

Storytelling & Border Mobilities



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Abstract

The thesis is based upon a non-representational ethnographic research that investigates the driving forces behind storytelling affecting border mobilities with Mitrovica and a New Bridge as the case study. In constructing our thesis, we drew from the suitable elements of mobilities theory (Urry 2007), and the way of controlling movement through governing (Bærenholdt 2012). We also researched how power and the rationality is possessed (Flyvbjerg 1998), in relation to human and non-human interaction with materiality engaging (Jensen, Lannig, & Wind 2016) in the understanding of place and identity (Massey 1999), and what impact storytelling (Jensen 2007) does have in constructing of place. A study of history alone was not sufficient to fully grasp the issue of border mobilities, and hence, qualitative data was collected and analysed to comprehend how a narrative turns to a discourse when a sufficient number of citizens believes in the stories. The control of movement happens through placemaking, and places are rooted in the historical events. Recent events in Mitrovica has created borders by external powers and the New Bridge functions as a material setting that crosses political, physical and ethnic border. The conclusions illustrates that to a large extent, power over place is the driving force behind storytelling and border mobilities, however storytelling is used as important tool, as wider discourses can be started and further actions can be legitimized with it.

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1 Introduction

We visited Mitrovica on our second day in Kosovo. Following the main road from the bus station to the New Bridge, nothing seemed different from the local standard: infrastructure was underdeveloped, streets were scattered with debris, and the cars were the dominant mode of transportation, but that seemed to be the current norm of places in Kosovo we had already visited. After walking through the city, we arrived at the Ibar River and saw the New Bridge for the first time. If we had not known better, we would have thought it was closed for road construction. Despite the rainy weather, which did not encourage movement on foot, there was steady flow of pedestrians crossing the bridge both ways. You could see from a distance that car lanes were closed with construction materials, but other than that, it seemed like a normal bridge which would be open again in the near future.

But approaching the bridge, one could see a patrolling group of police. The police SUV was parked sideways, half of the vehicle being in the driving lane, and the other half over a ditch without apparent reason. Whatever the reason was, their presence was relaxed, in a way that they have gotten used to standing there and have found innovative ways to park their SUV. On our way to the north side of the bridge, two UN soldiers walked by. They did not appear to be there with a mission, but perhaps their business was somewhere around the bridge. At the other end of the bridge, a fence was waiting for us, seemingly to guide us around the supposed construction site and to enter Northern Mitrovica. Behind the small construction site surrounded by fence, and a road parallel to the Ibar River we saw the first glimpse of the wall we had read about before our arrival. More police were located here, now equipped with armoured vehicles decorated with Italian flags.

The cars had Serbian issued licence plates, and the flagpoles held Serbian flags instead of the Kosovar or Albanian ones which were both commonly spotted in the other parts of Kosovo we had already visited.

The concrete wall was maybe two meters tall, but for us it did not have much credibility: the length of dilapidated chain of concrete blocks was at most a few dozen of meters, hinting that one could go around it relatively easily. The wall constrained mainly the vehicular traffic, but as for pedestrians there were no real physical restrictions of movement. When we had barely just reached the north side of Ibar River, our local guide from the south asked if we were pleased and had seen enough. He seemed anxious being there and expressed a willingness to turn back. In fact, while crossing the bridge, the guide who was hardly in his twenties, said he had never crossed the bridge before, even though Mitrovica was his home town. He explained this with a strict opinion of 'the other' ethnicity, describing them with words used for describing an enemy. He was reserved, maybe even fearful, and lead us to understand that especially at night people tend to avoid crossing the bridge to the opposite side.

The Italian police, known as Carabinieri, were patrolling at north end of the New Bridge as a part of NATO's mission to secure the peace. When we returned to southern side, we saw the South Mitrovica municipality building close to the bridge, which we had missed earlier. It seemed unusual to us that a municipality would fly Kosovar, Albanian, American, and NATO flags in front of the building at the same time. We knew that this area had had its fair share of conflicts and was often referred to as the 'city divided'. The number of police and security forces, the presence of NATO, and the behaviour of our local guide strengthened this claim for us.

We left Mitrovica wondering why a certain group of people refused to use the bridge while others – even pupils from the elementary school themselves – crossed the bridge on daily basis. The surroundings of the bridge seemed peaceful yet somewhat crowded, albeit being nested with security and in the middle of afternoon. Just before we were leaving Mitrovica, we heard that parents advised their children not to cross. We asked ourselves who has the power to shape and determine the stories and directly affect on movement of individuals. We wanted to study how the narrative is spread and forms a wider discourse, who are the storytellers of the discourse and what are their motives?

This ethnographic study takes place in a country less than ten years old and with ongoing power struggles influencing its current governance. Kosovo declared its independence from Serbia in 2008, but within the borders of Kosovo, Serbia still has the legal right to influence some of the municipalities. The New Bridge connects one of these municipalities, namely North Mitrovica, to South Mitrovica. The bridge has become the symbol of ethnic division since the war ended in 1999. The debates and conflicts between the two countries have cultivated an abundance of stories, and through the material setting of the New Bridge over 'ethnic border' we aim to cast a light upon the important relationship between storytelling and mobilities. Furthermore, this is an attempt to illustrate how non-representational ethnography can be used as a method for mobilities research, as we position ourselves to being both participants and observers, trying to render the liveliness of everyday interactions and qualities between people and objects in the built environment. With the pragmatic state of mind and a non-representational approach, this is not an impersonal study of the reality, but rather we use the data collected as

material for further analysing the driving forces behind the connection of stories, mobilities, and evidently, power.

1.1 Scope of the Thesis and Formulating the Research Question

The introduction of the thesis was started by an observation of our first trip to Mitrovica. This descriptive story consists of the very first interaction with the place. What we wanted was to gain an understanding of the surrounding elements. Our first impressions from Mitrovica, a curiosity which was raised from the individual's mobility behaviour, an interest towards the narrative 'turn' and the relationship of power to all this led to the following research question:

- What are the driving forces behind storytelling affecting border mobilities?

The research question is further supported by three sub-questions under the themes of mobility, power, and place. Based on a preliminary understanding of the peculiarities of the case study, the following questions were formulated in order to help answer our main research question:

- What are the current border-mobility characteristics in Mitrovica?
- What kind of physical and material setting is provided in Mitrovica?
- What kind of power structures exist in Mitrovica?

Mitrovica and its border connections caught our main attention to the place and choice of subject for the thesis. The borders can be understood on several levels. Firstly, the official border of Kosovo in the north to Serbia, and the municipality border between North and South Mitrovica. Secondly, the

municipality border is also the political border, since it delineates the governmental powers of Kosovo and Serbia. Thirdly, this municipality border is in addition an ethnic border, as the north side is mostly populated by Serbs and south side by Albanians. The New Bridge crosses these borders and has been a stage for demonstrations and material setting for political debates. It has become the symbol of ethnic division, and the different borders are constructed materially, politically, and emotionally, as the stories are appealing to people's emotions. It is the municipality border with all its dimensions that we chose to focus on with the thesis, as it highlights the history, political powers, stories, and how mobilities are restricted across it.

One of the motives of this research was, how emotions and viewpoints are influenced through narration, as the preliminary understanding of the place and its mobility characteristics seemed to be embedded within emotions and feelings. However, emotions are connected to high politics, materiality and mobility behaviour. This a study of what part *mobilities* plays in ethnic and political debates over a place and by who or how is movement influenced or controlled?

The way we have chosen to study these driving forces of storytelling is through the eyes of participation and observation. The narrative 'turn' has guided us to see the influences of stories and helped us to understand how narratives and stories are constructed. But we do this with the point of departure from a mobilities perspective, and the hope that we can contribute our findings to mobilities and place management as well. We want to provide illumination, for example, to the field of urbanization and developing urban areas around the world, as similar attributes can be identified in many average cases as well: political decision making, economic interests, role of the media, how the rationale is constructed, what is the current norm in modes of movement, and how citizens are coping with the changes.

1.2 Reading Guide

The thesis started with an introduction and was followed by presenting the research question and our motives of conducting the case study. The thesis will unfold in the following way;

The Methodology chapter introduces our approach, methods, and data used. After Methodology, the Theoretical Framework presents our toolbox and how we grasp the case study. The structure of theory comes in the basis of mobilities, power, and place, which helps us to answer our sub-questions. In addition, remarks of narrative and storytelling is also presented to build understanding how different topics are approached. The theories are individually presented, but also knitted together and seen in relation to one another. Then, the backgrounds of the case study presenting the general events taken place in the Balkan history are presented before narrowing it down to the case in Kosovo and current situation in Mitrovica where we can find the New Bridge. The Analysis chapter discusses the findings of our case study by bringing together the background of the case, data collected from the field study, methodology and the theoretical framework. The Analysis reflects on the results of the data, how different interviewee subjects situate Mitrovica, what themes are brought up and how stories are forming the place. This way of analysing resolves the sub-questions that will in turn answer the research question in the conclusion. In the Discussion chapter we furthermore discuss how the results can be used in the field of mobility management in more general level.

2 Methodology

The following describes our choice of methodology. As we are studying mobilities over ethnic border with tensions related to the history, we needed to guide the research towards a wholesome understanding of the narratives concerning the case study. This procedure includes the use of the right techniques to select and identify the information that can further be analysed in Chapter five. The methodological scope will primarily be from the non-representational ethnographic standpoint with pragmatism as the backbone. Narrative analysis comes under non-representational as a method used to analyse the data collected from interviewees and everyday conversations. After these principles, we will then elaborate the features of the case study and continue to present our data collection methods. After covering the quantitative survey, the interviewees are introduced with a further argumentation for why we chose these people to be interviewed. The final part of the chapter concerns reliability and validation of our data.

Echoing back to the use of narration and storytelling in the pragmatic aspect, every human being is a narrator and holds a story they want to share. Through narration, we want to grasp individuals' mobility behaviour and reflect the power structures in Mitrovica. The story of the narrators is their own reality and meeting with the world. It may be recalled from their childhood memories, something that has taken place recently or recalling a simple observation that happened a few minutes ago. Using the study of a narrator's voice will be interpreted in the analysis chapter. In order to grasp the narrative, a qualitative data collection was used. The narrators will further be described under 2.4.

The questions for the interviews are formed with inspiration from the Chapter three: Theoretical Framework in combination with the background of the case study (Chapter four). In the Theoretical Framework Chapter, the themes mobilities, materialities, and power are illustrated. These theories have

been used to analyse and understand the data extracted from the interview subjects. The Backgrounds of the Case Study Chapter provides sufficient knowledge to understand these questions in context of Mitrovica. The history contributes to giving an overall attachment to the place, as it explains why it is shaped as how it is found today. However, as explained further below, this alone was not enough to gain the full picture representation of the place. The stories heard during the research are narrated from personal viewpoint and thus, the narrative analysis is required in order to analyse the data. The survey provides some glimpses of the mobility characteristics in Mitrovica, and a sense of place – or ‘sense of Mitrovica’. The concept of place is furthermore discussed in Theoretical Framework. The sense of place, how it is narrated, and mobility characteristics contributes to our main research question, which is trying to demonstrate the relationship between storytelling and border mobilities. However, challenges related to the non-representational approach and data collection methods will be elaborated further below (see Section 2.5).

2.1 Pragmatism

The methodological point of departure for the thesis was the pragmatic positioning. It acknowledges how the world can be interpreted in variety of different ways and thus, no single viewpoint alone can provide the entire picture and that multiple realities may exist (Saunders; Lewis; & Thornill, 2012). The research problem is emphasized instead of methods, and pragmatists use all available approaches available to understand the problem (Creswell J, 2014).

Ideas and concepts – such as place and space – are considered as tools and instruments to understand the world and allow experimentation in order to gain a better perception of the world we live in (Barnes, 2008). Pragmatism allows researchers to choose their methods, techniques and procedures freely without committing to any one; for example, both quantitative and qualitative

data are used because together they provide the best comprehension of the research subject. (Creswell J, 2014)

Therefore, theories and concepts in the thesis are used as tools to understand our research problem in its own context. Creswell might argue for the use of a research 'problem' in his theory, however we wish to address what challenges are found in Mitrovica. Mitrovica as a place does not necessarily hold a problem in our perception, but challenges. With the pragmatic state of mind, we do not believe in using one single method or technique, but one of the defining characteristics of our research is the approach of non-representational ethnographic.

With a Vannini-inspired approach, we are living within the case study area where we are participating in the culture and everyday life by letting our informants express their individual opinions with their own words. For this reason, some of the interviews are unstructured, but we have also used semi-structured interviews especially with informants who we identified as possessing important knowledge. Besides the interviews, we interacted and had conversations with people around us where Mitrovica and its situation was the topic. On the other hand, our web-survey is fully structured, where respondents were primarily answering ready answer options with tick-boxes or sliders (survey in appendix 3). A fully structured survey was mostly used to test some of the claims and opinions revealed by unstructured and semi-structured interviews with a larger audience. We are also adding our own interpretations into the mix: considering with what tone the informants are expressing themselves, what are the things they primarily want to bring up, e.g. what is important for them personally, but also if there are things left unsaid. How we used qualitative and quantitative data is further elaborated in section 2.3.

2.2 Ethnography

The aim of ethnography is cultural interpretation (Hoey, n.d.). The aim of the thesis is to have a cultural interpretation of Mitrovica with the use of narration. When interacting with citizens, the attempt is to reveal the driving forces behind their stories with the help of ethnography.

Ethnographers do not merely report events and details of experiences, but they also attempt to explain the cultural constructions we live in through close exploration of multiple data sources. To understand the culture, ethnographers are viewing the studied subject through emic perspective, or in other words from the 'insider's point of view'. The emphasis in this representation is to allow meanings to emerge from researcher's encounter rather than exert existing models. (Hoey, n.d.)

As both participant and observers, our aim is to interpret the cultures of our case study from the emic perspective: Mitrovica and the New Bridge which divides Mitrovica into two municipalities. The thesis is thus an attempt to explain the cultural construction of Mitrovica and the New Bridge: why is Mitrovica a divided city, how are the arguments around it are constructed, and how do these affect to the movement between North and South Mitrovica, or in other words, between two ethnicities?

According to Brian A. Hoey, Associate Professor in the Department of Sociology and Anthropology at Marshall University, a primary source of data for ethnographers is perhaps participant observation. Long-term engagement in the field represents the dual role that ethnographers have: researchers must become participants of the studied environment and maintain the status of an observer. (Hoey, n.d.)

Interviews offers targeted data collection. Regardless of the style of the interviewer, person being interviewed should be allowed to answer without limitation of given answer options. Questions should be open-ended, and often an ethnographic interview does not differentiate much from an everyday

conversation. Since ethnographic research often takes months or even years, most conversations are without specific agenda and are purely spontaneous. (Hoey, n.d.)

2.3 Non-Representational Ethnography

Our approach of non-representational ethnography draws inspiration from the work of Phillip Vannini. His arguments and viewpoints of other non-representational thinkers are represented in his article *Non-representational ethnography: new ways of animating lifeworlds*, published in *Cultural geographies* in 2015. In addition to this article, Vannini's thoughts are further supplemented from his presentation about *Non-Representational Theory and Ethnographic Research* (nd.). In his presentation Vannini outlines 20 non-representational theory characteristics which have guided his approach to non-representational ethnography. Vannini acknowledges that this is not a comprehensive list, but, that the other characteristics are not as influential in his approach. Non-representational approach is applicable for us, as the topic of ethnicity is important and often sensitive in the Balkans. Furthermore, the New Bridge crosses the ethnic border and represents the crossover of the human and the non-human world. With non-representationalism, we are allowed to analyse the fleeting encounters, practises, and feelings, and importantly, the role of materialities. Vannini's approach allowed us to focus on to the cultural interpretation of Mitrovica by using these elements.

Following the spirit of pragmatism and non-representational theory and variety of interpretations of it, some of the characteristics that Vannini used are presented in the following. The characteristics displayed have been functioning as main guidelines for us with pragmatist positioning.

Vannini acknowledges several agreements with other non-representational writers. To begin with, non-representational ethnographers should fight against methodological timidity. Researchers should find wider ranges of

writing genres which could allow them to engage more in performative and creative practises. Fight indeed, as Dewsbury suggests the disruption of research habits and making research more performative by seeking inspiration from arts and poetry as a part of embodied living, and by emphasizing the singular powers such as locution and thought. (Vannini, 2015)

Dewsbury suggests that traditional research methodologies should be pushed towards an appropriate direction to make them 'dance a little'. Depending upon whom you ask, the appropriate direction varies: for Laurier and Philo the direction is seeking what more or else can be said through the use of language, Ingold argues for the traces of pen in terms of sketching, and for Stewart, Wylie and Vannini, himself it is performative writing. For Hinchcliffe, direction is in the gaps of knowing and in the unsaid. Latham, like Dewsbury, argues that the new directions of research can draw inspiration from an embodied and sensuous everyday life. (Vannini, 2015)

According to Vannini, non-representational ethnography embraces the analysis of practises, feelings and the backgrounds of everyday life. Vannini describes traditional and realist ethnography as something which merely reports the observations as they are, but in a temporally complex lifeworld, non-representational ethnographers do not claim to be able or even interested to do this. Instead, they are impressionistic and creative, and try to 'animate' rather than mimic. (Vannini, 2015)

Realist and representational theories often downplay the characteristics of everyday life such as impulsiveness and vivacious while at the same time studying the everyday life through the fixed lenses of rational behaviour and mechanistic predictability. These theories are often built upon binary oppositions and they try to explain the world as set of separate units. But non-representational theory emphasises the crossovers of the human and the non-human world: it argues against the dichotomy between metaphysical and material, and thus, it is not only people, but "things" as well, who act and speak.

Non-representational theory pays attention to everyday existence and the sensuousness of it. (Vannini, nd.)

“The focus falls on how life takes shape and gains expression in shared experiences, everyday routines, fleeting encounters, embodied movements, precognitive triggers, practical skills, affective intensities, enduring urges, unexceptional interactions and sensuous dispositions. Attention to these kinds of expression, it is contended, offers an escape from the established academic habit of striving to uncover meanings and values that apparently await our discovery, interpretation, judgement and ultimate representation”. – Hayden Lorimer in Cultural geography: the busyness of being ‘more-than-representational’ (Lorimer, 2005)

Non-representational theory allows itself to be inconsistent, unpredictable, ambivalent and haphazard. Instead of static models, a subject of study is seen through a transformative lens, focusing on adaptation, versatility and evolution. The use of mobile methods is embraced for data collection. In addition, all actors – people, material objects, ideas, etc. – are interconnected, but they are not equal in terms of power. In other words, some actors are more powerful than others, and non-representational research, therefore, is focusing on interconnections, differences and rapports. (Vannini, nd.)

Non-representational theory is not abiding traditional research methods and it has a strong disinterest in absolute and universal knowledge. The outcome of a non-representational ethnographic research is personal and situated. This is what Vannini describe as reflexive ethnography: by positioning themselves in their own research without deviation to either side, researchers are sharing their work both from the personal narrative and from the academic perspective. Therefore, the work is not ‘biased’, but only informed by personal experiences, dispositions and skills. (Vannini, nd.)

The place subject to non-representational research has an important role as well: The materiality – properties of material objects – must be lively rendered and reflected upon by an ethnographer. The spatialities and temporalities are colouring the experiences that the researcher is facing in the field and thus it is important to use the present tense of the first person rather than timeless ethnographic present. (Vannini, nd.)

“Movement is the lifeblood of action and the dynamic underlining the genesis of the lifeworld.” –Phillip Vannini, nd.

These new viewpoints in methodology may entail greater focus on events and in the unsaid. In addition, focus falls on the incompleteness and openness of everyday performances. Many authors also suggest researchers embrace experimentation. In the core of ethos of ‘animation’ is the non-representational idea that there are other and diverse ways of knowing. (Vannini, 2015)

In other words, non-representationalism encourages the case study by interacting with citizens. This will give us a better understand what kind of border mobilities Mitrovica has. As a response to this way of connecting with the place, the following section, does indeed, involve how information can be extracted by using Yin’s purposes of study regarding a case study.

2.3.1 Narrative Analysis

As supported by our notions in the theoretical framework and keeping the methodology coherent with it, the following will briefly cover another aspect to consider - narrative analysis. This method will help us to interpret the stories told from the data collected that will be presented below. Narrative, by definition, explains or normalizes what has happened – or was imagined to have happened – and makes sense of it (Bamberg, 2012).

Narrative analysis then, refers to a variety of approaches in different kind of texts. Nations, governments, organizations, scientists, professionals, social

movements, ethnic groups and individuals, all construct stories according to their experience. What makes it narrative, is the sequencing and the scoping of the story to a certain audience by selecting certain events, and then organizing and connecting it to create meaning. Narratives are not accurate descriptions of the past, but rather they refract the history by the influence of teller's imagination and motives. (Riessman, 2005)

How narrative works, is further explained in the theoretical framework, but for now, let us focus on how to analyse it and why we argue for narrative analysis. We find the terms story, narrative, and discourse very close to each other, and despite that the meanings are slightly different, no clear boundaries can be drawn between them. Discourses represent something broad with widely accepted or spread opinions or interpretations. They are constructed by smaller building blocks, or stories, which in turn are told by individual narration. But when a narrative becomes a story, or a story to a discourse, is not simple to distinguish. But what is important, is to acknowledge that even widely accepted does not mean it would be the absolute truth. As shown in The Background of the Case Study, even the school books can tell very different realities of history, and thus they reflect back to the stories and narrative. What is common for all these, is that they might vary accordingly as to who is the teller.

"[...] analysis of space requires analysis of discourse if we are to understand how spaces come to be as they are, how people exist and act within space" (Jensen & Richardson, 2004, p.43)

There is no one way of conducting narrative analysis, and according to Czarniawska, no 'method' or 'paradigm' exists either, only an 'ample bag of tricks' (Jensen 2007). But following the advice of Jensen & Richardson, we now present some of those 'tricks'. Let us start by presenting the modes of narrative representation by Jensen (2007):

Table 1 Modes of narrative representation (Jensen, 2007)

Mode of representation	Characteristics	Examples
Text	Detached Information	Tables, lists, annals
Narrative	Information, temporal ordering, structure and causality	Chronicles
Story	Information, temporal order, structure, causality and plot	Life stories Novels
Discourse	Structuring meaning giving systems and institutionalized stories	Political ideologies Scientific medicine

Table 1 illustrates the hierarchical order of text, narrative, story, and discourse. It follows a narrow definition of narrative and suggests to study how place is framed in words. From the table we can see, that when detached information is structured by temporal ordering or causality it then becomes the narrative. Narratives are lower in the hierarchy than stories, which all contain plots. Stories, in turn, are an integral part of discourse, i.e., institutionalized stories. (Jensen, 2007)

In other words, as we interpret it, discourses are constructed through narratives where plot and meaning is added. This argument will be further elaborated on in the theoretical framework. The following illustrates some other 'methods' which we used to draw inspiration for our methodological choice.

In thematic analysis, the focus is in the context, where what is said is more important than how it is said. This approach where language is recognized as a resource rather than a target of study is particularly useful for finding similar thematic elements. Structural analysis, on the other hand, is oriented towards

how the story is told, but still includes the thematic content. The language used is in the spotlight, and the focus thus is about how the narrative is composed to stand persuasive. Rigorous following of this method would include the study of how the sentences are constructed and with what tone and weight particular words are used. In this approach, there is a risk of too strong emphasis is put on syntactic and prosodic features of talk, which causes the interview excerpts becoming unreadable if the reader is not familiar with the context and socio-linguistics. The strict approach of this analysis then might ignore historical and institutional factors. (Riessman, 2005)

In interactional analysis interest shifts towards co-construction of storytelling, where both the narrator and his approach as well are analysed since gestures and gazes are often left out from the transcriptions. But those gestures are studied in performative analysis, which is extending the interactional analysis beyond the spoken language. Researchers may analyse actors being 'on stage' and how the characters are positioned in a story. The performative view considers how narrators want to be known, and is appropriate for study of identity construction, for example. (Riessman, 2005)

We cannot put a finger on one of the four previously mentioned approaches, since we find them all applicable – at least to some extent – in our case study. Thematic elements are found, we interpreted in some cases the tonality and gestures of the narrator, and in some cases we have experienced successful conversations around the research topic and undoubtedly, we have then participated in the narration. But rather than choosing one method for every encounter, we have switched our approach accordingly with the pragmatic state of mind. These four approaches help us to vary our approaches and to focus on what we should be aware of: for example, some interviews were so neutral and only information based that the thematic approach almost chose itself, but in another case, the narrator took 'the stage', to present his viewpoints and allowed questions only afterwards. It was a prime example on how the narrator wanted to be known.

2.3.2 Case Study

As discussed, the non-representation ethnographic approach allows us to observe and to have an embodied interaction with what is being studied. This way of engaging with the society lets us extract not only new information but investigate the means behind the case of Mitrovica.

According to Andersen, a case study is a research method used in particular the field of social science, but also typically in professions provided within the practical department, city planning being among them. A case study is suitable when investigating the reason behind 'the cause' or 'several causes' in order to be able to develop a full understanding of what is being analysed. It recognizes the various variables (location, wages, the working environment etc.), and their characteristics in order to gain an overall comprehension of what is being analysed. It provides a holistic approach, where the aim is to unite the different elements to create whole understanding of the case. According to Yin in Andersen, there are three purposes that can justify a single case study: Firstly, the case is critical towards theory, models, assumptions or practices being used. Secondly, the case is unique or extreme, which presents a new combination of already familiar relations that has yet not been researched. Thirdly, the case reveals the phenomenon, meaning that the studied phenomenon has yet not been investigated. (Andersen, 2003)

"A case study is an empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon in depth and within its real-life context, especially when the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident". (Yin 2009)

Flyvbjerg states that typical or average cases are often not as rich in information than extreme or atypical cases. More actors are activated in this kind of situation. A case may be at the same time critical, paradigmatic, and

extreme, but not necessarily. Extreme case is deviant and holds an possibility to obtain information from unusual situations. (Flyvbjerg, 2006)

Stake puts weight on the uniqueness and individual aspect of the case. According to him, a case study investigation is guided by the nature of the case, historical background, physical setting, and political context, for example. (Stake, 2003)

The New Bridge is a case study examining the extreme situation between the ethnicities that has fought against each other for less than twenty years ago and is currently still a stage for debate. Different variables such as borders, political powers, and prevailing narratives are identified. We are using Yin's one of the three purposes of study, this thesis that is first and foremost extreme, or at least atypical case study. The power structures are of Mitrovica are very unique, as two countries holds power within one them and the juxtaposing of the two ethnicities still exists with parallel structures. Our research is also considering historical background, physical setting and materiality and political context as Stake argued. However, one could also argue that we are casting a light to phenomenon of storytelling, power, and mobilities.

2.4 Collection of Data with Several Methods

When considered what empiri would be right to guide the thesis, we considered both quantitative surveys and qualitative interviews as a way to stress research in a diverse matter. Quantitative data is a collection of statistics or larger quantities of a data that is needed in order to answer 'what' or 'how many' questions, which can help researchers to answer a hypothesis when conducting an experiment with various measures (Jeffrey, 2013). The empirical scope is affected by the encounters of the human and the non-human contact in the situational context which may emerge factors that will further contribute to our empiri and help to answer the research question. Therefore the qualitative data takes place through the non-representational ethnographic approach,

which allows data collection through self-observations and interviews. Using non-representational ethnography will let us get closer to the subjects and their perception of the social world.

2.4.1 Quantitative Survey

After conversing to people both in Pristina and Mitrovica early in our research, we noticed a weak pattern that those living in Mitrovica have often different perspective than the ones living outside Mitrovica, and it was not uncommon that the perceptions were contradicting. We wanted to study the factors involved in this pattern and how they are affecting people's perceptions. The survey was constructed with the following guidelines.

