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Spaces and Institutional Logics in Post-Conflict Settings of Mitrovica

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ABSTRACT

Spaces structure interactions between communities in post-conflict settings. They are governed by particular institutional logics, which can foster boundary building and boundary transgression. This article proposes an extended version of the concept of 'everyday peace' including a focus not only on micro-level individual actorness in social interactions but also on an important meso-level dimension in the analysis of social behaviour and variation in institutional logics governing spaces where social interactions take place. We apply these concepts to the study of perceptions and practices around bridges in Mitrovica in Kosovo.

Introduction

A characteristic feature of post-conflict contexts is a certain degree of ambivalence between, on the one hand, continuing divisions and tensions, and, on the other hand, persistent attempts to achieve normalcy and peace in daily lives of people through various practices of 'everyday peace' (Mac Ginty 2014, 2017). This dynamic is particularly visible around physical boundaries separating communities in post-conflict settings (Ejdus 2017; Bouris and Isleyen 2018; Duclos and Jouhanneau 2019). In and around such spaces, 'perceptual identity boundaries' become taken for granted and translate into various forms of local resistance to return to normalcy and peaceful co-existence, often thereby generating various kinds of new physical boundaries (Mac Ginty 2017, 8; see also Visoka 2018).

The current article studies the role of spaces in 'everyday peace' in post-conflict context in the town of Mitrovica in Kosovo – an ethnically divided town featuring communities of Kosovo Albanians and Kosovo Serbs. Our research focuses specifically on perceptions and practices within and between the communities in North and South Mitrovica when it comes to crossing the bridges across the river Ibar/Ibër, representing boundaries and connections between the Kosovo-Serb community in the northern part of town and the

Kosovo-Albanian community in the southern part of town. While the Main Bridge remains a space of tensions and a place of physical and symbolic boundary-building between the two communities, the Eastern/Railway/Bislim Bajgora Bridge,[1] just a few hundred metres away, is readily used by the locals from both sides for a range of purposes. Whereas a lot has been written about the EU's role in crisis management in post-conflict settings such as Kosovo, including in Mitrovica (see Zupančič and Pejič 2018), the locals' perceptions and practices of boundary-building and boundary transgression around the bridges in Mitrovica have not been studied thoroughly so far (but see some initial studies by Björkdahl and Gusic 2013). This is somewhat puzzling as the Mitrovica bridges – in particular the Main Bridge (Ibar River Bridge) – have been a frequent reference of not only media[2] (as powerful symbols of a divided town and society) but also embedded in the vernacular of both mayors: Mitrovica South and Mitrovica North. While some spaces remain characterized by high levels of tensions and conflict, other spaces are governed by different norms and principles fostering more peaceful behavioural patterns. We use the notion of *institutional logics* to conceptualize such sets of principles and norms governing spaces (Friedland and Alford 1991; Thornton and Ocasio 1999). This perspective complements analyses focusing on the micro-level behaviour of individuals and groups (Mac Ginty 2014, 2017) as well as analyses focusing on the macro-level of social transformation and stabilization efforts by governments and international organizations (Zupančič and Pejič 2018). We argue that the EU and other international actors should pay much more attention to the spatial dimension and institutional logics governing spaces in post-conflict and conflict-prone areas.

The article proceeds as follows. First, we elaborate on the expanded concept of 'everyday peace' to include the spatial dimension focusing on divergence in institutional logics governing different spaces in a post-conflict setting. Second, we elaborate on the selection of the case of Mitrovica and its bridges for the study of spatial practices of boundary-making and boundary crossing. Third, we analyse the background of how the local environment around the bridges in both North and South Mitrovica came to feature spaces governed by different institutional logics – some parts and spaces are more conflict-prone while other parts more peaceful and featuring a degree of everyday normalcy. For this purpose, we present two sets of findings based on both quantitative and qualitative data collected over the period of two years (2017–2019) and a number of visits to Mitrovica. The research findings are based on analysis of two representative surveys of the local population on both sides of the bridges: one carried out within EUNPACK (A Conflict Sensitive Unpacking of the EU Comprehensive Approach to Conflict and Crisis Mechanism) project (*N* = 206) and the other later carried by the Mitrovica Mediation Centre (2017, *N* = 790) in 2017.[3] This includes survey data on the uses of the bridges showing high degrees of divergence in frequency and purpose of crossing the bridges. In the conclusion we summarize the findings.

