jews or Tzintzars) and beyond (for instance, Vlachs), some are forgotten or disregarded (like Turks), while others have only just appeared (for example, Egyptians). What is important, they continually redefine and shape their identities in line with political circumstances and interactions with other communities. Moreover, Serbian and Albanian identities are also not as stable and homogeneous as is commonly perceived, which this thesis will set out to demonstrate.

Similarly, the image of the city itself is as fluent and complex as the identities of its inhabitants. As it was stated earlier, the identity of a divided city is relatively new to Mitrovica and should not be considered as fixed. Therefore, the analysis includes other identities of the city, either in the horizontal or vertical dimension, which illustrates the complex structure of Mitrovica, commonly known as divided.

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<sup>2</sup> RAE community – Romani, Ashkali and Egyptians community.

All in all, the presented research perspective stands against the dominant ethnic/national discourse in research on divided cities in the region, which tends to underestimate other important phenomena and processes. As Eriksen noted, it is unquestionable that thanks to research on ethnicity many important findings were discovered, but one should also be critical enough to leave this concept behind when instead of a useful research tool it becomes an obstacle in the research process (Eriksen 1993). The situation in Mitrovica, if interpreted only through contemporary ethnic/national divisions, especially in the context of two dominant groups, cannot fully reflect the nuances and complexity of the population structure, inter- and intragroup relations, and thus it cannot reveal the real importance of the ethnic or national component for the residents. Therefore, this research was designed to be inclusive and pluralistic with regard to its participants and sources. The aim of this approach is to broaden, complement and verify the results of research on Mitrovica that have been obtained to date.

### *Thesis structure*

The thesis includes an introductory chapter which describes the state of research and methodology (main research categories), a chapter which provides a historical frame for the research subject, followed by three analytical chapters and a chapter devoted to conclusions. In the analytical chapters I will focus on selected aspects of integration and disintegration processes: designation and symbolic sphere (symbolic dimension), social relations (social dimension) and the duplication of infrastructure and services (functional dimension).

The proposed division into three analytical parts may not be perfect, as there is an inherent interrelation between the described aspects of (dis)integration. Nevertheless, to attain analytical order, such thesis structure, resulting from research material, seems to be the most appropriate and transparent. Certain issues are mentioned in more than one place, but for the sake of readability connections between particular parts are highlighted with additional commentary. For instance, the significance of the university is mentioned in all analytical chapters, but is described in detail only in the final one, which deals with the functional dimension of Mitrovica's urban space.

The first chapter consists of two parts: the first one deals with the state of the art, theoretical basis and main research categories, while the second discusses methodology and



the research process. The chapter describes three basic research categories that were employed: divided city, site of memory and actor of urban space; moreover, it introduces three dimensions in the analysis of Mitrovica, substantiates the choice of mixed methodology and the case-study method as an adequate research perspective for this study. The aim of this chapter is to introduce the literature on Mitrovica and to justify the need for and the value of the proposed thesis, and to illustrate the research process in detail.

In the second chapter the historical context of the development of Mitrovica is presented through selected important circumstances and events which were the turning points in Mitrovica's development. Therefore, in this chapter Mitrovica is presented as a communication hub, a multicultural settlement, strategic garrison, and an industrial centre. This overview is also complemented by the general characteristics of urbanisation and modernisation processes. The description of the historical context is augmented by the analysis of the development dynamics of urban areas in the region (with a focus on specific urban and social order in the former Ottoman/Turkish city) and the influence of modernization and industrialization. This chapter constitutes an introduction to the issue of urban development in the Balkans, taking into account the historical context.

The third chapter of the thesis (the first analytical chapter) is devoted to the analysis of the symbolic dimension of urban space. The main research category which is used for the purpose of interpreting the semantic space of Mitrovica, is a 'site of memory', understood as a cultural symbol that members of a particular community find important (Szpociński 1983, 2007). The aim of this chapter is to provide an overview of the symbolic dimension of contemporary Mitrovica's urban space. Urban space is considered as a text of culture rich in symbols (Radović 2013), a platform where sites of memory are manifested. Since the text of urban space is continually produced and constructed (Low 2017) by particular actors, the residents' perspective on the symbolic space of Mitrovica along with the analysis of the actual contemporary city space is indispensable. This chapter is divided into two complementary parts. The first one describes the symbolic space of contemporary Mitrovica based on the outcomes of empirical research: source analysis, observation, and the results of structured and semi-structured interviews. The second part introduces the main layers of the symbolic landscape in Mitrovica and attempts to explain the meaning of various elements in the space of contemporary Mitrovica with reference to the outcomes of empirical research.

The main objective of the fourth chapter is to explore the state of contemporary social relations in Mitrovica and the dynamics of social structure in the context of integration and disintegration processes. This chapter attempts to outline the complex relations between Mitrovica's residents through their everyday social practices, such as communication, mobility, mutual contacts and perception, relations with neighbours and the role of a resident. Moreover, an introductory section provides the demographic description of contemporary Mitrovica with a focus on specific internal migration and its consequences for the current situation in the city. Crucially, the proposed analysis goes beyond describing the two dominant communities living in Mitrovica, including also the responses of minority groups. Finally, it complements the analysis with other possible aspects of division, e.g. these resulting from economic inequalities, religion, rural-urban frictions, political affiliations, or individual behaviour.

The final analytical chapter analyses integration and disintegration processes in Mitrovica considered as an urban organism. Therefore, in this chapter attention is paid to presenting actors of urban space with a focus on parallel institutions, using the example of the university. The first part of this chapter elaborates on the general characteristic of urban space actors and their role, as well as the sense of agency of residents within this network. It is important to determine which actors are perceived as the most influential according to respondents from different communities and how their actions influence the division of the city. The aim of this subchapter is also to describe the institutional order in which actors perform their role. The second part of this chapter elaborates exclusively on the role of the university as an actor of urban space within the presented institutional order. Therefore, it provides an overview of parallel education history in Kosovo and higher education providers in Mitrovica and evaluates the university as an important and influential institution.

In the chapter devoted to conclusions I briefly outline the main findings of the analytical chapters. Subsequently, I refer to the objectives of the thesis with a special focus on the nature of (dis)integrating processes in Mitrovica. I highlight the value of this thesis for further research in the region, and its innovative aspects. I also suggest that the methodology developed for the purpose of this thesis may be useful for investigating the urban space of other divided cities. Finally, I raise a number of issues that were only touched upon or glossed over in this thesis in order to suggest further research directions.

## *Editorial remarks*

The system of names and quotations adopted in this thesis takes into consideration the rules of the English language, ease of reading, the value of including local languages for the purposes of analysis and the historical context of sources. In general, I use English equivalents of proper names, if applicable, which are commonly used in English, considering the practical needs of English readers. Moreover, in some cases the English forms are perceived as the most neutral and their usage is justified in order to avoid any potential accusation of some kind of political preference.

Since the name of the city and the region are designated differently depending on the source<sup>3</sup>, providing an explanation for the specific form used in this thesis is essential. Moreover, the diversity of Mitrovica's names and the importance of the very name are presented in detail in the third chapter.

In this thesis the city is referred to as 'Mitrovica' instead of its Serbian ('Kosovska Mitrovica') or Albanian (indefinite – 'Mitrovic(ë)', definite – Mitrovica) version. The rationale behind this choice is to use a shorter form, commonly encountered in English publications and also probably the most neutral designation of the city in the context of linguistic dispute over Mitrovica's status.

The name 'Kosovo' is used in this thesis for the disputed territory, as is common practice in most English publications. This is also to emphasize the geographical location of this territory rather than its political affiliation. Therefore, designations such as 'the Republic of Kosovo' or 'Kosova/ë' and 'Kosovo and Metohija' or 'Kosmet' are not used in this thesis. Any other notation is justified only inside quotations (from interviews or written sources) or if relevant to the analysis.

Nevertheless, throughout this dissertation I also take into account the original entries of proper names in modern local languages, mainly Serbian and Albanian. Some names do not have English equivalents, for instance, two language variants of the cities 'Ferizaj' and

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<sup>3</sup> The need to describe the location of Mitrovica evokes different perspectives on territorial designations of the region resulting from various attitudes towards the issue of Kosovo's independence. Therefore, different versions of its geopolitical localisation can be found. One of the most accessible examples is the description on Wikipedia where the following sentences can be found:

*Mitrovica is a city located in the North part of Republic of Kosovo (Mitrovica është qytet në pjesën veriore të Republikës së Kosovës)*, Wikipedia in Albanian. See: <http://sq.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mitrovica>, accessed: 02.2017;  
*Kosovska Mitrovica (...) is a city located in the northern part of Kosovo and Metohija, Republic of Serbia (Косовска Митровица (...) је град на северу Косова и Метохије, у Републици Србији)*, Wikipedia in Serbian. See: [http://sr.wikipedia.org/wiki/Косовска\\_Митровица](http://sr.wikipedia.org/wiki/Косовска_Митровица), accessed: 02.2017.

‘Uroševac,’ in such cases one or both versions are provided, depending on the nature of the source and association with one of the cultures. Whenever a name is mentioned for the first time in the text, its form in the other local language(s) is provided. Sometimes the name is the same or differs only slightly in pronunciation or accentuation, like Prizren and Pristina. The text also contains historical names presented in their original form, e.g. even though the name of the mine nowadays has two language versions – ‘Trepča’ and ‘Trepça’ – only the original ‘Trepča’ is used. Latin transcription is mainly used, except for quotations which follow the original source.

The names of authors and other figures are rendered in their original form, in some cases other language versions are provided, for example in the case of Muharem Bektashi/Muharem Bekteši, whose name appears in two language versions in written and visual sources.

All other names and titles of publications in foreign languages are translated into English. When first mentioned books and publications are provided with a full title and its English translation in brackets. Once a name is introduced, it will be thereafter given in the same form, unless there is a specific reason to refer to other language versions.

Quotations from publications and interviews are given in accordance with their source, using the alphabet of the original version, while providing an English translation in footnotes (if the original quote was from a language other than English). The rationale behind this choice was that the equivalent text in footnotes should be understandable to the reader and bring additional value of analysing sources. Unless stated otherwise, quoted fragments and publication titles were translated by the author of this thesis.

The thesis also includes numerous visual materials. For the sake of readers’ comfort, figures and photos are integrated into the text and provided next to the information they refer to.

## **1. Chapter I: Methodology and Theoretical Framework**

This introductory chapter comprises two parts: the first one deals with the state of the art, theoretical basis and main research categories, while the second presents methodology and the research process.

The first part is devoted to the state of the art on Mitrovica and the description of three basic research categories: divided city, site of memory and actors of urban space. The aim of this part is to introduce the literature on Mitrovica and to justify the need for and the value of the proposed thesis. Moreover, this part elaborates on the nature of the materials employed. The first part also presents the rationale for selecting the main research categories and introduces the three dimensions of the analysis of Mitrovica, which correspond to the analytical chapters.

The second part of this chapter justifies the choice of mixed methodology, i.e. one based on quantitative and qualitative approaches, as an appropriate research method for this study. Furthermore, it describes the interrelation between particular outcomes resulting from different research methods and proposes the case study method as an adequate research perspective for exploring this particular urban phenomenon. Another aim of this chapter is to illustrate in detail the processes of preparation phase, data gathering, analysis and interpretation. Finally, this chapter elaborates on the complicated process of cooperation with local residents and the mutual engagement of the researcher and the locals in this academic research.

### **1.1. State of the art. Mitrovica – literature review**

Nowadays, Mitrovica is perceived mostly as a divided city, but before the Kosovo War of the 1990s, the sources presented the city in the context of its rich history, economic development, location, population structure and its cultural life. Mitrovica has been described as an industrial centre, a communication junction, a strategic garrison, the centre of resistance and antifascist struggle, a multi-ethnic and multicultural urban environment and the centre of entertainment, known for its rock and jazz bands.

It was only recently that Mitrovica became the image of a divided city only recently, therefore, and so literature analysing Mitrovica from the perspective of a divided city is

sparse. With a few exceptions (Björkdahl & Gusic 2013, Grob & Papadovassilakis & Vincente 2016, Gusic 2017) the case study of Mitrovica was not included in major comparative studies on divided cities (Bollens 2012, Nagle 2016, Calame & Charlesworth 2009, Kempen 2007, Anderson 2008). On the other hand, there is an impressive number of publications on post-conflict divided Mitrovica, mostly articles and reports in the field of political science and broadly defined international relations devoted to security issues, and the process of reconciliation and peacebuilding in the post-conflict area as well as the status of Kosovo.

First sources on Mitrovica appeared in the 15<sup>th</sup> century in travellers' journals (Lutovac 1950) and in documents issued by the Ottoman Empire. Some of these documents were translated and analysed in the works devoted to the history of the region. For instance, a study *Osmanli arsivi belgelerinde Kosova vilayeti* edited by Yusuf Sarinaj and translated into Albanian as *Vilajeti i Kosovës në Dokumentet Arkivore Osmane (Kosovo Vilayet in the Ottoman Archives Documents)* is an analysis of archival sources from 1530 to 1912, documents, maps, plans, photographs etc. concerning the territory of Kosovo Vilayet. The publication is concerned with topics such as administration and properties, political, economic and social context, military issues, justice, faith, education and population (statistical data on the entire vilayet). Several subchapters are devoted to Mitrovica: a document on the establishment of a refugee neighbourhood (*lagjja e muhaxheireve*)<sup>4</sup>, documents on the Russian and Austrian consulate in Mitrovica or the description of administrative buildings in the city. According to Miloš Luković and Noel Malcolm, at the turn of the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries in the Ottoman Empire there were several newspapers printed in the Serbian language, such as *Carigradski glasnik (Constantinople Herald)* and *Prizren*, later renamed *Kosovo*, which also remain an important source of information on Mitrovica (Luković 2007, Malcolm 1999).

Information on the development of Mitrovica in the past is provided by historical studies, which to a varying degree take into account the geographical and social aspects. At the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, Branislav Nušić, Jovan Cvijić, Jefro Dedijer and Avram Popović<sup>5</sup> mentioned Mitrovica in their books. Short descriptions of the city included in the

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<sup>4</sup> A refugee neighbourhood was established in 1891 for people from Bosnia. See: *Osmanli arsivi belgelerinde Kosova vilayeti – Vilajeti i Kosovës në Dokumentet Arkivore Osmane*, ed. Y. Sarinaj, Istanbul 2007.

<sup>5</sup> Branislav Nušić was the consul of the Kingdom of Serbia living in Pristina between 1893 and 1896. Jovan Cvijić was a Serbian geographer and ethnologist, the president of the Serbian Royal Academy of Sciences and

works of Nušić, Cvijić, Dedijer and Popović give an overview of its development, natural surroundings, general social structure and position in the region. The authors emphasise the developing tendency of Mitrovica at the dawn of the 19<sup>th</sup> century owing to its propitious location within the railway network (built in 1873/74). During that time many travellers visited Kosovo providing less or more extensive descriptions on Mitrovica, e.g. John Reed in *The War in Eastern Europe* (Reed 1916) and Rebecca West in *Black Lamb and Grey Falcon: The Record of a Journey Through Yugoslavia in 1937* (West 1942).

Bilingual monographs published in the 1970s and 1980s by the Institute of History of Kosovo in Pristina and the Institute of Contemporary History in Belgrade are a particularly valuable source of information on various aspects of the city's functioning. Also noteworthy is the publication on memorial sites in Mitrovica (then Titova Mitrovica/Mitrovicë e Titos), which constitutes a significant reference point in the analysis of the city's symbolic dimension.

The first complex monograph on Mitrovica was published in 1979. It was prepared by the Institute of History of Kosovo in Pristina (*Institut za istoriju Kosova u Prištini*) and the Institute of Contemporary History in Belgrade (*Institut za savremenu istoriju u Beogradu*) in both Serbian – *Kosovska Mitrovica i okolina* and Albanian – *Mitrovica dhe rrethina* (*Mitrovica and Its Surroundings*). The monograph includes the history of Mitrovica from the Neolithic Age to World War II. It is divided into three parts: 1/ from prehistory till 1918, 2/ between the two world wars, and 3/ the Second World War – *Liberation War and Socialist Revolution 1941-1945*. The aim of this initiative, as stated in the introduction, was to create the basis for further research and to present particularly significant events and individuals from the past, especially in the context of the revolutionary workers' movement<sup>6</sup>, the League of Communists of Yugoslavia and the socialist revolution<sup>7</sup>. Clearly, the main objective of this study was to describe a strong industrial, multi-ethnic urban centre with a long history of labour movement development and communist struggle, as well as promoting communist

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the vice-chancellor of the University of Belgrade. Jefro Dedijer was a Bosnian Serb writer and geographer, an assistant professor of geography at the University of Belgrade.

<sup>6</sup> Authors of the monograph identify the period of the revolutionary workers' movement from 1918 to 1941 and of the national liberation movement from 1941 to 1945.

<sup>7</sup> [SRB] '(...) ona bude podstrek i polazna baza za dalja istraživanja i obradu pojedinih značajnijih događaja i ličnosti iz prošlosti, a naročito iz istorije revolucionarnog radničkog pokreta, Saveza komunista Jugoslavije i socijalističke revolucije.' [ALB] '(...)ky libër do të jetë një cytje dhe bazë nisëse për hulumtime të mëtejme dhe për përpunimin e ngjarjeve e të personaliteteve të ndryshme të rëndësishme të së kaluarës, dhe sidomos nga historia e Lëvizjes revolucionare punëtore, e Lidhjes së Komunistëve të Jugosllavisë dhe të Revolucionit Socialist.' See: *Kosovska Mitrovica i okolina*, ed. A. Hadri, Ž. Avramovski, Mitrovica 1979, p. 7. *Mitrovica dhe rrethina*, ed. A. Hadri, Ž. Avramovski, Mitrovicë 1979.

ideology. Even though this publication was ideologically influenced, it remains the first complete source of information on Mitrovica and its surroundings.

Another important monograph which complements *Mitrovica and Its Surroundings*, describes Titova Mitrovica from after World War II until 1980. According to the authors, the main objective of this work was to present the post-war development of the city and to familiarise, younger generations in particular, with this accomplished achievement and overall development (incl. socialist social relations) (Abdyli 1985). Apart from the above-mentioned institutions, the Faculty of Philosophy, University of Pristina also took part in this initiative. The Monograph edited by Tahir Abdyli was published in both Albanian – *Mitrovica e Titos 1945-1980* and Serbian – *Titova Mitrovica 1945-1980 (Tito's Mitrovica 1945-1980)*. It contains information on the social structure, the administrative and political system, a short overview of the history of the city, its industrial and economic development, infrastructure, financial, political and social organisations, education system, and health care supplemented with visual materials. The last chapter of this monograph is of paramount importance as it deals with the memorials and cultivation of revolutionary traditions. *Tito's Mitrovica 1945-1980* includes bilingual sources (Albanian and Serbian), such as archival materials, literature and newspapers.

An important monograph on Mitrovica published in the 1980s, which deals strictly with the memorials and sites of memory is *The testimony of the struggle for freedom* written by Sulejman Murati in Albanian and Serbian – *Dëshmitë e luftës për liri / Svedoçanstva borbe za slobodu*. Here, memorials (*spomen-obilježja*) are defined as monuments, busts, plaques, fountains (*česme/čezmat*) and tombstones. The aim of this study is to describe the memorials which commemorate crucial events and individuals from the history of the labour movement and national liberation struggle in Titova Mitrovica and its surroundings (Murati 1986).

Following World War II, an impressive number of short articles and elaborations on the history of the city appeared as well. In the study *Zvečan, Trepča i Kosovska Mitrovica*, Milislav Lutovac gives the historical context of the development of the city within the region, identifying several phases in the development of Mitrovica, from the initial recognition of the micro region called *Dimitrijevo Polje*, where later a settlement has arisen, to modern times. In the study *Kosovska Mitrovica – antropogeografska istraživanja (Kosovska Mitrovica – Anthropogeographical Research)*,<sup>8</sup> Atanasije Urošević presents a detailed examination of the

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<sup>8</sup> Atanasije Urošević was a Serbian geographer and a professor at the University of Belgrade and Skopje.



economic and political situation in the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century and the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Urošević presents the administrative position of Mitrovica before 1878 when it belonged to the Sanjak of Novi Pazar (part of the Bosnia Vilayet). Another example of the historical overview of the territory of Mitrovica is the article *Pesëdhjetë shekuj të Mitrovicës (Fifty Centuries of Mitrovica)* by Sulejman Murati and Mustafa Shukriu, which presents a short description of the region's past from the Neolithic to the post-WWII period with a focus on medieval settlement and oriental *kasaba*<sup>9</sup>. During the period of socialist Yugoslavia several informative books were published, such as Milorad Vavić's *Kosovska Mitrovica* (Vavić 1965) and Blagojević and Radonjčić's bilingual *Naš grad, naša briga / Qyteti jonë – Brenga jonë (Our city – Our Concern)* (Blagojević and Radonjčić 1985). From among the newspapers of socialist Yugoslavia, one should mention *Zvečan* published in the 1950s.

Following the Balkan conflict in the 1990s, Jusuf Osmani published several historical works on Kosovo, most importantly *Mitrovica dhe diplomacia Ruso-Serbe 1901-1903 (Mitrovica and Russian-Serbian Diplomacy 1901-1903)* (devoted to the significance of Mitrovica as a political centre in the region at the turn of the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries and the centre of Albanian resistance) and one part in the series *Vendbanimet e Kosovës (Kosovo Settlements)* dedicated to Mitrovica – *Mitrovica, Zubni-Potoku, Zveçani*.

When it comes to the issue of the symbolic dimension of urban space, one cannot omit Avni Azemi's *Toponimet e Mitrovicës (Toponyms of Mitrovica)*. Written like a dictionary, this study guides us through all the important toponyms in the city: buildings, sacral and secular objects, streets, monuments and cultural sites.

While enumerating the sources on Mitrovica, we cannot forget the works of Dušan T. Bataković, a Serbian historian, especially the collective study *Kosovo and Metohija. Living in the enclave* edited by Bataković and published in 2007. Special attention should be paid to Miloš Luković's article *Kosovska Mitrovica. Present and Past*, a part of the book *Kosovo and Metohija. Living in the enclave*, and its extended version *Историјске, урбано-демографске и социолингвистичке оцобености Косовске Митровице (The Historical, Urban-demographic and Sociolinguistic Features of Kosovska Mitrovica)* published in the book *Живот у енклави (Life in The Enclave)* (Sikimić 2005).

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<sup>9</sup> This work was published both as a self-contained article and a series of articles in the bilingual newspaper *Zvečan* in 1971.

Two periodicals that provide several articles on a number of topics connected with Mitrovica are also noteworthy. One issue of *Zvečan*, a Belgrade-printed magazine, was entirely devoted to the overview of the different periods of Mitrovica's history (1/1996), while *Baština*, a periodical of the Institute for Serbian Culture-Pristina/Leposavić (*Институт за српску културу-Приштина/Лепосавић*) with its seat in Leposavić (since 1999), regularly publishes articles on various contemporary issues of Mitrovica and the region.

Last but not least, *Studenti na severu Kosova i Metohije (Students in Northern Kosovo and Metohija)* presents the outcomes of several waves of research carried out in Mitrovica between 2009 and 2014 on the student population. Particularly important are: *Etnički stereotipi studenata na severu Kosova i Metohije i u Beogradu: predstave o svom narodu i drugima (Ethnic Stereotypes of Students in Northern Kosovo and Metohija and in Belgrade: Ideas Regarding Their People and Others)* by Olivera Marković Savić and *Etnička distanca studenata na severu Kosova i Metohije i u Beogradu (Ethnic Distance of Students in Northern Kosovo and Metohija and in Belgrade)* by Uroš Šuvaković and Jasmina Petrović which presents the instruments and outcomes of the study on ethnic distance and stereotypes. This book contains not only useful information on the methodology (adapted to the local context), but also important data on post-war Mitrovica.

The available sources also present an image of Mitrovica as a tourist attraction. Mitrovica was mentioned in the work describing notable memorials and places in Kosovo published by the tourist organisation in Kosovo in former Yugoslavia – *Kosova. Monumentet dhe bukuritë (Kosovo. Monuments and Attractions)* (Qukiq 1971). The best source of information about present-day Mitrovica and the current narrative on particular places and sites could be the *Mitrovica guide* website together with a *Facebook* profile operating since January 2013, under the motto – *Mitrovica guide. Source of Information & Host of Memories*<sup>10</sup>. In this context, the work *Mitrovica dhe rrethina. Mozaik informative (Mitrovica and Its Surroundings. Informative Mosaic)* may also be useful, because it presents the contemporary reception (Albanian narrative) of Mitrovica's heritage. Similar contemporary studies or guides about the city as well as other informative materials (e.g. maps), published with potential visitors in mind, are hardly ever available in Serbian.

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<sup>10</sup> For more information, refer to: <http://mitrovicaguide.com/>, accessed: 05.2017.

Mitrovica was also mentioned in compilations of travel journals, reportage and popular scientific literature, e.g. *Balkan Ghosts: A Journey Through History* by Robert D. Kaplan, *Wild Europe: The Balkans in the Gaze of Western Travellers* by Božidar Jezernik, *Povesti i slike iz Kosovske Mitrovice 1944-1955 (Tales and Pictures from Kosovska Mitrovica 1944-1955)* and *Шехер-Митровица под Звечаном (Šeher-Mitrovica under Zvečan)* by Dragan Frtunić and *Код Старог Бунара. Приче о старој Митровици (At the Old Well. Stories of Old Mitrovica)* by Miodrag Radomirović.

It is only after the Kosovo War that Mitrovica begins to be characterised as a divided city. Some of the works are devoted exclusively to the case of Mitrovica (Pavlović 2016, Marković 2010, Dhermi 2009, Pinos 2016), while others present Mitrovica as a divided city comparing it with the other cities in the region (Shaw 2003, Gusić 2013, Radović 2013). The most common notion of the division of the city refers to the ethnic/national dimension, visible in its functional, social or symbolic/spatial order. Nevertheless, while certain works present a superficial analysis of contemporary Mitrovica built exclusively on intergroup conflict, others, even though they refer to intergroup rifts as the main reason for division, provide a more in-depth analysis of Mitrovica.

For instance, in *Kosovo's Mitrovica. The Symbolic Paradise of an Ethnic Apartheid* Eda Derhemi, after only one-day observation, makes a strong, unambiguous claim that Mitrovica itself is the symbol of ethnic division in Kosovo and every part of it is positioned in relation to the discourse of division and hostility (Derhemi 2009)<sup>11</sup>.

In comparison, although in his PhD thesis *Свакодневни живот становника северне Косовске Митровице (Everyday life of North Kosovska Mitrovica Residents)* Aleksandar Pavlović emphasises the divisions in Mitrovica along ethnic lines, at the same time revealing a significant difference in the Serbian community. Pavlović argues that solidarity among Serbs in North Mitrovica remains the main social imperative, in relation to which all other social relations in the Serbian community are positioned in the background. However, solidarity among Serbs, derived from the feeling of kinship and proximity as well as shared

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<sup>11</sup> Derhemi's article is part of *Conflict and Cooperation in Divided Cities* ed. by J. Jańczak. The publication is a collection of diverse case studies of divided cities such as Jerusalem, Sarajevo, Belfast, Nicosia, Ceuta and Melilla, Opole, Szczecin, Gorizia-Nova Gorica, Valga-Valka, Narva-Ivangorod, Słubice/Frankfurt, Berlin, Copenhagen-Malmö, Tornio-Haparanda, Brussels, Helsinki, Kosovo's Mitrovica and Luxembourg. The authors represent different academic disciplines and approaches, therefore a common definition of a 'divided city' cannot be expected. The divisions reflect national, ethnic, religious, linguistic, and other differences, which, depending on the case study, are introduced by state borders, lines of demarcation, fences and walls, informal rules, as well as invisible lines. The book presents different forms and phases of conflict and cooperation in urban space in diverse historical contexts.

ethnicity in opposition to Albanians, is not the whole story (Pavlović, 2016). Along with acts of solidarity, Pavlović deftly identifies the elements of division in the Serbian community due to residential status (there is a difference between a native inhabitant – *starosedelac* and a newcomer – *doseljenik*), socioeconomic stratification (as a consequence of economic decline and the lack of a legal framework that could prevent an increase in crime), and due to the issue of North Kosovo's political status (Pavlović, 2016). Moreover, this study was based on fieldwork carried out between 2012 and 2014. Although it does not include information about the entire city, it still examines everyday practices, economic situation, social structure and mutual relations of Serbs, the identification of Albanians as *Other*, as well as the urban space itself.

Mitrovica as a divided city is also presented in reports prepared by a number of foreign and local organisations such as Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe (hereinafter OSCE), United Nations Development Programme (hereinafter UNDP), International Crisis Group (hereinafter ICG), and The Kosovar Stability Initiative. Most of the reports focus mainly on security issues and examine the socio-political context, thus remaining an invaluable source of information on the current situation in the city and the region.

Mitrovica is presented together with other examples of divided cities from the region and beyond. In existing comparative studies, Mitrovica is analysed along with Beirut, Belfast, Jerusalem, Mostar, Nicosia, Vukovar and less common examples – Lagos, Treichville and Johannesburg (Björkdahl, Gusic 2013, Grob, Papadovassilakis, Vincente 2016, Gusic 2017, Shaw 2003, Radović 2013).

In *Mostar and Mitrovica. Contested Grounds for Peacebuilding* Annika Björkdahl and Ivan Gušić present the cases of these two cities in order to understand the friction that emerges in the interaction between international and local peacebuilding actors, as well as discourses and practices in divided cities. In Srđan Radović's *Grad kao tekst (The City As a Text)* Kosovska Mitrovica is mentioned alongside Belfast, Brussels and Mostar; however, it is not analysed in this study as an example of a city divided as much as Mostar and Sarajevo. In *A Tale of Three Cities: Considering Divided Cities in the Former Yugoslavia* Emily Shaw analyses Mitrovica together with Mostar and Vukovar, former industrial and multi-ethnic urban centres of socialist Yugoslavia, in the context of the post-war integration process. Shaw claims that in each case the separation of the cities is viewed as an unfortunate and temporary

side-effect of the war without adequate analysis of the quality of separation itself (Shaw 2003). Shaw focuses on the dynamics of division from the perspective of interests of larger groups and emphasises the relationships between the division of the cities and larger-group conflicts, potential symbolic meaning of those cities in the context of battles led by political leaders, as well as the relationship between particular decisions of larger groups and their most preferred outcomes in divided cities.

To sum up, ever since the period of socialist Yugoslavia, whenever extended monographs (usually ideologically marked) on Mitrovica were published, no study describing the overall situation in the city (taking into consideration its northern and southern part) has appeared, not to mention any collaborative works. Articles (i.e. shorter forms) constitute the majority of contemporary publications on the subject, and, more often than not, they concentrate on the division along ethnic lines, i.e. are devoted to security issues, reconciliation process and peacebuilding in the post-conflict area, and the status of Kosovo. Moreover, many works either deliver a rather superficial analysis of contemporary Mitrovica or concentrate on one part of the city.

With the above in mind, it is fair to say that we still lack a contemporary monograph on Mitrovica, which would take into account the city as a whole and be based on mixed methods involving diligent empirical research. There seems to be a need for a comprehensive synthesis of the city, free from unilateral, national, and ideological perspectives, one that would reflect the complexity of the city structure. The value of the proposed thesis results from the multicultural and multilingual character of the written sources and texts of culture used. The thesis is based on sources in Albanian, English, Polish and Serbian.

## **1.2. Theoretical basis and main research categories**

The theoretical basis of this thesis are the works in the field of anthropology and sociology of urban spaces and public life (Jałowiecki, Szczepański 2009, Majer 2010, Low 1999, Wnuk-Lipiński 2008) with particular emphasis on liberal arts orientation in city research (sociology of everyday life and semiological perspective), studies that combine history and other humanities, concerning research on the sites of memory and collective memory (Nora 1984/1998, Szpociński 1983/2008, Sujecka 2005), historical and political studies analysing the history of the city and the region over the centuries (presented in the

previous subchapter), as well as various analyses in the humanities and social sciences devoted to the problems of divided cities (Kulczyńska 2014, Kotek 1999, Bollens 2012, Nagle 2016, Shaw 2003). In order to provide a comprehensive analysis of Mitrovica as a divided city, the thesis includes the following types of sources: single-case research on Mitrovica as a divided city, comparative studies which include Mitrovica, works on East-Central and South-Eastern Europe and on Balkan divided cities paying special attention to historical background and studies on divided cities characterised by ethnic/national conflict.

'Divided city' is the main research category of this thesis. The majority of researchers emphasise the importance of the strategy of symbolic space building in divided cities and the interrelation between urban space and socio-political conflicts (Nagle 2016, Bollens 2012, Radović 2013, Kotek 1999) as well as the importance of actors within the peacebuilding process and the impact of their decisions on structuring the relationships between people and between groups in divided cities (Bollens 2012, Nagle 2016). Based on the state of the art, I have selected two more categories crucial for the analysis of a contemporary divided city: *site of memory* and *actor of urban space*.

The analysis of the literature on divided cities resulted in the proposed structure of the analytical chapters that corresponds with the main research categories. Due to the fact that many researchers perceive historical context as vital in explaining the phenomenon of the divided city (Anderson 2010, Kulczyńska 2014, Kotek 1999, Nagle 2016), particularly the collapse of empires and emergence of modern national states, an overview of Mitrovica's past was introduced into this thesis. The analytical chapters will refer to the three main dimensions of urban space divisions: symbolic, social and functional. All research categories will be introduced in this chapter.

## DIVIDED CITY

Research on divided cities covers the multiplicity of fragmentation aspects (social, economic, ethnic, political, confessional, racial, mental/material etc.) and the diversity of approaches, definitions, and methodologies (Allegra, Casaglia, Rokem 2012). Literature on the topic provides various examples of divided cities (from Berlin, Nicosia, Jerusalem, Belfast, Mostar to Paris, London or NY) and identifies a number of reasons for partition: globalisation and intensified migration, industrialisation and urbanisation, deindustrialisation

and the ensuing income inequalities, historical or political decisions that result in border changes, uncovered problems with functioning in a varied environment (due to ethnicity, religion, origins and specific ways of behaviour), or difficulties with the distribution of space and goods. Depending on the intensification of regional and global processes, divisions in the urban space have different facets. Some authors of articles on divided cities provide a direct definition of a divided city, while others focus on the characteristics of divided cities. There is also a group of authors who find the notion of a divided city self-explanatory and do not conceptualise it as a (research) category. The most common idea is that such cities are ruptured by constructed rather than primordial divisions (Nagle 2016) in a violent conflict (Nagle 2016, Bollens), as a consequence of historical events and political decisions (Kulczyńska 2014, Kotek) or as a result of broadly understood globalisation processes (van Kempen 2007).

The category of divided city is undoubtedly ambiguous. Therefore, when making an attempt to conceptualise it, many aspects must be taken into consideration. Should we pay more attention to the causes or to the consequences of dissolution? Is it necessary to describe the dynamics of (dis)integration? What is the reason for identifying and defining the phenomenon of a divided city at all? Which features are constitutive for the category of divided city? Is it not true that every city is in a way divided? Therefore, what kinds of divisions are important and when do they actually matter? Should we pay attention, first of all, to the divisions which led to the dysfunction of the city as a whole? Eventually, who makes such a decision?

The category of divided city often appears along with other adjectives describing the city, such as polarised, contested, frontier, border, partitioned, fragmented, distinct; or characteristics like violent, turbulent, multicultural, deindustrialised, postmodern, sacred, multi-ethnic etc. Such terms should not be used without a clear explanation – although all of them allude to complicated urban circumstances, each puts emphasis on different aspects of cities' fragmentation, as well as describing different environments at different times (Bollens 2007). Apparently, there is a significant difference between cities segregated predominantly by race, ethnicity, or class.

One must admit that every city is somehow divided, while an *undivided* city is simultaneously a myth and a utopia (van Kempen 2006). Nevertheless, for the purposes of scientific analysis, a detailed conceptualisation for this category is essential. For instance,

even though several studies define New York as a divided city, it can hardly be used as a context for divisions in Mitrovica (see: van Kempen 2007).

Taking into consideration research on divided cities in the global perspective, the following comparative studies are worth mentioning: *City and Soul in Divided Societies* by Scott A. Bollens, *Social Movements in Violently Divided Societies: Constructing Conflict and Peacebuilding* by John Nagle, *Divided Cities: Belfast, Beirut, Jerusalem, Mostar, and Nicosia* by Jon Calame and Esther Charlesworth, and *From Empires to Ethno-national Conflicts: A Framework for Studying 'Divided Cities' in 'Contested States'* by James Anderson.

*City and Soul in Divided Societies* analyses the on-going problems of managing cohabitation in divided cities based on nine main case studies (Jerusalem, Beirut, Belfast, Johannesburg, Nicosia, Sarajevo, Mostar, Bilbao and Barcelona) with references to other divided cities (Brussels, Montreal and Baghdad). Bollens presents a critical analysis of peacebuilding and reconciliation process in divided cities and argues that professional responses to spatial divisions play an important role in the processes of conflict resolution.

In this publication, as well as in his previous works, Bollens's primarily focuses on politically divided cities and the relationship between nationalist/ethnic conflict and urbanism. He labels cities polarised or contested 'where the very legitimacy of their political structures and their rules of decision-making and governance are strongly contested by ethnic groups who either seek an equal or proportionate share of power or demand group-based autonomy or independence' (Bollens 2007). Bollens emphasises the importance of planners (urbanists, urban planners) and policymakers' decisions on structuring relationships between people and groups in divided cities. According to his research, as a result of faulty policy, divided cities remain constrained and quartered, deprived of long-range urban planning and a common zone, and are characterised by a fragmented public service system (electricity, water supply, education etc.). Post-war nationalist divisions are reinforced by parallel institutions, demographic manipulation, obstruction of comprehensive integrative mechanisms, and corruption of public power for private and/or ethnicised benefits (Bollens 2007). According to Bollens, in societies of potent ethnic territoriality cities can be the only places where the necessities of economic need and interdependence bring people together (Bollens 2007); therefore he argues to provide urban interventions at the micro level that would stimulate a bottom-up approach.



Similarly to Bollens's views on urban interventions, John Nagle perceives the activity of social mobilisation in urban space as a complementary peacebuilding element. In *Social Movements in Violently Divided Societies. Constructing Conflict and Peacebuilding*, Nagle introduces a social movement approach to the study of violently divided societies. In his works Nagle does not provide a direct definition of a divided city, focusing instead on urban spaces violently divided as a result of armed conflicts and/or deep sectarian conflicts over the legitimacy of state sovereignty, referring to the cases of Beirut, Belfast, Mostar, Jerusalem and Sarajevo (Nagle 2009, 2013). Divided cities are characterised by semi-permanent ethnic rifts, high levels of endogamy and social segregation (Nagle 2013). According to Nagle, divisions are constructed through colonial *divide et impera* and/or modern state-building processes (Nagle 2016) and are reinforced by historically embedded patterns of social segregation and endogamy, meaning that the levels of intergroup distrust are high and group boundaries are sharp enough so that 'membership is clear and, with few exceptions, unchangeable' (Nagle after Lustick, 1979).

The researcher presents a critical approach to neoliberal post-war reconstruction in divided cities, which facilitates further division rather than integration, mainly through devolving power to small cliques or elites that capture the state to serve their own economic and political interests and use divisive rhetoric to maintain their position of power within ethnoreligious groups (Nagle 2016). Using the examples of Belfast and Beirut, Nagle illustrates how urban space in divided cities is used in the service of antagonistic ethno-national projects (Nagle 2016) and emphasises (after Lefebvre) that urban space remains a constitutive dimension for socio-political conflicts (Lefebvre 1991, Nagle 2013, 2016). According to Nagle urban social movements may help ameliorate or contest the politics of ethnic antagonism in divided cities (Nagle 2013). He introduces a sociological perspective to the research on divided cities combining Lefebvre's right-to-the-city theory with non-sectarian social movements' struggle to forge participatory democracy in the city.

In Jöel Kotek's *Divided Cities in the European Cultural Context* the definition of a frontier city functions as a description of a divided city perceived mostly in the political context or identified as a consequence of geo-political changes. The collapse of multinational empires and return to national narration and a nation-state model (ethnic rather than civic) are considered the main factors determining divisions. According to Kotek, frontier cities or regions are not only polarised on an ethnic or ideological basis but are, above all, disputed because of their location on fault-lines between ethnic, religious or ideological wholes. To

summarise it with Kotek's metaphor, a frontier city is a territory for two dreams (Kotek 1999). He emphasises three elements that characterise any frontier city: sovereignty's quarrel, double legitimacy and conflict. The notion of multi-ethnic, polarised or multicultural is rejected as an indispensable part of the definition, because it does not necessarily implement opposing claims. Nevertheless, it can be a part of city's characteristics.

He describes the realities of Brussels, Belfast and Jerusalem, while also giving examples of other contemporary and historical cities and regions. As a reference point for his analysis, Kotek identifies several characteristic elements which describe a frontier city: disputed area, importance of political control, buffer zone, dynamic space, mixed spaces threatened by extinction, a place that often remains *lieux de mémoire*.

Among others, Kotek presents the example of Kosovo. In quarrels around this disputed area he identifies the opposition between the right to self-determination (a principle of democratic legitimacy) and historical rights (historical legitimacy) as two dreams for one territory. Since in 1999, when the article was published, divisions in Mitrovica were of an entirely different nature than today, the author refers to the example of Peja/Peć city as a significant *lieux de mémoire*, historic cradle of the Serbian nation, to describe the meaning of symbolic (holy) place (Kotek 1999). Rather than describing specific case studies in detail, Kotek discusses them superficially through historical and political events, decisions and processes as well as the current status of a given disputed territory. The article provides an overview of extremely different fragmented cities and regions.

Finally, James Anderson proposes to pay attention to the common origins of ethnically divided cities at the peripheries of empires, instead of interpreting division through the most recent conflict. Anderson argues that their common origins at the peripheries of empires, particularly during the endgames of empires, and the specifically nationalist nature of their conflicts are much more important than major ethnic cleavages of religion and language (Anderson 2008). Located at the edges of empires in the period of decline, future divided cities

*involved the typically empire mechanism of 'divide and rule,' politically using, and in the process strengthening, even creating, ethnic divisions, and constructing hierarchies and animosities between more and less favoured ethnic communities, or, more benignly, allowed them an element of self-administration (Anderson 2008).*

Anderson states that during the period of nation formation empires provided the common historical point of origins for the future ethno-nationally divided cities by introducing policies based on the 'divide and rule' principle and developing imperial nationalism (Anderson 2008). Moreover, he points out that empires are also responsible for nationalism developing around the ethnicities of language and religion, since it was them that politicised those differences.

Based on the limited number of publications on the subject, research on divided cities in Europe is a relatively new phenomenon. Increased interest in this topic, also in Poland, can be observed from the 1990s, when political changes in East-Central Europe took place (Kulczyńska, 2014)<sup>12</sup>. In *Miasta podzielone w Europie (Divided Cities in Europe)* Katarzyna Kulczyńska provides a general description of divided cities in Europe, focusing on their genesis, typology, and synthetic characterisation based on their area and population. According to the author, divided cities have appeared as a result of changes in the course of state boundaries, largely caused by the two world wars or by the disintegration of certain states. In Europe divided cities came into being during the first half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century as a consequence of Napoleonic Wars and the Congress of Vienna, when the concept of a national state emerged. Further territorial changes in Europe in the 20<sup>th</sup> century as a result of two world wars and socio-political changes in East-Central Europe resulted in rupturing further cities located on newly created borders. The beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> century brought a growing number of new borders in the Balkans following the creation of Montenegro, Serbia and Kosovo. They were torn in a historical process by a country border into two separate urban organisms which from the moment of separation belong to two different political systems (Kulczyńska 2014).

According to Kulczyńska, divided cities (as opposed to 'contact' ones) are characteristic of East-Central and South-Eastern Europe, where the fluidity of boundaries and changes in the territorial ranges of states was the most pronounced. She identifies 19 pairs of ruptured cities across different borders in Europe (internal and external borders of the EU<sup>13</sup>),

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<sup>12</sup> In *Miasta podzielone w Europie* Kulczyńska identifies several works which together present a multidimensional perspective on the issue of a divided city and remain characteristic of changes taking place in selected divided cities with a particular focus on historical, socio-cultural and spatial dimensions. Kulczyńska presents a literature review on divided cities, mostly taking into consideration Polish researchers, focusing on local case studies. Among the most popular examples of the cities on the Polish-German border on Odra river (Frankfurt (Oder)/Ślubice, Zgorzelec/Görlitz, Gubin/Guben) and the Polish-Czech border (Cieszyn/Český Těšín).

<sup>13</sup> Polish-German (Frankfurt (Oder)/Ślubice, Zgorzelec/Görlitz, Gubin/Guben, Łęknica/Bad Muskau), Polish-Czech (Cieszyn/Český Těšín), Dutch-Belgian (Baarle-Nassau/Baarle Hertog), Dutch-German

among which 12 are located in East-Central Europe. Some cities were excluded from the analysis due to insufficient statistical data: South and North Nicosia, Bosanski Brod and Slavonski Brod. Moreover, the author did not include the case of Bosanska Kostajnica and Hrvatska Kostajnica on the Bosnian-Croatian border or of Bosnian cities divided by internal administrative borders, such as Mostar and Sarajevo. Even though the analysis was published in 2014, it omits the case of Mitrovica. Taking into consideration Kulczyńska's definition of a divided city, it seems that it was excluded due to the problematic status of Kosovo.

Certainly, one can identify more examples of divided cities in the Balkans than those taken into consideration by Kulczyńska. There might be several reasons why divided cities in the Balkans are still not explored enough. First, a study on the cities in the Balkans might be quite challenging due to the lack of data or access to such data. Kulczyńska identified the pair of 'Slavonski Brod and Bosanski Brod,' but could not include it in her analysis due to the scarcity of sources. Second, the conceptualisation of the category may exclude from the analysis cities divided by internal administrative borders, such as Mostar (Pilić, Bošnjak 2011) and Sarajevo (Potyrała 2009). The analysis also excludes the case of Bosanska Kostajnica and Hrvatska Kostajnica on the Bosnian-Croatian border, probably due to the fact that these cities are relatively small and not widely known. Finally, it is worth mentioning here that cities like Vukovar (Shaw 2003, Čorkalo & Biruški & Ajduković 2009), Pristina (Ermolin 2015) and Skopje (Janev 2011, 2015) are also analysed as examples of divided cities in the Balkans.

Srdjan Radović's *Grad kao tekst* exemplifies a study which includes the category of divided city. Radović analyses divided cities in post-Yugoslav countries in the context of symbolic conflict over urban space. Radović (using the examples of Berlin, Jerusalem and Nicosia) perceives divided cities as cities ruptured between two entities in historical or political circumstances, as well as those polarised as a result of cultural, economic, ethnic and other differences (Radović 2013). Radović presents several characteristics and means of symbolic re(construction) of urban space in divided cities that reaffirmed formal and informal division of urban area. Mostar (Bosnia), characterised by Radović also as an example of *toponymic nationalism*, remains the paradigmatic divided city in the region. Radović

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(Kerkrade/Herzogenrath), Austrian-Slovenian (Bad Radkersburg/Gornja Radgona), Austrian-Czech (Gmünd/České Velenice), Hungarian-Slovak (Komárom/Komárno), Estonian-Latvian (Valga/Valka), Finnish-Swedish (Tornio/Haparanda), Italian/Slovenian (Gorizia/Nova Gorica), Swedish-German (Laufenburg/Laufenburg [Baden], Rheinfelden/Rheinfelden [Baden]), Estonian-Russian (Narva/Ivangorod), Greek-Turkish, Republic of Cyprus and Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus (Nicosia/North Nicosia), Croatian-Bosnian (Slavonski Brod/Bosanski Brod), and Italian-Vatican (Rome/Vatican).

describes the complex process of symbolic changes in the city's topography, including the selective reconstruction of destroyed city tissue, the new memorialisation concept as well as the intervention into the urban toponymy, using the example of the presence of secular (bridge) and sacral (church, mosque, cross) objects, street names, significant places etc. The description of commemorative strategies in East and West Mostar is followed by the analysis of similar competing symbolic policies in Sarajevo and East Sarajevo. Radović is convinced that the strategy of symbolic space-building in divided cities strengthens bounded space and the impenetrability of national identity. Only the change of identity policy could result in a decrease in spatial and symbolic division between different communities.

## SITE OF MEMORY

One of the analytical chapters is devoted to the analysis of the symbolic dimension of urban space. The main research category used for the purposes of interpreting the semantic space of Mitrovica is 'site of memory' understood as cultural symbol including proper names of objectified cultural products and the names of historical events as well as heroes, deemed important by members of a particular community (Szpociński, 1983; 2007).

'Site of memory' is a category introduced in *Mémoire collective* by the French historian Pierre Nora (Nora 1947). Initially, *lieux de mémoire* were places in the literal sense of the word, where communities leave their memories and perceive them as an inseparable part of their personality, like historical archives, monuments to their heroes or particular places of gathering. In the preface to the English edition of *Realms of Memory: Rethinking the French Past*, Nora admits to have moved from the relatively narrow (which emphasised the site) to the relatively broad concept of *lieux de mémoire* (with the focus on memory) (Nora, 1998). He goes on to define this concept as follows:

*a lieu de mémoire is any significant entity, whether material or non-material in nature, which by dint of human will or the work of time has become a symbolic element of the memorial heritage of any community* (Nora 1998).

In Poland, the notion of 'sites of memory' (*miejsca pamięci*) was introduced by Andrzej Szpociński in *Kanon historyczny (Historical Canon)*. The author perceives sites of memory, not merely as tangible objects, such as historical places, memorials or mythical paintings, but also as figures of memory (important historical figures inherited from distant or

recent history, to whom certain places, objects, traditions, cultures, beliefs, national identities are related), or events which have shaped a nation's collective memory and its modern identity (Szpociński 1983/2003).

Marcin Kula, another Polish researcher, goes even further and proposes a much wider context using the term *historical memory carrier* (*nośnik pamięci historycznej*). According to Kula such a carrier could be anything to which the community and the individual attach value (historical figure, place of the event, the event itself) (Kula 2002).

The term 'sites of memory' is particularly functional in confrontational research, devoted to neighbouring and multi-level cultures (Sujecka 2005, 2008). It allows us to present complex relations between more national canons or (collective) memory narratives. Sites of memory analysed in *Балкански места на паметта. Терминът Македония и образът на Никола Вапцаров в българския и македонския времепространствен континуум* (*The Balkan Sites of Memory: The concept of Macedonia in the Bulgarian and Macedonian Space-Time Continuum*) verbalise the values treated by Bulgarian and Macedonian intelligentsia as an integral part of their identity (Sujecka, 2005). The term defined by Szpociński is here enriched by the territorial dimension, becoming a past space-time continuum that embraces past events and their participants (Sujecka 2005).

The analysis of the symbolic dimension of urban space is extremely relevant, because it provides information about values important to the community and its identity (Szpociński, 1983; 2003; 2007). The relevance of non-verbal communication is undeniable; what is more, in everyday life, it is even more common than communication in specific languages (Csáky 2012). It is important to identify and describe the most significant sites of memory in order to determine whether the symbolic sphere points to a division of the city or, to the contrary, its cohesion. In addition, it is crucial to establish whether there is some symbolic conflict in urban space (Nijakowski 2006), whether the symbolic space remains a platform of conflict or rather of integration (Szpociński 1983), whether the analysis of urban space uncovers common, different or mutually exclusive narratives. Eventually, what is the aim of the actions taken by actors of urban space within the scope of symbolic policy – is it to integrate, to maintain the division, or to exacerbate the conflict? Research on this aspect of urban space is particularly interesting and valid, as changes to urban space are introduced even now and are relevant to the urban community (often causing emotional reactions).

Many significant remarks in this context can be found in Andrzej Szpociński's analysis of the collective memory phenomenon as a factor for integration and a source of conflicts (Szpociński 2009). Considering the dispute over Polish memory, the author identifies two main problems: opposing approaches towards the same events and the practical character of the quarrel. Opposite positions resulted from radically different perceptions of the same facts by the participants of past events, who belong to different national and social groups, often former enemies, today's equal participants in the public discourse. New interpretation of the past becomes an argument in the fight for compensation for past injustice inflicted by other groups, their representatives or ancestors.

Another important work tackling the issue of conflicts in the symbolic dimension is *Domeny symboliczne. Konflikty narodowe i etniczne w wymiarze symbolicznym (Symbolic Domains. National and Ethnic Conflicts in the Symbolic Dimension)* by Lech M. Nijakowski. Conflict in the symbolic dimension means a struggle between two or more specific groups (cultural, national, ethnic, racial etc. minorities) which try to destroy or change material symbols of another group (e.g. monuments, graves, objects of cult). The study offers an introduction to the theory of national and ethnic conflict, an aspect extremely relevant to the research on Mitrovica. It contains a detailed analysis of the terms 'territory' and 'space' and their meaning, as well as demonstrating the importance of the symbolic domain as a reservoir of symbolic capital. The work reflects on the role of objects commemorating historical events in the society and the typology of different types of monuments. Finally, the book contains case studies of Silesian, Ukrainian, Jewish, Romani, Belarusian and Latvian communities living in Poland (Nijakowski 2006).

The issue of memory sites has recently attracted attention of researchers from the Balkans (Sujecka 2008). From among the latest studies on collective memory and sites of memory special attention should be paid to the works of Olga Manojlović Pintar and Srdjan Radović. In *Arheologija sećanja. Spomenici i identiteti u Srbiji 1918-1989 (The Archaeology of Memory. Monuments and Identities in Serbia 1918-1989)* by examining the phenomenon of memorials, Pintar analyses how the political and ideological system of values was introduced into the space. According to the author, a monument should be perceived as a specific *topos* that maps the memory landscape and historical culture of the community. She identifies several important figures immortalised in monuments in that particular Serbian spatiotemporal context: women's figures, national heroes, fallen soldiers and civilians killed

during the war. In this study, memorials are perceived as archaeological artefacts, as material traces of the society which raised or destroyed them (Manojlović Pintar 2014).

Srdjan Radović in *Grad kao tekst (The City as Text)* analyses the broader context of post-socialist and post-Yugoslav cities where the change in political and economic system, the disintegration of the state, and the transformation of the entire national context can be observed along with their influence on the symbolic conceptualisation of the space. Radović examines the dynamics of cities' public space (creation and destruction of significant places) during the transformation of the political and national context. A city perceived as text is read through the names of public spaces, particularly street names, which act as reference points in urban space and the carriers of symbols shaping the city's identity. The work is based on sources from several cities of former Yugoslavia that went through a similar transformation process (from socialist to post-socialist framework, from Yugoslavian rule to independent national states), such as Belgrade, Zagreb, Pristina, Skopje, Mitrovica, Banja Luka, Mostar, Sarajevo, Ljubljana etc.

In this work, urban space is considered as a text of culture, rich in the symbol system (Radović, 2013), a platform where sites of memory are manifested. These sites of memory are: historical events (war of the 1990s, the assassination of the Russian consul in 1903, the Battle of Kosovo), places (Kosovo field, Prizren), historical and mythological images, mainly of individuals (Prince Lazar Hrebeljanović, Tsar Dušan, Isa Boletini, Adem Jashari, Mother Teresa, Teuta) present through their materialisation in urban space: sacral and secular objects, historical places, memorials, monuments, street names, tombstones, busts, plaques etc.

The main source of data is the urban space itself explored through participants' observation. The analysis of contemporary urban space is enriched by written, visual and audio-visual materials on the city and its urban space, as well as by the results of research on residents' reception of the urban space of Mitrovica (collected during structured and semi-structured interviews).

As emphasised by Csáky, when elaborating on the selectivity of memory content, with the change of the signifier, the signified may also change (Csáky 2012); therefore, it is important to pay attention to former sites of memory. For this reason this thesis includes an analysis of the selected sites of memory which were relevant in the past, but are today neglected, forgotten or destroyed (of particular interest is the attitude of current residents towards the sites of memory from the Yugoslavian period). In this context both the presence



and absence of particular elements of urban landscape are perceived as relevant signs, since they communicate the acceptance or denial of a particular narrative.

In *Miejsca pamięci. O niebywalej karierze pewnej koncepcji badawczej (Places of Remembrance. The Incredible Career of a Certain Research Concept)* Kornelia Kończal presents Nora's research perspective and its interpretation in the international context analysing the studies on sites of memory in several countries: Switzerland, Belgium, Luxembourg, Russia, Austria, the Netherlands, Germany, Italy and France. According to Kończal, taking into consideration all the differences between particular approaches, it appears that the only common ground that connects all those concepts is a close link between sites of memory and collective identity, as well as the focus on history of the second degree (Kończal 2013). The first problem that she identifies is the category itself, as it implies a wide range of definitions from metaphorical to strictly topographical. Another issue is the diversity of objectives and motivations, from scientific to political. Moreover, what distinguishes all the initiatives is the focus on different historical periods. The all, however, strive to depart from factography, linear narration, political and event history and to turn towards the symbolic dimension of the past, collective representations and the analysis of forms and functions that exploit the past for the purposes of current needs.

Although the concept of *lieux de mémoire* remains far from unequivocal, there is no doubt that sites of memory became a research category which enriches traditional approaches. Furthermore, this term proved its functionality with reference to phenomena emerging in the environment of cultural and ethnic contacts (Sujecka 2005). Hopefully, this analysis will also prove applicable to urban space studies due to enhancing their potential.

## ACTOR OF URBAN SPACE

The aim of the final analytical chapter is to analyse integration and disintegration processes in the urban organism of Mitrovica. Even though this analytical category remains the focus of this part of the thesis, it is linked with other aspects of integration and disintegration processes.

'Actor of urban space' or 'actor of social creation of space' (Jałowiecki, Szczepański 2010) is a category that has been changing through centuries depending on the historical

period and the level of the development of the city. In various studies it is termed differently, but in practice it signifies mostly the same phenomenon.

In this study, actors of urban space are identified as individuals and/or institutions that make relevant decisions regarding urban space; they are individual, collective, institutional and non-institutional subjects which play and take on various roles: foreground, background and episodic using a whole range of various props, such as symbols, slogans, programs, signs, adverts, letters, press articles, broadcasts etc. (Jałowiecki, Szczepański, 2010). The author of *Miasto i przestrzeń w perspektywie socjologicznej (The City and Space in Sociological Perspective)* emphasised that this category changes depending on the historical context and depends on the basic configuration of social forces in a given historical epoch and particular society. The book identifies four major historical periods along with their characteristic actors that will be the reference point of this analysis. During the pre-industrial era, actors of social creation of space were predominantly the representatives of the ruling class (kings, princes and feudal lords) and residents (burgesses, merchants and craftsmen). The abolition of city's autonomy and an increase in the centralist power of the state resulted in the domination of the ruler as the main creator of urban space. In the industrial era, new actors emerge – industrial entrepreneurs who operate together with the state. The 20<sup>th</sup> century brings the reconfiguration of the system and new relevant actors: economic organisations and the representatives of specialised professional groups (e.g. architects, urbanists, urban planners). From the perspective of real socialism the most significant ones are: state and political institutions as well as industrial and construction enterprises. Among new actors characteristic of the post-industrial period, the following entities should be mentioned: (international) corporations, real estate development companies and local governments.

Of course this model of city development is neither universal nor rigorous. The goal of this short description is to present the main development trends applying primarily to European cities. In the global context, all the actors appear in various configurations linked together with different interrelations.

Nevertheless, one must remember that European cities located within the Ottoman Empire were planned and managed differently from Western European cities, with regard to both the urban and social dimension. There is a great difference between the urban order of Habsburg and Ottoman cities. What is of particular significance, the population of Ottoman cities was divided into socially-based *mahalas*; for instance, in the 19<sup>th</sup>-century Belgrade there

were Turkish, Serbian, Jewish and Roma districts (Stojanović 2012). The ideal city's landscape in the Ottoman Empire was dominated by single-storey houses; narrow, rough and curvy cobbled streets; as well as mosques and crowded markets that remained at the centre of social life. Moreover, due to cities' geopolitical localisation and additional roles as garrisons, seats of districts or frontlines, the process of modernisation was delayed or even halted compared to Eastern European cities (Stojanović 2012). The above-mentioned circumstances had a significant impact on the development of cities like Mitrovica. In addition, the specific context of their development engendered a complex configuration of urban actors. They will be discussed in detail when analysing the real and imagined space of the city.

The category of urban actor or actor of urban space appears in research on divided cities explicit or implicit. In addition to analysing written sources and maps, Radović also conducted empirical research. With the aim of understanding formal and informal structures as well as relations which influenced the process of shaping the city as text, he carried out several semi-structured interviews with actors of urban space. Radović identifies them as representatives of two main groups: dominant – local authorities, presidents and members of the city commission for monuments and street naming, and marginal – NGO representatives, artists etc. (Radović 2013)

Bollens defines them as *urban planners* or *urbanists* and includes all individuals (within and outside of the government) involved in the anticipation of a city's or urban community's future and the preparation for it. Within the government, this category encompasses: town and regional planners, urban administrators and policymakers as well as national and regional urban policy officials. Outside of it: community leaders, project directors, the staff of non-governmental, community or voluntary sector organisations, scholars of urban and ethnic studies, and business leaders (Bollens 2007).

Nagle divides actors into two main groups: elites (sectarian groups) and non-sectarian groups that remain in a permanent conflict in urban space. Non-sectarian groups or social movements encompass lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) groups, environmentalists, trade unionists, tenants, the global justice movement, feminist groups, disabled and peace movements (Nagle 2013).

Shaw perceives Mitrovica, and Kosovo in general, as an interesting case in thinking about the potentially contradictory motives of larger groups and local actors. Even though after 1945 Kosovar Serbs and Kosovar Albanians had contradictory political perspectives, as

long as they were not triggered by larger-group concerns, they were able to coexist relatively peacefully (Shaw 2003).

According to the International Crisis Group Report<sup>14</sup> on Mitrovica there are several key players: the international community, Belgrade, Kosovo Albanians, the Serbs of the North. Taking this as a reference point for identifying urban actors in Mitrovica, I decided to include the residents of the city, even though their political significance appears to be marginal in the context of broader international politics.

In this study actors of urban space are identified as: inhabitants of the city, local politicians/political parties, non-governmental organisations, university, ethnic/national groups (which in divided societies tend to impose their will, Bollens 2007), international organisations (OSCE, UN), local businessmen (investors), foreign investors, authorities in Belgrade and in Pristina, international institutions/authorities in Brussels (EU), experts/professionals (urbanists, architects, sociologists, urban planners etc.), mass media, religious groups, foreign army (NATO)<sup>15</sup>. This selection of the essential actors of urban space was based on preliminary research, unofficial interviews and literature review. Their significance was measured through structured (the questionnaire asked the residents about the importance of particular actors) and semi-structured interviews.

In Mitrovica both communities had to pay a high price for the division. The dissolution of the city persists, with objects such as the bus station, Trepča mine<sup>16</sup>, Orthodox Church and Cemetery, Catholic Church, and sports facilities remaining in the south side of the city, and regional hospital, the majority of modern buildings, Bosniak *mahala* and Muslim Cemetery remaining in the north side. Over time on both sides of the river the respective communities created their own institutions (e.g. local administration, universities, sacral objects) that enable them to fulfil most of their vital needs without venturing to the other side. Nowadays, on the two sides of the bridge, one uses different currencies, languages, phone companies, means of transport, finds different products in local shops and notices the characteristic marks of symbolic landscapes (flags, sacral objects, street names, institutions, and monuments). However, it is not impossible to pay in euro on the north side of the river, to hear the other language, walk or travel by taxi to the other side, use different mobile phone

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<sup>14</sup> *Bridging Kosovo's Mitrovica Divide*, ICG Report 165/2005.

<sup>15</sup> The final chapter will detail the role of particular actors.

<sup>16</sup> Trepča Mine – Miniera e Trepçës (alb.), Рудник Трeпчa (srb.). Industrial complex crucial for the economic development of Mitrovica (and Kosovo region), especially from the 1920s onwards.

operators, find NGOs and universities that operate on both sides and to identify similar problems (garbage, lacking infrastructure, unemployment) as well as to recognise many common aspects of symbolic space (similar way of marking significant places or the selection of important motifs).