To improve chances of getting fully filled responses, the questionnaire should be kept as short as possible. Field-specific vocabulary and jargon should be avoided in order to gain an instant understanding of the question. Easy to select ratings and tick-boxes are known to be a far better choice over free-text boxes and open-ended questions. (Gould, 2011)

The survey was distributed through social media and email. If people had certain opinions about Mitrovica depending on if they live there or not, we wanted to find out how often people outside Mitrovica visit the place and what was their main source of information regarding the place. We were curious to hear their reasoning behind their stories, however we acknowledged that use of free textboxes is much less successful in surveys than tick boxes. Therefore, we included claims collected from previous conversations when engaged with the topic. Instead of freely describing their reasoning, respondents would answer how truthful these claims are on a scale of one to five. The survey had a background information section where participants would fill out their age, gender, nationality, ethnicity, and where they are from. We did a trial-run of the survey with a local person who did not know much about our field of studies in order to get feedback and to make the survey as clear as possible. Responding

was done anonymously. The further induction can be found in the analysis part and the questionnaire results in the appendix.

2.4.2 Qualitative Interviews

Non-representational ethnography has guided us to find the right kind of knowledge through following interview actors which will shortly be presented here, and further discussed in the analysis chapter (see Appendix for transcriptions). We considered people who are chosen because of the suitability and quality of their information. In fact, these actors with whom we conducted targeted interviews with sometimes directed us towards other actors who were also vital for our research. Though we got very good recommendations on who to interview, we also intentionally steered away from these instructions in order to gain other and perhaps opposite viewpoints as well.

2.4.3 A Short Introduction to the Interview Subjects

In the thesis, we pursued many different narrations in order to grasp the sense of place. The following persons are identified as targeted interviews, as they hold significant information due to their position. With the persons represented, we have tried to cover the viewpoints of different actors: international community, NGO's and local authorities. Interviews are used together with our observation, as we can reflect on these perceptions and ask the 'why' questions.

The table 2 will give an overview of who we conducted expert interviews with; the international perspectives by Göran Paulsson, a counsellor and positioned as the Head of Development Cooperation for the Swedish Embassy in Pristina (Embassy of Sweden, 2017) and Stein-Ivar Lothe Eide, Deputy Head of Mission for the Norwegian Embassy (Royal Norwegian Embassy in Pristina, n.d.). Mayor of South Mitrovica, Agim Bahtiri (Komuna e Mitrovicës, n.d.) presenting one side and Adriana Hoxhiq, Head of administrative presenting the

other (Osmani, 2013). Klodeta Krasniqi, the architect for UN-HABITAT (UN-HABITAT, n.d) and Miloš Golubović, project manager of Community Building Mitrovica (Mitrovica, 2016). These authority figures have different relations to Mitrovica based on their positioning and working title. The expert interviews are further elaborated in detail in the analysis chapter.

Table 2 Qualitative interviews

Name	Title	Organization	Date of the meeting
Göran Paulsson	Head of Development Cooperation	Swedish Embassy	10th of March
Agim Bahtiri	Mayor	South Mitrovica	17th of March
Miloš Golubović	Project manager	NGO: Community building Mitrovica	17th of March
Stein-Ivar Lothe Eide	Deputy Head of Mission	Norwegian Embassy	17th of March
Klodeta Krasniqi	Architect	UN-HABITAT	31st of March
Adriana Hoxhiq	Head of administrative office	North Mitrovica	5th of April

Agim Bahtiri is the Mayor of South Mitrovica. As the mayor, he has the leading position in city governance, dealing with policy and politics. He is also responsible for handling citizen's issues. (Komuna e Mitrovicës, n.d.)

Bahtiri, an ethnic Albanian, has lived in Mitrovica most of his life, however he spent 25 years working as a businessman in Switzerland. Therefore, his power prospect is influenced by his time working internationally as much as he holds a national understanding of Kosovo or more locally, Mitrovica itself. (Bahtiri, 2017)

Initially we wished to interview mayors of both north and south Mitrovica, however we were not capable of reaching Goran Rakić, mayor of the north

Mitrovica. The primary reason for having an interview with him was that we wished to gain a perspective from both sides of the municipalities. Since a meeting with Rakić was not possible, we contacted and arranged a meeting with north Mitrovica's principal executive officer, Adriana Hoxhiq (Osmani, 2013). Hoxhiq's role is from a technical standpoint and works with the director of the different departments in the municipality (Osmani, 2013). She does not deal as much with politics as the mayor but provides services for the citizens of North Mitrovica (Hoxhiq 2017). Hoxhiq, ethnic Bosnian, is born and raised in Mitrovica and is equally engaged with Mitrovica, and expressed her service oriented side towards the citizens.

What is particularly intriguing with the authorities mentioned above is how they both are a part of the Kosovo government, located in opposite borders and with different official positions. Perhaps because of the factors mentioned (ethnic background, position, location) their interpretations for the current and future Mitrovica differ. This draws our attention towards the two and how like or divergent their narration may be. How power can contribute with shaping their rationalities and how is this affecting Mitrovica? The question will be further be brought up in the analysis chapter.

Both Göran Paulsson and Stein-Ivar Lothe Eide are foreign diplomats working for the Swedish and Norwegian embassies in Kosovo. Their positions are different and so is their role and the experience they possess.

Paulsson has been working as a consultant as Head of Development Cooperation in Pristina for three years. In general, the Swedish embassy is based on strategies that are decided by the government. These strategies are in cooperation together with partners in the field of economic development, public administration and civil society, and environmental and climate areas. The partners are, for instance, the Prime Minister's Office for Policy Implementation and Ministry of Environment for local level implementation. The overall aim of both the European Union together with the international

community is to create stability and bring Kosovo closer to Europe. (Paulsson 2017)

Lothe Eide is the first secretary after the ambassador functioning as an advisor as the deputy head of mission in Kosovo. Norway plays an important role and has been involved with Kosovo since The Second World War. The embassy is involved with projects related to ethnical minority rights, gender issues, job creations etc. being financial aspects. The Norwegian role in Kosovo is to reflect who they are in light of cooperation with both the Serbian and the Kosovo governments by trying to normalize the relationship as a priority. They talk to everyone and get involved and contribute with advice. (Lothe Eide 2017)

Both diplomats are in their accordance role having an international perspective of the political situation in Kosovo and further Mitrovica. Their impact wish is to benefit Kosovo's cooperation with Serbia and normalize their relationship through their presence, contributing financially and with consultancy. For the reasons mentioned, the diplomat's role is not taking any of the sides. They are serving on behalf of their embassies, indifferent to the Serbia - Kosovo relation as they self-stated. The arguments and opinions are comparable to other aspects diplomats in the region may have. Therefore, they provided a foreign aspect.

Miloš Golubović is the project manager of Community Building Mitrovica, a non- governmental organization. Golubović himself is a local citizen of Mitrovica. He is ethnically Serbian, but considers himself Kosovar (Golubović 2017). The mission behind Community Building Mitrovica is to facilitate a dialogue between the cities of North and South. (Mitrovica 2016)

According to UNESCO's website, a non-governmental organization performs tasks that are societal oriented. They can be organized at different levels (local, national or international) and can capture the various interests and concerns of the people. The NGO's performance is to bring the challenges

of the citizens to the government, and to advocate and encourage political engagement through knowledge and information. (UNESCO, n.d.)

Community Building Mitrovica is capturing the challenges and issues experienced by the citizens of Mitrovica. Through the NGO, we have gotten an overview of what concerns are held by the people in relation to belonging, identity and place. The NGO is to some extent operating like an intermediate between the citizens and authority figures (UNESCO, n.d.). They are trying to grasp the needs of the people and express them to the government on their behalf (UNESCO, n.d.). Some of the main concerns were to decrease the gap between ethnicities in order to create a unified community someday.

Klodeta Krasniqi is a young Kosovar Albanian architect and planner that is currently working for UN-Habitat Kosovo. She has taken parts of her education in Pristina and Milano, Italy. (Krasniqi, 2017)

UN-Habitat Kosovo focuses on improving Kosovo's planning system and legislation towards a sustainable manner. They have provided technical support when drafting the new framework within the planning department by assisting the transition from the former top-down focus to more participation from the public, and being inclusive and having a multi-disciplinary approach towards planning. With this in mind, the aim and approach here is to consider the many needs of the different social groups through participation and transparency UN-Habitat is at the working with local and central government level, and with the University and civil society organisations. (UN-HABITAT, n.d)

"[...] UN-HABITAT has been working together with civil society organisations, decision makers and municipal planners to build a common understanding of the planning process and prepare civil society organisations with a focus on NGO's representing youth, ethnic minorities, and women, for participation in dialogues and public

debates and engagement as partners in strategic projects.” (UN-HABITAT, n.d)

For the reasons mentioned above, Krasniqi, a UN-Habitat member, expressed her opinions about Mitrovica (Krasniqi 2017). Through the interview, we have gotten an overall comprehensive view of what projects UN-Habitat are involved with in Mitrovica, what challenges they face when cooperating with the municipalities and how they engage citizens and other actors together in order to try to normalize the situation and building up the community across The New Bridge. Her narrative signifies the international importance of placemaking, and what role they play in the different planning levels in the government and citizen involvement (Krasniqi 2017). In light of power and narration, UN-Habitat is a trustworthy, internationally known organisation and their involvement and aspects are vital to consider. (UN-HABITAT, n.d)

2.4.4 Market Day

The initial intention of this encounter was to first get an impression of the place through everyday life. We had been told many stories at this point, and wanted to see for ourselves what ethnic groups attend the north Mitrovica market. So we used the location of the market as a place to figure out who came there, for what reasons and how often. We had a translator with us that helped with conversations from Serbian to Albanian. Since one of us can spoke and understood the language, we had an interview with our translator too. He was a local living in North Mitrovica and engaged with our topic. These answers are included as a part of the data collection in the analysis.

2.4.5 Everyday Conversations

The interaction with our conversations is a part of the non-representational ethnographic method of gaining information behind everyday conversation regarding Mitrovica. Since we wished to find out what are the driving forces

behind the stories told, these conversations will help is to know where their sources are from, why they think this way about Mitrovica and how motives are constructed.

The everyday conversations guided us in our research in terms of what we should ask from what other sources, but they also proved to be very interesting in terms of data gathering. Although the content of the stories was taken into consideration – especially if similar stories were repeated elsewhere – but the important data was people’s viewpoint when telling the story. The way they constructed their narrative, with what words they spoke of, how strict their opinion was, how much or how little they cared about the topic were all things we observed while having these conversations.

To answer our research question, we argue that it was necessary to understand people’s mind-sets first and, only then, to be able observe and explain their mobile pattern connected to the cultural and ethnic borders – which might be a sensitive topic for some. Their way of addressing the topic hinted towards the way what they really thought about it. But the mind-sets of the people were also in the scope because we needed to understand the story and its effects on the people’s opinions; how the narrative is working when it is used by power authorities or media.

2.5 Reliability and Validation of Methods and the Data

The following discusses the reliability of our data collection displayed. The first starts with interviews conducted, where we were limited due to a language barrier and our interviewee representatives were mostly from South Mitrovica and Kosovo. The second part discusses the quantitative data and its limitations. Due to the lack of responses the data from the survey is therefore applied as a supportive measure for qualitative interviews and our own observations rather than a self-evident.

2.5.1 Qualitative Data

Qualitative interviews were part of our mixed-method data collection. We had expert-interviews with persons identified as possessors of high knowledge in their respective field. With these interviews, we covered viewpoints of the international community with the Norwegian and the Swedish Embassies. Furthermore, a representative from United Nations Human Settlements Programme UN-HABITAT was interviewed as well. The Non-Governmental Organisations come in vast numbers in Kosovo and thus, the Community Building Mitrovica was chosen to get an idea of what NGOs engage with in Kosovo and more importantly, the NGO based in Mitrovica. Furthermore, the interview with the Mayor of South Mitrovica represented the political aspect and Head of Administrative Office in North Mitrovica represented the technical aspect of the 'city divided'. They provide viewpoints from South and North Mitrovica. Despite the effort, we did not have the chance to interview politicians with an ethnic Serb background. Neither did we interview any government level politicians in the South, but these perspectives are covered with their statements in media. However, some information might have gotten filtered in the process dependent on the media's reliability.

Part of our data collection was also the numerous and spontaneous everyday conversations and our own experiences. Even though we have regularly visited both the north and south sides of the Ibar River, we have lived and spent most of our time in Pristina. Many of the everyday conversations took place with internationals living and working in Kosovo or locals who spoke fluent English and often interacting with foreigners. These people were also almost all young adults. On the one hand, they were a relatively homogenous group of people, but on the other hand they were quite informed of current events, they had interesting perspectives to offer in terms of different peculiarities taking place in Kosovo and Mitrovica, and they were also critical towards all sides and not blindly supporting one alone. Nevertheless, the

spontaneous everyday conversations that took place represents only one, although informed, story.

2.5.2 Quantitative Data

Despite the multiple reminding messages, the questionnaire produced only 40 completed responses and 26 partially completed responses. We did not have a specific estimate of numbers we wished from participate in the survey, rather, our aim was to gain a diverse background of respondents and their viewpoints. The 26 partially completed responses were excluded from the analysis, since those answers were not comparable with the fully completed responses. Partially completed requires that some of the answers are saved, so these respondents did click to the next page but did not continue to submit the final answers. From the statistics, we could see that the link distributed was opened 349 times, giving the response ratio of 10%. We consider this as a relatively low number, but the analysis is done while acknowledging that this is far from a representative sample. Therefore, our aim is not to reveal something explicit with the questionnaire, but to compare our other notions and observations and see if any coherences can be found.

The Respondents

Over half of the respondents were in the age group of 22 - 27. Nearly one fourth were between 28 and 33 years, and 13 % were 16 to 21 years. The other categories (under 16, 34-39, 40-44, and over 45) all produced two or less responses. 60 % of the respondents were males. 48 % lived in Pristina and 28 % lived somewhere else than the given answer options. Only two responses were given from North Mitrovica and four from South Mitrovica. Roughly three quarters of the respondents were Kosovars by nationality, and despite the one Serb, the other 28 % chose the answer option 'other'. These others were Albanians (three), Americans (three), and some individuals from other European countries. Three quarters were Albanians by ethnicity, but responses consisted of a few Serbs, Bosniaks and one Caucasian as well. Some answered

the ethnicity question with their nationality, but these answers were either Americans or other European countries. The demography from the survey seems to be in accordance with our observations and statistics in Kosovo: most of the people are Kosovar Albanians, Albanians are presented as a close neighbour due to same ethnicity, the amount of Americans stands out, and a small selection of other European citizens is represented as well.

2.5.3 Limitations

The following section includes the reliability and validity of the respondents. Considering that 10 % of the ones who opened the link distributed on social media answered, this needs to be taken into account when analysing the data. The number of answers, ages, and where they come is treated accordingly. 90 % of the respondents were over 16 but under 34 years old. The questionnaire was also in English, which also excluded locals if they did not have the required language skills. Though a few responses we got were from our case study area, by far the biggest group of respondents were from Pristina. We did emphasize when distributing the questionnaire that we were interested in responses coming from outside Mitrovica as well, but one can also speculate that the questionnaire represented more the viewpoints of young, educated people who use social media and largely by those who live in the capital or other cities. Thus, these results do not represent the viewpoints of the generation which has participated in or properly saw the late 90's or earlier conflicts, people from smaller cities or municipalities, people who do not use or do not have access to the internet or the ones who do not speak English. Undoubtedly there are other groups as well which were excluded. The low number of responses is causing significant distortion in some of the answers, and therefore we cannot put too much weight on perspectives presented through this questionnaire, but rather they are used in supportive manner to the qualitative data.

We encountered some challenges during this ethnographic study. One of them being, that only one of us spoke the Albanian language. The language skills we possessed affected to the decision of focusing more on the Kosovar side, than the Serbian side of the story. However, since one of us had not been in Kosovo before, we also had the 'fresh pair of eyes' to interpret the cultural differences and nuances. What we lacked in the language skills, we gained in different perspectives. With these conclusions, we continue to present our theoretical framework in the following chapter.

3 Theoretical Framework

The previous chapter emphasized how pragmatism allows the researchers to use diverse tools and find flexibility when conducting empirical research and understanding everyday life. The following theoretical framework is considered as a part of the pragmatic view. These theories are used as tools in order to understand and study the link between stories and individuals' mobile behaviour. Another aspect is looking upon 'The New Bridge' as the material linkage of embedded performances. The two aspects are trying to give an understanding of the place. The theoretical framework has evolved through the work of the thesis, as we have gained knowledge based on critical parameters reflected as interesting to investigate in relation to the case of Mitrovica.

The structure of the chapter starts off by arguing our choice of theories. Then, the concept of mobilities turn, as the base of the theories. The next will present notions of power and rationality which will be further elaborated in relation to mobilities and place. Moving onwards from the mobilities and power, place and materiality will be discussed, with the relations to movement in and around it. Materialities are crucial when discussing about the place as New Bridge is part of the materialities between two places. The final tool is the use of 'storytelling'. Narrative analysis has been mentioned in the methodology chapter but in this chapter narration, or storytelling is introduced as a tool used when analysing our data. The conclusion of this chapter knits all the tools together through the illustration of the theoretical diagram.

The theories are used as tools to understand the driving forces behind movement and stories. In the centre of our research is the New Bridge, which has been symbolically disconnecting but *de facto* connecting pedestrians between the north and south of Mitrovica. The material bridge is used as a stage for stories, which influences influencing the place and which will eventually influence the mobilities in and around it, like we will later argue. The bridge is a material representation illustrating the peculiarities of the border in question.

Despite of its historical events that will be elaborated in the following chapter (Background of the case), it has been a stage and symbol for the flow of movement, immobility, past mobile practices, emotional experiences, political situations and the power that has created the place. Therefore, role of place has to be seen in relation to mobilities and materialities of the New Bridge.

In order to gain a holistic theoretical base, the work of following authors will be presented. The point of departure for the thesis is '*the mobilities turn*' by John Urry. Following mobilities, Tim Cresswell's notions of *place* is introduced. In his writing of '*Place - An introduction*', Cresswell has reached out to an interdisciplinary audience. Brought up powerful notions related to place and belonging, we will use Cresswell's concept of place as a means when trying to grasp movement between borders in Mitrovica. In addition to the sense of place, materialities will contribute to the comprehension. However, place cannot have meaning without *power* (Cresswell, 2015), thus the notion of power will be enlightened when studying Mitrovica with Bent Flyvbjerg's thoughts from the book '*Power and Rationality - Democracy in Practice*'. In addition, geographer Doreen Massey conceptualizes time and space and sees the dimensions as rooted in history (Massey 1991). Mitrovica, as any other place, is historically formed. To link the power to place, and how places can be branded and influenced, we use Ole B. Jensen's notions from urban branding. These notions refer back to power, and demonstrates the interlinkage between the theories. The understanding of Mitrovica – from a mobilities perspective – as a place with notions of Massey and Cresswell, and in the context of power by Flyvbjerg and narration by Jensen will later be brought up in the analysis chapter where the we will combine the tools together to achieve a reflective comprehension.

3.1 Concept of Mobilities

The whole world seems to be on the move. The range is vast and stretches from asylum seekers to sports stars reaching out their next match destination, from air passengers to daily commuters, and from backpackers crossing the globe from one edge to another. However, *mobilities* is more than just moving from A to B and involve a variety of social practices, it is time and space dependent, and, therefore it has a widespread influences in relation to societies. (Urry 2007)



Figure 1 Palestinians removing roadblock restricting movement in December 2015 (Source: International Solidarity Movement)

The scale of this travelling is enormous, and around this phenomenon ‘*the new mobilities*’ paradigm started to form within social sciences. Contributed by work of anthropology, geography, science and technology, tourism, transport, sociology and migration studies, for example, *mobilities* can truly have a variety of different approaches. At the same time when new places and technologies enhances mobility for some, they also increase immobility for others, especially when it comes to crossing borders. (Sheller & Urry, 2006)

The concept of mobilities covers a wide spectrum of movement of people, goods, capital, and information across the world but also the daily

transportation and movement through public and private space in a local level. The issues of mobility around the world are in the focal point: fear of illicit movement and the related security risks are increasingly affecting to the logics of governance. Institutions are reorganized, risks and illnesses are moved across the globe, and social and educational life are transformed by mobilities. These changes transform the families, communities, spaces, and also the commitments of people towards the nation. Essentially, the nation itself is transformed by mobilities. (Hannam;Sheller;& Urry, 2006).

A further notion of the '*new mobilities paradigm*' is the range of mobility-systems and the complexity within and in between these systems. What Urry mediates here is the inequalities made between people and places in terms of their location and access to mobile-systems. Mobility-systems can be viewed as *infrastructures of the social world*. By '*mobile-systems*' Urry describes the possibilities that generates movement; (Urry 2007)

"They provide 'spaces of anticipation' that the journey can be made, that the message will get through, that the parcel will arrive. Systems permit predictable and relatively risk-free repetition of the movement in question." (Urry, 2007 p.13).

According to Urry, this is a result of the mobile world. The sequent augments how power has been and is connected to mobility-systems. (Urry 2007)

Mobilities are highly affiliated with the concept of power and differential mobilities reflects the power hierarchy and structures of societies, as rights to travel can vary between races, genders, ages and classes (Hannam;Sheller;& Urry, 2006). Described by Skeggs (2004), mobility and control over it both reflects and enforces power. Therefore, mobility can be thought of as a resource, in which not everyone has equal rights (Sheller & Urry, 2006).

At the same time when new places and technologies enhances the mobility for some, they also increase the immobility for others, especially when it comes to crossing borders (Sheller & Urry, 2006). Hannam, Sheller and Urry (2006) argues that debates over lack of public transportation and poor land-use planning, for example, are issues of mobility and moorings: who is able to move and who is trapped in.

In addition, Urry (2007) suggests, that societies should be studied through their mobilities: from the examination of movement of people, goods, information, etc., one can gain new and valuable insights and aspects about the society. But it is important to acknowledge, that the mobility does not refer only to physical movement, but the mobility as a phenomenon covers at least for key areas: (Hannam;Sheller;& Urry, 2006)

1. *“Migration, tourism and travel*
2. *Virtual and Informational Mobilities*
3. *Mobility nodes and spatial mobilities*
4. *Materialities of Mobilities”*. (Hannam;Sheller;& Urry, 2006)

From above (see figure 1), we can conclude that mobilities is truly a widespread phenomenon covering physical, immaterial and virtual movement on different scales. After presenting the main point-of-departure for the thesis, we will now continue to present the closer framework within a mobilities approach. The following chapters will introduce the concepts of place, materialities, narrative and power. At the end of this chapter, we will sum up how these concepts are used together with our topic and approach.

3.2 Power and rationality

To explain the characteristics of power, the further notions are taken from Bent Flyvbjerg's book *'Rationality and Power – Democracy in Practice'*. Flyvbjerg (1998) used an in-depth case study of politics, administration, and planning in

the Danish town of Aalborg, and in essence, it demonstrates how power is used in the “Aalborg Project”, which is facing the challenges of a growing number of cars in relation to environmental and social concerns. Flyvbjerg is standing on the shoulders of Michel Foucault, who also worked with the theme of power. The main characteristics of power and rationality is presented here, to be later used in our local context but also when analysing general notions of storytelling and mobilities.

Flyvbjerg raises the problems between rationality and power. Their relationship is asymmetrical, and the normative emphasis on the rationality ignores how the power works, and thus it is being dominated by power. Hence, Flyvbjerg suggests considering if this kind of relationship is affordable in the modern society. To tackle this weakness of modern society, the first step is to understand power. (Flyvbjerg, 1998)

“[...] power defines what counts as knowledge and rationality, and ultimately, [...] what counts as reality.” –Bent Flyvbjerg (1998, p. 27)

Instead of understanding reality, power seeks to define a specific reality. This means that power might see knowledge as an obstacle, and thus suppresses the rationality and knowledge for which it has no use. Power, then, produces the rationality and knowledge supporting the reality it seeks. The principal strategy of power is rationalization presented as rationality, by blurring the separating line between the two. Rationalizing takes place at the backstage, hidden from public view. But it is presented as rationality on stage in a sophisticated way, since rationalization violates the accepted professional ethics. (Flyvbjerg, 1998)

Flyvbjerg also raises the topic of interpretations: for example, from the same survey there can be two different interpretations, but the one who can put greater power behind its interpretation, then becomes the “truth”. This

interpretation – selected by power – is then understood as the new reality. This demonstrates how power defines reality. (Flyvbjerg, 1998 p.117)

“[...] power does not limit itself to defining a specific kind of knowledge, conception, or discourse of reality. Rather, power defines physical, economic, ecological, and social reality itself. Power is more concerned with defining a specific reality than with understanding what reality is. Thus, power seeks change, not knowledge. And power may very well see knowledge as an obstacle to the change power wants. This, I will argue, is the most important single characteristic of the rationality of power, that is, of the strategies and tactics of power in relation to rationality. Power, quite simply, produces that knowledge and that rationality which is conducive to the reality it wants. Conversely, power suppresses that knowledge and rationality for which it has no use. In modern societies the ability to facilitate or suppress knowledges is in large part what makes one party more powerful than another” – Bent Flyvbjerg (1998, p.36)

Flyvbjerg’s notion of power and rationality works as a tool for the thesis when interpreting what stories has been told and by whom. It helps to understand the power possessed and how is it expressed and with what rationality. However, power has direct connections to mobilities and thus, the following section will further link power with mobility.

3.2.1 Mobility and power

Moving from power and rational towards the use of power within the notions of governing in relation to border mobilities: Urry explains the *mob* – referring to a uncontrollable crowd – is seen disorderly because it is mobile without defined borders and therefore needs be tracked and regulated. This is connected to governmentality, which is an interesting view in relation to power: how certain laws and systems designed limits movement. An example

is a look on the surrounding design and its effect on mobility. Urry underlines that when circumstances are in favour of the walker it challenges the car driver. Nevertheless it leads to diversity of interactions on the streets that may form various activities. As a contrary, are absent places, which produces bodily insecurity and an avoidance of 'interactional vandalism'. This is something that can occur in a homogenous society and can be directed to a group of people dependent on ethnical background, gender, age etc. which will be further elaborated below. (Urry 2007)

This section will look at how government has controlled mobilities in societies, traced by Michel Foucault in late 20th century in Jørgen O. Bærenholdt's article '*Governmobility: The Powers of mobility*' (2012).

"Mobility may be governed, but it is first and foremost a way of governing, a political technology. It can be argued that in most cases, mobility is more a question about the making of societies than a threat to societies" (Bærenholdt, 2012 p.20).

Bærenholdt identifies how Foucault attempted to propose a concept for explaining self-governance of people through their freedom of movement as a dynamic relation with material dispositions by using the term '*governmobility*'. It stresses on how mobilities involve social and cultural dimensions, therefore it holds both meaning and power. Foucault's description of power; (Bærenholdt 2012)

"[power is] relational, mobile and never complete, always in the making" –Michael Foucault in (Bærenholdt, 2012 p.23)

And '*governmentality*';

“Human practices have been institutionalised with certain understandings and routines, whereby the population governs itself.”

–Michael Foucault in (Bærenholdt, 2012 p.25)

When stressing on the relation of power performed in mobile practices, the focus is rather on the government of mobilities than the government through mobilities. But, in fact government of mobilities might actually indicate the indirect process of governing societies through mobilities. (Bærenholdt 2012).