An expanded concept of 'everyday peace'

This study contributes to the 'local turn' in peace and conflict studies by expanding on the concept of 'everyday peace' proposed by Mac Ginty (2014, 2017). The conceptual debate on 'everyday peace' reacted to the dominance of top-down approaches in the studies of peace-building and reconciliation processes conducted by the EU and other international

organizations. Traditionally – somewhat simplified – the top-down approaches have conceptualized such processes as adoption of external actors' stabilization models by a target society (Lavenex 2008; Lavenex and Schimmelfennig 2011). This would include a set of rules and norms, formal institutions and experts deployed in the field to support and monitor implementation of change processes on the ground.

Yet, as observed by a number of scholars, post-conflict societies are characterized by a variety of micro-level practices enabling individuals and groups to avoid conflicts in micro-level interactions with others operating in the same environment (Mac Ginty 2014). Mac Ginty's conceptualization of the strategies of everyday peace puts a premium on individual instrumental rationality in devising strategies for reducing the danger of getting into conflictual exchanges with strangers in one's own daily life. There is, however, arguably also a second dimension to 'everyday peace' that does not necessarily have to do with individual strategic choices in micro-level interactions but with the institutional logics governing particular boundary *spaces*. Let us elaborate.

Institutional logics of boundary spaces and 'everyday peace'

As the spatial turn in conflict studies indicates, organization of space matters in structuring patterns of interaction in post-conflict societies (Chojnacki and Engels 2016). In some cases, specific spaces are created by international peace-building actors with the purpose of fostering peaceful patterns of interaction of conflicting parties (Vogel 2018). Yet, arguably, such spaces also represent relatively extraordinary circumstances and do not necessarily foster a sense of normalcy in the daily lives of the locals. Our concern here is with spaces of peaceful interaction emerging somewhat naturally and without top-down steering *alongside* spaces filled with tensions and danger in a given post-conflict environment. This is expressed and perpetuated by sets of practices that enable individuals to interact safely without having to pay attention to religiously or ethnically conditioned markers of identity (Stavrevska 2016; see also Mac Ginty 2014). Thus, the concept of *space* as used in the current analysis denotes a physical site or location to which a certain set of material practices and established patterns of social interactions are attached and, over time, may become taken for granted by a local population. Sets of practices and behavioural patterns may be usefully conceptualized as institutional logics.

Following the seminal work on institutional logics by Friedland and Alford, the concept of *institutional logic* is defined here as a set of material practices and symbolic constructions which constitutes the organizing principles of a given institutional order and which is available to organizations and individuals to elaborate (Friedland and Alford 1991, 248). As they point out, key institutions such as capitalism, state, democracy or family each have a central logic that characterizes them. Institutions of modern societies are thus both symbolic systems and material practices (Friedland and Alford 1991, 249). Developing this idea further, Thornton and Ocasio (1999, 804), in their seminal article, see institutional logic as 'the socially constructed, historical patterns of material practices, assumptions, values, beliefs, and rules by which individuals produce and reproduce their material subsistence, organize time and space, and provide meaning to their social reality'. In general, institutional logics include complex sets of norms associated with notions such as family, market, capitalism, religion(s), marriage and the like. From this perspective, actions of individuals and groups are socially embedded in inter-subjectively shared

meaning structures. This provides a link between action, cognition and socially con-structed practices and rules operating in a given social setting.