Despite the undisputed costs of dividing or administering a divided city, it seems that the symbolic value of the city to the larger group renders the inconveniences acceptable (Shaw 2003). Does it mean that inhabitants are ready to adjust to the circumstances in the name of ‘higher purpose’? To this end, it is essential to examine the locals’ attitude towards external actors and the residents’ sense of agency.

When considering the divided city, it is crucial to establish whether Mitrovica’s urban space, similar to other divided cities, is constructed predominantly by and in the service of antagonistic groups (in this case most probably ethnonational ones). If so, does there exist a need and a platform for alternative activities of other actors, especially city residents? Is there a sphere of political action where residents intermingle to produce agency, power and collective action? Finally, do they identify with the dominant groups’ policies or rather perceive them as hostile, harmful or insufficient?

With this in mind, it is vital to take into consideration all the actors of urban space and their interrelations as well as the significance of the particular divided city in various contexts: local, national, regional, and even global. It is essential to identify the importance of particular actors, their sense of agency (Wnuk-Lipiński 2008), attitudes towards representatives of other groups (of interest) and, last but not least, their understanding of concepts such as ‘citizen,’ ‘neighbour,’ and ‘citizens’ rights.’ By doing this we can obtain a clearer picture of whether the potential for introducing social change exists.

### **1.3. Mixed methods research in practice**

The thesis is based on the sources gathered during fieldwork in Mitrovica and the region. Fieldwork is understood as a set of practices, including the coexistence and living with the community within which one conducts research. Research for this thesis involved several methods which provided different kinds of materials: structured and semi-structured interviews (transcripts of interviews, questionnaires), unanticipated conversations (field

notes), observation involving partial participation (field notes), and the analysis of written and visual materials (literature and documents, field notes).

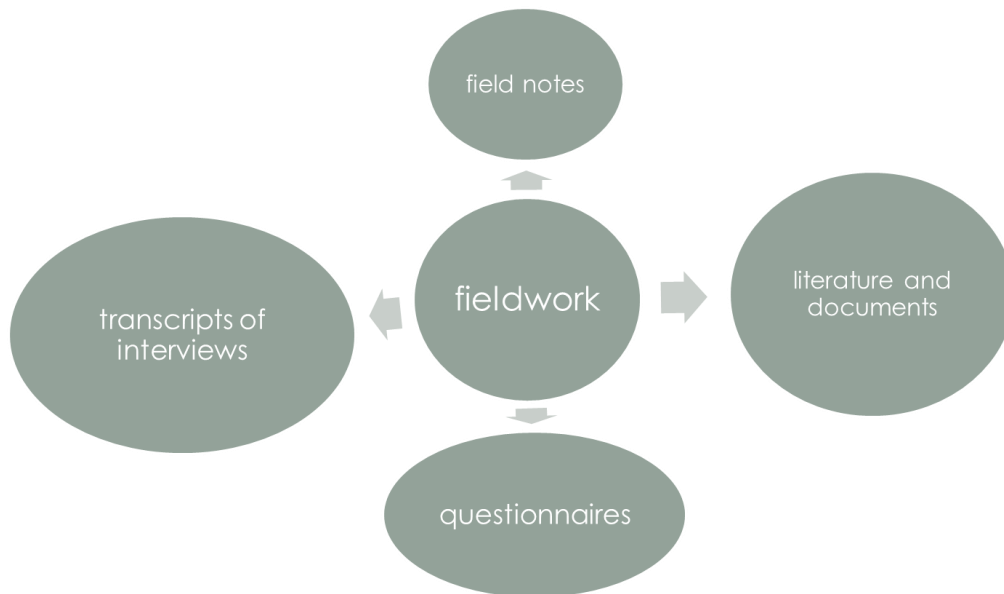


Diagram 1. Mixed methods research – materials obtained during fieldwork

The research was designed and conducted so as to mix different methods, therefore, it is crucial to present their mutual relations. All methods were complementary and crucial for the final outcome; however, they can be ranked in terms of their sequence and priority. It is important to underline the prevalence of qualitative research methods over quantitative ones with regard to the frequency with which these methods were used and their time-frame.

To ensure the validity of the results, a triangulation approach was applied. Triangulation means compiling data from various sources in order to determine the compliance of the results; it assumes that one research strategy is cross-checked against the results of using the method associated with another research strategy (Bryman 2012). It was demonstrated that the results of a case study and the conclusions drawn from them are usually more convincing and more accurate if they are based on different sources of information to which similar convergence can be attributed (Yin 1984/2015).

Participant observation and the analysis of documents and literature were conducted throughout the entire research period. The aim of these methods was to further elaborate the research structure, modify the project (if needed) as well as to verify the data obtained. Structured interviews in the form of a survey were conducted before the main phase of semi-structured interviews. The aim of quantitative research was to receive a set of diverse

responses from a large number of residents and thus to identify the scale of the phenomenon and predominant tendencies. Semi-structured interviews were aimed at verifying and deepening the outcomes obtained from the survey. The interviews provided valuable additional information, not foreseen in the scope of research. Data findings were then compared with the reviewed literature and used in the writing of analytical chapters.

The case study method was used in this thesis, as it identifies a contemporary phenomenon in its natural context as a subject of research, especially when no clear boundaries between the phenomenon and context can be determined. Therefore, this method addresses the need for understanding complex social phenomena, such as the city. Furthermore, this approach implies a specific research model and data collection method emphasising the role of triangulation (Yin 2015). In mixed research conducted within the case study approach, all methods must refer to the same research questions. Therefore, in this thesis methodological tools were created with regard to three main dimensions of urban space of divided city (symbolic, social and functional), which were selected on the basis of initial literature analysis, consultations and preliminary research.

Methodological tools as well as fieldwork in general were also prepared in accordance with the characteristic of the field: post-conflict territory of divided city, cultural and linguistic borderline.

The research carried out on post-conflict territory is inseparably linked with a strong intensification of basic fieldwork problems and the occurrence of unexpected complications<sup>17</sup>. Researchers may struggle with many problems resulting from the obstruction of the work of institutions, such as the lack of statistical data or limited access to the sources in archives and libraries. What is extremely important, post-conflict societies are incredulous and suspicious, i.e. not always willing to cooperate, either as individuals or representatives of particular entities. Bearing this in mind, it was crucial to approach local partners and interlocutors with the required knowledge of local practices and relations, and well-prepared research tools which would meet the expectations of all communities, e.g. with regard to question formulation or the selection of topics.

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<sup>17</sup> For more information on carrying out research in post-conflict borderland and its circumstances see: M. Maciulewicz, *In Search of Academic Identity. Reflections on Intercultural Partnership, Fieldwork and Researcher's Engagement*, [in] *Searching for Identity*, ed. by Jan Kieniewicz, Olha Tkachenko, Ayur Zhanaev, Warszawa 2019.

Since ‘borderland’ implies a combination of diverse cultural and linguistic orders, fieldwork in such a region entails multilingual research. Dilemmas resulting from such an approach affect every research stage, from the initial literature analysis and questionnaire preparation (more than one language version) to the transcription of interviews and the writing process itself. The work is bristling with dilemmas regarding language, the importance of local language command and translation difficulties (Ćwiek-Rogalska 2017), followed by issues pertaining to transcription and, eventually, the incorporation of obtained responses into the final text (Kudela-Świątek 2012). Not to mention the problem of whether or not to engage a translator during the research process. Other linguistic issues resulted from the nature of cultural/linguistic borderland, which requires confronting complex multilingual identities (Bielenin 2011).

Therefore, the organisation of fieldwork in a divided city necessitates establishing a particular agenda and putting extra effort to contact local inhabitants and institutions, cooperate with representatives of different groups as well as engage in the observed reality. It also requires creating specific research tools that take into account linguistic diversity, the complex structure of local community and cultural nuances.

### **1.3.1. Researcher’s positioning**

It has been demonstrated that the acknowledgement of researcher’s positioning through the process of reflection (critical self-evaluation) is essential in qualitative research. The disclosure of researcher’s stance in relation to the data is crucial for the reader to understand the researcher’s perspective. Berger argues that positioning refers to how researchers view themselves in relation to their research and data; i.e. their understanding of self in the creation of knowledge (Berger 2013).

In my opinion, there are several important aspects of my status as a researcher that may bear on the outcomes of this research: the status of a young student and junior researcher, of a foreigner (or the Other) as well as personal experience of living in a divided city.

The fact that I am a young student determined the outline of my research from its initial phase. From the very beginning I was trying to contact people of similar age, open to interethnic cooperation and keen to participate in a joint project. Therefore, during the research phase I stayed in touch with students and with people from the non-governmental



sector (e.g. young scholars, representatives of cultural institutions, ordinary citizens); this resulted in a limited contact with politicians and official representatives of various institutions. It is possible that my cooperation with mostly young and active people determined my positive personal experience with the residents of Mitrovica and influenced the outcomes of my research.

Furthermore, as a foreigner, temporary citizen, foreign student and researcher (with a particular categorisation system), I have experienced the sense of being a stranger, or *the Other*, at different stages of my research. Being a temporary citizen from another country signifies a specific relation with various public service offices, such as banks, the police etc. Foreigners experience their own otherness in their neighbourhood and in everyday life: while shopping, at the gym or in a cafeteria. The status of a foreign student and young researcher is extremely perceptible in places where student exchange programs and mobility are not that common and where such a person could be more frequently identified as a foreigner or by his/her nationality rather than name.

The problem of otherness also appears when an individual in the role of a researcher faces a different categorisation system. On the one hand, an attempt to assume the part of the Other may end in a muddling of one's own identity and the obliteration of research goals, and on the other, a priori domination of one's research field by one's own categories may result in losing touch with reality (Walczak, 2009). The researcher functioning between different categorisation systems needs to cope with the problem of otherness in this matter as well.

The experience of 'living' in a divided city and in a way becoming a part of its reality (e.g. memory of recent violence and strategies of coexistence) has its consequences for researcher's identity and the interpretation of the results. From my perspective, issues such as restrictions on free movement, changeable circumstances of living and working, different behaviour practices, e.g. among neighbours, and the meaning of words such as 'tolerance' or 'violence' gained a different semantic depth and weight during my fieldwork. Moreover, the experience of divided city space and life among conflicted communities allowed me to become familiar with the sense of otherness on different levels.

Ethical and professional aspects of researcher's attitude towards the studied environment have already been covered in many academic textbooks (Babbie 2013; Hammersley and Atkinson 2000). Nevertheless, since fieldwork remains a kind of initiation

(Bielenin 2011), each and every researcher learns in practice how not to harm the local community and not to hinder the efforts of future researchers.

While carrying out this research, I provided the respondents and research team members with ample information. Research participants agreed to partake in a survey, interview or research team's works on the basis of consent forms (usually delivered to interlocutors during semi-structured interviews) or verbal consent. They were also informed that their responses will be treated confidentially and anonymised. Therefore, personal details are not disclosed in the thesis, and any information pertaining to participants was removed, if there was even the slightest possibility it could be used to identify them despite anonymisation. In this thesis, participants were described exclusively based on respondents' profiles.

In order not to hinder the work of future researchers, proper research was preceded by preliminary research (including preliminary visits to the field and literature analysis) numerous consultations on methodological tools (including pilot research on the questionnaire among a small group of Mitrovica's residents) and constant contact with locals.

### **1.3.2. Research process**

My first visit to Mitrovica took place in 2012 while conducting student research in Pristina and Mitrovica for the project *Kosowo. Społeczeństwo – kultura – polityka (Kosovo. Society – Culture – Politics)*<sup>18</sup>. Since then, I have visited the region regularly and participated in numerous workshops, cultural events and language courses.

The final choice of the subject of my doctoral dissertation was preceded by extensive empirical research and consultations conducted at home and abroad (mostly during my PhD studies). The proposed study topic reflects my interests, language skills and knowledge and of initial research (state of research, queries). Preliminary studies, carried out during my doctoral studies in the area that is the subject of this dissertation, had an impact on the choice of working methods, which take into account the introduction of the case study method, use of diverse research materials and conducting empirical research.

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<sup>18</sup> The outcome of this research was, among others, the publication of *Kosowo. Społeczeństwo – kultura – polityka*, K. Gerula, Ł. Karczewski, A. Koziej, M. Maciulewicz, M. Mudel, M. Smoter, Warszawa 2015.

The proper research phase for this PhD thesis was preceded by preliminary research carried out between 2015 and 2017. To this end, I participated in various exchange and scholarship programs as well as conferences in the region. Having to the opportunities to use different means of student mobility I cooperated with different academic environments, such as: the Department of Sociology (Faculty of Philosophy, University of Niš), Department of History (University of Belgrade), Faculty of Philology (University of Prishtina ‘Hasan Prishtina’) as well as the Faculty of Philosophy in Mitrovica (University of Pristina with its temporary seat in Kosovska Mitrovica).

During my research, I organised long-term stays on both sides of the city, North and South, in different locations, as well as short-term stays on scholarships in Niš, Pristina and Belgrade. It was an important element of my research due to possible differences in the perception of the city, depending on the season, the main location during my stay, activities planned and experiences. The first stays in Mitrovica designed with the purpose of starting preliminary research on site took place in December 2016 (mostly in the northern part) and in February 2017 (mostly in the southern part). Between May 2017 and August 2018 I lived in the region, first in Pristina, then Belgrade. During that period I participated in local conferences, different cultural events as well as conducted the proper part of my research. The survey for qualitative research was conducted in November 2017, while the majority of interviews for quantitative research were carried out in April and June 2018.

In order to fully introduce the context of this research, it is crucial to present the most important historical events that occurred during that time. At the beginning of 2017 the Belgrade-Kosovska Mitrovica train incident took place. On 14 January 2017 a train from Belgrade, decorated with frescoes from monasteries of the Serbian Orthodox Church and painted in the colours of the Serbian flag and the inscription ‘Kosovo is Serbia’ written in various languages, was sent with the intention of reaching the final stop in Mitrovica. This initiative prompted a rapid reaction from Pristina, led to tensions on the Serbia-Kosovo border and a threat of armed conflict. Eventually, the train stopped before the Kosovo border, but the incident itself made headlines of local and international newspapers<sup>19</sup> and had repercussions for Mitrovica’s residents.

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<sup>19</sup> *Serbian Nationalist Train Halts at Border With Kosovo*, The New York Times 14.01.2017; *Serbia-Kosovo train row escalates to military threat*, BBC news, 15.01.2017.

Another extremely important event was the murder of Oliver Ivanović, a well-known politician who was shot dead in front of his party's offices in the northern part of Mitrovica on 16 January 2018<sup>20</sup>. Ivanović, born in Mitrovica, was the leader of a Kosovo Serb party called 'Freedom, Democracy, Justice' (*Sloboda, demokratija, pravda*). The assassination and the funeral were dramatic events for the local community (as well as internationally), not to mention the investigation that followed Ivanović's death.

It is worth mentioning the elections that took place during my research stays: Serbian local and parliamentary elections (April 2016), Serbian presidential elections (April 2017), parliamentary elections (June 2017, but the government was only constituted in September 2017) and local elections in Kosovo (October 2017, second round November 2017). Thus, one can conclude that the period when my research was conducted was rather turbulent.

To sum up, my stay in the region lasted, with short intermissions, from October 2015 to September 2018. I may not have spent this entire time in Mitrovica, but I strongly believe that three years of constant contact with its local context allowed me to become familiar with the local culture well enough to prepare this thesis.

### **1.3.3. The idea of partnership in cultural research**

Paramount to this analysis is the question of mutual engagement, both of the researcher in the explored environment, and of the locals in the progress and outcomes of research. Since I was concerned with fieldwork based on mutual cooperation, which necessitates the researcher to live and work with the local community (Eller 2012, Bielenin 2011), I decided to implement the idea of partnership in cultural research.

The participation of local inhabitants in research is inevitable. They bring invaluable organisational assistance on-site and their help with research is invaluable. They know local languages, their homes and everyday lives are a part of the local landscape, they are familiar with the unwritten rules of the place and the features of the local community. Depending on the status and identity of each local, the researcher may gain better access to local institutions, more guarded communities or places of limited availability.

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<sup>20</sup> *Митровица се опростила од Оливера Ивановића*, Политика, 18.01.2018.

Local inhabitants and the community should also benefit from this mutual cooperation. Some of them find the interest of a foreign researcher in their reality, history, tradition, language etc. valuable. Others benefit from the cooperation with an academic entity, the company of a foreigner and an opportunity to communicate in a foreign language. There are also locals who want to contribute to the development of their community by taking part in research, to learn and gain skills, and to establish further cooperation.

Bearing in mind the idea of *working with* and not *on* (Bielenin 2011 after Sarah Pink 2000), I engaged locals in my research in various roles, as independent interviewers, consultants, guides in everyday life etc. Contact with local people and institutions and participation in local events were the integral elements of my everyday practice. It is important to emphasise that different roles of my local colleagues were assigned so as to ensure their participation did not invalidate the results of research. For instance, none of the research team members were involved in the role of respondents.

In June 2017, as part of the Youth4Youth Program carried out by the UN Mission in Kosovo, I received a modest grant for an inter-ethnic project. I realised this grant in September 2017 by organising a workshop on ‘Enjoying empirical research in an international working team! Basics of fieldwork research in practice – Mitrovica 2017.’

The workshop and research were a part of a scientific study on Mitrovica perceived through the category of divided city. The objective of the project was to enable local youth to work in an international working team, to gain the theoretical and practical knowledge from empirical research, and to build networks in order to integrate and to improve communication with their potential future co-workers, neighbours or simply friends. The aim of this initiative was twofold. First, using my knowledge and experience, I wanted to contribute to the peacebuilding process by supporting young local leaders in the field of education. Second, thanks to that experience I hoped to achieve better outcomes of my PhD research. Simultaneously, I intended to establish contact with local students and activists to build networks, which would contribute not only to my personal career, but also to the cooperation between local leaders and academic institutions, as well as non-governmental organisations in the region and beyond. Taking into consideration the current situation in Mitrovica, I envisioned creating two research teams, one operating in the northern, and the other – in the southern part of the city. However, the UN team convinced me to attempt organising one workshop for a mixed group and to create a project team that would include local people.

After two months of intense preparation, the workshop took place in Diakonie Centre in Mitrovica, one of the most suitable places for a multicultural event in Mitrovica.

The participants of the workshop were young people, students and NGO activists from the region (not necessarily from Mitrovica) who are able to communicate in English and speak fluent Serbian and/or Albanian. I wanted to cooperate with people from different communities, of different genders, social backgrounds, views and beliefs who were eligible for this project (meaning they could communicate in the above-mentioned languages and were open to cooperation and learning). The process of recruitment was long, as it involved working on application forms, disseminating information on the workshop, the process of selection and, eventually, creation of the list of final participants. In the end, 18 participants took part in the event, 11 females and 7 males, students of sociology, psychology, law, journalism, and political studies. Most of the participants were either from Mitrovica or Pristina, others were in Mitrovica for the first time. There were also participants who live in Mitrovica and met for the first time during the workshop.

The program included a theoretical introduction and practical exercises on social research methods, such as observation, interviews, and questionnaires. Participants partook in pilot research (in the role of respondents and reviewers), and gained practical knowledge on how to present themselves and their scientific project to potential respondents. Students also learnt how to create their own research project and where to apply for financial support. There was also time to discuss the different images and representations of Mitrovica, as well as to enjoy each other's company during integration exercises. I conducted most of the activities myself, but some of the participants were also engaged in preparing exercises or lectures. Those who completed the workshop with positive outcomes and decided to participate in further cooperation were engaged in this research as independent interviewers.

Since I did not have any substantial financial support to organise this research and lived on a modest scholarship, I could not offer my co-workers any remuneration (a common practice in this cultural context) other than my knowledge and experience. Even though this proved difficult and required extra effort on my part to find suitable interviewers who would agree to work without remuneration, today I am able to see these circumstances in a positive light. All in all, I engaged in my project young, intelligent and ambitious people who were interested in gaining knowledge, experience and developing further cooperation, who enjoyed their role as interviewers and members of a multicultural and multiethnic team, despite not

being reimbursed for their effort. In the end, the participants of this research were promised to receive the following benefits: participation in a free preparatory course on qualitative research methods, a certificate after the successful completion of the course and research (issued by the University of Warsaw), free working materials (including questionnaires), reimbursement of transport costs to and from the place of research, refreshments and snacks during the activity and, for those who fulfilled their obligations, the possibility to apply for an intercultural workshop organised in 2018 by the Faculty of 'Artes Liberales,' University of Warsaw (fully or partially financed by the organisers, depending on the outcomes of founding applications).

As I coordinated the work of two big groups in Mitrovica, I decided to prepare two trainings in both parts of the city. Two days before the commencement of research, I came to Mitrovica full of concerns and doubts, because there were still uncertainties regarding the place to meet the interviewers, conduct training and my accommodation. Under such circumstances I could only trust my local co-workers and expect the unexpected. During the training the assistance of locals with regard to translation, encouraging valuable people to participate in the research, and their knowledge of Mitrovica's topography proved invaluable. Unfortunately, some participants did not attend either of the two preparatory trainings, which required organising additional meetings for their benefit, including trips to Pristina.

The training included: information about the research goal, analysis of the questionnaire, information about interviewers' obligations and benefits, a short presentation on the characteristics of a structured interview, a self-completion questionnaire and two practical exercises. Using the knowledge gained from the research, the participants practiced how to prepare introductory statements and to partake in an interview in the roles of respondents and interviewers. After completion of the training, each interviewer received 'Guidelines for Interviewers' (prepared for this particular research) and detailed instructions regarding the part of the city where they would work. Research was conducted in two phases, in November 2017 as part of quantitative research a survey was conducted with the cooperation of my local research team, while interviews for qualitative research were carried out in June 2016.

Eventually, our joint project culminated in an international workshop 'Theory in Practice. International Workshop for Young Researchers Working in Intercultural Environment' organised in September 2018 by the University of Warsaw at the Faculty of

‘Artes Liberales.’ The workshop was, among other things, a continuation of activities aimed at increasing the potential of young researchers in the humanities, strengthening their intercultural communication skills and integrating undergraduates and PhD students with foreign students.

#### **1.3.4. Data collection – an overview**

Due to the lack of basic statistical data on the population for the entire city it was impossible to conduct research on a general population sample. Nevertheless, it was crucial to include in this research as many different perspectives as possible in order to get broad variety insight. Therefore, taking into consideration the objectives of this research and the fact that relevant statistical data are unavailable or insufficient, a mixed-type sample was used – clustered and stratified. Research was anonymous and the selection of a particular respondent was random.

More than 300 structured interviews were conducted by local interviewers in November 2017. The research team consisted of 22 independent interviewers from different communities (Albanian, Bosniak, Romani and Serbian) who successfully completed the recruitment process. Interviewers were young people: students and NGO activists who speak fluent Serbian and/or Albanian, have experience with empirical research and/or are familiar with social science methodology. The majority were also able to communicate in English and other foreign languages.

Most interviewers completed two trainings: a one-week free preparatory course on the basics of empirical research (critical analysis of the questionnaire, presentation of crucial fieldwork, the role and obligations of the researcher and interviewer, description of the research) and a one-day training before conducting research in Mitrovica for this particular project.

Researchers’ engagement in the fieldwork consisted in several activities, such as participation in a preparatory course for fieldwork, critical analysis of the questionnaire, participation in quantitative research carried out among respondents defined by the sample and in accordance with provided instructions and, finally, participation in evaluating the research. The interviewers worked in the designated parts of the city, mostly in pairs, and were asked to visit every second or third flat where they should pick one respondent using



their preferred method, e.g. a person whose birthday was most recent. They were also asked to pay attention to respondents' demographic characteristics to prevent gathering data from a group homogeneous in terms of gender, age, etc.

Due to security issues and in order to avoid mistakes or misunderstandings, I was in touch with all the interviewers every day. They required support in problematic situations, e.g. when many people refused to participate in the research or whenever issues resulting from poor weather conditions or power cuts occurred. Once they completed their research, I organised separate meetings with each and all of them to properly evaluate their work and to clarify any doubts; this involved trips to Pristina. Every meeting required at least half an hour (often longer), during which I diligently checked every questionnaire and listened to interviewers' impressions from the field. The interviewers were required to deliver a complete set of filled questionnaires along with their final report. The results far exceeded my expectations and only strengthened my conviction that a great research team had been built.

The interviewers conducted structured interviews with the aid of the questionnaire. Three language versions of the questionnaire were prepared for the purposes of this research and PhD study (the English version was not used during the empirical research). All of questionnaires were validated in the pilot research carried out among the young population of the city.

The survey contained both closed- and open-ended questions. Questions where respondents had to choose one response from a list of alternatives were often followed by an open question asking to justify or elaborate on their answer.

The questionnaire for structured and semi-structured interviews prepared for the purpose of this thesis contains the standard profile questions (with special attention paid to residential status) and includes issues like social distance, characteristics of a desirable neighbour, level of mobility and communication, as well as ideas regarding the city's future. A research instrument designed in this way enables revealing important information regarding the structure of the society, mutual relations between individuals and groups in the city, and the importance of demographic changes and migration. The English version of the questionnaire is attached to this thesis (see: Annex 2. Questionnaire).

In this research, a total of 304 respondents were interviewed, 145 were male (47.7%) and 158 female (52%),<sup>21</sup> 1 participant did not disclose their gender. Respondents were classified into the following age groups: between 18 and 26 – 106 respondents (34.9%), between 27 and 35 – 66 respondents (21.7%), between 36 and 45 – 51 respondents (16.8%), between 46 and 59 – 58 respondents (19.1%) and 60 or older – 23 respondents (7.6%).

Most respondents declared secondary (38.5%) or higher (36.5%) education, 14.5% of respondents graduated from vocational secondary schools, 7.9% ended their education at primary school, while 1.3% were uneducated. The level of education correlated significantly with age; 52.3% of respondents with higher education were in the 18-26 age group (a total of 55% of respondents from this age group), while only 3.6% and 1.8% of respondents with higher education were in the last two age groups (respectively, 7% and 9% of respondents from these groups). Compared to the other groups, a significantly higher percentage of Romani respondents declared primary or no education (81%).

Almost 60% of respondents (57.4 %) evaluated their economic situation as average (able to fulfil basic needs without difficulty), 23.1% as good (not lacking anything), 13.2% as bad (barely making a living), 3.6% as very good (having enough money for a comfortable life) and 2.6% as very bad (not enough money to fulfil basic needs). Regarding ethnic/national identity, slightly more Serbs (35%) than Albanians (20%) evaluated their economic situation as good.

Taking into consideration ethnic/national identity, there were: 197 Albanians (64.8%), 81 Serbs (26.6%), 11 Romani (3.6%), 8 Bosniaks (2.6%), 2 Ashkali and 2 Turks (both 0.7 %), 1 Gorani (0.3%) and 2 others, among which one respondent declared himself as Kosovar and the other as Montenegrin, and there were no Egyptians. Religious beliefs were declared by 302 respondents; the majority were Muslim (213; 70.1%) or Eastern Orthodox (79; 26%), 8 respondents declared themselves as Catholic (2.6%) and 2 as other, there were no Jews or Buddhists. There was a significant correlation between ethnic/national identity and faith; 88.7% of Muslims in the city declared themselves as Albanians, while 98.7% of Eastern Orthodox Christians as Serbs (only one respondent declared himself as Eastern Orthodox and non-Serbian). There was also a presence of Catholic Albanians (75% of Catholics in the survey, about 3% of all Albanians) and Catholic Serbs (25% of Catholics, about 2.5% of all

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<sup>21</sup> In the entire thesis, data obtained from my research were rounded off to the nearest whole number. The number of respondents who participated in the survey is 304 (N=304). Unless stated differently, the percentage of responses is counted with reference to the total number of valid answers to a particular question.

Serbs). All Romani, Bosniak, Turk and Ashkali respondents declared themselves as Muslims (respectively, 5.2%, 3.8%, 0.9% and 0.9% of the studied Muslim population).

Amongst 304 respondents, 280 declared living in Mitrovica permanently (92.1%), 22 temporarily (7.2%), while 2 responses were missing. Moreover, 252 respondents (82.9%) declared that they were born in Mitrovica, 21 (6.9%) were born in a city or village close to Mitrovica, and 30 (9.9%) respondents were born in another city or village. When asked whether they had been displaced or changed their place of living in the city, 77.3% of inhabitants said no, while 22.7% answered positively. Those who had, migrated mostly between the southern and northern parts of the city, but also within the same part, occasional respondents had been displaced from other settlements close to Mitrovica (for instance, Leposavić or Vushtrri/Vučitrn) and some of them had emigrated temporarily during the war. In the case of ethnic/national identity, more Serbs than Albanians (25.6% vs. 18.3%) declared that they had been displaced. At the same time, all of the Ashkali respondents, 80% of Romani, 50% of Turks, 14.3% of Bosniaks claimed that they had changed their place of living.

Semi-structured interviews were conducted mainly in April and June 2018, exclusively by the author of the project. I believe that in order to conduct valuable fieldwork, it is crucial to be able to communicate with local people. Local interlocutors should be able to use the language they feel comfortable with and which they speak confidently. Therefore, interviews were carried out in three languages (Albanian, English and Serbian) depending on the preference of the respondents, and with or without the assistance of local translators. Interviews with the representatives of the Serbian community were conducted exclusively in Serbian, while with the representatives of the Albanian community, either in Albanian, English or Serbian; the respondents from other groups preferred either English or Serbian. Most of the interviews were recorded using a voice recorder.

Thanks to several previous stays and my preliminary research carried out in Mitrovica, the city was a familiar ground and my presence was not surprising to the people I have met earlier. In order to obtain diverse responses and opinions, a group of respondents was carefully selected in accordance with their demographic characteristics. Some interviews were arranged ahead of my arrival, but most of them were arranged on-site. In many cases, contact with local inhabitants was made possible owing to the assistance of my local co-workers. Nevertheless, I tried to be as independent as possible in terms of everyday life organisation,

moving around the city and the neighbouring locations, as well as arranging and conducting interviews.

All in all, I recorded 24 interviews with adult residents of Mitrovica, 10 of them female and 14 male, of varying ages (but predominantly younger). The number of respondents from different communities corresponded with their social structure. A significantly greater number of respondents declared living in Mitrovica permanently, while several had been displaced during the Kosovo War. A list of recorded interviews is attached to this thesis (Annex 1. List of recorded interviews).

During the semi-structured interviews, in contradistinction to structured interviews, particular questions were developed based ‘guidelines for the interview’ prepared in advance. The course of the conversations adapted to the respondent’s profile. Before agreeing to participate, the participants were informed about the study, its aims and objectives, as well as their ability to withdraw at any moment.

### **1.3.5. Data analysis: transcription, coding patterns, field notes**

The response rate and quality of survey were high owing to the diligent process of selection and preparation, as well as engaging a well-prepared research team, perfectly familiar with the local context. According to final reports prepared by research team members, respondents were courteous and helpful, some were also interested in the research and eager to share additional comments. Response rate was generally high with a few exceptions. People refused to fill in the questionnaire mostly because of other obligations (e.g. professional or taking care of the family) or due to negative experience from previous interviews. A common complaint stated by many research team members, people complained that too much research was already being conducted in their neighbourhood. This issue was extremely problematic, especially in the Romani district, where even person from that community have had difficulties to complete the sample (Final Report no. 10). The respondents were also concerned that the results would be used for purposes other than scientific, e.g. political. It appears that a lot of research was conducted lately with the aim of identifying political preferences. Occasionally, respondents who agreed to participate in the study refused to answer or fill in certain questions, mostly for political reasons.

Taking into consideration all the final reports, structured interviews prevailed over self-completion questionnaires. When selecting the appropriate data-collecting method, interviewers were allowed to choose one of these two forms, in consideration of respondents' eyesight, hearing and writing skills, as well as their personal comfort. Research participants were approached chiefly in their homes or apartments, with occasional exceptions of interviews conducted when they were shopping or in the street, but within the designated district. Depending on individual needs, interviews lasted between 15 and 35 minutes. A common complaint of the interviewers was research being interrupted by power cuts, spells of cold weather (in November), problems navigating the city (interviewers from other cities) and, in some cases, the early hours for conducting research. Responses from the survey were coded and analysed using SPSS software.

Recorded interviews were transcribed and ordered in the list attached to this thesis. For the transcription of recorded interviews and field notes MS Word was used. Recorded interviews were introduced into the text in different ways, depending on the purpose, in whole, as part of conversation or respondent's statement or opinion, sometimes quoted indirectly or paraphrased. Quotations are given quotation marks, unless longer than 40 words, in which case they are given in a separate paragraph. Both direct and indirect quotations are marked with adequate reference notes (date and/or number etc.). Quotations are introduced for various reasons: to illustrate a point, to provide evidence, to deepen readers' understanding and, especially, to give voice to participants. The transcriptions contain unique linguistic features of particular respondents, in some cases with commentaries. If needed, statements from Albanian and Serbian were translated by the author of thesis (unless otherwise stated), quotes in English were cited in the original version. One may have the impression that the responses of representatives from different communities are 'unbalanced.' It might result either from the fact that respondents' statements are not always introduced with a direct quote (as mentioned above) or from the choice of the language of the interview, while the representatives of Albanian communities chose Albanian, English and Serbian as the language of the interview, interlocutors from the Serbian community preferred to talk exclusively in Serbian.

Unrecorded interviews and unofficial conversations were noted down in a research notebook right after each conversation. Field notes included respondents' reactions to the invitation to participate in a recorded interview, their reasons for declining to be recorded, as well as for completing only a part of the interview, or refusing to participate at all. For some

respondents signing the consent form was problematic or unnecessary, while some did not deem research that involves recording sufficiently anonymous.

### *Observation with partial participation*

The results of my observations conducted in the city were saved as field notes in the form of text or visual materials. Research notes include remarks gathered on a daily basis known as ‘thick description’ (Geertz 1973), methodological remarks, document analysis and visual materials. Additional information regarding interview situation, results of participant observation and methodological remarks were carefully noted at every possible moment and right after each interview or observation. Research notes allowed me to save and remember valuable reflections, track the progress of my research and to remain emotionally stable during the period of research.

The object of my analysis were the documents and other materials collected in local libraries and archives, mostly in Mitrovica – Municipality Archive in Mitrovica (posters and public announcements, maps<sup>22</sup>) and Belgrade – Archives of Yugoslavia (documents produced by the state bodies and organisations of Yugoslavia from 1918 to 2006).

Visual materials were gathered as a result of urban space observation and library or archive queries. In most cases, I took pictures using a phone camera, as during my first stay it turned out that a professional camera would often cause additional problems resulting from its weight and reactions of people. Phone cameras, on the other hand, were commonly used by the residents. Many historical photos were collected courtesy of archives, libraries and museums. It proved considerably difficult to obtain the development plans of the city and maps (particularly contemporary ones)<sup>23</sup>.

In order to become familiar with the urban space of Mitrovica and its inhabitants I strived to visit every possible location in the city and its surroundings, and to participate in the practices of residents. My actions included walks around the city, research at local archives and libraries as well as participation in the everyday life of Mitrovica’s residents, including shopping, use of services, drinking coffee, participation in different cultural events (such as

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<sup>22</sup> *Udhërrëfytes i fondeve dhe koleksioneve arkivore, Arkivi Ndërkomunal i Mitrovicës*, Mitrovicë 2006. *Arkivi Ndërkomunal i Mitrovicës 1970-2005*, Mitrovicë 2005.

<sup>23</sup> According to one of the respondents working at the UN, a mapping of cities in Kosovo is to be undertaken by UNHABITAT in the near future. Informal conversation with UNHABITAT employee in Pristina, 15.08.2017.

concerts, exhibitions, competitions) and religious celebrations (*iftar*, *litija*). Occasionally, such activities required waking up very early, for instance when visiting the local market at rush hours, or staying up late to participate in religious celebrations.

## **2. Chapter II: Historical Overview of Mitrovica's Development**

As it was stated in the first chapter, contemporary works on Mitrovica often neglect the historical dimension when analysing current divisions in the city or refer only to the collapse of Yugoslavia in order to explain divisions along ethnic/national lines. It was also emphasised that many researchers of divided cities point to more distant historical processes, such as the collapse of empires and emergence of national states (Anderson 2010, Kulczyńska 2014, Kotek 1999, Nagle 2016). Therefore, the historical dimension will not be underestimated in this thesis.

I would like to propose a problem-oriented rather than chronological approach towards the historical overview of Mitrovica's development. Firstly, I am not a historian and thus my research does not encompass an in-depth historic analysis. Such an ambitious project could be an appropriate challenge for a research team consisting of professionals specialising in particular historical periods. Contemporary, strictly historical monographs demand a critical analysis of historiographical narratives as well as in-depth studies of archival materials.

Secondly, the main aim of this chapter is to present main reference points with regard to different aspects of the development of the city, and not only its history. The historical overview shall serve as an important context for the analysis of contemporary Mitrovica in the social, functional and symbolic dimensions.

Moreover, my research is based on a mixed methodology, which not only presents the analysis of the documents and literature, but also the outcomes of empirical research. However, a historical overview based mostly on one method (analysis of the literature, documents and visual materials) will play a crucial role in the triangulation process.

The main aspects of the development of Mitrovica presented in this chapter were selected by analysing the literature and documents, and they correspond to the outcomes of the research presented in the analytical chapters. The overview does not include the entire history of the region (where today's Mitrovica is located), nor an in-depth analysis of the neighbouring settlements and towns; instead it elaborates on the city's past in the framework of the first available sources on the Mitrovica settlement (from the 15<sup>th</sup> century) until the dissolution of Yugoslavia.



## 2.1. Diversity and richness of cities in the Balkans

A city can be defined in a multitude of ways (Weber 1992). The aim of this subchapter is not to elaborate on the definition of the city, nor to create a universal typology of cities, but to provide the general characteristics of urban settlements in the Balkan Peninsula with a particular focus on Mitrovica and the settlements in its vicinity. To understand the context of research on Mitrovica and its place in the scope of urban networks, it is important to provide the general context of the development of cities in this particular region, to present the variety of urban environments characteristic of the Balkan Peninsula, as well as to introduce the basic theoretical and methodological challenges.

To this end, it is crucial to mention the following problems of different approaches and methodologies that deal with the typology, status and definition of the city and with the access to and the reliability of sources. It is also prudent to present the selected propositions of typologies of the cities in the Balkan Peninsula and to emphasise the characteristic features of cities in the local context.

The importance of quantitative (statistical data, such as the number of inhabitants, city area and population density) and qualitative methodology (social, economic, cultural, functional, historical and legal functions from the micro to the macro level) obviously depends on the nature of urban development, its location and the historical period in question. Designations such as *small* or *big* in reference to the city mean nothing without the proper localisation of the object of research in a particular time-space framework. The data on the size of the city in the Middle Ages and in 20<sup>th</sup> century or in Europe and Asia could be completely different. Cities that in today's Europe are considered relatively small (about 30 000 residents) are the size of medieval capitals, e.g. fourteenth-century London (Jałowicki 2010).

This also applies to qualitative data concerning different dimensions of urban space; for instance, the professional structure of the society vs. the number of inhabitants. The number of residents of a particular settlement may be irrelevant as long as their majority works in the fields. At a particular stage of development, to define the settlement as urban, it was crucial that the majority of inhabitants were employed outside of the agricultural sector. Weber, for instance, believes that the number of citizens engaging in trade or craft is the most important feature characterising an urban settlement (Weber 1992). Therefore, quantitative

data should also be interpreted in the quantitative perspective, providing information about the changeable structure of population, organisations and institutions.

Apart from the above-mentioned distinction between an urban settlement and a village, there is an additional issue of a settlement's status: the delineation between the urban space itself and its municipality and suburbs. City borders tend to be fluent, changing with the development of the city.

The status of a settlement was clearly classified in the Ottoman Empire as *şehir* (a city, usually with a fortress); *kasaba* (settlement of an urban type that was larger than village in size and importance, but had not yet reached the dimensions and appearance of a city, mostly unfortified settlements whose population engaged in trade and craft); *palanka* (2<sup>nd</sup> half of the 16<sup>th</sup> and in 17<sup>th</sup> century, a place fortified with embankments and stakes; most villages in Serbia and Bulgaria in the 17<sup>th</sup> century were *palankas*); *varos* (suburbs of a medieval Balkan city, mostly Christian part of the city); *targ* and *pazar* (settlements distinguished from a village by the presence of a regular market, but without the status of *kasaba*) (Todorov 1983). Such evaluation was, however, time-specific and not set in stone. Mitrovica, for instance, was described as a commercial settlement solely in the 16<sup>th</sup> century, and later designated as a *kasaba* or even a *şehir*.

It is worth emphasising that the fluidity of city borders has its consequences for this research, as certain studies and censuses include only the urban area of the city, while others take into consideration its peripheries or the entire municipality. This makes it harder to characterise the structure of urban population and to track the dynamics of its development over time.

There is also another aspect which should be taken into consideration when regarding the city's surroundings. Firstly, it should be a place of a particular urban environment in a network of settlements and/or more advanced urban areas. As will be shown later, Mitrovica's relatively late development was determined by the neighbouring settlements until the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century and by its place in the administrative and political context of the Ottoman Empire. Secondly, the specialisation of its function, something that characterises the city, gives it its unique features and distinguishes it from other settlements in the scope of a particular entity or unit, e.g. region, country etc. Therefore, it must be stressed that at the turn of the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries Mitrovica stood out from its environment as a trade centre, and in the 20<sup>th</sup> century – as industrial centre.

To date the urban economy and social structure of Balkan cities has not been adequately studied, while the question of the status of medieval Balkan and late Byzantine cities in particular has not been properly researched (Todorov 1983). This is also the case with the issue of emerging of cities in the Balkan Peninsula and of their development (Zlutar 1988). There might be several reasons for this. First, the lack of sources, especially from the first period of the Ottoman Empire on the Balkan Peninsula (Todorov 1983). Second, the access to the sources can be limited either due to a language barrier or to organisational problems (Gara 2017). Moreover, integrated cultural studies on the city emerged relatively recently as an academic discipline. Such status quo implies problems not only with the description of this settlement in the past, but also with following the dynamics of its social and spatial development.

The cities of the Balkan Peninsula are significantly different from one another. Although located in the same part of the continent, i.e. Southern Europe, Split, Sarajevo and Niš are entirely distinct examples of urban settlements. Each is the outcome of different circumstances: geo-political localisation and cultural influences that result from it. What is important, cities in the Balkan Peninsula emerged during different historical periods.

The Balkan region was undoubtedly a platform of the influences of superpowers (hence different cultures and civilisations), which resulted in the diversity of cities located in a relatively small area. The Balkan Peninsula experienced different urban traditions: Roman Empire, Byzantine Empire, Slavic countries in the Middle Ages, the Ottoman Empire, Habsburg Empire and the appearance of new traditions along with the gradual withdrawal of the Ottoman Empire from the Peninsula. The urban space of Sarajevo, which until nowadays compromise features of Ottoman/Balkan city and Habsburg city, may serve as a proof of the significant influence of main superpowers in the cities of Balkans.

Jovan Cvijić is considered to be the first researcher who contributed to the development of urban sociology in the region (Vujović 2005). In *Balkansko poluostrvo* (*Balkan Peninsula*) he identifies three main types<sup>24</sup> of Balkan cities: **Mediterranean**, **Patriarchal** and **Byzantine-Turkish** (or proper Balkan). According to Cvijić, the types of urban settlements (*varoši*) are strictly connected with cultural spheres present in the Balkan Peninsula, therefore his typology is based on geographical and cultural features. Cvijić emphasises that in many cases cultural influences were overlapping, while the character of

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<sup>24</sup> Ideal types (in the sense given by Weber) are reference points rather than a strict research category.

local inhabitants differed from place to place, which resulted in a huge variety of urban environments (Cvijić 1922). Among **Mediterranean** cities he distinguishes Dalmatian (Adriatic Coast, from Trst to Bar), Arbanasi (coast of Albania, Skadar/Shkodër, Drač/Durrës) and Greek (Adriatic and Aegean Coast, Patras, Thessaloniki/Solun/Salonika, Volos, Kavala). Cities of the **Byzantine-Turkish** type are mostly located in the continental part of the Balkan Peninsula, far from the coast. The landscape of such cities remains almost unchangeable: a huge number of low shops and houses (with low-pitched roofs) packed tightly along narrow winding streets, where buildings are predominantly made of wood. Private houses are fenced with a wall so high that one cannot see the courtyard. Each city has its own market (*pazar/čaršija*), where all the goods are presented in front of the stalls or shops. A generally ethnically mixed society lives mostly in districts (*mahala*) located outside of the market. Cvijić presents rather negative characteristics of a typical Balkan city, describing it as a dirty and dangerous place (Cvijić 1922). Cities of **Patriarchal** type are located north of Niš, in Montenegro, Bosnia and Herzegovina as well as Bulgaria. These are either ex-villages which became cities or old cities whose trade-and-craft society adjusted to the patriarchal order. Generally, these are small cities with straight and wide streets leading to a spacious market. Typically, industrial enterprises appear at their outskirts, such as a sugar factory, brewery, spinning mill, weaving plant or a sawmill. Changes in the landscape of such cities were caused by the stronger influences of Central-European cities in the 19<sup>th</sup> century (Cvijić 1922).

Nikolai Todorov emphasises the common heritage of cities in the Balkans (Byzantine, pre-Ottoman and Slavic Balkan urban tradition) as well as the differences between them resulting from territorial distribution. Todorov distinguishes **West European** and **Muslim cities** and argues that cities in the Balkan Peninsula are different from either of these. He underscores that **Croatian and Dalmatian cities** (which developed under the strong influence of Italy) evolved differently from the cities in the **central and eastern part of the Balkans** (Todorov 1983).

In the Balkan Peninsula, cities were established at different stages of social development, from ancient to modern times. Taking into consideration the period of their establishment, Cvetko Kostić proposed dividing cities in the Balkan region (which he designates as 'our cities' – *naši gradovi*) into three categories: *the old ones* (ancient and feudal cities which experienced many modifications in the Eastern part under Byzantine and Turkish influence and in the Western part – under Italian and German), *mixed cities* (established by Greeks, Cincars and Sephardic Jews in the East and by Germans, Hungarians

and Ashkenazi Jews in the West), and *industrial cities* (which appeared in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, relatively late compared to West European cities) (Kostić 1982).

According to Sreten Vujović, taking into consideration the geographical, socio-spatial, political and cultural aspects, one can recognise three main types of Serbian cities of the past: **coastal** (*primorske*), **central** and **Vojvodinian** (*Vojvodanske*) (Vujović 2005: 401). He emphasises the specificity of Vojvodinian cities, which in the 18<sup>th</sup> century obtained the status of independent cities (Novi Sad, Sombor, Subotica) in contrast to the cities of central Serbia.

Another point of view can result from the specific role and importance given to cities in the Ottoman Empire system. Behija Zlatar argues that the period between the 15<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries was the time of Oriental-Balkan urbanisation (Zlatar 1988). At the time many settlements were rearranged and many more have just emerged. According to Zlatar, urban settlements that appeared as part of this specific urbanisation in the Balkans, can be divided into open and fortified cities. Among open cities one may identify: *varos*, *kasaba*, *seher*, while among fortified cities: *palanka*, *hicar*, *kale*. These cities, defined by Zlatar as Levantine (*gradovi levantskog tipa*), comprise a residential (*mahalas*) and functional part (concentrated around *čaršija*). Furthermore, they are characterised by large population, usually predominantly Muslim, and in major cities one could find monumental Islamic buildings and a huge *čaršija* where various crafts are cultivated (Zlatar 1988).

Regarding Mitrovica, Urošević states that until the construction of the railway, it was a small and rather unimportant Turkish-Eastern type settlement (*palanka tursko-istočarskog tipa*), especially judging by the number of such public buildings as mosques, hans, hamams, and workshops (Urošević 1954). Only at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century did it gain the status of *varoš*. Nušić describes Mitrovica as the most beautiful *varoš* of Kosovo (Nušić 1902).

## 2.2. Mitrovica – turning points in the city's development

On the basis of my research, I selected several important circumstances and events which can be considered the turning points in Mitrovica's development. Consequently, in this chapter Mitrovica is presented as a communication junction, multicultural settlement, strategic garrison, centre of resistance and anti-fascist struggle, and an industrial centre. This overview is also complemented by the general characteristics of urbanisation and modernisation processes.

Over the centuries, the territory of present-day Mitrovica was under the rule of the Byzantine Empire, medieval Kingdom of Serbia, Ottoman Empire, Kingdom of Serbia, Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes, Kingdom of Yugoslavia, Nazi Germany, and the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia. Since Mitrovica was considered a settlement and mentioned for the first time in the documents from the time of Ottoman rule, this period will be the reference point for my further analysis of the city's development. Moreover, since the development of Mitrovica dates back to the Ottoman Empire, whose rule lasted until the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century and in Mitrovica until the end of the Balkan Wars, many references will be made to the social and spatial order of the empire.

As a result of the fluid political context and multicultural environment, Mitrovica gained many different designations throughout the centuries: *Dmitrovica*, *Mitrix*, *Mitrovica*, *Pazarska Mitrovica*, *Kosovska Mitrovica/Mitrovica e Kosovës*, *Titova Mitrovica/Mitrovica e Titos*. Its first name mentioned in the available sources – *Dmitrovica* – is connected with the figure of Saint Demetrios, a Christian martyr from the early 4<sup>th</sup> century AD (Popović 1922, Lutovac 1950, Hadri & Avramovski 1979, Abdyli 1985, Murati 1986, Osmani 2000, Frtunić 2001, Azemi 2015). Urošević informs us that Mitrovica was named *Kosovska Mitrovica* from the 1890s, but before that it belonged to the Sanjak of Novi Pazar (part of the Bosnia Vilayet) and was named *Pazarska Mitrovica* (Urošević 1954). Another name change occurred in the 1980s after Tito's death, when one city in each of the republics and provinces received an additional name after Tito (Osmani 2000, Radović 2013).

Mitrovica's past cannot be analysed without its immediate geographical context, as its development was closely connected with the rise and fall of nearby settlements, mostly **Trepča** and **Zvečan**, but also **Vushtrri/Vučitrn** and **Banjska** (Popović 1922, Lutovac 1950, Urošević 1954, Abdyli 1985, Hadri & Avramovski 1979).

Mitrovica was not even a settlement during the time of Zvečan's development. Back then the territory of present-day Mitrovica was called *Dimitrovo Polje pod Zvečanom*, i.e. Demetrios' Field near Zvečan (Popović 1922). Zvečan lost its strategic/military importance in the second half of the 15<sup>th</sup> century, right after the Serbian Despotate (1459) and Bosnian Kingdom (1463) had been conquered by the Ottomans (Urošević 1954). The settlement of Vučitrn/Vushtrri is located north of Mitrovica, during the Ottoman rule it was an important administrative and agricultural centre (Abdyli 1985). Meanwhile, the role of a trade and mining centre (until the 17<sup>th</sup> century) was performed by Trepča, a mining settlement, located ca. 10 km to the northeast of Mitrovica (Abdyli 1985). Moreover, north of Mitrovica, on the

route to Novi Pazar, the settlement of Banjska was situated. From the 16<sup>th</sup> century, if not earlier, it contained an important caravanserai and enjoyed hot mineral springs that attracted travellers. Despite favourable geographical conditions, Mitrovica could not develop due to the dominant environment of neighbouring settlements. Only after Zvečan had lost its strategic position and Trepča's mine had fallen into decline, could Mitrovica develop as an urban centre.

Mitrovica appears in the documents of the second half of the 15<sup>th</sup> century and only in the 16<sup>th</sup> century it is described as an urban settlement. Nevertheless, until the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century and the construction of the railway in 1873, it remained a small and rather insignificant settlement of only several hundred houses. Favourable geographical conditions for establishing a settlement (agricultural and mineral sources), the development of the neighbouring settlements and its location at an intersection had a crucial impact on the development of Mitrovica.

### **2.2.1. Mitrovica as a communication junction**

Mitrovica is located in the northern part of Kosovo, it is the northernmost city of the region (Urošević 1954). The city is situated in the valley surrounded from the northeast by Kopaonik (*Kopaoniku*), by Rogozna (*Rogoznë*) from the northwest, and the Čičavica (*Çiçavicë*) mountain from the south. It is situated on a plain, right under the Zvečan hill located northwest of Mitrovica.



Fig. 1. Map of Kosovo. Source: [https://www.globalsecurity.org/military/ops/kosovo\\_maps\\_base.htm](https://www.globalsecurity.org/military/ops/kosovo_maps_base.htm), accessed: 04.2019

Three rivers run through the city: *Sitnica/Ситница*, *Ibër/Ибар*, *Lushta/Љушта*. Ibar begins in Rožaje, eastern Montenegro, passes through Kosovo and flows into the West Morava river near Kraljevo. Continuing to the south from Rožaje, the river passes through Gazivode, Zubin Potok, Ugljare, Zupče and Šipolje, reaching the city of Mitrovica where it makes a sharp turn to the north flowing towards Zvečan. The Ibar river receives from the south the Lushta river and on its elbow turn there is its longest (right) tributary, the Sitnica. Favourable conditions for the development of agriculture and trade result from this geographical position.

Through the ages, the territory of today's Mitrovica, later a settlement and eventually a city, was under the rule of various political entities as well as different administrative orders; this significantly influenced its geopolitical position. The location of Mitrovica on the [changing] centre-periphery axis affected its development or stagnation, therefore, the general overview of Mitrovica's position on geopolitical maps must be taken into account.



During the Ottoman Empire, cities were not autonomous but depended on a central power (Todorov 1983, Vujović 2005). Moreover, cities also played a definite role in the establishment of the administrative system as well as its maintenance. Administrative units were named after larger cities within their boundaries, cities that were also the seat of the territory's administrative-judicial and military authorities (Todorov 1983). What is important, smaller cities and settlements located near major trade routes, together with their offshoots, developed significantly as trade and transit centres.

As a result of the Ottoman conquest of the Balkan Peninsula in the second half of the 15<sup>th</sup> century, the territory of the former Serbian Empire (and its successor, the Serbian Despotate), after numerous battles, eventually became a part of a new political and administrative system, where it remained until the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

It is crucial to stress that throughout the centuries and regarding its dependent territories, the administrative system of the Ottoman Empire was neither homogeneous, nor stable. On the contrary, most administrative decisions depended on the Empire's current geopolitical position, which had a significant impact on the status of particular cities located on the Balkan Peninsula (Todorov 1983).

The special dual power status of Serbian and Turkish authorities at the turn of the 14<sup>th</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup> centuries and in the first half of the 15<sup>th</sup> century over the district, which included the Kosovo territory, lasted until 1455 (Luković 2008, Hadri & Avramovski 1979). At the end of 1455, the eastern part of the District of Branković (in 1396 transferred under the rule of Stefan Lazarević) was described by Isa-beg Ishaković<sup>25</sup> as *Vilajet Vlk*. Soon after the Sanjak of Vučitrn was established in the region (Luković 2008a). The territory of Mitrovica probably remained a part of this sanjak (within the Eyalet of Rumelia) until the Eyalet of Bosnia was established at the end of the 16<sup>th</sup> century.

In 1864, during the period of Tanzimat reforms the Eyalet of Bosnia was transformed into the Bosnia Vilayet. In 1865 Mitrovica was a part of the Sanjak of Novi Pazar in the Bosnia Vilayet, and since 1878 – in the Vilayet of Kosovo. After the Congress of Berlin, the territory of the Sanjak of Novi Pazar remained under the Ottoman administration; however, Austria-Hungary gained the right to station their garrisons there. From 1890 Mitrovica was incorporated into the Sanjak of Pristina (Vilayet of Kosovo) and remained a part of it until the Balkan Wars.

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<sup>25</sup> Isa-beg Ishaković was the governor of the Sanjak of Bosnia and the Sanjak of Skopje.

Mitrovica belonged to the territory of the Sanjak of Novi Pazar, therefore, it was not formally a part of Rumelia Eyalet, but rather the Eyalet of Bosnia, which determined its closer connections with this territory (especially Novi Pazar) than with the territory of Kosovo. Nušić argues that Mitrovica remained on the border of Bosnia and Old Serbia (Nušić 1902). Moreover, Mitrovica was not only the border city between these two administrative entities, but over time, following the withdrawal of the Ottoman Empire, it became a border city between two empires.

Mitrovica's place within different administrative orders was similarly complicated and fluid after the withdrawal of the Ottoman Empire. During the period of the gradual withdrawal of the Ottomans as a result of the First Balkan War, until WWI Mitrovica remained a part of the Kingdom of Serbia. After WWI, as part of the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes (1918-1929) Mitrovica belonged to *Zvečanski okrug* (1913) and *Raška oblast* (1922-1929)<sup>26</sup> (Hadri & Avramovski 1979, Luković). As part of the Kingdom of Yugoslavia (1929-1941) it belonged to *Zetska banovina, srez Kosovska Mitrovica*<sup>27</sup>. During WWII Mitrovica remained under German administration within occupied Serbia.

After WWII Mitrovica remain a part of the Autonomous Region of Kosovo and Metohija within the Federal People's Republic of Yugoslavia (1945-1963), and later, the Autonomous Province of Kosovo and Metohija (1963-1968) and the Socialist Autonomous Province of Kosovo (1968-1990) within the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (1963-1992). The status of Kosovo was returned to the pre-1968 Autonomous Province of Kosovo and Metohija by the new Constitution of the Republic of Serbia, adopted on 28 September 1990.

Smaller cities and settlements in the Balkans served as transit centres. The Ottoman Empire needed to maintain the safety and good condition of the traffic roads in the Balkan Peninsula because of frequent Turkish military campaigns in Central Europe and the support of strong garrisons in the western frontier zones of the Balkans (Todorov 1983). At the same time these settlements served as commercial centres. Apart from well-maintained caravansaries, markets (*čaršija*) also developed.

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<sup>26</sup> From 1918 to 1922 the kingdom maintained its pre-WWI subdivisions of Yugoslavia's predecessor states. In 1922 the state was divided into thirty-three oblasts (provinces).

<sup>27</sup> In 1929 after the establishment of the 6 January Dictatorship, a new system of nine banovinas (regions) was implemented by a royal decree. In 1939, as an accommodation to Yugoslav Croats in the Cvetković-Maček Agreement, a single Banovina of Croatia was formed from two of these banovinas (and from parts of others). Information based on the literature and population censuses.

In most cases settlements were located on plains, close to rivers and nearby trade routes. Mitrovica was not situated on any of the major roads leading directly to Constantinople such as *Via Egnatia* (from Durrës through Thessaloniki to Constantinople) or *Via Militaris* (*Via Diagonalis*, *Via Singidunum*, connecting Central Europe and Constantinople through Belgrade and Niš) described as crucial by Todorov. Nevertheless, Mitrovica was located on an old route from Bosnia to Macedonia (*Bosansko-Makedonski put*) which along the path from Foca-on-Drina to Kosovo coincided with *Via Drine*, a medieval trade route connecting Dubrovnik and the Drina river valley (also known as *Dubrovački put*):

*Ona, tako, leži na starom bosansko-makedonskom putu koji je iz bosansko-hercegovačkog predela, preko Rogozne, vodio na Kosovo i u Makedoniju i koji se, uostalom, od Foče na Drini, pa sve do Kosova, poklapao sa starim Dubrovačkim putem. Na tu uzdužnu i ranije vrlo saobraćajnu liniju kod Mitrovice izbijaju dve važne saobraćajne linije sa zapada: jedna koja dolinom Ibra vodi na Mitrovicu i s Kosovom povezuje oblasti u slivu te reke, Stari Kolašin i Rožaje, i druga, linija Peć-Mitrovica, kojom se Kosovo povezuje sa severnim delovima Drenice i Metohije, a preko Peci, i sa istočnim predelima Crne Gore.*<sup>28</sup> (Urošević 1954)

In 1469 Mitrovica received the status of a market town (Hadri & Avramovski 1979). Documents from 1530 (*tržište* or *tržište na Kosovu*) and 1614 (*trgovačko mesto*) characterise Mitrovica as a market or commercial centre (Lutovac after Matković 1888, Urošević 1954).

These communication routes predetermined Mitrovica's future, although its development was for a long time hampered by the nearby towns of Banjska and Vučitrn (Abdyli 1985). The old Bosnian-Macedonian route started to lose its importance towards the end of the 17<sup>th</sup> century, and lost it completely after the construction of the railway in 1873 (Urošević 1954).

Railroad as a new means of transportation reconfigured the trade map, propelled the decline of certain cities and the development of others (Cvijić 1922, Todorov 1983). The

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<sup>28</sup> 'Thus it is situated on the old Bosnian-Macedonian route, which from the Bosnian-Herzegovinian area, via Rogožna, led to Kosovo and Macedonia and, moreover, from Foča-on-Drina all the way to Kosovo, it coincided with the old Dubrovnik road. There are two important traffic routes that connect this long and previously very busy traffic line in the west, near Mitrovica: one leading through the Ibar valley to Mitrovica and connecting Kosovo with the catchment area of that river, incl. Stari Kolašin and Rožaje; and the other, the Peć-Mitrovica line connecting Kosovo with the northern parts of Drenica and Metohija, and also with the eastern parts of Montenegro via Peć.'

entire Sanjak of Novi Pazar as well as a great part of Kosovo depended on this railway network (Abdyli 1985).

Many sources emphasise that Mitrovica gained its importance and began to develop from a small settlement to an urban centre only after the construction of the railway towards the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century (Hadri & Avramovski 1979). Once Mitrovica had become the terminus on the newly built line, the entire export and import of its hinterland went through the city (Urošević 1954).

*Код Митровице свршава се железничка пруга која из Скопља кроз Косово пролази. (...) То што се ту свршава железничка пруга даје овој вароши врло велику живост, какве нема ни у једној вароши на овоме крају. Особито су живи дани: понедеоник, среда и петак, јер у те дане стиже воз из Скопља са путницима за Пећ, Нови Пазар, Сеницу, Нову Варош, Пријеполје, Бело Поље и Плевље, а у исте дане долазе из поменутих вароши и путници, који ће у Скопље и Солун. Митровица је дакле највећа раскрсница (осим Скопља) у целом Косовском Вилајету.<sup>29</sup> (Цариградски гласник)*

This line was opened in 1873/4 and connected the Kosovo towns of Mitrovica (the last stop in the north), Vučitrn, Pristina, Lipljan, Uroševac and Kacanik with Skopje, Gevgelija and Thessalonica.

*Митровица је последња станица на прузи Скопље – Митровица. Ту и ноћивају возови који из Скопља долазе. Она има и ложницу, шупу за локомотиве, рампе, сместиште угља, као и три споредна колосека. Осим тога и Митровица као 'скела' врло је жива варошица и према њеном напредовању може се сматрати за варошицу будућности. Од ње се пружа важан друм за Нови Пазар, код ње и Пећ има везе са железницом. Преко ове станице две и три нахије набављају себи еспап и шаљу своје*

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<sup>29</sup> 'The railway line from Skopje passing through Kosovo terminates in Mitrovica.(...) The fact that the railway line ends there lends this town a great air of liveliness and bustle, not to be found in any of the other towns in the area. Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays are particularly lively because on those days the train arrives from Skopje, carrying passengers for Peć, Novi Pazar, Sjenica, Nova Varoš, Prijepolje, Bijelo Polje and Plevlja, and on the same days passengers arrive from these towns, travelling to Skopje and Thessalonica. Mitrovica is therefore the busiest junction (apart from Skopje) in the entire Kosovo Vilayet' Citation from *Carigradski Herald* newspaper in M. Luković 2007, p. 91.

производе. Отуда је митровачка станица готово најважнија за саобраћај на целој прузи.<sup>30</sup> (Nušić 1902, in: Luković 2005)

With the opening of the Belgrade-Niš-Vranje railway in the Kingdom of Serbia in 1884, connecting with the railway of the Vardar valley, the Kosovo line lost some of its importance, but continued to be of great influence on trade and commerce in Kosovo and the surrounding areas (Luković 2007):

*Митровица је пресећена главним косовским друмом који иде за Босну, она је на промећи трију нахија: Пазарске, Пећске и Приштивске; код ње се свршава железничка линија Скопље-Митровица те је отуд она скела за све босанске нахије као и за Пећску.*<sup>31</sup> (Nušić 1902)

At the end of the 19th century, as a result of the railway construction and massive migration, the market in Mitrovica consisted of 50-60 shops and has just started its rapid development (Urošević 1954): ‘Чаршија је митровачка увек врло жива са околности које напред поменуемо и које Митровицу и учинише најважњим градом на Косову’<sup>32</sup> (Nušić 1902).