Bærenholdt criticizes the view of governmentality and how it is being used through mobilities which produces inequalities. That these inequalities are a product of societal obstacles rather than connections. Inequalities needs to be taken seriously through the government’s further attention to the societies. Meaning that governmentality and power may be in charge of a specific common space and, through mobilities, politics can manage and control borders and places. This further notion of governing may also challenge societies through the production of immobility when restricting freedom. Thus mobilities are shaping societies, and are directly connected to one another. (Bærenholdt 2012)

Urry (2007) asserts that state intervention can make the choice of limiting mobility ‘rights’ to certain groups of people. The state holds the power to choose who are the “good and bad” movers and may label a certain group based on a cultural practice, ethnicity, faith or skin color. This is because certain states seeks to control, monitor and even limit people’s right of movement. This act can, as Urry states, be traced back as fearing the mobile, and the fear of the dangerous ‘mob’. These characteristics of certain places illustrates how societies may be dominated by mobile-systems. (Urry 2007)

Furthermore, one of the features when studying mobilities and power is the narrative exploration, in which the narrative is constructed by the government in the policy making. Ole B. Jensen, together with Tim Richardson, identifies spatial ideas behind this discourse and shows how these ideas are socially and

politically organised in space as a part of everyday practices. *'Making European Space: Mobility, power and territorial identity'* (2004) considers the construction of the new discourse of European spaces from the 1980s that emerged new thoughts, practices and ideas related to mobility and transport. The discourse wished to shape the EU policy of agenda by including the spatial dimension to the economical, social and political agenda. The vision is to make a monotopic Europe based on a 'Zero-friction society' where the infrastructure shapes ways of living, travel, and work towards mobilities flow and harmony between spaces. It seeks to break down barriers that control freedom of movement. However, the freedom of movement is dependent on the physical infrastructure that in most cases is institutionally framed by governmental political control. There is a need for mediation from both a top down and bottom up. (Jensen & Richardson 2004)

"Spaces, then, may be constructed in different ways by different people, through power struggles and conflicts of interest. This idea that spaces are socially constructed, and that many spaces may co-exist within the physical space is an important one. It suggests the need to analyse how discourses and strategies of inclusion and exclusion are connected with particular spaces". -Flyvbjerg & Richardson (2002, p.56)

Jensen and Richardson are trying to identify challenges in relation to the power interests of spaces, how they are dealt with, and what frameworks are considered in the policy making. They argue that spatialities need a practical and cultural oriented understanding in order to create conditions for everyday societies. They suggest the following critical elements; (Jensen & Richardson, 2004)

"The first of these is the role of socio-spatial relations in the construction of a territorial dimension of identity. The second is the significance of the study of flows and mobilities in understanding

socio- spatial relations. [...] Finally, [...] how mobility, and the organisation of space, must be considered across spatial scales from the local to the global, if we are to understand how Europe is being constructed.” (Jensen & Richardson, 2004 p.42-43)

According to Jensen and Richardson, lived spaces are shaped by discourse or by actions in these spaces that has later, in turn, shaped discourses (Jensen & Richardson, 2004). Therefore, to be able to understand how lived spaces become as they are, how people act and shape them, it is crucial to study not only the phenomenon of the place but discourse as well.

3.3 Interactions with Place & Materiality

Moving from the relation of power and mobility towards the study of place and materiality, the following looks at the ‘situational’ context. Since the thesis is heavily concerned with perceptions of a place and the mobilities within it, the concept of place is therefore relevant to introduce. The following provides an introduction for how the place can be understood and used in the research. Tim Cresswell points out in his book *‘Place – An introduction’*, what geographer Jeff Malpas has argued: in interdisciplinary research the place is a key term in a variety of different fields (Cresswell, 2014). Places provide the material settings for embodied performances, and therefore, the approach scopes the relation of places, cultural practices and materialities. This illustrates how they cannot be found meaningful when separated one from another.

3.3.1 Place

The geographer Doreen Massey argued in her essay *‘A global sense of place’*, that between a local place and the global world there are a number of relations and that it is the relations to the surrounding world through which places has to be understood. Therefore, there is a need to understand places as processes since places do not hold one single border or a unique identity. A fixed picture

of a place is impossible to capture, and thus, it is also impossible to fully understand places if looked upon isolated. Instead, the place is required to be studied in its' constant movement. (Massey, 1991)

However, Tim Cresswell puts more weight on the relationship between people and places. He argues that spaces – unknown abstract areas between the places – become places after people have created meaning for them. Although a place can refer to a physical location with fixed coordination or a possession of a certain location – as in “my place” or “your place” – place can also refer to position in hierarchy or in a timeline. (Cresswell, 2014)

“Place, then, needs to be understood as an embodied relationship with the world. Places are constructed by people doing things and in this sense are never ‘finished’ but are constantly being performed”.
(Cresswell, 2014, p. 69)

A few examples of how places are constructed by people and being performed are some well-known historical events. Events such as the demolition of the Berlin Wall, the demonstration and brutal removal of the demonstrators in Tiananmen Square in Beijing and waves of protest in Tahrir Square in Egypt as a part of the Arab Spring all took place in a certain location with physical settings and hosted historical significance within them. Locations and physical settings had important role in each of the case. (Cresswell, 2014)

But the concept of place includes also the concept of power. Quite naturally, the power over place can come by owning a certain place, like for example, a flat. But authorities, politicians, and private companies might have power over some places as well: police and security forces are ensuring peace for a place and politicians might have strong support and mandate from a certain area and therefore, power as well. In the digital age, Google Maps appear to show results nearby, but, in fact, it shows primarily those businesses who have optimized their visibility in the Google search engine. (Cresswell, 2014)

“Place is a shared resource, and when you give all that power to a single entity, you are giving them the power not only to tell you about your location, but to shape it” –Wroclwaski in (Cresswell, 2014 p. 4)

The word place is often used only to refer a location. But places are not bound only with one location, as the word refers also to a material setting for social relations: (Cresswell, 2014)

“A ship, for instance, may become a special kind of place for people who share it on a long voyage, even though its location is constantly changing.” (Cresswell 2014 p.13)

Cresswell argued, that place includes the notions of locality, materiality, meaning and power, but Claus Lassen added the mobilities to the equation as well, since the mode of travel and place is often related. Locality refers to a physical location, and materiality to the physical settings at the location. The different perceptions are summoned in the meaning while power is connected to the status of the place. Finally, since the place is required to be understood in its constant movement and relations to the surrounding world, the mobility part is covering accessibility, connectivity and flows of movement of – and within – the place. (Lassen, 2016)

From the above we can conclude, that places can have multiple and overlapping definitions at the same time. Place may provide fixed coordination or it can be a place in a certain time, but just as well can be the material setting without fixed coordinates for social relations. But as Massey (1991) emphasizes, none of this takes away the importance of the uniqueness of place. Instead of thinking places as labels, they should be considered as raw material for creating identity (Cresswell, 2014). The following chapter discuss places in the perspective of materiality as it is deeply linked to the concept of place.

3.3.2 Materiality

Our aim of the thesis is to study the stories and narrative that affects citizens' movement and what may influence their mobile behaviour. To study the perception of the narrative connected to everyday behaviour and patterns we drew inspiration from the article by Jensen, Lanng, & Wind: '*Mobilities design - Towards a research agenda for applied mobilities research*' where the thought of an interplay between materialities and mobile subjects is discussed. In the article Jensen, Lanng, & Wind (2016) unfolds the aspects of how the new mobilities paradigm challenges the view of space as a social process, but engages analysis of places with relations, flows and but not as fixed places. The social world is generated over time-space, highlighted in relation to the local and global, and between people's movement, material belonging, and the physical and symbolic dimensions of mobility cultures. In a mobile situation, the following three analytical dimensions are explored; (Jensen, Lanng, & Wind 2016)

1. *The material spaces and design*
2. *The social interactions*
3. *Embodied performances.* (Jensen, Lanng, & Wind, 2016)

Further emphasis of mobility can be drawn from Jensen & Richardson, where they argued that movement between and within spaces is increasingly shaping the socio-spatial relationship. They also brought up an example of bridges, which can have different meanings: from allowing people to commute to work to binding new regions and cross borders. (Jensen & Richardson, 2004)

By support from pragmatism, and through the eyes of the non-representational ethnographer, the study of everyday life and mobilities are, according to Jensen et al. (2016) enabled and disabled through materialities design. To further examine the interplay between materialities and mobilities the following will seek to determine the analytical dimensions, starting with the material spaces and design (see figure 2).

The widely-used vocabulary of materiality of design includes the notions of surface, volume, space, voids, etc., while the abstract meanings of the “material” engages with design and opens to discussions about diverse approaches and methods. This pragmatic attitude likes to experiment and be explorative towards new alternative realities. The interrelation between the design environment and mobilities is looking at how materialities points or direct people to move in a certain ways. (Jensen, Lanng, & Wind, 2016)



Figure 2 "The Bicycle Snake" in Copenhagen is built to connect only bicyclists (Source: Visitcopenhagen, nd)

There is, therefore, no separation between materiality and humans. Humans are, in this relationship heterogeneous entities that move and shape varied networks. Materialities take the mobile subject in any situation as they are on the move or interacting with not only material design of architecture, but also street signs, objects from A to B, including infrastructure, regions, journeys, and other materialities of the everyday route like mobile phones, GPS systems, coffee, tickets, bags. This indicates how materialities are actively participating in the people’s mobile situations. Therefore, the human is an actively catch up with ‘mobile sensemaking’. (Jensen, Lanng, & Wind, 2016)

3.4 Impacts of storytelling

The term *narrative* and *story* is referred throughout the previous chapters but let us introduce some of the narrative elements furthermore. After illustrating the importance of mobilities and its interconnections to place, materialities, and power, we now dive into the narrative part of the theory. The narrative is the last part of our theory chapter and will provide an important step in order to understand our topic *Storytelling and Border Mobilities*. After the narrative and storytelling aspect is covered, we will sum up theories in the sub conclusion to further be used in the analysis and conclusions.

To briefly explain some of the ‘narrative’ terminology, we introduce a few combined thoughts from Ole B. Jensen, Catherine Riessman and Ruth Finnegan. In his article ‘*Culture stories: understanding cultural urban branding*’, Jensen (2007) argued that in a broader perspective every *story* is a *narrative*. In his earlier article, ‘*Branding the Contemporary City - Urban branding as Regional Growth Agenda?*’, Jensen (2005) linked branding, narrative, and storytelling:

“Thus building a strong brand image has to do with identifying the most relevant associations and strengthening their links to the brand. [...] the branding process is a process of creating an evocative narrative with a spatial referent through selective storytelling.”
(Jensen 2005)

In a narrower definition, story and narrative hold different meanings, (Finnegan, 1998; Jensen, 2007) but again in a broader perspective we can argue that the terms narrative, storytelling, and branding are tightly connected, if not, synonyms. Jensen (2007) further presented the analytical framework for narrative representations, where he, in addition to *narrative* and *story*, also included the term *discourse* as “institutionalized stories”, being the highest in this hierarchy. Despite the profoundly different context, both in our case study and in Jensen’s article, competing stories and actors which are trying to affect

the area of accordance are identified. Based on these notions – but acknowledging the difference of specific definitions of terms – we argue to use branding as storytelling and thus, letting us continue with the notions of urban branding, as we are with this definition, essentially studying a certain type of branding of an urban area.

In urban branding, social agents voice the spatial changing ideas through narratives and stories, which are part of a larger discourse. The stories presented are structured to motivate and legitimize the intervention, and thus, storytelling has become a new form of governance. The stories concerning the same place are often competing and told by different actors, but one of the fundamentals of place and narrative is the theme of power. In other words, it is the power what links place and narrative. (Jensen, 2007)

In addition, Eckstein (2003) and Throgmorton (1993) in (Jensen, 2007) elaborated on this thought by claiming that community boundaries are set by storytelling and narration, defining those who are included in and excluded from the audience. Understanding storytelling in its broader definition, or as a part of discourses, we can remind what Jensen & Richardson (2004) stated about discourses:

“Discourses produce lived spaces, and actions within lived spaces in turn shape discourses” –Jensen & Richardson (2004, p 43)

From the notions of space and place presented previously, we can then analyse that discourse might change the abstract, unknown space to the social agent spreading the discourse through stories, but in fact it is a lived *place* for some. Jensen (2007) recognizes a variety of actors who contributes to the diversity of stories in his topic of urban development in Aalborg, such as city council members, the local developers, the business community, the university, and the culture scene. But Mirriam Greenberg (2000) also pointed the extreme importance of the role media plays in this construction of the representation.

But as places do not hold one single identity, neither does the narrative. Time, place, actors, and context structure the narrative of the events, and thus no phenomena exist with only one narrative (Flyvbjerg, 1998, p8). Essentially,

“[...] urban branding is evocative storytelling aimed at educating its recipients to ‘see the city in a particular way’” (Jensen 2007).

3.5 Conclusions of Theories

The theoretical framework operates with certain elements that are considered as tools to understand the case study. These tools are used when conducting the data collecting and analysing the findings found in the analysis chapter. What is important to mention is the effect of storytelling as a individual power. If not including storytelling, mobilities, power, place, we would not have the same understanding of the New Bridge. The following will further elaborate the theoretical elements together and discusses them as a whole.

Like presented in the Concept of Mobilities, mobility is a resource which is not equally distributed and power structures of everyday life is embedded within it. In addition, Bærenhold argued that mobility may be governed, but more than that, mobility is a way of governing. In other words – as we interpret it – mobility is power, in a similar way that natural resources or wealth. Jensen & Richardson reminded us that it is the movement which shapes the socio-spatial relationship and Urry in turn argued that societies should be studied through their mobilities. As Urry also argued that mobilities is a lot more than just physical movement from A to B, and an integral part of our everyday life, then, if one can restrict mobilities, it can be said that power, thus goes beyond physical restrictions of movement and through movement one can shape places as well and it is certainly a way of governing. The notion of the fear of illicit movement and the need to control it furthermore demonstrates the relationship between mobilities and power.

However, we argue that different individuals hold various levels of power that is related to their positioning in the society. Meaning that a someone with high societal status might possess a higher extent of power than a citizen. Therefore, that individual may have the power to create a discourse while the individual narrates his story and attempts might be less influential to the community around him. Another important notion is the power and rationale is used through the elements presented in the thesis: materiality, place, branding, mobilities. All these elements do hold a certain power and rationale within them, however not highly expressed individually. Therefore, through the eyes of Flyvbjerg, this is considered and discussed in the analysis chapter.

In addition, we identified, that power is also mobilised, always on the move, and not stationary or sedentary. This reminds also how places should be understood: borderless and as ever changing processes and heavily affected by mobilities to, from, and within it. Places are also affected by different entities telling competing stories about it. For stories, places are stages which provide the location and/or the physical settings for them and through the stories the location and the materiality might get symbolized and give meaning also for those who do not have any previous relation with the place. Since the storytelling – in the broad sense of the term – tries to educate the recipient to see things in a certain light, once more the power element comes in the picture. As Flyvbjerg argued, power seeks the rationality and knowledge supporting the wanted reality and suppresses the ones for which it has no use. To put this in the perspective of narration, it is selective storytelling, e.g., what is not said is equally important as what is being said. In the broad – and our – understanding of the term *story*, the terms of narrative, story, and discourse are synonyms. The *discourse* might refer to institutionalised stories, but they are, nevertheless, stories. Therefore, the social agents or actors telling stories do not have the same influence, and this is why the power distribution must be taken into account: politicians, media, private businesses and individuals have different potentialities to influence, but also motives and the means of telling their

stories. Within their respective community, every representative has again, difference in power.

Hence, mobilities, place, power, and narrative are intertwined with each other and must be understood in their local contexts. To operationalize these theories, the following theoretical diagram is presented to illustrate how we have used them:

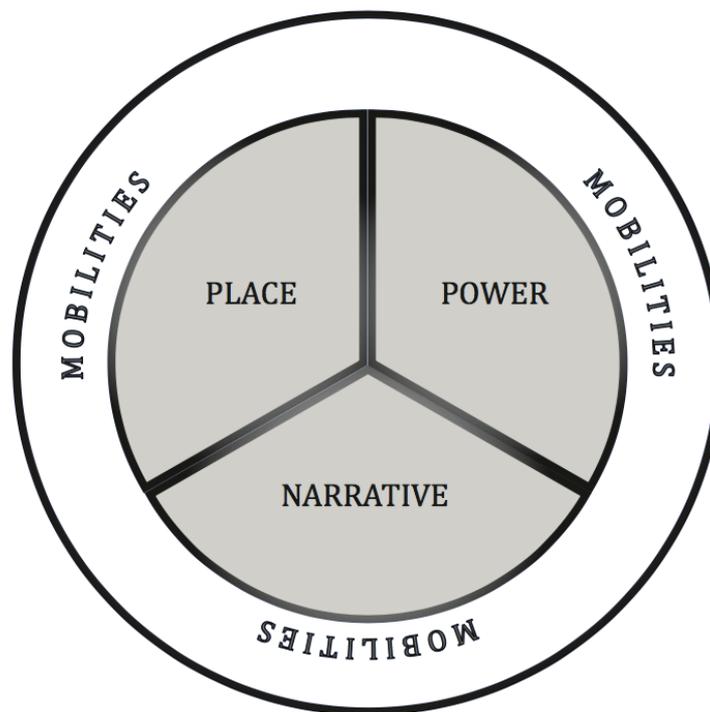


Figure 3 The Theoretical Diagram

The theoretical diagram (figure 3) demonstrates the components of the theoretical framework we have used. The outer circle represents mobilities as point of departure, and the elements of power, narrative, and place illustrates the toolbox we have used within mobilities approach. Power represents the capacity of capability to influence, while place covers the materiality, physical location, and cultural meaning. Narrative in this framework covers the broad spectrum of stories, from individual narrations to institutionally guided discourse. When these three elements are combined, they represent a given mobility situation with a given setting of elements. If any of the three elements

is altered, it will have an impact on how the remaining two elements work and eventually forming the situational mobilities. In fact, if there is any change in any of the elements, they will irrevocably affect on the other: if for example one has the power to start new discourse, it will change place, and vice versa. Thus any change in these elements are then affecting to the others, and the proportions of the elements then describe local situation. The complexity of the relationship between these elements goes beyond what can be represented in 2-dimensional figure, but it is an attempt to describe the interrelations of these elements and how we have used these theories as tools for the thesis. With these conclusions, the conceptual frame of the thesis is set. The following chapter will present the backgrounds of the case study and some examples of situational context which is further analysed in the Analysis chapter with the tools presented here.

4 Backgrounds of the case study

In our case study, everyday mobilities needs to be seen in the context of history, since the location has been shaped through the influences of external powers for centuries. These historical influences and many of the later international relations that have taken place in Mitrovica and Kosovo need to be understood in order to answer the research question, since movement and place are tightly intertwined. As mentioned by Doreen Massey (1999), rootedness can provide 'a sense of place' and identity. Therefore, this chapter is divided into two sections: The first presents the historical background of the Balkans and an idea of how 'sense of place' is historically formed and how it is still affecting Kosovo today. The second part raises attention to some of the recent events illustrating the current shape of Mitrovica, and how the identity is kept alive, altered and used to legitimize actions.

With the tools presented in the previous Theoretical Framework Chapter, we then use the data collected to further analyse the history, how it is told and how that affects identity and sense of the place. The theoretical elements: mobilities, power and place are used in order to identifying the meaning behind the historical events. This chapter further contributes to the questions of what kind of physical and material settings exists in Mitrovica and illustrates also the power structures there. It also demonstrates how narratives between two countries can take place in non-human forms, as we lay examples of political arrest and building a wall. It also presents how restrictions of movement are created and how power is controlling the movement to achieve the reality it seeks with the rationale created by institutional stories and selective storytelling.

4.1 The Balkans

The Balkan area has an incredibly complex and unique history. To understand the current situation in Kosovo and more specifically, in Mitrovica, the following background information is provided. In part of the thesis, the case-specific data, aspects, and opinions forming the historical context are provided for later reflection. For an overview of the area figure 4 shows the Balkan countries. The former Yugoslavia is marked as green.



Figure 4 Map of the Balkans, green represents the former Yugoslavia (Source: World Regional Geography: People, places, and Globalization)

4.1.1 A Recent History of Kosovo

Kosovo unilaterally declared its independence from Serbia in 2008 which makes it the newest country in Europe (Pfeiff, 2016). Today, it is recognized by 113 countries (Republic of Kosovo, Ministry of Foreign affairs, 2017), and many of those who do not recognise Kosovo as an independent state have their own territorial disputes (Hogarth, 2013). From 1999 until its independency in 2008, Kosovo was administered by the United Nations, after NATO bombings forced Serbia's then-president Slobodan Milosevic to withdraw his troops from the province (Taylor, 2014). NATO bombings were a consequence of a long chain of events, but mainly it intervened to stop Serbia's brutal ethnic cleansing of the territory's Albanian population (History, n.d.). NATO received crucial

assistance from Kosovo Liberation Army (KLA), whose scouts passed the Serbian tank coordinates forward, eventually to American fighter jets (Schmidle, 2013).

The reason for the ethnic cleansing was to break down the rise of the separatists' pressure coming from Kosovo, which started after Yugoslavia's break-up in 1990 (BBC, 2016). At that time, Kosovo had 92 % Muslims and an Albanian majority by ethnicity but was considered as a southwestern province of otherwise Christian Serbs. In 1999, troops of Slobodan Milosevic retreated after 78 days of bombing, and put an end to Yugoslavia's final break-up war. After the war, Kosovo was rebuilt quickly by the European Union in order to get the country back on its feet. NATO stayed in Kosovo and currently has four bases in the country. (Pfeiff, 2016)

But the NATO intervention did not occur without critique. The military alliance bypassed the United Nations under humanitarian justification, and illustrated to the world for the first time that when it comes to a war on terror or under humanitarian pretext, it does not need the approval of the UN Security Council. Thousands of missiles were launched and 14,000 bombs were dropped on almost a thousand different targets, killing over 2000 civilians and injuring thousands more. This was all against a sovereign nation which "did not pose any real threat to any member of the alliance". Hundreds of thousands of ethnic Serbs were forced to leave their homeland in Kosovo, and unexploded bombs continue to pose a threat years after the campaign was over. (RT, 2014)

However, the majority of the war criminals from the Balkan wars in the 1990's that have been convicted by International Criminal Court in Hague, have been ethnic Serbs (Nousiainen, 2017). But, Amnesty International has accused NATO of committing war crimes as well during the bombing against Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (Amnesty International, 2000), and US envoy Robert Gelbard described the Kosovo Liberation Army (KLA essentially fought against Milosevic's forces during late 90's) as "*without any question, a terrorist group*"

(RT, 2014). KLA has been accused of being involved in the organ trafficking of Serbs in late 1990's (Ristic, 2015, Lewis, 2010), and torturing in secret detention camps (Schmidle, 2013). After disbanding the Kosovo Liberation Army, several of its leaders moved to politics and became active in Kosovo's administrations (Sullivan, 2014).

From what has been stated above, we could conclude that every major participant of the Kosovo war has had its own faults. Although most of convicted war criminals in Hague were Serbs, it seems that the wrongdoings give the apparent reason for justifying the fears or dislike towards 'the other'. The events that took place in the aftermath of Yugoslavia's break-up has still today an effect on political actions between the countries. Regardless of the legitimation of such actions, it is likely that due to abundance of historical events and the different perspectives on them, these actions are viewed differently depending on who you ask. Before representing some of the current actions and discourse, an adequate amount of the Balkans history is presented, in order to put the 'narrative' into a context. However, the aim of the thesis is not about revealing the absolute truth of past events, but instead the aim of the thesis is to illustrate what driving forces affects mobilities through narration.

4.1.2 A Crossroad of Cultures

To understand why Kosovo is so important to Serbs and the type of discourse the countries have been conducting, one must look further back. From the historical events we can learn about the dynamics of different ethnicities and how the current situation evolved.

The Balkan peninsula has always been a crossroad of cultures. Illyrians, Greeks, Celts and Roman all had settlements here before Slavs migrated from the north. Religious influence have been strong throughout the centuries, namely Western Christianity (i.e. Roman Catholicism), Eastern Orthodox Christianity, and Islam. On the other hand, the same ethnicities can have different religious backgrounds. For example, the South Slavs (Bosniaks, Serbs,

Slovenes, and Croats) have had different religions but share the same ancestors and speak languages that are closely related. (Hewitt, n.d.)

Before 6th century, the area we known today as Republic of Kosovo was populated by the Dardanis, who are believed to be either Illyrian or Thracian by their origin. From the 6th century onwards, the Slavs begin to settle in and the area became a disputed border between the Byzantine and the Slavs, which finally tips over in favour of the Slavs in 12th century. The area became the heart of Serbian empire, which is still considered as the birthplace of Serbian nation with important Serbian Orthodox churches and monasteries. (BBC, 2016)

But it was the famous battle of Kosovo Polje in 1389, when the Ottomans invaded the area and forced the Serbs to flee and move their capital to Belgrade. The battle in 14th century inaugurated 500 years of Turkish Ottoman rule, and the ethnic and religious balance tipped in favour of the Muslims and the Albanians as the current area of Kosovo was opened to Muslim Albanian settlement. But eventually, the weakening of the Ottoman Empire in mid-19th century allowed Serbia to gain its independence again. (Hewitt, n.d.)

4.1.3 Former Yugoslavia

After the first World War – when the Austrian Archduke had been killed by the Bosnian Serb nationalist in Sarajevo with the aim of uniting the South Slavs – the Austro-Hungarian Empire fell. The Serbs were active in the creation of an independent southern Slavic state with the Serbs, Croats and Slovenes. The Kingdom of Yugoslavia (yugo means “south”, therefore “Kingdom of South Slavs”) was established in 1918. With internal power struggles, the new state was on the verge of collapse when World War II came to Yugoslavia. (Hewitt, n.d.).

World War II was not an easy period for the Balkans. Yugoslavia surrendered in less than two weeks after the first Nazi Germany airstrike, The State of Croatia (today’s Croatia and Bosnia-Herzegovina) and Slovenia had Nazi puppet governments, and Montenegro was left to Mussolini. Backed up by

Nazis, the *Ustaše* (Government of State of Croatia) send enemies of the state to death camps. Not only did the Ustaše murder Jews and Roma, but significant amount of Serbs as well. The estimates vary between tens of thousands to hundreds of thousands, depending on who you ask: Nationalistic Croatian leaders in the 1990's argued for the offensive lower-end estimate, while the high-end figure which is close to a million was taught in Yugoslavian schools. In addition, many Serbs were forced to flee the country. (Hewitt, n.d.)

Mussolini's Italy invaded Albania in 1939, and Kosovo was annexed to Italy's Balkan puppet state. The Italians were seen as liberators, but, soon after Italy switched sides in the war, Germany occupied Kosovo. Kosovars were recruited for the 21st Waffen SS Mountain Division Skanderbeg, and they refused to serve outside Kosovo, but would fight against the Slavs without problems. Yugoslavia managed to conquer Kosovo back in 1944, and the past collaboration against the Axis powers with the Kosovars fighting in 1944-1945 led to the massacres and deaths of thousands of ethnic Albanians. (Murray, 1999)

From the beginning of its existence until the end of World War II, Yugoslavia was a very unstable state. But Tito – Josip Broz by his real name – a Partisan leader managed to unite the nations, sometimes by using ruthless force to persuade the new member states. Tito ruled Yugoslavia which was made of six republics: Croatia, Slovenia, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Montenegro, Macedonia and Serbia. Each republic had their own parliament, president, and their rights to vote. In order to balance the Serbian dominance in Yugoslavia, Tito set up two autonomous provinces within Serbia: Vojvodina in the north for the Hungarians and Kosovo in the south for the Albanians. (Hewitt, n.d.)

Although Yugoslavia was a communist country, it was relatively free and had good relations with the West – largely because Tito refused to ally with the Soviets. Industries were nationalized, but small businesses were allowed. Citizens could not get rich, but they were able to get some commodities, like

cars and vacations. Yugoslavia was a tourist destination and its citizens could travel both to the East and the West. At the same time, Tito's rule was tight and oppressive, and the fragile union started to shake shortly after Tito's death in 1980. (Hewitt, n.d.)