Arguably, spaces in post-conflict environments (and in any social environment for that matter) can be governed or permeated by different institutional logics. Spatial organiz-ation and the institutional logics governing spaces in a post-conflict setting matter for determining what type of behaviour is appropriate. Hence, while some spaces are gov-erned by the logic of national identity and territorial sovereignty, other spaces may be gov-erned by, for instance, the logic of the market and business transactions, logic of class difference or the logic of religious tolerance. The latter three logics may foster different types of behaviour than the former one. This may contribute to scaling or reconfiguration of difference between communities in a post-conflict setting in the sense of Hirblinger and Landau (2018). As we show in our empirical analysis, bridges as boundary spaces between the two communities in Mitrovica are informed by different institutional logics. Inter-actions and practices on and around the Main Bridge are arguably permeated by the logic of territorial sovereignty as the bridge has been the site of numerous clashes between ethnic groups in recent decades. As a result, a set of material practices character-ize the space on and around the Main Bridge as crossing the bridge is not only physically problematic due to different types of barriers but apparently remains an infrequent choice for locals crossing the river. As our data shows, locals are much more likely to use the Eastern/Bislim Bajgora Bridge and do so primarily for 'business purposes'. Practices on and around the latter bridge are thus arguably permeated by a different institutional logic than the Main Bridge, namely the logic of the market – including relatively frequent and open transgressions across a boundary between different parts of an ethnically divided town.

This has implications for the notion of 'everyday peace' as institutional logics governing particular places and spaces in a post-conflict setting may have an effect on what is con-sidered 'normal' behaviour. Thus, normalcy and 'everyday peace' may be achieved by individuals not only by doing things in a particular way so as to avoid conflict (see Mac Ginty 2014, 2017), but also by doing things *in a particular place and space* governed by norms and rules different from those underpinning a particular conflict.

The current article thus proposes an extended version of the concept of 'everyday peace' including a focus not only on micro-level individual actorness in social interactions but also on an important meso-level dimension in the analysis of social behaviour and vari-ation in institutional logics governing spaces where social interactions take place. Of course, institutional logics do structure the behaviour of individuals and mitigate conflict. As Mac Ginty (2017) points out, well-established sets of norms and rules associ-ated with family ties, locality, business relationships, cultural preference and/or marriage enable individuals and groups to interact with high degrees of civility across boundaries in deeply divided societies. We argue that analytical focus should also encompass the spatial dimension, i.e. a focus on how specific spaces may be characterized by institutional logics structuring expectations of appropriate behaviour in these spaces. Thus, building on Giddens' (1984) notion of structuration, we direct attention to how actorness and practices are informed by and embedded in structures of norms and rules connected to particular spaces. While behaviours and perceptions are those of individuals, shared expectations related to particular spaces may invite and foster particular types of behaviour by

individuals. Thus, in post-conflict settings, spaces may both reinforce and tame existing cleavages and perceptual boundaries between communities.

In what follows, we first look at the where and how the peace and conflict are practised in Mitrovica, based on findings from two surveys in 2017. We analyse key spaces (Agnew 2011) where peace and conflict are performed through everyday practices. In this way, we allow for 'the local' to express different self-categorizations within the local population, without assuming that ethnic belonging is the dominant logic in each situation or that it is a monolithic entity. In this way, we acknowledge that citizens of Mitrovica are not just objects of interventions by national and international elites, but that they also have agency. Through analysis of meanings attached to these spatial practices, we analyse the dominant background reasoning or logic of action in different spaces. This points to different patterns around the Main Bridge and the Railway/Bislim Bajgora Bridge.

Before we move on to discussing interaction patterns in relation to the bridges, a brief introduction to the local context is in order.