After WWI, Mitrovica started to lose the markets of the Sanjak of Novi Pazar (due to political changes and new railway routes), but gained the Montenegrin-Serbian connection after the establishment of the Peć-Mitrovica road. As a result, the region of Novi Pazar began to gravitate towards Sarajevo.

In 1928 the Vardar-Kosovo railway (*vardasko-kosovska željeznica*), built in 1873, was extended to Kraljevo and thus connected Mitrovica with the Raška region (earlier travel was possible only through Novi Pazar). As a result of this investment, Mitrovica gained a connection with Belgrade, as the railway route from Kraljevo to the northern part of Serbia already existed (Urošević 1954).

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<sup>30</sup> ‘Mitrovica is the last stop on the Skopje-Mitrovica line. This is where the trains arriving from Skopje wait the night. It also has a repair shed, an engine shed, loading platforms, a coal yard, and three sidings. Moreover, Mitrovica as a platform town is very lively and, judging by its progress, may be considered to be a town of the future. From it an important road runs to Novi Pazar, and thanks to the railroad there is a connection with Peć. Through this station two or three administrative districts obtain their goods and ship out their produce. For this reason Mitrovica station is almost the most important stop for traffic along the entire line.’

<sup>31</sup> ‘Mitrovica is intersected by the main Kosovo road going to Bosnia; it is at the crossroads of three nahiyahs: Pazar, Peć and Priština; it ends with the Skopje-Mitrovica railway line and hence serves as a platform for all the Bosnian nahiyah as well as Peć.’

<sup>32</sup> ‘The market of Mitrovica is always a very lively place due to the circumstances that we mentioned above and which made Mitrovica the most important city in Kosovo.’

In 1931 the Kosovska Mitrovica-Kraljevo railway was completed, and Mitrovica lost its importance as a commercial centre in the Sanjak of Novi Pazar, because from then on the transport of goods went through the Raška region (Abdyli 1985). Eventually, the establishment of the Peć/Peja – Kosovo Polje/Fushe Kosove railway in 1936 provided Mitrovica with a Montenegrin-Serbian connection.

Post-WWII, and especially between 1965 and 1980, the flow of railway passengers and commodity circulation declined. Simultaneously, a sudden increase in road traffic was observed (Abdyli 1985). Mitrovica did not lose importance due to these changes, as it was located on the route of two major highways: the Ibar Highway (*Ibarska magistrala*) and the Adriatic Highway (*Jadranska magistrala*).

The construction of the Ibar Highway leading from the cities in central Serbia to Pristina (through Kozareva, Titova Mitrovica and Vučitrn) started in 1953. Mitrovica was also directly connected with the Adriatic Highway, finished in 1970 and leading to the Adriatic coast through Montenegro, Bosnia and Croatia. Those two main routes granted Mitrovica its intersection status; in addition, the shortest routes to Macedonia, southern and eastern Serbia as well as to the Montenegrin coast lead through Mitrovica (Abdyli 1985).

### **2.2.2. Mitrovica as a multicultural settlement**

The multi-cultural environment and fluid social composition have been characteristic of Mitrovica for centuries, owing to its geopolitical location, and to the urban character that the settlement gained over time.

Ger Duijzings argues that ‘Kosovo was essentially a pluralistic society, where various ethnic groups coexisted, many languages were spoken and all major religions of the Balkans were represented’ (Duijzings 2001). Cities which remained administrative, military or commercial centres were the hubs of cultural plurality (linguistic, religious, ethnic), apart from the Ottoman subjects there were also residents representing foreign communities, usually Roman Catholics (Gara 2017). Additionally, many cities were inhabited by a significant number of merchant population representatives, like Greeks, Jews, Romani and the Aromanians (Jelavich 2005). As opposed to rural areas where ethnically homogeneous villages prevailed, urban areas were characterised by a mixed population (Duijzings 2001).

Mitrovica, like many other settlements and cities in the Balkans, was inhabited by mixed population. It is worth emphasising that the level of its cultural diversity was directly related to the roles played by the city at particular times. The best example of this interrelation is the construction of the railway line. As soon as Mitrovica had become a terminus on the Skopje-Kosovska Mitrovica route, its growth accelerated and thus Mitrovica's population increased and became very heterogeneous (Urošević 1954). The significant growth of Mitrovica's population from 300-500 houses in the 17<sup>th</sup> century (Čelebija) to 1,300 houses at the turn of the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries (Nušić 1902) was inseparably linked with railway construction. A similar mechanism can be observed with the acquisition of new roles by the city as a merchant, administration and industrial centre:

*Најпре трговина, а после администрација и рудник, привукли су људе с разних страна: занатлије, трговце, чиновнике, слуге и уопште раднике разних занимања.*<sup>33</sup>  
(Lutovac 1950)

What is important, the area formed a cultural microcosm, consisting of a complicated patchwork of groups (in the linguistic, religious, ethnic sense, etc.) which interacted with each other, not homogeneous groups either replaced one another or lived in closed communities next to each other. Moreover, the division, especially in urban centres, was not only reflected in linguistic, confessional and ethnic boundaries, but also in professional ones. Over the centuries, many different cultural communities present in Mitrovica contributed to its growth through their skills and knowledge (which should not be underestimated) and thus their inflow or outflow determined how the city developed.

Undoubtedly, the distinction between Muslims and non-Muslims was the basis of the Ottoman social order. Apart from the changeable administrative order, briefly described in the previous subchapter, there was another element that determined the position of inhabitants in the framework of the Ottoman Empire and beyond – the so-called millet system. Generally speaking, it was a means of guaranteeing the rights of non-Muslim citizens in the Ottoman Empire in order to organise communities which were granted certain rights and privileges (G'orgiev, 2013). Until the 1980s, the idea of the millet system, perceived as an array of well-defined, hierarchically organised, self-governed and rarely intersecting communities, was

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<sup>33</sup> 'First the trade, and then the administration and the mine, attracted people from all parts: craftsmen, traders, clerks, servants and, generally, workers of various professions.'

dominant in the historiographical narrative (Gara 2017)<sup>34</sup>. The system of self-governing confessional communities, or rather a form of indirect rule at the very beginning, was established with the Ottoman conquest and evolved with time. Eastern Orthodox, Armenian and Jewish millets were officially recognised only at the turn of the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries and in the 19<sup>th</sup> century (Gara 2017, Braude 1982)<sup>35</sup>. Nonetheless, religious affiliation was not the only component of inhabitants' identity; Ottoman subjects, classification and terminology depended on the administrative context, and religious affiliation was not the only marker of difference to be applied, as Gara proves presenting the status of the Romani community (Gara 2017 after Tezcan 2012).

Indeed the order resulting from administrative and socio-confessional divisions influenced the self-identification of the members of particular communities in the Ottoman Empire and beyond. At the same time it managed, and to some extent created, the specific microcosms of complex, multiple, diffuse and dynamic identities which later faced the idea of a homogeneous national identity resulting from the nation-state concept and nationalist movements.

Mitrovica, and Kosovo in general, are prime examples of such a microcosm of unobvious and dynamic identities. There are sources on the presence of Catholic Albanians in Mitrovica (from Đakovica and Pec) (Urošević 1953), Muslim Albanians, as well as Islamised groups, also among the Slavs (in the first half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century some Serbian families in Mitrovica converted to Islam (Urošević 1953) Gorans, various confessional affiliations of the Romani community etc.

Due to the change in the components of identity (from socio-confessional to ethnic), designations (Šiptari/Arbanasi/Albanci), terminology (Gypsy/Cigani/Roma), as well as the disappearance of certain communities, their evolution and the emergence of new ones (Montenegri, Macedonians, Kosovars), describing this dynamic population structure is rather challenging.

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<sup>34</sup> The discussion on the perception of intercommunal relations resulted from several circumstances: archival sources, new theories and discoveries: emergence of a modern state (religious reforms leading to greater diversity). Current research on the interreligious relations in the Ottoman Empire focuses on the forms, extent and limits of tolerance and interaction between communities, emphasising the importance of how the situation changed over time (Gara 2017).

<sup>35</sup> Institutional arrangements known as the millet system appeared at the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> century due to increased legibility, although the term was systematically used only in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Before that there was no system of indirect imperial rule over the non-Muslim population with such an important administrative position of the communities' religious leaders, as prior to the 19<sup>th</sup> century the Ottomans had no coherent policy to create the empire-wide administrative and fiscal communities under religious leadership (Gara 2017, Braude 1982).



Although the first reliable official census figures appeared at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century (Malcolm 1999), information on the earlier social composition of Mitrovica (and Kosovo) can be found in the documents produced by the state administration of the Ottoman Empire (*defter*), in historical studies which identify the shifts of particular groups based on historical events and in travellers' journals, and the writings of geographers and political representatives.

Unfortunately, none of the available demographic data are conducive to comparative analysis due to the differences in conceptualisation and entanglement in the nationalist ethnographic dispute (Atanasovski 2017). Ottoman censuses, for instance, classified citizens by confessional or socio-confessional categories not taking into consideration their language or ethnic identity, not to mention national identity that emerged in the 19<sup>th</sup> century.

Moreover, some studies and censuses include only the urban area of the city, while others take into consideration its peripheries or the entire municipality. However, from the perspective of this thesis, the exact number of Mitrovica's residents in the past is not as crucial as the presence of particular communities.

Therefore, taking the above into consideration and bearing in mind the aim of elucidating the changeable composition of the social structure in Mitrovica, several migration waves/demographic shifts should be mentioned, determined by wider political developments or important local events. The goal of this subchapter is to demonstrate that the multi-ethnic composition of the population and the constant shifts in its structure remain the main characteristics of this settlement. Therefore, the description focuses on the presence of other, commonly disregarded, groups in Mitrovica with reference to its contemporary identity components (with appropriate commentary, if needed). Demographic changes occurred in the scope of broader historical processes, and therefore the second reference point of this description is the order of crucial historical events. The origins of Albanian and Serbian inhabitants before the Ottoman period will not be covered in this thesis, as it would require a separate study and is not essential for describing the development of Mitrovica. The presence of various contemporary communities and their entanglement in the current political situation will be covered in one of the analytical chapters.

Taking into consideration the time of the construction of the first mosques and settlements, Muslim Turks were probably present in this region (Branković's district) in the middle of the 15<sup>th</sup> century (Luković 2005, Urošević 1954). Malcolm traces the origins of

Turkish population in Kosovo to the turn of the 14<sup>th</sup> and 15<sup>th</sup> centuries (Malcolm 1999). Over the centuries Turks were coming to Kosovo and Mitrovica from different locations in the Ottoman Empire, especially after the construction of the railway and as a result of the Russo-Turkish war (1877-1878). From the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century Turks were gradually withdrawing from the territories no longer under the Ottoman rule and, eventually, during the Balkan Wars most of them fled to Turkey.

It is assumed that the Romani came to Kosovo from the Byzantine Empire around the 14<sup>th</sup> century (Malcolm 1999). At the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century there were a few households of Eastern Orthodox and Muslim Romani in Mitrovica (Lukovic, 2005). What is interesting, in Mitrovica (and Pristina) they belonged to the small minority of non-nomadic Serbian-speaking Romani, while the majority of Kosovo's Romani were Albanian-speaking and Muslim (Malcolm 1999). A significant number of Romani people settled in Mitrovica after the construction of the railway. Urošević argues that Albanian-speaking Romani arrived mostly from Vučitrn and Pristina, while the Romani-speaking Roma came from Laba (Urošević 1954). Lutovac believes that there were Romani who speak Albanian, Serbian and their native language living together in one of Mitrovica's *mahalas*. Serbian-speaking Romani (whom he describes as *srpski Cigani*) came from the Drenica neighbourhood (Lutovac 1950).

The Great Turkish War (the War of the Holy League, 1683-1699) at the end of the 17<sup>th</sup> century, which ended in 1699 with the Treaty of Karlowitz, was the turning point in the history of the Ottoman Empire. In the Balkans it resulted in a significant migration of the predominantly Christian population to the North. Population shifts also affected the territory of Kosovo. In Serbian historiography this exodus is known as the Great Migration and is interpreted as a process that significantly changed the ethno-demographic character of Kosovo. According to Serbian sources, at the end of the 17<sup>th</sup> century Albanians, earlier an insignificant minority, became the majority in the region. Understandably, Albanian historians provide a different interpretation of the events and emphasise the contribution of Albanian Catholics to organising the resistance against the Ottomans (Malcolm 1999).

A significant change in the number of inhabitants and population structure did not occur until the construction of the railway; back then Mitrovica had no more than 2,000 inhabitants (Urošević 1954). At the beginning of the 17<sup>th</sup> century, there were about 300 houses (Čelebija 1957). It appears that Mitrovica did not develop significantly over the next

two centuries, as various travellers at the beginning of the 19<sup>th</sup> century estimated the number of households at between 200 and 350 (Lutovac 1950, after Krstić).

Between 1870 and 1890 there was a significant influx of Muslim refugees and outflow of Serbs from Kosovo (Malcolm 1999). After 1878 as a result of territorial changes (after the Treaty of Berlin) many refugees came to Kosovo from Bosnia, Serbia and Montenegro. In 1891 a refugee neighbourhood for the people from Bosnia (*lagja e muhaxheireve*) and the Bosniak district (*bošnjaka mahala/ lagja e Boshnjakëve*) were established in Mitrovica (Sarinaj 2007). Among the Muslims who settled in Mitrovica at the time were Turks, Albanians and Serbs (Urošević 1954). In 1890, Mitrovica had about 21,000 inhabitants (Lutovac 1950).

At the turn of the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries other communities came to Mitrovica as well: Macedonians<sup>36</sup> from Tetovo and Veles (Urošević 1954), Jews from Pristina (Lebel 2002), Tzintzars from Kruševo and Bitola (Luković 2004, Luković 2005), as well as Russians in 1920 and 1921 after the October Revolution (Frtunić 2010, Radomirović 2013, Maliković 1993). There was also observed migration from nearby villages and from Kosovo and Macedonia (Hadri & Avramovski 1979).

The Tzintzars probably settled in Mitrovica after it became connected with Skopje via the railway line and after the Russo-Turkish War (1877-1878). They came mostly from Kruševo and Bitola and took up trade. The Tzintzars left a considerable mark on Kosovo's economy, not only in Mitrovica, but also in other cities such as Lipljan, Oblič, Pristina and primarily in Uroševac (Ferizaj), where they lived for more than 120 years. They specialised in trade, handicrafts, hostelry and tavern-owning; in so doing they contributed significantly to the development of Pristina and Mitrovica as well as participating in founding Ferizović [Uroševac], Lipljan and Globoderice [Oblič]. After WWI there were only a few Tzintzar houses left in Mitrovica (Urošević 1954). Following the nationalisation of property, they started to migrate and relocated mostly to Skopje (Luković 2004); the last Tzintzar families left Kosovo in the 1990s.

Jews started to migrate to Mitrovica at the turn of the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries, mostly from Pristina (Lebel 2002), but some have come from elsewhere, for instance, Novi Pazar (Mušović 1992). Mušović argues that Pristina Jews, as well as other Kosovo Jews, are either

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<sup>36</sup>This study was published in 1954 when Macedonian identity was recognised. It does not give any explanation as to why such a group was identified at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century.

immigrants from Macedonia who lived there before the 15<sup>th</sup> century or Sephardic Jews, or could be the descendants of both groups (Mušović 1992). Jews began settling in Mitrovica when the city started to develop after the construction of the Skopje-Mitrovica railway and the reactivation of the mining site (Mušović 1992). Even though the Jewish community in Mitrovica was one of the smallest in the territory of Serbia, they had a significant impact on the development of the city, among other things, laying foundations of trade in Mitrovica (Lebel, 2002). They were granted their own district in the city, probably along with a synagogue and a cemetery, and owned several workshops in the very centre of the city – the *čaršija*. The number of members of the Jewish community increased gradually. According to Ženi Lebel, there were 53 Jews in the city in 1913 and 116 in 1940/41 (Lebel, 2002). Mušović argues that there were 104 Jews in 1931 and 136 before the outbreak of WWII (Mušović 1992). During WWII, Mitrovica was under German occupation; this led to the tragic deaths of most of Mitrovica's Jews who did not manage to escape to Pristina. Out of 136 Jews only 45 fled to the South in the Italian occupation zone (Mušović 1992). Those who did not manage to escape were captured and together with the members of the Jewish community of Novi Pazar they were sent to Sajmište where they were executed. Those who survived were detained in Albania, and after the war ended they came back to their houses burnt-out, and eventually left Mitrovica, migrating to Israel (Mušović 1992).

According to the Ottoman census from 1910, before the Balkan Wars, Mitrovica had about 10,000 inhabitants, excluding the military garrison, which was almost as populous (Luković 2005, after Urošević 1957 and Cvijić 1996). The decline in the number of residents primarily due to the Muslim population migrating to Turkey was noted in 1914. The population loss was quickly made up for by new migrants from neighbouring villages and towns settling in the developing city.

Importantly, in 1920 a significant number of British people settled in Mitrovica after the opening of the Trepča Mines (*Miniera e Trepçës/Рудник Тренча*) (Luković 2007, Murati 1971, Abdyli 1985, West 1942). The mine factory played a significant part in the mixed composition of Mitrovica's population and the development of the city in general during the Yugoslavian period.

Censuses from 1921 and 1931 classified the population regarding confessional identity and native language. According to the 1921 census, 10,045 people lived in Mitrovica (*opština Kosovska Mitrovica*), among them 2,817 Eastern Orthodox Christians, 6,697 Muslims, 427

Catholics (*Rimo-katolika i Grko-katolika*), and 104 Jews. Regarding the native language, 3,887 residents declared to be Serbs and Croats, 104 Slovenians, 1,860 Albanians (*Arnauti*), 3,287 Turks, 56 Tzintzars and Tzintzars/Romanians (*Cincara/Rumuna*), 5 Russians, 3 Italians, 1 British (*Englez*) and 831 others (*ostali i nepoznato*).

According to the 1931 census, the municipality of Mitrovica (*srez Kosovska Mitrovica*) was inhabited by 30,788 individuals, 17,245 Eastern Orthodox, 12,623 Muslim, 754 Catholic and 18 Evangelist (148 others). Moreover, 21,921 residents declared Serbian, Macedonian, Croatian and Slovenian as their native language, 5,788 Albanian (*arnautski*), 200 other Slavic languages, 82 Hungarian, 80 German and 2,717 other languages. The urban territory of Mitrovica was inhabited by 11,295 people, 4,067 Eastern Orthodox, 6,388 Muslim, 693 Catholic, 18 Evangelist and 23 other Christians (106 others). The census probably did not include the foreigners (mostly British) hired in Trepča or Mitrovica and remained temporary inhabitants of the city (Luković 2005).

The census planned for 1941 was not conducted due to the outbreak of World War II. After the war, the number of inhabitants of the city (urban territory) increased gradually (1948 – 13,901, 1953 – 17,195, 1961 – 26,721, 1971 – 42,160, 1981 – 55,651), similarly in the entire municipality (1948 – 48,719, 1953 – 57,009, 1961 – 59,913 or 70,555, 1971 – 90,968, 1981 – 105,322).

National or ethnic affiliations differed depending on the census. Therefore, it is hard to undertake a comparative analysis of population composition without an in-depth analysis of the methodological tool. One of the most significant changes was the status of Muslims (in the sense of ethnic-national identity). In the 1961 census, the understanding of the name shifted; people of Yugoslav origin who identified as Muslims in the ethnic, but not religious, sense declared themselves Muslim. The category of Yugoslavs also changed over time, for instance, in 1931 Serbs, Croats, Slovenians, Macedonians, Montenegrins and Muslims who did not select any option were listed as Yugoslavs, while in 1971 and 1981 the category encompassed those who did not declare their ethnic nationality or regional affiliation<sup>37</sup>.

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<sup>37</sup> The methodological explanation for the national structure of population in SFR Yugoslavia from 1981 reads: *A special feature of the 1971 and 1981 censuses is that population is grouped into two main summary groups: "Persons who declared their ethnic nationality" and "Persons who didn't declare their ethnic nationality". In the 1971 census the latter group was divided into three subgroups: 1. "Persons who didn't declare their ethnic nationality (according to the article 41 of the SFRY Constitution)" 2. "Persons who declared as Yugoslavs" and 3. "Persons who declared in the sense of regional affiliation" and in the 1981 census also into three subgroups: 1. "Persons who didn't declare or opt for anything" according to the article 41 of the SFRY Constitution, 2.*

It is also worth noticing that designations of some groups changed between the above-mentioned censuses. For instance, Albanians appeared as *Arnauti* in censuses from 1921 and 1931, *Šiptari* in censuses from 1948 and 1953, and *Albanci* in the 1961 census. Also the Romani were designated as either *Cigani* or *Romi*, and in 1953 were not mentioned as a separate ethnic/national group at all (likely being classified as other non-Slavs). Moreover, the ethnic/national affiliation of the Romani was rather fluent considering their linguistic and confessional diversity.

The social composition of Mitrovica remains varied but with a stable domination and a gradual growth in the Albanian population to this day. Researchers indicate migration, the inflows and outflows of particular communities, and the high rate of population growth among Albanians as the main causes of such gradual increase (Abdyli 1985).

Another important process which deserves mentioning is the massive rural-urban migration in the 1950s-1970s from the surrounding rural areas and Kosovo in general. The ratio of urban to rural population increased gradually: 1948 – 28.5%, 1953 – 30.2%, 1961 – 37.9%, 1971 – 46.3%, 1981 – 52.4 % (Abdyli 1985). Essentially, this migration was a direct outcome of the clear delineation of the urban and rural landscape and the prioritisation of the city as the site of socialist transformation (Troch 2018). Among the main reasons for migration, one could mention better housing conditions and infrastructure, employment prospects and attractive work conditions, including social benefits.

According to The Kosovo Human Development Report, in the post-war period Kosovo faced rapid population growth, long-term shifts in the relative numbers of ethnic Albanians and Serbs as well as four migration waves: 1) pre-1989, mostly young unskilled men with a low level of education and driven by economic situation migrated from rural areas (especially in the 1960s), 2) 1989-1997, caused by the unstable political situation when both skilled and uneducated men from rural and urban areas alike migrated for economic as well as political reasons (also to evade military service), 3) 1998-1999 when more than 800,000 refugees went to Albania, Western Europe and the US, many of whom returned after June 1999, and 4) in the post-1999 period when migration was due to economic, educational reasons as well as personal reasons, e.g. family reunification (UNDP 2014).

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*“Persons who declared as Yugoslavs” and 3. “Persons who declared in the sense of regional affiliation”. This classification of responses to the question of ethnic nationality made possible, in line with Constitutional provisions, the presentation of persons who didn’t declare ethnic nationality or didn’t opt as well as the number of citizens who declared as Yugoslavs. See: Nacionalni sastav stanovništva SFR Jugoslavije, knjiga I, Podaci po naseljima i opštinama, Beograd 1981.*

### 2.2.3. Mitrovica as a strategic garrison

Mitrovica's role as a strategic garrison is strictly connected with its border character resulting from its geopolitical location and political situation. The most favourable conditions for its strategic and military development occurred in the 11<sup>th</sup> century when it was a border fortress of Raška (Grand Principality of Serbia, 1091-1217) and at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century when it became a border city of the Ottoman Empire (after the Treaty of Berlin had been implemented).

Without doubt, Zvečan was the oldest historic settlement in the region and the first military site of such importance (Lutovac 1950). Although Zvečan was first mentioned in documents from 1091 as a border fortress of the Raška region, considering its location, it must have been erected much earlier, probably even in Roman times (Lutovac 1950). The Zvečan fortress is located north from the Ibar river and provides a great view of the whole valley, which undoubtedly lent it its strategic relevance.



Fig. 2. Zvečan Hill, Kosovska Mitrovica. Source: National Library in Belgrade, Rg 592-035.

In a strategic sense, from the beginnings of Raška, the fortress was considered the key to its entrance and remained a venue of many historical events and battles (Lutovac 1950). With the development of the Kingdom of Serbia (1217-1346), which succeeded the above-mentioned Grand Principality of Serbia, and with the gradual expansion of its territory to the south, Zvečan lost its border location as well as strategic importance. Eventually, it lost its

strategic and military significance in the second half of the 15<sup>th</sup> century, right after the Serbian Despotate (1459) and Bosnian Kingdom (1463) had been conquered by the Ottomans (Urošević 1954). However, in the second half of the 17<sup>th</sup> century when the Ottoman Empire had to face Austrian forces, it regained its status (Lutovac 1950). The Fortress of Zvečan was damaged the most in the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, at the time of Mitrovica's development, as the stones from which it had been built were used for the construction of public buildings, the bridge and the garrison (Nušić 1902, Lutovac 1950).

During the rule of the Ottoman Empire, Mitrovica and its neighbouring settlements remained relatively small trade centres. The situation changed towards the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century as a result of the railway line construction in 1874 and the implementation of the provisions of the Congress of Berlin after 1878.

Situated in a corner between Serbia, Austria-Hungary and Montenegro, it became a great Turkish military centre in the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Mitrovica, together with all of Kosovo, became a frontier region contested by the Ottoman Empire and independent Serbia.

*Но сем трговачке има она [Mitrovica] и војничку важност, јер је последња станица на линији према српској граници из које се разашиле или у коју се збира војска из босанских страна. Отуда је у њој седиште дивизијске команде и команда једне бригаде. Тога ради дигнута је у Митровици велика и јака касарна<sup>38</sup>. (Nušić 1902)*

According to the 1910 Ottoman census, before the Balkan Wars Mitrovica had about 10,000 inhabitants, excluding the military garrison inhabited by ca. 10,000 servicemen (Luković 2005, after Urošević 1957 and Cvijić 1996). Urošević argues that the need to supply such an impressive garrison and to fulfil the expectations of numerous officers who stationed in Mitrovica influenced the development of both its trade and craft industries (Urošević 1957).

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<sup>38</sup> 'Apart from trade [Mitrovica] also has military importance, because it is the last stop on the way to the Serbian border, from which the army from Bosnian territories could be sent or towards which it could gather. Hence it is also the headquarters of division and brigade commands. For that reason, a large and strong garrison was built in Mitrovica.'





Fig. 3. Military garrison and officers' house in Mitrovica. Source: National Library in Belgrade Rg 592-016.

During the Balkan Wars, Kosovo was incorporated into Serbia, which did not undermine its frontier role. In 1913 Mitrovica became the seat of the District of Zvečan and remained an important military centre in the Kingdom of Serbia and beyond (Hadri & Avramovski 1979), even though it never regained the importance from the period of the Ottoman rule.



Fig. 4. Postcard from Mitrovica showing the military garrison of king Stefan Dečanski and Zvečan Hill. Source: National Library in Belgrade Rg 592-021.

During WWII, when Mitrovica was in the German zone as part of the occupied Serbian territory, it played a crucial role as a provider of mineral resources rather than that of a significant military garrison. This issue will be further discussed in the next section.

#### **2.2.4. Mitrovica as an industrial centre**

Mitrovica's development, especially its radical transformation in the 20<sup>th</sup> century, was inextricably linked with the industrial potential of the Trepča Mines. Even though in the medieval period it was a separate mining and trade centre, which hindered Mitrovica's development, over time Trepča became an inseparable part of Mitrovica in the social, spatial and functional sense. As a result, today Trepča remains one of the main components of the city's image and identity.

Until the 17<sup>th</sup> century, the settlement of Trepča, located 10 km to the northeast of Mitrovica, played the role of a trade and mining centre (Urošević 1954). The development trends of Trepča were similar to those of other settlements in the region; from the mid-13<sup>th</sup> century the development of mining resulted in building mining cities, while in the second half of the 15<sup>th</sup> century rapid growth of Serbian and Bosnian cities, such as Novo Brdo, Brskovo, Srebrenica, and Fojnica could be observed (Vujović 2005).

Trepča was mentioned for the first time in medieval sources from 1303 as one of the biggest mine centres for silver and lead excavation (Murati Shukriu 1971, Lutovac 1950). It was designated with the following names: Trepice, Tripce, Trepča, Tripza and Trepza (Murati & Shukriu 1971).

Trepča reached the pinnacle of its development in the first half of the 15<sup>th</sup> century, when it was considered to be the largest trading place in Serbia (Lutovac 1950). In 1363 Uroš decided to leave Trepča under the supervision of Vuk Branković (Murati & Shukriu 1971). The development of the market and craftsmanship at the beginning of the 14<sup>th</sup> century resulted from the exploitation of Trepča and trade. Trepča maintained commercial relationships with coastal towns, particularly with Dubrovnik and Kotor (Murati & Shukriu 1971, Hadri & Avramovski 1979). It is also important to emphasise that apart from the residents of Dubrovnik, the rule of the Nemanjić dynasty brought Saxons (renowned and skilled miners) to the region (Murati & Shukriu 1971).

Nevertheless, it seems that the residents of Dubrovnik contributed the most to the development of Trepča, as evidenced by their special status. Owing to their special administrative position with regard to taxes and customs, they were experienced tradesmen, and therefore remained a very important factor in the development of trade in feudal medieval Serbia. Moreover, they were granted their own colony for Dubrovnik's residents as well as their own consul and court (Lutovac 1950, Murati & Shukriu 1971, Hadri & Avramovski 1979, Hrabak 1996, Osmani 2005).

In 1431 Turks were present in Trepča, where they also had their own colony. Mehmed II, an Ottoman Sultan, took control of the mine in 1455 banning the export of resources to Dubrovnik, which resulted in a decrease in mining and trade. According to Lutovac, Marin Bici, the Archbishop of Bar, who travelled to Trepča in 1610, noted that the settlement comprises 500 houses, of which 40 were Catholic (Lutovac 1950). There are also sources from 1685 that mention Catholic miners for the very first time (Lutovac 1950). The decline of old mineshafts with time and the consequences of the War of the Holy League (1683-1699) eventually resulted in stopping all works in the Trepča Mines in 1690 (Hadri & Avramovski 1979).

It is hard to say much on the development of the industry after World War I. First attempts at modernisation and industrialisation in Mitrovica were made towards the end of the Ottoman rule, but the process of industrialisation gathered momentum in the interwar period. Before then only two small enterprises had been established: a quarry producing millstones and a sawmill (Hadri & Avramovski 1979). The first industrial building was the steam-powered sawmill built in 1921 (Abdyli 1985, Urošević 1954), but there were also several ordinary sawmills in operation (Hadri & Avramovski 1979). Beyond that, there was a plywood factory, panel board factory, soldering factory, and a machine repair shop (Urošević 1954). Not until 1927 did Mitrovica gain its hydroelectric power station and an electric sawmill, while in 1936 a brick factory was built (Urošević 1954). Nevertheless, the industrial output relied heavily on wood due to forest resources located in the Ibar district (Urošević 1954). At the time trade and crafts remained the basis for development.

Only when the British company reopened the Trepča Mines, did Mitrovica start to grow into the biggest industrial centre, first in the region and later in Yugoslavia. In 1926 first mining works were conducted under the new company, Trepča Mines Ltd, a branch of the British company, Selection Trust. After almost two centuries of inactivity, in 1921 the first

new building was constructed and in 1930 production started (Urošević 1954, Murati & Shukriu 1971). The rate of exploration and production increased gradually until 1938 what was connected also with the economic crisis (Murati & Shukriu 1971). The reactivation of the Trepča Mines was a crucial moment for further development of Mitrovica, as it compensated for various unfavourable circumstances. At the time, the city started to lose its trading potential as a result of new transportation lines constructed in 1928 and 1936. Under the British ownership, the historic lead, zinc and silver mining site of Trepča expanded to include flotation, smelting and refining in Zvečan (Troch 2018, Folić 1994).



Fig. 5. Residential area of the Trepča Mines, Kosovska Mitrovica. Source: National Library in Belgrade, Rg 592-011.

During WWII the Nazis paid special attention to Trepča, as lead and zinc production were indispensable for their war machine (Abdyli 1985). On the eve of WWII, Nazi Germany showed a great interest in Trepča. Both the mine and the processing plant in Zvečan worked incessantly throughout the war. Due to Trepča's importance for the German war economy, Kosovska Mitrovica came under special German administration in occupied Serbia (Luković 2007); along with the neighbouring districts it constituted a special unit in the German occupation zone and became the seat of the *Kreiss-Komandantur* (Hadri, Avramovski 1979).

In Socialist Yugoslavia, communist authorities expanded Trepča into a mining, metallurgical and chemical conglomerate (Troch 2008). Unlike in the interwar period, after

World War II a dominant role of industry and mining could be observed; right after the war it constituted 90% of the total production (Abdyli 1985).

During that time, thanks to Trepča's development, Mitrovica urbanised and modernised rapidly. Immediately after the war had ended, the reconstruction of the damaged communication routes and the construction of new roads was started. It was followed by the development of other branches, such as construction, banking, tourism and of several new professions in the service sector.

Moreover, Trepča was the driving force behind the first construction phase of housing and the public infrastructure that started in the 1950s. The mining enterprise constructed a residential area on Ibar's sparsely populated left bank (nowadays, northern part of the city) as well as invested in the health care system (hospital) and educational system (technical high school and a faculty of mining and metallurgy) (Troch 2018). The development of industry and infrastructure was accompanied by the decline of agriculture and forestry, the disappearance of traditional forms of craft and the emergence of new ones (Abdyli 1985).

As an industrial centre of significant importance, Mitrovica gained a special status in Yugoslavia, as proved by Tito's visits to the city in 1950, 1967 and 1971 (*Zvečan*, Abdyli 1985) and the decision to rename the city as Titova Mitrovica after Tito's death (Osmani 2000, Radović 2013).

What is extremely important but often glossed over, the industrial development of Mitrovica resulted in dramatically high levels of air, soil and water pollution, already deemed problematic in the 1980s (Abdyli 1985). According to Stojanović and Milosavljević, Mitrovica was the second most polluted city in the world (Luković 2007 after Stojanović & Milosavljević 2004). Despite the toxic environment created as a result of rapid and intensive industrialisation of Mitrovica (Šajn, Aliu, Stafilov, Alijagić 2013) and despite the fact that Trepča operated at a loss (Božić 2009), the majority of local people share a negative view of its demise following the collapse of Socialist Yugoslavia. The loss of Trepča deprived the population of Mitrovica of its primary source of socio-economic prosperity and spatial identity (Troch 2018).

### 2.3. Mitrovica – urban development

Only after the construction of the railway connecting Mitrovica with Skopje at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, has the city become a relevant urban centre. Before that it was a rather small and unimportant Ottoman settlement. As it was mentioned before, from 1874 onwards Mitrovica has developed into a significant trading centre, and after 1878 – a military and political urban centre. Eventually, from the onset of the 20<sup>th</sup> and especially after World War II, Mitrovica has gradually become an industrial centre of great relevance. Geopolitical circumstances influenced its spatial expansion and diversity, population growth and functional and infrastructural development.

Until the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century Mitrovica was located exclusively on the right bank of the Ibar river. Back then ‘Stara Mitrovica’ (Urošević 1954) was located between the river and the hill of Bair and between the Ibar Bridge and Ljusta. In all likelihood, Mitrovica would resemble a village rather than a town, had it not been for a few shops in the central district (*čarsija*) and the fact that it was divided into three or four districts where Serbs, Turks and Romani lived separately (Urošević 1954). Later on, Mitrovica started to expand to the north and the south, as illustrated by the city plan (Fig. 6).

As a result of mass migration from Bosnia, Serbia and Montenegro new residential quarters were created: a refugee neighbourhood (*Muhadžerska Mahala/Lagjja e muhaxheireve*) to the south of Old Mitrovica, a Bosnian district (*Bošnjaka mahala/Mahala e Boshnjakëve* or *Saraj Mahala*) on the left bank of Ibar, and to the north of the city centre, and the Romani district (*Ciganska Mahala*) located to the west from the centre, and on the right bank of Ibar (Urošević 1954, Sarinaj 2007). Moreover, as a result of its growing political importance, Mitrovica received a military garrison to the south of the city, in the Bair neighbourhood. During the time of the establishment of new residential districts and the military base, the north-eastern part of the city also expanded towards the present-day railway route, back then the route to Trepča (Urošević 1954). Nušić mentions that in 1884 a great bridge was constructed using stones from the Fortress of Zvečan (Nušić 1902).

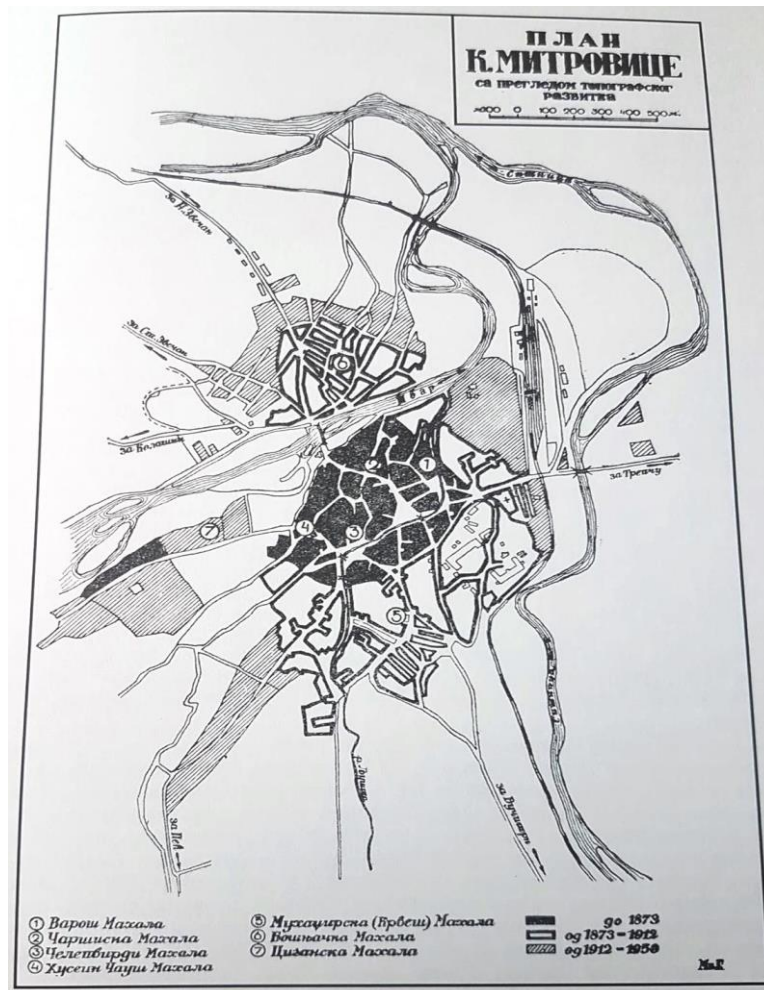


Fig. 6. Urban plan of Kosovska Mitrovica. Source: A. Urošević, *Kosovska Mitrovica – antropogeografska istraživanja*, Glasnik Etnografskog Instituta SAN II-III, Belgrade 1953-54.

Other parts of the city were erected after the Balkan Wars. Mitrovica expanded in the direction of the Peja/Peć route which led to Montenegro. The Bosnian district also expanded to the north and west, and many houses were built along the route to Zvečan. Meanwhile, the Romani *mahala* expanded towards the city centre and along the Ibar river.

Although initial modernisation was undertaken by Yugoslav authorities after Mitrovica's liberation from the Ottoman Empire, the construction of new residential quarters of the first Western-style modern public building took place earlier, in the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Back then Ottoman military barracks and a secondary school were established (Troch 2018). The neoclassical Russian and Austro-Hungarian consulates were built at the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century (Troch 2018).

In the interwar period, the city was modernised by the construction of new public buildings and basic infrastructure. The elegant Hotel Jadran, a school and a hospital were

opened during that time (Urošević 1953). In 1927 the city was electrified (Abdyli 1985) and in 1938 a wastewater and water supply system (limited to the garrison and a small part of the city, ca. 2.5 km long) was introduced (Abdyli 1985). Unfortunately, many residents still lacked access to these amenities. The best-equipped apartments were built at the beginning of 1930s in Zvečan for English professionals employed in Trepča (Abdyli 1985). Subsequently, the Ibar Bridge (constructed in 1884) was renovated, gaining an iron fence and sidewalks (Urošević 1954). At the same time, some streets (mostly the main ones) were paved (Urošević 1954).



Fig. 7. English colony under Zvečan Hill. Source: National Library in Belgrade, Rg 592-007.

The city was significantly destroyed after the wars. As a result of bombings and military activities, many houses, buildings, streets, roads, bridges and the limited communal systems were destroyed. Soon after the war, in the 1950s, the reconstruction and construction of local roads started. Until then the roads were macadam, cobbled or had no foundation at all. At the time, streets in the Bosnian district were straight, however, in other parts of the city they were curvy, unequally distributed, while side streets often turned into blind alleys (Urošević 1954).

After the Second World War Mitrovica was predominantly located on the right bank of the Ibar river. A new urban development plan for the city was not developed until the 1960s. The the huge interest of the local community in future development plans and the



delay in introducing them were visible in the press in the 1950s and 1960's, for instance, in the newspaper *Zvečan*<sup>39</sup>.

Meanwhile, in the 1950s the first investment in the new residential area in the north was initiated by the Trepča mining company (Troch 2008, Abdyli 1985). In 1954 the reconstruction of the water supply system started and by 1960, 4 km of wastewater pipes were available (Abdyli 1985). The first phase of urbanisation, initiated by Trepča mostly in the northern part of the city, lasted from the 1950s to the adoption of the urban plan in the 1960s. Nevertheless, the investments in the north were not completed beyond that initial phase. For instance, 'the further development of residential buildings provides a sampling of socialist urban architecture, with stand-alone *soliters*, small zones of freestanding apartment blocks with open spaces, and buildings in the brutalist architecture of the 1970s' (Troch 2018).

Being a company, Trepča not only invested in a new residential district for its workers but also granted loans to its employees for their private real estate investments (Abdyli 1985). Such investments were supported by the municipality (that provided land) and by banks (that granted loans). By 1975 more than 4,800 private houses were built in Mitrovica (Abdyli 1985). Apart from the aforementioned development in the northern part of the city, due to a private housing initiative a new neighbourhood – Tavnik – was established in the southern part of Mitrovica.

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<sup>39</sup> Information on the debate on the urban plan of Mitrovica can be found in the newspaper 'Zvečan' printed in Mitrovica. The following articles are particularly worth recommending: *Kada će biti gotov urbanistički plan? Stambena kriza se ne rešava rušenjem zgrada već izgradnjom novih, a urbanisti nisu o tome vodili računa!*, 20.04.1958; *Kada će biti gotov urbanistički plan? Odgovor arhitekta Dragutina Partovića*, 05.06.1958; *Urbanistički problemi Kosovske Mitrovice; Raste naš grad*. 21.11.1959; *Donošenje urbanističkog plana se odugovlači*. 18.04.1960.

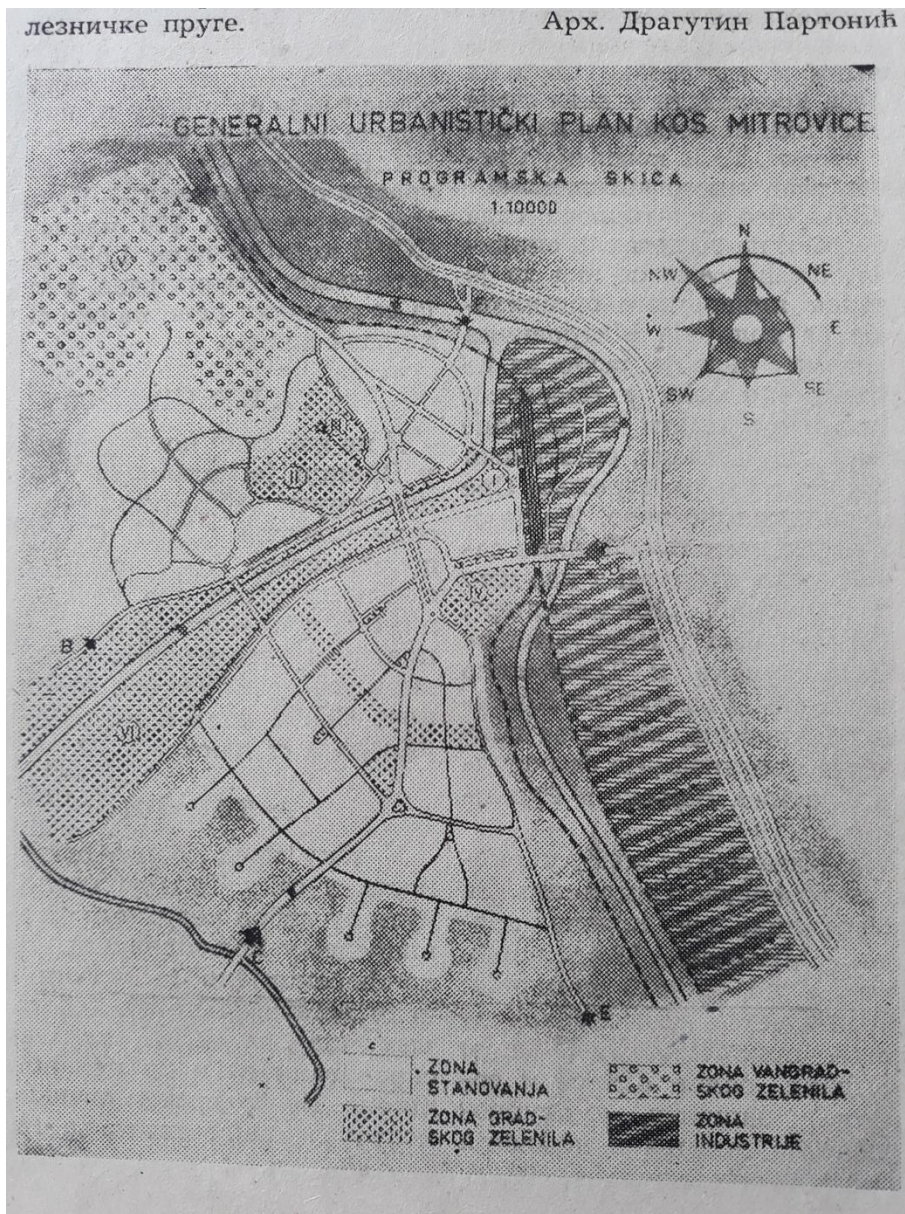


Fig. 8. General urban plan of Kosovska Mitrovica. Source: *Zvečan* 18.04.1960

Eventually, the long-awaited urban plan was adopted by Mitrovica's municipal assembly in 1962. The plan envisioned a circular grid divided into autonomous zones for housing (in both parts of Mitrovica), industry (along the Sitnica river and the railway), administration (urban centre in the south) and recreation (in the vicinity of the Ibar river and Partisan Hill) (Troch 2018). In addition, it was focused on the introduction of linear urban order with multi-storey buildings situated on the street line. The second phase of urban development, which started in mid-1960s, implemented significant changes in all the above-mentioned dimensions; this included the southern part of the city that before then remained untouched.

In 1971 during the second phase of urbanisation, a new bridge was constructed, and later also the second bridge on the Ibar river, close to the railway station (Abdyli 1985). In the late 1970s and the 1980s the water system was regulated and the road network in the centre was reconstructed. To deal with sanitary issues, the Ljušta river was redirected through an underground canal.

The plan was prepared with 60,000 residents in mind, without taking into account the people who migrated to Mitrovica in the meantime (Abdyli 1985). Therefore, many investments and construction sites were unsystematic, some did not adhere to the plan, while others were never carried out. This resulted in illegal buildings, an unbalanced development of streets compared to houses and houses that had water supply but no sewage.

Before the construction of the railway, buildings in the residential districts used to be one-storey houses, made of low-quality and unstable materials and covered with straw. At the turn of the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries, a few public buildings and ‘beautiful houses of wealthy Muslims’ were built in the city in addition to several ‘modern-style buildings’ in the newly created Bosnian district (Urošević 1954). Even post-WWII, most residential buildings in the city were built using low-quality materials:

*Rasličit je materijal kojim su podizane kuće ovog grada. Kuće u Ciganskoj Mahali (цигански кућерци) су од плетери и блата и покоја само од ћерпича или цигле. Куће осталог становништва у свим деловима града су у темељу од камена (риолита са Звечана), док су им зидови изнад темеља од цигле, ређе од ћерпича. Код неких је цело приземље од камена(...) Куће од ћерпича су зидане на бондрук, а исто тако су на бондрук зидане и неке старије куће од цигле. Код неких кућа су чак и зидови од камена зидани на бондрук. Кровови на кућама у новијим деловима града су од црепа, а у старијим деловима је цреп само на новјим зградама (...)<sup>40</sup> (Urošević 1954).*

In most parts of Mitrovica, houses were located on the street line with the exception of the Muslim part of the city situated close to the Ljušta river, which retained a more Turkish or Eastern character (Urošević 1954).

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<sup>40</sup> ‘The material used to erect the houses of this city varies. The houses in the Gypsy district (gypsy houses) are made of wicker and mud and only some are made of bricks. The houses of the rest of the population in all parts of the city are made of stone (rhyolite from Zvečan), while their walls above the brick foundations are often thinner than brick. Some even have a ground floor made of stone (...) The brick houses, including some of the older ones, were built using wooden frames. Some houses even have stone walls built on such a frame. Roofs of the houses in the newer parts of the city are tiled, while in the older parts only the newer buildings are tiled (...).’

Post-WWII the the city was undeniably dominated by socialist architecture; however, it was not equally distributed in the urban tissue of Mitrovica. Pieter Troch argues that the division which emerged as a result of socialist urban solutions between the northern and southern parts (the former was progressive and represented the future development of the city and the socialist society, while the latter was reminiscent of a backward, conservative and not-quite-urban environment with limited transformation potential) persists in the contemporary cityscape (Troch 2018). The changes resulting from the most recent conflict (such as, the direct destruction and reconstruction of the urban heritage, illegal buildings) have somewhat violated the image of the socialist city and caused further chaos in the urban landscape.

### **3. Chapter III: Imagined Boundaries. Symbolic Dimensions of Disintegration in Urban Space**

The aim of this chapter is to provide an overview of the symbolic dimension of urban space of contemporary Mitrovica. Urban space is considered as a text of culture rich in symbols (Radović 2013), a platform where sites of memory are manifested. Since the text of urban space is continually produced as well as constructed (Low 2017) by particular actors, the residents' perspective on the symbolic space of Mitrovica together with the analysis of contemporary city space is inevitable here.

Firstly, it is important to identify and describe the most significant sites of memory exemplified by historical events, places, historical and mythological images, present through their materialisation (in the form of sacral and secular objects, historical places, memorials, monuments, street names, tombstones, busts, plaques etc.) in the urban space of contemporary Mitrovica. The goal of such descriptions is to determine whether they correspond with the selected periods from Mitrovica's past and are linked with the local context or rather refer to above-local memory.

Secondly, since sites of memory remain a part of the dynamic process of memory shaping, strictly connected with the current socio-political context, it is crucial to determine which sites of memory are visible and well-maintained and which are neglected, forgotten or destroyed. The analysis will include the historical context and the narratives of different communities in order to provide a possible explanation for the current status and condition of particular sites of memory.

Moreover, to verify whether the symbolic sphere is in line with a division of the city or, to the contrary, its cohesion, and whether it reveals common, different or mutually exclusive narratives, the analysis will compare research outcomes with reference to respondents' profiles and their place of living. It is also important to determine whether there are any common sites of memory and how they are described by different groups and communities and whether they imply real and/or imagined borders.

Additionally, since urban space is continually created, the aim of this analysis is to identify the main actors and their motives in the context of (dis)integration, i.e. whether they seek to integrate, maintain the division or exacerbate the conflict, etc.

Last but not least, due to the methodological approach employed in this thesis, I will introduce comparative perspectives on the results obtained using different methods in order to determine whether there are any significant discrepancies between them.

This chapter is divided into two complementary parts. The first one (*Symbolic dimension of contemporary Mitrovica*) describes the symbolic space of contemporary Mitrovica based on the outcomes of empirical research: the analysis of sources and observation and the results of structured and semi-structured interviews. The second part (*Layers of the symbolic landscape in Mitrovica*) introduces the main layers of the symbolic landscape in Mitrovica and provides a possible explanation for the elements of contemporary Mitrovica's space with reference to the outcomes of empirical research.

### **3.1. Symbolic dimension of contemporary Mitrovica**

#### **3.1.1. The overview of contemporary urban landscape**

Today Mitrovica is a medium-sized city located in the northern part of Kosovo, about 40 km from Pristina, 124 km from Skopje, 75 km from Novi Pazar, and 80 km from Prizren. The city is situated in a valley and bounded by the Shalla Hills from the northeast.

Three rivers flow through the city. The Ibar river is dammed in Kosovo, creating the artificial Lake Gazivode (1977). Recently, another artificial lake was also created; it is located to the west from the Romani district. Ibar can be crossed using one of three bridges: the main bridge (currently closed to traffic), the eastern or secondary bridge (open to traffic and pedestrians) and the foot bridge (available only to pedestrians).

Ibar is perceived as a border between southern and northern Mitrovica. However, the city is also divided into several other quarters or neighbourhoods,<sup>41</sup> which include apart from the centre(s) (*Qendra/Centar*): the Bosnian district (*Lagja e Boshnjakëve/Бошњачка махала*), the Romani district (*Fidanishte/Fidanishtja, Ромска махала*), the less known Partisans' Hill (*Kodra Partizane/Партизантско брдо*), Minors' Hill (*Kodra e Minatorëve/Микронаселје*), the Ilirida neighbourhood (*Iliriada/Iliridë*), the Bair neighbourhood (*Lagja Bairi/Баир*), the Tavnik neighbourhood (*Tavniku/Тавник*), Bridge of

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<sup>41</sup> This short description of the main parts of the city should be treated as a general overview. It is based on several maps, mostly contemporary, often contradictory or incomplete, author's on-site observations and interviews with locals.

Blood (*Ura e Gjakut*), and the industrial zone (*Zona Industriale/Индустриска Зона*), *Suhodoll/Cybu Do*.<sup>42</sup> It is worth emphasising that each neighbourhood, regardless of whether it is located in the southern or northern part, is a specific microcosm of complex relations with its own history of internal shifts and development.

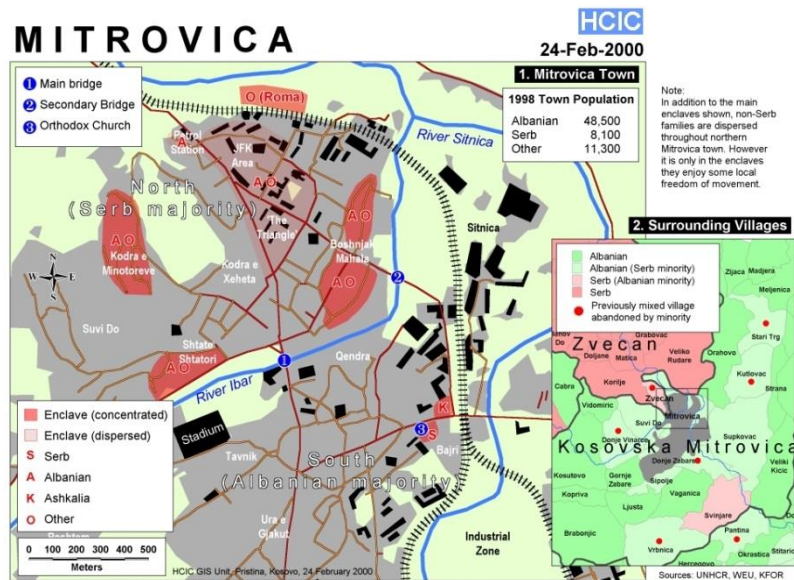


Fig. 9. Map of Mitrovica and surrounding villages. Source:

[https://www.globalsecurity.org/military/ops/kosovo\\_maps\\_base.htm](https://www.globalsecurity.org/military/ops/kosovo_maps_base.htm), accessed: 03.2019.

Nowadays, it is rather problematic to identify the city centre, one reason being the limited access to sources. Even the interviewed residents appeared to be confused regarding this matter. The first issue was the division of the city when they were asked e.g. to specify which part and period we were referring to in our conversation. The second issue was the sense of centrality; in many cases when asked to locate the centre, the interviewees pointed at particular parts of the city which either have a specific function or specific appearance, such as the social centre, the urban centre or the market. As a result we can point to several examples of the centre, before and after the division of the city, such as the promenade close to the former Hotel Jadran and Nikola Tesla cinema, relatively close to the statue of Isa Boletini, the vicinity of the roundabout with the monument of Prince Lazar, the place(s) close to the main mosque, the surroundings of the main bridge, or the northern part of the city as a whole. Mitrovica's main street is nowadays divided into King Peter I Street (*ulica kralja Petra I*), leading from the city entrance in the northern part to the main bridge, and Princess Teuta Street (*Mbretëreshë Teuta*) from the main bridge to the southern side.

<sup>42</sup> Certain names of neighbourhoods appear only in one of the available sources, while other are not official but commonly used.

The situation seems to be less complicated regarding the market, even though in the course of armed conflict and economic transformation the place has changed significantly. Nowadays, Mitrovica's residents shop in the (green) markets, similar to the old *pazar*, located close to the main mosque (in the South, where it used to be), close to the Romani district in the South and to the main bridge in the North, but also in small shops (for example, in the Bosnian district) and in new shopping malls located mostly close to the eastern bridge on the south bank of the river.

Even though transport is not as restricted as several years ago, it is still problematic. Different transport hubs are located in either part of the city. To reach Mitrovica from the 'Kosovo side' using public transport, e.g. from Pristina, most common routes lead by bus or minibus to the bus station or one of the stop spots<sup>43</sup>, among which the most popular is the place *close to the main mosque* which means the bus stop (or unofficial stop spot) on the other side of the street. It is impossible to travel to Mitrovica by train from any other place in Kosovo. The passenger train operates only on the following lines: Prishtina-Skopje-Prishtina, Fushë Kosovë – Hani and Elezit – Fushë Kosovë and Prishtina-Peja/Peć-Prishtina<sup>44</sup>.

Public transport to North Mitrovica from Serbia is organised mostly by buses and minibuses, but also by train. Most buses and minibuses stop at the new bus station (sponsored by the EU) located close to the train station. There is also an active train connection on the Kosovska Mitrovica-Kraljevo-Kosovska Mitrovica<sup>45</sup> line. The closest airports in the region are located in Pristina, Skopje and Niš.

It is also worth adding that although different taxi companies operate in both parts of the city, nowadays it is possible to travel by taxi between the northern and southern part without changing car plates or other complications. Nevertheless, such a drive would probably cost more than a longer drive within one part of the city. Certain locations can only be reached by a private or hired car.

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<sup>43</sup> Stop spot is defined here as an unofficial stop, not marked as a taxi or bus stop but performing such a role. In most cases, it is a characteristic place where different means of transport stop to take in or drop off travellers. Although it remains unmarked, the residents are aware of its existence.

<sup>44</sup> There is a railway line which leads to Mitrovica/Zvečan but is no longer open to passenger transport. Nowadays, it is used occasionally for freight transport. See: <http://www.trainkos.com>, accessed: 03.04.2019.

<sup>45</sup> During my stay in North Mitrovica in 2016 I visited the train station and took a picture of the train schedule which included a connection between Mitrovica and Kraljevo. Therefore, I was surprised during the Belgrade-Kosovska Mitrovica train incident to read in the news that there was no train connection between Serbia and Mitrovica or Kosovo. Fieldwork, December 2016.



This short introduction into the spatial (dis)order using the example of the main reference points in the city only shows that all communities pay a high price for the disintegration. At the time of dissolution the southern part contained: the bus station, the Trepča Mines,<sup>46</sup> the Orthodox Church, the Christian Cemetery, the Catholic Church, and some sports facilities, while the northern encompassed: regional hospital, most of the modern buildings, the Bosnian district and the Muslim Cemetery. Over time, communities on both sides of the river developed their own, separate institutions (for example, local administration, universities, health care facilities) which allow them to fulfil most of their vital needs without having to cross the river.

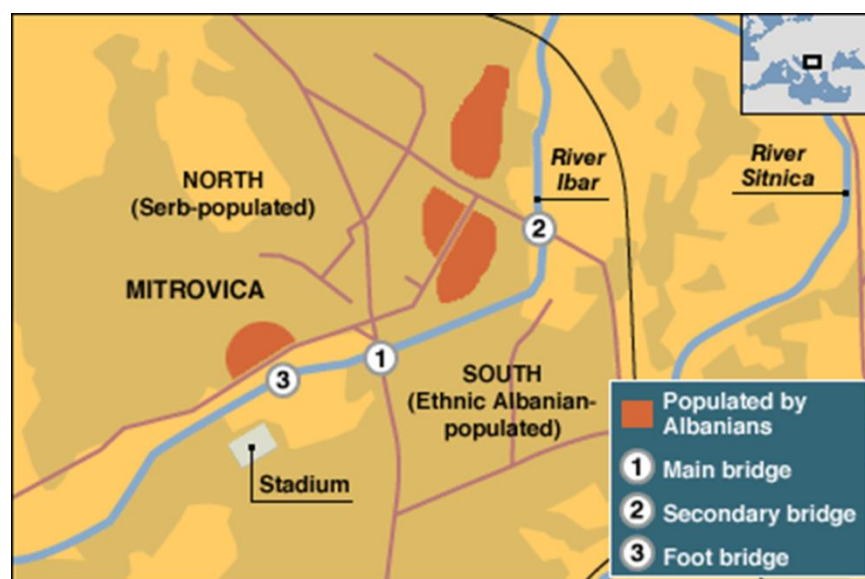


Fig. 10. Map of Mitrovica. Source: <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/europe/3525396.stm>, accessed: 05.2017

The very central piece of infrastructure, which at the same time is the most important element of the symbolic landscape of urban space, is undoubtedly the main bridge. It witnessed fragmentation on the functional, social and symbolic levels. Before the war in the 1990s<sup>47</sup> its only role was functional; it enabled crossing the river. Nušić mentions that a great concrete bridge built of stones from the Zvečan fortress was constructed in 1884 (Nušić 1902). In the interwar period, the Ibar bridge was renovated; it gained an iron railing and sidewalks (Urošević 1954). Another change came with socialist urbanisation, in 1971 a new bridge was constructed, and later the secondary bridge was also built on the Ibar river, close

<sup>46</sup>Trepča Mines – Miniera e Trepçës (alb.), Рудник Трeпчa (srb.). Industrial complex crucial for the economic development of the city (and the region of Kosovo), especially from the 1920s onwards.

<sup>47</sup> Certain authors emphasise the cultural meaning of the bridge. See: Zoran D. Nedeljković, *Glavni most na Ibru: kulturni element i simbol međuetničkih podela u Kosovskoj Mitrovici*.

to the railway station (Abdyli 1985). The main bridge was erected after the war, and it was renovated in 2000-2001 thanks to the financial support from the French government.



Figs. 11, 12. The main bridge in Mitrovica. National Library in Belgrade, Rg 174-007, Rg 174-019

During my research the image of the bridge and its surroundings changed significantly. In 2012 barricades were still present (initially on the main and the secondary bridge), and hostile graffiti and flags, as well as KFOR and Kosovo police officials could be seen on both sides. In 2018 the renovation of the bridge on the southern side was completed, river banks close to the bridge on both sides gained a new appearance and began bustling with activity (ever since the residents started to spend their time there); the northern side was still under construction, but the bridge was no longer blocked and the passage to the other side was not such a big issue, as the bridge was used more frequently.



Fig. 13. The main bridge. North Mitrovica. Fieldwork November 2012



Figs. 14, 15. Secondary bridge. Fieldwork 2013

Apart from the bridge, which undoubtedly dominates the urban space of Mitrovica, there are also several other sites which remain the most visible and most commonly described reference points in the symbolic space of the city: the monument on the hill, Orthodox Church, Lazar's monument, the new mosque, several monuments or large format posters of armed individuals (mostly in the southern part of the city), the statue of Isa Boletini, flags and other national/state symbols (also in the form of graffiti), paintings, slogans etc. Any visitor to Mitrovica is bound to spot these places and structures.