Figure 5 In March 24, 1989, Rilindija reported that Serbia has changed the constitution of Kosovo to remove their autonomy. Kosovo is under Serbia's rule. (Source: Pashtriku.org, nd)

The breakup began in the autonomous province of Kosovo in the late 1980 with protests. Back then, 90 % of the people living in the province of Kosovo were ethnic Albanians, and the few Serbs in Kosovo felt oppressed under Albanian leadership. Because Kosovo is considered as the birthplace of the Serbian nation with historical battlegrounds and important monasteries, Serbian politician Slobodan Milošević used this conflict for his own advantage. His road to power started in 1987; he began by giving inflammatory speeches and upsetting the balance between the two ethnicities Tito had built. Eventually Milošević gained the Presidency and annexed Kosovo to Serbia. The other states

of Yugoslavia were concerned about the takeover, and during the next decade, Yugoslavia broke apart with much bloodshed. (Hewitt, n.d.)

In early 1990's, news spread and many associated the Balkans with cruelty. The first country to leave was Slovenia, followed by Croatia and then Bosnia-Herzegovina. In 1998, the Albanians started to rebel against the Serbs in Kosovo, but they ended up becoming victims of Milošević's ethnic cleansing until the NATO intervention later in the same year. After this, Kosovo was still almost a decade nominally part of Serbia, but in reality, a UN protectorate and self-governing area. On Sunday, February 17, 2008, Kosovo unilaterally declared its independence from Serbia. (Hewitt, n.d.)

To summarize, the Yugoslav crisis started and ended in the Serbian province of Kosovo. While some countries managed to secede from Yugoslavia after a brief armed conflict with 100 casualties or so (BBC, 2012), Kosovo has been through the whole breakup process of Yugoslavia. Kosovo was stripped from its autonomy in 1990 by Slobodan Milošević, and later in the 1990's the rebel KLA attacked Serbian authorities only to face a Serbian crackdown followed by the ethnic cleansing of Kosovar Albanians (BBC, 2016).

It is important to acknowledge, that the full history of the Balkans, Yugoslavia, or Kosovo is not fully covered in this research. The previously mentioned timeline provides the reader first with a brief historical overview of the area, second, a demonstration of the eventful history (see figure 5) of Balkans and more specifically Kosovo, and third, some examples on how the history has been told by different parties and how the later actions are justified by selective narrative of the history. Hewitt (n.d.) points out, that the clear majority of people never wanted the cruel wars, but a few single-minded and selfish leaders shamelessly exploited the old grudges and polluted the atmosphere with hateful propaganda by controlling the media and boosting the embers of ethnic discord.

When looking at the history of the Balkans, it becomes clear that it is increasingly difficult to fully comprehend the overwhelming number of events, information and viewpoints taking place. In addition, when discussing the Balkans, it is important to acknowledge that many important events were triggered by foreign powers. In the Balkan area, there has been multiple external influences which still have an affect on today's relations within the Balkan countries. The two biggest ones are the split of the Roman Empire in the 4th century (some of the today's borders and cultural practises in the west Balkan) and the 500-yearlong rule of Ottoman Empire (this Islamic influence further divided the Balkans into Christians and Muslims) which started in 14th century (Hewitt, n.d.). But just as the Roman and Turks have left their mark in the Balkans, so did Nazi-Germany during the second half of the 20th century: The death camps during Croatian Nazi-minded Ustaše-government rule, which executed Serbs, among others, were considered the first ethnic cleansing in the Balkans, and it is these camps that the Serbs used to nominally justify the atrocities against Bosniaks and Croats fifty years later (Hewitt, n.d.).

From this we can conclude, that there is an abundance of material where one can derive his or hers views from. Our aim is to illustrate that there has been – and still are - multiple different aspects and viewpoints of the past, and to furthermore study how those perspectives are related to people's everyday mobility in their society and culture with their own 'sense of place'. The aforementioned historical timeline gives the basis for understanding some of the more recent events that occurred in the Balkans, Kosovo, and Mitrovica, which will be presented in the following section.

4.2 Introducing Kosovo

This section of the history moves from the former historical events towards the recent events after the war ended in 1999. Starting with events in Mitrovica, the New Bridge crossing the Ibar River will be mentioned in short. Secondly, we

illustrate the strong appearance that the international community has had and still has in Kosovo. Third, in the light of the international influence with Ahtisaari proposal in 2008, we will explore a further linkage to the Brussels agreement in 2013. Here, the current hot topics of the situation between Serbia and Kosovo will illustrate the expression of ethnic tensions. The following further explains the peculiarities of the selected case study, the cultural border and what symbolizes the separation of Mitrovica. These peculiarities will first study the impacts of the ethnicities through demographics and then further elaborate Mitrovica North and South.

4.2.1 Demographics

When looking at the demographics from the latest 2011 census, the estimates are around 1,8 million people reside in Kosovo (World population review, 2016; CIA World Factbook, 2016). According to CIA World Factbook (2016), 93 % are Albanian, 1,6 % Bosniaks and only 1,5 % Serbs, while World population review (2016) has their latest numbers of ethnics in Kosovo showing 92 % being Albanian, 4 % Serbs and 2 % Bosniaks. Both sources underline that the 2011 census was boycotted by Serbs and other minorities and thus do not show reliable results. (World Population Review, 2016; CIA World Factbook, 2016)

According to the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) in the Balkan Group's report, the largest number of Serbs are concentrated in Northern Mitrovica with an estimate of around 63,000. This shows a higher number than the statistics made by the Kosovo Statistics Agency (ASK), which stated 38,000. Serbs living in south of the Ibar River in the other six Serb-majority municipalities (Gračanica and Štrpce are the largest ones, Klokot, Novo Brdo, Parteš, and Ranilug being the smaller ones) with a total share of 37 % and 54,000 residents. Another 20 % of the Serbs may, as confirmed by OSCE, live in Albanian majority neighbourhoods. (Prelec & Rashiti, 2015)

Due to an unreliable information of the census (that would illustrate the demographic and include age, gender, education, employment etc.), within the Serb community, the lack of proper integration policies by the government, might affect the most fragile ones. Another impact of the low population count is the cutting of budgets it has to the Serb-majority municipalities, giving a further threat to integration. The Kosovo Statistics Agency has been asked to review and correct their population count for the Serb-majority municipalities through all applicable data, but at the same time, Belgrade is recommended to direct Serbs to participate as well. (Prelec & Rashiti, 2015)

The census from 1991 was boycotted by Albanians, and at the time, nearly 200 000 Serbs were counted in Kosovo by the Yugoslav authorities. Thinking about the number of Serbs from 1991 and the ones from today (about 150,000), the number of Serb refugees seems to be lower than expected. However, the Serbs who have chosen to return have been faced with hostility or with violent responses due to Kosovo authorities not being sufficient with their restoration. According to Prelec & Rashiti, independent of their location, whether it is in northern or southern enclaves, or in the Albanian majority villages, the Kosovo Serbs all have one thing in common, regarding the concerns for their physical security, unlimited access to Serbian health care institutions, education, and the requisites needed to make a living. These are seen as the crucial steps towards achieving the successful integration process of Serbs in Kosovo. (Prelec & Rashiti, 2015)

4.2.2 The Serb Dominated Centre

Since 1999, municipalities in northern Kosovo have been living in an autonomous, isolated communities from the rest of the country. Some of the population has never interacted with Albanians, while many of the residents have never taken a step over the informal 'ethnic border' across 'the New Bridge' to South Mitrovica. The area has not got much care lately: (Prelec & Rashiti, 2015)

“The area feels left behind. Firms that exist nowhere else dot the streets of North Mitrovica, dusty reminders of a long-dead socialist Yugoslavia.” (Prelec & Rashiti, 2015)

“Mitrovica has been rotting away for a long time”. reports a professor from the University of Pristina which was moved to Mitrovica only ‘temporarily’. (Prelec & Rashiti, 2015)

Despite the decrepitude of the place, North Mitrovica is still a major centre for the Serbian society in Kosovo. As discussed by the Balkan group, both the best university and medical centre of Kosovo is located there and used by Serbs all over Kosovo. *Gazivode*, the largest lake (shared with Serbia), is the source for clean water and used by the entire country. However, North Mitrovica is facing dual pressures, due to parallel structures and a transition from Serbia to Kosovo. This economic and political change is emotionally tough and unpleasant for Serbs. About every Serb individual acknowledges Pristina’s right to govern them as illegal and they deny Kosovo’s segregation from Serbia. Firstly, the economic transition makes planning a challenge and cuts deep into family’s finances. Currently, the majority of people in North Mitrovica are employed in programs managed by the public work programs, funded by Serbia and designed to prevent emigration and remain in control. (Prelec & Rashiti, 2015)

As a faculty member of North Mitrovica University hoped that not

“doing things the modern way, but rather doing things the way they were done fifteen years ago.” (Prelec & Rashiti, 2015)

Or in other words, before the war. Therefore, the transitions need to be managed with care since it may motivate a continuation of Serbian systems and prevent emigration. (Prelec & Rashiti, 2015)

When looking at the statistics of the ethnic demographics in Kosovo, the remaining minorities are also important to acknowledge. However, we chose to concentrate on the Serbs and Albanians for our case study. The main reasons for this is because it is the dominating tension between the two ethnic groups regarding the situation in Kosovo, more specifically Mitrovica. As mentioned, the Serbian administration in Serb majority municipalities, and especially in North Mitrovica, is constantly challenging the Kosovo government. Serbia is supporting ethnic Serbs financially with the intention of the Serbs in Kosovo would show loyalty in return. This dual integrity and patriotism is something that is rooted in the past, and remains yet today. The following will further illustrate these ethnic claims that have taken place during declaration of Kosovo's independence in 2008, and again brought up during the Brussels agreement in 2013.

4.2.3 Kosovo and Mitrovica Today

The partition of Mitrovica emerged after NATO's air campaign against Serbia in 1999. At the same time, hundreds of thousands of Albanian refugees were returning back to Kosovo, and many of Serbian houses and businesses south of the river were burned. This led to the majority of Serbs fleeing north. Both sides fanned the extreme nationalism, and the Serbs established informal checkpoints on the three main bridges in Mitrovica – preventing ethnic Albanians to return to their homes in the north. (Synovitz, 2013)

Today Kosovo is safe and easily accessible, however with some restrictions with its northern neighbour Serbia. Entering Serbia from Kosovo is only possible if you enter Serbia first (Pfeiff, 2016). According to The U.S. Department of State, attempts to enter Serbia with a Kosovan entry stamp is considered to be illegal travelling in Serbian territory (The U.S. Department of State, n.d.). The government of United Kingdom (Gov.uk, n.d.) furthermore warns about leaving Serbia without an entry stamp, since one may face charges of illegal immigration without the stamp. Thus, Gov.uk (n.d.) advises that

travelling from Kosovo to Serbia should be done via from other entry point than the Kosovo-Serbia border, for example Montenegro.

The northern Mitrovica is mainly populated by Serbs, as the south side of the Ibar River there are mainly Albanians. There are controversial opinions about the dangers of crossing the bridge, and while locals might discourage you from crossing the bridge for your own safety, the local travel guide largely blames the international media about this inaccurate allegation. (Mitrovica Guide, n.d.)

The official border between Kosovo and Serbia lies a couple of dozen of kilometres away from Mitrovica as illustrated at figure 6. However, this is not border studied in the thesis, but here it is to illustrate that the country is at different location.

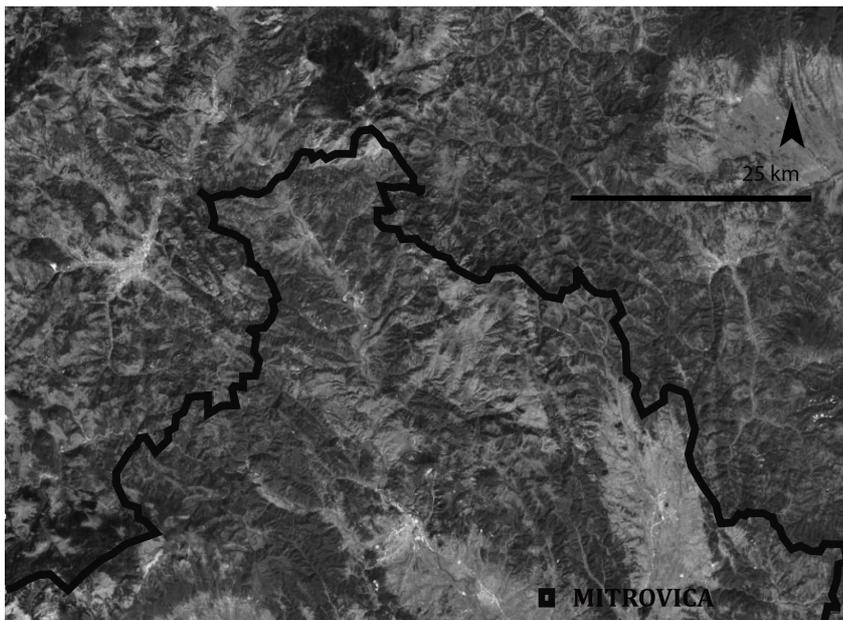


Figure 6 Mitrovica lies a couple of dozen of kilometres from the official border between Kosovo and Serbia. Serbia is in the north and Kosovo is in the south of the map (Source: Map and Borders from Google Earth, authors' illustration)

Political Arrest and the Train Incident

A couple of weeks prior to our arrival in Kosovo in February, the BBC reported that the French police arrested the former Prime Minister of Kosovo and ex-leader of the KLA Ramush Haradinaj based on a Serbian arrest warrant

for alleged war crimes in late 1990's. Today Haradinaj is an opposition leader in Kosovo, and he has already faced charges twice before. While Kosovo's foreign ministry described the incident or arrest as unacceptable, Serbia appealed to France to "put justice ahead of politics". (BBC, 2017a)

In Spring 2017, an advertising campaign in Pristina took a stand supporting Haradinaj (see figure 7). High visibility billboards showed pictures of Haradinaj, with the text "Ramush Haradinaj është Kosova" – Ramush Haradinaj is Kosovar, provided with hashtag #ourman. It is unknown who paid for this campaign.



Figure 7 Marketing campaign in Pristina

In light of the above mentioned, during our stay in Pristina, we witnessed a sound of fireworks surrounding the city Thursday evening, April 27th, 2017. We were told that the fireworks and citizens' parade was the celebration of Haradinaj's release and return to the home country.

But quickly after the arrest, Kosovo prevented a Serbian train from Belgrade to Mitrovica from crossing the border. The train was painted with the Slogan "Kosovo is Serbia" in 20 languages (figure 8), and inside the train was decoration of Serbian Orthodox images from the Kosovar monasteries. While Serbia described the train as a mobile exhibition of their cultural heritage,

Kosovo saw it as an act of provocation. But it was the Serbian Prime Minister Aleksandar Vučić who gave the order to stop the train, allegedly because Kosovar special forces tried to blow up the track. Serbia further claimed that Kosovo was planning to arrest the driver, if the train crossed the border. In a press conference, Prime Minister Vučić told that he stopped the train “to show that we want peace”. (BBC, 2017b).



Figure 8 The train from Belgrade To Mitrovica was covered with words "Kosovo is Serbia" in 20 languages (Source: BBC, 2017 / AP)

4.2.4 The New Bridge

The New Bridge was reconstructed in 2001 by team of workers of half ethnic Albanians and half ethnic Serbs (Beardsley, 2001). After the war ended and Belgrade’s troops were withdrawn, the KFOR soldiers were deployed to secure peace of the potential flashpoint (Morina, 2017).

There have been several attempts to block the movement across the bridge, from a stack of concrete and rocks to a park (Hopkins & Peci, 2014). After negotiations in Brussels in 2013, the so-called ‘Peace Park’ was agreed to be removed. The Peace Park was established in the middle of the New Bridge, blocking the passage of people and cars and thus, separating the two ethnic groups from one another. (Kushi, 2015)

In 2015, Sidita Kushi described the bridge in openDemocracy as following:

“Thus, the bridge is both a symbol and a product of the material manifestation of the ethnic divide in Kosovo, the politicization of ethnic differences, and the inability of both ethnic Serbs and Albanians to co-exist under one national border. As long as this structure delineates Serb versus Albanian narratives within Kosovo, it will continue to portray a dangerous, unproductive, and painstakingly constructed dimension of Balkan identity politics”

Two other bridges connect all traffic between South and North Mitrovica, but the New Bridge has been the symbol of the separation. In 2015, the Brussels agreement was signed by the Prime Ministers of Kosovo, Serbia, and the EU representatives, with the intention to remove barricades and facilitate the free movement of people and vehicles. The EU would sponsor this project, and the New Bridge was supposed to be open for all traffic by the end of June 2016. Due to delays, it has been extended to June 2017. (Bailey, 2016a)



Figure 9 The New Bridge close to being opened photographed in May, 2017 (authors' photo).

The Ibar River acts as a cultural border splitting language, currency, ethnicity, and governing authority. The New Bridge (see figure 9) crosses the

Ibar River, and has been the stage for multiple demonstrations and riots. It has become the unofficial symbol of ethnic division, and still maintains the division between North and South. (Morina, 2017)

Figure 10 illustrates the division started after the war in 1999 between North and South Mitrovica, or 'a city divided'.

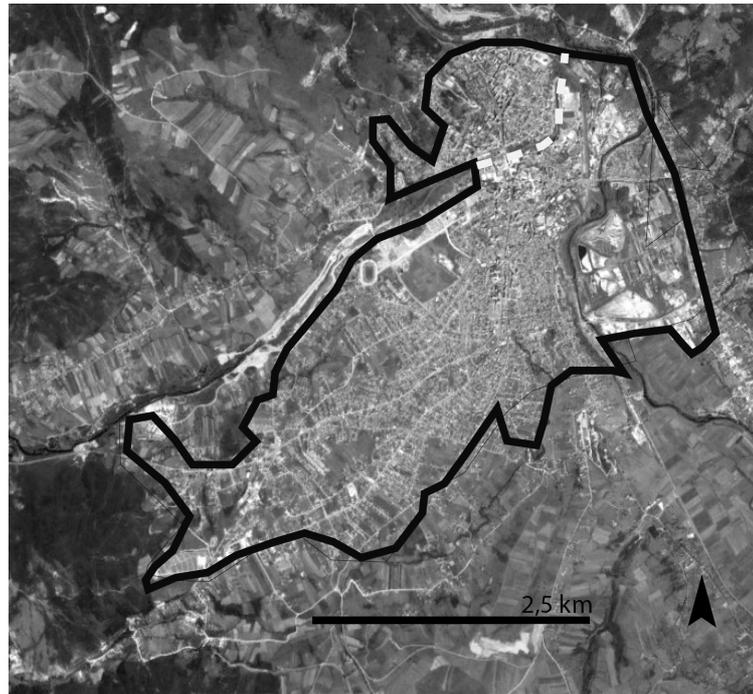


Figure 10 Map of North and South Mitrovica, separated by white dashed line (Source: Map and Borders from Google Earth, authors' illustration)

The most recent barricade was a wall built by the Serbs in December 2016. The wall was erected next to the New Bridge, and the Serbs said that the wall was built to protect against landslides, but the Pristina Government saw the act of building the wall as a further attempt to divide the city by its ethnicities. (Bytyci, 2017)

Dragan Spasojevic, Chief of the Municipal Department of Urban Planning Construction and Housing Affairs in North Mitrovica expressed in Pristina Insight, that the wall was negotiated in Brussels, but Kosovo denies that this was ever agreed upon. After the demolition of the wall was agreed on with EU

officials, The Mayor of North Mitrovica explained that wall would be transformed into an amphitheatre, facing both the north and south sides. Argument that the wall would protect pedestrians from cars was also presented. (Hopkins, 2016)

However, Pristina Insight claims that the original plan of “rejuvenation” of the area does includes a low wall, approximately a meter tall. It is unknown when the dimensions of the wall in mock-up plan was agreed upon. (Hopkins, 2016)

The day after we visited the New Bridge in Mitrovica in early February 2017, and saw the wall, we heard that the wall had been torn down. As reported by the Reuters, it was demolished by Serbian bulldozers (Bytyci, 2017). The agreement for removal of the concrete wall was signed by Kosovo’s Minister of Environmental and Spatial Planning and the Mayor of North Mitrovica (Bailey, 2017). According to the European Union Office in Kosovo, the plan is to redesign the area to an elevated stairway to ensure freedom of movement and road safety (Hopkins, 2016).

Mayor of North Mitrovica Goran Rakić, a hard-line Kosovo Serb, (Radio Free Europe, 2014) stated in Pristina Insight that while the EU has supervised the redesign progress of the bridge and the future roundabout next to the bridge, it is Serbia’s responsibility to fund and design the agreed pedestrian zone linked to the project. (Hopkins, 2016)

To fully understand why it would be Serbia’s responsibility to fund and design something within the borders of Kosovo, one must be introduced to Ahtisaari proposal. The Ahtisaari proposal has had widespread impacts on Kosovo, and is a further illustration of the intervention of external power.

4.2.5 The Ahtisaari Plan

The United Nations envoy, Finnish diplomat Martti Ahtisaari’s plan essentially proposed to the UN Security council that even though Kosovo was

legally a part of Serbia but administered by United Nations, its independence is the only viable option for a politically and economically stable result (BBC, 2007). The Ahtisaari Plan – officially “*Comprehensive Proposal for the Kosovo Status Settlement*” – allowed Kosovo Serbs to have their own communities, local institutions and close connections to Serbia within state of Kosovo (Gallucci, n.d.).

The proposal gives Kosovo the right to hold its own flag, an anthem and the right to conclude international agreements. Moreover, it gives rights to apply for memberships in international institutions. But in reality, the proposal includes monumental tasks, amongst them is to grant minorities substantial rights which would make Kosovo a multi-ethnic society. This includes minority requirements at national level institutions, but also wider powers given to the local levels. In addition, the proposal has created a number of new municipalities designated to accommodate ethnic Serbs. North Mitrovica is one of the new municipalities, and it is responsible for arranging its own healthcare and higher education, for example. Furthermore, whenever the teaching will be conducted in Serbian language, schools will use books developed in Serbia. (Austin, 2007)

The plan provides essential rights to minorities in Kosovo, protecting their national and cultural identities (for example, stating minimum requirements for representatives in the central government and ministries). But it also allows Serb-majority municipalities to get funded from Belgrade, which, according to Gerard M. Gallucci, former Assistant Professor of Political Science in University of Arkansas and UN Regional Representative in Mitrovica, causes Kosovar Serbs to live in two worlds at once. (Gallucci, n.d.)

None of the persons we interviewed denied the importance of Ahtisaari plan related to Kosovo’s independence. Many of them also acknowledged the criticisms it has raised. Due to these parallel structures, Serbian politicians from

Belgrade visit Serb majority municipality and their local politicians and citizens in Kosovo, assuring that they are cared for in Belgrade (Paulsson, 2017).

In 2012, after 13 years of international oversight, Kosovo formally obtained its full independence when The International Steering Group declared that Ahtisaari plan was “substantially implemented” (Aliu, 2012). But foreign involvement was far from over, as many international organisations – such as the mandate of the EU mission in Kosovo EULEX and NATO peacekeeping forces – continued their presence in the country (Dhumieres, 2012). Today, a variety of international organisations have activities in Kosovo. The United Nations have a presence with total of 16 UN agencies and partners, among them is UN Development Programme, The International Monetary Fund and World Bank with annual budget around 40 million dollars (UNMIK, 2017).

But the Ahtisaari plan has been – and is still – criticised, as it promotes and maintains a division between Albanian and Serb ethnicities through a variety of mechanisms, such as previously mentioned connections to Serbia (Kursani, 2017). This also enlightens the statement of the North Mitrovica mayor presented in previous chapter: the parallel governing structures also allows the spatial planning of North Mitrovica – and other Serb majority municipalities in Kosovo.

4.2.6 Improving the Relations of Serbia and Kosovo

"What we are seeing is a step away from the past and, for both of them, a step closer to Europe." –Catherine Ashton in (Piotr, 2013)

Stated by the foreign policy chief Catherine Ashton, when cheering for the agreement that had taken place four years ago in April 2013. The ambitiousness for the concession was to start a negotiation in order to ‘neutralize’ the relations between Serbia and Kosovo. According to The Guardian, it has been a tough road to make both sides cooperate and come to an agreement. The two sides

have been pushed by the EU for months and have had several rounds of negotiations that resulted in failure. However, the meeting in Brussels was required in order to see their way towards EU membership. (Piotr, 2013)

The Serbians living in northern part of Kosovo covering the municipalities; North Mitrovica, Zubin Potok, Leposavic and Zvecan are the ones who are decisively affected by the 15-point agreement according to the article by Deutsche Welle. The estimate of Serbs living in these municipalities are about 40-50,00 which approximately 95percent of the population of the area, while in the entire area of Kosovo Serbs comprise about 5 percent of the total residents. The significant matter here is the ethnical descent. The Serb minority in Kosovo feel 'helpless' without a strong autonomy from Serbia. The Prime Minister of Kosovo, Hashim Thaci expressed at the beginning of the negotiation same year the following: (Hasselbach 2013)

"[...] elimination of all illegal Serbian security structures in the north, so that we can continue our work to create a unified legal and security system throughout Kosovo." -Hashim Thaci in (Hasselbach, 2013)

The then-prime minister Thaci asserted that the Serbians in all of Kosovo should fit with Kosovo's government. After all, Belgrade has power over the district economically, its education, healthcare and town planning and makes a parallel Serb structure to the community. Therefore, Thaci underlines it should not further be administered or have powers from a third level as such. At the time of the agreement, Kosovo feared having a state within a state, something this agreement is supposed to overcome. Hardly after the pact of the two took place, Serbs in North Kosovo (The municipalities previously mentioned) called for a demonstration to protest against the deal. This is one of the many events that have taken place since 2013 that has challenged the agreement's implementation that will further be elaborated below. Another significant point elaborated in the agreement is that neither side is not going to prevent the other

from gaining EU membership. However, Belgrade has already questioned the agreed upon non-blocking action and tried to prevent Kosovo's memberships in international institutions, such as the UN. (Hasselbach, 2013)

One of the most recent action was the wall in North Mitrovica which, as already mentioned, came as a surprise and was decided upon by local Serb authorities. It was constructed in the process for revitalization of the New Bridge when the ethnical relations were reduced. The two meter high wall brought up several contradictions such as why it was constructed and did it violated against the Brussels agreement? Many national and international authorities got involved and claimed different political viewpoints. Lulzim Basha, the leader of the opposition in Albania contended the wall violate Kosovo's laws and the agreement that had taken place in Brussels. The wall contributed to the construction of territorial disputes that the agreement was trying to reduce; (BalkanEU, 2016)

"The building of such structure is a provocative and destabilizing act for the population of Mitrovica, relations and dialogue between Serbia and Kosovo and the climate of peace and stability in the Balkans" – Lulzim Basha in (BalkanEU, 2016)

Most politicians in Pristina were against the construction considering that it increased the separation of ethnical difference between Serbs and Albanians. However, the Mayor of North Mitrovica, Goran Rakic maintained that the construction would undergo for a coming project, and will therefore not be demolished. The EU demanded the politicians stick to the agreement regarding revitalization of the bridge which they will carefully monitor. Federica Mogherini, the spokeswoman for the High Representative for Foreign Policy claimed this was not a wall, but a connection to the ring road with the pedestrian area through the construction; (BalkanEU, 2016)

"It will not be a wall, but stairs that link the ring road with the pedestrian area. During yesterday's talks, the sides agreed on building stairs that secure freedom of movement from one side to the other." – Federica Mogherini in (BalkanEU, 2016)

An earlier procedure for the normalisation of the relations between the two sides, a Serb force by the name 'Civilna Zastita' (Civil Protection), was brought to an end in late 2015. This was considered as an illegal structure that the Pristina minister wanted dissolved in order to reduce the ethnic challenges and the 'parallel' institutions. The minister's suggestion was to integrate members of the 'Civilna Zastita' into the regular Kosovo police. This has raised a discussion among the Serbs in the North and is an example of their low confidence in Kosovo's police force. (Hajdari, 2015)

The Serbian government's liaison officer, Dejan Payicevic says there will be continuing employment for the 'Civilna Zastita' members and explains how they will work as normal under the Kosovo police force, (Hajdari, 2015)

"They have always been there to ensure that everyone feels safer and they will continue to do the same jobs within the sector for extraordinary situations and other institutions in Kosovo and Metohija," ensures Payicevic.

However, a report done by the Balkan Group discusses what impact the Brussels agreement has for Pristina and Belgrade stating that neither are in favour of the tasks required, and neither are they capable of providing the resources they ask for. However, with the international support, goals were set in order to try to integrate Serb institutions as a part of the Kosovo systems. (Prelec & Rashiti, 2015)

4.3 Summary

The area of Kosovo has been ruled by several powers throughout its history. Different rules have left their mark in the history of the Balkans, where one can find multiple different ethnicities and religions. However, it is the ethnicity that connects people more than religion, as for example Slavs identifies themselves as Muslims or Christians. Events that have taken place throughout the history of the area continues to bring up the tensions, but historical disputes are also maintained and kept alive, often through narration of embracing the identities and 'sense of place'. Both sides find arguments or restored stories where the other is considered as the 'guilty' one. During the Balkan wars, the old grudges were exploited by few selfish leaders to legitimate their further actions. This is a prime example of when one has the power to start a new discourse to legitimize their further actions.

Foreign powers have had a tremendous influence in Kosovo through its history. The Brussels agreement is an attempt to normalize the relationship, reducing the parallel structures, and integrate Serbs in the Kosovo government. NATO stopped the ethnic cleansing, the UN administered the country for almost a decade, the Italian police are patrolling non-stop at the New Bridge, a number of countries are donating development support, and the current political situation is highly affected by proposal of a Finnish diplomat, approved by the UN. Even Serbia still has direct impact to several municipalities and their citizens in Kosovo. The topic of reopening the New Bridge, urban planning of Mitrovica and the wall together illustrate that issues of Mitrovica are also issues of the two countries and external mediators are involved to solve the challenges.

The debates between two countries are often taking place through material setting. The New Bridge is repeatedly in the headlines, and symbolises the recent events around it. The wall in North Mitrovica furthermore demonstrated the power relations, as it is justified by narrating an apparent reasoning. The arrest of Ramush Haradinaj was seen from Serbia's side as a "seek of justice", which caused a counteract: marketing campaign defended him

in high visibility billboards in the streets of Pristina. It is hard to think about any other reason for the campaign than boosting identity, community, and 'sense of place'. Therefore, 'the sense of place' and dichotomy of 'us' and 'them' can be embraced and reminded by using tools of symbolic elements, such as flags, and marketing campaigns and hashtags of *#ourman*. This is further discussed in the following Analysing Chapter together with other data, methods, tools we have used.

5 Analysis

The way we describe Mitrovica is a dual society structure that is interfered by power relations coming externally and internally. These powers have to a certain degree increased mobilities for some, but also produced immobilities. Even though Mitrovica is influenced by higher politics, this has challenged the citizens' commitment to the nation and the road to self-governance. The discussion concerning power will be elaborated in the latter part of this chapter, even though power linkages are frequently raised throughout the analysis. During the thesis, we have gained many impressions of the place that have influenced on our views which were further affected from our embodied experiences, observations, talks we have had, and new sources we have studied.

The findings are discussed through different themes of notions regarding what has been brought up by the interviewees, our personal interactions, and the interpretation of historical events. The Background of the Case Study is examining a chronicle of events, but it also lays out the significance of the place interpreted. Interpretations are done with a consistent foundation of tools found in the Theoretical Framework presented in Chapter four and collected data from multiple different sources, which were further elaborated in Methodology chapter.

The following structure of the chapter is dividing the findings into eight themes; The first analyse viewpoints coming from selective storytelling illustrating different sides of the same topic. In the second theme citizens attempt to live their lives regardless of the 'top-down' politics, however they are nevertheless influenced by them. The third theme underlines the impact of external powers in Kosovo and Mitrovica, as the fourth section explains the parallel structures and how they affect to the place today. After presenting these competing powers, the fifth theme concerns notions of materialities and non-human as a tool and way to tell stories. It explains how symbols are used to make stories alive, but also used as the driving forces to legitimize the actions.

The sixth theme draws the attention to 'sense of place' and how the identity has been embraced through selective storytelling. Contradictions between rules and practices are represented in the seventh theme through our own story, and lastly, with the eight theme we underline the power to start stories. While the first elaborates the complexity within viewpoints, the last illustrates the power behind the stories

5.1 Analysing the Stories

When we first engaged with the topic by using sources, our impression was that every party has acknowledged themselves as victims first. Since the history is full of complex events, it has cultivated a number of opinions on how things have happened. At the same time, how the history is told is dependent on how the narrator wants them shaped, and often with an intentionally or unintentionally altered story:

"We tend to turn a conflict into a matter of black and white [...]. Often the truth lies somewhere in the middle, with a broad swatch of gray in which both sides bear responsibility to resolve the conflict." -Jane Simon, M.D, in The Huffington Post (2014)

However, as we dived into the case study and encountered with the stories ourselves, we learned that the conflict is narrated accordingly to the one's driving forces. When we studied the background of the case often the stories were exaggerated in an intriguing or conspicuous way by not only the ones involved in the conflict, but also by external narrators. The media reported news which were not accurate according to locals, and people outside Mitrovica had their own perceptions. The questionnaire showed that even among a relatively homogenous group of people variation occurs in their stories and no one conclusion can be made regarding the kind of stories that are told in different regions or among certain groups of people. However some weak

tendencies are identified. The trend was that people would not move freely (figure 11) across Ibar River, driving with Kosovar issued licence plates in the north was considered to be dangerous, and North and South Mitrovicans are not treated equally.

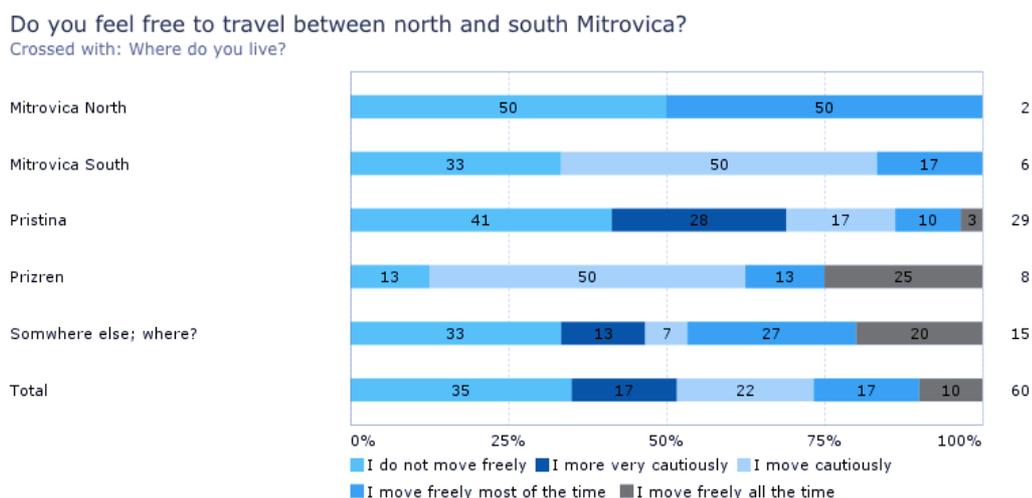


Figure 11 There was a pattern showing that some people would not move freely between North and South Mitrovica

We met some locals in South Mitrovica who would not dare to cross the bridge, but on the other hand, we never saw the bridge empty of pedestrians, illustrating that it is commonly used. Another interesting aspect of the questionnaire was, that there were some who had never visited Mitrovica but still claimed that driving with Kosovar issued licence plates is dangerous in the north (figure 12).

Driving with Kosovar licence plates in North Mitrovica is dangerous -
 Crossed with: How often you visit Mitrovica?

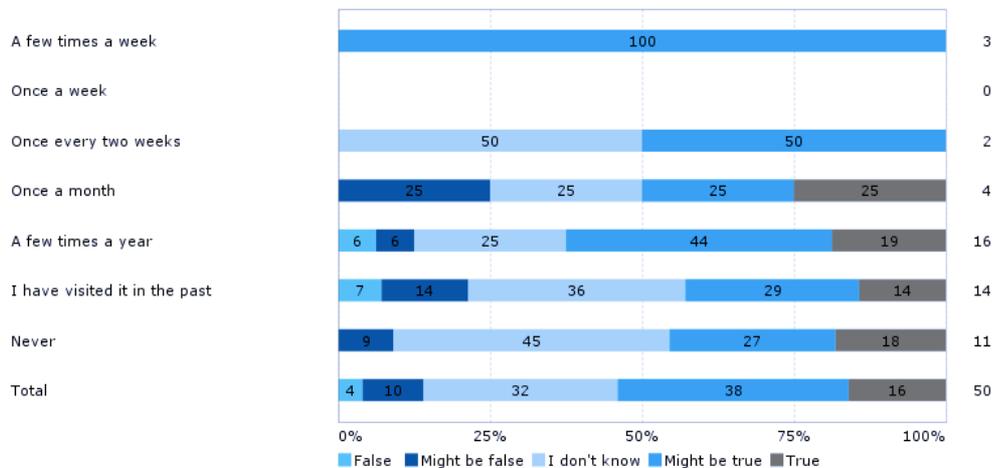


Figure 12 Though respondents did not have own experience, they could still make a statement about dangers of driving with Kosovar issued licence plates in North Mitrovica. However, a variation in statements occurred among respondents.

This might sound inconsistent with the data, but, for us, this aligns with our other findings: stories are told as facts despite the lack of their personal experience or the limitations of knowing the reality. These stories might be heard from others, and, then, retold as their own. The stories might be intentionally or unconsciously structured accordingly to one’s driving forces. The two most popular answers on how the respondents got their information were social gatherings and social media. This result is most likely connected to our way of distributing the questionnaire, but for this group of people there were a few weak indicators that similar perspectives occur according to where responders live, or in other words, the physical proximity of their social circles. People from Prizren often answered differently than the ones from Pristina. Likewise, North and South Mitrovicans had different perspectives on the same topics.

It is clear that Kosovo, and more specifically, Mitrovica has been shaped and reshaped by different powers. First, the Ottoman empire, then the former Yugoslavia, and now the strong presence of the international community, to mention a few. There is, therefore, no doubt that a place is time and space dependent and that historical events have a major impact on societies today. As

pointed out by Cresswell in chapter four, places may be arranged in a timeline. For example, people give meaning to a place by referring to memories that have been shaped, performed, or constructed by a certain fixed location, or even claiming the place as 'mine' or 'yours'. This leads towards the grasp of a place's identities which Mitrovica holds more than one. Mitrovica is a multi-cultural and ethnic city with a number of relations to the outside world and some of those relations are in conflict with the others. It is partly a consequence of the parallel structure leading Kosovo Serb living in a dual society between maintaining loyal to Serbia at the same time trying to relate to the Kosovo government. Therefore, Mitrovica does not contain one identity alone, but possesses one of many articulated by the narrator.

5.2 Tales of Citizens

The pre-study (found in Chapter Four) of Mitrovica and Kosovo was conducted before our arrival, and heavily indicated how Mitrovica, indeed is, a divided city. News agencies like The Washington Post from 2015, New York Times from 2016, and Reuters from 2017, as well as several travel-blogs, other websites and rumours all repeated the same phenomenon: a divided city where Serbs live in the North and Albanians live South of Mitrovica's Ibar River. Many of the rumours were reminiscent of the remaining bitterness and fear of the other, and, that it would be dangerous to go to the other side. In the beginning of our research, some mentioned that Albanians are more afraid of the Serbs, than Serbs are afraid of Albanians. The opposing ethnicity was also described as 'evil', which really illustrated the individual's perception of the other. This was enhanced by the stories we heard from ordinary young people we met in Pristina: for example, driving a car with license plates issued by Kosovo in the North Mitrovica would not be tolerated, and vice versa for cars with licence plates issued by Serbia in South Mitrovica incurring a good chance of being the target of rock throwing.

We attended the weekly market on Saturday, March 4, 2017 located next to Ibar River and The New Bridge. Here, we interviewed a few people from the countryside selling their farm goods. The majority of them were ethnic Serbs and spoke Serbian, and therefore we had a translator with us who spoke both Serbian and Albanian. The translator was a local citizen living in the northern part and Albanian by ethnicity. He also functioned in a way as our 'agent': he knew many of the people we interviewed, so the first contact with the interviewee was made when he introduced us as researchers. The sellers were mostly farmers, some had lived in Mitrovica all their lives while others travelled from further parts of Kosovo to sell their goods. We started by asking background questions like: Where do you live? How long have you been living here or coming here? How often do you come to Mitrovica? What different languages do you know? And what is your ethnicity? We had a guiding set of questions (found in the appendix) on how they perceive the place and about their mobile self, but generally we tended to go along with the answers they were providing, often with a follow-up questions like 'Why'? The general outcome could be roughly summoned to these answers:

"Don't care, it's simply politics."

"We've lived side by side for years."

"We don't feel any restrictions of movement."

However, one of the farmers – Albanian by ethnicity – pointed out that he travelled to North Mitrovica, because he knew people from the time before the war living there. He knew farmers who refused to come, because they do not have that kind of social network and therefore do not feel safe to do so.

After our interaction with the farmers, our translator introduced us to a family living a few kilometres north from city centre. The family consisted of a married couple with three children. The children's ages varied from a few

months to six years old. They were ethnic Serbs, who had relatives living on both sides of the river. When asked how often they would cross the river to go to the southern part of the river, the answer was a couple times in a year. But the reason was because of their economic situation, a subject which repeatedly came out from their other answers as well. At the time of the interview, they were both unemployed, and the reason for their immobility seemed to be something which is not unknown for the rest of the world: *due to the insufficient economy their mobility was challenged*. The husband put significant amount of weight for the general conditions of the roads, and more specifically within Mitrovica, the lack of parking spaces.

After our interviews, we had our final chat with the translator. He pointed out that if we would ask the same questions from people living outside of Mitrovica, for example in Pristina, the capital, or Prizren, the second largest city of Kosovo, in the southern part of the country, the answers might be vastly different. He explained that people living in or frequently visiting Mitrovica mostly do not have any problems living together or going to the opposite side of the Ibar River, but the ones relying on media coverage and second hand information, has wildly different perceptions.

While there was some evidence based on our interviews and encounters that being a local – e.g. living in a ‘city divided’ – does not necessarily mean that all citizens feel free to travel without restrictions, but that the majority of the citizens we encountered emphasized that such restrictions in Mitrovica do not exist. After travelling in a car equipped with Kosovar licence plates in north Mitrovica interviewing Serbs, meeting only but helpful people, and seeing the Albanian translator getting along with Serbs and hugging each other, the story about throwing stones felt very distant. But of course, our encounters were heavily influenced by our translator: he introduced us to his social network that provided us with data. However, he expressed that people who lost family members during the war, might have an immensely different perception of the opposite ethnic group in Mitrovica, then the ones we met at the market.

5.3 External Powers

History has taught us how Kosovo has been influenced, changed and reshaped for centuries. The area has been influenced by the Romans, Turks, Slavs, and more recently, NATO, the United States, and the European Union to point out the essentials. In the past 20 years, the external powers have had and still have a major impact on Kosovo's independence and future developments. In addition, Serbian governmental structures are still legal in Kosovo: This dual governance and parallel structure in Serb-majority municipalities in Kosovo, have been enabled by Ahtisaari's proposal. Connections to Serbia can be seen in the cityscape of North Mitrovica (figure 13).



Figure 13 Wall painting in North Mitrovica saying "Kosovska Mitrovica" and "Kosovo is Serbia – Crimea is Russia", with connection to Serbian and Russian flags. White area in the left-hand side of the painting represents borders of Kosovo, as the white area in the right-hand represents borders of Crimea (authors' own photo).

These Serb municipalities have some inhabitants who are living in dual worlds. They might consider themselves Kosovars by nationality, but ethnic Serbs. However, ethnicity is in this part of the world often expressed as very important and might be valued more highly than nationality. According to Balkan group, Kosovar Serbs tends to be obedient to Serbia, which officially considers Kosovo as a part of Serbia. This dual political structure is

consequently causing confusion among Kosovar Serbs by challenging their identity, relations and positioning in the world. In some cases, this triggers, indirectly, fear among them to move or even make a movement or interaction with the other ethnicity unacceptable among their society. Since communities, families and identities are committing people to the nation, the nation is formed by its mobilities pattern (Hannam;Sheller;& Urry, 2006). From the events that occurred in Winter 2016-2017, such as arrest of Haradinaj, building the wall, and sending the train, one could draw the notion that the Serbian government is hindering the integration of Serb-majority municipalities with the society of Kosovo, and encouraging the building or keeping of their own identity. This also illustrates a form of control. Many Serbs in North Kosovo have never crossed the New Bridge to the South and many have never interacted with any Albanians. Absence of places, in this relation, is viewed as a producer of bodily insecurity to move in order to avoid 'interactional vandalism', or social avoidance. Absence of places can occur in homogenous societies, and is a trace found among Serb communities. They are experiencing a dual pressure living in a contradicting society and not knowing where they belong. Hoxhiq from North Mitrovica municipality expresses how the situation is for citizens living in north and how their ethnicity decides what choices they make in their daily lives:

"[...] if I live in the north, then I am using all the services from the north side. There are many Albanian families; it's not that it's their choice but it is just settled like that. It is not forbidden, but somehow, you know; this educational system in the north is treated to be for Serbians and they want to have Kosovo educational system. So they practically sleep in the north, the families do sleep in north Mitrovica, but they take most of the services in South Mitrovica. They [Albanians] go to take vaccines; ambulances that are in the south. They use

kindergartens that are in the south, they use schools that are in the south because of the language and the program". (Hoxhiq 2017)

She exemplifies the situation for Kosovar Albanians in North Mitrovica, as the opposite issue of what the Serbs are experiencing. She criticizes the Serb systems and public control in the north. How it is limited only for Serbs and not viewed as accessible for Albanians. She did not, however, specify in what ways. If it is because of their ethnicity alone and that Albanians do not feel as a part of the north education and health programs or if it is a choice by the Albanians not to attend Serb programs. Based on Hoxhiq statement, the system, either one of the other, is made for a particular group of people where 'the other' is not permitted. This power structure is creating political, physical and emotional borders. The high political border pressures the physical and emotional ones:

"We need to be able to recognize the pain of each other and give a chance to start and live together because we are neighbours." (Hoxhiq 2017)

She breaks the political situation down to the human scale. The political borders are constructing forms of 'prejudice' and 'discrimination' between locals in both North and South Mitrovica. The focus should rather be on forgiveness and moving forward, together.

Right now, the parallel governing seems to be causing the biggest hindrance in improving the relation between Serbia and Kosovo. However, Serbia has expressed their interest to retain their power of their enclaves. The New Bridge is a physical and an ethnic border and hinders the physical crossing but also integration of ethnicities.

5.4 Parallel Structures

When diving into topic of Mitrovica, one is eventually going to face the notion of parallel structures, as argued above. Essentially implemented by external powers, the parallel structures are causing competing stories about the same location. The mayor of South Mitrovica – among others – wants to reunite the North and South (Bahtiri 2017), but the fact that there is another mayor in the north and Mitrovica is still a divided city tells that Bahtiri is facing resistance.

“We are still working on removing parallel structures in the North part, while engaging them in Kosovo’s special services, and giving legitimacy for the North Mitrovica mayor with Kosovo’s constitution, to be a major like every mayor in Kosovo and to have a calm territory, to not be available the Serbians parallel structures.” (Bahtiri 2017)

The parallel systems are causing challenges on several different levels. For citizens, Serbian documents are not accepted by the Kosovo government and thus causes troubles in citizens’ services. On a higher political level this gives the Serbian government officials the right to directly enter Serb-majority municipalities without consulting the Kosovo government first. Since the Serbs boycotted the census in 2011, the government of Kosovo does not have the exact population numbers and thus the right amount of funding cannot be given to these municipalities. This provides the need for aid to come from Belgrade. According to the Balkan Group, Kosovo’s government is not capable of fully equipping what is needed for Serbs living in the Albanian majority municipalities. Nor are they able to assist the Serb-majority municipalities due to the hindrance caused by the Serbian government. This further challenges Kosovo’s government, and results in internal powers not being able to craft a consensus without the external powers becoming engaged in the situation. In

consideration to what has been mentioned, Serbia in this relation is seen as an external power but partaking internally.

The provided status for Serb-majority municipalities also gives the power of spatial planning in these municipalities. If the statement by Goran Rakić about Serbia's responsibility to plan and fund the pedestrian area in North Mitrovica is valid, then, in the eyes of 114 members of United Nations this means that a foreign country is entitled to plan cities in another country – with an authorization given by the United Nations itself.

The Ahtisaari plan provided this internal power for Serbia. The materialities and creations of physical settings, e.g., spatial planning, that have caused severe debates, such as the wall and barricades at the New Bridge, have been physical illustrations of power and creating rationality. The wall was arguably built strictly for practical reasons, and while official of North Mitrovica argued that this was agreed in Brussel mediated meetings, Kosovo denied this agreement. Then, the rationale for building the wall continued to be for the protection of pedestrians from cars and the transformation into an amphitheatre – facing both north and south. Regardless what was agreed upon in that meeting mediated by the EU or if either the two sides are intentionally misinterpreting the outcome of that meeting, it again shows how things are perceived differently. This further illustrates that the stories might represent the very opposite sides of the same case.

However, there are a lot more opinions regarding Mitrovica and the events taking place around it. Every social agent is telling their own perception of the place according to their objectives. Again, the level of influence and impact varies, but the stories told are constructed according to their motives and perspectives. Kosovo wants to unite Serb-majority municipalities under its governance, but Serbia will not approve this and tries to keep supporters in Kosovo by granting them funds and paying their salary. The representative

from UN-HABITAT expressed how media chooses their stories when speaking about Mitrovica:

“(...) the media, of course, when they roll out certain things they always focus on what makes news not really on the impact it might have on the people. For example, very little is put on the different activities that are done by NGOs that have Serbian and Albanians doing thing for both - who gives you the perspectives of ok - there are a lot of differences and bad things, however there is a lot of room for some positive interactions and opportunities to create good things.”
(Krasniqi 2017)

Despite the hope that media should be an independent reporter, one cannot close their eyes to the fact that in some parts of the world, the local and national media might be owned and controlled by political power, and that dramatic headlines are selling better than no stories at all. Topics about the place are carefully selected and so are the stories that will sell for the audience. Krasniqi points out that positive aspects that improves the place and aims to increase the community between ethnicities is not communicated in the media as much as it should be:

“It focuses at something that attracts viewers rather than the impact it has does not really matter. For me not only for Mitrovica but if you look at what is put there I don't think they put too much attention in the impact that it has in people, music or any other cultural exposure”.
(Krasniqi 2017)

Media's relation to government was raised especially in Serbia during the interviews. But also many of the interviewees said that international media is often exaggerating what has happened, as stated by Golubović:

“Many times when something happens between Serbs and Albanians, they immediately report it as an interethnic incident, ‘I am a Serb. He is Albanian’. What is being told by the police officer is different than what is being told in the media. The police reports an ordinary crime, media states it’s an ethical one by.” (Golubović 2017)

Golubović emphasises likewise as Krasniqi that media changes the actual story of the event happening at the place, making it sound extreme to increase the number of viewers and, therefore, it continues to oppose the situation. Mayor Bahtiri reminded us about media’s selective storytelling:

“They [media] always try to exaggerate the small tensions and unfortunately they want to hear bad things and not good things. Here happened a lot of good things that are not represented, but they represent only the bad little things that shouldn’t have been in our media.”

Later Bahtiri brings up his concerns of truthfulness of media:

“They have their material from our government.”

The power structures are described by parallel governance of Mitrovica. The place is affected by power through stories, and in this case media is one channel of distributing these stories. The role of the media cannot then be discarded since it has an impact on places, but also to citizens’ stories which further shapes the place. The following is a description of our travel to North Mitrovica and an observation of how citizens from different ethnicities are coping with parallel governance of the place;

Today we had a scheduled meeting with Mrs. Adriana Hoxhiq, a person who so many had recommended for us to meet. The meeting took place

in North Mitrovica, so we decided to drive there. Yes, we were going to cross the 'border' to North Mitrovica with a Kosovar issued license plate. We did not know what to expect, but when remembering the stories, which slightly made us nervous when we approached the city. This was not just any regular 'border' crossing, as we had heard various and contradicting versions of driving restrictions when using plates issued from Kosovo to the North. The times we had visited the place on foot we spotted Serbian issued plates, foreign ones (UNMIK, Carabinieri, etc.) or the freedom to not have any plates. Because of the contradictory stories, we decided to try it for ourselves. What would be the worst-case scenario if we drove to North Mitrovica with a license plate issued by Kosovo? As we digested the thought, several unsafe and alarming images came to our minds. We had to admit at that point that we did fear crossing the border. We got carried away with our thoughts and noticed that the stories we were told had started affecting us as well. No, we gathered the thoughts towards the interview and convinced ourselves that everything would be okay. This rational thinking proved to be the right thing to do, because nothing happened. Not a single person commented, stopped, or prevented us from crossing the Ibar River with the car.

After having the successful and enlightening interview with Mrs. Hoxhiq, we returned to the car that was parked on a side street. When backing it up up the road to turn it towards the direction we came from. While the thoughts were focused on the direction of the car, we missed a second look to the left side and ended up scratching a car that came from nowhere. The driver came right out and started yelling at us in Serbian. It took some time to register what had happened and

wondered where this car that we crashed into came from? Well actually he had decided to park at the road exit while we were backing up and had blocked the entire. Anyhow, the damage was done on both our vehicles. We asked the older retired looking man in English and Albanian if he could speak either of the languages and he shook his head and replied 'ništa', meaning 'no'. As we thought this would not lead to anywhere, and pulled out the the EU principal registration form for car accidents. There was a mutual effort of trying to make a conversation through use of hands-gestures and head nodding, as an Albanian approached us. He had been watching and listening and asked us if he could help in Albanian. He started off by explaining to the older man that it's his fault to park right at the exit road and that it was not our mistake alone to crash into his vehicle. However the Serbian looked away from that and expressed through his hands pointing towards his car that the crash still has been done and there was damage that needed to be fixed. We were glad that the Albanian got involved and that he wished to assist us towards a mutual understanding. He suggested bringing the car to a mechanic he knew of in South Mitrovica because the cost would be cheaper for us and we would avoid the hassle with the police force.

The Albanian removed the licence plate issued by Serbia from the car before the four of us jumped in. We asked him if this was the smart choice and why we did not report the incident to the cops? He replied,

"It would not be in favour of us. The cops are Serbian and they will choose his side no matter what".

His backtalk came as a surprise. We were wondering where he was from and if that might have an effect on his sudden rationalizing. He told us he lived in the same house as he grew up in in North Mitrovica,

not too far from where he met us. He also assured us over and over again that he was willing to help without any further intentions. As we continued driving we asked why we did not go to a mechanic in the north side since we were driving across the bridge to the south. He said that he wants to do us this favour where he will bring us to someone he knew for a cheaper deal since mechanics usually rip off foreigners in this country and that mechanics in the north in general are pricy. Since the Albanian had gotten involved we thought we might as well just go with what he suggested as the best solution. After he negotiated with the mechanic and lied about us being related to him, we finally paid the retired Serbian for the costs needed to repair the damage. We all got back to where we started, shook hands and the Serbian expressed how thankful he was towards the Albanian for being there. We did the same and like he had promised, he left with a “was my pleasure” as we returned back to the damaged car and headed back to Pristina.

As we have tried to render the claims for ourselves it proved that not all stories are transmitting the ‘actual truth’ and there are several factors involved in the respondents’ truth. This illustrates that there is a clear distinction of people who have never travelled or visited Mitrovica and their claims what we later used in the quantitative study. Several sources were concerned about media’s exaggerating news and their legitimacy. But it seems that whenever the story is narrated enough, it then becomes part of wider discourse. Thus, media’s responsibility cannot be ruled out from keeping up the parallel structures, as media might be used to spread out selective institutionalised stories.