Nevertheless, there are many other objects, places and spaces which are missed by external observers who are unfamiliar with the history of the city or did not spend enough time in Mitrovica. Such places include very important (now forgotten or replaced) spaces of the symbolic cultural landscape; they will be covered in this analysis. The research question is whether these places remain invisible and irrelevant to the residents of Mitrovica, and if yes – why?

### **3.1.2. Symbols and places of importance in Mitrovica – residents’ perspective**

One of the main objectives of this chapter is to examine residents’ point of view regarding the symbolic space of their city. It was essential to determine which elements of urban space they recognise, notice, identify with and which ones they omit, underestimate or deny. To this end, as part of the empirical research, residents were asked which places or objects they identify as important and symbolic. Since the name of a divided city is often the most important symbolic ‘carrier,’ this problem will be analysed in this chapter. Residents were asked which names of the city they recognise and accept, and which names they use and identify with.

It was vital to verify whether there are any discrepancies between the symbolic space presented by Mitrovica’s residents and the space that emerged from my observation of the city during my research (2012-2018) combined with literature review on Mitrovica and the region. The analysis of responses on all possible levels and determining the differences in the responses of particular groups (ethnic/national, confessional, age, social etc.) would be worthwhile. Unfortunately, due to formal limitations of the thesis, only the most visible and important discrepancies will be described, mostly in the context of ethnic/national communities. The outcomes of empirical research will be taken into consideration in the next section of this chapter.

#### *Symbol of the city*

The outcomes of qualitative and quantitative research are congruent. The aim of quantitative research was to receive a set of spontaneous answers from a large number of inhabitants and thus identify the scale of the phenomenon. During the interviews it was possible to understand the reasons why something could be regarded as a symbol and to become familiar with the dynamics of particular symbols and to source comments about problematic symbols. Therefore, the outcomes of both research paths cannot be separated and will be interpreted together. Diagram 2 presents the results of the survey regarding the symbol of the city [question 21].

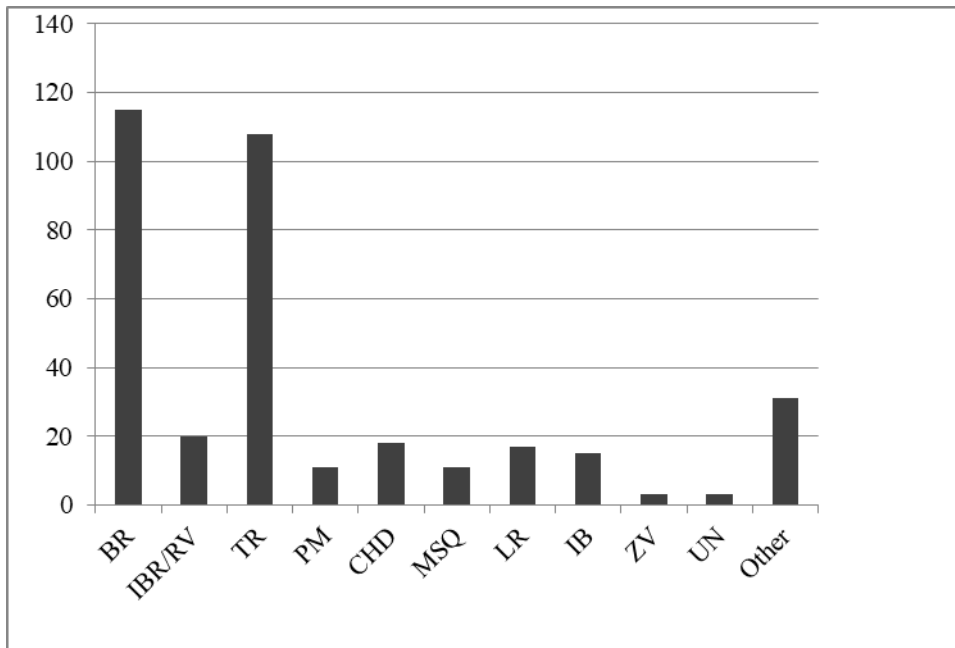


Diagram 2. Symbol of the city [question 21]<sup>48</sup>.

The most common answer to this question was **the bridge** [BR] and the **Trepča Mines** [TR], both strictly linked with the local history of the city. Out of these two symbols only **the bridge** was regarded as a symbol by the respondents from almost all communities in the city (except for Turks). The percentage of inhabitants who considered the bridge to be the symbol varied from ca. 30% (Albanians) to 100% (Gorani) of respondents. It is worth stressing that more Serbian (44%) than Albanian (30%) respondents regarded the bridge as the symbol of the city.

The above answers were confirmed by the outcomes of the other part of the survey, where respondents were asked to assess their level of agreement with a number of statements [question 26]. One of the statements was ‘The bridge is the symbol of the city.’ Almost 90% of respondents agreed with this statement; all communities were consistent, except for Serbs and Albanians who gave different answers. About 10% of Albanians and 5% of Serbs disagreed with the statement and several remained neutral. Such a difference between Albanians and other communities regarding the importance of the bridge and its symbolic message can be connected with the political narrative that tends to keep Mitrovica, and the entire territory of Kosovo, as a whole.

<sup>48</sup> Abbreviations used in the diagram: BR – bridge, IBR/RV – Ibar/river, TR – Trepča (Mines), PM – monument on the hill, CHD – (St. Demetrios) Orthodox Church, MSQ – (the main) mosque, LR – Prince Lazar, IB – Isa Boletini, ZV – Zvečan, UN – university.

Level of agreement	Number	Percentage (excluding missing)
-1 : I disagree	24	8.2%
0 : I neither agree nor disagree neutral	6	2.1%
+1 : I agree	261	89.7%

Diagram 3. Level of agreement with the statement “The bridge is the symbol of the city” [question 26].

During the interviews, the bridge appeared at least 6 times [8, 10, 11, 12, 13, 19]<sup>49</sup> as the symbol of the city and respondents indeed emphasised its negative associations. Firstly, it is associated with division, border or wall and thus has negative connotations [12], instead of actually connecting or integrating people:

*‘Mitrovica gde most razdvaja ljudi umesto toga da ih spaja’ [8]<sup>50</sup>*

*‘To bi trebalo da bude most, jel da? (...) simbol Mitrovice je taj most koji radi skroz druga... znači obrnutu funkciju od onoga šta treba da bude taj most’ [11]<sup>51</sup>.*

*‘Ndoshta Mitrovica ka një element kryësor që është edhe politik. Është ajo e para që ndoshta e kam shpjegu, ajo ndarja që është shumë e keqe – ura – ajo që në një farë sëmundje. Nuk ka me bëjne me dokumentacione, me menaxhmenti, por ka me bëjë me ndarje etnike pa nevojshme’ [19]<sup>52</sup>.*

Secondly, some respondents focused on the different appearance and function of the bridge nowadays and in the past. The main bridge was not relevant in the past; this changed in 1999 during the war when it gained a significant political meaning [11, 12, 14]. Moreover, it gained a completely new structure; in the past it did not differ much from other bridges or stand out from its surroundings [unrecorded interview, 06.2018]. One respondent identified it even as an anti-symbol, something that one should avoid rather than pay attention to: *‘(...) kao nešto što treba izbegavati i da je preprečen barikadama i mislim da mi ne bi ibarski most*

<sup>49</sup> Hereinafter numbers in brackets [] refer to interviews.

<sup>50</sup> ‘Mitrovica where the bridge separates people instead of connecting them.’

<sup>51</sup> ‘That should be the bridge, right? (...) the symbol of Mitrovica is that bridge which has the other... I mean the reverse function of what the bridge should be.’

<sup>52</sup> ‘Perhaps Mitrovica has one key element that is also political. It’s what I probably explained before, the separation which is very bad – the bridge – which was like some kind of disease. It has nothing to do with documentation or management, but with unnecessary ethnic divisions.’

*pao na pamet kao simbol grada*' [10]<sup>53</sup>. Another respondent stressed that it can be perceived like that taking into consideration various media reports [3].

There were also interesting remarks about the function of the bridge as a meeting point [21] or reference point [22] and the place that attracts foreigners:

*Q: What is the symbol of Mitrovica?*

*R: I would say bridge, now. In the past maybe something else, but now it is bridge.*

*(...)*

*R: But now the bridge...why I am saying... because I see a lot of people coming to the bridge during the summer, internationals or people who live abroad and take pictures and photos...*

*Q: Coming here only to see the bridge or mostly to see the bridge?*

*R: To see the bridge and to understand the situation. [1]*

Regardless of the situation, some respondents recognised the uniting potential of the bridge [4] and considered it both a symbol and an important place in the city [15].

In contrast to the bridge and its symbolic importance (whether positive or negative, buy perceived almost universally by all communities in the city), **Trepča** was regarded as the symbol of the city mostly by Albanians (almost 50%), Turks (100%) and the Romani (about 36%). What is significant, the percentage of Serbs who identified it as the symbol of the city was below 5%. Based on these results, two questions should be asked: why is Trepča, an industrial enterprise, regarded as the symbol of the city, and why is there such a divergence of opinions on this matter between different communities?

Survey results, which revealed the importance of Trepča, can be partly supported by the outcomes of qualitative research in which Trepča was mentioned 6 times, including in the context of its miners' legacy [22, 9, 1, 3]. One of the respondents explained in detail why Trepča is the most important element of the city's identity and in which dimensions:

*Trepča, to će uvek biti, što kao kombinat, što kao borba protiv okupacije i nemačke u vidu spomenika, što kao fudbalski klub, mislim da će uvek biti Trepča. Meni. Kad kažete u Mitrovici i kome god da kažete u bivšoj*

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<sup>53</sup> '(...) something to be avoided, something that was blocked by barricades, and I don't think that the Ibar bridge would come to my mind as a symbol of the city.'

*Jugoslaviji, Kosovska Mitrovica neće znati ni po čemu drugome naravno ako i uzmemo šabanja oko mosta, hoće tu da bude Trepča, ništa drugo [22]<sup>54</sup>.*

The quotation shows how Trepča has penetrated every possible aspect of city's infrastructure (industrial enterprise), how it dominated the memory of the past (the fight against occupation during WWII), and how it remains an integral part of residents' everyday life (football club).

Therefore, this outcome should be connected with the industrial development of the city and its prosperity thanks to Trepča more than with anything else, for instance, the nostalgia for Yugoslavia and its ideology of unity and brotherhood. This is further corroborated by the fact that compared with Trepča, significantly fewer respondents identified the monument on the hill (3.6%) as the symbol of the city or an important place.

**The monument on the hill [PM]** is undoubtedly linked with Trepča's and miners' history, but only with its particular period and in a specific political and symbolic context. Here, the results of the survey are not conclusive and imply ambiguous attitudes towards the monument, especially in the Serbian community. The monument still provokes various attitudes, for instance, some people connect it with the miners' past, while others consider it to be the symbol of the mendacious propaganda of brotherhood and unity in socialist Yugoslavia:

*(...) we used to call [Mitrovica] as a miners' city... also maybe you have seen this symbol over there, it was the symbol as we learnt in our schools, it is related to the miners who were killed over fighting during the WWII [9].*

*(...) ono što je po inerciji mnogi stanovnici Mitrovice nazivaju simbolima grada za mene to nisu nikakvi simboli, odnosno za mene oni nemaju nikakav značaj, čak naprotiv, dakle imaju nekakva negativna ružna, ružna, ružne asocijacije i kad je u pitanju spomenik na partizantskom brdu i ne znam šta još drugo bilo simbol kao Mitrovice (...). Prvo, što to nema nikakvu manje više ni kulturnu umetničku vrednost, drugo strana da to je bila jedna politizovana stvar koja često bila osnovana i zasnovana na nekim lažnjim temeljima, na iskrivljenim istorijskim istinama odnosno na neistinama, na lažnjim nekim osnovama, osnovama, na nekim lažnjim politikama bratstva i jedinstva i ljubavi, solidarnosti, harmoniji među narodima čega nije bilo, nikad nije bilo, da se ne zavaravamo, samo možemo (...) [14]<sup>55</sup>.*

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<sup>54</sup> 'It will always be Trepča, as a conglomerate, as the place of fight against occupation, including German, in the form of a monument, as a football club, I think it will always be Trepča. For me. When you ask in Mitrovica and if you would ask anyone in the former Yugoslavia, Kosovska Mitrovica will not be known for anything else, of course not taking into consideration quarrels about the bridge, nothing but Trepča, nothing else.'

<sup>55</sup> 'What many inhabitants of Mitrovica perceive as the symbols of the city due to inertia, are not symbols for me, that is, they have no meaning for me; on the contrary, they have some kind of negative, ugly, ugly, ugly



What is interesting, the monument can be perceived as the symbol of the city because of its location on the hill and the fact that from the day it was erected, it has dominated the landscape of Mitrovica: ‘I don’t know what is its name, but you probably see it on the top of the mountain, it’s some kind of... I don’t even know what that is...’ [3]. Its location may also have an influence on its recognition by the Serbian community, since it is located in the northern part and on a hill (8.6% Serbs and 1.5% Albanians recognised it as a symbol). This can be proved by the fact that most Serbs call it either *Kukavica* or simply *spomenik na brdu*, paying attention to its location rather than any perceived symbolic message. Only a few people recognised it as a monument to fallen Partisans.

Another symbol connected specifically with the local context did not receive as much recognition as Trepča or the bridge, probably because of its distant importance. **Zvečan** [ZV] was recognised as the symbol of the city only by a few inhabitants from the Serbian community [3 in the survey, and 2 during the interviews 5, 10]. Respondents link its symbolic meaning mostly with its importance in the Middle Ages. Taking into consideration the importance of medieval history in the Serbian narrative and the great importance of the fortress in the local context, it is hardly surprising that only the members of the Serbian community have Zvečan imprinted in their memory.

Two issues significantly divided Serbian and Albanian respondents, namely, religion and local heroes. What is interesting, only in the case of St. Demetrios Orthodox Church [CHD] and the figure of Isa Boletini [IB], were Albanian and Serbian communities entirely divided (other communities did not partake in this division). A hundred per cent Serbs from the whole sample and 22% among Serbs identified the Orthodox Church as the symbol of the city. Similarly, 100% Albanians from the whole sample and 7.6% among Albanians recognised Isa Boletini as the symbol of the city. The mosque [MSQ] was regarded as a symbol by Albanians, Ashkali and Romani. The importance of Prince Lazar [LR] as a symbol was shared by Serbs and Bosniaks.

Taking all this into consideration, the connection with the **religious dimension** of symbolic space was significantly lower than with the local dimension. During the interviews, the mosque was mentioned once: ‘*Që tash per momentin nderhiç pos xhami që ndertu (...)*’

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associations, and when it comes to the monument on the Partisan Hill, and I don’t know what else can be the symbol of Mitrovica (...) Firstly, it has no, more or less, either cultural or artistic value, secondly, it was a politicised thing that was often grounded and based on some false foundations, on distorted historical truths or falsehoods, on some false grounds, on some false policies of fraternity and unity and love, solidarity, harmony among the people; this was never the case, we should not fool ourselves, but we can.’

[18]<sup>56</sup>. St. Demetrios Orthodox Church was mentioned three times, and the respondents who deemed it significant focused on its functional meaning [12].

Neither Isa Boletini nor Prince Lazar were mentioned frequently during the interviews [11, 4, 16]. Taking into consideration their central position in both historical narratives, the interviewees' reasons for the symbolic importance were quite unexpected:

*Pa ne znam, simbol Mitrovice sada trenutno može da bude isto Lazar, severnog dela, zato što (...) da, nov spomenik zato što je otprilike ogroman, stvarno je mnogo velik spomenik i zauzima ceo centar Mitrovice, koji inače bio mali, tako da bi to trebalo da bude simbol na malo loši način, nije baš neki pozitivan simbol ukoliko zauzeo ceo centralni deo i onako malog dela severne Mitrovice [11]<sup>57</sup>.*

*Q: In your opinion, what is the symbol of the city? (...)*

*R: I think the symbol of the city is statue that is located here, on the end of the square, it's Isa Boletini square (...) He was from Mitrovica, very well-known personality.*

*Q: Can you say something more about that person? (...)*

*R: Yes. He took part on the event when the, when the independence of Albania was happening, so he was known for his braveness, for his kindness, for his generosity [4].*

In the first case it is the size of the monument and its appropriation of the public space that caught the attention of the interviewee. In the second example, the knowledge of the historical figure is rather superficial and focused on his local origins and personal character.

The only institution which appeared in the symbolic dimension was the **university** [UN] (during quantitative [3] and qualitative research [7]). Again, not surprisingly, it was identified only by the Serbian community. Such an outcome was highly expected and its causes will be described in detail in the last chapter.

Other single responses included the following groups of answers: identified objects or places (Jadran, Adriatic, city centre, the square), abstract values (culture, sport, music, history, heritage, freedom, victory, division, opposition to NATO), individuals connected

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<sup>56</sup> 'For now, nothing except for the mosque which is being built (...)'

<sup>57</sup> 'Well, I don't know, now the symbol of Mitrovica could also be [Prince] Lazar, in the northern part, because... (Q) Yes, a new monument, because it is huge, it is really a very large monument and it occupies the whole centre of Mitrovica, which was otherwise small, so it should be the symbol, but a bit in a bad way, not exactly a positive symbol, if it occupies the entire central part, already such a small part of northern Mitrovica.'

either with the city or the region (Adem Jashari, Kadri Veseli, Mc Kresha, Novak Djokovic, Rona Nishliu) or groups (people of Mitrovica, the Serbian nation).

During the interviews, respondents also identified single symbols regarding particular places and objects located in the city or nearby, both present and past ones (Nikola Tesla cinema, Jadran, museum, cultural centre, theatre, Adriatik, Bajgore, Kushtova, artificial lake, cultural-historical/religious monuments in general, old Mitrovica), events (festivals), institutions (university), groups (residents/people). It is worth noticing that in the context of the city's symbol three respondents paid attention to contamination, pollution and the garbage problem. These problems appeared during many recorded and unrecorded interviews, and it is telling that nowadays several residents of Mitrovica consider them symbolic.

Additionally, qualitative research revealed the negative attitude of several respondents towards the general issue of symbolic landscape and the condition of heritage in Mitrovica. One of the main problems was the destruction of urban heritage:

*Kulturno nasleđe Mitrovice je uništeno, što nije čudno, dakle s prvo, s jedne strane stranim intervencijama, stranim vojnim razaranja i u prvom svetskom ratu, i u drugom svetskom ratu, s druge strane nepažnjom vlasti, pogotovo dakle one vlasti, dakle komunističke koja nije za neku starinu, za neke vrednosti iz prethodnog sistema, naprotiv taj prethodni sistem često doživljava kao arhineprijateljski, pa se naravno i svim sredstvama obračunavala protiv tog sistema, pa i prema nasleđu tog sistema tako da je Mitrovica ono što vidimo danas jedan plod te socijalističke arhitekture, socijalističkog urbanizma i to je sve izgradilo na temeljima nečega od ranije, to ranije dakle nije začinjavano, jer da bi se novo izgradilo, moralo da bude uništeno to prethodno (...)* [14]<sup>58</sup>.

One of the residents paid attention to the problem of identity:

*Mislim da građani severne Mitrovice još uvek tragaju za tim, ne znam kako je u južnom delu, ali ovdje definitivno postoji kriza identiteta u tom smislu, znači da više nema nekih mesta tradicionalnih za okupljanje, ili mesta koje bi mogli da se nazovu simbolima grada, ali nakon rata to definitivno na primer jeste crkva iznad grada, ovaj i sada vidim da postaje mada meni nije blisko lično ali ova nova pešačka zona, kod spomenika u*

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<sup>58</sup> 'Mitrovica's cultural heritage was destroyed, which is not strange, so, firstly, on the one hand, foreign interventions, foreign military devastation during the First and the Second World War; on the other hand, the negligence of the authorities, especially those authorities, that is communist, which were not for some antiquity, for some values from the previous system, on the contrary, the former system is often perceived as hostile, and of course by all means accounted against that system, and even for the legacy of that system, so Mitrovica is today that what we see, is one of the fruits of that socialist architecture, of socialist urbanism, and all of it was built on the foundations of something older, that was not preserved, because in order to built the new one, the old had to be destroyed.'

*centru i kružnom toku, vidim da to nekako postaje mesto gde narod cirkuliše, za mene su to lično neka mesta koja volim, par možda nekih kafića (...) [8]<sup>59</sup>.*

This response revealed another issue which is the problematic difference between an important place and a symbol as well as different concepts and perceptions of symbols and the reasons why something is perceived as such, e.g. because of its size, historical meaning, economical importance, location, etc.

Some respondents did not answer the question regarding the symbol. Basically, in most cases the category of a symbol was not clear for them at all, as perhaps it was too abstract and not connected with their everyday life; some treated it as an empty category, others confused it with the idea of an important place. It could also be that no one ever asks them such questions, making them feel excluded from this dimension of city's life: *'Ko nama pita? To je problem. (...) Ovde svaki gledaju svoj posao'* [23]<sup>60</sup>.

What is important, the research revealed both negative and positive symbols as well as different perceptions of the same symbol. Highly diverse views and opinions prove beyond doubt that the community of Mitrovica is internally heterogeneous, not attached to ethnic/national identification, but also critical towards the symbolic space and its own heritage. Moreover, commonly recognised symbols are linked with the local context rather than the national narrative of both dominant groups. Nevertheless, particular examples of symbols that appear to divide communities can be also observed.

### *Important place*

According to the outcomes of qualitative and quantitative research, the spectrum of answers about an important place was more diverse than about the symbol of the city. Moreover, compared to the symbol, in the case of an important place there were additional categories, such as cultural and religious places [CUL, REL], public spaces [PUB] with

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<sup>59</sup> 'I think that the citizens of northern Mitrovica are still searching for it, I do not know how it is in the southern part, but here we definitely have an identity crisis in this sense, which means that there are no longer any traditional places for gathering, or places that could be called the symbols of the city, but after the war it is definitely, for example, the church above the city, well. And now I see that it becomes, though not to me personally, but this new pedestrian zone, near the monument in the centre and near the roundabout, I see that somehow it becomes the place where people wander around, for me they [the symbols] are personally some places I love, some cafes.'

<sup>60</sup> 'Who is asking us? That is the problem. (...) Everyone minds their own business here.'

institutions [IN] on top of that. Diagram 4 presents the results of the survey regarding an important place or structure in the city [question 22].

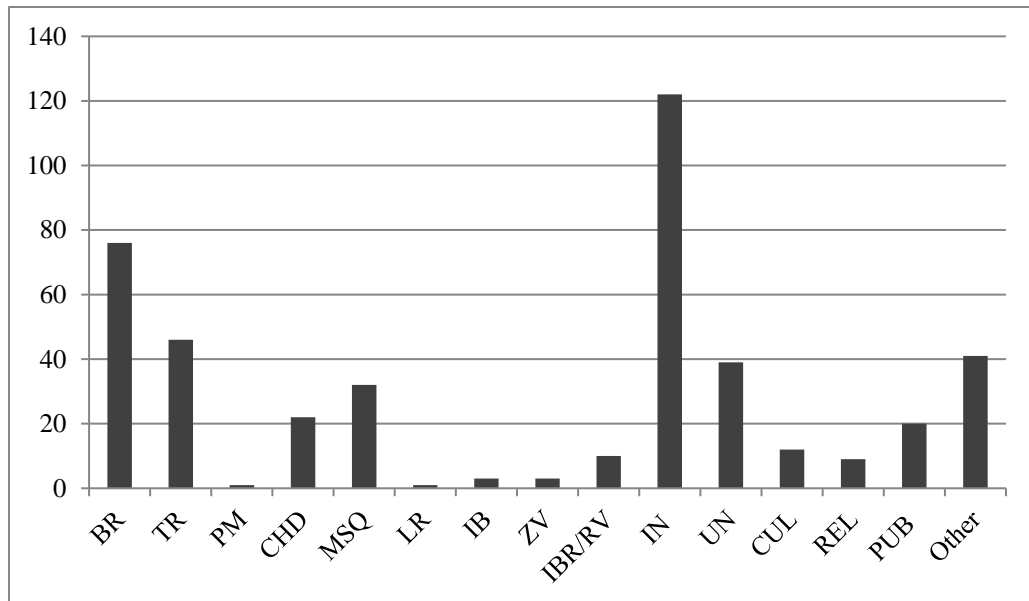


Diagram 4. Important place/object in the city [question 22]<sup>61</sup>.

During qualitative research far more definitions of an important place or structure emerged. In most cases respondents perceived it in the context of city's functioning, but some identified it as a meeting point (public/social/cultural space) [8, 11, 21], a location that was important to them personally (place of memory or simply neighbourhood) [13, 14, 15], a destination worth seeing or visiting [17, 20] or just a place that this particular respondent liked [13].

Many residents identified various institutions (such as municipal, hospital/health centre, library, school, court, police, bus station/transport enterprise, fire brigade) as important entities. The university was counted among institutions; however, due to its significance it was also regarded as a separate category (32% of the respondents according to whom institutions were important, also indicated the university). In this case, differences between the representatives of different communities is crucial. Significantly more Serbs (over 60%) than Albanians (28%) regarded institutions (and the university) as important places. This

<sup>61</sup> Abbreviations used in the diagram: BR – bridge, TR – Trepča (Mines), PM – monument on the hill, CHD – (St. Demetrios) Orthodox Church, MSQ – (the main) mosque LR – Prince Lazar, IB – Isa Boletini, ZV – Zvečan, IBR/RV – Ibar/river, IN – institutions, UN – university, CUL – cultural objects, REL – religious objects, PUB – public spaces.

point of view was supported by the Gorani (100%), Bosniaks (50%) and Turks (50%). Similarly, more than 30% Serbs and not even 7% Albanians considered the university to be crucial for the city. Considering other communities, only a few representatives from the Bosnian community deemed the university to be an important place. One respondent provided a plausible explanation:

*Mislim da su objekti koji su bili važni, oni koji su dati briselskim sporazumom, poput opštine Kosovske Mitrovice, suda, policijske stanice, pa čak i zatvora (...). Mislim upravo na institucije, jer džaba postoji sve ukoliko nemate institucije na mestu gde živi Vaš narod bez institucija nema države, bez države nema ničega. Onda to je neka druga zemlja [10]<sup>62</sup>.*

Clearly, members of the Serbian community see institutions as the guarantors of their existence and of relative security in this territory. During the interviews, 6 respondents mentioned institutions to be the most important places [4, 6, 7, 8, 10, 12], while the university was listed twice [4, 7]. Here again the issue was emphasised mostly by the Serbian community. Except for the above-mentioned examples of institutions, during the interviews the prison and cultural centre were also mentioned. It is extremely significant that the **university** was listed as an important place, and more detailed information on institutions, the university and their significance will be provided in the final chapter.

**The bridge** and **Trepča** remained at the head of the list, but there is a small difference between the number of people who perceived them as important and those who selected other answers. Again, more Albanians than Serbs identified them as important entities; 29.4% of Albanians and 9.9% of Serbs selected the bridge, while 21.3% of Albanians and 2.5% of Serbs found Trepča important. The bridge was also deemed important by the Ashkali (50%) and Romani (over 72%), whereas 25% of Bosniaks indicated Trepča.

During the interviews, the bridge was mentioned 6 times [2, 3, 15, 19, 21, 23], mostly from a negative, or at least problematic, perspective.

*If we take into consideration the media part and what was shown on the news from the city, the most important place is usually the bridge of Mitrovica, where is the division between the Serbs and the Albanians, but there are other places that you can think of there [that] are very important, for example, the Trepča mine, that's one thing and the Zvečan factory, and maybe other cultural places, this museum for example and so on [3].*

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<sup>62</sup> 'I think the facilities that are important are those given by the Brussels Agreement, such as the municipality of Kosovska Mitrovica, the court, police station and even the prison (...). Straight away I think about institutions, because nothing matters, unless you have institutions in a place where your people live; without institutions, there is no state, and there is nothing without the state. Then it's another country.'

In the interviews Trepča or closely related topics appeared 7 times [3, 12, 16, 17, 18, 20, 24], again in the context of the identity of the city and its uniqueness resulting, among others, from the diverse community and highly developed industry:

*Mitrovica je poznata za kulturni diverzitet. Zašto? Zato što je bila Trepča, i što su u Trepči (...) u Trepči je radila cela jedna Jugoslavija, bivša Jugoslavija. Nisu radili tu samo Srbi i Albanci, bile su sve moguće narode i narodnosti. Bez obzira na to, kad radiš više godina, kad se stvori jedan most, komunikacija koja savezuje, i naročito kad je stabilna ekonomska situacija koji ne misli na politiku... [24]<sup>63</sup>.*

*Këtu ke na ka punu fabrika për shembull. Tregti, ke tregti nuk është punë kjo është mbijetesë. Pa fabrika në Mitrovicë s'ka sende [18]<sup>64</sup>.*

To confirm the findings from the previous subchapter, one should mention that in the survey only one person (i.e. fewer than 1% of all respondents) perceived the monument on the hill as important. Moreover, only one respondent mentioned it in this context during the interviews.

Surprisingly, places related to the religious dimension were more frequently identified as important places than as the symbol of the city; this could imply that their functional significance is stronger than the symbolic one. This assumption was confirmed by one of the respondents who emphasised the importance of religious practices and rituals:

*Pa na primier vrlo važno je da postoji crkva svetog Dimitrija zato što da posle rata nismo imali crkvu u severnom delu da bi se ljudi venčavali, da bi obavili te verske obrede, rituale i kako god, obično i slično venčanja i to je vrlo, vrlo bitno mesto [12]<sup>65</sup>.*

The Orthodox Church is considered important only by Serbs, whereas the mosque – also by the Ashkali and Romani. During the interviews only 2 respondents mentioned the mosque [2, 17]; one person mentioned it in the context of ‘churches’ (*xhamite dhe kishat*) [17], but without specifying why.

The decreasing tendency was visible both in the case of Prince Lazar and Isa Boletini, who were mentioned only by several respondents from the two communities: Serbian and

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<sup>63</sup>‘Mitrovica is known for its cultural diversity. Why? Because Trepča was here, and because they were in Trepča (...) there was one whole Yugoslavia, former Yugoslavia, in Trepča. It was not only Serbs and Albanians who worked there, there were all possible nations and nationalities. Nonetheless, when you work for many years, when a bridge is created, communication that unites is established, and, especially, when the economic situation is stable, no one thinks of politics...’

<sup>64</sup>‘Here the factory has worked for example. Trade, as for trade it is not the labour part, but the element of coexistence. Without factories there is nothing left in Mitrovica.’

<sup>65</sup> ‘Well, for instance, it is very important that there is St. Demetrios Church, because after the war we did not have a church in the northern part, where people could get married, perform those religious rituals, rituals and whatever, similar to weddings, and it is a very, very important place.’

Albanian, respectively. During the interviews, Isa Boletini [21] and Prince Lazar [2] were each listed only once.

Compared to the symbol of the city, in the context of important places the social and functional dimension was more prominent during the interviews. For instance, several interviewees identified **coffee shops** as important places due to their integrating and social functions as well as their economic importance and cultural potential [4, 5, 11]:

*(...) to su kafići, jer ovaj, ima ih mnogo za ovako mali grad i ovaj to se najviše ogleda leti, kada nema studenata grad je mrtav, ima par kafića koji ne rade tada i to može da se, i možeš da vidiš po tome, nekako grad cveta kad ima više ljudi kada su te bašte pune i može to jeste malo smešan odgovor ali znaš možda i nije jer sa te ekonomske strane ipak tu je, vidiš taj privredni sektor tada cveta onda a samim tim cveta i kulturni život (...)* [5]<sup>66</sup>.

Another respondent identified *ETC*, a well-known shopping mall located in South Mitrovica, as an important place, because of its integrating potential and economic significance, claiming that ‘some people say that it’s the most multi-ethnic project’ in the city [2].

Furthermore, **public spaces** (green spaces such as parks, meeting points like the yellow pillar or the city centre, walking zones such as squares, the promenade) [PUB] were named by 6 interviewees [21, 13, 12, 11, 8, 1] and by numerous respondents in the survey. In comparison, public spaces and religious or cultural objects were identified as important places by a similar number of respondents. It seems that the importance of Ibar, others rivers and the artificial lake [9], was more functional than symbolic. Some respondents regarded rivers as special [16, 19]. Other single responses from the survey and the questionnaire included such interesting responses as the stadium (Adem Jashari) [19], tower house (*kulla*), Zvečan [3], and Shala e Bajgorës<sup>67</sup> [17,19,20].

All in all, the residents of Mitrovica view an important place mostly in the functional dimension, as a place connected with their everyday live.

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<sup>66</sup> ‘(...) are the cafes, well, there are many of them for such a small town and, well, it is mostly visible in the summer, when there are no students, the city is dead, several cafes do not work and you can see that somehow the city flourishes when there are more people, when the gardens are full, and this answer may be a bit ridiculous, but, you know, it may not be, as on the economic side it is still there, you see that the economic sector flourishes too and therefore the cultural life.’

<sup>67</sup>Shala e Bajgorës is a mountainous area between the Ibar river and the Llap valley at the foot of Kopaonik.



### *Name of the city*

Language analysis is a crucial part of any spatial analysis because of its role in framing the experience of a place, reconfiguring social relations and facilitating or constraining material outcomes (Low 2017). Language indicates, measures and names space through place-naming. As part of this research, the residents were also asked about the name of the city, because the name undoubtedly has its symbolic importance, especially in the context of the division of the city in this post-conflict territory. To begin with, in the past Mitrovica had different names and even today several variants of its name are in use. It was important to identify the memory regarding Mitrovica's past names and to examine which names (and for what reasons) are most commonly known. Moreover, it was also crucial to check if any additional names are in use (mostly unofficially) and what they imply.

According to the outcomes of the survey, presented in Diagram 5, the most commonly recognised name is the short form *Mitrovica* or *Mitrovic(ë)* [M]; considering a general leaning towards the economy of words this is hardly surprising. Nevertheless, when it comes to comparing the answers from respondents representing various communities, it appears that there is a significant difference between Albanians (almost 57%) and other communities, especially Serbs (17.3%), with the exception of the Romani (almost 73%). If we include in this category the responses which recognised two language versions, *Mitrovica* and *Mitrovic(ë)* [Mae], the difference is even more visible. The second most commonly recognised name *Kosovska Mitrovica* or *Mitrovica e Kosovës* [KM] was recognised mostly by Serbs (85%), the Gorani (100%), Bosniaks (75%) and the Romani (81.8%), and less often by Albanians (18.8%) and other groups.

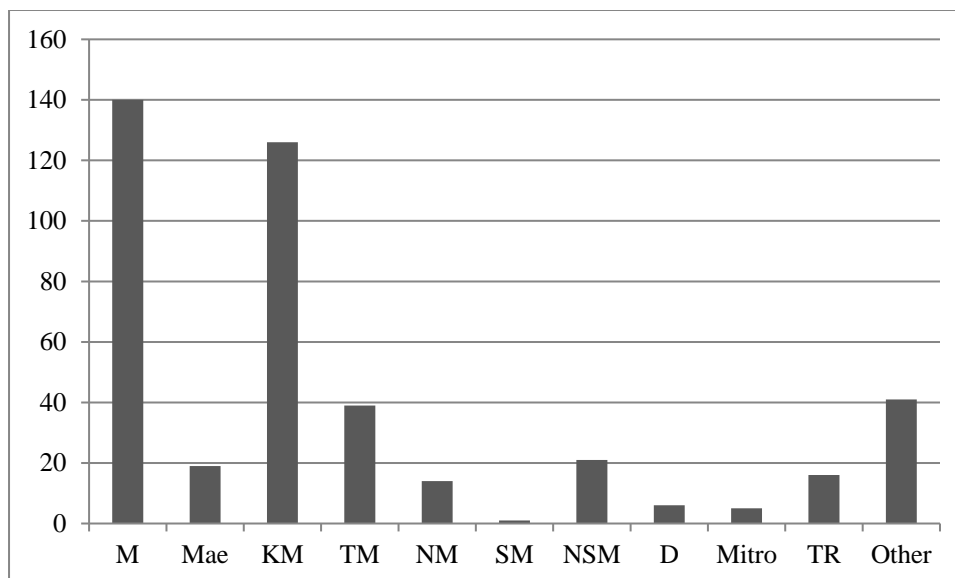


Diagram 5. Name of the city [question 23]<sup>68</sup>.

Another important observation concerns the recognition of such names as South Mitrovica (*Mitrovica jugore, Jug, Južna Mitrovica/Jug*) [SM] and North Mitrovica (*Severna Mitrovica/Sever, Mitrovica veriore/Veri*) [NM], or the use of both [NSM]. Only the members of the Serbian and Gorani communities use the name North Mitrovica, whereas when it comes to using both variants – North and South, the number of Albanian respondents giving such an answer was significantly larger. Only one respondent from the Albanian community recognised the name South Mitrovica. Apparently, communities which actually live in the northern part of the city tend to emphasise the partition or feel the need to specify the separation or distinctiveness of North Mitrovica. Moreover, they recognise that the identification of Mitrovica's name in time and space is problematic:

*Q: Na šta misliš kad pričaš o Mitrovici, samo na severni deo ili na grad kao celi grad, severni i južni deo?*

*R: Jao, meni to je i dalje... ja... kad me neko pita kolika je Mitrovica, ja prvo postavljam pitanje Mitrovica kao čitava Mitrovica ili Mitrovica kao sever i jug, zato što sam ja rasla i živela u Mitrovici koja je bila kompaktna sredina. Tako da zavisi od pitanja, (...) ukoliko se naglasi da pričam o severu, pričam o severnom delu grada. Ukoliko pričamo o Mitrovici, da neko kaže Mitrovica, meni je Mitrovica cela Mitrovica, sever i jug.*

*Q: Znači, pre nego što krenemo da pričamo o Mitrovici trebalo bi da se odredi ustvari o čemo pričamo.*

<sup>68</sup> Abbreviations used in the diagram: M – one designation Mitrovica/Mitrovic(ë), Mae – both designations Mitrovica/Mitrovic(ë), KM – Kosovska Mitrovica/Mitrovica e Kosovës, TM – Titova Mitrovica/Mitrovica e Titos, NM – North Mitrovica, SM – South Mitrovica, NSM – North and South Mitrovica, D – Dmitrovica, Mitro (short form), TR – designations connected with Trepča and miners' tradition.

R: Naravno, da naravno.

Q: A kad se kaže Kosovska Mitrovica?

R: I Kosovska Mitrovica i Titova Mitrovica, (...), tako da meni je to jedna Mitrovica. Ukoliko se ne naglasi severna Mitrovica [22]<sup>69</sup>.

A similar conclusion can be drawn from qualitative research. Significantly more respondents recognised the names Kosovska Mitrovica (9 times) and North Mitrovica (4 times) than South Mitrovica (2 times). The interviews only confirmed that the issue of the name is more complicated for the Serbian community or, in general, to the people living in North Mitrovica. Moreover, based on a statement quoted below, one can conclude that, depending on the person one is talking to, the use of a particular name is meaningful and may in fact divide the residents of North Mitrovica:

*Četiri nazive postoje: Mitrovica, Kosovska Mitrovica, Severna Mitrovica, Severna Kosovska Mitrovica. Zavisi koga pitaš, ako pitaš međunarodnu zajednicu oni će da kažu severna Mitrovica, ako pitaš Albanca oni će da kažu Mitrovica, ako pitaš Srbina ili će da kažu Kosovska Mitrovica ili Severna Kosovska Mitrovica, u 90 posto slučajeva, neko će da kaže i sever, možda, kapiraš, da bi se dodvorio međunarodnoj zajednici pa kaže severna Mitrovica [12]<sup>70</sup>.*

To exemplify the problem, the respondent showed me the card of the organisation where he is employed and explained: *‘To je najbolji primer ove vizitke koje smo uradili u organizaciji. Vidiš da piše na engleskoj verziji: North Mitrovica, a na srpskoj verziji piše Kosovska Mitrovica’* [12]<sup>71</sup>. This once again emphasised the importance of interlocutors’ status or attitude, and, indirectly, the influence of ‘internationals’ or ‘outsiders’ on the situation in the city.

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<sup>69</sup> ‘Q: What do you mean when you talk about Mitrovica, only the northern part; or the city as a whole, both northern and southern parts?’

R: Wow, for me it’s still... I... when someone asks me how big Mitrovica is, first I ask whether they mean Mitrovica as a whole or Mitrovica as north and south, because I grew up and lived in Mitrovica which was a compact environment. So it depends on the question, (...) and whether it is emphasised that I am talking about the north, talking about the northern part of the city. If we are talking about Mitrovica, when someone says Mitrovica, to me Mitrovica is the whole of Mitrovica, north and south.

Q: So, before we start talking about Mitrovica, should we actually determine what we are talking about?

R: Of course, yes of course.

Q: And when someone talks about Kosovska Mitrovica?

R: Both Kosovska Mitrovica and Tito’s Mitrovica (...), so to me it is one Mitrovica. Unless North Mitrovica is emphasised.’

<sup>70</sup> ‘There are four names: Mitrovica, Kosovska Mitrovica, North Mitrovica, North Kosovska Mitrovica. Depends on who you ask; if you ask the international community, they will say North Mitrovica, if you ask Albanians, they will say Mitrovica, if you ask Serbs they will either say Kosovska Mitrovica or North Kosovska Mitrovica in 90 per cent of the cases, someone could also say North to, you know, to win the favour of the international community, so they would say North Mitrovica.’

<sup>71</sup> ‘That’s the best example, these business cards we’ve done in our organisation. You can see that the English version says: *North Mitrovica*, and the Serbian version says: *Kosovska Mitrovica*’.

The interviewees from other communities had a less ambiguous attitude towards the name of the city. Many of them identified Mitrovica spontaneously and without hesitation as a whole entity, stating for instance: ‘*krejt komplet*’ [13]<sup>72</sup>. Others would emphasise the Serbian domination in North Mitrovica and treat South Mitrovica only as a reference point:

*Për pjesën veriore dmth kena qasje me pak edhe s’është qe kena andej informacione kështu duhen. Se ç’ka bëhet. Andej veç e dina se funksionon krejt me sistemin e shtetit te Serbisë, dmth shteti i Kosovës nuk ka fare qasje në Mitrovicën Veriore. [17]<sup>73</sup>*

Some recognised the issue, but did not find it their personal problem:

*Q: Kad kažemo Mitrovica, da li mislite na južni i severni deo ili samo na južni deo?*

*R: Kako da Ti kažem... pa ja mislim na ... da je isto to sad, ne mogu da kažem ni sa severa ni sa juga. Zato kada kažu Mitrovica, može da te pitaju: gde živiš, živiš na jugu ili na severu? Znaš, to je problem. Kod mene, da Ti kažem, problem nije, to nije do mene. Gde živiš? U Mitrovicu [23]<sup>74</sup>.*

Others argue that the name Mitrovica was, and still is, used by the majority of ordinary residents, while all quarrels over the name of the city, and all the changes, seem to be the result of political decisions made by the unspecified ‘them’:

*Q: What was officially actually the name of the city?*

*R: Just Mitrovica.*

*Q: Mitrovica?*

*R: In fact, I will tell you something, first it was Mitrovica, then they made it Titova Mitrovica, then again, when they suspended, they made it Kosovska Mitrovica, but everybody was using just Mitrovica; (...) Just if someone was asking in that time... because there were some other cities in former Yugoslavia, like Sremska Mitrovica, something like that. So you need then to clarify that. Otherwise we get used just Mitrovica, that’s all [9].*

Another interesting outcome concerns the past names of the city. In the survey *Dmitrovica* [D] was mentioned by several respondents, all from the Serbian community. Similarly, during the interviews, *Dmitrovica* was mentioned only twice [10, 14] and for the third time in the context of St. Demetrios’s role as the patron of the city [8]. One respondent

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<sup>72</sup> ‘entirely complete’

<sup>73</sup> ‘To the northern part we have less access and we have no information (as we should). What is going on in there? We only know that it works completely with the Serbian state system, which means that the state of Kosovo has no access to North Mitrovica.’

<sup>74</sup> Q: When we say Mitrovica, do you mean South and North or just South Mitrovica?

R: What can I tell you ... well I mean ... it’s the same now, I can’t say the north from the south. That’s why when they say Mitrovica, they may ask you: where do you live, do you live in the southern or the northern part? You know, that’s the problem. For me, let me tell you, this is not a problem, it’s not up to me. Where do you live? In Mitrovica.’

mentioned the role of the Orthodox Church in transferring the knowledge of the first name of the city by linking it with St. Demetrios:

*Ne znam, ja Mitrovicu znam jednostavno kao Mitrovica. A čuo sam priču jednog od sveštenika odavde koji je rekao da je Mitrovica dobila naziv po svetom Dimitriju, da je to bila Dmitrovica, a da se vremenom kroz neki proces jezički promeničilo i da se jednostavno naziva Mitrovica*<sup>75</sup>[10].

The name *Dmitrovica* was also mentioned during one unrecorded conversation with an interviewee from the Albanian community, but taking into consideration his background of history education, this should be treated as an exception (unrecorded conversation, 02.2017). The name *Pazarska Mitrovica* connected exclusively with the period of the Ottoman rule was not mentioned in the survey or during the interviews.

From among past official names of the city, Tito's Mitrovica (*Titova Mitrovica/Mitrovica e Titos*) [TM]<sup>76</sup> is still remembered by 12.8% residents, but in this case it is hardly impressive. What is interesting, the number of respondents from the dominant communities who recognised this name was very similar: 14.8% of Serbs and 12.2% of Albanians (also 9% of the Romani and 50% of the Ashkali and Turks). During the interviews, the name Tito's Mitrovica was mentioned 7 times, while two respondents decided to explain how it was introduced:

*Posle Titove smrti savezne vlasti su odlučile da svaki grad, to jest da po jedan grad u svakoj od pokrajina i republika u SFRJ dobije naziv odnosno prefiks Titov. Pa ne znam, u Vojvodini – Titov Vrbas, u Makedoniji – Titov Veles, u Crnogori – Titovgrad, i tako na Kosovu, u centralnoj Srbiji – Titove Užice, a ovde na Kosovu, Mitrovici pripala ta čast odnosno bruka i sramota da grad dobije naziv Titova Mitrovica* [14]<sup>77</sup>.

*(...) znaš to u prošlosti da se Mitrovica zvala Titova Mitrovica i to je u to vreme bila velika čast u stvari. U Jugoslaviji, u svakoj republici postajao je jedan grad koji je uz svoje ime dodavao ime tadašnjeg*

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<sup>75</sup> 'I don't know, I know Mitrovica simply as Mitrovica. And I've heard the story from one of the priests from here who said that Mitrovica was named after St. Demetrios, that it was Dmitrovica, and that over time, through some process, it was linguistically changed and simply called Mitrovica.'

<sup>76</sup> After Tito's death in 1980, a new wave in the construction of his personality cult began. By the end of 1983, four cities in the SFRY were named after Tito, one in each republic and province that had not previously had a 'Tito' city, and new names were thus given to Titova Mitrovica, Titov Drvar and Titovo Velenje in 1981, as well as Titov Vrbas in 1983. Although the reason for this name-changing was clear, these procedures provided additional legitimacy, such as emphasising the role of Drvar in the NOB, or the distinctly mining and labour character of Kosovska Mitrovica and Velenje. The first of the cities to change its name in the 1990s was Velenje in 1990, followed by Drvar in 1991, and Kosovska Mitrovica, Vrbas and Užice in 1992. See: S. Radović, *Grad kao tekst*, Beograd 2013.

<sup>77</sup> 'After Tito's death, the federal authorities decided that each city, that is one city in each of the provinces and republics in the SFRY, should be given the name or prefix *Titov*. Well, I don't know, in Vojvodina – Titov Vrbas, in Macedonia – Titov Veles, in Montenegro – Titovgrad, and so in Kosovo, in central Serbia – Titove Užice, and here in Kosovo, Mitrovica, the honour and the shame of getting the city named Titova Mitrovica.'

*predsednika Josipa Broza Tita. I onda, Mitrovica je dobila taj epitet, i to ...Mitrovica... i to je bilo tada značajno. Jako ljudi su se time ponosili i tako dalje [8]<sup>78</sup>.*

One can conclude that the attitude towards this name is at least ambiguous, some may regard it as a great honour and distinction, while others – as something shameful.

Last but not least, a few interesting additional names appeared during the survey: a familiar short form derived from Mitrovica – *Mitro* [Mitro] and a group of names which emphasise the importance of the mine to the identity of the city: the city of miners (*Minatori, Qyteti i Minatorëve*), city of ore or simply *Trepča* [TR]. These names were recognised exclusively by the respondents from the Albanian community, however, they were not mentioned during the interviews. One respondent referred to the idea of miners' city [9].

To conclude, there are particular names of the city which are recognised exclusively by one of the dominant communities, such as North Mitrovica and *Dmitrovica* by Serbs and *Mitro* or mine-related names by Albanians. Moreover, the name *Kosovska Mitrovica* was predominantly recognised by the communities living in the northern part of the city. Obviously, the city's past name, except perhaps for the latest one (Tito's Mitrovica, also not that common), tend to be forgotten or deemed unimportant. It seems that this aspect unites all communities. Local unofficial names which reflect the specificity of the city and emphasise familiarity were recalled only by the Albanian community.

The issue of the name of the city cannot be easily interpreted, since it touches on numerous problems which should be taken into consideration: the unique need to identify the space in the post-conflict territory, different language versions, economy of the language, a large number of different designations, identity issues and the additional symbolic burden of the city's name and its political dimension.

### **3.2. Layers of the symbolic landscape in Mitrovica**

Taking into account the history of the city and the dynamics of its development, one can identify three main periods which influence the urban space of Mitrovica and which are the reference points in this analysis: the Ottoman period, the Yugoslav period (with a special

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<sup>78</sup> '(...) you know, in the past Mitrovica was called Titova Mitrovica and that was a great honour in fact at the time. In Yugoslavia, there was one city in each republic that added the name of then President Josip Broz Tito to its name. And then, Mitrovica got that denomination, and that... Mitrovica... and that was significant at the time. Many people were proud of that and so on.'

focus on the period of socialist Yugoslavia, because the period of the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes and the Kingdom of Yugoslavia were not covered in the empirical research to such an extent as other periods), and the post-socialist and post-conflict period at the same time. Additionally, these three periods constitute interesting examples of different socio-political orders with regard to the problem of the city's division. Finally, since the thesis focuses on contemporary Mitrovica, special attention will be paid to the layers of Mitrovica visible today.

### **3.2.1. Ottoman legacy**

The Ottoman period is traditionally regarded as a time of subjugation to foreign domination, evoking notions of enslavement and oppression (Todorova 1996). In the master narrative of Balkan nation states yoke is the metaphor used for describing and interpreting the Ottoman rule (Gara 2017).

According to Serbian historiography, modernity and order set in with the end of the Ottoman yoke and with shedding the old spatial disorder and disorganisation. This is linked with the image and stereotypes about Ottoman cities and the issue of modernisation or, in this case, Europeanisation (see previous chapter). Some authors believe that the Ottoman legacy in Serbia prevented the establishment of the modern political class, middle class and urbanity, i.e. the forces on which modern European states are built (Jovanović 2016).

The image of the Ottomans as aliens to the European world resulted mostly from their Asian ancestry and Islamic religion. In a similar vein, they are the ones who suppressed the development of medieval kingdoms (Gara 2017) and blocked the modernisation process.

With regard to Kosovo, in the Serbian narrative the Ottoman Turks were perceived as enemies. What is more, also 'their local allies, above all Muslim Albanians – legal and illegal immigrants descending from the highlands of northern and central Albania and settling in the plains of Metohija and Kosovo at various times during Ottoman rule (1455-1912) (...)' (Bataković 2007). The Serbian narrative presents the Ottoman period as the beginning of a long-lasting conflict between Albanians and Serbs. The main reason was the unequal status of these groups; while the Christian population had lower status and was deprived of privileges, Albanians gradually became a part of the influential ruling class in the Empire. Moreover, Albanians 'increasingly replaced Islamised Slavs, ethnic Turks or ethnic Arabs in the

provincial administration' (Bataković 2007). Over time, a division based on religious and socio-political grounds is presumed to have developed due to hostile attitudes toward both Ottomans and Albanians. What is more, the hostility towards Albanians persisted and even increased after the withdrawal of the Ottomans from the Balkans, 'under the Italian Fascist and German Nazi occupation (1941-1945), and under Tito's communist regime (1945-1990)' (Bataković 2007).

Researchers who disagree with the concept of a long-lasting Albanian-Serbian conflict argue that the negative image of Albanians in Serbian culture became dominant only at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. The events at the turn of the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries led to Serbian-Albanian hostility, which was finally consolidated on the eve of the Balkan Wars of 1912 and 1913 (Pavlović 2015)<sup>79</sup>.

The complete rejection of the Ottoman past was most visible in the architecture of the new capital cities (Hartmuth 2006). One of the most striking examples is Belgrade, where the traces of oriental city can be observed only in the diminished territory that remained after all the interventions which lasted from the end of the 17<sup>th</sup> century until the beginning of the latter half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century (Zamolo 1977). The last third of the 19<sup>th</sup> century witnessed the most crucial urban interventions – manifestations of the enthusiasm for the 'liberation' from the Ottoman 'yoke' and, theoretically, its legacy (Hartmuth 2006). Of course the new architecture could not include mosques and minarets, which were perceived as symbols of the past and backwardness; this was also the case with other characteristic elements of Turkish architecture (Jezernik 2004). The period of Europeanisation between 1878 and WWI brought about the aggressive redesign of post-Ottoman towns (Hartmuth 2006).

In Mitrovica, the changes came later than in the capitals, firstly, because it was clearly a less important urban environment and, secondly, because the Ottomans did not leave the town until 1912. During the interwar period the Yugoslav authorities demolished the important sites of Ottoman Muslim urbanity, such as the central mosque and the clock tower (Troch 2008).

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<sup>79</sup> The book *The figure of the enemy. Rethinking Serbian-Albanian relations* provides examples of such an approach among Albanian and Serbian researchers. To learn more about this changing discourse, see for instance: A. Pavlović, *Od junaka do divljaka: Albanci u srpskom herojskom i nacionalnom diskursu od sredine osamnaestog do početka dvadesetog veka*, [in:] *Figura neprijatelja. Preosmišljavanje srpsko-albanskih odnosa*, Beograd 2015.





Fig. 16. View from Mitrovica with the clock tower, ca. 1912. Source: National Library in Belgrade, Rg 592-025

Nowadays, the only thing left from the Ottoman period in the space of Mitrovica is the **old city hammam** from the 18<sup>th</sup> century, which was still in operation in the 1950s (Azemi 2015).



Fig. 17. Old city hammam. Source: Official website of the Ministry of Culture, Youth and Sport, [https://dtk.rks-gov.net/tkk\\_objekti.aspx?id=4](https://dtk.rks-gov.net/tkk_objekti.aspx?id=4), accessed: 07.2019

In 1959-2009 it was used by the Museum of Mitrovica and the City Archives. The hammam was not destroyed during the war (1998-1999) and some of its original elements have survived to date. In 2009 the building was handed over to a private owner and turned into a restaurant. According to the Database of Cultural Heritage of Kosovo, the hammam is under temporary protection.



Fig. 18. Old city hammam. Source: Official website of the Ministry of Culture, Youth and Sport, [https://dtk.rks-gov.net/tkk\\_objekti.aspx?id=4](https://dtk.rks-gov.net/tkk_objekti.aspx?id=4), accessed: 04.2019



Fig. 19. Old city hammam nowadays. Source: [https://dtk.rks-gov.net/tkk\\_objekti\\_en.aspx?id=4](https://dtk.rks-gov.net/tkk_objekti_en.aspx?id=4), accessed: 04.2019

There are also only a few **old houses** left from that period, with a bay window projecting from the first floor and a broad overhanging roof.



Fig. 20. Street in Mitrovica. Source: National Library in Belgrade Rg 592-013.



Fig. 21. Former house of Xhafer Deva (19<sup>th</sup> century) in South Mitrovica. Source: Official website of the Ministry of Culture, Youth and Sport [https://dtk.rks-gov.net/tkk\\_objekti\\_en.aspx?id=1595](https://dtk.rks-gov.net/tkk_objekti_en.aspx?id=1595), accessed: 04.2019



Figs. 22, 23. Old, abandoned house in North Mitrovica. Source: Fieldwork, June 2018

Most mosques in Mitrovica and in Kosovo<sup>80</sup> were destroyed in 1999 during the war, and none of the old **mosques** have survived in the city. The only mosque whose elements (walls) can be seen today is the Mosque of Mazhiqi (*Xhamia e Mazhiqit*) from the 16<sup>th</sup> century, located about 15 km from the urban area of Mitrovica. Mosques that can be seen in the city are either newly built or have been rebuilt. The following mosques are no longer present in the city: *Xhamia e Bairit* (19<sup>th</sup> century, located close to the garrison – 1999), *Xhamia e Çarshisë* (? – 1926), *Xhamia e Ibrit* (19<sup>th</sup> century – 1990s), *Xhamia Gazi Isa Beg* (18<sup>th</sup> century – destroyed twice: 1912, 1999), *Xhamia e Haxhi Veselit* (18<sup>th</sup> century – 1999), *Xhamia e Shipolit* (19<sup>th</sup> century – 1999) (Osmani 2004, Azemi 2015). The mosque of Bair and the mosque that replaced *Xhamia Gazi Isa Beg* have been rebuilt thanks to the financial support of the United Arab Emirates and Saudi Arabia (Osmani 2004).

<sup>80</sup> Among other architectural objects ‘under attack’ one should also list traditional houses – *kullas*, religious schools and libraries and historic elements of urban space, such as old Turkish markets. For more information see: Andrew Herscher and András Riedlmayer, *Monument and Crime: The Destruction of Historic Architecture in Kosovo*, Grey Room, No. 1 (Autumn 2000), pp. 108-122.



Fig. 24. *Xhamia e Ibrit*. Source: National Library in Belgrade, F1745-003

The division of the city space is still visible, for instance, through the presence of specific residential quarters – *mahalas*. Even though there are only two quarters that retained ‘*mahala*’ in their names (Bosnian and Romani districts), it seems that other quarters also have their specific socio-cultural character. In certain quarters, e.g. Bosnian, characteristic streets also remained; however, this is bound to change soon, considering new investments in the area in the last years. In addition, the notion of the central market as a trading place, but also a meeting point and a place of social integration (rooted in the tradition of the Ottoman *bazaar* or *çarsi*) and of a coffee shop or a tea place (*çajtore*, *kafana* etc.) is still vital, although in a transformed form.

The cultural policy of de-Ottomanisation was meant to turn the ‘ottoman town’ into a ‘modern European city’ (Hartmuth 2006); its aim was to achieve the coveted ideal of the polar opposite of being Ottoman (or Oriental), namely steady Europeanisation, Westernisation and modernisation of society (Todorova 1995). Compared to capital cities, in Mitrovica post-1912 and in the interwar period this goal was achieved on a small scale. Significant changes in the urban landscape did not occur until the arrival of socialist Yugoslavia after WWII.

What is important, many objects or places which remained from the Ottoman period were destroyed at the end of the 20<sup>th</sup> century and in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. The reasons for this were linked with Kosovo’s Albanian Muslims rather than with the Ottoman Empire, as over time the Ottoman cultural heritage, instead of becoming Kosovo’s heritage, became ‘Albanian cultural heritage in Kosovo’ (Herscher & Riedlmayer 2000).

### 3.2.2. Socialist period

Today, the most visible heritage of socialist Yugoslavia includes residential space, functional/administrative buildings, industrial objects and infrastructure. The city was significantly destroyed during the world wars, and therefore, right after WWII the reconstruction and construction of local urban space started. The first phase of urbanisation carried out in North Mitrovica commenced in the 1950s, while the adoption of the urban plan in the 1960s initiated the second phase of urbanisation concentrated mostly in the southern part. The urban plan of the new socialist city was to create (in contrast to the former 'Ottoman city' synonymous with backwardness) separate residential, industrial, administration and recreation zones and to introduce a linear urban order with multi-storey buildings situated on the street line.

Post-WWII Mitrovica was predominantly located on the right bank of Ibar, therefore, more coherent concepts of socialist urbanity were carried out in the northern part of the city rather than in the southern. Basically, the northern part of today's Mitrovica was built during the period of socialist Yugoslavia and, almost intact, still serves the residents today.

However, taking into account the symbolic dimension of urban space, except for the monument on the hill (as it is commonly referred to nowadays), hardly any socialist Yugoslav heritage survived in the city. According to the already mentioned monographs on Mitrovica, *Titova Mitrovica/Mitrovica e Titos* and *Dëshmitë e luftës për liri/Svedoçanstva borbe za slobodu*, the list of **socialist Yugoslavia sites of memory** included historical places, memorials, monuments, names of the streets and objects/institutions/organisations, tombstones, busts, plaques and even private houses (Murati 1986, Abdyli 1985). Even though the Shrine to the Revolution monument dominated Mitrovica's landscape, it was not the only symbolic site during that period. In the urban landscape of Titova Mitrovica the memory of ten heroes was revered: Ibrahim Perviz, Rade Milićević, Muharem Bekteshi, Silvira Tomazini, Vlado Četović, Bogoljub Čukić, Milun Ivanović, Nikola Bubalo, Meto Bajraktari, Jovanka Radivojević (Abdyli, 1985).



Fig. 25. Muharrem Bekteshi, a national hero (*Narodni Heroj Muharem Bekteši 1922-1944/Heroi i popullit Muharrem Bekteshi 1922-1944*). Source: Archives of Yugoslavia.

Considering research outcomes, none of these heroes play an important part in the memory of today's residents, neither in the imaginary nor the material dimension. Most of the sites commemorating them were either removed or destroyed in both parts of the city.

A similar thing happened with the names of the streets,<sup>81</sup> with a few exceptions in the northern part of the city. Mitrovica may not have gone through such tremendous changes in the symbolic dimension as Pristina. Changes in Pristina happened in two phases: first, in the 1980s when it was like *'skraćeni udžbenik srpske nacionalne istorije i mitologije (sa naglaskom na kosovski ciklus) i atlas geografije tzv. srpskih zemalja'*<sup>82</sup>(Radović 2013), and later, after the war in 1999. In Mitrovica, street names were changed in 1992 (although many names from the Yugoslav period remained untouched) and post-1999. Nowadays, even though the names of main streets have been changed, in the northern part one can still find streets named after Llole Ribar, Sutjeska and Oslobođenja.

<sup>81</sup> Streets named after fallen combatants and national heroes are listed in two sources: S. Murati, *Dëshmitë e luftës për liri/Svedoçanstva borbe za slobodu*, Titova Mitrovica/Mitrovicë e Titos 1986. and *Spomen obelježja i negovanje revolucionarnih tradicija*, [in] *Titova Mitrovica 1945-1980*, red. T. Abdyl, Titova Mitrovica 1985.

<sup>82</sup> 'a shortened textbook of Serbian national history and mythology (with an emphasis on the Kosovo series) and an atlas of the so-called Serbian territories.'

In the context of Yugoslav heritage and city division, the fate of the main street of the city, leading from the city entrance in North Mitrovica, through the main bridge and the city centre, all the way to the bus station, cannot be omitted. First, in 1992 the former Marshal Tito Street was divided into King Peter I Street (*ulica kralja Petra I*) in North Mitrovica, and Karađorđe Street (*Karađorđeva ulica*) and Gavriilo Princip Street (*ulica Gavriila Principa*) in South Mitrovica (Službeni glasnik RS, 31. mart 1992), and then, after the war, it was divided into King Peter I Street (*ulica kralja Petra I*) in North Mitrovica leading to the main bridge from where it turns into Princess Teuta Street (*rruga Mbretëreshë Teuta*) in South Mitrovica.

**The Shrine to the Revolution monument** was erected in 1973 and is one of the Yugoslav memorial works of Bogdan Bogdanović, Serbian architect and urbanist. Both in the literature and the residents' statements, the monument is designated with different names, either emphasising its location, e.g. Monument on Partisans' Hill, Monument on the hill; or its symbolic dimension: Shrine to the Revolution (*Spomenik revolucije/Përmendorja e revolucionit*; Murati 1986), Monument to Fallen Partisans/Miners/Trepča's Miners, Memorial Shrine of Serbian and Albanian Partisans 1941-1945, Monument to Combatants Fallen in the National Liberation Struggle (*spomenik palim borcima u NOB-i*) (Abdyli 1985).

The monument was made of concrete with small elements of copper and consists of three main elements: two columns and a trough-like structure, which represents either a trilithon or a gateway (Lawler, 2012); it is also described as two columns and a wagon or a structure in the form of a mining wagon (Abdyli 1985, Tomašević 1983).

Shrine to the Revolution was one of over twenty memorial works by Bogdan Bogdanović, erected throughout the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia from 1952 to 1990 (Lawler, 2012) and a part of the monumental *lieux de mémoire* network of Yugoslav 'brotherhood and unity' identity/project. What is more, Jauković argues that this specific network should be interpreted as *lieux de mémoire* within the *lieux de mémoire*, taking into consideration that these spaces function on two levels: physical and narrative (Jauković 2014).

Similar to other Yugoslav monuments to the revolution, which were erected on the historic sites of partisan struggle, and almost exclusively located outside towns and villages in the open landscape (Burghardt & Kirn 2012), the monument in Mitrovica is located on a hill and therefore, is visible from every, even the most distant, place in the city.





Figs. 26, 27. Shrine to the Revolution. Fieldwork, November 2012.



Fig. 28. View of Mitrovica from the southern side. Source: Fieldwork.

According to the literature, the idea of the monument, whose construction was initiated in 1959, corresponds directly to the armed action(s) of Trepča's miners, who formed Miner's Troop (*Rudarska četa*) during WWII: '*simbolizujući na taj način oružanu akciju na žicari*'<sup>83</sup> (Abdyli, 1985), '*simbolizuje oružanu akciju izvedenu 30 jula 1941 godine*'<sup>84</sup> (Murati

<sup>83</sup> 'symbolising armed action on the mine's cable car system'

<sup>84</sup> 'symbolising armed action carried out on July 30, 1941'

1986), *'posvećen rudarskoj četi koja je 30 jula 1941 digla u vazduh žičaru u Trepči'*<sup>85</sup> (Tomašević 1983).

The monument was clearly dedicated to the partisans, as confirmed by (Kulić & Thaler 2018); however, its abstract form and the local context left space for several interpretations of its symbolic meaning, not necessarily inclusive. Moreover, the monument remains an example of *shared* heritage (Jauković 2014) which, in general, produces multiple layers of interpretation.

Firstly, as Burghardt and Kirn argue, 'instead of formally addressing suffering, modernist memorial sites incite in audiences universal gestures of reconciliation and resistance and encourage focus on moving forward' (Burghardt & Kirn 2012). Therefore, the two columns holding up a mine cart are meant to signify two peoples of Kosovo, Serbs and Albanians, united through their antifascist struggle, which is represented by the trough-like structure. Additionally, the universalism of partisans, 'the only social force that rejected the logic of nationalism, and consequently, the logic of ethnic-cleansing imposed by fascist forces' (Burghardt & Kirn 2012) only strengthens this message.

Secondly, the structure of the monument seen as a gateway can symbolise the doorway of reconciliation. There are also ideas of other aspects of unification, not only in the common fight against occupation, but also of working together in the mining industry and overcoming differences in the newly created state of Yugoslavia.

A more general interpretation, distancing itself from the Yugoslav ideology of reconciliation between Albanians and Serbs, and leaning towards industrial development, focuses on the long history of mining in Trepča. From this perspective the monument emphasises the importance of Mitrovica as the heart of Yugoslav strength and cradle of production ('industrial cradle' that provided for and was nurtured by the entire country). Additionally, Troch argues that Bogdanović's monument symbolises the close relation of Northern Mitrovica and Trepča (Troch 2018).

At the same time, 'the abstract and universal gestures of the monuments have been perceived as the suppression of particular national interest' (Burghardt & Kirn 2012). This applies to the monument in Mitrovica, since according to some of my interviewees it is perceived as a symbol of suppression and falsified political reality [interview 14].

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<sup>85</sup> 'dedicated to a miners' troop that blew up a cable car tower in Trepča on July 30, 1941'

The symbolic message of this memory site was strengthened by two memorial plaques that preceded the construction of the monument. A plaque for Muharema Bekteši/Muharrem Bekteshi regarded as a national hero during the Yugoslav period was inscribed: *NARODNI HEROJ MUHAREM BEKTEŠI 1922-1944/HEROI I POPULLIT MUHARREM BEKTESHI 1922-1944* (Murati 1986). The second plaque commemorated the fallen miners of Trepča in the shape of a symbolic mass grave with an inscription in Serbian (on the left) and Albanian (on the right)<sup>86</sup>:



Fig. 29. Inscriptions on the memorial grave of fallen miners. Source: S. Murati, *Dëshmitë e luftës për liri / Svedočanstva borbe za slobodu*, Titova Mitrovica 1986, p. 14.

During the Yugoslav period it was one of the most representative and recognisable places in Mitrovica and beyond. This fact can be proved by the information from tourist guides, the literature on Mitrovica from the period, and visual materials, such as postcards.

<sup>86</sup> ‘Faithful to the traditions of freedom, workers of Trepča responded to the calls of Yugoslavia’s Communist Party and, under the leadership of Comrade Tito, took part in the People’s Revolution. In this hard struggle, hundreds of them gave their lives, which serves to the new generations as a bright example of dedication to their people and the party. Gathered from the high and low places across this land, the remains of brave miners who lost their lives between 1941 and 1945 rest in this tomb.

Jovanić Jovo, Desnica Jovo, Hajdari Bislim, Mirić Mima, Čolaković Đorđe, Korać Ljubo, Čolaković Nikola, Stanković Đuro, Osmokrović Todor, Isufi Habib, Rapajić Vaja, Zec Mile, Kalezić Ljubo, Bursać Milan, Miljuš Mile

18 July 1959, Mitrovica

The Collective of Trepča Workers”



Fig. 30. Postcards from Mitrovica. Source: courtesy of Archives in Mitrovica. Fig. 31. Source: National Library in Belgrade, Rg 174-015

Currently the monument is quite forgotten, if not disowned. Its condition leaves a lot to be desired; however, considering that many similar memory sites were destroyed, vandalised, or at best abandoned during the 1990s (Burghardt & Kirn 2012), its fate could have been worse. The Shrine to the Revolution may not be significantly damaged, but it is certainly neglected. Over time, decorative elements made of copper were lost, yet this ca. 19-metre high concrete monument remains unscathed. Unfortunately, it is not protected by any laws, has never been repaired or restored (Lawler 2012), there is no lighting on the hill, and from time to time the monument and the plaques tend to be defaced with graffiti (political or personal).



Fig. 32. Symbolic mass grave of the fallen miners of Trepča. Fieldwork, November 2012.



Fig. 33. Symbolic mass grave of the fallen miners of Trepča. December 2016.



Fig. 34. Symbolic mass grave of the fallen miners of Trepča. February 2017.

In contrast to the Yugoslav period, the absence of this memory site from contemporary sources, the residents' memory and the lack of commemorative or other practices (with few exceptions<sup>87</sup>) cannot be denied. I visited this place several times during my research, and each time it represented different stages of neglect. In 2012 the plaques the monument were defaced with graffiti (incl. four Cs that stand for *Само Слога Србина Снаива*<sup>88</sup>) and littered with plastic bags and empty bottles. In December 2016 it was not much better, but at least the plaque commemorating the fallen miners had been renovated. In 2017 there were withered flowers on the symbolic grave, which could mean that some

<sup>87</sup> For instance, artistic and recreational events (yoga sessions) and commemorative meetings organised by small groups:

<http://www.rts.rs/page/stories/sr/story/125/drustvo/2374456/dan-borca-obelezen-u-kosovskoj-mitrovici.html>

<https://kossev.info/dan-oslobodjenja-kosovske-mitrovice-tajna-slobode-je-hrabrost/>, accessed: 07.2019.

<sup>88</sup> 'Only unity saves Serbs'

commemorative events actually do take place on the site. Based on my observations, the place is visited mostly by residents who come here to hang out, also in the evenings, and by outsiders who want to see the monument and have a good view of the city.

The **fate of the Yugoslav heritage** and of other memorial sites in Kosovo and beyond was similar. According to a tourist guidebook to Kosovo from 1978, in Kosovo there were 296 smaller or bigger memory sites to the national liberation struggle. Apart from Mitrovica, the most relevant commemorative sites were listed in Prištini/Prishtina (*Spomenik bratstva i jedinstva* and Martyrs' Cemetery<sup>89</sup>), Peja/Peć (*Spomenik revolucije na Karagaču*), Uroševac/Ferizaj (*Spomenik bratstva i jedinstva*), Landovica-Prizren (*Spomenik Bori Vukmiroviću i Ramizu Sadiku*), Lipljan, Đakovica<sup>90</sup>, Gniljan, Crnoljevo, Vučitrn/Vushtri. Most Yugoslav memory sites were destroyed and forgotten (Peja/Peć), destroyed and replaced with other commemorative sites, mainly linked with the Kosovo Liberation Army, KLA (*Ushtria Çlirimtare e Kosovës, UÇK*) and its members (Landovica-Prizren, *Spomenik bratstva i jedinstva u Uroševcu*). Some of them are still present but contested (*Spomenik bratstva i jedinstva* in Pristina and another one in Vitromirica)<sup>91</sup> or, in the best case scenario, simply forgotten and abandoned.

The Memorial of Boro and Ramiz in Landovica, just like the monument in Mitrovica, referred directly to Albanian-Serbian relations (Rogoś 2019). It was erected in 1963 on the 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Boro's and Ramiz's deaths.

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<sup>89</sup> Unfortunately, there is not enough space here to elaborate on other sites of memory from the socialist Yugoslav period in Kosovo. To learn more about the monument in Pristina see: Isabel Ströhl, *Pristina; s "Martyrs' Cemetery" – Conflicting Commemorations*, Südosteuropa, Zeitschrift für Politik und Gesellschaft 3/2006.

<sup>90</sup> Some Yugoslav memorials replaced former sites of memory, as was the case with Đakovica, where a monument to Partisans was erected on the site of a previously destroyed orthodox church. See: D. Bataković, *Kosovo and Metohija: Identity, Religion and Ideologies*, [in] *Living in the enclave*, Belgrade 2007.

<sup>91</sup> During one of the meetings devoted to historical heritage, the mayor of Pristina – Shpend Ahmeti – when asked about the fate of the Monument of Brotherhood and Unity in Pristina, replied that every day he receives letters from residents asking either to restore or destroy the monument. He claimed that the number of opponents and proponents is similar and concluded that the problem is relevant for Pristina's residents and still triggers heated debates on cultural heritage. *Fieldwork*, 07.2014.

See also: Kosovo 2.0 article: C. Mari, *A monument between brotherhood and unity*, and Adem Jashari's <https://kosovotwopointzero.com/en/a-monument-between-brotherhood-and-unity-and-adem-jashari/>, 2015.



Fig. 35. Memorial of Boro and Ramiz in Landovica, Prizren. Source: <https://www.spomenikdatabase.org/landovica>, accessed: 04.2019

Boro Vukmirović (1912-1943) and Ramiz Sadiku (1915-1943) were important figures of the communist partisan movement in Kosovo during WWII; they were ambushed in Landovica on their way to Prizren and were slain together in 1943 (Elsie 2012). In socialist Yugoslavia Boro and Ramiz became the symbol of Albanian and Serbian brotherhood and the unity ideology visible not only in material but also non-material culture of both languages (Rogoś 2019). Ramiz was Albanian and Boro – Montenegrin; they entered the communist historiography in Kosovo as symbols of ethnic fraternity between the Albanians and Slavs (Elsie 2011, Schwandner-Sievers 2010). Information regarding Boro and Ramiz was common knowledge; tourist guides to Kosovo did not fail to mention its symbolic meaning: ‘*čija simbolika neraskidive veze najbolje govori o borbi i otporu naroda i narodnosti Kosova*’<sup>92</sup> (Gaši, Folić, Trbović 1978).

After the collapse of Yugoslavia and the war in Kosovo this monument no longer fitted the new ideological context and thus had to be redefined. In 1999 the memorial was demolished and replaced with the Martyrs’ Cemetery (*Varrezat e Dëshmorëve*) of Kosovo Liberation Army (KLA) soldiers who died during the battle of Jeshkova (Rogoś 2019).

Taking into consideration the results of my fieldwork research (surveys, interviews and observation) and other available analyses, one can conclude that the Yugoslav heritage is at best contested, while the residents’ attitude towards their Yugoslav past is quite ambivalent, if not hostile. Apparently this conclusion can be applied to both Albanians and Serbs. It seems that the attitude of other groups is less negative, yet this assumption should be further verified

<sup>92</sup> ‘whose symbolism of unbreakable bond is the best advocate of the struggle and resistance of the people and ethnic groups of Kosovo’

through more extensive and in-depth research, focusing on a particular group or selected groups.

It was in the interest of Yugoslavia to preserve small Balkan nations within the stronger state and prevent conflicts between them (Kuljić 2018). What is more, the equality principle was meant to establish and reinforce symbiosis between the defensive and political-ideological reasons for Yugoslav unity (Božić 2009). Paradoxically, the ideology of brotherhood and unity which was supposed to reduce the differences resulting from ethnic/national identities and reconcile Albanians and Serbs, indeed united them in contesting this very ideology. Moreover, both sides appear to use the manipulated memory of Yugoslavia to legitimise their own power and consolidate a new sense of identity.

Schwandner-Sievers describes the memories of Yugoslavia among **Kosovo Albanians** as ‘hurt memory’ (Schwandner-Sievers 2010 after Ricoure 2004). To many Albanians the idea of ‘brotherhood and unity’ never materialised, even during the best of Yugoslav times, while some of the people who talked to Schwandner-Sievers agreed that the time of Tito’s rule until the mid-1980s was in fact formative. Unfortunately, the memory of the period was violated and supplanted by the traumatic experience of ‘Milošević’s era’, which probably contributed to the absence of Yugoslavia, or rather Tito’s era, from the public space and public discussion (Schwandner-Sievers 2010).

It is crucial to emphasise that the period following the mid-1980s was not the only source of traumatic memories. The status of Kosovo Albanians in socialist Yugoslavia has been changing after WWII depending on political situation. Therefore, one must keep in mind that there is a substantial difference between the situation of Albanians in Kosovo during the so-called Ranković era, which lasted till 1966, and the period in the mid-1970s after the adoption of the new constitution in 1974. Nevertheless, for Albanians the memory of Yugoslavia was supplanted by more significant memories, mostly related to the last war in Kosovo. Moreover, Schwandner-Sievers argues that the memory of Yugoslav socialism was neither visible nor spoken about in public in post-war Kosovo until the declaration of independence in 2008 and that even then the narrative was akin to an aggressive anti-Yugoslav approach (Schwandner-Sievers 2010).

Researchers agree that today’s Albanian public discourse and the public space in Kosovo are dominated by the memory of armed resistance, as symbolised by the Kosovo Liberation Army (KLA) and especially by one of its fighters, Adem Jashari (Krasniqi 2016,



Di Lellio 2006, Schwandner-Sievers 2010). Of course these contemporary narratives stand in opposition to the memory of socialist Yugoslavia.

A similar tendency of rejecting the memory of Yugoslavia, the prevalence of exclusive 'patriotic' discourses and the instrumentalisation of Yugoslavia's memory for current political objectives can also be observed in Serbian dominant discourse and public space.

In Serbian historiography on Kosovo by Dušan Bataković, the socialist Yugoslav period is perceived as a failed communist experiment of reconciliation, which aimed to suppress the long-lasting conflict between Serbs and Albanians with the ideology of 'brotherhood and unity.' Tito is described as a communist dictator of Yugoslavia, who favoured political emancipation of Kosovo Albanians. According to Bataković, Tito was driven in his decisions by the hope of reinstalling Yugoslav influence in Albania, but instead he served primarily the Albanian national cause by introducing the constitutional amendments of 1968 and 1971 (Bataković 2012). Tito is perceived as a person responsible for ethnic discrimination against the non-Albanian population, someone who allowed the change in the structure of society caused by the migration of Serbs and Montenegrins from Kosovo, and failed to react to the difficult situation of the Eastern Orthodox Church<sup>93</sup>.

In Serbian discourse Yugoslavia and Yugoslavism are described as a dungeon, a delusion and an ideology 'hostile' to national aspirations (Stojanović 2017, Kuljić 2018). Of course socialist Yugoslavia could be perceived through the lens of communism's state-forming function, of renewing or granting statehood (Stojanović 2017), but this perspective is rather disregarded nowadays. Nevertheless, there is a significant difference in the perception of the memory of socialist Yugoslavia between both discourses, resulting from the fact that, contrary to Kosovo Albanians, Kosovo Serbs have had the experience of a nation-state before the Yugoslav unification after WWII. Therefore, their more ambiguous perceptions of the new state and memory of Yugoslavia can be seen as a consequence of their positive identification with both the Serbian and the subsequent Yugoslav state and the sense of continuation and natural extension of the old Yugoslav state (Jovanović 2016).

According to Todor Kuljić, Yugoslavism remains an active discourse, along with the 'patriotic' or 'national' one (Kuljić 2018). Nevertheless, the potential of Yugoslav and

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<sup>93</sup> Bataković provides an example of the destruction of the orthodox church in Djakovica in 1950 in order to place the monument to the fallen partisans of Kosovo on this particular site. Just as important is the removal and banning of the name 'Metohija' in 1968, which was seen as overly Christian Orthodox and Serbian for the desired political image of the Albanian-dominated province of Kosovo.

national memory differs; while the Yugoslav memory is stigmatised, nostalgic and sporadically dispersed in society, the national one is normalised and centralised in the institutions of the nation-state (Kuljić 2018). Apparently, the memory of Yugoslavia is mostly revived by its critics as a rival memory set with the aim to emphasise its own patriotic identity, to create a new interpretation of responsibility and blame, as well as to diminish the value of the past (Kuljić 2018). Moreover, it became the central function of the discourse on communism to create an interpretative framework not only for the past, including the most recent past of the wars of the 1990s, but also for the troubles of the present (Stojanović 2017, Kuljić 2018).

The attitude towards the legacy dedicated to the national liberation struggle is unenviable; in all the countries of former Yugoslavia, unwanted heritage is disregarded, stolen or at best recycled, while slogans are printed on the ruins (Babić 2017). Burghardt and Kirn emphasise, though, that in the countries like Slovenia, Serbia, and Montenegro, the narrative of self-liberation and the partisan struggle was more suited to the integration into the new nationalistic narratives (Burghardt & Kirn 2012). Only when the narrative embodied in the monuments stood directly in opposition to nationalist interests, were memorial sites removed, as can be proved by the actions of Kosovo authorities. Jauković argues that even state-protected cultural monuments which remain the shared Yugoslav heritage, such as the October in Kragujevac Memorial Park in Serbia and the Sutjeska National Park in Bosnia are used by local authorities to embed a national narrative within the previous Yugoslav one (Jauković 2014).

### **3.2.3. Post-conflict and post-socialist period**

The urban space of Mitrovica changed significantly in the 1990s and later as a result of the collapse of socialist Yugoslavia and the Kosovo War. Mitrovica became a post-conflict and post-socialist city, as can be easily recognised in its spatial order.

During the armed conflict Mitrovica went through a phase of massive destruction, when the residential areas, infrastructure and most of its cultural heritage were damaged or destroyed. Moreover, as a result of conflict and the collapse of former socio-political structure, the city experienced institutional destruction as well. Later on, the city went through a post-conflict reconstruction phase which, in this contested space, has taken a more

uncontrolled form than in any other urban environment. Such a situation was caused by institutional chaos resulting from the unresolved status of Mitrovica and from massive migrations to the city. The majority of construction sites operated without any urban plan (and none has been adopted until today), meanwhile each entity was governed by its own laws. Although Mitrovica experienced a construction boom, it had to face the problem of illegal building on a huge scale. Many residents (mostly newcomers) tried to solve housing problems by constructing temporary buildings on their own initiative, leading to additional infrastructural chaos in the city. What is more, the image of the city space abounded with industrial infrastructure from the times of Trepča's prosperity.

As a result of such changes also the symbolic space of Mitrovica went through a significant transformation. After the conflict, both Serbs and Albanians, started to mark its territory with their own symbols. This subchapter includes the analysis of contemporary urban space, its elements constructed after the Kosovo War in 1999 and residents' narration regarding their own city. Contemporary sites of memory will be interpreted in the context of Mitrovica's cityscape and the dominant Serbian and Albanian narratives. The outcomes of the research are the main reference point for this analysis.

According to the outcomes of empirical research and based on my observation, two individuals remain the symbols of Mitrovica: Prince Lazar and Isa Boletini.

Prince Lazar was identified as a crucial person exclusively by the citizens of North Mitrovica. This was to be expected, since the prince remains a central figure of the myth of Kosovo (battle) which remains the basic reference point in contemporary Serbian culture and Serbian national identity (Gil 2005, Di Lellio 2009, Čolović 2016, Jovanović 2016). Moreover, in Serbian literary tradition and collective memory, together with Saint Sava, Prince Lazar who chose 'the kingdom of heaven over the kingdom of earth,' remains the most significant and symbolic hero of the covenant which opened a new martyrological chapter in the history of the Serbian nation (Gil 2005). The Kosovo myth was used since the 1980s to emphasise Serbian suffering in Kosovo and to provide a (pseudo-)historical context for the Serbian exodus from the province; it reacquired significance after the Serbian-Albanian conflict in 1998, while after the *de facto* loss of control over the province in June 1999 it served as compensation for the weakness of the ethnopolitical and legal arguments in support of the Serbian control over Kosovo (Jovanović, after Bieber 2002). As Ivan Čolović argues, it is evident that even after the war in Kosovo (1997-99), the myth of Kosovo remains an

important medium of dominant policies in Serbia, regardless of all possible problems which meet its current exploitation (Čolović 2016).

In Mitrovica the monument to Prince Lazar is the largest monument in the northern part of the city (10-metre tall including the plinth). The monument was erected recently, for the celebration of Vidovdan in 2016. The unveiling of the statue took place during an official ceremony attended not only by the residents of the city but also by numerous officials. The director of the administrative office for Kosovo and Metohija (*Kancelarija za Kosovo i Metohiju*), Marko Đurić, who uncovered the statue, said that ‘Lazar ovde da ostane, jer su i Srbi ovde da ostanu’<sup>94</sup>. One of the reporters who participated the unveiling ceremony claimed that Prince Lazar was the symbol of Serbian nation in Kosovo and that some residents could have been heard chanting ‘Knez Lazar se ponovo vratio na Kosovo’<sup>95</sup>.

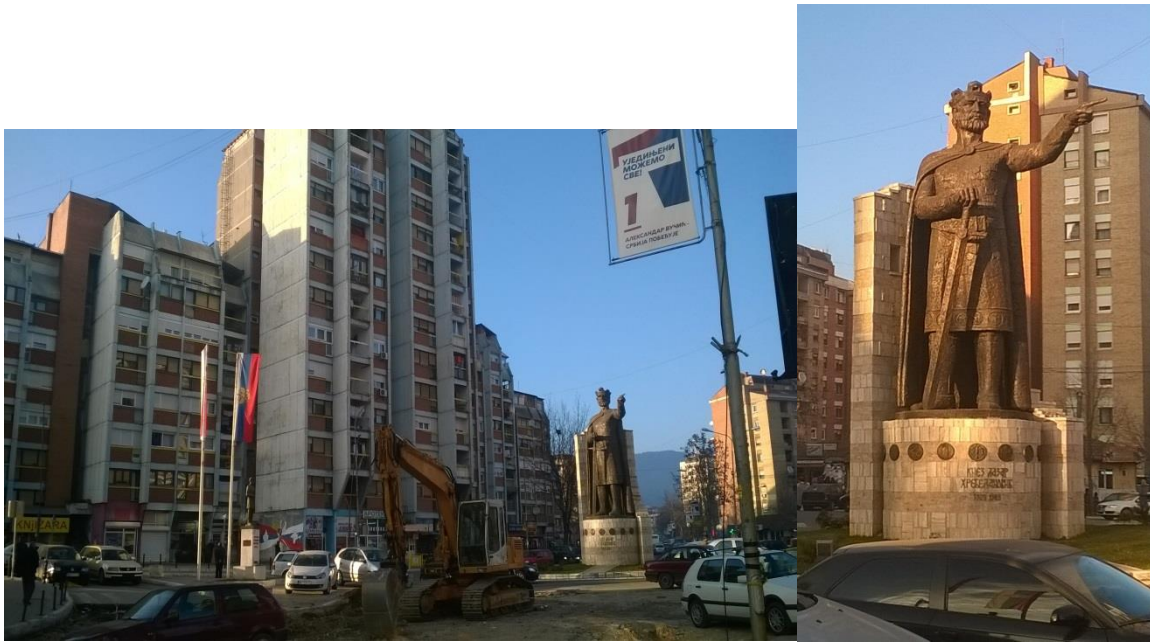
The monument is situated in the very centre of North Mitrovica, in the middle of a roundabout on the street previously called *Trg Šumadij*, and later changed into *Trg kneza Lazara* (Pavlović 2017). It is inscribed with the name of the prince (*Knez Lazar Hrebdeljanović*) and the dates of birth and death (1329-1389). The prince’s right hand is on his sword, while his left hand is raised pointing south; it is said that he points in the direction of Gazimestan where the Battle of Kosovo took place. According to Pavlović, the symbolic meaning of the monument is clear, which is to send a message to the Albanian side that despite Pristina’s efforts to put this part of the city under its control, it shall remain Serbian (Pavlović 2017)<sup>96</sup>.

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<sup>94</sup> ‘Lazar is here to stay, because Serbs are here to stay’. The unveiling ceremony of the monument could be the subject of a separate work, for more information see: <http://www.kim.gov.rs/lat/v1464.php>, accessed: 20.04.2018.

<sup>95</sup> ‘Prince Lazar returned to Kosovo.’

<sup>96</sup> The context of erecting the monument is connected with an attempt to reintegrate the city in 2015, further described in the next section of this chapter.



Figs. 36, 37. The monument to prince Lazar in North Mitrovica and the construction site of a pedestrian zone. Fieldwork, December 2016.



Fig. 38. Monument to Grigoriy Stepanovich Schterbina in North Mitrovica. Fieldwork, December 2016.

Fig. 29. Graffiti in the centre of North Mitrovica. Fieldwork, November 2012.

The message of the monument to Prince Lazar is strengthened or supplemented with the symbolic context of the city centre, where numerous flags, graffiti and, especially, the monument to Grigoriy Stepanovich Schterbina (Григорий Степанович Щербина)<sup>97</sup> can be seen. This relatively small monument, re-erected much earlier than the monument to Prince Lazar, is an important site of memory that refers to the turbulent period of the turn of the 19<sup>th</sup> to 20<sup>th</sup> centuries. According to Pavlović, this Russian consul is credited with protecting Serbs in Kosovo and Metohija during the Albanian rule (Pavlović 2017). Monument to the Russian diplomat was erected for the first time in the southern part of the city in 1928, after WWII it was placed in a local museum and destroyed in 1999; the new monument was erected in 2007 in the centre of North Mitrovica. The monument to Schterbina strengthens the tragic narrative of continual Serbian sacrifice and victimhood, introduced with the figure of Prince Lazar. Moreover, events from the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century are directly connected with modern times, since, as pointed out by Pavlović, residents claim that the monument was erected under circumstances that were as difficult for Serbs in Kosovo and Metohija (as the residents of North Kosovska Mitrovica) as during the times when Schterbina was a consul (Pavlović 2017).

The symbolic space of the centre of Mitrovica should also be analysed in reference to the current political situation and the continuity of Serbian-Russian partnership. Apart from the monument to the Russian consul and protector of Serbs in Kosovo and Metohija, the symbolic space of the centre contains graffiti<sup>98</sup> expressing solidarity with Russian policy as well as Russian flags waving alongside Serbian flags. According to empirical research, the monument to Schterbina is not perceived as an important site of memory; none of the respondents mentioned it. There was only one exception to this, a quick remark from one of my interviewees who expressed a rather negative attitude towards the pro-Russian symbolism in the urban space of Mitrovica and was unable to explain the reason for placing the

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<sup>97</sup> G. S. Schterbina (1868-1903) was a Russian diplomat who performed his mission in numerous cities during the period of the Ottoman Empire, such as Skopje, Shkodra and Cetinje. In 1902 he was appointed for the function of the first consul in the newly opened Russian diplomatic office in Mitrovica. Schterbina died in Mitrovica in 1903 from gunshot wounds. See: Aslanova Sevilya Niyazovna, *Concerning the Murder of the Russian Consul G. S. Schterbina in Mitrovica (Case Study of Turkish Archival Records)*; Vesna Sekulić, *Otvaranje ruskog konzulata u Kosovskoj Mitrovici*, Baština 192005, Priština Leposavić; Bataković, Dušan T. (1987), *Погибија руског конзула Г. С. Шчербине у Митровици 1903. године*, Историјски институт. XXXIV: 309–325.

<sup>98</sup> Graffiti propagating the following slogans (in Cyrillic): ‘Kosovo eta Srbija – Krim je Rusija’/‘Kosovo is Serbia – Crimea is Russia’ – mixing Serbian and Russian for word-play. ‘Jer odavde nema nazad. Kosovska Mitrovica’/ ‘Because there is no going back from here. Kosovska Mitrovica’. Source: Research field notes.

monument in the very centre of North Mitrovica [interview 22]. Indeed, it dominates the central part of North Mitrovica.

Without doubt the symbolic space of northern Mitrovica is a part of the main Serbian historiographic discourse that emphasises the medieval golden age of the Serbian nation, its long-lasting struggle for independence, full of sacrifice, and the resulting uniqueness of Serbs.

Meanwhile, Isa Boletini remains the central figure to Kosovo Albanians from Mitrovica, connected with the city by his origins (he was born in the village of Boletin near Mitrovica) and with his engagement in the fight for Kosovo's independence at the turn of the 19<sup>th</sup> to 20<sup>th</sup> centuries. His importance to the residents is also evidenced by numerous sites of memory located in the city and nearby: a monument, boulevard name, Boletini's grave and home (*kulla*) preserved in Boletin, and a large format poster on a building near the walking zone.

Albanians view Isa Boletini (Isa Bey, 1864-1916) as one of the most important national figures. According to the *Historical Dictionary of Kosovo*, changing sides and allies, Boletini participated in the following events at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> and the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century:

*After the rise of the League of Prizren, he took part as a young man in the Battle of Slivova against Turkish forces on 22 April 1881. In 1902, Boletini was appointed head of the personal "Albanian guard" of Sultan Abdul Hamid II (r. 1876–1909) in Istanbul, where he spent most of the next four years and acquired the title "bey." He was loyal to the sultan, but in 1908 he gave his initial support to the Young Turks. When Xhavid Pasha sent an army of 7,000 men to subdue Kosovo in November 1908, however, he and a handful of friends put up fierce resistance. After their escape, Turkish troops burned his house down in revenge. In 1909, Boletini led fighting in Prishtina, Prizren, and elsewhere, and played an important role in the general uprising in Kosovo in the spring of 1910, where he held Turkish forces at bay in Caraleva, between Ferizaj and Prizren, for two days. During the first Balkan War in 1912, he led armed guerrillas in Kosovo and later in Albania proper, in support of the provisional government, which proclaimed Albanian independence in Vlora on 28 November 1912. In March 1913, Boletini accompanied Ismail Qemal bey Vlora to London to seek British support for the new country. He was later interned in Podgorica, where he is said to have been killed in a shoot-out (Elsie 2010).*

The importance of this figure to the Albanian society (both in Albania and Kosovo) is substantiated by the fact that he was awarded the title of 'Hero of Albania' (after 1945) and the 'Hero of Kosovo' order (in 2010) by Fatmir Sejdiu, the president of the Republic of Kosovo.



Figs. 39, 40. Monument to Isa Boletini and a poster of him, South Mitrovica. Fieldwork, respectively, February 2017 and November 2012.

Boletini's monument was unveiled in Southern Mitrovica on the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Independence of Albania and Flag Day (28 November 2012). The statue is situated on the boulevard, close to the main bridge, on a spot previously occupied by a statue of a large black two-headed eagle. On 10 June 2015 Boletini was reburied at a ceremony in the village of Boletin attended by hundreds of people. The reburial was followed by a public tribute at the football stadium in South Mitrovica.

Nevertheless, without downplaying his position in Albanian and local history, taking into consideration the symbolic space of South Mitrovica being dominated by the KLA sites of memory, it is significant that according to empirical research Isa Boletini is the undisputed central figure in the residents' eyes.

As a result of the latest conflict, the symbolic urban space has changed radically not only because of the destruction of earlier heritage, but also due to many new symbolic interventions, particularly visible in the southern part of the city. New sites of memory



appeared in the form of monuments, street names, memorial plaques<sup>99</sup>, posters, and graffiti<sup>100</sup>. This aspect of collective memory did not feature in residents' responses, neither in the survey, nor during the interviews. Since the memory of the last war is visible in the urban landscape, it will be presented here shortly on the example of monuments dedicated to victims (and, at the same time, heroes) of the last conflict. Monuments serve as the materialisation of the social memory of a particular community and remain an important inventory of a modern nation (Jezernik 2001).

In North Mitrovica there is only one site of memory in the form of a monument to Serbs Killed in Kosovo since the 1990s – the Monument to Serbian Victims of the Kosovo War (also called the Monument of Truth). This monument bears an inscription: *‘Погинули у рату за одбрану отаџбине од бомбардовања и терористичке УЧК у Косовско-Митровачком округу’*<sup>101</sup> and lists 200 people fallen during the Kosovo War between 1999 and 2003. The monument is about 5 metres tall with a cross and icons at the top. It was erected after the Kosovo War and is located right next to the main bridge. Pavlović argues that considering the fact that the bridge represents to Serbs the main point of Serbian-Albanian division, the positioning of this memorial ideologically underlines spatial demarcation from Albanians, perceived as the enemy and blamed for the suffering of Serbian population in the war of 1999 and beyond (Pavlović 2017).

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<sup>99</sup> Plaques commemorating tragic events and victims (on both sides) at the place of their death. Examples: *Plaka perkujtimore tek “Tregu i Gjelbert”* (Azemi 2015); North Mitrovica – plaque on Kolašinska Street (field notes).

<sup>100</sup> See: Иван Башчаревић, *Град и графити : политички графити у северној Косовској Митровици*, Косовска Митровица 2011; Радомир Д. Ђорђевић, *Моћ графит-мурала : од уметничког до националног самоодржања*, Косовска Митровица 2015. M. Mudel, *Misja Unii Europejskiej w zakresie praworządności – (nie)wspólny punkt*. [in:] *Kosowo. Społeczeństwo, kultura, polityka*, ed. A. Koziej, Warsaw 2015.

<sup>101</sup> ‘Killed in the war while defending their homeland from bombing and KLA terrorists in the Kosovo-Mitrovica District.’



Figs. 41, 42. Monument to Serbian victims of the Kosovo War, North Mitrovica. Fieldwork 2012, 2018.

Undoubtedly, sites of memory of the Kosovo War are more numerous and visible in the southern part of the city. Monuments and memorial complexes devoted to the memory of KLA fighters dominate the symbolic space of the city. Additionally, during my visits between 2012 and 2017, I could witness the change of symbol carriers. When I came to Mitrovica for the first time in 2012, the central part of the city was dominated by large format posters of Isa Boletini and of the most prominent KLA members, such as Adem Jashari and Hamëz Jashari.



Figs. 43, 44. Posters of Hamëz and Adem Jashari (from the left), South Mitrovica. Fieldwork, November 2012.



Fig. 45. Poster of Adem Jashari on the former Hotel Adriatik in South Mitrovica. Fieldwork, November 2012.

Later on the posters were removed (with the exception of Isa Boletini in the very centre of the walking zone) and replaced with the memorials of KLA soldiers; however, what is interesting, without the central KLA figure – Adem Jashari. Towards the end of my research, the centre of South Mitrovica was dominated by memorials to the following individuals: Mehe Uka (walking zone, *korzo*), Shemsi Ahmeti (next to the main mosque) and Safet Boletini (close to the city museum). It is worth noticing that one memorial plaque to a

KLA member – Avni Hajredini – is located in the northern part of the city, in the mixed neighbourhood of the Bosnian district.



Figs. 46, 47, 48. Monuments to KLA members (from the left): Shemsi Ahmeti, Mehe Uka, Safet Boletini. Fieldwork, February 2017.



Fig. 49. Memorial to Avni Hajredini, Bosnian district in Mitrovica. Fieldwork



Figs. 50, 51. Park of '*Fehmi dhe Xhevë Lladrovci*'. Fieldwork, February 2017

One of the memorial complexes to KLA – the park of '*Fehmi dhe Xhevë Lladrovci*' – is located on the periphery of urban Mitrovica, in the direction of the Mitrovica-Skenderaj-Peja road, close to the 'Bridge of Blood' (*Ura e gjakut*). It was erected in 2009 and contains several busts and monuments, among others, the busts of Fehmi and Xhevë Lladrovci, Fatime Hetemit (Azemi 2015) and the monument to Avni Dedea.



Figs. 52, 53, 54. Monument to Avni Dedea, the park of '*Fehmi dhe Xhevë Lladrovci*'. Fieldwork, February 2017

It is worth adding that at the outskirts of Mitrovica, in the Shipol neighbourhood, a cemetery for KLA soldiers (*Shipol varrezat*) is located (Azemi 2015). The message of the above memorials is strengthened by numerous Albanian flags, either located next to the memory sites or present in various spots in this urban space<sup>102</sup>.

Taking into consideration the prevailing post-conflict discourse of Kosovo Albanians, the absence of two main narratives identified with Adem Jashari and Ibrahim Rugova (Krasniqi 2016) may seem quite unexpected.

Ibrahim Rugova (1944-2006) was a scholar, writer and member of the Democratic League of Kosovo (*Lidhja Demokratike e Kosovës, LDK*) elected as the first president of the self-proclaimed Republic of Kosovo during the parliamentary elections in 1992, which were boycotted by Serbian community (Elsie 2011). Re-elected in 1998, he held this position until his death in 2006. Rugova represented the dominant peaceful policy of resistance in the form of parallel society carried out until the mid-1990s. Following the war, the founding myth of the warrior hero (represented by Adem Jashari) replaced that of peaceful opposition to the 1990s Belgrade regime (Di Lellio, Schwandner-Sievers 2006). The monument to Ibrahim Rugova is located in the centre of Pristina, while the bust of the former president – in Gjilan. He was posthumously awarded the ‘Hero of Kosovo’ order in 2007 by the president of Kosovo, Fatmir Sejdiu.

Adem Shaban Jashari (1955-1998) was a fighter from Prekaz in Drenica who took part in the armed revolt against the Serbian rule, initially in 1991 and later as a commander of KLA (Elsie 2010). After the massacre of the Jashari family in Prekaz in 1998<sup>103</sup>, Adem Jashari has become known as the legendary commander, a mythical figure who binds past and future generations to the nation (Di Lellio 2006a, Schwandner-Sievers 2013). Because of his resistance and dramatic death he became the quintessential Albanian freedom fighter determined to rid Kosovo of Serbian occupation and was hailed as a KLA martyr (Elsie

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<sup>102</sup> National Albanian flags are significantly more visible in the urban space of Mitrovica than Kosovo state flags. See: M. Maciulewicz, *Symbole państwowe Republiki Kosowo. Młode społeczeństwo wobec wyzwań nowej państwowości*, [in] *Kosowo. Społeczeństwo, kultura, polityka*, red. A. Koziej, Warszawa 2015.

<sup>103</sup> An attempt to arrest Jashari for the murder of a Serbian policeman failed on 22 January 1998, and earlier in December 1991 and January 1998; on 5 March 1998 larger Serbian forces appeared in Prekaz, shelling and bombing the Jashari compound for 3 days, until Jashari was killed; 58 other people were also slain in the attack, 46 of whom belonged to Jashari’s extended family (among them, 18 women and 10 children under 16). What is left of the compound of the Jashari family in Prekaz was preserved as a museum and has become the object of mass pilgrimages in recent years. The bodies of the Jashari family lie buried in a graveyard nearby (Elsie 2010). Each year on the anniversary of the event a huge ceremony is organised, the day is also proclaimed a national celebration. To learn more about this contemporary site of memory of Kosovo Albanians see: Anna Di Lellio, *Sacred Journey to a Nation: The Construction of a Shrine in Postwar Kosovo*, 2006b.

2010). Moreover, following Kosovo's declaration of independence in 2008, Jashari was posthumously awarded the 'Hero of Kosovo' order for his role in the Kosovo War.

Apart from Prekaz, the place of Jashari's family mass killing, which became the most important site of memory in the form of a memorial complex in Kosovo, other memorials to Jashari are located in Tirana, Skenderaj (close to Prekaz), Pristina (a poster which replaced Boro and Ramiz's poster), Vushtrri and many other places in Kosovo. In addition, there are streets, boulevards and many other urban toponyms named after Jashari and the members of his family.

In Mitrovica, the city stadium and a boulevard were named after Adem Jashari. Not so long ago in South Mitrovica one could also see posters picturing Adem Jashari in a military uniform with a gun, but later they were removed. During my empirical research, Adem Jashari was mentioned only a few times, while Ibrahim Rugova – not even once.

At the same time, Isa Boletini, an important figure in Albanian history, though perhaps pushed to a secondary position in the post-conflict Kosovo narrative of memory, remains the dominant figure to Albanians living in Mitrovica. The most obvious reason is the local context; because of his roots Isa Boletini can be perceived as a symbol of the city. Moreover, it would be difficult to recall any other Albanian from Mitrovica who contributed more to the Albanian struggle for independence than Boletini. Other possible explanations involve the distance between rural and urban culture, frictions within (groups or clans of) Kosovo Albanians and the power of local traditions versus other above-local traditions, for instance national or state ones.

The Mosque and the Orthodox Church represent another group of the most significant symbols recognised by the residents of Mitrovica. Regardless of confession, religious objects, mosques and churches, all suffered as a result of political changes and armed conflicts in Mitrovica and in Kosovo, especially during the war in 1999, when both Serbian and Albanian heritage was being destroyed.

The amount of literature on the topic is truly impressive, and its importance to the public cannot be overestimated<sup>104</sup>. More so regarding the earlier context of cultural heritage

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<sup>104</sup> See: *Violence Taking Place: The Architecture of the Kosovo Conflict*, by Andrew Herscher; *Under Orders: War Crimes in Kosovo* by Fred Abrahams ; *The Destruction of Memory: Architecture at War* by Robert Bevan  
Public debates: <https://kosovotwopointzero.com/en/small-talk-destroy-old-build-new/>. Surprisingly, when it comes to destroyed cultural heritage in Kosovo, it seems that the issue is commonly associated mostly with the

destruction or neglect in Kosovo, for instance, actions taken right after the Ottomans' withdrawal, during WWI and WWII, socialist Yugoslavia (which generally disregarded religious heritage) and, eventually, during the so-called Milošević's period. Moreover, the last war in Kosovo (1998-1999) led to a dramatic destruction of all kinds of cultural heritage in Kosovo. What is striking, there is hardly any doubt that the destruction of cultural sites was deliberate. The types of damage sustained by the monuments indicate that the damage was intentional rather than resulting from having being caught in the cross-fire of military actions (Herscher & Riedlmayer 2000). Among the most important events of the last conflict are the actions of the growing-in-strength KLA formation against the policy of peaceful resistance represented by Ibrahim Rugova, the campaign of Serbian forces in March 1998 aimed at the KLA and Kosovo's ethnic Albanian population, and, finally, the NATO operation (March-June 1999) and the revenge attacks by returning Albanians directed against the local population and Serbian Orthodox sites. The most dramatic actions of heritage destruction in Mitrovica took place in 1999, 2000 and 2004, and were directed at both Albanian and Serbian cultural sites.

Today, there are two Orthodox churches left in the city: St. Sava Orthodox Church and St. Demetrios Orthodox Church. **St. Sava Orthodox Church**, in the southern part of Mitrovica, was built in several phases between 1896 and 1913; it was designed by Andra Stevanović. On 17 March 2004, the church was attacked by local Albanians, looted and set on fire (Ženarju 2013). Until very recently Serbs did not have access to the church, except for on 27 January, the day of St. Sava.

Since the church is located in the southern part of the city, most Orthodox believers who settled in the northern part after the division of the city in 1999 had practically no access to any orthodox church. The new **St. Demetrios Orthodox Church** on the hill in North Mitrovica was built over 4 years, between 2001 and 2005. The residents gave several reasons for its placement, such as the conviction that on this particular site St. Demetrios Church was located in the Middle Ages. Nowadays, it is the main place of religious practice. According to research results, a significant number of the residents of North Mitrovica perceive it as a centre of religious life and the symbol of the city. Moreover, according to Pavlović, this church is perceived by locals as the affirmation of the presence of the Serbian Orthodox

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heritage of the Serbian Orthodox Church. Herscher & Riedlmayer stress that the initial UNESCO report on the state of cultural heritage in Kosovo after the war was based primarily on information supplied by Serbian cultural heritage institutions (Herscher & Riedlmayer 2000).



Church (SOC) and an important factor in preserving the ethnic and religious identity of Serbs in Kosovska Mitrovica. Moreover, it remains an important spatial marker that designates the northern part of the city as Orthodox and Serbian (Pavlović 2017).



Fig. 55. St. Sava Orthodox Church in South Mitrovica.



Fig. 56. St. Demetrios Orthodox Church. Source: Fieldwork, November 2012

In the southern part, a similar function is performed by the newly built Bajram Pasa Mosque (2014), commonly recognised as the main mosque. It was built in the centre of South Mitrovica after the war, on the site of the old Gazi Isa Beg Mosque, thanks to the financial support of Turkey<sup>105</sup>.

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<sup>105</sup>Official website of Mitrovica Municipality (*Komuna e Mitrovicës*): <https://kk-arkiva.rks-gov.net/mitrovica/News/Lajmet/Ne-Mitrovica-ndertohet-xhamia-me-e-madhe-ne-Kosove.aspx>, accessed: 11.05.2016.



Fig. 57. Bajram Pasa Mosque (the main mosque) in South Mitrovica. Source: <http://www.sandzakhaber.net/nova-dzamija-u-mitrovici/>

The final symbolic site of memory, and probably the most important to be mentioned in this thesis, must be **the main bridge**. This infrastructural object, completely irrelevant in any symbolic dimension before the conflict, after the Kosovo War remains one of the most significant (common) memory sites, an example of painful shared memory of all communities in Mitrovica.

Significantly, the bridge is associated with the Kosovo War and the symbolic division of the city in 1999 resulting from the French KFOR decision to prevent Albanians from transferring into the northern part of the city. The main bridge also reminds of NATO bombings and of numerous incidents and events which took place after the conflict, on the bridge in particular and in Mitrovica in general (2004, 2011)<sup>106</sup>.

The symbolic importance of the main bridge stems from the fact that it stands for the division of society and urban landscape. Moreover, it remains the symbol of two exclusive policies represented by two main communities living in Mitrovica: the independence of Serbian community and the legitimacy of Kosovo authority. Therefore, the renovation of the main bridge and its reopening was not just a simple act of traffic restoration (as was the case with the secondary bridge which was reopened and remains open to car traffic). It is

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<sup>106</sup> The description of the events which took place on the bridge or in its vicinity could be the subject of a separate study. However, one should take notice of events which took place in 1999 (division of the city), riots in 2004, riots as a result of the declaration of Kosovo's independence in 2008, riots and setting up barricades in 2011, the Brussels Agreement in 2013, Peace Park construction in 2015, the initial works on the bridge reconstruction in 2016.

considered, predominantly by Serbian community, to be a symbolic act of Pristina's sovereignty over the northern part of the city. According to Pavlović, the response to an attempt to reopen the bridge in 2015 was the erection of Prince Lazar Monument on Vidovdan in 2016 (Pavlović 2017). This is also the reason why renovation works in the northern part are still not completed and frequently disturbed by different circumstances<sup>107</sup>.



Fig. 58. View from the main bridge in North Mitrovica. Fieldwork, November 2012



Fig. 59. View on the main bridge from North Mitrovica. Fieldwork, November 2012.

<sup>107</sup> During my stay in December 2016 the works on the construction of a 2-metre high wall-like object started in the northern part. According to the local press, it was supposed to be the element of the reconstructed walking zone leading from the centre of North Mitrovica to the bridge; the use of this concrete base was meant to elevate the walking zone. The construction of 'the wall' resulted in the protests of Albanians who claimed that Serbs built another barricade. Eventually this concrete construction was probably removed at the beginning of 2017, as during my stay in February 2017 the construction site next to the bridge looked different. Additionally, taking into consideration the time of walking zone construction in the northern part, it is obvious that the final implementation of construction works next to the bridge and its opening to car traffic is deliberately obstructed for reasons mentioned before.

Furthermore, it is not only the bridge itself that remains the carrier of the above-mentioned meanings. The surroundings of the bridge are also full of symbols, such as flags, graffiti, memorials and monuments located close to the bridge, indicating (symbolic) dominance over the territory. On the one hand, the main bridge symbolises the suffering of all communities; on the other, it reflects the friction between completely different concepts of Mitrovica's past and future, represented by Serbian and Albanian communities.

A closer analysis of the contemporary urban space of Mitrovica highlights ethnic/national divisions among the city residents visible in exclusive symbolic narratives, at the same time it reveals many similarities in the way these narratives are constructed and carried out. Additionally, it reveals intra-group frictions either connected with different approaches towards a particular site of memory (for instance, presented by the representatives of Serbian community towards the figure of Schterbina) or inaccuracies regarding the dominant above-local narrative (like the underrepresentation of the central figure of post-conflict Kosovo, Adem Jashari, and other missing figures, such as Rugova and Skanderbeg).

Both narratives are centred around recent and past conflicts and are built on the concept of territory and its links with the fate of the nation. In addition, both sides remain the objects of historical injustice and stick to self-victimisation narratives. The figure of a victim and, at the same time, a hero (either an individual or a collective) occupies the central position in these narratives.

## Conclusion

The analysis of the symbolic dimension of Mitrovica based on several different methods (survey, interviews, observation, literature) leads to the general conclusion that the urban space of Mitrovica is not simply divided into two completely separate and exclusive parts dominated by either Albanians or Serbs. Of course a division into different symbolic ethnic/national narratives in contemporary Mitrovica can be easily demonstrated and was also confirmed by the results of this research. Nevertheless, it is important to pay attention to several interesting and unobvious findings which resulted from the introduction of the historical context, diversity of research methods, the inclusion of minorities in the research, and the comparative perspective.

To begin with, as a result of this research, many important sites of memory (respected or disregarded) were identified, either thanks to the residents' responses or the observation of urban space. The most visible and well-maintained are the newly created sites of memory connected with the ethnic/national narrative and referring mostly to the memory of Kosovo War. The heritage of the Ottoman Empire and socialist Yugoslavia which could be perceived as a common legacy, but stands in opposition to the dominant national narrative, was destroyed or at best disregarded and, nowadays, it is forgotten, neglected or has been replaced by dominant national narrative(s). The Ottoman heritage and the creation of Yugoslavia are seen as crucial historical limiting factors of Serbian national development (Jovanović 2016). Kosovo Albanian public discourse and public space are dominated by the memory of armed resistance and the long-lasting struggle for independence, which leaves virtually no room for any other memorial practices.

The most popular sites of memory, such as the bridge, sacral objects or memorials to individuals, can be easily analysed within the framework of exclusive ethnic/national narratives. In fact, the religious aspect and local heroes constitute two groups of answers which significantly divided Serbs and Albanians. It appears that these views were also shared by the representatives of other communities. For instance, the mosque is regarded as a symbol by Albanians, Ashkali and Romani, while Prince Lazar by Serbs and Bosniaks. The same applies to the name of the city; one can easily conclude that Albanians use the simple name *Mitrovica/Mitrovice*, while Serbs, exclusively, *Kosovska Mitrovica* to underline the continuity of Serbian power over this territory. Research demonstrated that the name *Kosovska Mitrovica* is predominantly recognised by communities living in the northern part of the city, mostly Serbs, but there are also names commonly disregarded by all communities (such as *Tito's Mitrovica* and other past names), while other names are used by residents for various reasons, not necessarily linked with the division of the city. Moreover, it is also interesting that for *Mitrovica's* residents important places have functional rather than symbolic connotations and are mainly related with their everyday lives.

It appears that there is only one site of memory recognised by all communities and highly visible in this urban space – the bridge. Indeed, it seems that there is no better example illustrating the division of the city. As stated in this chapter, the bridge remains the symbol of Serbian-Albanian division, a demarcation spot from the Other (Albanian or Serb) perceived as the enemy and blamed for the suffering of one's own population in the Kosovo War and beyond, as well as two exclusive policies represented by two main communities living in

Mitrovica. On the other hand, after the Kosovo War it remains one of the most important and common memory sites, an example of painful shared memory of all communities in Mitrovica, not only Albanians and Serbs. Moreover, it may also exemplify the dynamic nature of common memory sites, as well as their complexity and multi-layered character.

The issue of the actors of urban space and their motives will be analysed in detail in the final chapter. Nevertheless, based on the obtained outcomes, one can point to political groups or individuals who strive to build and strengthen the national/ethnic narrative in order to carry out their political agenda, regardless of further integration or disintegration of the city. Additionally, most of these actors probably do not belong to the community of Mitrovica's residents. There is no doubt that Mitrovica has many actors of urban space who separately strive to implement many different strategies, not in accordance with any urban plan or other legal schedule/outline.

The analysis of the symbolic urban space of Mitrovica revealed similar elements of both national narratives and the examples of intra-group frictions or divisions. Owing to that, the problem of division can be localised and analysed in different dimensions, not only the ethnic/national one.

#### 4. Chapter IV: Social Practice – Divisions among Urban Community

Many studies on divided cities were devoted to the research on urban community and intergroup relations in the city (Shaw 2003, Bollens 2012, Nagle 2016, Calame and Charlesworth 2009, Čorkalo, Biruški & Ajduković 2009, Jańczak 2009, Pilić & Bošnjak 2011, Björkdahl & Gušić 2013, Pavlović 2016, Gušić 2017). Moreover, in many cases of Balkan divided cities, the disintegration of the city was analysed exclusively from the perspective of a destroyed community (Pilić & Bošnjak 2011, Čorkalo, Biruški & Ajduković 2009, Shaw 2003).

Research on Mostar<sup>108</sup>, Vukovar<sup>109</sup> and Mitrovica, and other aforementioned studies on divided cities, showed that the ethnic/national dimension of community's disintegration prevails over other aspects of division. The prevalence of the ethnic/national aspect in the narration of divisions in those cities is no doubt understood, and this thesis does not aim to challenge that. Nevertheless, one cannot underestimate the importance of other factors which influence mutual relations between residents. The situation in Mitrovica, if interpreted only through contemporary ethnic/national divisions, especially solely in the context of two dominant groups, cannot reflect the complexity of the population structure, inter- and intragroup relations, and thus, it cannot reveal the real importance of the ethnic or national component to the residents.

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<sup>108</sup> *Hoće li Mostar ostati komunikacijski podijeljen grad?* [Will Mostar remain communication-divided?] by Šime Pilić and Mateja Bošnjak presents the results of a survey carried out among 514 students at different universities in Mostar in 2009. The aim of this qualitative research was to determine to what extent students were aware of ethnic divisions in Mostar, what they thought about coexistence in the city and in what way their attitudes were influenced by the direct exposure to suffering during the war (Pilić & Bošnjak 2011). The main research goal was to examine the influence of war and its consequences on mutual relations between the students in Mostar from different national groups. To some extent, methodological tools used in the Mostar study can be perceived as a reference point for the research in Mitrovica. Both cities suffer from the division of urban space between two main ethnic/national groups, primarily as a consequence of the collapse of Yugoslavia. As a result of the conflict both cities have experienced significant shifts in their demographic composition. They also became (symbolically) divided by a river. The study involved tools for measuring social distance, exposure to the war experience and the level of in-city mobility. A questionnaire examined the attitudes towards the perception of Mostar as a divided city and the perspective on the future of social relations in this community.

<sup>109</sup> Another important work studied the community of Vukovar. Even though it represents a psychological approach, the paper titled *Od dekonstrukcije do rekonstrukcije traumatizirane zajednice: primjer Vukovara* [From Deconstruction to Reconstruction of a Traumatized Community: the Example of Vukovar], contains several important remarks about a disintegrated community in the local context. It presents the results of research on the process of social reconstruction conducted between 2000 and 2004 in Vukovar using various research methods (e.g. ethnographic research, focus groups, qualitative research). The article describes the division of a community that had been highly integrated in the past, destabilized before 1991, and completely destroyed as a result of war. The aim of this article was to demonstrate the dynamics of destruction, division and post-conflict reconstruction of a traumatized community (Čorkalo Biruški, Ajduković 2009). Although Vukovar represents a different example of a divided urban community than Mitrovica (ethnically mixed but socially polarised), the study presents an important set of research tools which can be implemented in the study on Mitrovica.

Therefore, the proposed perspective analyses other possible aspects of division, such as resulting from economic inequalities, religion, rural-urban frictions, political affiliations, or individual behaviour. In the case of Mitrovica, the issue of other aspects of internal divisions within the communities has already been mentioned in several studies. For instance, Miloš Luković notices that, apart from ethnic and confessional differences, the residents of Mitrovica might be divided into three groups according to their residential status: refugees, newcomers and old citizens (Luković 2005). The category of old citizens (*Mitrovčani, starosedeooci*) refers to families that have lived in the city from before WWII, newcomers have lived in Mitrovica for a few generations, but came to the city after WWII, while refugees have moved to the Mitrovica after NATO troops had entered this territory (Luković 2005). Apart from noting acts of solidarity, Pavlović also identifies the elements of division in the Serbian community regarding, among others, the residential status of its members. There is a difference between native inhabitant (*starosedelac*) and newcomer (*doseljenik*); however, he also points to the socioeconomic stratification as a consequence of economic decline and the lack of a legal framework which could prevent an increase in crime, alongside the question of North Kosovo's political status (Pavlović 2016). Rok Župančič also refers to one of the aspects covered by Pavlović, namely, the impact of the political situation on the condition of the present-day local community. According to his observations, the EU peacebuilding engagement in Kosovo intensified the intra-ethnic split of Serbs into the so-called 'boycotters' and 'integrationists'. He argues that, as a result, for many people from the Serbian community it was not Albanians that they should be afraid of, but rather their fellow Serbs (Župančič 2018). Gušić argues that post-war Mitrovica is shaped by urban conflicts over peace(s) produced by various governing attempts. He identifies several dimensions and groups of individuals, often of contradictory goals, representing different governing attempts (both organised and ambiguous) by the residents of the city, e.g. domestic such as family and friends, by criminal gangs and local elites, and by outside actors such as Belgrade, Pristina, or Brussels (Gušić 2017). Shaw perceives Mitrovica and Kosovo as a place where potentially contradictory motives of larger groups and local actors meet (Shaw 2003) and emphasises that even though post-1945 Kosovar Serbs and Kosovar Albanians had contradictory political perspectives, they were able to coexist relatively peacefully, until triggered by larger-group concerns. Therefore, one can conclude that there is visible distance between political groups and ordinary citizens, as well as local and national authorities.



Most analyses of disintegrated communities in divided cities focus on the relations within two dominant groups, e.g. Croats and Bosniaks (in Mostar), Serbs and Croats (in Vukovar) or Albanians and Serbs (in Mitrovica). Through fieldwork and literature analysis, I came to believe that such an approach provides only a partial picture of relations between residents. Therefore, the proposed analysis describes other communities living in Mitrovica and the research outcomes that take into account the responses of the representatives of minorities.

This chapter will attempt to outline the complex relations between Mitrovica's residents through their everyday social practices, such as communication, mobility, mutual contact and perception, relations with neighbours and the role of the citizen. The introductory section provides the demographic description of contemporary Mitrovica with a focus on specific internal migration and its consequences for the current situation in the city.

#### **4.1. Demographic characteristics of contemporary Mitrovica**

According to OSCE data used for the purposes of this research<sup>110</sup>, Mitrovica has about 100,000 residents. Its northern part, including the surrounding villages, is inhabited by approximately 29,460 people (Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe [OSCE], 2015a). There are about 22,530 Kosovo Serbs and 4,900 Kosovo Albanians residing in the city and in surrounding villages, as well as approximately 1,000 Kosovo Bosniaks, 580 Gorani, 210 Turks, 200 Romani, and 40 Ashkali residing in the city. According to 'Kosovo Population and Housing Census 2011,' there are 70,289 people (71,909<sup>111</sup> in the municipality) living in South Mitrovica<sup>112</sup>: 69,497 Albanians, 518 Turks, 416 Bosniaks, 528 Romani, 647 Ashkali, 23 Gorani and 14 Serbs (OSCE, 2015b). It is worth noting that the '2011 Census of Population, Households and Dwellings in the Republic of Serbia' did not cover the territory of Kosovo. Unfortunately, the statistics which take into consideration indicators other than ethnic/national identity are available only for the southern part of the city<sup>113</sup>; since the subject

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<sup>110</sup> The latest OSCE report was issued in 2018, but when this research was prepared and conducted the only available report was from 2015 and therefore, it is the reference point for this thesis. The latest report is available here: <https://www.osce.org/mission-in-kosovo/122118>, <https://www.osce.org/mission-in-kosovo/122119>.

<sup>111</sup> This includes *Mitrovicë*/Mitrovica South and some 40 villages.

<sup>112</sup> The 2011 census was boycotted by the inhabitants of North Mitrovica.

<sup>113</sup> The last census of the whole city organised in 1991 was boycotted mostly by the Albanian population (this applies to the entire Kosovo territory). See: *Bridging Kosovo's Mitrovica Divide* (2005).

of the analysis is Mitrovica as a whole (its northern and southern part), such data would not contribute to completing the profile of the city's population.

Serious shifts in the city's demographic composition in both the northern and the southern part were characteristic of earlier centuries, as was presented in Chapter II, but also of the last conflict in the 1990s.

In the context of current divisions and demographic composition, apart from **emigration**, at least two other crucial trends have contributed to the great change of life in Mitrovica: **internal displacement** (with all the consequences of the emergence of Internally Displaced Persons, IDPs)<sup>114</sup>, **inflow of people from rural areas**, and inflow from neighbouring rural municipalities (Hardten 2014).

Firstly, about a third of Albanian citizens and, likely, over a half of other populations left Mitrovica during the 1990s. Serbs emigrated mostly to Serbia, Albanians to Pristina and other cities in Kosovo, while a great number of representatives of both groups moved abroad. Secondly, according to a UNDP poll, 67.4% of Serb residents of North Mitrovica did not live in Mitrovica before 1999, while 19.8% of Albanians declared themselves to be newcomers and 57.3% stated they had lived in Mitrovica before 1999; many refused to answer the question (UNDP, 2011). In addition, about 30% of representatives of all the groups declared that they had been displaced from the southern to the northern side of the city, or the other way round (UNDP, 2011). All of the above could lead to the conclusion that a large part of North Mitrovica residents have never had any contact with South Mitrovica residents based on mutual coexistence.

What is more, many of those who were forced by the conflict to migrate from one part of the city to another had to move many times between rented accommodation before they were able to afford their own home. Some of them struggled for many years or are still trying to cope with the housing issue, which means that they either have to sell their previous accommodation or obtain compensation for lost real estate. Moreover, most newcomers belonging to the group of internally displaced people who were forced to flee their homes, probably experienced violence from the representatives of another ethnic group, and were or still are in a poor, or at least uncertain, economic situation. This significant inflow of a more

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<sup>114</sup> According to the UNHCR definition, Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) did not cross the border to find safety; unlike refugees, they are on the run at home. In many cases, Mitrovica's residents stayed not only within the borders of their country, but also the city where they were born.

traditionalist population from rural areas also affected the urban and cultural landscape of the city.

Aside from the above-described migration of rural society to the city right after the conflict, everyday mobility from neighbouring settlements and other cities can also be observed; this has an impact on the structure of the urban society and the relations in the city, mostly on its economic balance. Regarding the economic aspect, one cannot underestimate the influence of the diaspora, not only on the overall situation of Kosovo (UNDP 2014) but also on the local community.

Today's Mitrovica is inhabited predominantly by two communities: Albanian and Serbian, but there are other communities as well. According to the available data presented above, Mitrovica's residents include Albanians, Ashkali, Bosniaks, Gorani, Montenegrins, Romani, Serbs and Turks, while several sources also mention Egyptians (either as a separate group or as part of RAE community) and, finally, foreigners<sup>115</sup>.