5.5 Non-Humans as Narrators

People are not the only ones who tell stories. Non-humans are used as a medium for influencing, and they can take either material or immaterial form: as an example, a law restricting movement can be regarded as an immaterial narrator. A country's flag is another example of material form of the non-human. In Kosovo, the Albanian flag illustrating the ethnic majority is probably even more common than the official flag of Kosovo. Ethnicity has come up several times throughout the research, including in the questionnaire when a few respondents reminded us about the differences between nationality and ethnicity.



Figure 14 This combination of Kosovar, Albanian, US, EU, and NATO flags can be seen both in Pristina and South Mitrovica (authors' own photo).

The symbol of double-headed eagle in the Albanian flag can be seen almost everywhere, from flags to t-shirts and stencil art on walls. The flag illustrates Albanian ethnicity and is often flagged next to a Kosovar flag, and sometimes a US and NATO flags are accompanying them (see figure 14). The United States has a strong symbolic presence in Kosovo. Former US president have statues and roads named after them, and there is even a small scale Statue of Liberty on top of a building in Pristina. The American accent can be heard regularly in the

streets and restaurants in Pristina. However, when crossing the New Bridge to North Mitrovica, the visual change is immediate (see figure 15). No Kosovar, Albanian or US flags can be seen there, but instead the Serbian flag and painted anti-EU slogans on the walls can be found.

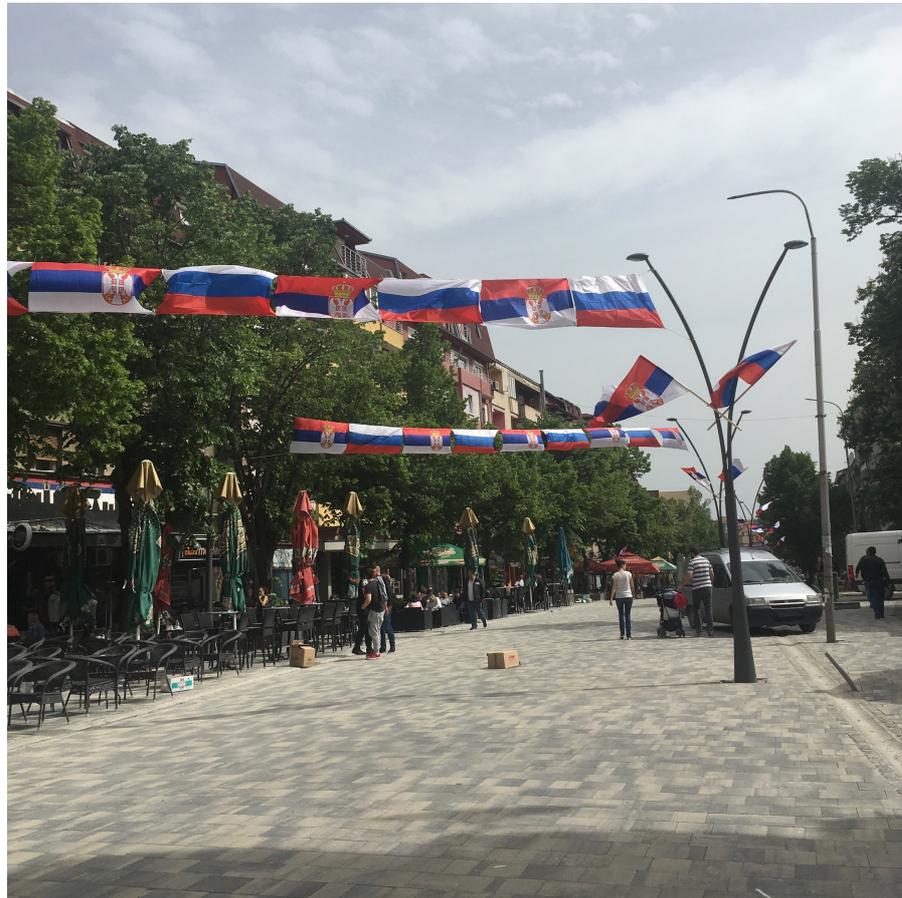


Figure 15 Serbian and Russian flags in North Mitrovica in May 13, 2017 (authors' own photo).

The clashes and debates between countries which were presented earlier, are often sparked through non-human intervention. The arrest of Ramush Haradinaj was based on alleged war-crimes, and the train stopped by Serbia was covered with the slogan “Kosovo is Serbia”. The wall caused further provocation, let alone the New Bridge which has been the stage for various events and demonstrations throughout the past 20 years. These events illustrate how the non-human setting is used as a tool in order to seek legitimation for the following discourse, or in other words, defining the wanted reality. The discourse in relation to the topic then continued to use material

medium/instruments, for example, when the marketing campaign in Kosovo defended Haradinaj with high-visibility posters in the capital, Pristina.

It seems that these non-human symbols are creating images of friends and foes, us and them, and who are supporters and with whom one needs to be careful with. The symbols and other non-human visual instruments therefore tell a story without words, actively being in the background, reminding us about the past, and paves the path to legitimate the future actions.

If we want to consider what best symbolises Mitrovica, the New Bridge could be the most visible and well-known material symbol for it. It symbolises the interethnic conflicts and the attempts to reunite north and south. On the other hand, the immobility can be argued as an immaterial symbol for Mitrovica. The immobility is expressed in conversations, and despite the fact that the symbol in this case is stronger than the actual phenomenon, it is held up through power, for example, the parallel structures and the prevailing, self-governing stories.

We found out from a couple of different sources, that the US citizens working for their government are forbidden to enter North Mitrovica. Regardless whether that is reasonable or not, this is yet another illustration of governmobility.

5.6 Interpretations of the past

When we conducted interviews and had everyday conversations, the most common way of explaining the current situation was telling it through history. For example, the interviews conducted with the farmers pointed towards ‘the time before the war’:

‘I’m Serbian, I was born here. [...] we lived like brothers and sisters with Albanians. We ate together, we spent time together. The distance

between Serbians and Albanians was like layers of an onion.” (Market day 2017)

The Serb farmer emphasizes how an ethnic ‘barricade’ has formed and prevented Serb and Albanian from gathering and having a united community as it was before. They emphasized how everything was better then:

“There are many positive things to see here and we are trying to bring back the good from the past. Before there was more visible culture and rock music.” (Golubović 2017)

Very often the stories repeated the same mantra: there was no North or South Mitrovica and Albanians and Serbians lived side by side and people moved freely across the Ibar River. They entered each other's homes as their own and their kids played together. The mayor of South Mitrovica described the old industrial town having a strong economic situation that was destroyed during the war and that is now going to be turned towards a better direction through economic growth (Bahtiri, 2017). Milos Golubović spoke of Mitrovica having the most outstanding rock band in all of the Balkans:

“We established Mitrovica rock school that is now an independent organization that works north and south with over a 100 students with mixed ethnicities that is the only condition. If you want to play in a band, they need to be mixed. There are two minor branches that makes them hard to move from one side to the other. They perform together and go abroad together.” (Golubović 2017)

He has a strong wish to re-create this ‘rock movement’ and make kids from both sides play together with certain criteria’s in the group organization; the band has to include different ethnicities (Golubović 2017).

The majority of the people we interviewed provided only positive images of the past: the information they provided described a stable place where there were no interethnic clashes, with homes and jobs for everyone, and high politics did not take place in those stories. Often disputed or negative topics were not mentioned. The past history was told through selective storytelling, by leaving things out and therefore re-shaping the past identity of the place. Of course, no in-depth analysis of Mitrovica nor its history is possible to give within the given timeframe of the interviews, but it was striking how the past was considered so positive. Often the history was told to justify the interviewees' 'wished' goals. The mayor with the goal of a better economic development emphasized the industry, workplaces and a strong economic situation in the past (Bahtiri, 2017). He mentioned that the Balkan's greatest rock band was formed in Mitrovica (Golubović, 2017), and people lived side by side and moved freely on both side of the Ibar River.

“Mitrovica was one municipality with 125.000 citizens, and has been known as a industrial city. Mitrovica had Trepqa which had 22.000 employers, with a strong economic development. After the war started, Mitrovica was destroyed completely. Serbs destroyed everything that was Albanian: houses, villages, they burned it all.” (Bahtiri, 2017)

Using the broader understanding of the term *story*, all these are stories are from different social agents, and accordingly, their positioning and scale of interest was different. But using the hierarchical representation table, we could then argue that the talk about economic development are parts of institutionalized stories coming from a political level, while the 'living side by side' -stories were part of a wider discourse among those we interviewed. Individual farmers have far less chance to influence than politicians, however they may still wish something from the future, that is similar to the politicians. The common thread for both were justifying the present or future actions through the past.

5.7 Contradictions of Stories and Practises

The pre-study of Mitrovica and the New Bridge let us believe in a different reality than what we personally encountered. We interpreted the international media's viewpoint as something which represents the world in a most realistic manner and found multiple supportive sources about the situation, but still our perception of the place changed a lot after being in Mitrovica for the first time. The same happened with some of the stories we heard afterwards. As an example, the concern regarding the licence plate issued by either country (Serbia/Kosovo) entering the opposite area. Some told that story as a truth without reservation, but some other participants during the conversations did convey a sign of doubt and questioned it. Later we had a ride with our translator in his car. It was equipped with Kosovar issued licence plates – and we did not experience anything outside the norm. However, we heard the licence plate story from other sources as well, with the reasoning that without plates you will get in less trouble than with them. Pointing out that again our perception changed based on the experience with our translator and further when we drove to north Mitrovica ourselves with Kosovar issued licence plates.

During our research, it became obvious that the direct border crossing from Kosovo to Serbia would not be possible. However, contradictory stories were raised. First, someone told us that it is possible with an Identity Document (ID) card, since the Serbian border officials cannot put a stamp on the ID card. The second story pointed out that the border crossing might be possible with passports alone and an ID card was not required. Fuelled by our previously mentioned experiences, we decided to try our luck by crossing the border to see what awaits us at the port of entry.

Firstly, Kosovar authorities stamped our passports when we left the country as they would at any other border as well, but the Serbian authorities stopped us. They first denied our entry to Serbia and pointed out that the missing ID cards were required. Since we did not carry ID cards, we debated

that a passport is as valid document as the ID. After couple of rounds of negotiations, the officials let us go, but without entry stamps and “only this one time”. The situation was polite, and the way the border guard acted showed he really hoped we would carry these ID cards in order to let us pass. ID cards are not stamped when crossing borders, and if they would have stamped our passports Serbia would then more or less acknowledged that the border exists – which Serbia does not want to admit. We reasoned that since Serbia does not recognize the Kosovo border, in their perspective we already were in Serbia this entire time, making t border control unnecessary there. This not only shows the ambiguous relation between stories and reality, but also how citizens’ mobilities are governed through those stories. In addition, while this story is told by several official institutions – foreign and domestic – it is also told by ordinary citizens, pointing towards Michel Foucault’s notions of people’s self-governance, where practises are institutionalized accordingly to certain understandings and routines. Therefore, we found clear contradictions with institutionalized rules and possibilities of movement.

This identifies how power exists at every level and is based on one’s narration. It is not only political or economic power, but also at ground level, it concerns a citizen’s power to influence. How much power when compared to politicians, is a different conversation, but this does not mean citizens are powerless. They have the power to tell a story, and sometimes, depending on a variety of factors, those stories are believed and the listener may change or strengthen his viewpoint. The repetition of similar stories increases the likeliness of them supporting the other and thus the chance of it becoming the new reality when those stories form a larger discourse. However, there is no certainty that the stories are not just told like it was heard without personal experiences or without intentional external influence. We argue that storytelling is a form of spreading information, and thus it could be then said that this information is *mobilised*, since it is not in the possession of only one individual anymore. Therefore, the ability of mobilising his or her stories could

be considered as a resource. The other way to think the same matter, would be if one has economic or social status to mobilise himself or herself, has also the power to have a greater impact towards a larger audience. Emphasizing again that mobilities are both a means and resource to support one's power.

5.8 Power behind Stories

The New Bridge is currently closed to cars, but not to pedestrians. Still, there is discussion about “reopening” the New Bridge, which indicates that cars have a higher status in the ‘transportation hierarchy’. Also the fact that at least we have not heard this debate as to whether or not the bridge is already opened or not, speaks for itself: until cars are able to cross the New Bridge, it is considered closed. Therefore, the bridge is only symbolically closed, but *de facto* connecting. For us, with our backgrounds as urban and transportation planners, it really does seem as a matter of perspective. The car keeps dominating the symbol of free movement, despite the already congested streets in the relatively small city of Mitrovica.

Hoxhiq expresses her opinions regarding the reopening set for June 2017:

“(...) it is nice, I would like to see it opened. But is it something that is done in the proper time, is it something that is done in a proper way? Everybody can conclude that the north is against opening this bridge, i think this is going to change”. (Hoxhiq 2017)

She emphasizes that people in the north are not ready for this action due to past events and situations: with the wall in December 2016 and the previous ugly barricade with sand during the 2013 elections where people from the south yelled and complained as examples. She thought that the physical reopening might hinder accessibility through new uninviting events and trigger a continuation towards immobility. Despite the claim already mentioned,

Hoxhiq does want to comply with the agreements of high politics and believes that it will be a success:

“We are interested to keep peace and we will coordinate and we will accommodate our plans and our actions according to these political decisions. We will not call people to go out in the street and to say we don’t want this, if this is the decision made among high politicians between Belgrade and Pristina.” (Hoxhiq 2017)

Competing stories are taking place at every level of society, and even externally from the particular society, as we have discussed how foreign powers are debating whether Kosovo is independent or not and how safe it is to travel there. These competing stories have an impact on the place as argued by Jensen & Richardson. The stories might either strengthen or change one’s opinion about the place, which furthermore should be understood with its embodied relationship with the world, similar to what Cresswell argued.

While Canada’s travel advice for Kosovo is “Exercise normal security precautions” for a majority of the country (Government of Canada, 2017), Australia is recommending “High degree of caution” (Australian Government, Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, 2017). Considering that the two countries are referring to same place, they have the power to define a very different reality for the ones reading their travel advices. Thus it is evident that the perception of a place is dependent on who is telling the story: At the time of writing the thesis, 79 United Nations member nations do not recognize Kosovo and thus their perspective is that Kosovo is not an independent country and is a part of Serbia. Hence, even the same attributes that the place has, for example same physical location, material settings, own parliament, government, police or other features of independent country do not necessarily mean the same reality for different countries. Therefore, the decision to not recognize Kosovo is based on other reasoning. The detailed analysis as to why some countries

have not recognized Kosovo is not a part of the thesis, but it can be then argued that those countries then have the power to define the rationality for not recognizing Kosovo's independence and base their own reality considering the amount of countries in the world for themselves.

6 Conclusion

The research question was set up with inspiration from the background of the case study and first impressions from the field. It was answered by using a various mix of methods through the pragmatic approach in coherency with non-representational ethnography, and tools from the theoretical framework. The following will start by answering the sub-questions connecting to mobilities characteristics, material setting, and power structures in order to answer the main research question regarding storytelling and mobilities. The following chapter will discuss how these findings may contribute to the field of mobilities management.

What are the Current Border-Mobility Characteristics in Mitrovica?

The current mobility characteristics around the defined border in Mitrovica cannot be summed up into one characteristic in particular. There is clear evidence proving that a lot of people do not move freely or do not move at all, but on the other hand steady flow of pedestrians is a common sight on the New Bridge. The New Bridge is constantly provided with security patrolling on both ends, which might have some preventive and calming effects for the bridge and its surroundings. However, there are two other bridges connecting North and South Mitrovica, which do not have security and no clashes have occurred. The New Bridge is currently restricted from the use of cars, but not from pedestrian use. The one dominating mobility characteristic is the indirect discourse and supposition of the car as a primary mode of transportation. Another mobility characteristic is the vastly spread prejudice about immobility and the clear spatial distinction between two ethnicities.

What Kind of Physical and Material Setting is Provided in Mitrovica?

The material setting provided in Mitrovica was at the time of writing this thesis under a constant transition. In this study, The New Bridge has had a major role as a connecting infrastructure – or disconnecting, depending upon your viewpoint. The renovation of the New Bridge is an EU-funded project and has sparked some public debates, for instance, when Mayor Rakić claimed parts of the financial responsibility for Serbia. The wall has now been torn down, and the refurbishment of the bridge still continues. The Ibar River separates North and South Mitrovica, and the New Bridge as a physical environment and material setting meant to be connecting infrastructure but it also symbolises the disconnectedness of the place. The material settings is also very different in the North than in the South. Flags, symbols, graffiti and even the licence plates express immediately which side you are on.

What Kind of Power Structures Exists in Mitrovica?

From the above we can reflect on the power structures in Mitrovica. Both the South and the North municipalities are backed up by their corresponding governments, but in addition, the EU is mediating the negotiations and is involved in the spatial planning among other political topics. The UN and some European embassies have been developing projects in Mitrovica, and the Italian armed military police, the Carabinieri is securing the safety around the bridge. The amount of US flags and symbols in Pristina and South Mitrovica reveals their influence in the country. Therefore, the debates between the two municipalities are also debates between the governments of Serbia and Kosovo. These debates are then mediated by external entities, and economic and spatial development is receiving significant help from the international community. The political border of Mitrovica has been created by a continuous sequence of events starting from 1999. This means that the external and internal forces

affect citizen mobility accordingly to what can be understood as today's situation: a material and partly emotionally constructed ethnic division between Kosovar Serbs and Kosovar Albanians in Mitrovica.

What are the Driving Forces Behind Storytelling Affecting Border Mobilities?

The key to understand the relationship of storytelling and border mobilities is first to understand mobilities in a wider scope than just as physical movement. People and goods do move to a large extent and they are a very tangible way to understand movement, but that is only a part of a story. Capital, news, cultures, diseases, information and power is on the move as well. And as Massey argued, even places should be understood in their constant movement. Controlling the movement of the previously mentioned, and one is not too far from Bærenholdt's notion: that mobilities is first and foremost a way of governing. Second, the concept of border should be carefully considered. In addition to the traditional borders between countries, borders should be understood again in greater perspective. Borders can delineate a separating line between two places or countries, but as in the example of our case study, the border between North and South Mitrovica demarcates the two governmental powers, municipal authorities, citizens' ethnicities, cultures, and languages, all within one independent country.

Movement happen in and between places. Places provide the material setting for movement, and then, movement, in turn, shapes the socio-spatial relations. As Jensen & Richardson argued, the discourse – institutionalised stories – is shaping lived spaces and those discourses are then shaped by lived spaces. In our understanding, if spaces are lived in, they are then places since they have a meaning for the ones 'living' in it. From this, we argue, that mobilities certainly is a way of governing, but used with the complex combination of these elements: stories, places, and materialities. What connects mobilities and power, is the place. Movement of any kind, requires place, and

when the place is changed, it then affects its mobilities. The one who has the power to change the place, has also the power to affect the mobilities in and around it. If one wishes to study the relationships of power, place, and mobilities, the key thing is to identify actors, their motives, and how the story is structured.

However, the relation of places and movement is not one-way, when for example the bridge is blocked, then the physical mobilities, or the lack of it, causes hindrance in every other dimension of mobilities as well: ideas, information, and opinions are not exchanged to the same extent anymore and when this dichotomy starts, it is easy to embrace the division by separating 'us' from 'them' and promoting those new identities, distinguishing features, and symbols that have may been established. The restriction of movement then might cause the creation of new homogeneous groups, but those groups might be vastly different among themselves.

The driving forces behind storytelling affecting border mobilities is thus, to a large extent, power over place, and storytelling is used as a tool to legitimize action or opinion over place. However, the important acknowledgements and the one we wish to highlight, is first that with power we do not merely mean a high institutional or societal status. To clarify the argument, the right question is not whether or not one has power, but *how much* power do they have? Surely, the closer one is to decision makers or media distributing news, for example, the more likely that individual then has more power when compared to, for instance, other citizens. But citizens also have the power to mobilise their stories: Through these narrations some have more power to influence, while some have less. But the capability to influence is almost always there, and hence, so is the power. Our first visit to Mitrovica, we heard how parents had the power to restrict the movement of their children by branding the place as dangerous. If enough parents tell the same story, then those individual narrations become a part of a widespread discourse that shapes the 'new norm'. However, the stories do not necessarily have to be true to have an impact on the

individual or society. Secondly, this does not exclude the fact that individual narrations can be influenced by those who possess institutional or societal power. As an example, if they use their power to control media to tell a story accordingly that increases their power and influence over others. In fact, this notion is as important as the first one. If one possess enough power, then he can decide the topic of debate and thus control it: as found in many examples, when one instigated the topic and how it was addressed, then the following discourse formed around it. Competing narrations can occur simultaneously, and the story told is a result of interpretation of other stories told, personal motives, and the worldview of the narrator.

7 Discussion

The aim of the thesis has been to cast light upon the relationship between storytelling and border mobilities. This research illustrates our input to the cross study of narrative turn and mobilities. We found out the pervasive role power has in the relation to storytelling and mobilities, and thus the terms storytelling and mobilities cannot be understood without the concept of power. Our case study was identified as an extreme case, due to the abundance of historical events, the clear polarization between the two ethnicities and the ongoing power debates and border disputes between two countries. In addition, other external powers were relatively easy to identify and therefore the driving forces behind the research topic was more clear than perhaps in an average case. To fully cover all sides of the reality, it would require an additional perspective in which researchers would relocate themselves to reside among the other ethnicity. But instead of discovering the 'absolute truth', our intentions were to identify the driving forces and thus the findings of this thesis can be applicable to many average cases as well. For instance, understanding the challenges related to social segregation and integration in spatial and urban planning in cities around the world and how is power used in these spatial interventions? Therefore, these findings are not only meant to inspire academic research but are also intended to serve a practical use as well. For example, the research could aid in urban planning, transportation and understanding how cultural differences can be integrated into solving societal conflicts. The next step could be a comparable study of putting the extreme into an average case as described above.

By discussing concepts such as borders, places, and power in a broader perspective, we have tried to illustrate their relations in a wider scope. If we can discuss these concepts in other than their singular meaning, we can then see their full potential. For example, how the power is used to reshape identities and places, and how it affects also to place's mobilities. Place and power are the

key notions of any spatial planning debate, and through the findings one can see that when place is changed then its mobilities has changed as well. The narrator has the power to construct his or her stories accordingly to their wanted reality, and depending on, for example, the societal status, the influence of that power may vary. But places are still performed, and under constant change and under influence of those stories.

We have further made some methodological remarks. We were both participants and observers during our study, and often extremely interesting topics rose in a spontaneous conversations. Through our own narration, we have described some of the personal events we have experienced. Applying non-representational ethnography, the daily interactions, adaptability and versatility of subjects were captured by using our embodied encounter with them. This methodology has been allowed by pragmatism, to let us focus on mobile methods, and finding interconnections between materialities and people, as Phillip Vannini argued. Furthermore, not trying to identify the absolute truth of stories, non-representational ethnography has liberated some resources to focus on the operational driving forces behind our studied topic. The thesis is therefore an attempt to tell our story from academic perspective.

We experienced several restrictions and limitations with the case study. This includes the collection of the data, but also when it comes to our non-representational observations. Firstly, the survey was, as mentioned, very limited to a homogenous group of people. Not only to whom it was distributed but also how (over social media). For instance, it was for people who knew the English language and answered by young people in Pristina who were familiar with the Facebook groups. The conduction of the survey could have been done differently to reach more heterogeneous group. Also, instead of using social media alone it could have been distributed to schools, universities, workplaces, public spaces and among locals in Mitrovica. The language in the survey could have been in all the native speaking languages (Serbian, Albanian, Turkish, Roma etc.) in order to gain diversity. However, a broader scope as such may not

only direct the research towards new findings, but also new research directions. Secondly, there were restrictions experienced with the interviews and interviewee subjects. This relates to the language skills we possessed, as only one of us spoke the Albanian language. The elderly group of people spoke little to no English at all, and thus especially our everyday conversations were often limited to the younger crowd.

During the conduction of the interviews, we gained new perspectives that lead us to other interview subjects. This means that the field of interest lead to interview subjects that would have additional or interesting angles within the topic based on their position or role. The interviewee subjects used were carefully chosen in order to grasp most of the research through their perspectives. However, a richer interaction with citizens of Mitrovica could have given us a reflection of stories constructed about their own relation to mobility, place, and power. An idea for gaining a more in depth understanding of their mobilities and mobilities pattern could be by using a similar methods as the one Simon Wind did in his PhD, 'Making Everyday Mobility' (2014), where he tracked 11 family members and how they moved in order to see what role mobility plays in their lives. Another way of approaching our study could be through use of power relations in mobile practices as Trine Fotel together with Thyra Uth Thomsen, "The surveillance of children's mobility" (2004). In this article, they study how the children's mobilities are being monitored by 'adults' in the society and with today's technology. Perhaps the context cannot be directly linked to the thesis, however, children's and parents' perceptions of this monitorization may illustrate the power of narration and its impact on the modern society. Studying the role of mobilities, what activities families have, and the patterns of their movement could be interesting in the case of Mitrovica if this data could be connected to the stories told and the viewpoint they have. The thesis is emphasizing the power relationships in mobilities studies. With these notions mentioned above, we draw conclusions that in in the field of

mobilities management, we have to understand power of narration in the context of mobile practices and place.

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10 Appendices

Appendix 1

The interviews are divided into two subjects:

The local/private - People at the Market

Questions from a personal approach so the interviewee subject corresponds based on his personal life rather than as a professional

Background Questions

How old are you?

Where do you live?

How long have you been living in Mitrovica?

Who do you live with?

What do you do in your spare time?

What is your education level/grade attending?

What different languages do you speak/know?

What is your ethnicity/from/belonging/identity?

Place

What is the best parts/things with your hometown?

Where do you have family and friends?

What is the reason why you live in Mitrovica (job, family, place, all)?

Do you feel comfortable in Mitrovica?

What symbolizes Mitrovica in your opinion?

After independence in 2008, has any changes happened in your daily life as a citizen? (Example, changed profession/ changed school/ lost your business/family has moved in/out. Are you familiar with Ahtisaari proposal)

Can you see development in the city for the past 5 years? (2011 onwards)

What is your opinion about the newest cooperation and renovation of the bridge?

What has changed, for the better/worse?

Name 3 reasons why Mitrovica is a good city to live in and 3 reasons why Mitrovica is not so good?

What are the potentials of the city that can be worked on in the future?

How can Mitrovica be improved? (Questions like these might reveal people's thoughts and mindsets?)

How do you think about the foreign troops in Mitrovica / New Bridge?

Mobilities

How do you move in order to get to work/daily shopping/ friends/meeting?

Do you at times get a ride from someone or organize rides with other people when travelling to places? (Lacking of infrastructure for the place or skills/competences)

For citizens living North Mitrovica: Do you ever go to south Mitrovica?

When you travel to south Mitrovica, how does it make you feel?

To a kid: How is it walking to school in the morning/meeting friends after school?

To parent: What do you think of your kid's (mobility) pathway to school in the morning/ return in the evening?

If your mother/father takes you to school everyday, do they take any other kids in your class as well? Or have you been taken to school by other parents? (community question) Hopefully they will answer how this experience is at the same time?

To the kid: Does your parents allow you to use a cellphone? what do you do with it? call them to pick your up?

Power

What symbolizes for citizens of Mitrovica?

What mode of mobility citizen of Mitrovica use the most?

What has been the historically biggest turning points (In Mitrovica)

What has been the impact of those turning points?

What are your thoughts around Ahtisaari proposal?

How has the past events affected people's mobility behaviour?

How has the past events affected the dynamics of the place (inhabitants)?

When was the new bridge originally built and for how long it has been closed for cars?

Professional background

Questions from a professional approach so the interviewee subject corresponds based on his professional self rather than personal his personal life. The questions changes dependent on the interviewees professional position:

Where are you from?

Tell us a little bit about your work here?

How long have you been in your current position?

How do you think media presents Mitrovica (local, national, international)

How has the international media affected the dynamics of the place (everyday inhabitants, travellers to and from the place)?

What has been the biggest obstacles in Mitrovica after and between the Brussels agreement / between Kosovo and Serbia / the two ethnicities?

How is the cooperation between Serbia and Kosovo and Mitrovica North/South? Are the challenges wider/ smaller?

Do parallel structures exist between the two sides? In what forms?

Does the implementations from the Brussels agreement go through?

How do you find the cooperation with south Mitrovica/Pristina?

What are your thoughts around Ahtisaari proposal?

Consequences? Effects?

How has the past events affected the dynamics of the place (inhabitants)?

What do you consider being the symbol of Mitrovica for citizens?

When is the new bridge going to have it's opening for cars? And what ethnicities are the workers?

What projects are you working on to increase mobility on either side of the bridge?

Any cooperation with citizens?

Do you / other NGO's / the international community see Mitrovica as represented in international media?

For example, the recent events (train, wall, etc)

How has the international media affected the dynamics of the place (everyday inhabitants, travellers to and from the place)?

UN Habitat in Kosovo?

What kind of political / local (top-down/bottom-up) level guiding is influencing your (PHd)work?

Architecture about the bridge or nearby? How to arrange mutual design with parallel structures?

Appendix 2

Transcription of Interview with Agim Bahtiri, Mayor of South Mitrovica, 17th of March 2017

I: Mitrovica was one municipality with 125.000 citizens, and has been known as a industrial city. Mitrovica had Trepqa which had 22.000 employers, with a strong economic development. After the war started, Mitrovica was destroyed completely. Serbs destroyed everything that was Albanian: houses, villages, they burned it all. 146 people have died in Mitrovica, in all Kosovo have died 12.000 people and 4.000 is missing.

Then, with the liberation of Kosovo, UNMIK and KFOR were responsible, they tried to bring back Albanians in their houses, they saw some problems that some families couldn't come back in North Mitrovica, because their houses or apartments were burned. In 2002 the problems started, where dozens of Albanians were killed, hundred were injured and 15000 citizens of Kosovo with Albanian nationality displaced in South Mitrovica from the North and in other cities of Kosovo. It was a tense city, there were protests, harassments, and there were consequences. Then, the process of bringing back Albanians in the North of Mitrovica, but it wasn't successful, there were set parallel structures of Serbia in North, which legitimized every Albanian who lived in the North, there were created total blockade in Ibri's Bridge, tones of sand to stop moving in the bridge, then happened other blockades after intervention of Kosovo's Police in the North, were burned 2 border crossing points which are in the Northern part, but they put 36 other barricades in the North.

Then, the illegal structures acted and still act but they were stronger before, till 2013, in 2013 there were local elections where citizens attended of all nationalities and Mitrovica's municipality it split in two in 2004, administrative boundaries were defined politically, in 2006 is a decision from municipality assembly which actually accepted administrative boundaries with Ahtisaari's Plan, in 2008 ratified in Kosovo's parliament, who defines administrative boundaries of both municipalities and this in 2013 has enabled to have a candidate for mayor in the North Mitrovica, separation of municipality happened with Ahtisaari's Plan.

In 2013 came Mr.Rakic, and me as a major of south Mitrovica, I have been someone who lived 25 years in Netherland, I come from business side, and for businessmen it doesn't exist differences in nationality, race, borders, but businessmen want economic development, welfare for all, much less these people know barricades, so I started to work with internationals, with their help, who were implicated very much with different ambassadors in Kosovo, we started to try to approach citizens, to make a free zone, a zone where Albanian and Serbian could move, collaborating with Mr.Rakic in the North, to unite the city not in the Ahtisaari's form but for the citizens.

Then we started the process in Brussels, I've been part of Kosovo's delegation in Brussels, there we started the conversations, it started in 2014 and ended in 25 August 2015, where we agreed to have a plan for the bridge, a project by EU, in both sides of the bridge becomes the traffic insertion for cars and for citizens who want to pass, and so this was made with the EU, still we are working there. We are still working on removing parallel structures in the North part, while engaging them in Kosovo's special services, and giving legitimacy for the North Mitrovica mayor with Kosovo's constitution, to be a major like every mayor in Kosovo and to have a calm territory, to not be available the Serbians parallel structures in that part, we are in the best part to reunite the city and we are working so hard with the foreign, to have a reunited city, I think that the reunite is going to happen in the May of this year (2017), we will finish EU project.

I think that now has been created a good climate, people can move freely in the North part and in South, they live freely in the North part, where before they were unsafe from parallel structures and by this year I think it is going to finish all, to reunite the city, not boundaries but

for the citizens, so Mitrovica have 2 municipalities, we are not against it, but we are all dedicated for citizens to feel free in both sides South and North, to move freely, to reunite the city for the citizens, but the administration will have 2 municipalities, 2 majors but with free movement, one city, like Mitrovica it was before, free and developed in the near future. We think that after returning to this condition that is very good now, because before were 9863 incidents till 2013, but till now are only 7, then the crime has decreased for 58.3% according to police, solved crimes 72.3% according to police, it has happened a big change, an amazing stability, no tensions.

Me and the other major will work to not have tensions in both sides, because tensions just send us to a bad impact, I'm here for an economic development and that cannot happen where are the tensions and no safety, but I worked in that direction to have a safety for every investor, to have conditions, and this is happening, 36 that has been all of them are removed, the sand is taken off from the Ibri's Bridge, now we are going to the end of our project, and is coming a economic development and we announced free zone in all municipalities, free economic zone, we made a new economic zone, who is certificated from Kosovo's ministry. We are working in the infrastructure, 20 companies are making 20 factories, we are trying to make 300 factories, to have new employers and after the issuance of the bridge we are going to have assignment of both majors, to have new investors in South and North. You know that Mitrovica hasn't been known as a tensioned city only in Prishtina but also in Brussels, and so we will try to send a good message in Brussels and in Washington but we work for our citizens, and we will succeed in the future also, I think that tension in Mitrovica has ended, the wall has been removed, everything's going okay. It is a pleasure to see my citizens not wanting tensions, problems but they want to live in peace, to live in economic development, education and to live free, their kids to live free and not to worry to go out. Mitrovica city will be a multiethnic city and with an economic development.

V: What is your opinion about how media represents Mitrovica ?

I: Unfortunately, in all over the world media wants to represent things exaggerated, especially these national media, but also those international but they are more careful. They always try to exaggerate the small tensions and unfortunately they want to hear bad things and not good things. Here happened a lot of good things that are not represented, but they represent only the bad little things that shouldn't have been in our media.. For the reason we have a common interest, to stabilize the city for the Kosovo's road in EU, we have made a lot of positive steps, media are not correct, they are supports of parties, they think only for the bad of the city.

V: We heard that media of Serbia are influenced by government, do you think that in Kosovo is also influenced by Kosovo's government?

I: Of course, yes. In Serbia and Kosovo rarely happen to have independent medias, they are depended from politic because they live by it, every party has their own media unfortunately, I asked for independent media to tell the truth, even for bad things even for good things, but here doesn't happen. For the people who really are bad and work bad they never mention them, but they attack the people who work well, media are most of them supporters of party. They have their material from our government.

V: These who listen this media, people who live outside Mitrovica or Kosovo, they can have a bad perspective for Mitrovica by this?

I: They exaggerate things, even if really in Mitrovica that case is nothing important, and so they think it is true what media say. It has dissatisfaction from the citizens of Mitrovica because they know how things really are, and the people who really don't know situations they can believe the media, which is not supposed to support a party but to be realistic in their job.

V: Which are the biggest obstructions in Mitrovica.

I: Economic development, this place wasn't well developed because it was a tense city, crisis city and people who lived in Mitrovica, intellectuals who lived in Mitrovica they are

displaced in other cities and now is different, intellectuals are coming back in Mitrovica, but Mitrovica has been left behind because other cities are more developed and the economic development started since I came here as a major.

V: Are you talking about North Mitrovica or South?

I: I'm talking for both, for Mitrovica as one city. South Mitrovica is more developed than the North. But I would like the North to be developed also, to work together, for them is going to be a memorandum which is going to invite donors to develop both sides South and North, without an economic development cannot be an absolute tranquility, because if people won't have a job and every family won't have an average wage they can be manipulated from someone else, Serbia doesn't hesitate to do that, Serbia gives more than 40000 wages for Serbs in Kosovo, so if the wages still continue and we don't do anything to afford them a wage from our country we are going to have problems because they can make troubles when they are getting paid by Serbia and so they live by them and they should listen to them. And independence of Serbs in Kosovo should be employing them, working with them.

V: So, contacts that you have with Rakic is a good collaboration, does he see Mitrovica in the way you see it?

I: We have collaboration but he sees it a little different, and I see it different. Because Serbia reflects even in the North part in the major, for the reason that they think to separate the North, to manage it with an municipality association, parallel structures, but that is not going to happen, Kosovo is a independent country and they cannot do that, we as a country offered good opportunities all the communities in Kosovo, 90% are Albanian, less than 10% are minorities, and we offered them good opportunities, we have a lot of major cities that are managed by other minorities, 20 places in our government are for minorities, so I don't know any country in the world who offers this much for minorities and so they have the chance to develop the country and to believe in their leader, in economic development, education, their language, just to have their chance to be free, educated and have their perspective. I think we as a country did a lot for minorities, and we are still doing so Mitrovica and other majors have a little bit difference with me, but the future of Mitrovica is to have the citizens united, to move freely, with the free speech, no matter North or South, I think that this year is going to end for Mitrovica united, and when you come here you won't know if you are in North or South.

V: Why the American college is one in North and one in South ?

I: I know that are 2 colleges are building up from Sweden, Denmark and Norway, it is a project of 6th embassies, in the North is builded, but in the south is going to be open now. But American college is something else which we let them use 2.5 Ha of Mitrovica's land, which starts from primary school till university, which is going to have about 700 students, there will have American teachers, the cost is going to be around 1200E. I think that is going to be a good school for the future of our kids, to be educated in a American college in Kosovo.

V: What do you think about Ahtisaari's plan

I: Ahtisaari's plan is an operative plan for Republic of Kosovo, according to Ahtisaari's plan in 2008 was declared Kosovo's independence. Ahtisaari's plan defines points that he got to maintain stability in Kosovo, that created good conditions for serbs and all other communities, in the place where serbs live to be managed by their citizens he made some municipalities, just for them to have their own major, their administrations, this was bad for Kosovo, Mitrovica got separated from Ahtisari's Plan, but anyway we wanted an independent country and we couldn't do it other way without Ahtisari's Plan, so now we stay behind it, anyone who wants to get out Ahtisari's plan doesn't have space in Kosovo, we accepted it and we are loyal to it, and we are going to be loyal till the end, even why it has damaged us.

Appendix 3

Transcription of Interview with Klodeta Krasniqi, UN-Habitat, 31st of March 2017

V: So yeah, we thought like you can tell us a little bit about you said, you studied architecture here?

I: Yeah I studied architecture bachelor in University of Pristina and there I started my thesis with urban design in centre of Pristina, then I continued my master in Milano and there I did my thesis about Pristina. Somehow it ended up tackling the integration issue because its like we talk about integration all the time, but then when we tried to look at the different communities and what does integration mean. It's a very kind of a grey area and how it is interpreted by different administrations. Like the central and the local, so this is when kind of drawing into tackling the integration through spatial planning rather than spatial planning itself. So I'm more like drawn now into governance and using spatial planning as a tool to tackle integration or this kind of socially complex areas. I work with UN-HABITAT for like five years now and right now I'm based as UN-HABITAT representative in Mitrovica South.

Our program now focuses on northern region who covers seven municipalities, it is the fourth Serbian majority municipality and is on the other side of Ibar reversely we have: Mitrovica North, Zubin Potok, Zveqan and Leposaviq. And then we have the other Mitrovica South and then we have Skenderaj and Vushtrri. I'am located in Mitrovica South.

So there are a lot of things, I mean it depends on the perspective that you are looking at. If first the thing that we have to seize is that it is one or at least it used to function as one urban area the city, and now it is divided in two. It is administrated by two different bodies with very huge differences in every single aspect; You name it, the administration, political, social everything. The administration, I mean in my perspective, is that they don't see Mitrovica as one city, some sides yes, some sides no, some sides more, some sides less. But there are other internal issue within in each municipality that or there are certain dynamics that it is a difficult time to have them integrated. Because you know Mitrovica still have the two different parallel systems: You have Kosovo government and Serbian structures are still not fully integrated in the Kosovo government and projects are developed by both with different entrance.

V: Well these parallel structures like it is coming up all the time and it seems like it's not one of the biggest issues in Mitrovica, is it the same in spatial planning as you know parallel structures that Is actually the biggest hindrance In the practicing of your work?

I: We have just started in that region so this year has been more on conducting a base line assessment on municipal capacities to address usual planning. So it is a recall that It is still internal so somehow I can't reveal to much of that, but what I can say is that is difficult the fact that you have two different systems meaning that you have two different legislations and two different competent bodies with different mandates, working in one space. So of course it is very complex, let's say situation because you have projects overlapping each other as you might have heard just recently: you have this pedestrian area with a wall built, this was somehow introduced in to the design or after. But then you had another project going on just next to it which really than in terms of design concept, the work was highly conflicting because one was trying to create a connection while the other one was trying to create a boundary, so in this sense like this lets you understand how well coordinated activities are or how well coordinated bodies who are competent for this kind of issues are.

V: Do you coordinate between north and south like other projects coordinated like at least an effort to coordinate the spatial planning project?

I: There was one, so the question was system because now for three years we have a difference spatial planning system, before you had the law of spatial planning which had so a

number of plans which was the municipal development plan, which is a strategy for entire municipality, urban area, then you had the urban development plan which focused only on one.

The strategy for the urban area and then you have the regularly ordinary plans which were let say operational plans for. In 2008 Mitrovica when still the statues of both were not clearly lets say, defined, they drafted on MDP and UNDP which is the municipal and urban development plan which I was talking about which covered the entire area. But that states at least on paper was one municipality still at least on paper was one, it was the municipality of Mitrovica and in this process both parts of the city, both administrations were covered by the same plan but the plan is not really much taken under consideration. The Northern part especially they don't see the plan as theirs. Although, parts of those both structures, were parts of the process. You have the different of implementations. But that's a very common problem in Kosovo so you don't have this kind of feedback mechanisms that really. I mean by law they are defined, you have to do annual reports on the implementation plans, but they don't really have them unfortunately, so very little is known on to what extends in these plans. So now actually we are working in Mitrovica, so this was one of the activities that we were starting because it is a new law since 2013 or 2014 and it is a new law or plan system that is organized. You have the municipal development which is more or less similar to like it used to be, but then you have a zoning map which requires different kind of preparations at the stage of municipal development planning on to be able to do that regular framework for the entire municipality. So now we are at this stage when municipality needs to start reviewing for UNDP and start drafting UNDP, so we are here now and hoping to start soon and this will be of course one of the opportunity to start soon, to open some gates with the Mitrovica North and to see how can we coordinate. By making plans and activities in order not to design conflicting policies especially for things like Serbs delivery, it's a lot of common points so, but this is more or less now.

V: Does UNDP feel like neutral when it comes like North and South?

I: We are UN HABITAT we are UN agency (a sister agency) we have different mandates for us we just deal with humans settlement but yeah as UN we are to fully neutral to the status. To the ethnic composition.

V: I read it's too hard to make agreements with the Northern part of Mitrovica?

I: Depends on the perspective, I mean if you go and look from the Northern perspective it's quite hard to agree with the Southern perspective. But then, I mean, some of the competences in why let's say the rule of law in the entire country of Kosovo is something that is central to the government needs to take care of. But of course we are partners with the government of Kosovo and we are trying to somehow through spatial planning tackle the integration issue and create cooperation.

V: So UN HABITAT is kind of like promoting this urban thinking and better urban life and that's how you try to push further the cities and municipalities north and south these policies what's stopping on doing these contracts or if it is just about spatial planning what are the reasons ?

I: For example, now we have one project that we are initiating because this program in the Northern municipal started in October. So we are at first stages of doing that, another activity that has started is improvement of municipal markets in both sides of Mitrovica South and North. And now we are at the stage of responding and this has been done in cooperation in city of Barcelona and the institute for municipal markets in Barcelona and UN-HABITAT with both Mitrovicas. And now we are in the stage of positive response from both Mitrovicas to work on the municipal market issue. So I mean it's more the need for a facilitator rather than lack of willingness. Of course there are a lot of challenges because both context as a low standing they have their inner issues and terms functionality of the administration like it's still our municipality, or administrations are not capacitated enough to handle and to lead and to spatial planning. If we are referring to it starting from the development of the strategy, budgeting and programming and then investments. And then the maintains and impact assessment and the

feedback to the strategy. So the cycle still doesn't function in municipalities and let alone than the cooperation between the two in coordination, so I mean, at least from my perspective as a representative from Southern part, I see quite a lot of willingness, but with similar response we have received from the Northern part but you need of course to find the right tools to have the issue to consolidate that kind of process.

B: Would you say that there is a difference between the how you and UN-HABITAT is perceived northern and the southern citizens like due to different perceptions?

I: Both municipalities or both regions they have been highly opened. I mean we sit in their municipalities, we became a part of their teams and they were highly opened, of course I mean to start a program it took some years because you need to build that kind of trust and to see that your aim is to actually support development and capacity, enhancement and not to fight it or to try to push it to your own agenda, because our agency the way that it works it really tailors their program activities according to the needs of municipalities. They don't come with the defined framework on a program. Ok we have the components that we will address but then the term of needs and projects is up to the municipalities and their capacity and their needs. So then this is, of course, a process that needs to help for some time until you get the right ingredients, but so far in conducting the work they have been wide open. Because we have local staff here so the agency how it works It has its management and usually we have CTV and chief technical assistant who is a French lady who has designed this program and who is trying to implement it together than we have a spatial planners who are local people so for example we have Serbian and Albanian working together. We have Albanians in the Northern municipality as well, so far I mean we haven't really, but of course it's more of the issue of the capacities of the municipalities to handle this kind of projects. V: is it economical? Of course because the financial capacities are very limited in relation to the needs. When you look at the list of capital investment projects for example municipalities have developed in the recent years, you see they still tackle the basic needs - like accessibility to water or streets, but the issue I'd like to emphasize is the way that we approach projects we see so it's everything is based at hard. So you see that there is no street you go and put some asphalt and there you go. So the entire concept on how to have only small activities, shorten activity, investments feed into a larger strategy. That kind of knowledge does not really exist, this is why when it is difficult to have a strategy implementing because the activities that they place are not really in line or do not derive with the strategy. The strategy itself contains them, but do not derive the mid term expenditure framework from which when you get the budget the midterm you expenditure framework, it is a three year framework that the municipality develops to orientate the activities, all the investments for the following three year. And the budget then is not based on that and then the budget for this framework is not done deriving from the strategy. And subsequently budgeting in the final occasion is not done in line with the strategy. So then it is difficult to know when you are framing the skeet whether it's in line with the plan and if no then what are the possible impact that it might have? so these are the very basics challenges that you can see all over our municipalities, which makes it difficult to discourse larger things.

V: How would you say that does the current political environment or political issues, debates, events happening like do they have effect in your work?

I: Of course because it affects people's behavior, it affects who need willingness, so of course for us the fact that we are sitting in municipality means it is much easier for us to understand when it is the right time to push for certain things. For example if you have certain projects that are perfect in between two of course you don't push for some meetings, this is why we understand the environment and then we behave accordingly.

V: Do they open about bridge renovation about opening it again? How do you see that recent events influenced on that?

I: For example, now I will speak more from my own announces, if you look at the other environments we have gone more less through the same. You can see that this way of

interpreting the centralization has created more segregation, for example in Bosnia, the Mostar. if you read, for example what is happening there it's the same logic as the same framework, and this kind of interpretation has created more segregation between or let's say has deeper differences between two communities. Because if you don't cooperate if you have nothing in common to cooperate for, of course there is nothing let's say giving you the opportunity to work together to see that on personal basis we don't have anything against each other.

V: When you say Mostar, do you mean the bridge in Bosnia, are they Bosnians on both sides?

I: No we have different communities (Serbs and Bosnians), it is a very similar and you have the different municipalities on both sides and the other one, look at the services that they receive from the administration there are so many factors that can contribute to segregations. In Mitrovica for example we have two different administrations so the central government influence rather than local one.

B: Is the North Mitrovica getting the same support and funding from the Serbian government and the South from Pristina?

I: I don't know to what extent to what kind of funding Mitrovica North gets from Serbian government, they do because there are projects who are implemented by the parallel structures which is projects that are founded by Serbian government. But there are a lot of services who are provided from the South. So investment and services the way we look at them it is quite a large portion. The grand/funding from central administration is given based on the inhabitants that you have. As we know there is information because the senses were not completed in that part of the country. And some for example they don't know sufficient capacities to develop plans so that kind of funding then have to go back although the right conditions were set.

V: I don't know if you are affected when you talk for citizens in Mitrovica are they affected on what's going on in the media on how media perceives Mitrovica?

I: When I started going to Mitrovica first it was for me still interesting, because the way that I perceived the situation towards Serbia it's very different from how people from Mitrovica perceived the situation. First because you have had a lot of incidents with Albanians living in Mitrovica, than you have the issue solved which is a big issue and remains like a fight for territories. So stuff like this then does not really enable people to look beyond the differences and certain things. And the media, of course, when they roll out certain things they always focus on what makes news not really on the impact it might have on the people. For example, very little is put on the different activities that are done by NGOs that have Serbians and Albanians doing things for both - who gives you the perspective of ok - there a lot of differences and bad things, however there is a lot of room for some positive interaction, opportunities to create good things.

V: Would you say that it's because need us the influence by politics?

I: I can't say, I have no more knowledge but for me is more into how media works as such. It focuses as something that attracts viewers rather than the impact does not really matter. For me not only for Mitrovica but if you look at what is put there I don't think they put too much attention in the impact that it has in people, music or any other cultural exposure.

B: Have known that there is a difference between local and national media in terms how Mitrovica is represented or international?

I: I don't know, I think the media concentrates a lot in dialog between Serbia and Kosovo. If we look at how transparent the process was then of course it gives the main focuses in trying to draw some information and what's really happening because the same information is put differently in Serbia so you don't really know which source to trust more. I don't know, because the process of course it has it's gaps and transparency and all that, so of course the media tries to show what is happening cause they come up and say that there are so many positive

achievements but you don't really see so it's really difficult to tell how positive are these achievements. And then the local media of course concentrates on issues like a project bumping out of nowhere, of course they want to know what is happening so I don't know if it is a bit different on how they represent the situation, maybe some more focus and good things happening should be good.

B: Is UNHABITAT involved of the bridge renovation?

I: It is a project that has been developed and implemented by EU office in Kosovo and they have done a lot of investments in the Southern part regarding public infrastructure, public facilities, have done work on multi functional buildings by the bridge, some sports hall. So we are working on the site in the Mitrovica North that is the market area. Because one of the key poolers of our programs has always been inclusion so we all the projects that we developed we have a inclusive process we have different kind of activities engaging people, communities, citizens, NGO, different stakeholders, designing things. And now we have this market that is right next to the bridge and in the Northern municipality and we have developed the mindcraft. Is the second project we developed it's using mindcraft as a creativity to engage communities in design so what we have done, I think in few weeks we are going to have the presentation of the concept design for that workshop, for the market area. And we have people from both municipalities, participating in designing. We tackled this collaboration between two, because this is not for just one part of the city but for both. So this design will derive from both North and South citizens.

V: When will be presented?

I: In two weeks maybe.

V: Is that something that we can see?

I: Yes, I can send you the invitation to tell you where is the presentation.

V: The bridge renovation was EU project; it was also planned by EU?

I: Yes it is a project done by the EU office, they hired a company for the project and for implementation.

V: Are you collaborating with EU?

I: We try to coordinate activities first because we don't want to have overlapping activities or to be in each others way. Mindcraft is 3day workshop, some presentation, small training department so we try to encourage people who really know mindcraft but also some who don't, it takes 12-13 minutes to know how to use mindcraft. So we have training to know how can use it and so they can participate actively to designing the space. Usually we have 16-17 proposals because we have a group of 2-3 people, in case of Mitrovica we will have 15-16 proposals, then we will have this session where we have these discussions, all of the presented proposals, and then we try to discuss all the different proposals, elements they have included, we vote, we agree we disagree, we disagree. Have these consensus where we put all the proposals and we start to vote and see how we can virtualize, then we have a final model, concept design and then we have develop design based on the model we have, the presentation is open to the public.

V: Are people willing to cooperate with the other side?

I: Yes, yes the Albanians and the Serbians. There are some Albanians who are like even of the north side of the river it is still Mitrovica, it is my city but some others are like if I cannot see it, I cannot go there, it feels foreign, so we think it would be a great opportunity for people to go to other side, to see that it is not a big deal.

V: How common do you think it is for people not going to the other side?

I: People don't go to the other side because they don't need to.

V: The majority of people or half of them?

I: I think the majority. Only a small part needs to.

V: What makes the people go to the other side?

I: People who do business types, mainly might to go to the other side, but I have never seen someone go to the other side for a cultural event or something like that.

V: Are there reasons to go or reasons to not go?

I: There are no reasons to go to the other side. Simply because there is nothing attractive to go to the other side. So this is what we are trying to do here. Create this market, have some different products so the people would be pushed to go there, but it's a long process.

V: What about those people who would not go there for any reason because they fear their safety?

I: I think it's normal for people to feel fear for going to the other side. What I don't think is normal is the lack of effort to create the space/room for people. And this is something that cannot be initiated by the local because people have fear to travel from one side to the other and don't feel safe. This is normal that they feel like that because there has been a conflict based on ethnicity and this will remain for centuries. The effort to create room for these people has been very little.

like that cause of the history and the ethnical conflict and differences but whats not normal is the little room that has been created for people to travel from one side to the other and that is not something that can be initiated by the law or the government.

V: What do you define as ethnical differences?

I: We are talking about the majority, Albanian and Serbs the minority but in North Serbs are the majorities. And by differences I don't mean the language etc but the background, the history. But still I think that the language is going to become a greater barrier in the future because us Albanians don't learn Serbian and they don't plan on learning Albanian neither even though we can find common ground like English.

V: So you are saying that the culture is really similar between these two?

I: No, there are cultural differences. Of course there are a lot of similarities because Kosovo was invaded for 500 years from the Turks and almost 100 years by the Serbs so of course they have a lot of things in common. However in terms of culture and all that they are different. They have different music, and different everything so the cultural differences are there even though influences is there. But for me, the conflict is still there just 20 years ago. I mean, you have seen the news; you have a lot of (something) from both sides. You have people go to the north getting beaten just because they are Albanian. Then people won't go to the north just to have a cup of coffee. At these there has not been put enough effort in these 20 years to make the other side easily to go to.

V: How about the municipalities in the North living in these parallel structures. Do they feel obligated to continue these parallel structures?

I: Well it is an ongoing process and it depends on the dialogue between Serbia and Kosovo. So the influence is there of the integration has started, there are bodies that has started to be included in the Kosovo government, but it is an ongoing process but there is no denying that the Serbian government has lots of affect on the locals living there.

V: Also I was gonna ask you about your thesis, what is it about?

I: It is about how to use spatial plans or what are the different mechanisms in different levels (all the way from EU policies to the local plan) to put the right measures when tackling integration. For example if you have seen Athisaari's plan which is based on the de-centralization, EU policies, the core of that policy is to provide better services to citizens. And if you see that policy it has been implemented in both countries and it has provided a greater

segregation than anything else. Because all the Serbian Communities (the Serb municipalities earlier mentioned) has created new Serbian municipalities without having the right administration or capacities or anything. Rather than putting the right mechanisms in different kind of structure in order to create the right physical structure to provide the services for these people, it has created new dysfunctional entities that will take another 10 years to function normal. From there I have tried to see what are the right measures to implement different policies in different levels. If we talk about integration how has our government tackled it?