As one can see from statistical data, a minority that is often disregarded is the **Gorani community**. Probably because of its complex identity, which includes different components of identity characteristics of main ethnic communities, Albanian and Serbian. Depending on the sources, the Gorani are perceived as Islamised Serbs, Slavicised Albanians, Bulgarians from Kosovo, *Bošnjaks*, Torbesi in Macedonia/Islamised Macedonians, autochthons etc. Some claim that the Gorani came to Gora together with Turks, while earlier this territory was inhabited by Serbs (Milosavljević & Popović 2008); others say that they are the ancestors or predecessors of the Thracians. Malcolm claims that according to local tradition, people converted to Islam as a result of hostility from Greek bishops after the closure of the Serbian Patriarchate in 1766 (Malcolm 1999).

Other sources indicate that they have come from Gora which is a part of the mountain range of Sharr Mountains (*Шар планина / Malet e Sharrit*). Gora is a region located south from Prizren, on the borderland of southern Kosovo, northeastern Albania, and northwestern Macedonia. As is characteristic of borderlands and multicultural regions, the Gorani use a specific language which they themselves designate as 'ours.' Taking into consideration other languages in the region it is closer to Macedonian than Albanian (Arnault-Dérens & Geslin 2011). In most cases they profess Islam.

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<sup>115</sup> This group includes the representatives of international organisations, military forces, EU representatives, NGO workers and volunteers etc.

As a result of conflict this small community experienced serious demographic changes in the Gora region, as well as in Mitrovica and its surroundings. According to different sources there were about 20,000 citizens living in the Gora region in the 1990s (Arnault-Dérens and Geslin 2011).

The Gorani migrated from Gora to the cities in the region during the Yugoslav period, mostly for economic reasons. Gorani families who came to Mitrovica in the 1990s, and whose migration no doubt resulted from conflict, mostly arrived from Vitina/Vitisë, Uroševac/Ferizaj, Gniljane/Gjilan and Pristina, but were born in one of two places in Gora: the city of Dragaš/Drageash or the village of Radeš (Milosavljević & Popović 2008). It is worth mentioning that the Gorani also migrated from South to North Mitrovica.

Well-known for making bread, sweets, grilled meat and local specialities, such as *burek*, they found themselves in a new environment. However, businesses run by the Gorani have a good reputation and, in most cases, are successful, not only in the region, but also abroad.

**Egyptians and Ashkali**, two other communities that collectively with the Romani are commonly known as RAE, should also be mentioned here. As it was already stated, the Romani community was present in this region probably from the 14<sup>th</sup> century; in most cases it was perceived as a relatively homogeneous group, distinct from Albanians, Serbs or Turks. Not much research was devoted to its complex structure and crucial changes in the particular Romani communities. It appears that the diversity of the population identified as the Romani is linked with its location, the level of integration with the local community, lifestyle (sedentary or nomadic), their command of local language, and religion. Meanwhile, Egyptians perceive themselves as the descendants of ancient Egyptians; they do not speak the Romani language but local languages: in Kosovo they use Albanian and profess Islam (Balcer 2007). They started to develop their national consciousness in the 1980s in Ohrid (Macedonia), from where the idea originated (Duijizings 2011). The Ashkali, on the other hand, have several different theories of their own ethnogenesis, the most popular being that their roots are in ancient Iran. Similarly to Egyptians, they speak Albanian and profess Islam (Balcer 2007). Both communities separate themselves from the Romani population and have accused each other of inventing their separate identity. They also work intently on stressing their own otherness. The Ashkali and Egyptians distance themselves from the Romani by indicating several differences, such as the more sedentary and urban character of their community,

higher social status and standard of living, which can be proved by the fact that they had lived in the historical centres of cities, rather than in the Romani districts, and finally, by their level of education and specialised professions (Duijzings 2011).

One can conclude that the presence of many minorities in Kosovo implies more complex and less hermetic realities than it may appear on the surface. What is more, they continually redefine and shape their identities in line with political circumstances and interactions with other communities. Serbian and Albanian identities are also not as stable and homogeneous as it is commonly perceived, which will be demonstrated later.

#### **4.2. Intensity of mobility and restricted freedom of movement**

In the research regarding the disintegration of urban community in Balkan cities mentioned earlier, the aspect of the frequency and intensity of in-city mobility was not neglected (Pilić & Bošnjak 2011; Čorkalo, Biruški & Ajduković 2009; Pavlović 2015). It is important to determine the nature and the intensity of residents' contacts with representatives of other ethnic/national groups, why they do not cross the river (or under what circumstances they would do so), which places they perceive as safe and which they tend to avoid, how they move around the city, e.g. choose their paths and adjust their behaviour to circumstances.

First, it is crucial to point out that mixed neighbourhoods are still present in Mitrovica, which is rather uncommon in cities considered as divided. The majority of such neighbourhoods are located in the northern part of the city, for instance, Miners' Hill/Microsettlement area (*Kodra e Minatorëve/Микронаселје*), where old citizens of Mitrovica and at the same time the representative of all communities live<sup>116</sup>. The most visible example of a mixed neighbourhood is the Bosnian district (*Lagjja e Boshnjakëve, Бошњачка махала*) which was established at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century and is inhabited by representatives of various communities. Moreover, one should mention the so-called the Three Skyscrapers (*Tri solitera*) which constitute an uncommon mixed 'neighbourhood' of

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<sup>116</sup> One respondent identified further mixed neighbourhoods, which in his/her opinion exist only in the northern part: '*Međuetnički ti odnosi su poprilično dobri, pogotovo u ovim multietničkim sredinama u severnom delu Kosovske Mitrovice, znači to su četiri sredine Mikronaselje, Suvi Do, Bošnjačka mahala i Brđani, tu su dobri međuetnički odnosi. A u južnom delu ne postoje međuetnički odnosi zato što nema Srba prosto, jer ono ... isterali su sve Srbe*'/'These interethnic relations are quite good, especially in these multi-ethnic communities in the northern part of Kosovska Mitrovica, so there are four: Mikronaselje, Suvi Do, Bošnjačka mahala and Brđani, and the interethnic relations there are good. And in the southern part there are no interethnic relations, because there are no Serbs simply because they... have expelled all Serbs' [interview 12].

people living in three modern and tallest buildings in Mitrovica, located right next to the Ibar bank in the northern part. The Romani district (*Fidanishte/Fidanishtja*, *Ромска махала*) located in the southern part could be also regarded as a mixed neighbourhood; however, it seems to be quite dominated by the Roma community and therefore its mixed status might be disputable. The residents of the Romani district appear to have fewer problems with in-city mobility than any other group. Based on several unrecorded interviews conducted during my fieldwork, the residents of other above-mentioned mixed neighbourhoods find in-city mobility less difficult as well, whereas many residents of the Bosnian district do experience this issue.

Certain interviewees compared going to ‘the other side’ to visiting a different city [interview 5]. A couple of years ago crossing the river would be ‘unimaginable’ [interview 5], especially through the main bridge which was under constant supervision, as numerous ethnic incidents were still taking place in the city. The main bridge remained closed for many years, with movement directed to the eastern bridge (which remained open to car traffic, except for periods of heightened tensions, for instance, when barricades were set in 2011) or to the pedestrian bridge leading from the southern part directly to the Three Skyscrapers. Based on my observations, conversations and interviewees’ statements, in recent years the situation in regard to the movement improved. For instance, one of the respondents stated that the decision which bridge to use in order to cross the river depends on one’s needs and the distance to a particular location: ‘Pa zavisi od potrebe. Ukoliko idem do Gračanice onda se koristi most koji ide kroz bošnjačku mahalalu, a ukoliko treba da se vidim sa prijateljicom koja je iz xxx onda idem preko glavnog mosta. Ništa drugo’<sup>117</sup> [interview 10].

Nevertheless, the situation is still dynamic and tensions or political decisions can influence the level of movement through the bridge. The interviewees from different communities claimed that political tensions significantly impact the situation in the city, the relations between people and the circulation of people and goods.

Both groups were convinced that it is safer to stay in their part of the city and claimed that their people are more tolerant. To prove that, Serbs emphasised that North Mitrovica is multi-ethnic in comparison to South, while Albanians claimed that it is dangerous for them to go north, while Serbs can move freely and make business in the south.

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<sup>117</sup> ‘Well it depends on the need. If I go to Gračanica, then the bridge that goes through the Bosnian *mahala* is used, and if I need to see a friend who is from xxx, then I go over the main bridge. That’s all.’

In most cases people stressed that they would not venture to the other side alone, but would rather be accompanied by friends, friends-locals (living in the other part of the city), foreigners, or relatives. Sometimes for more remote destinations they would use organised transport [unrecorded conversations April, June 2018]. There were also cases of visiting the other part of the city for professional reasons – under such circumstances they would spend their time with their co-workers [interview 2, 5, 21].

Many of my respondents, especially those who were born in Mitrovica and know both main languages used in the city, feel that they can move freely. Nevertheless, they admit to feeling responsible for the person they travel with, but also somewhat insecure when they go to certain parts of the city accompanied by someone else (e.g. people from ‘the other side’ or foreigners) for sightseeing or to take a walk [interview 1, 10]. They are concerned about their companions whose faces may look foreign, and stress that they also feel the need to restrict their speech (using a particular language or not speaking at all) in order to avoid unpleasant situations when someone might approach them and ask for documents or the purpose of their visit [interview 1]. Those who feel secure to move freely in both parts of the city sometimes stressed that they avoid staying on the other side late or at night. Nevertheless, they claimed to know people who spend time on the other side even in the evening [interview 5]. A respondent from the Serbian community said that (s)he feels more comfortable going out in the evening in Pristina due to the number of foreigners in the streets, and a more international atmosphere than in Mitrovica [interview 11].

Respondents were asked why, in their opinion, inhabitants do not want to cross the Ibar river [question 24] and to indicate possible reasons using the following prompts: *very common, sometimes can be the reason, not relevant, I do not know/do not have an opinion*. Possible reasons were identified based on preliminary and pilot research: I do not know the language and cannot communicate [language], I do not want to communicate with the representatives of the other group at all [unwillingness to communicate], I have negative experience (memories) [experience], my relatives forbid me to go there [relatives], I do not have to go there, everything that I need is available in my neighbourhood/part of the city [no need], I have an experience of being discriminated in that part of the city [discrimination], I do not feel secure there [security], I am afraid how my fellows would react [fellows], I was warned not to go there [warning].

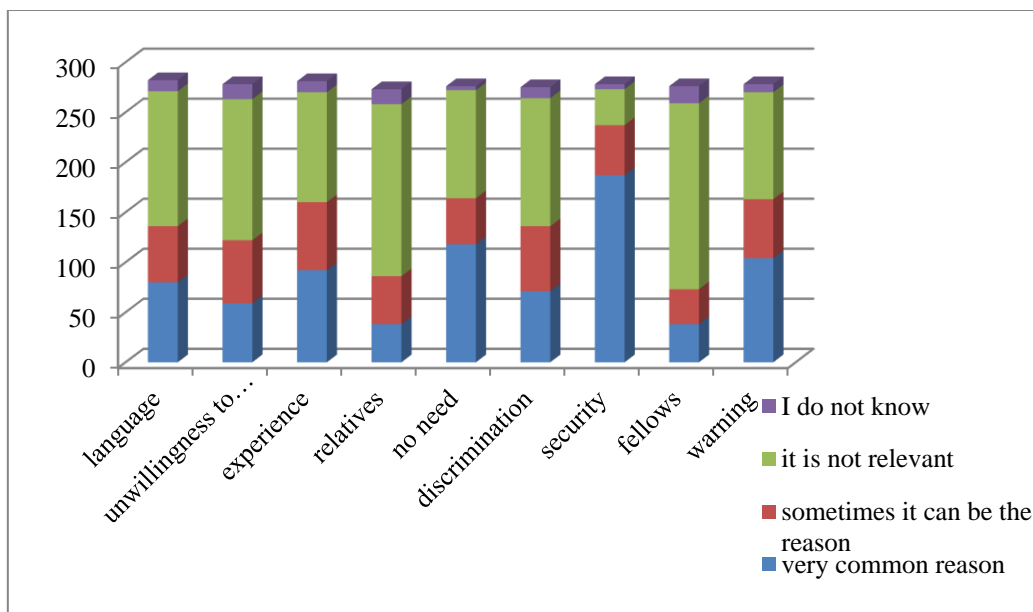


Diagram 6. Reasons for not wanting to cross the Ibar river [question 24].

Most common reasons for not crossing the river were linked with perceived security issues: 61.5% of respondents claimed that it is a *very common* reason for them, 16.4% that it *sometimes* can be the reason. Therefore, about 78% of respondents do not feel secure on the other side (88.3 % Albanians versus 66.7% Serbs).

A relatively high response rate was linked with answers related to other security-related issues, such as: negative memories or experiences (52.7%; Albanians – 60.9% and Serbs – 40%), being warned by others (not to go to ‘the other side’) (51.6% in general; 62.4% of Albanians and 42% of Serbs), and acts of discrimination experienced (declared by 44.8% of respondents in general; 47.7% of Albanians and 43.2% of Serbs). Moreover, 54.6% of respondents claimed that they did not need to go to the other part of the city (Albanians – 60.4%, Serbs – 47%).

Apart from linguistic problems related to mobility, described in the previous section, nearly all interviewees mentioned a psychological barrier which prevented them from crossing the river without need. One person claimed that (s)he tries not to be driven by prejudices, but as far as safety issues go, (s)he feels uncomfortable about going to ‘the other side’:

*Q: Da li imaš nekakve probleme da se krećeš gradom? I sad mislim i na južni i na severni deo.*

*R: Ne, pa ne. Imam i dalje malo tu psihičku barijeru, kad je u pitanju južni deo, ne volim da idem sama, to je isto, važi verovatno i za Albance na jugu, znaš. Ali nije da se sad osećam ugrožena ili da se plašim, postoji*



*ta doza opreznosti kod mene, moram da budem iskrena. Znači, ne mogu sad da kažem da meni je isto kao kad sam na severu, pa nije, i to su učinile ove godine, rasta ovde, odgajanja, slušanja, gledanja raznih stvari pa i propagande razne. Ja se trudim da nemam predrasude prema bilo kome, i ovaj... ali kad je bezbednost u pitanju, ipak tu moraš da budeš malo... (...)*

*Q: Kojim putem ideš?*

*R: Pa idem preko mosta, na primjer.*

*Q: Ovde? Nije problem da li je drugi most, da li je glavni?*

*R: I onaj tamo i ovaj ovde, ne nije, znači... ali uvek se trudim da idem sa nekim. S tim što je lakše, ja se dobro ne sećam južnog dela, i uvek je lakše kad si u društvu<sup>118</sup> [interview 5].*

Most frequently visited places, outside one's own neighbourhood, include shopping spots, institutions, pedestrian zones, cafeterias and restaurants. When asked for places they avoid, interviewees pointed to the other part of the city with the exception of public places located close to the bridge. A few respondents from the Serbian community identified mixed neighbourhoods in North Mitrovica, such as the Bosniak district or the so-called Three Skyscrapers, as the most dangerous ones.

Another very important obstacle to the freedom of movement is of institutional nature. It is problematic to move around the city carrying documents not accepted by local institutions, and since Kosovo and Serbia have not as yet recognised each other's governments, in this territory they also refuse to recognise each other's documents. Respondents from the Serbian community claimed it can be problematic to travel south of Ibar without Kosovan documents [interview 12]. As it was mentioned in one study, many Serbs from the North, including Mitrovica, did not want to apply for a Kosovo ID (Župančić 2018). Without proper documents they are now afraid to travel to the other part of the city, and beyond. As in the case of other security-related issues, both communities claimed that

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<sup>118</sup> 'Q: Do you have any problems moving around the city? I mean both the southern and the northern part.

R: No, well, no. I still have a bit of that psychological barrier, when it comes to the southern part, I don't like to go alone, the same, probably applies to Albanians in the south, you know. But it's not that I feel threatened or afraid right now, there's that dose of caution in me, to be honest. So, I can't say now that it's the same to me as when I'm in the north, it's not, and this is what those years of growing up here, educating, listening, watching different things and propaganda of different kind did to me. I try not to be prejudiced against anyone, and this... but when it comes to security, you still have to be a little... (...)

Q: Which way are you going?

R: Well I'm going over the bridge, for example.

Q: Here? And there is no problem with whether it is the other bridge or the main one?

R: The one here and this one there, no, there isn't... but I always try to go with someone. Because it is easier, I do not remember the southern part well, and it is always easier when you are in somebody's company.'

other groups can move more freely in their part of the city, whereas they are allowed to do so ‘on the other side.’

Furthermore, mobility concerns involve restrictions on car traffic due to institutional chaos. In the city one can identify at least two different registration plates: Serbian plates for the residents from the northern part marked *KM*, and *RKS* plates<sup>119</sup> for the southern part issued by Kosovo’s administration. There are also many vehicles which move around without any registration plates. Residents from both sides complained that they were forbidden to go in their own car to the other part of the city, even though one of the bridges had been opened to car traffic for quite a while<sup>120</sup>. Serbs claimed that they cannot travel by car south of Ibar, because the police might stop them, confiscate their car and accuse them of breaking the law [interview 12]. Respondents from both groups argued that cars with ‘foreign’ plates may be destroyed, therefore, they try to avoid using their own vehicles on their way to the other side of the city, and usually go on foot instead. Right after the eastern bridge was opened, and the situation was still tense, people would swap their car plates just before crossing the river (in the Bosniak district), or travel without plates at all. Even taxi drivers implemented this practice, and speaking from experience, they would always charge extra for going to the other side [fieldwork 2013].

Aside from Mitrovica, restrictions on freedom of movement apply in all of Kosovo and outside of it. Taking into consideration that vehicle movement is obstructed due to the issue of registration plates, organising transport between cities, for instance from North Mitrovica to Pristina, is at best problematic [interview 22].

Both groups have to face problems related to the visa regime, however, it seems that the situation is more inconvenient for Serbs than Albanians from Kosovo. To apply for a visa, Serbs need to travel either to one of the diplomatic offices in Pristina, or to Belgrade, if a particular country has no diplomatic representation in Pristina. Since 2009 passports issued by the Serbian Coordination Directorate (*Координациона управа*) have been subject to the visa regime, and therefore, unless Serbs in Kosovo have any other citizenship, they need to apply for a visa just like all the holders of Kosovo citizenship. All communities are disappointed

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<sup>119</sup> *KM* stands for *Kosovska Mitrovica* and designates plates issued by the Republic of Serbia, while *RKS* stands for the Republic of Kosovo.

<sup>120</sup> During my visit in 2013, the passage through the eastern bridge was still blocked (see Figs. 14 and 15 in chapter III), over time the stones and vehicles have been removed.

with the EU policy regarding the visa regime. Additionally, Serbs express their additional disappointment with Belgrade's decision and claim to be discriminated by their own country.

*Sad postoje različite vrste pasoša, to je malo komplikovano. U suštini, svi koji su do 2009 godine uzeli srpski pasoš, taj pasoš je bezvizan. 2009 godine vlada Republike Srbije je donela odluku da svi pasoši srpski koji se izdaju na prostoru Kosova i Metohije više nisu bezvizni, znači treba Ti viza iako imaš srpski pasoš. I to je diskriminacija koju vrši Beograd nad Srbima na Kosovu. Znači mi smo, pazi, nad nama vrši diskriminaciju i Beograd i Priština i međunarodna zajednica. Sa svih strana smo onako diskriminirani baš kako... neverovatno<sup>121</sup> [interview 12].*

*Meni iskreno Srbija pala u očima, kad sam ja morao da odem u Beograd gde su Albanci vadili pasoše za 15 minuta, a ja sam sa sestrom čekao dva sata i moj otac je bio sa nama. Mislim da postoji neka doza odbojnosti Srba iz Beograda prema ljudima sa Kosova i Metohije, kao da smo mi neko ko je prodao Kosovo, kao da smo mi neko koji je jednostavno izdao Kosovo, da smo mi glavni krivci za sve što se desilo, a niko se ne seća da su oni koji su bili u Beogradu potpisali sporazume koji su doveli do svega ovoga. Od Slobodana Miloševića i njegove ekipe pa sve do dan danas (...) <sup>122</sup> [interview 10].*

Another crucial point was to elucidate the reasons for eventually crossing the Ibar river [question 25]. Respondents were asked to use a list of reasons and to identify the most common ones using the same scale as in the previous question (with an option to add their own reasons). Possible reasons were identified on the basis of preliminary and pilot research: work, doctor/health threat [health], religious destination related to my faith (e.g. church or cemetery visit) [my religion], religious destination related to different faith [different religion], administrative affairs [administration], friends, shopping, school/university, coffee/walk, transport, events and places (cultural destination) related to my own culture [my culture], tourist destination (vacation) [tourist destination], events and places (cultural destination) related to different culture [different culture].

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<sup>121</sup> 'There are different types of passports now, it's a little complicated. In fact, everyone who took the Serbian passport by 2009, well, it is visa-free. In 2009, the Government of the Republic of Serbia decided that all Serbian passports issued in Kosovo and Metohija are no longer visa-free, so you need a visa, even though you have a Serbian passport. And that is the discrimination Belgrade is exercising against Serbs in Kosovo. So, as you can see, we are discriminated against by both Belgrade and Pristina and the international community. On all sides, we are being discriminated, just... incredibly.'

<sup>122</sup> 'To me, honestly, Serbia went down in my estimation, when I had to go to Belgrade where Albanians took out their passports in 15 minutes and I waited two hours with my sister and my father who was with us. I think there is some dose of aversion from Serbs from Belgrade towards the people of Kosovo and Metohija, as if we sold Kosovo, as if we simply betrayed Kosovo, the conviction that we are the main culprits for everything that happened, and no one remembers that those who were in Belgrade signed the agreements that led to all of this. From Slobodan Milošević and his team to this day.'

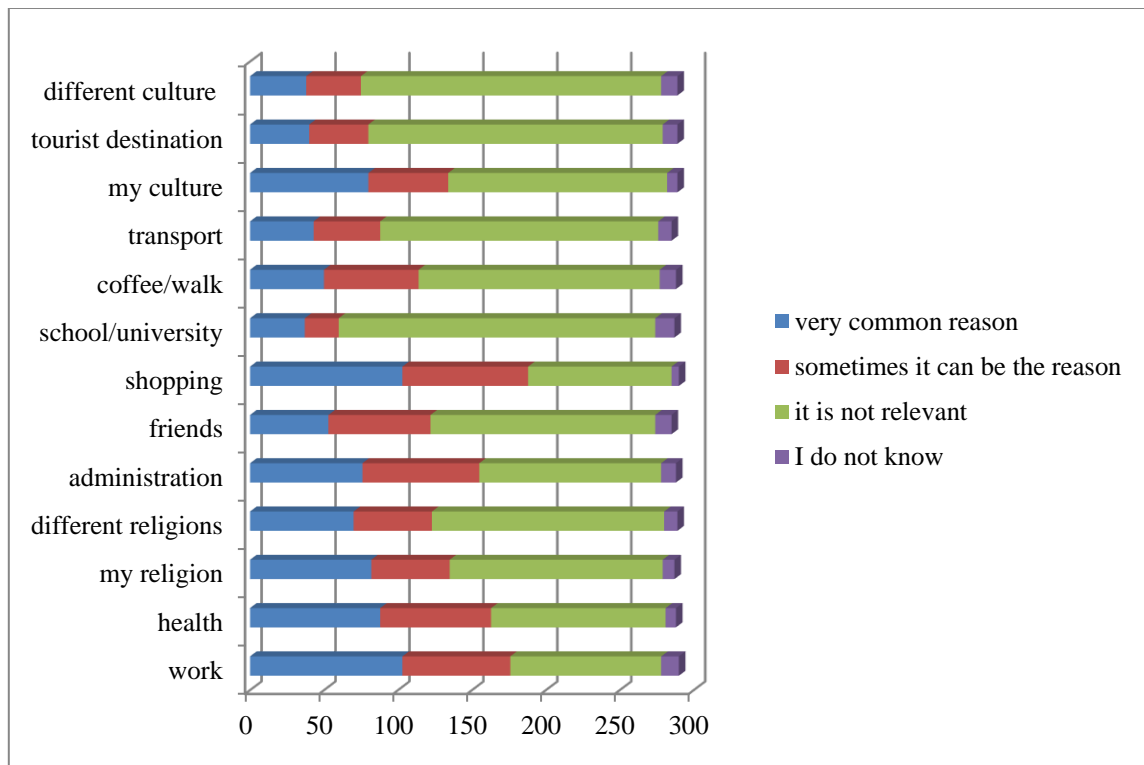


Diagram 7. Reasons for crossing the Ibar river [question 25].

The most common reason for crossing the river are apparently for shopping (61.9%) and work (57.9%), which is in line with the outcomes of qualitative research. According to 57.9% of Albanians and 49.4% of Serbs work is either a very common reason or sometimes can be the reason.

Respondents interviewed as part of qualitative research were either employed in a company run by the representatives of other communities or internationals, or their work involved contact with the representatives of other communities or internationals, such as co-workers or clients. Among my respondents were people hired in the municipality and other local institutions, the non-governmental sector, international organisations, schools and universities, but also in the private sector: shops and bakeries, and, in addition, small business owners. Asked about their communication with clients from other communities the sellers stated that either the client or someone from their staff knows some common language [interview 18, 19, 20]. Therefore, in general it was not perceived as an obstacle to making a transaction.

Shopping was regarded as the reason for visiting the other part of the city by 53.3% of Albanians and 75.3% of Serbs, all of the Romani, Ashkali, and Turks and the majority of

Bosniaks. In some cases the residents of Mitrovica (mostly women) travel for shopping to other cities: Belgrade, Pristina, Skopje etc. [interview 11, 17].

Health was an important factor for more than a half of all respondents (53.6%), but was more common among Albanians (58.9%), and almost all representatives of other groups, than among Serbs (30.9%). During qualitative research, the representative of all groups confirmed that many residents from Mitrovica seek medical care in the northern part, in other cities, or abroad. During my stay in the city I met an Albanian who came north for surgery [fieldwork, June 2018]. One of my respondents claimed that in South Mitrovica the health care system is far more corrupt and delivers low-quality service, including deliberate deception of patients. Therefore, even though (s)he lives in the southern part, (s)he prefers to seek medical care in the northern part or in another city:

*R: When it comes to hospitals, I don't think they cooperate. Because it's usually, people from Mitrovica South go to Mitrovica in the north, because they are not treated well in the south. (...) People go to Macedonia, to Albania, to Serbia only not to be treated in Kosovo, unless you are really not capable.*

*Q: And when you are sick? Where are you going?*

*R: North.*

*Q: Why?*

*R: Because the doctors are well-known, internationally. Most of Serbian doctors in Serbia used to either be here or from Mitrovica, who studying in Serbia they are internationally recognised as really good doctors and they are teaching the new generations, so they are really tough. Whereas here, usually you can pass and you see doctors here would drive crazy cars, have crazy houses, four-five houses. Whereas doctors in the North are having more normal life, have an apartment they have always lived there and maybe a better car [interview 1].*

Administrative issues (51%), however, were more common among Serbs (65.4%), and almost all representatives of other groups, than among Albanians (40.6%). Nowadays Serbs are obligated to have Kosovan documents (ID), cooperate with certain institutions of Kosovo and in order to apply for a visa in some cases they have to go to Pristina.

Religious destination related to one's own faith was the reason for 44.4% of respondents, among these, significantly more Serbs than Albanians (68% vs. 36.5 %). It was also mentioned during the interviews that Serbs were visiting monasteries, relatives in enclaves south of Ibar, which were often connected with religious celebrations, and that they would organise transport from the northern part to visit monasteries and orthodox churches in

Kosovo (especially during religious celebrations or important anniversaries) [interview 7, 14]. There were also cases of crossing the river to visit a cemetery.

The smallest number of residents claimed that the reason to go to the other side is to go to school or university (with the exception of IBCM), while 70.4% of respondents stated that it is not the reason. Similarly with cultural objects of different culture (66.8%), tourist destination (65.5%) or transport (61.8%). About half the respondents stated that visiting a friend would not be their reason to go to the other side. My interviewees claimed that sometimes they would go north/south to see their properties or places where they used to work, either out of curiosity or to make some arrangements [interviews April, June 2018].

In order to determine the level of intergroup contact, respondents were asked to define how often they take particular actions in reference to different kinds of relations with the representatives of the other ethnic/national group in the city (5-point Likert scale was used, with the level of intensity ranging from *very often*, *often*, *rarely*, *very rarely* to *never*) [question 28]. The following activities were listed: being in contact with the representatives of another ethnic/national group in the city, moving to the parts of the city where representatives of another ethnic/national group live [contact], buying in shops owned by representatives of another ethnic/national group [shopping], going to a restaurant/café owned by representatives of another ethnic/national group [coffee], making friends/getting acquainted with representatives of another ethnic/national group [friendship], making business agreements with representatives of another ethnic/national group [business], going to visit acquaintances from another ethnic/national group [visits], accidentally being in contact with the representatives of another ethnic/national group in the city [accidental contact].

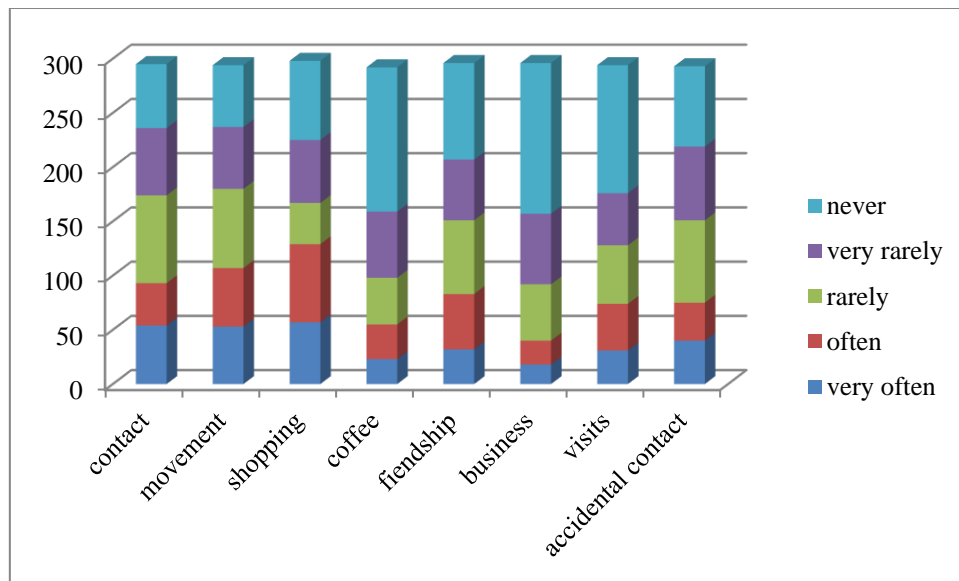


Diagram 8. Actions taken by Mitrovica’s residents in reference to different kinds of relations with representatives of the other ethnic/national group in the city [question 28].

According to the survey, 27% of Albanians and 10% of Serbs declared that they had never been in contact with the representatives of another ethnic/national group in the city, which was not the case with other groups. While slightly more frequent contact was observed among the people born in Mitrovica (33% of respondents born in Mitrovica declared to have very often or often been in contact with other group(s) versus 22% of respondents born in other places, the opposite trend could be observed for ‘never’ – 18% of residents originally from Mitrovica and 26% from other places), the age of respondents did not have a significant influence on the responses. The number regarding the intensity of movement corresponded with the above-mentioned data on the level of contact: 24% of Albanians and 13% of Serbs never moved to the parts of the city where representatives of another ethnic/national group live, which is not the case with other groups. Accidental contact with the representatives of another ethnic/national group in the city was less frequent among Albanians than in other groups, 33% of Albanians and 13% of Serbs claimed that they had never experienced accidental contact with other groups, while Bosniaks, the Romani, Ashakali and Turks declared that they in fact had had such an experience.

Apparently, shopping is not only the most common situation for residents to get in touch with other groups, but when it comes to various behaviours that people declared, it is also potentially the most integrating activity. Nowadays, Mitrovica’s residents shop at the (green) market similar to the old *pazar*, located close to the main mosque (in the southern part, where it used to be), close to the Romani district in the south, close to the main bridge in

the north, but also in small shops (located, for example, in the Bosniak district), and finally, in new shopping malls located mainly close to the eastern bridge on the south side of the river. Significantly more Serbs (52%) than Albanians (34%) declared to often or very often buy products in shops owned by representatives of another ethnic/national group. In contrast, 56% of Albanians declared to do so 'never' or 'very rarely.' According to respondents, the most popular places for shopping in the city (apart from local markets) are: supermarkets (*ETC* and *InterEx*, former *Emona*) close to the second bridge in the southern part and shops in the mixed Bosniak neighbourhood located in the northern part, also close to the second bridge. The main reason for their popularity among all groups are the relatively low prices of products and services. It seems that these are the main places in the city where meeting members of other groups is most frequent. Moreover, it is there that one can hear people speaking different languages.

No similar potentially integrating factor could be identified in the case of business agreements or visiting restaurant/cafés. Twelve per cent of Albanians and 15% of Serbs stated that they make business agreements with representatives of another ethnic/national group 'often' or 'very often,' while 58% of Albanians and 29% of Serbs responded 'never.' The difference was even greater in the case of spending free time and socialising, 74% of Albanians and 63% of Serbs 'never' or 'very rarely' go to restaurant/cafés owned by members of another ethnic/national group, while other groups tend to do so.

During my research I met people who claimed to avoid on purpose buying products or using services provided by representatives of other communities, because they either did not want to support their businesses financially or to be in their company [interview 14]. However, in some cases I was recommended services or products provided by "other communities", especially sweets, restaurants, shops etc. [interview 5, 12].

It was expected that the level of relations based on friendship would be lower than in relation with economic factors. Surprisingly, about 20% of respondents from both dominant groups not only maintained contact with colleagues or friends from another ethnic/national group, but also would get acquainted with its representatives. And thus 22% of Albanians and 23% of Serbs 'often' and 'very often' make friends/get acquainted with representatives of another ethnic/national group, while 38% of Albanians and 21% of Serbs 'never' do so. Moreover, 18% of Albanians and 25% of Serbs 'often' or 'very often' go to visit



friends/colleagues from another ethnic/national group, while 51% of Albanians and 24% of Serbs 'never' do so. The results were not significantly influenced by the place of birth or age.

Younger respondents claimed that they sometimes travel with their relatives or parents who have friends on the other side [interview 4]. Among young people who maintain relations and get acquainted with other groups, most were students, NGO activists or people employed in international organisations. Young people who were at least bilingual or grew up in mixed neighbourhoods seem to be more open and straightforward [fieldwork April, June 2018].

The goal of this section was to determine the nature and intensity of contact between representatives of different ethnic/national groups. It is worth emphasising that political tensions have a significant impact on the situation in the city, the relations between people and the circulation of people and goods.

Residents from mixed neighbourhoods and minorities appear to find the in-city mobility less problematic. In addition, people who cross the river developed various strategies, like choosing the right time and path, following news, going with someone, either relatives, representatives of 'other groups' from the city or foreigners, as well as using 'appropriate' language.

The most common reasons for not crossing the river were linked with the perceived issues of security or other security-related issues, such as: negative memories or experiences, warnings from others, acts of discrimination experienced or a psychological barrier. Certain respondents claimed to have no need to go to the other part of the city. Movement restrictions related to institutional chaos were mentioned as a significant obstacle to mobility in the city.

The most common reasons for crossing the river appear to be shopping and work. Health care was an important factor to more than a half of all respondents, more common among Albanians, and almost all representatives of other groups, than among Serbs. Administrative issues, however, were more common among Serbs, and almost all representatives of other groups, than among Albanians. Religious destination connected with one's own faith was the reason for a significantly higher number of Serbs than Albanians.

In general, most respondents felt safe in their own neighbourhood in their own part of the city. Asked for places that they try to avoid, respondents pointed mostly to the other part of the city, with the exception of public places located close to the bridge. Several respondents

from the Serbian community identified mixed neighbourhoods in North Mitrovica as the most dangerous ones.

When it comes to everyday contact, it is clearly obstructed and there are representatives from Albanian and Serbian groups who avoid contact with other groups, however, they do not constitute the majority of the whole community. At the same time Bosniaks, the Romani, Ashkali and Turks declared to have had an experience of coming into contact with other groups. In order to complement the analysis of mutual contacts and mobility in the city, it is also worthwhile to present the linguistic situation in Mitrovica and its importance for mutual communication.

#### **4.3. Issue of communication and importance of language**

In order to investigate communication issues, the following aspects were examined: declared knowledge of languages (especially local ones), opinions on the importance of language as an obstacle/facilitator in the communication process and everyday linguistic and communication practices. It was crucial to determine the level of intergroup contact, and to examine to what extent the language barrier prevents residents from moving freely around the city and thus from interacting with each other. Estimating the knowledge of languages and the willingness to learn new ones was crucial here. Hence, the research focuses on the role of language and linguistic practices in a multilingual post-conflict community. This part attempts to examine whether language skills and the command of other communities' tongues could determine the nature of communication, or whether there are perhaps some other, more important, reasons behind it. Outcomes presented below are based on surveys, in-depth interviews and participants' observation.

In order to determine the level of intergroup contact, respondents were asked to define how often they take particular actions in reference to different kinds of relations with representatives of another ethnic/national group in the city [question 28]; this was presented in the previous section. They were also asked about the reasons that prevent residents from crossing the river [question 24], and apparently one such reason was language. According to 26% of respondents it was a very common reason, while according to 18.4% it sometimes could be the reason. Moreover, 43% of Albanians and 53% of Serbs claimed that language was a very common reason or sometimes could be the reason preventing them from moving

freely to the other part of the city. Quite unexpectedly, the majority of respondents (63%) from the Bosniak community responded the same way. Language was not the main reason (which was security issues); however, based on the result and qualitative research, it could be an obstacle to interacting with representatives of other groups, especially among young people.

In Yugoslavia, Serbo-Croatian was the official language, and therefore older people can still communicate freely using this language (unless they are unwilling to). Meanwhile, younger generations, especially teenagers and students, who learn other foreign languages at school, e.g. English, German, or French, do not have the command of the languages of other local communities (such as Albanian and Serbian).

As part of quantitative research the knowledge of languages was also examined [question 11]. Residents were asked to assess their level of ability to recognise and use (by listening, reading, speaking, writing in) the following languages: Albanian, Arabic, Bosnian, English, French, German, Romani, Serbian, and Turkish. They also had a chance to add any other language they might know. According to the survey, 43% Albanians declared to know Serbian (to be able to recognise it – only 12.7%), while 24.7% Serbs – to know Albanian (46.7% are able to recognise it). Of course their command of these languages varies, however, all of the above-mentioned respondents declared to be able not only to recognise, but also to use these languages to some extent, either actively or passively. Representatives of communities other than Albanian and Serbian, in general declared the command of both languages.

In search for a common language, the results on foreign languages are also essential. Thus, 53.6% of all respondents declared to know English, 22.4% Bosnian, 17.4% Turkish, 12% German, and 7.2% French. Representatives of both groups declared to know Bosnian, 9.2% of Albanians, and 7.2% of Serbs as well as all respondents from minorities who responded to that question. Only 5.3% of respondents declared the knowledge of Romani, most of whom belonged to the RAE community.

Respondents were also asked which language(s) they would like to learn and why [question 12]. Among those who declared willingness to learn other languages (81% of the sample), the most popular were: English (33%) and German (34%), but also French (10%), Turkish (5.3%), Spanish (2.9%), and Italian (2.9%). Certain respondents declared willingness to learn more than one language. Less common languages were also mentioned: Russian,

Norwegian, Chinese, and Japanese. Regarding local languages, 8.6% of Serbs declared that they would have liked to learn Albanian, whereas a similar percentage of Albanians would like to learn Serbian – 7.2%. Representatives of all minorities were not interested in learning local languages, but would prefer to learn English, French and German instead. The reason was that they already had the command of both dominant local languages: Albanian and Serbian, or at least they declared so during the research.

Among the participants of recorded interviews taken as part of qualitative research, most were bilingual or multilingual. About half of them knew Albanian and Serbian and almost all were able to recognise the other language and had at least basic command of it. Sometimes people who knew both languages did not want to communicate and would not use the other language unless they were forced to do so by various circumstances. Representatives of other minorities knew at least one language of the two dominant groups, either Albanian or Serbian, and in most cases both. Even though, according to the survey, the command of the Romani language was declared mostly by the Romani people, there were also cases of other residents speaking this language. According to one of my respondents from the Romani community, certain people from outside the community also know the language [interview 23]: mostly those working in jobs specifically linked with the Romani community. During my research I came to know an Albanian who spoke Romani well because of a childhood friendship with a member of this community [unrecorded interview, 09.06.2018].

Friends from mixed-origin groups of older generations tend to mix languages during conversation: in particular people who have known each other since the Yugoslav period, when it was in a way mandatory to learn each other's languages [interview 9]. According to one Albanian respondent, friends of mixed ethnic backgrounds communicate using their respective languages, or a language 'creolised' *ad hoc* by occasionally using words, sometimes even entire sentences, from the other's tongue:

*Usually... mainly you know... when I speak with them, and when I know if they are from my generation, they are able even to speak in Albanian, so somehow they are... we are speaking at the same time both languages... I start with Serbian and maybe I will finish with Albanian... depends. (...) When we speak Serbian maybe we are using some expressions in Albanian, you know, when we speak in Albanian we are using some expression in Serbian [interview 9].*

When people do not know the other language or simply do not want to use it, English is considered a common language. It is used mostly for mutual cooperation, especially among young people who indeed may not know the other's language.

*Q: Da li možeš da koristiš srpski?*

*R: Mogu, da mogu. Sa mladim ljudima teže, ali mladi ljudi znaju engleski. I onda do sada nisam imala nekih problema. Jesam jednom u opštini na jugu sa jezikom, dešava se nekad, kažem, naiđeš na razne ljude. Neki ljudi ne žele, ne žele da pričaju na srpskom, i ti vidiš da razumeju, ali ne žele. Ja sad pretpostavljam da ima i Srba koji pričaju albanski ne žele možda da pričaju s Albancima. To su razne... ovaj, stvari u pitanju<sup>123</sup> [interview 5].*

Usually, however, people know at least a few words, sufficient to greet each other or to have a short conversation at a café or in a shop.

*Mislim ako ja sad mogu svom komšiju Albancu da kažem „dobar dan” na albanskom, da ga pitam šta radi na albanskom, (...) zašto bi on imao problem da me, da isto to uradi na srpskom. Dakle ne bi trebalo da gledam sad ja govorim albanski i mene oni sad sa druge strane pod uslovom rečeno pokorio ili osvojio ne, dakle... i ja nisam ga ni osvojio ni pokorio zato što on govori srpski jezik, jel tako? Tako da, to je sasvim besmisleno<sup>124</sup> [interview 12].*

Certain respondents, both Albanian and Serbian, claimed that it was risky to use one's own language 'on the other side' of the city. In their opinion, when visiting the other part the best strategy was to speak English or not to talk unless absolutely necessary [interview 1]. Nevertheless, there were also respondents who claimed that they could use their own language 'on the other side' freely, especially when accompanied by friends or colleagues. In most cases they were originally from Mitrovica and had more extensive experience of interacting with all communities on a professional level. One respondent born in Mitrovica claimed that in the past everybody had known where and when to use which language, for instance, in a public space such as shop or restaurant, because they had known each other [interview 22].

Some interviewees who have a basic command of Albanian or Serbian expressed a willingness to learn the other language, but complained that they did not have an opportunity for doing so. Respondents claimed that even if one was willing to learn the other language (for work or because of everyday practicalities), they might face many obstacles, such as

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<sup>123</sup> 'Q: Can you use Serbian?

R: I can, I can. With younger people it is harder, but young people know English. And then I haven't had any problems so far. I had once in a municipality in the south, with a language, it happens sometimes, you know, you come across different people. Some people don't, don't want to speak Serbian, and you see that they understand, but they don't speak it. I now assume that there are also Albanian-speaking Serbs who do not want to speak to Albanians perhaps. There are various... well, things at stake.'

<sup>124</sup> 'I think if I can now tell my Albanian neighbour "have a good day" in Albanian or ask him what he was doing in Albanian, (...) why would he have a problem with me, to do the same in Serbian? It should not be perceived that since I speak Albanian they conquered me somehow, no, hence... neither have I conquered him, because he speaks Serbian, right? Therefore, that's entirely absurd.'

criticism from their own group and a huge problem to actually find a teacher. Neither Albanians nor Serbs are offered to learn the other language at schools or at the university; if there is any cooperation between the Serbian and Albanian universities or scientific entities, it is rather on an individual level. Official cooperation on an academic level exists between the universities of Belgrade and Tirana as capitals of mutually recognised states<sup>125</sup>, but not between Belgrade and any university in Kosovo – because of political reasons. Nevertheless, there are still young people who want to learn ‘the other’ language and who do it by individual arrangements or at universities in Serbia and Albania.

During my stay in the region I became familiar with projects prepared by young people who organised mutual learning as part of NGOs. A group of young people expressed willingness to participate in such classes [unrecorded conversations June 2017]. The plan has not been carried out yet, but it portends well for the future. Moreover, I met young Albanians who learnt Serbian (in Pristina) and young Serbs who studied Albanian. The main reasons for doing so were: work opportunities, the need to communicate and to understand their neighbours, fascination with the other language (naming the Cyrillic alphabet used in Serbian and the ‘very rare and unique’ structure of Albanian as reasons), and, last but not least, willingness to face the dominant nationalist narrative and to meet *the Other* [unrecorded conversations August 2016; October 2017].

In this cultural context, language is not only the means of communication, but also the instrument of identifying *the Other*, the ‘enemy’, as such it has the power to bring back bad memories and experiences, but also its usage can be perceived as a sign of submission. While for the older generations, who possess some command of both languages, the use of language skills is a matter of conscious choice, for young people the possibilities and practices of mutual communication are more complicated. Their interactions either involve foreign languages or require from the users a conscious effort to learn the other, complicated and negatively marked, language. According to the outcomes of my research, people who were willing to do so were in the minority, with 8.6% of Serbs declaring that they would have liked to learn Albanian, and a comparable number of Albanians (7.2%) – to learn Serbian.

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<sup>125</sup> The list of the University of Belgrade cooperation agreements currently in force can be found at the official website of the university: <http://www.bg.ac.rs/sr/saradnja/sporazumi.php>, accessed: 20.06.2019. The Faculty of Philology, University of Belgrade, is the only one in Serbia to offer Albanology; it signed the agreement of cooperation with two universities in Albania: <http://www.fil.bg.ac.rs/medjunarodna-saradnja/>. To learn more about Albanology in Serbia see: M. Mandić, A. Sivački, V. Osmani, *Albanski u Beogradu: Katedra za albanski u kontekstu etno-političkog sukoba*, ‘Beton’ 165/2015, <https://www.elektrobeton.net/armatura/albanski-u-beogradu-katedra-za-albanski-u-kontekstu-etno-politickog-sukoba/> accessed: 14.07.2018.

Based on my research observations, I identified places where particular languages were used. The most multilingual places were: green markets and supermarkets visited by all residents, and mixed neighbourhoods. The Bosnian neighbourhood is one of those and at the same time it functions as a market where different languages can be heard. In general, one should rather use Serbian in the northern part and Albanian in the southern part, while talking to people or using services. Nevertheless, I heard both languages spoken ‘on the other side’ and met people who communicate in ‘the other language.’ Of course when having the command of foreign languages, especially English or German, one should not have problems communicating in Mitrovica.

The objective of this section was to examine whether language skills and the command of other communities’ tongues determine the nature of communication. Since the language is not only a means of communication, but also an instrument for identifying *the Other*, the issue of its importance to mutual communication is more complex. Therefore, it does not come down to simply knowing the language, but, more importantly, to everyday practices and attitudes towards other communities.

It is important to stress that most respondents were bilingual or multilingual, which is rather characteristic of the region. The command of languages included local as well as foreign languages. Moreover, according to the survey, 43% of Albanians declared to know Serbian, while 24.7% Serbs – Albanian. The representatives of communities other than Albanian and Serbian, in general declared the command of both these languages.

Everyday linguistic practice shows that there are inhabitants who do not use any other language except their own and those who communicate freely in both major local languages simultaneously or by mixing them. There are also people who know at least a few words sufficient to greet each other or to have a short conversation at a café or in a shop. Different responses regarding the use of ‘the other’ language were observable, some people communicate freely, while others avoid potentially ‘unwelcome’ language and adjust to the situation. All in all, it seems that in everyday communication it is possible to find a common language (especially taking into consideration residents’ language skills) as long as both sides are willing to communicate.

Apart from the fact that the representatives of all communities declared knowledge of a foreign language, there were also Serbs who declared that they would have liked to learn Albanian, and a similar number of Albanians – to learn Serbian. Neither Albanians nor Serbs

are offered the other language at schools or at the academic level, and so the only way they can learn it is outside their own education system, either through NGOs or individuals from local communities. The representatives of minorities were not interested in learning local languages, as they had already had the command of both dominant languages: Albanian and Serbian.

Even though language was not one of the most important reasons for not crossing the river, based on this outcome and the results of qualitative research, it could be one of the obstacles to interacting with the representatives of other groups, especially among young people. While for the older generations, who possess some command of both languages, the use of language skills is a matter of conscious choice, for young people the opportunities for and the practices of mutual communication are more complicated. It seems that the knowledge of a common language is less important in mutual communication than non-linguistic circumstances.

#### **4.4. Social distance**

The research on social relations was undertaken using a social distance measurement instrument. The Bogardus social distance scale enables to measure the potential for integration and cooperation or conflict. This instrument is used to measure the tendency of people to participate in social relations of varying closeness with other groups of people (Bogardus 1925). The modified Bogardus social distance scale was implemented in all ethnic/national and confessional communities living in Mitrovica. Apparently, many respondents did not respect the rules of the methodological instrument which require to indicate only one kind of relations on a given scale. The reason for that may be insufficient persistence of the interviewers in referring to the provided table according to rules or the disagreement on the part of the respondents with the presented options. For instance, some respondents expressed mixed feelings towards the representatives of a particular group, while declaring willingness to accept that person as a co-worker, and at the same time wanting to exclude them from the country.

Respondents were asked what kind of relationship they could accept with the representatives of particular groups, starting from marriage (considered as the closest relationship) to merely living in the same country (perceived as the most distant). They were



asked to refer to the question ‘What degree of closeness would you accept with the representatives of the following ethnic/national groups?’, and given a scale of relations: marriage, friendship, neighbour, co-worker, resident of the city, citizen of the country. The scale was used to measure social distance between groups in reference to ethnic/national and confessional identity [question 15].

There were many examples of very close as well as very distant relations, with the most divergent and radical attitudes displayed mostly by Serbs and Albanians, while other minorities declared a rather positive or neutral attitude towards other residents. The distance regarding the representatives of different confessional groups was usually shorter than in the case of ethnic/national ones.

No Serbian respondents declared willingness to having the closest relation with an Albanian resident, while 5.7% of Albanians who answered this question declared they would marry a person from the Serbian community. Such results regarding heterogeneous marriages only confirmed the trend which had been observed in previous decades. Snježana Mrđen, in the analysis of ethnically mixed marriages in the former Yugoslavia, demonstrated that Kosovo (*Kosovo i Metohija*) had the lowest share of mixed marriages during the entire period of observation (1970-1997)<sup>126</sup>. She also showed that post-1990 in all former Yugoslav republics and provinces (except for Montenegro) the degradation of inter-ethnic relationships induced the fall of inter-ethnic relations, especially at the beginning of the 1990s (Mrđen 2010). What is more, in Kosovo the trend of continually decreasing heterogamy was particularly visible, in the mid-1990s its level stabilised below 5%, which is the lowest share in the whole territory of Yugoslavia.

Research showed that there was also a high segregation level (index of homogamy) in reference to inter-ethnic relations between majority and minority ethnic/national groups in Kosovo between Albanians and Serbs, as well as in central Serbia: Serbs and Muslims, Serbs and Albanians; in Bosnia: Bosniaks and Croats, Muslims/Bosniaks and Serbs; in Montenegro: Montenegrins and Muslims, Montenegrins and Albanians; in Macedonia: Macedonians and Albanians, Macedonians and Turks and Macedonians and the Romani. A high index of endogamy proves that marriages between majority and minority groups are very rare.

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<sup>126</sup> According to the author, data in reference to Kosovo are available only until 1997. See: Mrđen S., *Etnički miješani brakovi na prostoru bivše Jugoslavije, 1970-2005*. Godina, ‘Zbornik Matice Srpske za društvene nauke,’ 131/2010.

The outcomes of this research confirm an opinion shared by interviewees that cultural, confessional, linguistic and historical differences may be the reason for a relatively greater distance between Albanians and Serbs in Mitrovica [interview 8]. Nevertheless, during my research I met people from mixed marriages who were born and lived in Mitrovica [unrecorded interview, 09.06.2018]. All of them were multilingual and spoke both languages proficiently. One of my respondents claimed that a surname which might indicate the origin different from the main community could sometimes lead to discrimination, and in this particular case, a surname was given as one of the reasons for undertaking a particular educational path [interview 1]. Asked if they recall a mixed-origin couple among the people they knew, some respondents gave particular examples, but all stated that it was a rather uncommon phenomenon. Ultimately, such couples usually would have to move abroad or face consequences from their local communities or families. The respondents also emphasised that even though before the conflict there had been couples from different communities, nowadays mixed marriages were uncommon [interview 22].

It is worth emphasising that marriages between Albanians and Serbs from Albania and Serbia became more common in recent years. According to Armanda Hysa, since 2006 marriages between an Albanian woman and a man from Serbia have started to be arranged<sup>127</sup> (Hysa 2015). She argues that eventually *real patriarchy* (which involves the universality of marriage, the age of getting married and extension of the lineage by having children) proves stronger than *symbolic (national) patriarchy*, which is the reason why those people chose to live in relationships perceived as controversial in their national communities.

Leaving marriage aside, there is a whole range of different possible relations between Serbs and Albanians: from friendship (35%) to enmity, i.e. wanting to exclude the representatives of the other community from the country (29%). Serbian respondents, as the only group in the city, declared a willingness to exclude Albanian citizens from the country; in this group there was also the highest level of ambivalence towards Albanians. At the same time, 34% of Albanians would exclude Serbs from the country (as the only group in the city that declared so), but there was a significant variety of responses among the respondents from the Albanian community (40% of them were ready to have a friend or marry a representative of this ethnic group). According to the results and except for the closest relation (marriage),

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<sup>127</sup> This research was carried out in rural areas using selected villages in Serbia as examples. See: Armanda Hysa, *Srpsko-albanski mešoviti brakovi: kada patrijarhalnost lomi barijere nacionalizma*, [in] *Figura neprijatelja. Preosmišljavanje srpsko-albanskih odnosa*, Beograd 2015.

there was a relatively small social distance between Albanians and Serbs; about 76% of Albanians were ready to have Serbian friends, while 88% of Serbs – Albanian friends. Such an ambivalence and variety of responses was also visible in the case of questions regarding communication and in-depth interviews (this will be discussed in the next subchapter).

Taking into consideration the radical distance between groups which revealed itself through the willingness to exclude a particular group from the country, an important trend might be observed among two dominant groups towards foreigners. On the one hand, Americans seem to be perceived positively by Albanians (86% declared the closest relation by marriage or friendship being possible), while 37% of Serbs would exclude Americans, and only 33% of Serbs were ready to accept an American as a friend or a part of their family (by marriage). On the other hand, 24% of Albanians would exclude Russians, while Serbs demonstrated a positive attitude towards this group (79% were ready to have a Russian friend or to marry a Russian). However, 45% of Albanians were ready to accept a Russian as a friend or a part of a family. It seems that this outcome reflected the current political situation and the system of alliances over the conflict in Kosovo. In some cases, respondents expressed even more radical attitudes towards an abstract political enemy (American, Russian) than a representative of a local community perceived as hostile (Albanians vs. Serbs).

Trends regarding social distance from other groups were relatively similar, a relatively high number of respondents from different communities declared willingness to be friends with the Ashkali (45%), Bosniaks (51%), Montenegrins (48%), Egyptians (47%), Gorani (53%), Romani (46%), and Turks (51%).

Nevertheless, certain Albanians and Serbs declared willingness to exclude these groups from the country: the Ashkali – about 6% of Albanians and 22% of Serbs, Bosniaks – about 2.9% of Albanians and 12.9% of Serbs, Montenegrins – about 3.6% of Albanians and 5% of Serbs, Egyptians – about 6% of Albanians and 18% of Serbs, Gorani – about 3.5% of Albanians and 7% of Serbs, Romani – about 9.6% of Albanians and 18% of Serbs, Turks – 1.1% of Albanians and 18.8% of Serbs.

Social distance between different religious groups [question 16] was definitely lower compared to the attitude towards ethnic/national groups, especially regarding confessions present in the city: Orthodox, Muslim and Catholic. In general, over 80% of respondents declared that they were ready to befriend or marry an Orthodox (82%), a Muslim (91%) or a Catholic (80%). However, certain Albanian and Serbian respondents expressed willingness to

exclude Orthodox (1.7% of Albanians), Muslim (15.3% of Serbs) and Catholic (12.5% Serbs and 0.5% Albanians) inhabitants from the country. However, the incidence of the most negative attitude was relatively low compared to the fact that most representatives of these groups were ready to maintain close relations with other religious groups. For instance, 72.4% of Albanians claimed that they were ready to marry or befriend an Orthodox, while 65.3% of Serbs – to befriend a Muslim (only one respondent – to marry). Respectively, 86.2% of Albanians and 60% of Serbs were ready to befriend or marry a Catholic.

Significant distance towards atheists was in evidence; 21% of Serbs, 17.4% of Albanians and 18% of the Romani would exclude atheists from the country, and only 52% of all respondents would have close relations with them (friendship or marriage). A high level of social distance could be also observed towards religious groups which are not present in Mitrovica. For instance, 14% of Serbs, 11% of Albanians, 16% of Bosniaks, 9% of the Romani and 50% of Turks would exclude Jews from the country, but in general 59% of respondents were ready to befriend or marry a Jew (57.4% of Albanians and 58% of Serbs). Regarding Buddhists, 16% of Serbs, 11% of Albanians, 9% of the Romani and 50% of Turks would exclude them from the country, but in general 57% of respondents were ready to befriend or marry a Buddhist (57% of Albanians were ready to be friends with or to marry, while 52% of Serbs were ready to be friends with a Jew).

Respondents apparently did not identify ethnic/national groups with religious groups and were aware that in their community or neighbourhood there live followers of a different religion. Even the results of this survey demonstrated the presence of Catholic Albanians (75% of all Catholics in the survey, about 3% of Albanians) and Catholic Serbs (25% of Catholics, about 2.5% of all Serbs) among the inhabitants of Mitrovica. It is also worth emphasising that there was a higher probability of an average resident of Mitrovica accepting a believer than an atheist. Such research outcomes are not surprising when taking into consideration other studies and the previous subchapters, where it was argued that in many cases ethnic identity was not necessarily tantamount to religious identity, which only confirms that confession is a strong component of one's identity. First of all, distance from other confessional groups could be shorter, because in many cases their representatives simultaneously belong to one's own ethnic/national group. Secondly, the reason why this distance was shorter may have resulted from the basic rule of any religion, which is to respect other religious people regardless of their faith. Previous studies already demonstrated that the acceptance of a representative of any other confession was one of the neighbour strategies of

peaceful co-existence in local communities (Bielenin-Lenczowska, 2009). Therefore, the distance towards an atheist, a non-believer or an individual who does not belong to any confessional group may be significantly larger than towards any other religious person.

To sum up, the research on social distance from ethnic/national and confessional groups revealed many examples of very close as well as very distant relations. The most diverse and radical attitudes were displayed mostly by Serbs and Albanians, while other minorities declared a rather positive or neutral attitude towards other inhabitants. Another observed feature was the shorter distance regarding the representatives of different confessional groups than of ethnic/national ones, as well as in the case of main groups (Albanians and Serbs) and the representatives of particular minorities.

Research on social distance confirmed the impact of political situation on inter-group relations. For instance, the outcomes regarding the distance towards Russians and Americans reflected the current political situation and the system of alliances over the conflict in Kosovo. It seems that the integrating and dividing potential of relations between the residents of Mitrovica may rise or wane depending on current political climate.

#### **4.5. Neighbour**

Research showed that residential status and circumstances linked with this category may influence the status of residents in certain urban contexts. In the case of Mitrovica, the issue of residential status and other aspects of internal division in the community were mentioned in several other studies (Luković 2005, Pavlović 2015, Župančić 2018). Since residential status remains in the scope of this analysis, the perception of the neighbour (*komunija/fqinj*), together with the concept of the real (or proper) citizen of Mitrovica [*Митровчани, Mitrovicas*] which will be introduced in the next section of this chapter, are crucial for describing mutual relations in this local community.

‘Neighbourhood’ is a category which appears frequently in the descriptions of relations in the Balkan region (Bielenin-Lenczowska 2009, Dragouni 2015, Falski 2015, Georgieva 1999, Lubańska 2007a & 2007b, Tepavičarov 1999) and still remains a promising category for further research on local communities. It seems that the unstable political environment (distant position of the central government) and, above all, the multicultural

character of the region, resulted in the development of strong neighbourhood and neighbour-oriented strategies in order to maintain social order at the micro level (Falski, 2015).

One of the aims of qualitative research was to identify the most important attributes of a neighbour and examine if there is any connection between the status of resident and identity components of respondents, on the one hand, and the characteristics of a welcome neighbour, on the other.

Out of 304 respondents, 280 (92.7%) declared permanent and 22 (7.3%) – temporary residence in Mitrovica; 83.2% of respondents declared to have been born in Mitrovica, 6.9% were born in a city or village nearby, and 9.9% – in another city or village. Asked whether they had been displaced or had changed their place of residence in the city, 77.3% of respondents disagreed, while 22.7% agreed. They migrated mostly between the southern and northern parts, but also within one part of the city; a few respondents were displaced from other settlements close to Mitrovica (for instance, Leposavić or Vushtrri/Vučitrn), and some emigrated temporarily during the war. In terms of ethnic/national identity, more Serbs (25.6%) than Albanians (18.3%) declared that they had been displaced; at the same time, all the Ashkali respondents, 80% of the Romani, 50% of Turks and 12.5% of Bosniaks claimed to have changed their place of residence.

In the survey, respondents were asked to declare (using a three-point scale: *important*, *neutral*, *not important*) which of the listed characteristics they considered important when thinking about their neighbour. In this context neighbour was interpreted literally as a resident of a space nearby (a building, street or part of the street, a backyard) [question 14].

More than 70% of respondents agreed that characteristics connected with individual character were the most important: they claimed that it was crucial whether a neighbour took care of the environment and kept it clean (79.3%), whether he or she was friendly and sociable (72.8%) and whether she or he was aggressive or calm (71.6%).

The importance of origins of one's neighbour also scored quite high: over 70% of respondents found it important which family their neighbour came from (this concerns all the national/ethnic groups). In this context it is interesting that the results did not suggest a significant interest in ethnic/national and confessional identity. In fact, confessional identity was not very important to the entire sample (50.2%) nor to particular ethnic/national groups; similarly the issue of whether the person was religious (52% claimed it was not important).

Respondents were ambivalent towards ethnic/national identity, but most of them deemed it not important (almost 50%, while 18% were neutral). Taking into consideration preliminary assumptions and the results of qualitative research, it is also significant that 68.2% of respondents thought it was unimportant in which city/village a person had been born, and 64.7% did not find it important whether the person was a newcomer. Moreover, over 40% of respondents believed their neighbour's occupation to be important. Other components of identity, such as marital status, political orientation, gender and sexual orientation, were not of significant importance. Given the opportunity for adding comments to this question, several respondents listed other important elements, such as behaviour towards the respondent, empathy, hygiene and morality; they also wanted to live close to a respectful, tolerant person with no criminal record.

This aspect of quantitative research was complemented by the results of qualitative research. During the interviews, people were asked about their everyday experience of living in the city and relations with other residents, including neighbours.