Also it gave me a better view of what has our government done. Like they built a neighborhood for dislocated people but I still don't think that's enough.

Also for examples the cinema has only albanian subtitles so the Serbs are not attracted to visit it because there are no serbian ones available. What does integration mean and what does it provide? You cannot make a Serbian in to an Albanian. Also when we are designing schools we cannot know for sure how many Serbian classes are we going to have or how many Serbian teachers should we have. These things when we take a look at seem like small or not really important things but actually these small things are what make the change. So I look at these small basic little things. When you see it at EU level, these are the ground needs that need to be considered. Just things that makes your life like what doctor do you go to, where do you go to eat dinner and I make sure there are such policies and mechanism helps so these things are in the process of integration going the right way. What are we integration and what does it mean?

V: Thats really cool. I hope you get to continue it

I: Oh yeah me to, The first stage is over But now I have a daughter and I have to take things slowly.

V: So what kind of theory and your method have you are been using in these thesis ?

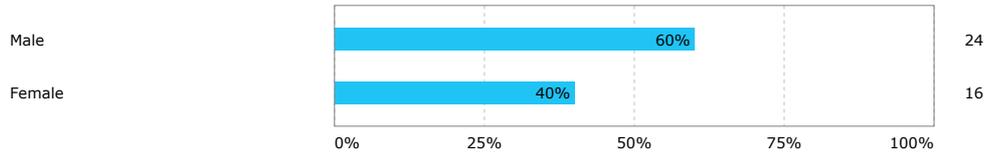
I: I have started with three or the policies, which tackles a lot of human right policies, how that has interpreted in peace treaties into these countries and how those peace treaties has affect in legislation. This is one of the things I look, then I look from the communities perspective how do they look services, what is their quality, and third I have to design this memory tool to go into these places to see some kind of stages to enable people from the both sides to see that they have in common. It's a complex one because the contacts for different reasons you have no data, it is so difficult to gather data and this makes my life very good. Because the funny part is that you have the same pattern, just few years apart and all these functions, we cannot see the same patterns repeating and repeating in different countries and the same mistakes are done and the same impact is done, and no lessons learnt and no memories staying there.

And the scale is also very different, can be something very small or something very extreme.

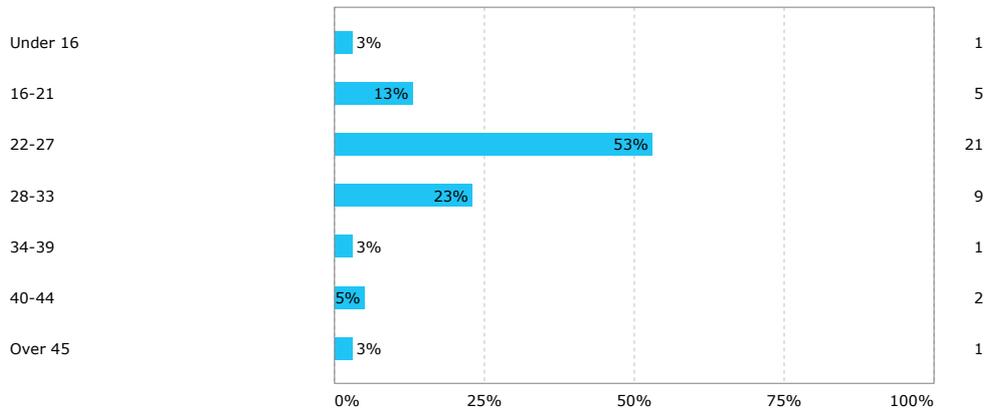
Appendix 4

Survey results

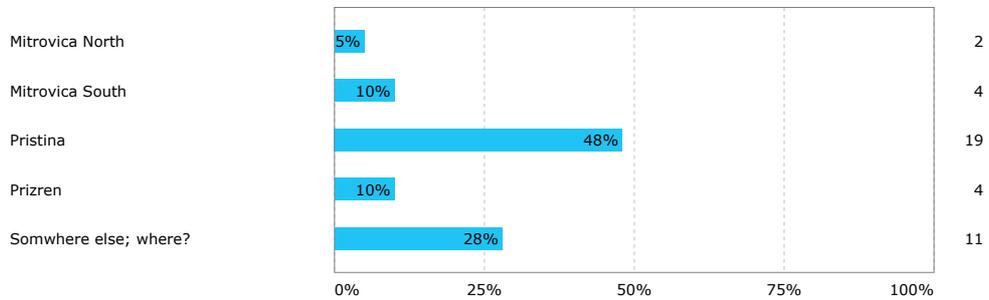
What is your gender



How old are you?



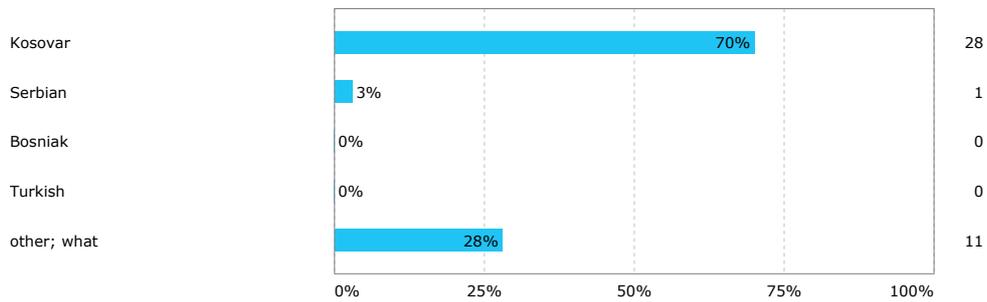
Where do you live?



Where do you live? - Somewhere else; where?

- Finland
- Kabul
- Barcelona
- Gjilan
- I split my time between Prishtina and Mitrovica North
- Wien
- Vushtrri
- Skenderaj
- Suhareka
- lund sweden
- Suhareke

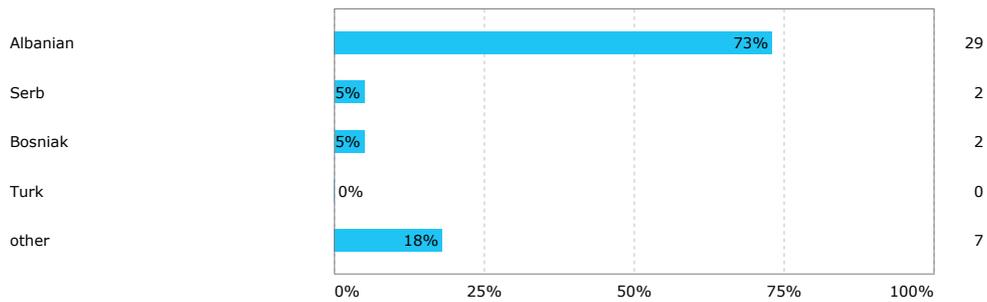
What is your nationality?



What is your nationality? - other; what

- Finland
- Greek
- Czech
- Spanish
- Albanian- Note:Kosovar are also Serbs, Turks and other communities that live in Kosovo.
- Albanian
- Kosovar nationality includes Serbian, Turkish and Bosniak by the way!. :)
- USA
- American
- Albanian
- American

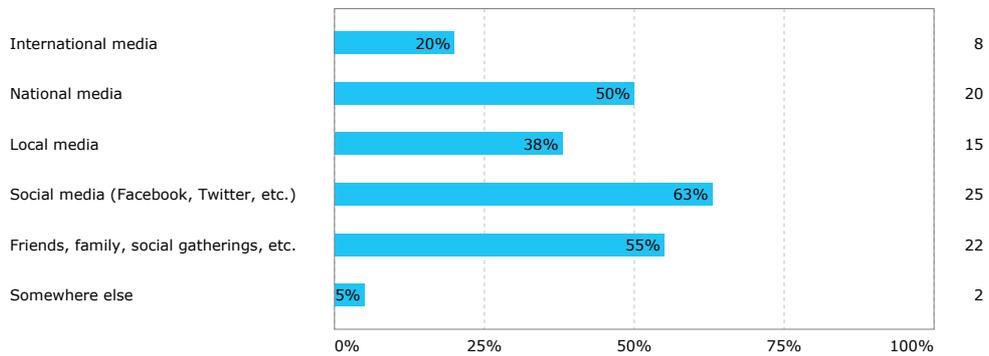
What is your ethnicity?



What is your ethnicity? - other

- Greek
- Czech
- Spanish
- Albanian. Note:Kosovar are called Albanians, Serbs, Turks and other communities that live in Kosovo.
- USA
- Caucasian
- American

Where do you get information about Mitrovica from? Pick 1-2 most important sources

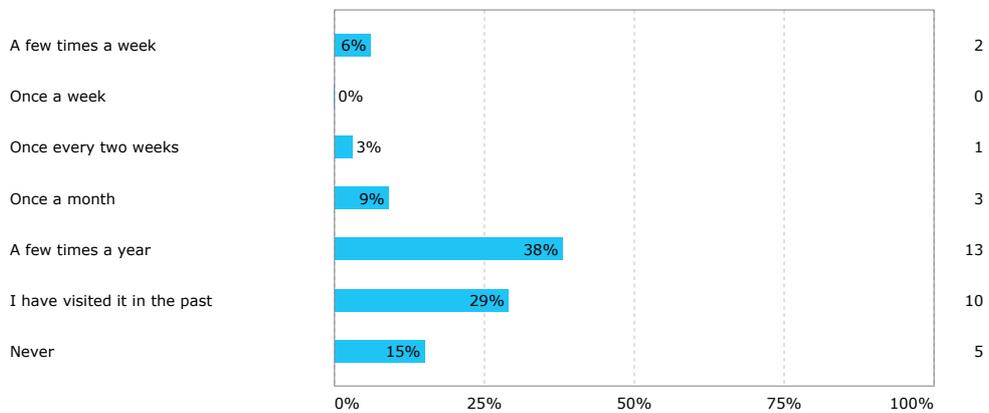


Where do you get information about Mitrovica from? Pick 1-2 most important sources

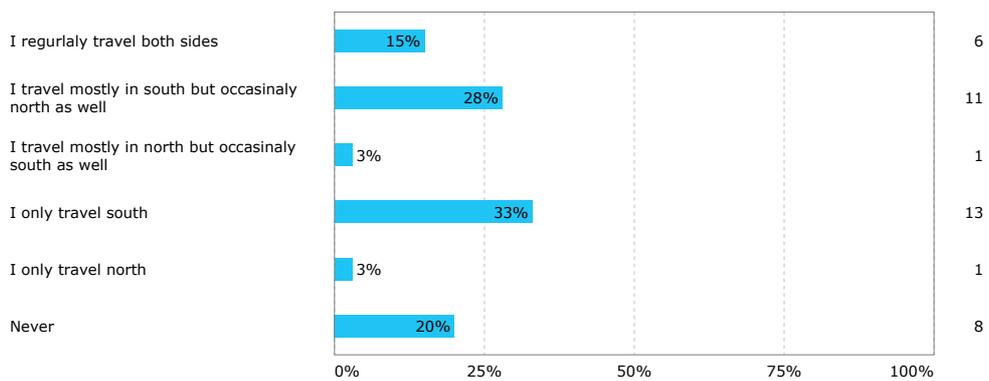
- Somewhere else

- Observation
- I work everyday in Mitrovica

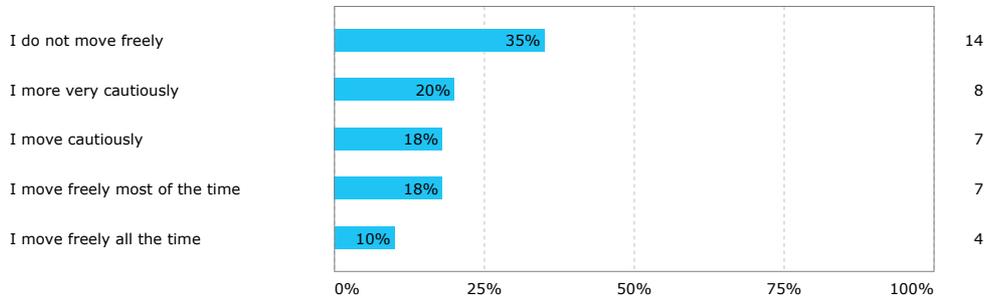
How often do you visit Mitrovica?



Have you travelled to north and south Mitrovica?

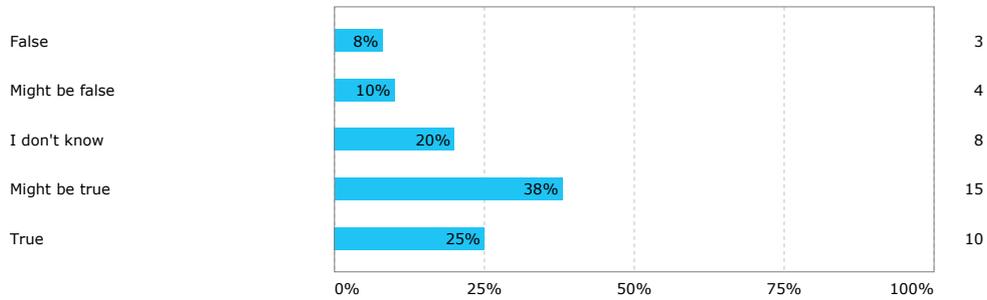


Do you feel free to travel between north and south Mitrovica?



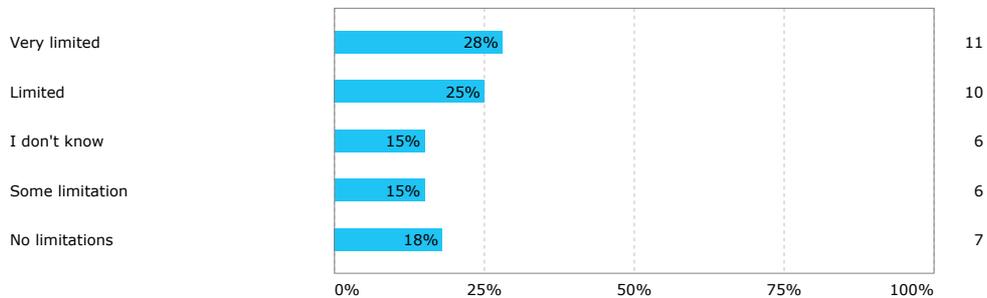
Driving with Kosovar licence plates in North Mitrovica is dangerous

-



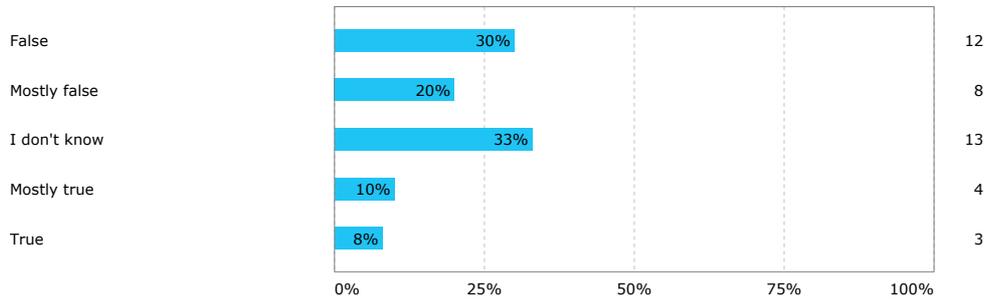
How limited do you feel traveling between north and south Mitrovica

-

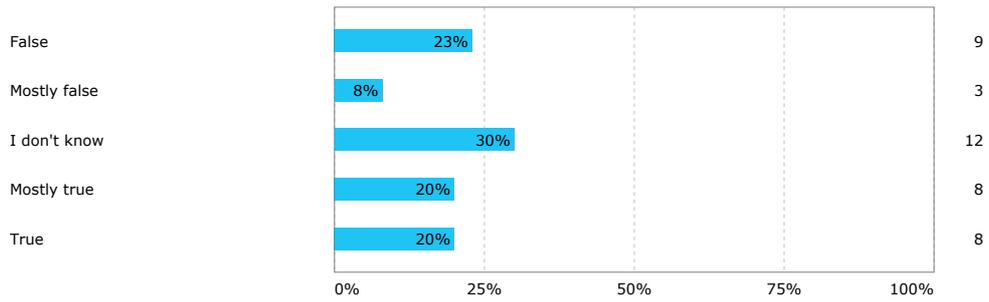


Citizens of mitrovica are treated equally not regarded if they live north or south

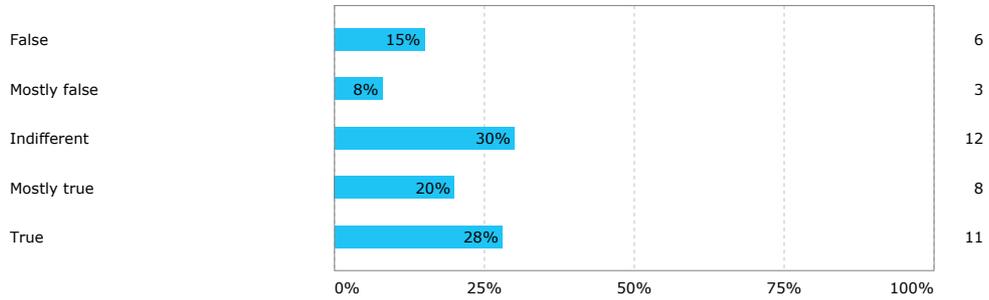
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The events taken place at the New Bridge / Ura Iber (tearing down the wall, re-opening of the bridge) will help to reunite Mitrovica -

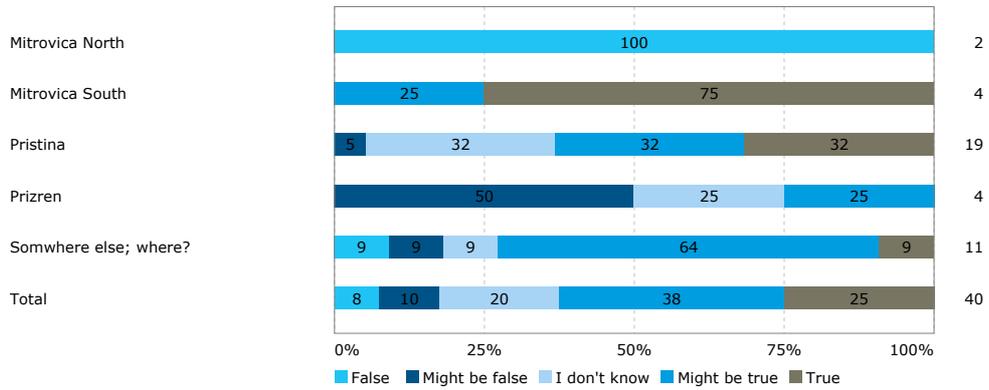


The armed forces (Carabinieri, NATO or KFOR) in Mitrovica makes me feel safe -



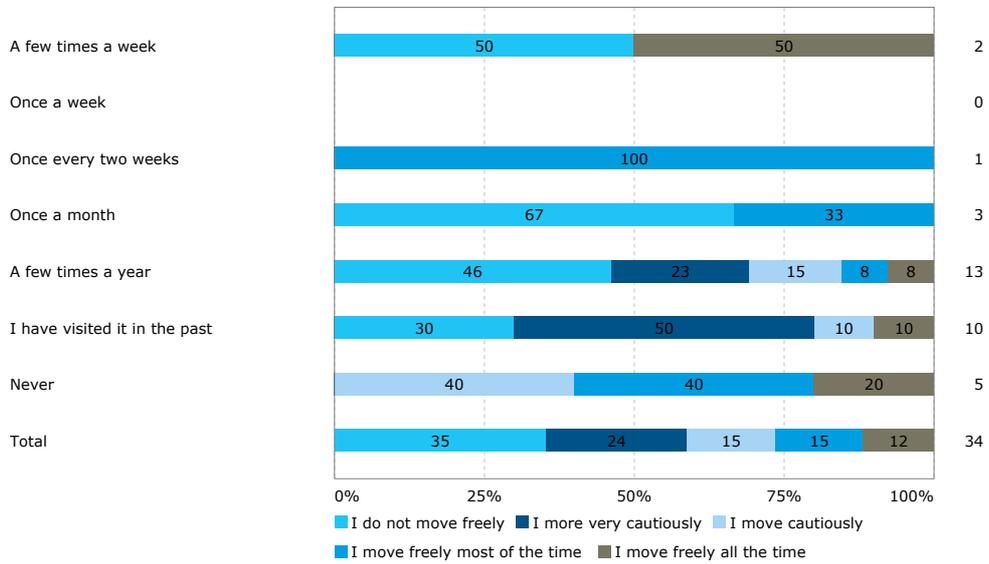
Driving with Kosovar licence plates in North Mitrovica is dangerous -

Crossed with: Where do you live?



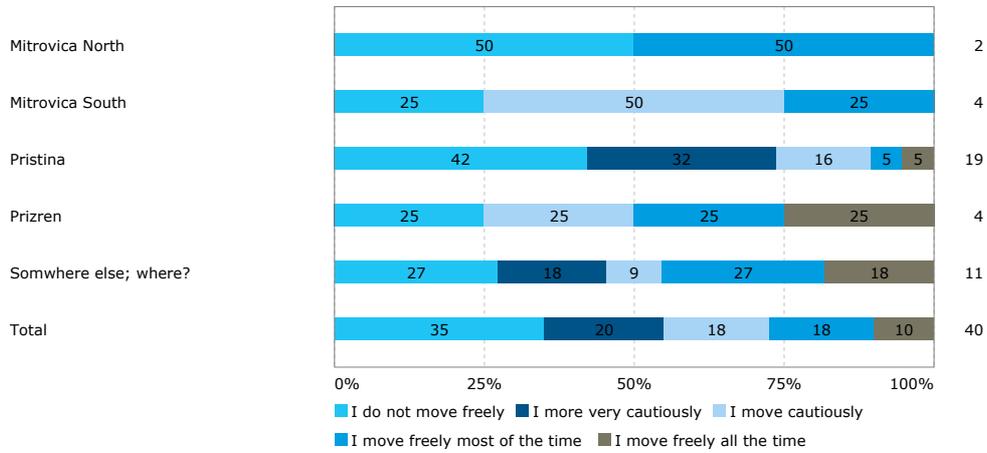
Do you feel free to travel between north and south Mitrovica?

Crossed with: How often you visit Mitrovica?



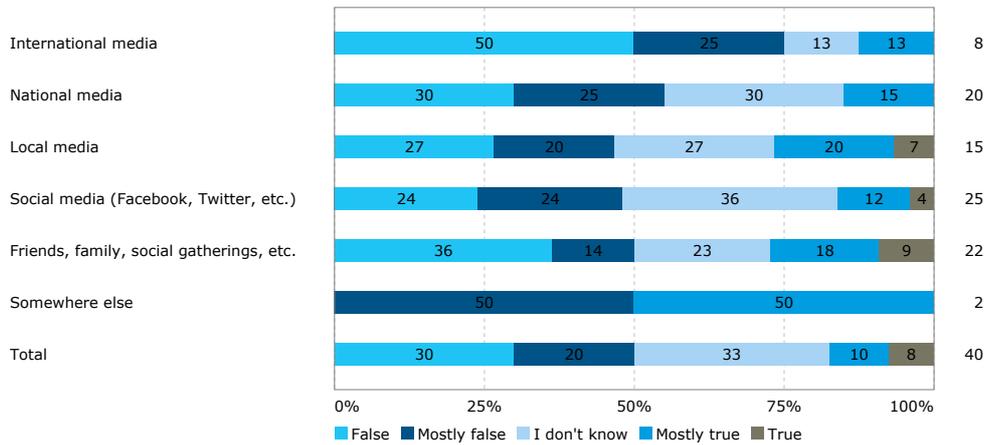
Do you feel free to travel between north and south Mitrovica?

Crossed with: Where do you live?



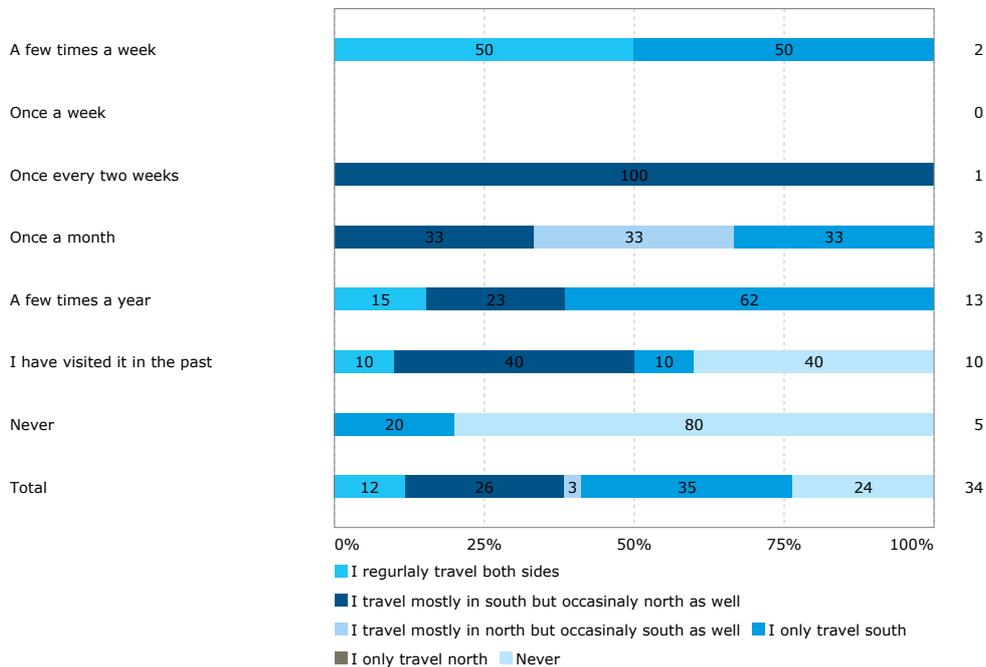
Citizens of mitrovica are treated equally not regarded if they live north or south

Crossed with: Where do you get information about Mitrovica from? Pick 1-2 most important sources



Have you travelled to north and south Mitrovica?

Crossed with: How often you visit Mitrovica?



Ideas, thoughts, opinions about the topic itself

- Other things make me feel unsafe in Mitrovica - high crime rate, especially amongst younger population, drug addictions, rising frustration amongst the communities themselves, high unemployment, corruption,
 - My husband is a Kosovar Albanian originally born in Mitrovica. Even though his father still has relations with Kosovar Serbs living in North Mitrovica, this part of the city seems to have become an enclave for radical nationalists who are the ones instigating trouble. For the Kosovar Serbs that I know, they don't feel very happy about this situation either. There are two supermarkets near the river (not the main bridge but the functional one) which are the main meeting points for people of both ethnicities, in the rest of the city it's not that often to find Kosovar Serbs.
 - I think the main problem in Mitrovica is the major policy towards Kosovo. Otherwise people earlier lived together. All potential incidents are caused by Serbian and Russian Secret Service
 - Feeling safe in North or South is not guaranteed by any force other than trust between communities. The trust is lost because of some criminals and mostly from beneficiaries from the situation. These beneficiaries are businessmen who pay a lot of money to keep the situation under tension, so they can continue criminal activities and use example North of Mitrovica.
- All communities use to live together and they still do so. Except the media and those criminals I mentioned above who really pay a lot to keep this situation as it is.

P.S.

Kosovar Albanian

- I once travelled to Gazivoda lake and we had Ks plates on (we didn't know that we should have taken it away) the official at the lake didn't allow us to take pictures and interviewed us asking where we are from. We were all very nervous. After taking of the plates, he allowed us to take pictures. It was such an intense situation.

Feedback for the questionnaire:

- 1. You asked about "nationality", and listed "Kosovar, Serbian, Bosniak, and Turkish" as options (but not Albanian). It sounds like Albanians from Kosovo are automatically Kosovars, but Serbs and others cannot have Kosovan nationality. You may want to reconsider that. Nationality is a tricky subject in the Balkans, it's equated with ethnicity much more than with citizenship.