Many interviewees claimed to have good relations with their neighbours, especially those who had lived in a given neighbourhood for a long time and had established strong personal connections. They maintained mutual relations by taking care of common spaces and flats, celebrating religious and personal occasions together (birthdays, the birth of a child). One respondent even compared the relations with their neighbours to those with their family [interview 24]. In some cases they considered their neighbourhood special, either in terms of personal relations or simply of their surroundings.

Even though the ethnic/national dimension of disintegration still remains vital, the respondents, regardless of their origins, also pointed to many other dimensions of divisions within the local communities in Mitrovica, such as: different levels of education, manners and behaviour (in many cases connected with rural or urban origins), economic status, religion, occupation, social position regarding political orientation and, last but not least, residential status.

According to this research and earlier studies on Mitrovica, apart from ethnic/national division, the differences resulting from economic situation, political engagement and residential status are the most pronounced (Luković 2005, Pavlović 2015, Župančić 2018).

Regarding economic status, respondents pointed to several very important issues which influence mutual relations in the local community. First of all, it is the process of gradual disappearance of middle class and, therefore, visible polarisation of society, which in this case divides people into rich and poor, but also into those who have money without effort and those who work hard but have almost nothing.

Secondly, during many conversations, the problem of unemployment was mentioned. Lack of jobs and very high unemployment rate among young people were very disturbing and concerning for most people. All respondents agreed that the labour market was strongly connected with family or political ties, and in most cases neither experience nor education had much bearing on getting employed.

As a result of political and economic changes, the structure of the labour market in the city has changed significantly. As it was mentioned in the previous chapter, during the Yugoslav period Mitrovica was an important industrial centre, and the labour market was more diverse and dynamic. Therefore, regardless of one's profession employment opportunities were aplenty. According to one of my interviewees, in the past one's profession was indeed important, not only in terms of earnings/profit, but also as a kind of competition which integrated people of similar interests: *'su bile značajnije podele u odnosu na ono čime su se ljudi bavili, šta su radili, to je bila neka vrsta nekog lepog takmičarskog duha'*<sup>128</sup> [interview 8]. In the post-conflict era, industry is practically non-existent and cannot assure workplaces anymore. Nowadays people can find employment in governmental institutions, start their own business, work in the service sector or non-governmental institutions [interview 12]. As many people emphasised, finding a job is often almost impossible without connections or political engagement. Thus in the eyes of a potential neighbour it is important to have a job that has been well-earned. Based on empirical research, it seems that currently inhabitants divide people into honest workers and those who were employed under 'unfair' circumstances, e.g. lacking proper education or experience.

The issue of profession is inevitably linked with that of political engagement, and significantly polarises the local community. Most of the sectors of the labour market are strongly connected with the political environment, which in many cases is related with war leaders and the criminal world.

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<sup>128</sup> 'there were more significant divisions in reference to what people were doing, what they were into, it was some kind of nice competitive spirit'



*A što se tiče trenutne političke situacije, mislim da ukoliko neko želi da bude deo nekih promena i tako to mora prvo biti član vladajuće stranke u Srbiji da bi bio i ovde, kao u srpskim tako i kosovskim, tako zvanim institucijama i da nemaju oni baš toliko puno prostora za samostalne odluke, za neko svoje mišljenje. I problem je taj što se kriminalne strukture uglavnom vezuju za vlast i upravljanje ovom zemljom, kakogod je nazovemo<sup>129</sup> [10].*

Another aspect is the influence of politicians (often newcomers) who are unfamiliar with the local context:

*Now there are many actors who became very strong, from Serbian community, somehow they even control the Serbia, not only the North, but believe me, Serbia, Serbian government [9].*

*Oni koji odlučuju o Mitrovici nisu u Mitrovici, ljudi koji su se borili za nju ne pitaju više, to su uglavnom ljudi koji su privrednici ili biznesmeni, kakogod da ih nazovemo (...), koji su menjali partijske knjižnice sa promenom interesa<sup>130</sup> [10].*

As a result citizens are also divided regarding their political orientation, connections with political structures and the ‘acts of loyalty.’

Differences which result from the economic situation definitely evoke a sense of injustice. Its entanglement in the political and criminal sphere only deepens divisions among residents, influencing the relations between neighbours. Some respondents elaborated on the difference between regular citizens and influential ones (i.e., politically engaged with ‘suspicious connections’) [interview 3].

Differences in education appeared during conversation in the context of excluding the Romani children from the educational system [unrecorded conversation April, June 2018] and in the context of people coming to Mitrovica from rural areas. Personal culture and behaviour in many cases were associated by respondents as connected with the rural origins of newcomers or their individual character. Since the status of the citizen seems to be one of the most important categories which characterise divisions in the local society, its complexity will be given due attention in a separate subchapter.

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<sup>129</sup> ‘As for the current political situation, I think that if one wants to be a part of some changes and so on, they must first become a member of the ruling party in Serbia in order to be here and in the Serbian and Kosovan so-called institutions and that they do not have so much space for independent decision-making, for their own opinion. And the problem is that criminal structures are mostly tied to the government and governance of this country, whatever we call it.’

<sup>130</sup> ‘Those who decide about Mitrovica are not in Mitrovica, people who fought for it are no longer asked anything, it is mostly people who are tradesmen or businessmen, whatever we call them (...), who have changed political IDs, political affiliation with the change of interests.’

Both qualitative and quantitative research results show that the most important elements of a welcome neighbour are character traits and their level of engagement in taking care of common spaces. It is promising that most interviewees described the desirable neighbour using the components of individual rather than collective identity, such as: personal traits (whether a neighbour takes care of the environment and keeps it clean, whether they are friendly and sociable, and whether they are aggressive or calm), origins, ethnic/national and confessional identity, residential status, economic and social status, profession, political affiliations, educational level, gender, marital status, sexual orientation, etc.

#### 4.6. Citizen of Mitrovica

Respondents from different groups stated that close relations with neighbours from different communities had been a fact pre-1990s. What is more, my interviewees emphasised the importance of local community not only at the level of their immediate neighbourhood (residents of nearby space), but also at the level of local citizenship, meaning an integrated and engaged community of citizens of Mitrovica, regardless of ethnic origins: *‘Mi smo se, mislim građani u Mitrovici, što Albanci što Srbi znali smo se i držali smo se zajedno, mislim da je više bila podela na građane Mitrovice i na ostale, bilo to Albanci ili Srbi, stvarno’*<sup>131</sup> [interview 22].

According to respondents, citizens of Mitrovica used to spend time in certain places, such as restaurants and cafés, which are still recognised as places where locals ‘hang out.’ What is more, this multicultural community was often described as integrated, valuable and active in the past; it was even emphasised that citizens’ activism was one of the characteristics of Mitrovica. To complete this rather nostalgic picture of old Mitrovica, it is important to point out that residents perceived that community of old as well-integrated and, in a sense, unique, but within well-known boundaries of mutual relations<sup>132</sup> and understanding the necessity to compromise and the restrictions apparent in everyday life. One respondent described these boundaries as a factor which enabled closer relations between communities: *‘(...) postojala ta neka granica a po mom mišljenju fina granica koja je nekako davala*

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<sup>131</sup> ‘We, the citizens of Mitrovica, Albanians and Serbs, knew each other and stayed together, I think that the division was more visible between Mitrovica’s citizens and the others, either Albanians or Serbs, seriously’.

<sup>132</sup> A phenomenon also recognised during research on multicultural communities in other parts of the Balkan region. See: Bielenin-Lenczowska 2009, Bringa 1995, Čorkalo, Biruški & Ajduković 2009, Georgieva 1999, Lubańska 2007a & 2007b, Tepavičarov 1999.

*prostor da ljudi se zbliže međusobno, da postanu prijatelji i to su bili jako lepi odnosi*<sup>133</sup>  
[interview 8].

One aspect where such boundaries could be identified by my respondents was a small number of mixed marriages, in contrast, for example, to mixed environments in Bosnia [interview 8]. Trying to explain these circumstances, they pointed to language differences, as well as religious and cultural characteristics. Nevertheless, in spite of cultural differences, they created good relations, which can be identified by everyday practices, such as spending time and celebrating together, taking care of each other's houses and respecting each other.

As it was mentioned before, in the city at present there are not that many citizens of old Mitrovica who actively created an integrated community (mostly families who had lived in Mitrovica for generations). It seems that the division into locals and outsiders is still valid, although not that visible at first glance due to the dominant value of solidarity with one's compatriots. One interviewee explained the peculiar unity of the residents of Mitrovica and the sense of otherness expressed towards newcomers:

*... jer su se ljudi identifikovali kao Mitrovčani, međusobno, to je bila neka zajednička crta i postojao, postojao je određeni duh koji je, jel tako, to ujedinjivao. Znači Mitrovčani su imali neke svoje fore i fazone da tako kažem, neke svoje zajedničke stvari. I onda kad su došli ljudi koji su bili iste nacionalnosti, nisu bili Mitrovčani, bili su doživljeni kao uzurpatori, da kažem i kao neko ko je okupirao sad mentalni i fizički prostor u gradu ...*<sup>134</sup> [interview 8].

One of the respondents born in Mitrovica was forced to move from the northern to the southern part and had to change homes several times post-1999. S/he currently lives in the south, in a neighbourhood s/he characterises as the suburbs. S/he does not feel connected with the neighbours as much as in the past, pointing to the level of education and the difference between the centre and peripheries of the city. S/he still stays in touch with ex-neighbours and maintains superficial relations with the current ones:

*... I know my neighbourhood but... not too much, ...I am using my house just for sleeping and my garden to be relaxed, staying with my family, but I don't communicate too much with them. Just in case when we*

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<sup>133</sup> ...there was this boundary and, in my opinion, it was a fine boundary that somehow gave space for people to bond with each other, to become friends, and those were really nice relationships'

<sup>134</sup> '...because people identified themselves as Mitrovica's residents mutually, it was a kind of a common characteristic and there existed a certain spirit which, you know, united this. It means that Mitrovica's citizens used to have their own, so to speak, jokes and behaviours, certain things in common. And then, when people who were of the same ethnicity came, who were not Mitrovica's citizens, they were perceived as usurpers, I'd say, and as someone who occupied mental and physical space in the city...'

*have some religious holidays, when we have to go to congratulate something, for condolences, when someone passes away or something like that... [interview 9].*

Currently, the ties between residents are not that strong due to a high level of migration. Many of my interviewees stated that they used to know their entire neighbourhood, but nowadays they hardly know who lives in their building. One of my respondents named such interactions as ‘relations without exaggerated familiarity’ [interview 14]. The composition of a neighbourhood is either highly changeable (many people live in the city temporarily, as can be observed based on the number of properties for rent) or ‘incomplete,’ for instance, when some of the neighbours live abroad and return only for the summer, when flats are abandoned and no-one moves in, or when the status of a property is not regulated [interview 1]. In general, people do not maintain significant relations, except maybe for the elderly [interview 21]. Post-conflict, the city experienced a construction boom and as a result many buildings have not even been finished; under such circumstances it is hard to imagine making them a part of a united neighbourhood.

For many interviewees, finding themselves in an entirely new neighbourhood was often the reason for moving from one property to another. In the north and in the south, the lists of concerns and problems were similar: people were bad-behaved or impolite, they did not respect house rules, left their garbage in the corridor, were loud and disrespectful, showed no interest in the local neighbourhood or community issues:

*... because people that come from the village, it is hard for them to get integrated in the city. I mean it's not about the culture, but it's about the values and rules that are different from the village and for that reason... I mean it's normal [for them] to throw the things, it's normal to shout, it's normal to ignore the others you know and ... so on [interview 21].*

*... to su ljudi koji dolaze, kojih većina njih dolazi sa malih sredina i sa sela, tako da su neke svoje navike i neke svoje načine funkcionisanja života utkali u nešto što je nama bilo, nama normalni život, što nama njihovi modeli funkcionisanja su bili totalno neshvatljivi. I šokantni. Znate, pričamo o galami, pričamo o nepoštovanju kućnog reda, pričamo o smeću koje se ostavlja po ulazu koje je javno dobro... ... U jednom trenutku je zgrada potsećala na bronx osamdesetih. I to se dešavalo većinom zgrada<sup>135</sup> [interview 22].*

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<sup>135</sup> ‘... those are people who come, most of whom come from small settlements and villages, therefore, they have some of their own habits and some of their own ways of life they have incorporated into something that was a normal life for us, whereas to us their lifestyle models were totally incomprehensible. And shocking. You know, we are talking about noise, we are talking about disrespecting house rules, we are talking about garbage that is left in the corridor, which is a public space... At one point the building resembled the Bronx [district] from the 1980s. And this was taking place in most of the buildings.’

It is important to once again emphasise the overall situation of newcomers, who in most cases were traumatised, and as ‘temporary residents’ did not feel a part of the community and did not contribute to the city’s development in a way that ‘old’ residents deemed desirable. In many cases, they came to the city only with hand luggage and without a place to stay. They tried to solve housing problems by erecting temporary buildings without sticking to any urban plan and thus causing infrastructural chaos in the city.

Since in many cases they came from rural areas, they transferred their own behaviours and values to the city, making the locals feel uncomfortable at best. In conflict and post-conflict contexts, local communities had to struggle with everyday existential problems and did not pay enough attention to the integration of newcomers into the community, as it was hardly the most urgent issue amongst the chaos caused by armed conflict. Their presence is also evaluated negatively in terms of governing the city. Newcomers (either refugees or political figures sent from the outside) took over the main functions in the city and influenced its economic and political situation against residents’ will. Therefore, they are often blamed for the chaos which can be observed in the city.

The aim here is not to condemn rural society and the behaviour of its members, but to show a peculiar clash of worlds, which was not necessarily strictly connected with ethnic/national identity. That is why some of my interviewees who were born in Mitrovica and in most cases grew up in mixed neighbourhoods, would sometimes say that it was better to live together with the representatives of different communities than with the newcomers of the same nationality.

Obviously, many respondents did not express any problems with integrating with the newcomers nor pointed on any disturbing characteristics. Some respondents did not mind the newcomers as long as the most crucial issues, such as traffic, garbage, paying bills and respecting everyday rules were settled [interview 1]. This of course concerns both those who come to the city for a short-term stay and those who live here. They appreciate the value of diversity and realise that owing to that the city is more vibrant. Moreover, diversity is also perceived as one of the characteristics of the society of Mitrovica. A resident from the Serbian community stated that as opposed to Belgrade you cannot identify a typical resident of Mitrovica, because people come from different environments and respect each other’s uniqueness [interview 12]. Sometimes, respondents even condemned the discriminating behaviour of people from the urban community towards the newcomers, accusing them of

being driven by prejudices and stereotypes [interview 3]. Last but not least, some were pointing to the fact that it is always easier to blame someone from the outside for all the problems and mistakes. One of my respondents paid attention to the strong connection in this cultural context between urban and rural environments [interview 8].

All in all, recent conflict undoubtedly influenced the change in the profile of Mitrovica's residents in regard to the relations within their neighbourhoods, the urban space and the attitude towards city government, revealing a division along the urban-rural social lines. In this section, selected aspects of social coexistence of residents in Mitrovica were described; in chapter 5 this picture will be supplemented with the issue of residents' sense of agency in the context of actors of urban space.

## Conclusion

To conclude, it is simply not true that there is no contact or cooperation between the main dominant groups in the city and that the movement between North and South Mitrovica is obstructed. Moreover, it is the minorities (groups other than Albanians and Serbs) who maintain relations with all other groups, cooperate with them and use their services, as well as move freely around the city. Although there are Albanian and Serbian residents who remain strictly connected with their own group and neighbourhood, a significant number of residents cross the river everyday for work, to go shopping or to visit friends on the other bank.

It was also shown that the urban community of Mitrovica consists of many different groups and individuals whose identities are not necessarily based on the ethnic component. An impressive range of different responses and opinions allowed me to make an overview of a complex internal network of interrelations within the local community. This short analysis also shows that there are many common concerns and problems that trouble the majority of residents.

Many existing boundaries and hierarchies seem to be invisible to researchers, the public and the decision-makers. Meanwhile, various integration and disintegration factors remain visible to the residents. In some cases they may appear less pronounced or forgotten due to the dominant (and exclusive) ethnic/national narrative. As a result, they tend to obstruct residents' coexistence in this already highly disintegrated multicultural community.

It is worth emphasising that social relations are also manifested in the symbolic and functional dimension of urban space. This aspect of urban community was explored in chapters 3 and 5, dedicated, respectively, to the sites of memory and to local institutions. Outcomes of qualitative research on inhabitants' attitudes towards the selected aspects of the symbolic dimension of urban space and the functioning of institutions will enrich the analysis of the state of social relations.

## **5. Chapter V: Actors of Disintegrated Urban Space. Parallel Institutions – Higher Education**

The last analytical chapter sets out to analyse integration and disintegration processes in Mitrovica considered as an urban organism. Therefore, in this part attention will be paid to the description of the actors of urban space and institutional order with a focus on the phenomenon of parallel institutions.

Again, the main reference point is the question in which aspects and to what extent Mitrovica can be perceived as a divided city. Obviously, finding examples of separation to demonstrate the division is not difficult, especially in the case of duplication of services. However, one must keep in mind the opposite tendencies and a complex structure of relations to properly analyse each particular case. It is not necessarily true that the division exists only between two exclusive structures, that it is fixed and that there are no attempts to reintegrate or to establish cooperation.

Moreover, a question arises on the function(s) of division and separation. It is not necessarily true that separation has the sole function of preserving division and should be evaluated negatively; it could also have other aims or could result from different interests represented by various actors.

The first part of this chapter elaborates on the general characteristic of the actors of urban space and on the role and the sense of agency of inhabitants within this network. It was important to determine which actors are perceived as the most influential according to respondents from different communities and how their actions affect the division of the city. The aim of this subchapter was also to provide a description of institutional order in which actors perform their roles. To this end, inhabitants' assessment of the functioning of institutions and their statements on the phenomenon of parallelism will be presented.

The second part elaborates exclusively on the role of the university as an actor of urban space within the presented institutional order. It provides an overview of parallel education history in Kosovo and higher education providers in Mitrovica and the evaluation of the university as an important/influential institution. The aim of this part is to face numerous research questions which will provide insight into interrelations between university(-ies) as institution(s) and the urban space of a divided city and the situation of higher education institutions located in post-conflict territory. It is crucial to establish whether



the existence of parallel/diverse systems of higher education determines and influences the division of the city or, to the contrary, its development? Within this analysis I attempt to answer the following questions: How does the university influence the urban space and the image of the city? How to characterise the university as an actor of the urban space? Is it correct to use the category of parallel institution with regard to the institution of the university in Mitrovica? How can particular elements of university's functioning demonstrate the phenomenon of parallel higher education and division of the city? What attempts have been made to prevent or overcome the partition of the higher education system and the segregation process within this system?

This chapter will also provide universal remarks on the relations between education and conflict. What is more, it will reveal additional roles performed by the university (apart from educational). It was important to determine to what extent the university and other institutions in the city could be perceived and treated in terms of political power as the cradle of statehood and legitimacy of power over territory.

### **5.1. Actors of urban space**

In this study, the actors of urban space are identified as individuals, groups and/or institutions that make relevant decisions regarding urban space; they are individual, collective, institutional and non-institutional subjects who play and take on various roles (Jałowiecki & Szczepański 2010). On the basis of literature review and pilot research, the following actors of urban space in Mitrovica were identified: local politicians/political parties, non-governmental organisations (NGOs), university, ethnic/national groups, international organisations (OSCE, UN), local businessmen/investors, foreign investors, authorities in Belgrade, Pristina and Brussels (EU), experts/professionals, mass media, religious groups, foreign army (NATO) and, last but not least, residents of the city. Respondents were also able to indicate other actors.

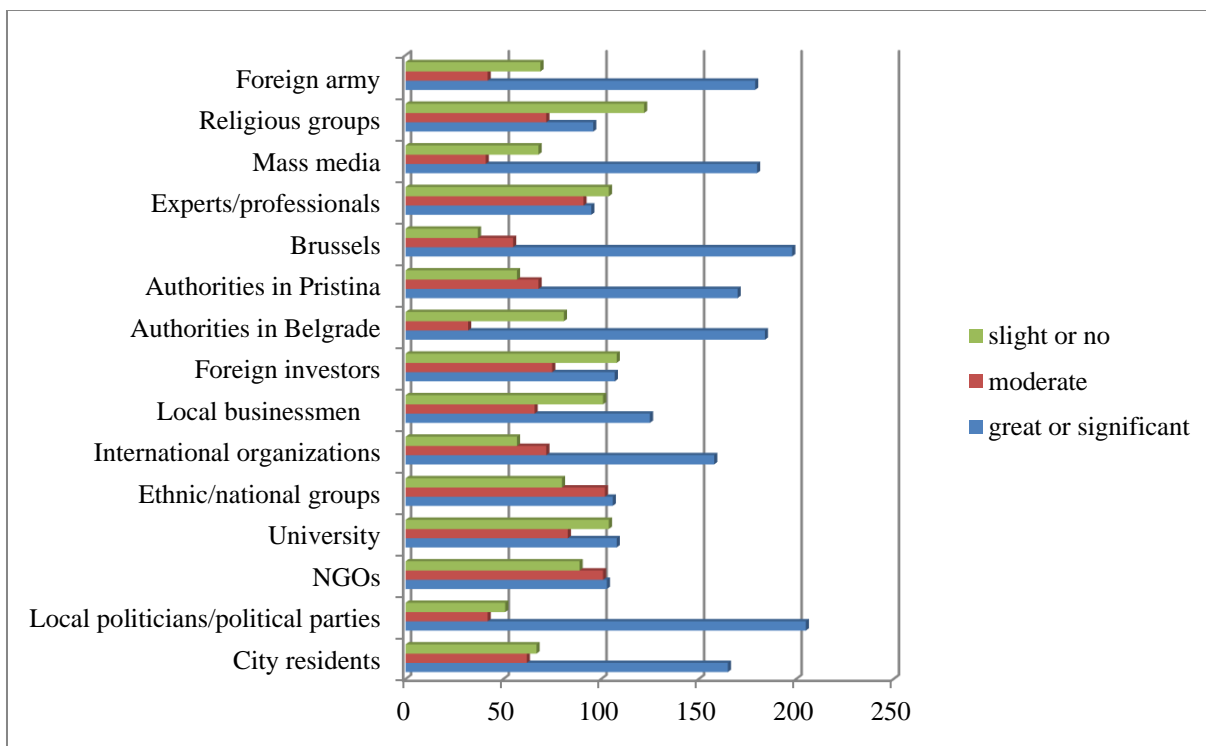


Diagram 9. Number of respondents who evaluated the impact of particular actors on the situation in Mitrovica [question 19].

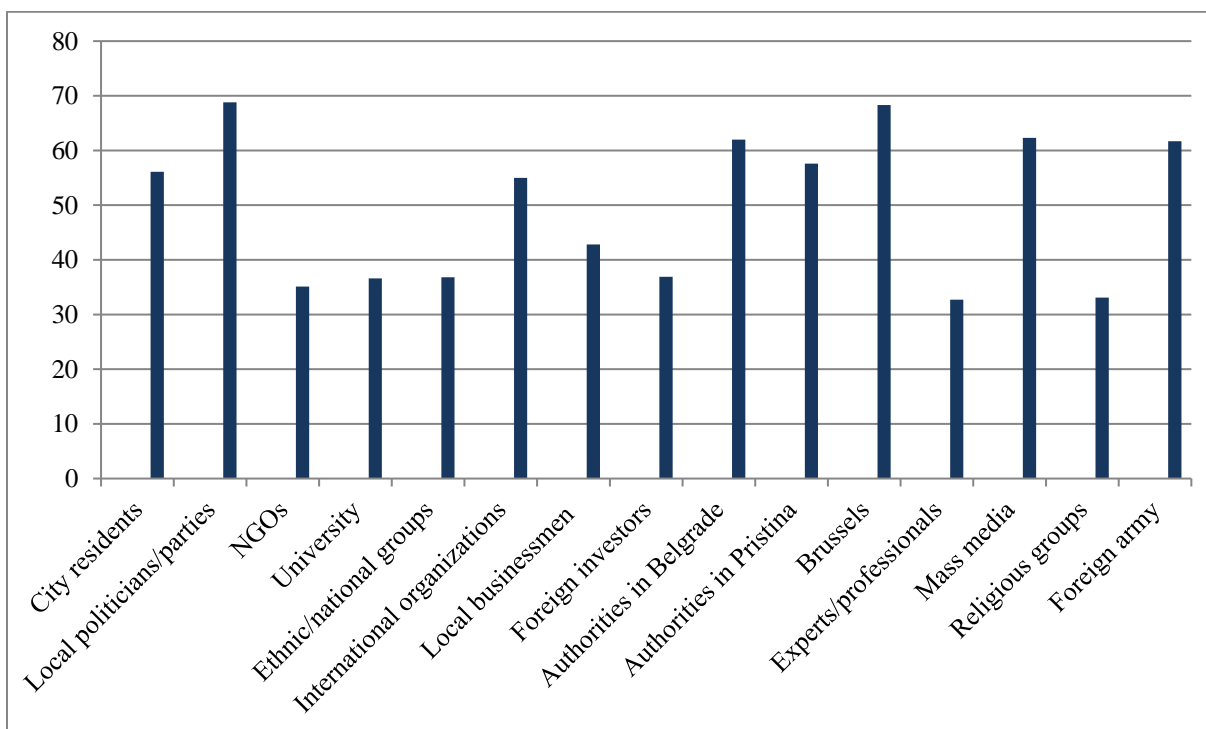


Diagram 10. Percentage of respondents who believe that particular actors have a great and significant influence on the situation in Mitrovica [question 19].

During the survey respondents were asked to determine to what extent, in their opinion, listed actors influence the situation in Mitrovica [question 19]. Actors connected with political power received highest scores: local politicians/political parties (68.8%), authorities in Brussels (68.3%), in Belgrade (62%) and Pristina (57.6%), and international organisations (55.0%). Inhabitants also believed that mass media and foreign army are among strong actors of urban space in Mitrovica. Crucially, the number of respondents who evaluated the role of these actors as great or significant was substantially higher than of respondents who assessed that their role is minor or that they do not have any influence. This proves that the position of these actors is very strong. This perception was not influenced by the ethnic/national profile of respondents. A small difference could be observed with regard to the evaluation of authorities in Belgrade as an actor, where, in contrast to other communities, Serbs (71.4%) and Albanians (62.6%) gave them the highest rate.

The outcomes of qualitative research confirmed the impact of political actors on the situation in Mitrovica. During interviews they were identified as: internationals/international organisations [1, 2, 6, 9, 12], Serbia or Belgrade [2, 7, 9, 10, 14], Pristina [6], government and parliament, respectively [2, 4], actors connected with local authorities (mayor, municipality) [7, 11, 15, 17, 23] and politicians/political parties [4, 9]. My interviewees were asked who, in their opinion, has the greatest influence on the situation in the city or remains the main actor of this urban space.

Although the category of ‘internationals’ or ‘international organisations’ may seem ambiguous, the questionnaire was more specific on the matter. During the interviews, people were asked open question and they were free to define and describe the actors and to elaborate on why they perceive them as important:

*Q: Who do you think has the greatest influence on the situation on the city, who are the main actors?*

*R: I would say internationals... international powers, let's say.*

*Q: Here you mean international organisations or governments?*

*R: No, international power means the most powerful countries in the world, that would dictate in indirect way the situation.*

*Q: Do they care about small city of Mitrovica?*

*R: It's about not only Mitrovica, it's about north region and then it's about division of the country, recognition of the country, many aspects, mines (...) [1].*

Regardless of interviewees' profiles, one of the most commonly mentioned actors was Belgrade.

*Q: So those would be the groups or the actors which actually influence the situation in the city?*

*R: Exactly. Now are many actors who became very strong from Serbian community, somehow they even control the Serbia, not only the North, but, believe me, Serbia, Serbian government (...) [9].*

Many Serbian respondents frequently mentioned Belgrade as an important actor but from a negative perspective. Serbian respondents presented a highly critical approach towards the authorities in Belgrade, which further demonstrated an intragroup division in this community.

*Glavnu reč naravno imaju nosioci političkih funkcija, to su ljudi koji su ovde u svakom slučaju instalirani od Beograda, dakle to nisu ljudi koji su ovde odabrani od građanstva, to nisu, samo neki ljudi koji su ovde prihvaćeni imaju podršku, izabrani. Nego su to ljudi instalirani iz Beograda, koji imaju glavnu reč i oni odlučuju o najvećim i najvažnijim stvarima u gradu. A ostali su samo sprovodionici, dakle njihove marionete [14]<sup>136</sup>.*

*A što se tiče trenutne političke situacije, mislim da ukoliko neko želi da bude deo nekih promena i tako to mora prvo biti član vladajuće stranke u Srbiji da bi bio i ovde, kao u srpskim tako i kosovskim, tako zvanim institucijama i da nemaju oni baš toliko puno prostora za samostalne odluke, za neko svoje mišljenje. I problem je taj što se kriminalne strukture uglavnom vezuju za vlast i upravljanje ovom zemljom, kakogod je nazovemo [10]<sup>137</sup>.*

Some interviewees mentioned an actor described as 'influential group(s)' [5, 8, 9, 10] understood as an undefined collective actor with connections:

*Q: Ko utiče na to što se događa u gradu? Ko odlučuje?*

*R: Određene lokalne osobe koje imaju, ovaj, velikog uticaja i ogromne veze, ne samo među političarima nega i sa jednom i sa drugom stranom, ja u to ne volim pretjerano da se mešam, mislim kao znamo otprilike ko su ti ljudi, ali ovaj, ko je sa kim povezan, ali veruj mi, ja se trudim da ne mislim na to, ne želim, iskreno. [5]<sup>138</sup>*

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<sup>136</sup> 'First and foremost, the people who perform political functions, these are the people who were somehow installed here from Belgrade, so they are not the people who were selected here by citizens, they are not, only some people who are accepted here have the support, the elected ones. But those are the people who are installed from Belgrade, who have the final word, and they decide on the biggest and most important things in the city. And the rest are just the executors, that is, their puppets.'

<sup>137</sup> 'When it comes to the current political situation, I think that if one wants to be a part of some changes and so on, one must first become a member of the ruling party in Serbia in order to be here as well as in the Serbian and in Kosovan so-called institutions, and that they do not have so much space for independent decision-making, for expressing their own opinion. And the problem is that criminal structures are in general connected with the government and governance of this country, whatever we call it.'

<sup>138</sup> 'Q: Who influences the situation in the city? Who decides?'

Such groups were mentioned by many respondents (regardless of their profile), those influential groups are supposed to connect political and criminal spheres, while concentrating economical, legal and political power in their hands. Moreover, respondents claimed that mutual relations between these groups cross any kind of ethnic or national boundaries.

According to several respondents, people who decide about the situation in the city are not from Mitrovica, neither are they interested in residents' opinions:

*Oni koji odlučuju o Mitrovici nisu u Mitrovici, ljudi koji su se borili za nju ništa ne pitaju više, to su uglavnom ljudi koji su privrednici ili biznesmeni, kakogod da ih nazovemo (...), koji su menjali partijske knjižnice sa promenom interesa [10]<sup>139</sup>.*

These newcomers not only ignore opinions of old residents, but also displace them in the decision-making process. One respondent was certain that actions taken by outsiders were motivated only by private profit and that they exposed the community to losses:

*Naravno taj njihov mentalitet [došljaka], taj njihov duh je uticao na to da se Mitrovčani povuku, dakle da dobiju sekundarni, drugoredni značaj, a oni su takvim svojim ponašanjem samo sticali privatne, neke lične koristi, a na uštrb odnosno na štetu kolektivnih interesa. (...) oni preko svojih nekih različitih kontakata, (...) preuzeli vodiće funkcije dakle i u gradu, preuzeli vodiće funkcije ili su ustvarivali uticaj na noseoce tih vodećih funkcija, pa se skoro oni tada počeli da se pitaju, da odlučuju, i o životnim prilikama u ovom gradu i o procesu zapošljavanja. (...) Oni su koristili državne pozicije zarad ličnog bogaćenja i zarad naravno klanskim nekim i plemenskim ispomocima. Tako da su ono bukvalno oni dovedeni svuda. (...) [14]<sup>140</sup>.*

According to one respondent, Mitrovica lacks any agency, the city remains a grey area and a very sensitive post-conflict territory used by different actors [21]:

*Q: Who actually decides now about what is happening in Mitrovica?*

*R: No one, in Mitrovica is status quo, Mitrovica is like a joker for the government, and not only for the government but even globally in Europe. Because if they want to find a reason how to start the conflict it's Mitrovica. Mitrovica is like a factory for the people who like to earn money on the politics, on the smuggling, on the everything that is bad. I mean, these people are totally forgotten and even by the government, but also now*

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R: Certain local people who have, well, a great influence and huge connections, not only among politicians, but also with one side and the other, I do not like to get involved too much, I think, we know in general who these people are, but well who is related to whom, but trust me, I try not to think about it, I don't want to, honestly.'

<sup>139</sup> 'Those who decide on Mitrovica are not in Mitrovica, the people who fought for it are not asked anything anymore, they are mostly people who are entrepreneurs or businessmen, whatever we call them (...), who have changed party loyalties with changing interests.'

<sup>140</sup> Of course, their newcomer mentality, their spirit, forced the residents to withdraw, to gain secondary importance, and by such behaviour they realised private, personal benefits, and at the same time acted to the detriment of collective interests.

*even from the people that is abroad, because they used to invest and help families (...) Somehow they don't care for each other.*

The position of NGOs as an actor of urban space deserves a closer look. According to survey results, almost the same number of respondents evaluated its importance as an actor to be great or significant (35.1%) and slight or none at all (30.4%), while a similar number of inhabitants remained neutral (34.5%). What is important, the representatives of the Romani and Ashkali communities attached great importance to NGOs (respectively, 90% and 100%). This fact can be explained by the statement of one interviewee who said that NGOs have influence particularly on individuals or groups that are the beneficiaries of particular programs [11]. People from the RAE group indeed benefit not only from numerous programs implemented by the third sector, but also are employed in these organisations. Small importance assigned to NGOs as an actor could be explained by many negative assessments provided by the representatives of other communities during the interviews [14, 21, 24]. Firstly, inhabitants were convinced that NGOs do not meet the requirements of independent and socially engaged organisations, because they were financed by foreign organisations, which have their own political goals. Therefore, projects implemented by these organisations tend to be adjusted to donors' expectations instead of the needs of local community. Secondly, they were accused of financial misuse and even money laundering. One of my respondents who was employed in one of the NGOs in Mitrovica claimed that on several occasions s/he had witnessed his/her colleagues spending organisation's money on their personal needs, for instance a very expensive lunch [14]. Moreover, their presence influenced labour market by fostering the illusion of employment [21]. Of course there are also many examples of positive contribution of NGOs to the society of Mitrovica, which were not in focus of our conversations; however, the interviewees mostly felt the need to criticise these organisations. Inhabitants may also be disappointed with their work, as they observe that plenty of money has been invested in Kosovo, yet the results of this financial support are nowhere to be seen.

Similar outcomes were obtained for other actors: ethnic/national groups, local businessmen, foreign investors, experts/professionals, religious groups. Their positive assessment was more or less the same as negative, with a relatively similar number of neutral answers (about one third of responses in all cases). None of these groups featured independently during the interviews.

An interesting finding of the survey was the importance which respondents attached to the inhabitants of the city. More than a half of inhabitants (56.1%) believed themselves to be a great or significant collective actor, while only 22.8% claimed that inhabitants had slight or no influence at all. Only 31% of Serbs perceived inhabitants as an important actor, which is significantly less than in the case of the representatives of other communities.

During the interviews, people were asked directly whether inhabitants influence the situation in the city, but also about their personal attitude towards this issue. In general, respondents evaluated their own influence and participation in social life more positively than that of other inhabitants.

Inhabitants' activity and participation was assessed quite negatively for a number of different reasons: the war that changed people, the importance of political situation which brought disappointment, the process of shaping a society that is more individualistic than collective, laziness or no sense of agency described as lack of power, hope, sense, strength or influence [2, 7, 10, 21, 22], etc. Several respondents claimed that inhabitants were simply not asked for their opinion [5, 9, 10, 14, 21].

My respondents argued that inhabitants are not active or curious, they think it is possible to achieve something only through a political party, they need to be encouraged, they believe that it is the government's or someone else's matter, they do not try to have any influence, they do not care [1, 3, 4, 5, 7, 12]:

*They have influence on the situation, but they would definitely need to be provoked from certain factors in order to have some influence, for example to make a protest or something like that. So they have some kind of influence, but mainly is the politicians who control everything that we can access or not access [3].*

*Q: Da li Ti imaš osećaj kao građanka Mitrovice da imaš velik uticaj na to što se događa u gradu?*

*R: Pa ne, ne.*

*Q: A ostali građani? Kako Ti se čini?*

*R: Nemaju ni oni. Imaju tu ljudi koji su povezani. Ljudi koji znaju ljude, ljudi koji ... ovaj imaju uticaj na to što se ovde dešava. Mi smo svi sitna riba, realno. Niti želim da imam neki veliki uticaj. Pozitivan bih volela da imam naravno, ali mislim da sam ja tu ono... [5]<sup>141</sup>.*

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<sup>141</sup> 'Q: Do you feel as a citizen of Mitrovica that you have a great influence on what is happening in the city?

The dominance of political actors in the city resulted in the loss of a sense of agency by ordinary citizens; they no longer feel that they have the power to influence the situation in the city, especially when they perceive this influence as power at the macro level:

*Q: Do you think that the citizens, they feel like they can influence the change in the city?*

*R: No, no way...*

*Q: And what about you?*

*R: Even myself, even I don't want to try to change it. Because international community, they are interested just to have somehow peace, they are not interested to have a real peace (...) if they are here, during his time period that he is here he would like to be quiet, mainly they are doing something as we are discussing gentleman's agreement, doesn't matter if you are coming from organised crime or something like that, just they need you if you have influence, or if citizens they have fear from you, they are afraid from you, let's say [9].*

According to respondents, only a small part of inhabitants remain active [8, 12].

*Ja mislim da da to je na vrlo jednom niskom nivou, mislim da postoje određene grupe ljudi koje nekako instaliraju u kom će smeru grad ići i šta će se u njemu dešavati a da većina stanovništva i ovaj ljudi koji su stari Mitrovčani ali i oni koji su isto postali Mitrovčani, 20 godina i ovako oni koji su došli sa strane, ja smatram Mitrovčanima, i žive u tom gradu, njihova deca tu rođena, ovaj, mislim da su jako pasivni i da nema dovoljno aktivnosti u tom nekom smislu da se aktivno uključe u oblikovanju zajednice [8]<sup>142</sup>.*

*Ali obični građani da kažemo, 'obični građanin' nema mnogo uticaja i nešto nema nego njega baš briga, ne zanima ga uopšte to, razumeš, on misli da postoje neki opštinari koji su zaposleni u gradskim službama i oni će da to rešavaju, razumeš. Ja kao građanin ništa ne treba da radim. Što je isto problematično jer onda ne postoji učešće građana znači participacija građana u donošenju odluka, u odlučivanju. A 90 posto stanovništva bih svrstao u ovu drugu grupu, znači ljudi koji nisu zainteresirani, njih baš briga [12]<sup>143</sup>.*

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R: No, no.

Q: And the rest of the citizens? What do you think?

R: Neither do they. People who are connected have. People who know people, people who... well have an impact on what's going on here. We are all small fry, realistically. Not that I want to have any major influence. I would love to have a positive one, of course, but I think that's how it is.'

<sup>142</sup> 'I think it's at a very low level, I think there are certain groups of people who are kind of determined in what direction the city will take and what will happen in it and that the majority of the population which includes these people who are old Mitrovicans, but also those who have become Mitrovicans in the last 20 years and so, those who came from abroad, I consider Mitrovicans, and they live in that city, their children were born there, well, I think, they are very passive and that there is not enough activity in this sense to be actively involved in shaping the community.'

<sup>143</sup> 'But ordinary citizens let's say, 'ordinary citizen' doesn't have much influence and somehow he doesn't care about, doesn't care at all, you know, he thinks there are some municipal employees who work in the city services and they will handle it, you know. Me, as a citizen, I have nothing to do. Which is also problematic, because then there is no citizen participation, which means citizen participation in the decision-making, in making decisions. And 90% of the population would be classified in this second group, so people who are not interested, who do not care.'



In contrast, most respondents felt that they had an influence in different dimensions, especially on the micro scale. Only in two cases they concluded that ‘sometimes they have influence and sometimes they do not’ [23] or that ‘everyone has, either good or bad’ [15]. Personal influence on the situation in the city was identified on different levels: being a citizen and fulfilling one’s obligations (paying bills, collecting garbage, taking care of the environment, voting, studying, looking for a job); being an active citizen through work or additional activities and in so doing having an influence on particular groups or milieus (NGOs, cultural); and, finally, being an influential person on a city scale (by participating in decision-making processes, introducing changes in the city: mainly infrastructural or legal).

While talking about citizens’ obligations, several respondents provided negative remarks on the importance of voting [3, 4, 7, 10]:

*R: I don’t think that the vote is gonna matter, no matter what. Because there are certain ways that the vote can be manipulated. So I don’t believe in the voting, even though I have been voting for the past 2 years (...). I don’t think that I make a big difference through the voting or without the voting [3].*

*Ja nikad nisam glasao na izborima. Ja mislim glas može nešto da se promeni, ali jednostavno nemate za koga da glasate, svi su isti (...) 20 godina su isti ljudi [10]<sup>144</sup>.*

Most people pointed to their jobs as a source of a sense of agency [1, 3, 5, 7, 8, 10, 12, 13]. Many of my respondents who work ‘on the other side’ of the city or in ethnically-mixed teams and, therefore, cross the bridge on a daily basis, perceive it as their contribution to community-building by means of maintaining relations with different communities.

Young NGO activists believe to have influence owing to their voluntary work [2, 11, 12, 17, 24], both in the southern part ‘*Unë po bëj punë vullnetare kryesisht me organizata jo-qeveritare, jam aktive, edhe domethonë për shembull mendoj që kam ndikim që në këtë aspekt*’ [17]<sup>145</sup> and in the northern part of the city: ‘*U ograničenoj meri, ne u potpunosti mislim ne može da se očekuje realno u potpunosti, ali u ograničonoj meri da. Osećam da imam, pogotovo preko organizacije u koje radim da osećam da se pitamo, u nekoj meri*’ [12]<sup>146</sup>.

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<sup>144</sup> ‘I have never voted in the elections. I think the vote can change something, but you just have no one to vote for, everyone is the same (...) for 20 years these are the same people.’

<sup>145</sup> ‘I work as a volunteer mainly with non-governmental organisations, I am active, and so, for example, I think I have an influence in that regard.’

<sup>146</sup> ‘To a limited extent, not fully, I think it cannot be expected completely realistically, but to a limited extent, yes. I feel I have, especially through the organisation I work in, I feel we are being asked, to some extent.’

Some respondents also believed that inhabitants had the power to influence the situation at the macro level through real and reasonable projects or initiatives delivered to proper authorities [7, 22]. However, most of them strived to avoid participation in any political initiatives.

The dominant political influence of any kind in both parts of the city was expected. Compared to previous reports, where inhabitants were described as dependent subjects who are devoid of hope, according to the outcomes of this research, many of them in fact do have a sense of agency and perceive themselves as actors of urban space in certain dimensions. Moreover, the representatives of all communities remained critical towards the actions of the main actors and did not conceal their disappointment or anger. It is worth emphasising that young people were perceived as a paragon of change by all communities [22, 17, 7], and thus their future potential should not be underestimated.

### **5.1.1. Parallel institutions**

The existence of parallel institutions is the most extreme example of duplication of services and infrastructure demonstrating the disintegration of the urban organism. The functional aspect of the division concerns administration (local and central offices, courts, universities, etc.), infrastructure (transport, urban development, communication), and economy (services, products, prices, currency).

The need to establish parallel institutions appeared as a result of the division of Mitrovica in 1999<sup>147</sup>. As it was stated in the first chapter, due to the dissolution, the majority of administration buildings (including the municipality), the bus station, most of the Trepča Mine premises, the Orthodox and Catholic Church, Orthodox Cemetery, and sport facilities remained in the southern part; while the regional hospital, the majority of modern buildings and Muslim Cemetery – in the northern part.

One of the most important documents that influenced institutional order in the city was the United Nations Security Council Resolution 1244 adopted in 1999<sup>148</sup>, which authorised an

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<sup>147</sup> KFOR cordoned off North Mitrovica and its hinterland in the summer of 1999 to create a makeshift safe haven for Serbs in the face of the Kosovo Liberation Army (KLA) takeover and reverse ethnic cleansing that took effect in the rest of Kosovo. See: Bridging Kosovo's Mitrovica Divide, Europe Report N°165 – 13 September 2005.

<sup>148</sup> Resolution 1244 (1999) adopted by the Security Council at its 4011<sup>th</sup> meeting on 10 June 1999.

international civil and military presence in the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia. Resolution 1244 established the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo (hereinafter UNMIK) and authorised an international peacekeeping force with substantial NATO participation in Kosovo (hereinafter KFOR). Moreover, it permitted the return of an agreed number of Yugoslav and Serbian personnel to maintain their presence at Serbian sites and key border crossings. After the war, both communities started to create their own structures within different institutional orders and in a specific and changeable relation to the UNMIK administration<sup>149</sup>.

Important changes in the institutional framework came also as a result of The Ahtisaari Plan presented in 2007<sup>150</sup>, the 2008 Kosovo declaration of independence<sup>151</sup>, an attempt to introduce the European Union Rule of Law Mission in Kosovo (hereinafter EULEX) and, last but not least, the Brussels Agreement signed in 2013<sup>152</sup>.

The situation is still very complex and dynamic, but, in general, one may conclude that the level of duplication has diminished in Mitrovica since the war, at least in the case of institutions. At present there are only three kinds of Serbian institutions in the north: the municipality, health care and education systems. Formal division, however, is still sustained with the presence of two municipalities<sup>153</sup> and two mayors: Goran Rakić and Agim Bahtiri.

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<sup>149</sup> North Kosovo: Dual Sovereignty in Practice, Europe Report N°211 – 14 March 2011.

<sup>150</sup> According to the Plan, Kosovo was to gain the attributes of a state and Kosovo Serbs were to be granted broad autonomy; the proposal contained regulations regarding cultural rights (cultural and national heritage matter), security issues (international military presence and civilian representatives) and political system (decentralisation). Eventually, the proposal accepted by Kosovo Albanians was rejected by Serbs. Comprehensive Proposal for the Kosovo Status Settlement, Security Council UN, 26 March 2007, [http://www.unosek.org/docref/Comprehensive\\_proposal-english.pdf](http://www.unosek.org/docref/Comprehensive_proposal-english.pdf), accessed: 10.05.2014.

<sup>151</sup> When Kosovo's independence was declared on 17 February 2008, Northern Serbs quickly distanced themselves from the new state. In May 2008, Serbia organised local elections in Kosovo Serb areas for the first time, resulting in the re-election of the mayors of three pre-existing municipalities, Zvečan, Zubin Potok and Leposavić, and the creation of a new Mitrovica municipality. See: North Kosovo: Dual Sovereignty in Practice, Europe Report N°211 – 14 March 2011.

<sup>152</sup> The 15-point Agreement reached on 19<sup>th</sup> April 2013 in Brussels, in the framework of Pristina-Belgrade dialogue established in 2011, was perceived as a major breakthrough. According to Predrag Jureković, by signing the Brussels Agreement, Belgrade – in principle – accepted the integration of North Kosovo into the constitutional order of Kosovo. Pristina, in turn, agreed to the establishment of the 'Community of Serb Municipalities,' which is to be granted considerable autonomy in the fields of economic development, education and health issues, as well as the land-use planning. The Agreement also covers such issues as local elections, security structures, judiciary system, and includes bilateral commitment to continue EU-mediated dialogue. See: P. Jureković, Kosovo Agreement – Implementation as a Litmus Test, IFK Monitor International, Vienna 2013, [http://www.bmlv.gv.at/pdf\\_pool/publikationen/ifk\\_monitor\\_19\\_int\\_01\\_kosovo\\_agreement\\_litums\\_test\\_pf\\_web.pdf](http://www.bmlv.gv.at/pdf_pool/publikationen/ifk_monitor_19_int_01_kosovo_agreement_litums_test_pf_web.pdf), accessed: 01.05.2014. 135 B. Barlovac, Kosovo and Serbia Reach Historic Deal in Brussels, 'Balkan Insight,' <http://www.balkaninsight.com/en/article/kosovo-and-serbia-may-seal-eu-deal>, accessed: 01.05.2014. 136

<sup>153</sup> There are two separate websites available for the two municipalities of Mitrovica: <http://www.kosmitrovica.rs/> <https://kk.rks-gov.net/mitrovicejugut/>, accessed: 20.06.2019.

The problem with characterising institutions in Mitrovica begins with their definition. Firstly, there is the issue of selection, as several of my interviewees who were asked to assess the service of institutions informed me that I should specify which ones [5, 7, 14]. Secondly, it turned out that the definition of parallel institutions depended on respondent's profile:

*Q: Da li se slažeš da u Mitrovici stvarno imamo paralelne institucije?*

*R: Pa dobro da, definicija kao takva da, jeste to, one funkcionišu istovremeno i jedne i druge, tako da naravno da postoje, sad zavisi s koje strane to posmatrate, za koga su one paralelne. [5]<sup>154</sup>*

Apparently, for some respondents, Serbian system remains parallel in reference to Kosovo, while for others quite the opposite. For instance, one Albanian was convinced that separate Serbian institutions violate the law of the Republic of Kosovo:

*Currently I believe that in the north part of the city the Serbians do whatever they want to do, without consulting the politicians or the government in the south which is all of Kosovo, so by that we understand that they are not respecting the full constitution of Kosovo and they are not respecting the rules (...) so I believe that currently they are taking decisions without consulting the Albanian part of the country [3].*

At the same time, a representative of the Serbian community argued that any institutions other than Serbian should not have the status of institution; they are simply 'criminal formations' which pose a threat to Serbian rights:

*dakle te institucije [Kosovo] prezirem, zapravo zato što za mene nisu to institucije, to su za mene dakle zločinačke tvorevine, koje smisao svog funkcionisanja dakle upravo imaju i baziraju na ugrožavanju srpskih prava i na jednoj aparheid politici prema tim Srbima. Pored svega toga to su dakle paralelne ustanove po mom doživljavanju, to su uzurpatori, stvarno uzurpatori koji su na jedan ilegalan način dakle oterali naše ustanove i formirali dakle neke nove ustanove bez ikakvog zakonskog pokrića [14]<sup>155</sup>.*

Kostovicova pointed to a similar discord in the perception of parallel education systems in the 1990s (Kostovicova 2005). Apparently the problem goes beyond institutions in Mitrovica, which was confirmed by several respondents, who stated that it is in fact the case of division of entire territory [1] and of the struggle for power over it. It appears that the representatives of the Serbian community and inhabitants of the northern part of the city

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<sup>154</sup> 'Q: Do you agree that there really are parallel institutions in Mitrovica?

R: Well, yes, the definition as such is that they function both at the same time, so of course they exist, now it depends from which perspective you look at it, for whom they are parallel.'

<sup>155</sup> 'therefore, I despise these institutions [Kosovo], in fact, because they are not institutions for me, they are criminal acts for me, in the sense of their functioning, therefore, they pose a threat to Serbian rights and are like an apartheid policy towards Serbs. In addition to all this, parallel institutions to me, they are usurpers, really usurpers who, in an illegal way have expelled our institutions and formed some new institutions without any legal cover.'

experienced the division of the city more severely; this had an effect on every aspect of their functioning, the relations between people, but also institutions [8]. Moreover, respondents from the Serbian community perceived Mitrovica as a particular case with regard to institutional system and the consequences of parallel system for their everyday lives:

*Mitrovica, kao što sama znaš, predstavlja jednu specifičnu strukturu kad je, kad su institucije u pitanju. Znači imamo i institucije Srbije, imamo i kosovske institucije, nekako se to najviše meša ovde, na severu, znači ljudi koje žive baš ovde u severnoj Mitrovici, Leposaviću, Zubnim Potoku postoje, žive u dva sistema. Evo lično ja, ovaj, prijavljena sam, lječim se u srpskom sistemu, a radim u kosovskom sistemu.[5]<sup>156</sup>*

Similar observations were shared by people who worked and lived in different parts of the city and those who cooperated with the representatives of other communities and institutions. Some respondents pointed to the role of a third actor, namely, international structures which contributed to the fragmented system and yet another institutional order [6]. A respondent employed in the municipality in the northern part of the city presented this interrelation between Kosovo, Serbia and UNMIK institutions on the example of construction permits:

*R: Znači, mi, ko se nama obrati, mi dajemo te dozvole, pogotovo tim srpskim sredinama u skladu sa onim kriterijama koje su važili pre rata, odnosno na osnovu onog detaljnog urbanističkog plana iz 1995 godine, mi to dajemo. A problem je što ovde ima administrativna kancelarija koju forsira Priština, privremena institucija iz Prištine koju rukovodi ova xxx i koja ima neke stručnjake koje su prihvatili da rade u tom sistemu. Pa onda vidite kakav je tu haos. Ovaj, pre toga radila je UNMIK administracija, gde su ovi stranci nama pokazali kako se radi ...*

*Q: Dakle postoje još uvek različite institucije?*

*R: Različite institucije, različite interesi. UNMIK i Priština su išle da naprave takav haos da se to sruši, da narod digne ruke (...) [6]<sup>157</sup>.*

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<sup>156</sup> 'Mitrovica, as you know, is one specific structure when it comes to institutions. So we have the institutions of Serbia, we also have the institutions of Kosovo, somehow it is mixed most here in the north, so the people who live right here in North Mitrovica, Leposavić, Zubni Potok exist, live in two systems. Here I am, personally, registered, receiving health care from the Serbian system, and working in the Kosovo system.'

<sup>157</sup> 'R: So, whoever asks us, we give them these permits, especially to those Serbian communities, in accordance with the criteria that were in force before the war, or based on that detailed urban plan of 1995, we give it. And the problem is that there is an administrative office here, which is imposed by Pristina, a temporary institution from Pristina run by this xxx, which has some experts who have accepted to work in that system. Then you see what chaos it brings. Well, before that the UNMIK administration worked, where these foreigners showed us how to work...

Q: So there are still different institutions?

R: Different institutions, different interests. UNMIK and Pristina intended to create such chaos that it would collapse, that the people would give up.'

Taking this into consideration, one can conclude that in Mitrovica there are at least three institutional orders, represented by the international presence, in this case UNMIK, the Serbian authorities and the Kosovo authorities, which form overlapping systems that are, more often than not, mutually exclusive and/or conflicted. Moreover, according to this statement, UNMIK and Pristina work against the Serbian institutions by not respecting their decisions and undermining their legitimacy. Earlier research indicates that a similar approach was represented by the Albanian community, according to which UNMIK by supporting the Serbian parallel system works to the disadvantage of the Kosovo state.

Respondents also mentioned three main institutional systems: education system [7], health care [1, 4, 7, 12, 22, 23] and administration/municipality [documents: 5, 10, 11, 12, application and recognition], some also added the police and the judiciary.

The importance of independent institutions was highly emphasised by the representatives of the Serbian community [7, 12, 14]: *‘Srpske institucije naravno one su okosnica svega, mi se držimo tih srpskih institucija, u opštinu Kosovska Mitrovica, u kliničko-bolnički centar, univerzitet. To je to što ostalo u srpskom sistemu (...)’* [7]<sup>158</sup>. During my research, health care, the education system and municipality were indeed institutions that remained subject to Serbian structures. The importance of these institutions for the Serbian community may not necessarily result from the quality of service they provide, but rather from the legitimacy provided by Serbian authorities:

*Ne mogu da budem zadovoljan kvalitetom rada tih ustanova (...). Koliko god tu imalo različitih nedostataka i da su najgore, da su milijun puta gore od nekih drugih ponuda, od nekih drugih opcija, odnosno tih opcija, koje su, koje počivaju na temeljima protivnim ovoj državi, a to mislim na te institucije tako zvane Kosova, ja ću se uvek odabrati, uvek odlučiti na institucije svoje države nego na njihove. A daleko je od toga da su ustanove na druge strane kvalitetnije [14]<sup>159</sup>.*

During the interviews, respondents could express their own opinion on the work and services provided by different institutions; they were evaluated rather negatively. These were the most common objections: poorly educated staff, too many employees, delays, unkind

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<sup>158</sup> ‘Of course, Serbian institutions are the backbone of everything, we stick to those Serbian institutions, the municipality of Kosovska Mitrovica, the Clinical Hospital Centre, the university. That is what remains of the Serbian system.’

<sup>159</sup> ‘I cannot be satisfied with the quality of these institutions’ work (...). Nevertheless, no matter how many various disadvantages they have and even if they are the worst, if they are a million times worse than some other offers, than some other options, that is, those options [institutions] that are based on the foundations opposed to this country, which is what I think of those institutions called Kosovan, I will always choose, always decide on the institutions of my country not theirs. And it is not true that institutions on the other side are of better quality.’

service and treatment of customers, need for modernisation/upgrade, chaos and disorder, corruption, nepotism, bureaucracy (red tape), discrimination in employment. However, some argued that in the broader context (e.g. post-conflict), institutions in fact provided decent service.

*You see the municipality, I mean, everything starts from there, putting their people that are not able to administer and steer the things well and that makes the things more complicated and in general they have more space to misuse the things and not giving priority to the things. I mean the schools are still in the same level as after the war (...) They don't have priorities... they invest as you see in the asphalt, in the infrastructure that are not so important for the citizens. But more is like... [interruption] for the young people [21].*

*R: We are quite young generation (...) but what is bad most of them they leave Kosovo – this is the biggest problem. We don't have stable institutions, they are quite highly corrupted, and what else... the nepotism is very high. If you don't belong to any political party and if you don't have any relation or connections to some high rank people in this political party, doesn't matter just to belong to this party, you cannot succeed.*

*Q: It concerns also Mitrovica?*

*R: Yes, for sure, for sure, in both sides, politicians they are behaving exactly in both sides (...) here is a problem only ordinary citizens, they have to stay and work together because organised crime and politicians they are working perfectly, they are matching to each other [9].*

*Rad institucija u Mitrovici je nalik teniskom meču, gde je običan čovek i njegovi problemi su ono loptica koja kruži sa jedne i sa druge strane. Imao sam iskustva, ja sam predao bio zahtev za xxx (...) i onda su mene slali od kancelarije do kancelarije, da ja posle pola sata izašao iz opštine bez bilo kakvog postignuća, bilo čega. I da mi je odlažen sastanak, odnosno da dođem drugi put kroz neko vreme pa sam pitao kad da dođem. Pa, ne znam dok prođe ovo, dok prođe ono... [10]<sup>160</sup>.*

*R: Mi kao Romi nemamo nikakvog prava, niko nije zaposljen ovde, u općini barem nije niko(...). Nama je deca imaju deca koji su završili školu, sve su završili fakulteti, svi nemaju posla ovde nigde, to je problem(...)*

*Q: Da li Vam se čini da to je samo problem romske zajednice ili ostalih isto?*

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<sup>160</sup> 'The work of the institutions in Mitrovica is like a tennis match, where an ordinary man and his problems are a ball circling from one side and the other. I had such experiences, I submitted a request for xxx (...) and then I was sent from one office to the next, and after half an hour I left the municipality without achieving anything. And my meeting was postponed, I mean, they told me to come a second time after a while, so I asked when to come. Well, I don't know how this one goes, how long it will take...'

*R: Pa možda je problem za sve problem posla, ne samo za nas, za Rome ili Aškalkije. Možda problem što na posao svi idu...*

*Q: A ko dakle ima posao?*

*R: Da Ti kažem pravo naši ljudi Romi, ne idu, onda stranci više idu. (...)*

*Q: A ovde u Mitrovici, da li treba da se ima neke veze da se dobije posao ili to je stvar obrazovanja?*

*R: E to je malo problem, kad ima negde poznate i veze to je bilo najbolje da dođe na posao, jer ovako ako nemaš veze ili nešto, mnogo je teško [23]<sup>161</sup>.*

*S'mendoj që është zhvillu në mënyrën me të mirë të mundshme. Mendoj se ka ngecje shumë në administrim edhe në aspekte të tjera kështu s'kisha me thonë... kështu në përgjegjësi në Kosovë dhe në Mitrovicë nuk është sistem shumë definime qartë edhe kishin mujt një arritje që në ato sisteme [17]<sup>162</sup>.*

Disintegration and dysfunction of institutions led to the migration of young people, to chaos, problems in everyday life, space for misuse, discrimination, erroneous decisions in the long-term perspective, social divisions, and a sense of injustice.

In general, the administration (municipality) in Kosovo and health care under Serbian institutions were evaluated as the most effective.

*A sad zanimljiva stvar jer s obzirom da živim ovde i da su mi potrebna kosovska dokumenta, imam ličnu kartu na tako zvane Republike Kosova. Mislim da su oni preuzeli baš onako efikasan evropski model saradnje sa građanima, i da je meni lična karta bila gotova u roku od nedelju dana. A što se tiče vađenja srpskih isprava poput vozačke dozvole, pasoša i lične karte, ja moram da idem u Rašku (...) a pasoš moram da vadim u Beogradu [10]<sup>163</sup>.*

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<sup>161</sup> 'R: As the Romani we have no rights, no one is employed here, at least not in the municipality (...). We have children, they have children who have graduated from school, all have graduated from college, no one has a job here nowhere, that's the problem. (...)

Q: Do you think this is the problem just for the Romani community or for others too?

R: Well, maybe it's a problem for everyone, not just for us, for the Romani or the Ashkali. Maybe the problem is that everyone goes to work...

Q: So who has a job?

R: Let me tell you, our people don't go, then the foreigners get more (...)

Q: And here in Mitrovica, do you need connections to get a job or is it a matter of education?

R: Well, that's a little bit of a problem, when you have friends and connections, it is best to get work, because otherwise, if you don't have connections or something, it's very difficult.'

<sup>162</sup> 'I don't think it has developed in the best possible way. I think there is a lot of stagnation in administration in other aspects as well, so I wouldn't say that... so in general in Kosovo and Mitrovica the system is not very clearly defined and there would be possible some achievements in those systems.'

<sup>163</sup> 'And now the interesting thing is that since I live here and I need Kosovo documents, I have an ID card of the so-called Republic of Kosovo. I think they have implemented an effective European model of cooperation with citizens, and that is why my identity card was ready in a week. When it comes to issuing Serbian documents, such as a driver's license, passport and ID, I have to go to Raska (...) and I have to get my passport in Belgrade.'



*Well, I myself, personally have my family doctor. So whenever I get sick I go to her so she, you know, gives me the instruction how to go somewhere ... but I don't really know. (...) To be very honest I would rather go somewhere private if I would, if I could afford that [4].*

All in all, residents were certainly critical of the present system(s). Regardless of origins, they recognised many common problems, such as corruption, injustice, chaos, the attitude towards ordinary citizens, etc. What is more, they did not conceal their concerns and presented a critical approach towards what they perceived as negative processes in the city.

## **5.2. University in Mitrovica**

### **5.2.1. Parallel institutions – higher education in Kosovo**

While any analysis of all aspects of integration and disintegration in the functional dimension could seem superficial and incomplete, particular attention will be paid to the higher education system in Mitrovica for a number of reasons. Firstly, the problem of parallel administration, separate courts or infrastructure was already examined in detail in earlier studies, however, the issue of the university was not explored enough or was underestimated.

Secondly, the structure and status of higher education in Mitrovica can serve as a prime example of the interrelation between all actors of urban space. The existence and development of higher education is crucial not only for students and academic staff, but also in order to stimulate the changes in social structure and urban space. For instance, new buildings are erected for educational and service purposes, while the entirety of academic infrastructure significantly changes the urban landscape. Moreover, the presence of academic environment and students in the city increases demand for properties for rent, and thus influences the economic development of the city and changes the labour market structure.

Moreover, universities shape future young leaders and main actors of urban space. As it was concluded by some respondents, young people are perceived as the main agent of changes. Today's students who will graduate from the universities in the city will decide tomorrow's future; that is why the importance of the university as an institution merits evaluation.

Last but not least, the issue of the university in Mitrovica, and in Kosovo in general, apart from any educational aspect, is mostly related to the legitimacy of power over the

territory. An overview of the situation of universities in Mitrovica will not only provide information on their (dis)integrating potential in this city, but also demonstrate its greater importance for Kosovo and Serbia as well.

The contemporary situation of the university in Mitrovica cannot be discussed without at least a general overview of higher education history in Kosovo post-WWII with a focus on the Albanian parallel education system in the 1990s. University of Belgrade set up a number of branch departments in Pristina as early as in the 1960s, while the first university in Kosovo (University of Pristina) was founded in 1969. The University of Pristina remained multi-ethnic and bilingual (with courses in Serbian and Albanian) until 1991, when Albanian staff and students were expelled from the university. Although it may not have been a period of peaceful coexistence, with numerous student protests taking place (most notably in 1981), until the early 1990s both dominant groups were a part of the state university in Pristina.

Events at the beginning of the 1990s that resulted in the creation of Albanian ‘shadow state’ (Kostovicova 2005) are perceived differently by both groups. Serbs underestimate the role of the institutional system in the ethnic exclusion of Albanians and argue that disorder was caused by the Albanian boycott aimed at institutions of the Serbian state (Jovanović 2015, Kostovicova 2005)<sup>164</sup>. Albanians, on the other hand, claim that their actions resulted from the discriminatory policy of the Serbian state and were exclusively caused by the expulsion of all Albanians from institutions<sup>165</sup>. Kostovicova argues that the Albanian point of view ignores ‘the fact that the Serbs did not, nor, indeed, did they need to, send out dismissal notices to each and every Albanian in the early 1990s’ (Kostovicova 2005).

During the transformation of the symbolic landscape of Pristina in the so-called ‘Milošević’s period’, the space of the university of Pristina experienced changes in its symbolic dimension. At the time monuments to Vuk Karadžić and Petar Petrović Njegoš were erected on campus, and the construction of the Orthodox Church of Christ the Saviour has begun (Radović 2013, Jovanović 2015).

Consequently, between 1991 and 1999 Albanians created a parallel education system in Kosovo organised in private homes and other available buildings (Kostovicova 2005).

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<sup>164</sup> During my research I encountered similar claims. According to one of my interviewees, Albanians were not dismissed from schools, but rather blocked educational institutions intentionally [unrecorded interview 22.06.2017]

<sup>165</sup> This point of view is presented in the movie ‘Drums of Resistance’ screened in Pristina at the EU Information and Cultural Centre on 20.06.2017.

Apart from the educational aspect, this system constituted a form of non-violent resistance against Serbs and a means in the struggle for independence. Furthermore, it was intended as an institutional basis for the future Albanian self-declared state in Kosovo. Unsuccessful attempts to implement the Milošević-Rugova agreement in March 1998 dramatically changed the intra- and intergroup relations in Kosovo. The conflict which broke out in the spring of 1998 resulted in mass migration, disruption to the teaching process and the Albanian system going into exile in Macedonia in 1999 (Kostovicova 2005).

After the Kosovo War the problem of access to higher education and of the education system in general reappeared with its discriminating and segregating strength, only this time in reverse. Albanians returned to university buildings, while Serbs had to find alternative educational facilities. At the time the symbolic space of the University of Pristina has changed, earlier monuments were removed and replaced by new ones, whereas the unfinished building of the Church of Christ the Saviour remained part of the university campus and to this day arouses bitter controversy.



Figs. 60, 61. Monuments to Hasan Prishtina (in front of vice chancellor's office) and to Fehmi Agani (in front of the Faculty of Philology) located at the University of Pristina. Fieldwork, July 2014.

While many primary and secondary schools were organised after the conflict, including in the Serbian enclaves in Kosovo (in the remaining school buildings and private homes), the only university with a Serbian curriculum was established in North Mitrovica with some departments in other settlements in North Kosovo.

Again, opinions regarding the educational system (created by Serbs following the war), its status, importance and potential, are divided. Albanians believe that the existence of an education system that is a part of the Serbian education system violated territorial integrity of Kosovo and that the Serbian parallel structures are a part of Serbian strategy to partition Kosovo. For Serbs, it was clear that their own education system can preserve Serbian authority, at least over a part of the Kosovo territory. Kostovicova underlines that Serbs safeguarded their power to preserve the sense of Serbian identity, not only from Albanians, but also international structures, post-war represented by UNMIK (Kostovicova 2005). At present, the higher education system, health care system and the municipality are the only remaining Serbian institutions in North Mitrovica and North Kosovo.

### **5.2.2. Higher education providers – description**

This short introduction to the turbulent history of the higher education system in Kosovo demonstrated that the university is one of the most important institutions not only to the city (and its development), but also to the whole region, as it has a great potential for their further integration or disintegration. Currently, the city has five higher education providers, two in North Mitrovica and three in South Mitrovica. In the north operate: the University of Pristina with its temporary headquarters in Kosovska Mitrovica (under the Serbian higher education law) and International Business College Mitrovica (IBCM). In the south: University of Mitrovica ‘Isa Boletini’ (UMIB), International Business College Mitrovica and Fama College. Except for the public University in Mitrovica (currently, *Universiteti i Mitrovicës ‘Isa Boletini’*, whose tradition dates back to the Higher Technical School from the 1960s) all of the above-mentioned were established post-conflict in the 1990s, after the city was divided. These higher education institutions operate under the Kosovo higher education law and are subject to regular accreditations by the Kosovo Accreditation Agency (KAA).

**University of Pristina, with a temporary seat in Kosovska Mitrovica** (*Universitet u Prištini sa privremenim sedištem u Kosovskoj Mitrovici*) draws on the history and tradition of

the pre-war University of Pristina, established in the 1960s and presently located in Pristina (*Universiteti i Prishtinës*, UP). In accordance with the decision of the authorities in Serbia, after the expulsion of Serbian academic staff and students from the University of Pristina during the war in 1999, the university and several other faculties were temporarily relocated to Krusevac, Kosovska Mitrovica, Leposavić, Vranje, Blace and Varvarin. At the end of 2001, by a resolution of the Government of the Republic of Serbia ('Sl. Glasnik RS' no. 60/01) North Mitrovica/Kosovska Mitrovica was designated as a temporary seat of the University of Pristina (Žarković, Mijačić, Milenković 2017). With time, other faculties resettled in Mitrovica and nowadays are located mostly in Mitrovica, with departments in Zvečan and Leposavić.

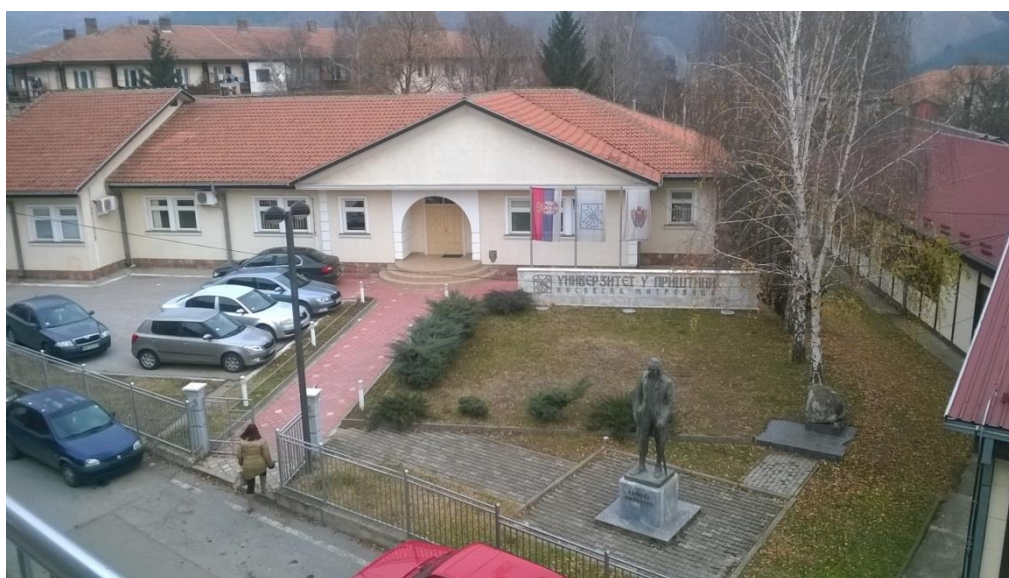


Fig. 62. University of Pristina with a temporary seat in Kosovska Mitrovica [*Universitet u Prištini sa (privremenim) sedištem u Kosovskoj Mitrovici*], monument to Dositej Obradović in front of vice chancellor's office. Fieldwork, December 2016.

The University adopted the Bologna agenda and introduced a three-cycle system of studies in 2006. It boasts ten faculties<sup>166</sup>, in 2008 it received a full membership of the European University Association (EUA), and in 2010 signed the Magna Charta Universitatum.

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<sup>166</sup> Faculty of Economics, Faculty of Medical Sciences, Faculty of Agriculture (Lešak), Faculty of Law, Faculty of Natural Sciences and Mathematics, Teachers' Training Faculty (Leposavić), Faculty of Sports and Physical Education (Leposavić), Faculty of Technical Sciences, Faculty of Arts (Zvečan), Faculty of Philosophy.

Currently, there are ca. 10,000 students and 900 academics and administrative staff. Apart from Mitrovica's locals, numerous students and academics come from the enclaves in Kosovo and other settlements in South Serbia, such as Vranje, Krusevac, Kraljevo.

Although the study offer is available solely in Serbian (except for philological studies) foreign students can benefit from exchange programs, such as Erasmus+, Erasmus Mundus, CEEPUS, or IPA. Citizens from many countries, including the majority of European countries, can come to Kosovska Mitrovica without a visa for up to 90 days. According to the official university website, the cooperation with the University of Belgorod in the Russian Federation was established.

The campus together with other university facilities occupies a large part of North Mitrovica. The university infrastructure includes: faculty buildings, Student Accommodation Centre, Cultural Centre, Centre of Informatics, Sports Centre, and several libraries. The accommodation centre offers numerous modernised dormitories for students and academic staff.



Figs. 63, 64. Students' Centre [*Studentski centar*] with dormitories, North Mitrovica. Source: Fieldwork, April 2018, [https://en.pr.ac.rs/wp-content/uploads/photo-gallery/slider\\_9.JPG](https://en.pr.ac.rs/wp-content/uploads/photo-gallery/slider_9.JPG), accessed June 2019

On campus one can find the monument to Dositej Obradović (in front of vice chancellor's office) and busts of Nikola Tesla, inventor, and Mihajlo Petrović Alas, mathematician and inventor.



Figs. 65, 66. Busts of Nicola Tesla and Mihajlo Petrović Alas on campus, North Mitrovica, Source: Fieldwork, June 2018.

In the case of the public university located in South Mitrovica, the official name of this institution reflects its symbolic affiliation. **University of Mitrovica** (*Universiteti i Mitrovicës 'Isa Boletini'*, UMIB) was established in 2013 by the decision of the Government of Republic of Kosovo. Before the opening of the university in 2005, Mitrovica has already hosted the Faculty of Applied Technical Sciences of the University of Pristina (FATS).

The tradition of this university dates back to the 1960s when the Technical High School, financially supported by Trepča, was established. Under the umbrella of the University of Pristina, in 1974 the Faculty of Mining and Metallurgy was opened with three departments: Mining, Technology, and Metallurgy, while in 1987 the Geology Department was added. The establishment of the technical school was crucial for the development of the whole region, since it provided engineering staff for the Trepča Mining and Metallurgy enterprise. Many students and members of the academic staff came from different republics in Yugoslavia to study or work at this technical faculty. The present-day university appears to cultivate the identity of Mitrovica as a city of miners and connects its existence with the

foundation of that first technical school, as evidenced by the slogan used in promotional materials for its 5<sup>th</sup> anniversary: ‘57 jetë akademike. 5 vjet universitet’<sup>167</sup> .



Figs. 67, 68, 69. University of Mitrovica ‘Isa Boletini’ (UMIB) [*Universiteti i Mitrovicës ‘Isa Boletini’*], vice chancellor’s office building, the construction site of the dormitories, current teaching building of the university.

Source: [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Education\\_in\\_Mitrovica](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Education_in_Mitrovica), <http://umib.net/galeria/>, accessed June 2019.

The present-day university took over the infrastructure and buildings of the technical faculty. During my research the remaining necessary academic infrastructure, such as dormitories (for an increasing number of students) and laboratories that would meet current technological standards, were still under construction. According to a video on the official university website, the future academic campus is envisioned as the biggest and best-equipped in Kosovo and beyond.

<sup>167</sup> ‘57 years of academic tradition. 5 years of the university’



One of my respondents who studied food engineering at UMIB emphasised the need for new equipment and university infrastructure: ‘Since we are studying engineering, also we need to work in labs, we need very sophisticated, you know, equipment and stuff, so we don’t really have much things’ [4]. According to this student a new university campus, laboratories and a scholarship program are a must. Currently students have to work in old labs and can hardly afford studies (especially young people who do not live in Mitrovica).

Before being granted university status, the academic offer of faculties in Mitrovica was limited strictly to scientific specialisations. Nowadays, the university has 6 faculties<sup>168</sup>, and apart from bachelor and master’s studies at 3 technical faculties, it offers bachelor studies in law, economics and education. According to the official website of the university, there are 4,243 students and 150 academics and 50 employees of administration.

Aside from its participation in the Erasmus+ exchange program, the university established academic cooperation with numerous universities abroad, for instance, in Albania, Turkey, Croatia, Macedonia and Bulgaria. The website is available in Albanian, English and Serbian, but the content for non-Albanian-speaking users is rather limited. It seems that the enrolment of foreign or non-Albanian-speaking students is hardly possible.

**International Business College Mitrovica (IBCM)** was founded owing to numerous foreign donors in 2010 as an internationally registered non-profit foundation operated under the auspices of the Dutch non-governmental organisation SPARK. The main aim of IBCM is to prepare future graduates for professional work in their workplace and communities, therefore, its programs put the emphasis on practice. IBCM has its own profile of study programs (Public Service Management, Marketing & Management, Environment & Agricultural Management) developed in partnership with higher education institutions in Denmark. For graduates, IBCM offers International (Danish) double degrees. IBCM has been accredited by the German Accreditation agency EVALAG since 2013.

In contrast to public universities in northern and southern part of the city, IBCM developed English-language academic programs and created a multi-ethnic academic environment, including students and staff. Moreover, it is located in both parts of the city, across two campuses with fully equipped classrooms, two canteens, study and recreational space, a library, two IT labs, a career centre, a Student Representative Council office, Student

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<sup>168</sup> Faculty of Geosciences (FG)/*Fakulteti i Gjeoshkencave*, Faculty of Food Technology (FFT)/*Fakulteti i Teknologjise Ushqimore*, Faculty of Mechanical and Computer Engineering (FMCE)/*Fakulteti i Inxhinierise Mekanike dhe Kompjuterike*, Faculty of Law (FL)/ *Fakulteti Juridik*, Faculty of Economics (FE)/ *Fakulteti Ekonomik*, Faculty of Education (FE)/*Fakulteti i Edukimit*.

Service offices and limited dorms for students coming from outside the Mitrovica region. What is important, campuses are not divided according to a(n) ethnic/nation key, but with regard to departments, and the university organisation indeed stimulates interaction between students from different communities [interview no 3].



Figs. 70, 71. International Business College Mitrovica (IBCM), North and South campuses, Source: <http://ibcmmitrovica.eu/about-ibcm/facilities-2/>, , accessed June 2019.

Apart from numerous opportunities for professional practice, IBCM offers exchange opportunities a part of Erasmus+ or agreements with international institutions in Denmark, Finland, Portugal and Lithuania.

Even though some of my respondents evaluated the work of IBCM positively, there were also more ambiguous or negative voices which focused on the quality of the offer, status and competences of the ‘international staff’ and the authority of a private institution of higher education [1, 10, 22].

*Postoji IBCM, to je međunarodni poslovni koledž, (...) nije univerzitet nego je fakultet, a da kažemo jeste visokoškolska ustanova. On je poprilično dobar (...). Naravno ljudi imaju gard prema privatnim institucijama odnosno privatnim školama, visokoškolskim ustanovama, zato što misle da se tu radi preko veze, da tu prosto ne možeš da stekneš neko realno znanje, ali ja mislim da je sasvim suprotno, jer ljudi koji baš upisuju privatne te fakultete oni se baš potrude da dobiju neko novo znanje koje se ne nudi na državnim fakultetima. Tako da ja bih rekao da privatni fakultet nudi neka znanja koje ne postoje ili se uopšte ne nude na državnim fakultetima [12]<sup>169</sup>.*

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<sup>169</sup> ‘There is IBCM, it is an international business college, (...) it is not a university, but a college, anyway it is a higher education institution. It is pretty good (...). Of course people are biased against private institutions, such as private schools, higher education institutions, because they think that it is done through a connection, that you simply cannot acquire some real knowledge here, but I think it is quite the opposite, because people who enrol in private faculties, they are really trying to get some new knowledge that is not offered at state colleges. So I would say that a private college offers some knowledge that does not exist or is not offered at all at state colleges.’

One of the negative assessments of IBCM came from a teacher who was interested in joining its academic staff and claimed that the recruitment process had not been transparent enough, while the so-called ‘international staff’ were people from the region, but outside of Kosovo [1].

Another person was a student who went to an IBCM meeting for prospective students:

*Bio sam na, to je bila prezentacija univerziteta IBCM-a, ja sam bio tamo, to je bila 2015 godine, (...) nije mi se dopalo kao prvo što to je privatni univerzitet, a mi imamo mišljenje da su državni univerziteti oni koji imaju kredibilitet, i koji nam mogu omogućiti uspeh u životu i ... lakše naći posao jednostavno, za razliku od ovih privatnih i stranih univerziteta, i mislim da postoji tu veliko nepoverenje. To je prva stvar, a druga stvar ... nisam baš voleo da mi bude profesor neko ko je studirao na tom fakultetu ko je završio prošle godine, a danas je već profesor. Navodno predavanja su na engleskom jeziku, ali njihov engleski jezik je jako loš. (...) njihov pristup, način na koji su oni prišli meni da kažu o čemu se radi i zašto taj fakultet vredi je bio nezadovaljajući. (...) A pored toga mislim ono plaća se [10]<sup>170</sup>.*

This prospective student, just like the aforementioned prospective employee, was not satisfied with the competence of IBCM professors. It also appears that the status of a non-public institution can be considered problematic.

Moreover, one of the main drawbacks of IBCM seems to be its tuition fee [3, 10]. An interviewee who was a student at IBCM justified their choice as follows:

*The main reason is because I got full scholarship (...). Apart from that the college is very well-known here, it has very good education, teachers from all over the world, and it's multi-ethnic college, because it has students of Turkish community, Bosnian, Serbian and so on. It also has two campuses, one of them is located in the north part of Mitrovica and the other is in the south part of Mitrovica. And... It gives also good price for the students that are from different ethnic groups, apart from Albanian, because the Albanians are the majority. Therefore, the minorities get to pay a lot less the tuition fees (...) [3].*

According to the official website of IBCM, the tuition fee in 2019 ranged from 995 EUR for students from Kosovo to 2500 EUR for international students from outside the region. There were also discounts (minorities<sup>171</sup>, family members) and scholarships on offer,

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<sup>170</sup> ‘I was at, it was a presentation of the IBCM university, I was there, it was in 2015, (...) I didn’t like it, firstly because it is a private university, and we are of the opinion that state universities are the ones which have credibility, and that can enable us to succeed in life and... it is easier to find a job simply, unlike these private and foreign universities, and I think there’s a lot of mistrust there. That’s the first thing, and the second thing... I wouldn’t really like to have as a professor someone who studied at that college, who graduated last year and is already a professor today. The classes are supposed to be in English, but their English is really bad. (...) their approach, the way they approached me to say what it was all about and why the college was worth it was unsatisfactory. (...) And besides, I think you have to pay for it.’

<sup>171</sup> ‘A student is considered as being from a minority if they are of the Romani, Ashkali, Egyptian, Bosniak, Turkish or Gorani heritage, and have residence in Kosovo.’

which representatives from the communities excluded from the financial support program may regard as discriminatory treatment.



Fig. 72. Fama College. Source: <http://kolegijfama.eu/frmGaleria.aspx>.

**FAMA College** is a private institution of higher education established in 2003 and located in the southern part of Mitrovica. FAMA College is based in Pristina and has campuses in Gnjilane, Prizren and Mitrovica. Studies on offer include a bachelor degree in one of 5 faculties: Management, Banking, Finance and Accounting, Psychology, Criminal Science and Law. None of my respondents studied in this college, some of them only mentioned it as an example of a higher education institution in the southern part of the city, adding a short comment on its high tuition fees. Some of my interviewees called it ‘American school,’ others stressed that it is too expensive, private, and only politicians can afford to send their children there.

### 5.2.3. University as an actor of urban space

Respondents’ profiles revealed that a relatively high number of Mitrovica’s residents are included into the higher education system. Most of the respondents who participated in the survey declared secondary (38.5%) or higher (36.5%) education level, there were 14.5% of respondents who graduated from vocational school, 7.9% who ended their education at primary school, and 1.3% were uneducated. The level of education correlated significantly with age; 52.3% of respondents declaring higher education were between 18 and 26 years old (55% of respondents from this age group), while only 3.6% and 1.8% of respondents declaring higher education were in the last two age groups (respectively, 7% and 9% of

respondents from this group). Compared to any other group, significantly more Romani respondents declared primary or no education (81%).

Most interviewees, however, had at least some experience of studying; 7 of them were active students and 10 – graduates. In addition, there were some who had to give up studying and those employed in the education sector (incl. higher education). Almost all members of my research team were active students or graduates. In view of all this, one may state that most of my research participants had an opportunity to benefit from the services provided by universities or at least had some experience of studying. However, most respondents were only familiar with one higher education system.

According to research, the university remains an institution of special importance, especially for the Serbian community. Even though it was not designated as one of the most influential actors of urban space by survey participants, of whom 36.6% perceived it as a great or significant actor (compared to 35.3% who evaluated its role as slight or of no influence), respondents from the Serbian community gave the university the highest score (40.3%). This was also the case with the question on the symbol of the city [question 21] and the most important place or object [question 22]. The university was identified as a symbol only by the Serbian community. As for important place and object, over 30% Serbs (compared to less than 7% of Albanians) considered the university crucial for the city. In the case of other communities, only the representatives of the Bosniak community chose the university as an important place.

Additionally, these results were confirmed by opinions presented during qualitative research. Only respondents from the Serbian community identified the university as the symbol of the city, the most important place and a significant actor of urban space [6, 7, 8, 11].

Firstly, the presence of the university in the city bestows on Mitrovica the importance of other academic cities in Serbia and the identity of student city:

*Imamo univerzitet ovde od 2002 godine. Jedni smo od pet univerzitetskih gradova u Srbiji, i svakako da to daje određenu, određenu nivou što se tiče samog grada i grad izgleda mnogo ozbilnije nego ... Ne mogu ni da zamislim da nema univerziteta, kako bi to bilo [7]<sup>172</sup>.*

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<sup>172</sup> 'We have a university here since 2002. We are one of the five university cities in Serbia, and it certainly gives a particular level of importance to the city itself, and the city looks much more serious than... I can't even imagine that there is no university, how it would be.'

Secondly, the importance of the university as an academic centre for the whole region was emphasised, especially by students from South Kosovo who did not have any academic centre south of the Ibar river. What is more, the university could also be perceived as a significant actor which influences the development of infrastructure, social and economic life:

*Ma svakako univerzitet prištinski sa privremenim sedištem u Kosovskoj Mitrovici je svakako mesto, ovaj mesto okupljanja omladine studenti sa čitavog regiona, mogu da kažem slobodno, ovaj mladi Mitrovčani, ljudi koji studiraju, to je neko mesto gde... koje svakako je nezaobilazno. To je s jedne strane. S druge strane univerzitet kao institucija onda ima nekih ispostavaka, to su domovi, to je menza, neki studentski klubovi, mesta gde ljudi kruže i cirkulišu i definitivno po mom mišljenju najznačajnija institucija u gradu je taj univerzitet [8]<sup>173</sup>.*

Moreover, the university is considered an important institution because it remains one of the last Serbian institutions which provides the legitimacy and continuity of Serbian presence in Kosovo. Respondents appreciated the fact that the university not only remained where is used to be, but also developed significantly and contributed to the development of the city under such hostile circumstances:

*I to kako jeste. Ako je nešto ostalo što je sto procentno srpsko to je univerzitet i bolnica. Ali opet dobro bolnica je državna i samim tim to je nešto što treba uvek da bude tu, ali univerzitet je uspeo da se sačuvao nakon svih promena, koje su se desile, a desilo se ih mnogo i mislim da napreduje. U odnosu na to kakav je 2000 da je sada baš onako napredovao i što se domova tiče za studente i što se tiče saradnje sa drugim univerzitetima vani, mislim da ima super saradnju sa univerzitetom u Rusiji (...). Imaju dobar program, dobre nastavnike, dobar kadar i mislim da su studenti jako zadovoljni radom generalno na univerzitetu i učenjem i znanjem koje staknu oko njega [11]<sup>174</sup>.*

When asked about the most important place and institution in the city one respondent linked both to the presence of the university:

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<sup>173</sup> 'Certainly the University of Pristina with a temporary seat in Kosovska Mitrovica is a place, well, this gathering place for students from all over the region, I can say freely, well young Mitrovica people, people studying, it is a place where... which is certainly indispensable. That's on the one hand. On the other hand, the university as an institution then has some facilities, these are the dormitories, the canteen, some student clubs, places where people circulate and definitely, in my opinion, the most important institution in the city is that university.'

<sup>174</sup> 'It is, indeed. If there is anything left that is one hundred percent Serbian it is the university and the hospital. But again, well the hospital is state-owned and, therefore, it is something that should always be there, but the university has managed to prevail/survive after all those changes that have taken place, and many have happened and I think it is progressing. Compared to what it was like in 2000, it has progressed and when it comes to student dormitories or cooperation with other universities outside, I think it has great cooperation with a university in Russia (...). They have a good program, good teachers, good staff and I think students are very happy with their work in general at the university and with the learning and knowledge they acquire there.'

*Mesto oko studentskog centra to mi je najvažnije, a institucija – univerzitet. (...) od čega ovaj grad živi, definitivno. Da nema univerziteta ne bi bilo severnog Kosova, ni severnog dela Kosovske Mitrovice, niti bilo, mislim, severa Kosova i Metohije [7]<sup>175</sup>.*

What is more, the same respondent stressed also the symbolic importance of this institution, claiming that the symbols of the city are the university, youth and bravery: ‘*Univerzitet i omladina (...) i hrabrost, ništa drugo, to je to*’ [7]<sup>176</sup>.

Nevertheless, respondents from the Serbian community were not entirely unanimous in their opinions. Several critical views were expressed on the role of the university, especially in the context of its prominent past and insufficiently used potential. One interviewee claimed that the university used to be the symbol of the city in the past connecting its academic identity with its mining identity:

*Q: Kakav je uticaj univerziteta, koji posle 90. postoji u gradu, na razvoj situacije u gradu?*

*R: Mora da se ovaj napravi razlika, tehnički fakultet, znači ono što je bilo vezano za... Mitrovica je bila nekad... naziva kao grad rudara, grad metalurga, zbog Starog Trga zbog Trepče... (...) Znači grad rudara i grad metalurga, pa su tu bili rudarski, metalurški, tehnološki fakultet vezano za... su bile ovaj... više škole, mašinska, elektro, vrlo jake. I drugo bila je škola učenika u privredi, jedna od najboljih u bivšoj Jugoslaviji, bila je jaka Trepča pa su ljudi... (...)*

*R: Što se tiče ovog fakulteta iz Prištine, ovog univerziteta iz Prištine... pa on... naziv mu kaže, fakultet, univerzitet Priština sa privremenim sedištem u Kosovskoj Mitrovici. Znači šta je to, to je onaj komoditet tehničke škole je narušen time što su tehničkoj školi sad zauzeli prostor za ekonomski za pravni, ne znam (...) To utiče na pad onoga što smo imali pre ovoga rata. (...) Izlazili su tehničari stručnjaci, koji su bili vrlo cenjeni i traženi [6]<sup>177</sup>.*

Apparently, according to this respondent, the potential of the former technical faculty (Faculty of Mining and Metallurgy, one of the best in Yugoslavia which nowadays is

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<sup>175</sup> ‘The place around the student centre is what matters most to me, and the institution – the university. (...) it is what this city lives from, definitely. If there was no university there would be no North Kosovo, nor the northern part of Kosovska Mitrovica, nor, I think, the north of Kosovo and Metohija.’

<sup>176</sup> ‘University and youth (...) and courage, nothing else, that’s it.’

<sup>177</sup> ‘Q: What is the impact of the university on the development of the situation in the city post-1990?’

R: One has to make a difference, technical college, meaning what was related to ... Mitrovica was once ... called the city of miners, the city of metallurgists, because of Stari Trg, because of Trepca ... (...) So the city of miners and the city of metallurgists, so there were mining, metallurgical, technological colleges in relation to ... these were ... higher schools, mechanical, electrical, very strong. And second it was the school of economy, one of the best in the former Yugoslavia, Trepca was strong, so people ... (...)

R: As for this faculty from Pristina, this University from Pristina ... well, it ... the name says, Faculty, University of Pristina with a temporary seat in Kosovska Mitrovica. So what is it, the amenity of the technical school is disturbed by the fact that the technical school has now taken up space for economics, for law, I do not know (...) This is causing the decline of what we had before this war. (...) Experts, technicians came out, who were very appreciated and sought after.’

developed as part of the University of Mitrovica ‘Isa Boletini’) was destroyed by the transfer of the University of Pristina to Mitrovica, occupation of the infrastructure of former technical school by this university and the changes to the technical profile of the studies.

Another respondent pointed to the dependence of the university in Mitrovica on Belgrade and numerous other problems of this higher education institution recognised in the region and beyond. A former student of the university in Mitrovica claimed that ‘*Univerzitet nema nikakvu samostalnu moć, po pitanju odlučivanja bilo čega, dakle to je onda univerzitet koji je zavisen od vlade u Beogradu*’ [16]<sup>178</sup>, and further elaborated on the circumstances to substantiate such a claim: dependent professors who were not devoted to their work, financially and politically dependent institution of the university, numerous cases of purchasing diplomas and passing exams by illegal means. This person believed that such situations were common in other similar institutions; however, the unstable situation in Mitrovica only provoked and created more space for abuse. The respondent was convinced that this renders this university totally insignificant and irrelevant [16]. Moreover, such practices are a threat to the state and the society, since graduates educated in such an environment will soon be employed in public institutions and become the potential carrier of change.

Statements of students from other communities contained similar accusations towards the institutions of higher education. One of my interviewees, who came from a minority community and eventually graduated from a university outside the Albanian-Serbian parallel system, claimed to have observed and experienced at the university at least two different forms of discrimination based on origins, the first connected with a non-Albanian surname, and the second with frictions between people from the city and people from the countryside [1].

Another young person, a student of the University of Mitrovica complained about the problems with the recruitment process and evaluation. They did not like the fact that professors were not independent and were connected with political parties:

*Mendoj që pak universiteti në cilin vijoj unë studimet është pak kisha me thonë një kopuk. Në atë aspektin që gjithçka shkojnë me ti afërm. Qysh në fillim, mendoj prania ime në universitet mandej aty me profoseret me krejt janë ato që u përkasin partive politike fatkeqësisht edhe gjithashtu vlerësimi bëhet në atë mënyrë. Mendoj që është diçka shumë negative. Mendoj që duhet kjo, sa me shpejt me u largu ky system që tash*

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<sup>178</sup> ‘The university does not have any autonomous power to decide on anything, therefore it is a university dependent on the government in Belgrade.’



*është si në arsim si në të gjitha aspekte tjetër, në veçanti në arsim, pasi që dimë se arsimi është edhe shtylla kryesore dhe bazë mbi të cila ndërtohet shteti [17]<sup>179</sup>.*

#### **5.2.4. University as a parallel institution**

When asked about the higher education system as an example of institutional parallelism, some respondents pointed to many examples of this partition, such as different books, celebrations and days off [1] or referred to the general division of the city which influenced all dimensions of its functioning, including institutions [8], while others did not consider the university as a parallel institution as long as it functioned only within the Serbian administrative framework:

*Q: Da li je isto univerzitet primjer paralelne institucije?*

*R: Univerzitet... pa nije, univerzitet radi prema srpskim zakonima, ne meša se, koliko razumem, ne zvanično se ne mešaju, ni, ne rade bilo kakve aktivnosti, ne pojavljuju se nigde gde se pominje kosovske institucije [22]<sup>180</sup>.*

Taking into consideration an overview of higher education providers, one can also identify many other aspects which indicate divisions in the higher education system, such as the lack of mutual cooperation and mutual recognition of universities, separate academic and student communities, different curricula and languages of instruction.

Based on respondents' profiles and their statements and the survey results which indicated a rather low level of mobility in terms of school or university [question 25], one can assume that the number of students who enrolled in the university dominated by the other group is quite negligible. Only for 12% of respondents the school or university was a very common reason for crossing the Ibar river and, almost certainly, this percentage concerned IBCM and minority students (in the survey, this response was given by the representatives of

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<sup>179</sup> 'I think that the university where I'm studying is a little bit, I mean, old-fashioned. In the sense that everything takes place with the support of your relatives. Firstly, my admission into the university, then the professors who belong to political parties, unfortunately, then also the evaluation is done in that way. I think that it is very negative. I think that this system should be abolished as soon as possible, same in education and in all other fields, in particular in education, since we know that education is also the main pillar upon which the state is built.'

<sup>180</sup> 'Q: Is the university also an example of a parallel institution?

R: The university... well, the university works according to Serbian laws, they do not interfere, as far as I understand, they do not formally interfere, nor do they do any activities, they do not appear anywhere if Kosovo institutions are mentioned.'

Albanian, Bosnian, Serbian and Romani communities, however, the percentage of Serbs was the smallest).

For graduates, one of the most problematic aspects of fragmentation of the higher education system was undoubtedly the recognition of diplomas. The problem is more complex than it appears at first glance, because it concerns not only Kosovan and Serbian institutions, but also foreign education providers operating in the territory of Kosovo. The situation of my respondent from a minority group who speaks fluent Albanian, English and Serbian can serve as a good example of this complexity. Even though that person was linguistically eligible to enrol at any university in the region, their choice was limited due to a stamp of the Republic of Kosovo on their high school diploma as well as a non-Albanian surname. The issue of diploma recognition and other minority-related obstacles, such as access to education, were also mentioned during one of my unrecorded conversations with an UNDP representative who deals with the rights of minorities in Kosovo [unrecorded interview, February 2017].

My interviewees, students and graduates, argued that when choosing their studies they had to take into consideration many factors, such as the value of a given diploma and its recognisability by potential employees [1, 7]. In addition, the interviewees also mentioned a significant difference between the diploma from a state (public) university and a private one. Opinions varied, but most respondents claimed that a diploma from a public institution is more valuable, as evidenced by the fact that public universities still earn a greater trust among young people:

*Në përgjigjësi në universitete private nuk është që kqyrin shumë me perspektive, për ata kam mendu me shku në universitet shtetëror, në universitet publik edhe jo privat. Nuk është se nuk japin programet e mira, drejtimet e mira, por fakt është qysh ai mënyra, qysh e kena perceptu, qysh na ka krijuar sistemi [17]<sup>181</sup>.*

Furthermore, students from all communities mentioned financial reasons, family affairs, educational offer and connections with their hometown as reasons for staying in Mitrovica, even though most of them were linguistically competent and had opportunities to enrol at foreign universities or any other in the region. Two of my respondents mentioned safety as the main factor [3, 10] to stay in their hometown [10], or to study in an ethnically non-homogeneous academic environment: ‘I would be interested [to study at public university

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<sup>181</sup> ‘In general, private universities do not provide perspectives and because of that I have decided to go to the state university, a public university, not a private one. It’s not that they don’t provide good programs, good fields of studies, but in fact it is how we have perceived it, how the system shaped us.’

in the north], but because of the situation I wouldn't feel quite safe, since there are no Albanians studying there. It would be difficult for me to make this decision' [3].

Apparently students from 'both sides' experience similar problems at their universities, such as discrimination based on broadly understood origins, language barrier (not only in regard to the language of the other ethnic group but also foreign languages), fear for one's safety and concerns regarding unequal treatment, shortages of equipment and insufficient technological development, lack of scholarship programs and financial issues, entanglement of political factors into the higher education system and, last but not least, the future of the university, its credibility and the future of the society. All in all, young people, students and recent graduates, are not only open to conversation and keen to share and discuss their views, but they also remain critical of issues and circumstances which influence their lives in a negative manner.

## Conclusion

This chapter described a complex institutional network which exists in Mitrovica using the example of the higher education system. This overview demonstrated the existence and interrelations between more than just the two main actors and two different institutional orders, additionally showing their entanglement within UN and EU structures.

This short analysis of the higher education system in Mitrovica uncovered several issues which could lead to identifying the relation between the university status and the division of the city. A complex system of relations within different institutional orders is no doubt in place, best visible on the example of the university in the political, economic, social and symbolic dimensions. Firstly, the cooperation between higher education providers is practically non-existent; the contested legitimacy of other universities causes the problem of diploma recognition, there is virtually no academic cooperation. Secondly, economic connection is also lacking, as universities are financed from different sources. Thirdly, the academic offer is accessible mostly to particular communities, because of the language on offer, problematic legal status and security issues. As a result, universities on 'the other side,' either north or south, are not recognised by the people from 'other communities,' nor considered an option. Students and academics alike remain visibly separated. Moreover,

authorities of the two main universities in the city exchange mutually exclusive messages transfer, without mentioning the fact that they are located in different parts of the city.

IBCM, a higher education provider established by foreign entities, which employs staff and enrolls students from different communities, while offering fee discounts for certain groups, appears to be an exception here. It allows students from different communities to interact and get acquainted, which in a disintegrated community is no mean feat.

Most respondents were critical of institutional chaos and the services provided by higher education institutions operating within it and of various problems resulting from the situation. What is more, according to research outcomes, many interviewees in fact did have some sense of agency and perceived themselves as actors of urban space in certain dimensions (at the micro and macro level). Moreover, the representatives of all communities remained critical of the actions of the main actors, openly expressing their disappointment and anger. However, could this be sufficient? It seems that the situation will not change as long as the main actors are connected with external political forces whose priority is not the well-being of this multi-cultural, diverse community but private (or group) gain. This is also the case with inhabitants who do not get involved enough in the city's affairs, or who feel obstructed or deprived of agency.

Apparently, the university and other institutional structures are highly important for the Serbian community that strives to protect its national identity in the territory of Kosovo. As Kostovicova argues, the dominant mentality in the region is that of a zero-sum approach to education and nationhood (Kostovicova 2005). As long as one side does not show the sense of integration, which for the Serbian community today means the loss of Serbian institutions, perceived as better-quality ones, and at the same time as the guarantee of their rights being protected, and the other side does not show readiness for compromise, the higher education system will probably remain the hostage of the political status of the North and will continue to be instrumentalised.

## 6. Conclusion

The presented dissertation was conducted with the aim of contributing to a better understanding of the urban reality of present-day Mitrovica perceived and described mainly as a divided city. As indicated in the introduction, I have sought to explore and analyse various dimensions of divisions, based on my fieldwork in Mitrovica.

An important argument of this thesis is that the image of Mitrovica as a divided city is relatively contemporary – it began to dominate the narrative of Mitrovica after the Kosovo War (Chapter 1). This point was emphasised by the conclusions from the historical overview (Chapter 2) and in the subsequent sections followed by my argument that rather than focusing solely on the division, Mitrovica should be described as an industrial centre, communication junction or a post-socialist city.

The main research problem was to examine in which aspects and to what extent Mitrovica could be perceived as a divided city. One may conclude that the reality of divisions in Mitrovica is more complex than it is commonly described and should not be limited only to the importance of contemporary ethnic/national divisions.

The aim of the historical overview of Mitrovica's development (Chapter 2) was to point to various historical processes operating from a more distant past in order to better understand the context of divisions in the city. In that chapter the issue of diversity of cities in the Balkans and the most important circumstances which determined Mitrovica's development and characteristics of urbanisation processes in the city were presented. Mitrovica was portrayed as a communication junction, multicultural settlement, strategic garrison, and an industrial centre. The chapter referred to many issues of urban space order from the past, regarding administrative, spatial and social dimensions of divisions. For instance, attention was given to the fact that the nature of divisions in urban societies in the Ottoman Empire was more questionable than might be suggested by the sources supporting the national perspective. The idea of the millet system perceived as an array of well-defined, hierarchic, self-governed and rarely intersecting communities, which is dominant in the historiographical narrative, can serve as an excellent example. It appears that instead it was a system of religious self-governing communities, or a form of indirect rule which evolved with time. Moreover, the order that resulted from administrative and socio-religious divisions influenced the self-identification of members of particular communities in the Ottoman Empire and beyond; however, religious affiliation was not necessarily the only component of

residents' identity nor the only marker of difference to be applied. As became clear from the analysis of sources, Mitrovica is one of the best examples of a microcosm of unobvious and dynamic identities, a multi-cultural environment with a fluid social composition from a historical perspective.

The first analytical chapter (Chapter 3) tackled the symbolic dimension of urban space of contemporary Mitrovica continually produced and developed by its residents. The goal was to identify and describe the most significant sites of memory, to determine which of them are visible and well-maintained and which are neglected or destroyed, to examine whether there are any common sites of memory and how they are described by different communities/groups, to verify whether the symbolic sphere confirms the division of the city or, to the contrary, demonstrates its cohesion, and to elucidate who the main actors participating in this urban space are, and to explore their motives for taking actions in the context of (dis)integration processes. The analysis of the symbolic urban space of Mitrovica revealed similar elements in both national narratives and provided examples of intra-group frictions or divisions. Owing to that, the problem of division could be studied in different dimensions, instead of focusing exclusively on the ethnic/national one.

The division into different symbolic ethnic/national narratives in contemporary Mitrovica could be easily demonstrated and was also confirmed by the results of this research; however, its outcomes lead to the general conclusion that this urban space is not simply divided into two completely separate and exclusive parts dominated by Albanians and Serbs, respectively.

The newly created sites of memory linked with ethnic/national narratives and referring mostly to the memory of the Kosovo War are the most pronounced and well-maintained. The heritage of the Ottoman Empire and socialist Yugoslavia, which could be perceived as a shared legacy, but stands in opposition to the dominant national narrative, was destroyed or at best disregarded, and today it is forgotten, neglected or supplanted by the dominant national narrative(s). There is no doubt that in Mitrovica many actors of urban space introduce many different, independent strategies, without abiding by urban plans, legal schedules or outlines. These are mostly political groups or individuals who strive to build and strengthen the national/ethnic narrative in order to realise their political agenda, regardless of further integration or disintegration of the city. Moreover, it is most probable that they are not a part of the community of Mitrovica's residents.

The most popular sites of memory, such as the bridge, sacral objects or memorials to revered individuals, can be easily analysed in the framework of mutually exclusive ethnic/national narratives. In fact, religion and local heroes constituted two groups of issues on which Serbian and Albanian communities were found to be significantly divided. However, their views were also shared by the representatives of other communities. For instance, the mosque was regarded as a symbol by Albanians, the Ashkali and Romani, while Prince Lazar by Serbs and Bosniaks.

There was only one site of memory recognised by all communities and highly visible in the urban space – the bridge. It seems that there is no better example to illustrate the division of the city. As stated in Chapter 3, the bridge remains the symbol of Serbian-Albanian division, a demarcation line from *the Other* (Albanian or Serb), who is perceived as the enemy and blamed for the suffering of one's own population in the Kosovo War and beyond, and, finally, of two exclusive policies represented by two main communities living in Mitrovica. On the other hand, after the Kosovo War it remains one of the most important and common memory sites, an example of painful shared memory of all communities in Mitrovica, not only Albanian and Serbian. Moreover, it may serve as an example of the dynamic character of a common site of memory, and of its complexity and multi-layered nature.

The second analytical chapter (Chapter 4) attempted to outline the complex relations between Mitrovica's residents through their everyday social practices, such as communication, mobility, mutual contacts and perception, relations with their neighbours and the role of residents. Since an analysis focused on the relations between the two dominant ethnic groups cannot reflect the full complexity of population structure and inter- and intragroup relations, the proposed analytical perspective involved other possible aspects of division, such as resulting from economic inequalities, religion, frictions on the rural-urban line, political affiliations, and individual behaviour. What is more, it also contained a description of other communities living in Mitrovica and the outcomes of research which included the responses of the representatives of minorities.

In order to demonstrate the multicultural character of the city and the complex identities of its residents, the introductory section of Chapter 4 provided a demographic description of contemporary Mitrovica's social composition with a focus on the particular phenomenon of internal migration, i.e. internal displacement or the inflow of people from

rural areas and its consequences to the current situation in the city. One of the most important conclusions of this section was that the presence of many minorities implies a more complex and less hermetic reality than it may superficially seem, one that continually redefines and shapes their identities in line with political circumstances and interactions with other communities.

This chapter presented the outcomes of research on the nature and intensity of relations between the representatives of different ethnic/national groups and their mobility in the city. Political tensions have a significant impact on the situation in the city, the relations between people and the circulation of people and goods. When it comes to everyday interactions, they are clearly obstructed; there are still representatives of Albanian and Serbian communities who do not interact with the members of the other group, but they do not constitute the majority of the whole community. It is not true that there is no contact or cooperation between the two dominant groups in the city and that movement between North and South Mitrovica is impossible. Interestingly, it is minorities (groups other than Albanians and Serbs) who maintain relations with all the other groups, cooperate with them, use their services and move freely around the city. However, although there are Albanians and Serbs who obviously remain strictly linked with their own group and neighbourhood (while avoiding all the others), a significant number of residents cross the river every day for professional, commercial or personal reasons, etc. The most common reasons for not crossing the river were linked with perceived security issues, while the most common reasons for crossing it were: shopping and work. Residents from mixed neighbourhoods and the representatives of minorities appear to find in-city mobility less problematic.

Another objective of that chapter was to examine whether language skills and the command of languages of other communities determine the nature of communication. Everyday linguistic practice and the outcomes of research revealed that there are inhabitants who do not use any language other than their own, even though they know other languages, yet there are also those who communicate freely in both major local languages or who attempt to communicate regardless of language skills. Two most important findings were as follows: 1) in everyday communication it is possible to find a common language as long as both sides are willing to communicate, and 2) the knowledge of a common language could be a less important obstacle to mutual communication than other non-linguistic circumstances.



Research on social distance in terms of ethnic/national and confessional groups revealed many examples of very close but also very distant relations. The most diverse and radical attitudes were displayed mostly by Serbs and Albanians, while minorities declared a rather positive or neutral attitude towards other residents. The religious aspect appears to have a smaller impact compared to the ethnic/national one. As part of research on social distance it was confirmed that political situation influences inter-group relations, and thus integration or conflict may develop (or be hindered) among Mitrovica's residents depending on the current political climate.

When it comes to the perception of one's neighbour and resident of Mitrovica, research showed that a disintegration of local urban community had indeed occurred, as can be demonstrated by a significant change in the neighbourhoods and in the profile of Mitrovica's resident. What is important, most interviewees described their desirable neighbour using the components of individual rather than collective identity. Moreover, the characteristics of a welcome neighbour encompassed many components other than ethnic/national, such as residential, economic, social, educational, professional, etc. Recent conflict influenced the change in the profiles of Mitrovica's residents with regard to relations with neighbours, the urban space itself, and their attitudes towards city governance, revealing a division on the urban-rural social line.

The final analytical chapter (Chapter 5) was devoted to the nature of divisions in the functional dimension of the city, with a focus on the phenomenon of parallel institutions. In order to provide a necessary context for the network of Mitrovica's institutional order, a general characteristics of actors of urban space was presented along with the role and sense of agency of residents within this network. This was supplemented with residents' assessment of the functioning of institutions and their statements on the phenomenon of parallelism.

Quantitative and qualitative research revealed that the most important actors of urban space are those connected with political power: local politicians/political parties, authorities in Brussels, as well as in Belgrade and Pristina. In addition, international organisations remain one of the most influential actors in the city. The dominant political influence of any kind in both parts of the city was not entirely surprising. Interestingly, it seems that in contrast to previous reports, where residents were mostly described as dependent subjects devoid of hope, according to the outcomes of this research, many of them in fact do have a sense of agency and perceive themselves as actors of urban space in certain aspects. In the survey over

half of inhabitants believed themselves to be a great or significant collective actor, while during the interviews, respondents evaluated their own influence and participation in social life more positively relative to other inhabitants.

When it comes to the assessment of institutions, the aforementioned parallel system was defined and identified differently depending on respondent. Firstly, this could be due to the fact that there are at least two or three institutional orders represented by the Kosovo authorities, Serbian authorities and international actors. Secondly, some respondents deemed the Serbian system parallel to Kosovan, while others believed quite the contrary. All in all, the relations between the aforementioned systems are perceived differently. On the one hand, UNMIK and Pristina work against Serbian institutions by disrespecting their decisions and undermining their legitimacy, on the other, UNMIK supports the Serbian system which works to the disadvantage of the Kosovo state.

Moreover, Chapter 5 discussed the role of the university as an actor of urban space in the presented institutional order. The analysis of the higher education system in Mitrovica uncovered several issues which could lead to the identification of a relationship between the university status of the city and its division. Without doubt a complex system of relations within different institutional orders could be observed on the example of the university in political, economic, social and symbolic dimensions. Firstly, cooperation between higher education providers is non-existent; the contested legitimacy of different universities causes issues with the recognition of diplomas and there is no academic cooperation. Secondly, there is no economic connection, as universities are financed from different sources. Thirdly, the academic offer is accessible primarily to particular communities, because of the language, problematic legal status and security issues. As a result, the university on 'the other side,' is not recognised by people from 'other communities' and thus not considered an option. The student community remains visibly separated as well, while the authorities of the two major universities in the city convey mutually exclusive messages, not to mention the fact that they are located in different parts of the city. However, IBCM, a higher education provider established by foreign entities, employing staff and enrolling students from different communities (in addition offering fee discounts for particular groups) appears to be an exception. Therefore, it remains the only higher education institution in the city which allows students from various communities to interact and get acquainted. In a disintegrated community this is no mean feat.

In Mitrovica, the university and other institutional structures appear to perform additional roles. However, institutions which operate under Serbian administration are of paramount importance for the Serbian community that strives to protect its national identity in Kosovo.

What is important, residents are critical of the institutional chaos and the services of higher education providers and can identify issues that this situation creates. Moreover, the representatives of all communities disapprove of the actions of main actors of urban space and do not attempt to conceal their disappointment or anger. Young people are perceived as the bearer of change by all communities, and therefore this valuable group and its future influence should not be underestimated. Nevertheless, it seems that the situation will not change as long as the main actors are linked with external political forces that do not prioritise the well-being of this multi-cultural, diverse community, but instead focus on private goals (or goals of a particular group), which only deepens current divisions.

In the first chapter, I argued that present-day Mitrovica is perceived mostly as a divided city and that there is a need for a comprehensive synthesis free from a unilateral national, ideological perspective, and reflecting the complexity of the city structure. I believe that this thesis responded to this need and provided an in-depth analysis of Mitrovica's urban space.

The value of the proposed thesis results from the employed mixed methodology and research perspective, sources used, timeframe over which research was conducted, and the comparative potential. Firstly, combining an interdisciplinary approach and a case study method ensured this work would not suffer from the limiting framework of a single discipline, and enabled openness to diverse explanations of particular processes or circumstances. Secondly, partnership with local co-workers representing all communities in Mitrovica assured an insight into contemporary Mitrovica's everyday problems, considering the different perspectives of its inhabitants. Thirdly, the choice of fieldwork as a research practice allowed me to experience living in a divided city, embedded within the community in which research was conducted. As a result, research materials included: original empirical data gathered from various residents of Mitrovica (not only from both parts of the city, but also from different quarters within those parts) and multicultural, multilingual written sources and texts of culture. Owing to that, it was possible to compare not only the two dominant groups, but also to carry out studies within those groups and to juxtapose them with minorities. The

narrative of the thesis, which contains statements and commentaries representing different communities, only emphasises the fact that this analysis set out to give a voice to the citizens of Mitrovica regardless of their identification characteristics. Moreover, the research timeframe covered a significant period; on the one hand, attention paid to a post-conflict territory becomes limited, but on the other hand, many important incidents still take place, with a potential to further divisive or integrating tendencies.

Future research on Mitrovica and divided cities seems worthwhile. Below I outline several promising research directions. The proposed analysis of the city's case study could be implemented into the regional context with focus on a particular city within the specific space-time framework. Research on other similar urban centres conducted with the aim of creating comparative work, which would problematise the nature of divisions in divided cities while considering contexts other than ethnic/national, could contribute to a better understanding of contemporary urban realities in the region.

As seen from this thesis, a contemporary city remains a complex and highly dynamic structure of relations which need to be observed with due care. Since at present many phenomena occur and intensify in urban space(s), research on cities is crucial to understanding the human experience in the global world.

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## 8. Annex 1: List of Recorded Interviews

No.	Date	Gender	Age	Language of the interview	Residential status	Eth./nat. group
1.	27.04.2018	F	27	English	permanent stay, D, Mtr	B, SM
2.	25.04.2018	F	18	English	temporary stay	O, SM
3.	26.04.2018	M	19	English	permanent stay, D, Mtr	A, SM
4.	27.04.2018	F	19	English	permanent stay, D, Mtr	A, SM
5.	25.04.2018	F	28	Serbian	permanent stay, M	S, NM
6.	27.04.2018	M	59	Serbian	permanent stay, D, Mtr	S, NM
7.	26.04.2018	M	28	Serbian	permanent stay, M	S, NM
8.	25.04.2018	M	29	Serbian	permanent stay, M	S, NM
9.	26.04.2018	M	42	English	permanent stay, D, Mtr	A, SM
10.	26.04.2018	M	22	Serbian	permanent stay, D, Mtr	S, NM
11.	25.04.2018	F	26	Serbian	permanent stay, Mtr	S, NM
12.	25.04.2018	M	27	Serbian	permanent stay, Mtr	S, NM
13.	04.06.2018	F	~40	Albanian	permanent stay	A, SM
14.	06.06.2018	M	33	Serbian	permanent stay, Mtr	S, NM
15.	07.06.2018	F	29	Albanian	permanent stay	A, SM
16.	07.06.2018	M	~50	Albanian	permanent stay	A, SM
17.	07.06.2018	F	20	Albanian	permanent stay, Mtr	A, SM
18.	07.06.2018	M	41	Albanian	permanent stay, Mtr	A, SM
19.	10.06.2018	M	31	Albanian	temporary stay	A, SM
20.	10.06.2018	M	28	Albanian	permanent stay	A, SM
21.	10.06.2018	M	37	Albanian	permanent stay	O, NM
22.	11.06.2018	F	40	Serbian	permanent stay, Mtr	S, NM
23.	11.06.2018	F	27	Serbian	permanent stay, Mtr	R, SM
24.	11.06.2018	M	62	Serbian	permanent stay	A, SM

F – female (10), M – male (14),

D – displaced, Mtr – born in Mitrovica

SM – South Mitrovica, NM – North Mitrovica

O – other (2), B – Bosniak (1), A – Albanian (11), S – Serb (9), R – Romani (1)

Coding pattern: [interview number]

## 9. Annex 2: Questionnaire

*Dear Resident,*

*the aim of this questionnaire is to study your attitude towards different aspects of how your city is functioning. We kindly ask you to participate in this research. Please answer the questions according to your opinion and choose one or more answers that best express your attitude.*

*This study is completely anonymous and you do not have to sign the questionnaire. Your responses will be used only for scientific purposes.*

*Thank you in advance for your cooperation!*

### QUESTIONNAIRE

1. **Gender**      a) male              b) female

2. **Age** .....

3. **Education**

a) no education    b) primary    c) secondary      d) vocational secondary    e) university

4. **Residential status in Mitrovica**

a) permanent stay      b) temporary stay

5. **Where were you born?**

a) in Mitrovica

b) in one of the neighbouring cities/villages.....

c) in another city/village.....

6. **How long have you lived in Mitrovica? (years/months).....**

7. **In which part (neighbourhood) of the city do you live?** (please give the name of the neighbourhood or street).....

8. **Have you been displaced from one part of the city to another? Have you changed your place of residence in the city? If yes, please specify.**

.....

**9. How would you describe your economic situation?**

- a) very bad, not enough money to fulfil basic needs
- b) bad, barely scraping a living
- c) average, able to fulfil basic needs without difficulty
- d) good, not lacking anything
- e) very good, having enough money for a comfortable life

**10. Please specify your national/ethnic group:**

- a) Albanians
- b) Ashkali
- c) Bosniaks
- d) Egyptians
- e) Gorani
- f) Romani
- g) Serbs
- h) Turks
- i) Other, which one? .....

**11. Which languages do you know and to what extent? (mark your answer(s) with „X”)**

Language	Understanding			Speaking		Writing
	Recognition	Listening	Reading	Spoken interaction	Spoken production	
Albanian						
Arabic						
Bosnian						
English						
French						
German						
Romani						
Serbian						
Turkish						

A1/2 – basic user, B1/2 – independent user, C1/2 – proficient user



**12. Which language(s) would you like to learn? Why?**

.....  
 .....  
 .....

**13. Please specify your religion.**

a/ Orthodox Church

b/ Islam

c/ Catholicism

d/ Buddhism

e/ Judaism

f/ Other, which one? .....

g/ None of the above

**14. Which of the following characteristics do you consider important in your neighbour? (in each line mark your answer with „x”)**

	Important	Neutral	Not important
Family			
Profession			
Marital status			
Religion			
Whether he/she is religious			
Ethnic/national group			
Which city/village he/she was born in			
Whether he/she is a newcomer			
Political orientation			
Gender			
Whether he/she is calm/aggressive			
Whether he/she has any hobbies/interests			
Sexual orientation			
Whether he/she is taking care of the environment/keeping it clean			
Whether he/she has pets			
Whether he/she is friendly/likes to make friends			
Anything else? If yes, please specify			

**15. What degree of closeness would you accept with the representatives of the following ethnic/national groups?** (in each line mark your answer with „X”)

	As close relatives by marriage	As my friend	As a neighbour	As a co-worker	As a resident in my city	As a citizen in my country	Would exclude from my country
Albanians							
Americans							
Ashkali							
Bosniaks							
Montenegrins							
Egyptians							
Gorani							
Romani							
Russians							
Serbs							
Turks							

**16. What degree of closeness would you accept with the representatives of the following religious group?** (in each line mark your answer with „X”)

	As close relatives by marriage	As my friend	As a neighbour	As a co-worker	As a resident in my city	As a citizen in my country	Would exclude from my country
Eastern Orthodox							
Muslim							
Catholic							
Jewish							
Buddhist							
Atheist							

**17. What would you like other people to know about you? Which of the following do you find important?** (in each line mark your answer with „X”)

	Important	Neutral	Not important
Your family			
Your profession			
Your marital status			
Your religion			
Your ethnic/national group			
The city/village you were born in			
Your political orientation			
Your gender			
Your interests/hobbies			
Your sexual orientation			
Anything else? If yes, please specify			

**18. How would you characterise the representatives of the following groups? Please specify their features** (you can use the provided list of characteristics).

- a) Ashkali
- b) Albanians
- c) Bosniaks
- d) Montenegrins
- e) Egyptians
- f) Gorani
- g) Romani
- h) Serbs
- i) Turks
- j) Russians
- k) Americans

**19. To what extent, in your opinion, do the following actors influence the situation in Mitrovica?**

1 – great influence, 2 – significant influence, 3 – moderate influence, 4 – slight influence, 5 – no influence at all

City residents	1	2	3	4	5
Local politicians/political parties	1	2	3	4	5
Non-governmental organisations	1	2	3	4	5
University	1	2	3	4	5
Ethnic/national groups	1	2	3	4	5
International organisations (OSCE, UN)	1	2	3	4	5
Local businessmen (investors)	1	2	3	4	5
Foreign investors	1	2	3	4	5
Authorities in Belgrade	1	2	3	4	5
Authorities in Pristina	1	2	3	4	5
International institutions/Authorities in Brussels (EU)	1	2	3	4	5
Experts/professionals	1	2	3	4	5
Mass media	1	2	3	4	5
Religious groups	1	2	3	4	5
Foreign army (NATO)	1	2	3	4	5
Anything else? If yes, please specify	1	2	3	4	5

**20. Characteristics of Mitrovica as a city/urban centre:** Use numbers to prioritise the characteristics, where 1– the most accurate, 10 – not accurate at all.

industrial, student, trade, divided, cultural, sacred, historical, multiethnic, multicultural, border, traditional, peripheral

**21. In your opinion, what is the symbol of the city?**

.....

**22. Which structure(s) or place(s) in the urban space do you consider important? Why?**

.....  
 .....

**23. Which names of the city can you recognise/list and which do you use?**

.....  
 .....

**24. Based on your personal experience, for what reasons do the residents not want to cross the Ibar river? What would be your reasons against crossing Ibar? (in each line mark your answer with „X”)**

	Very common reason	Sometimes can be the reason	Not relevant	I do not know/do not have an opinion
I do not know the language, cannot communicate				
I do not want to communicate with the representatives of the other group at all				
I have negative experience (memories)				
My relatives forbid me to go there				
I do not have to go there, everything that I need is available in my neighbourhood/part of the city				
I have an experience of being discriminated in that part of the city				
I do not feel safe there				
I am afraid of how my fellows would react				
I was warned not to go there				
Anything else? If yes, please specify				

**25. For what reasons do/would you cross the Ibar river? (in each line mark your answer with „X”)**

	Very common reason	Sometimes it can be the reason	Not relevant	I do not know/do not have an opinion
Work				
Doctor (threat to health)				
Religious destination related to my faith (e.g. church or cemetery visit)				
Religious destination related to different faith				
Administrative affairs				
Friends				
Shopping				
School/university				
Walk/coffee				
Transport				

Events and places (cultural destination) related to my culture				
Tourist destination (vacation)				
Events and places (cultural destination) related to a different culture				
Anything else? If yes, please specify				

**26. To what extent do you agree with these statements?** (in each line mark your answer with „X”)

	I strongly agree	I agree in general	I neither agree nor disagree	I disagree in general	I strongly disagree
Mitrovica is a specific city					
Mitrovica is a divided city					
Mitrovica doesn't differ from other cities					
Mitrovica differs a lot from other cities					
The bridge is the symbol of the city					
If I had an opportunity, I would immediately leave Mitrovica					
I would never leave Mitrovica to live in a different place					
I wish the city became more integrated					
I do not mind the division of the city					
I would like to have more influence on the situation in the city					

**27. It is said that Mitrovica is a divided city. Why do you think someone could claim that? List specific examples of division(s).**

.....  
.....  
.....

**28. How often do you do the following?** Circle the appropriate number: 1 – very often, 2 – often , 3 – rarely, 4 – very rarely, 5 – never

Be in contact with representatives of another ethnic/national group in the city	1	2	3	4	5
Move to the parts of the city where representatives of another ethnic/national group live	1	2	3	4	5
Buy in shops owned by representatives of another ethnic/national group	1	2	3	4	5
Go to a restaurant/cafe/tertia owned by representatives of another ethnic/national group	1	2	3	4	5
Make friends/get acquainted with representatives of another ethnic/national group	1	2	3	4	5
Make business agreements with representatives of another ethnic/national group	1	2	3	4	5
Go to visit acquaintances from another ethnic/national group	1	2	3	4	5
Accidentally be in contact with representatives of another ethnic/national group in the city	1	2	3	4	5

**29. What could have a positive impact on the changes in the city?** (in each line mark your answer with „X”)

	I agree	I disagree	I do not have an opinion
Forming the Community of Serb Municipalities			
Full incorporation into the legal system of Kosovo			
Unemployment reduction			
Reconnection of the northern and southern parts of the city			
Full incorporation into the legal system of Serbia			
Opening the main bridge			
Crime reduction			
Solution of the Kosovo issue (status)			
Integration with the EU			
Solving real estate problems			
Recall of EU institutions (EULEX)			
Recall of UN institutions (UNDP, UNMIK, UN-Habitat)			
Withdrawal of foreign military forces (NATO)			
Anything else? If yes, please specify			