Locating the study: The town of Mitrovica

The town of Mitrovica has become a symbol of a divided country. Once administered as a single and ethnically mixed municipality, the town was divided after the conflict in 1999 by the river Ibër/Ibar into two parts by the French Kosovo Protection Force (KFOR) contingent to prevent 'the conflicting groups to escalate the violence' (Björkdahl and Gusic 2013, 321). It was divided into: South Mitrovica, populated almost exclusively by Kosovo Albanians (96.5%) and North Mitrovica, populated mostly by Kosovo Serbs (76.5%) (OSCE 2018). While both parts of the city witnessed expulsion of other ethnic groups from their homes, North Mitrovica still has almost a quarter of its population of different ethnic backgrounds. Kosovo Albanians, Bosniaks and Roma are mostly concentrated in certain settlements within the urban part of Mitrovica North, e.g. Bosnjacka Mahala/ Mahalla e Boshnjakëve, Micro-settlement, Three Skyscrapers as well as in part of the village of Suvi Dol/Suhodoll.[4] It is the last major urban settlement in Kosovo with a significant portion of Kosovo Serb population. Kosovo Serbs from other Kosovo towns have either left after the conflict due to fear of retaliation or were forcibly displaced in different retaliatory actions in 1999 and 2004. Besides physical divisions of ethnicities, the town is divided across governance systems in place. While South Mitrovica has public administration processes led by the Kosovo governmental agencies, North Mitrovica has a double system of governance under Kosovo and Serbian system.

The Serb population that remained in Kosovo after 1999, gathered around villages in South Kosovo and four municipalities in North Kosovo where they represented the majority. As a survival strategy, they had established separate ethnically defined enclaves (which they would rarely leave), including separate forms of local government and administration supported by the Serbian authorities in Belgrade. While Serbian enclaves in the south integrated into Kosovo administrative system, the four municipalities in North Kosovo,[5] maintained what the OSCE referred to as *parallel structures* of governance unrecognized by the UN Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK; see report Parallel Structures 2003). This included visible functioning of courts, social security, administrative structures, schools and healthcare in line with Serbian legislation and parallel security structures in plain clothes (Parallel Structures 2003). Serbia's support to the Kosovo Serb population included

administrative services, for example issuing driving licences, passports and other docu-
ments, as well as financing of public services (Mijacic, Jakovljevic, and Vlasković 2017).
The reason for the continued existence of Serbian governance structures in North
Kosovo was related both to public perceptions among the Kosovo Serb population con-
cerning the fear of potential retributory behaviour and discrimination. Mitrovica became
one of the flashpoints of this governance set-up in Kosovo, where the river Ibër/Ibar rep-
resented a border between the parallel structures financed and led by Serbia as well as the
institutions of Kosovo.[6]

Until Kosovo declared its independence in 2008, and due to the immediate risk factors
involved, the NATO-led KFOR and the UNMIK were the primary international actors
involved; the EU did not have a significant role. Following Kosovo's independence,
however, the EU's role in Mitrovica grew through the deployment of its largest ever civilian
mission deployed abroad – the European Union Rule of Law Mission in Kosovo (EULEX).
According to Mahr (2018), EULEX and its operations have been continuously contested
by the local population in both the north and south of Kosovo – albeit for slightly
different reasons.[7] Mitrovica became a focus of EU peacebuilding intervention, especially
since successful mediation by the EU High Representative of the so-called Brussels Dialo-
gue on Normalisation efforts between Belgrade and Pristina. This agreement allowed for
the integration of four municipalities in North Kosovo into the Kosovo governance system
assisted by the EU, and therefore it was the central location of EU assistance and mediation
efforts since 2013. From this time onwards, in addition to funding a number of projects on
both sides of the river, the EU continued to be more involved in the north.

Despite high investments in terms of financial and human resources on the EU's part
for the last two decades, perceptions of their crisis management efforts among the
local population in Kosovo have been relatively mixed (Blease and Qehaja 2013; Visoka
and Richmond 2016; Bátora, Kursani, and Osland 2017; Bátora, Osland, Kvamme, et al.
2017; Qehaja 2017; Qehaja and Prezelj 2017; Ejdus and Juncos 2018). While Kosovo has
been a symbol of the EU's efforts in effectively stabilizing post-conflict societies, it has
also come to symbolize the complexity of such processes and the often occurring mis-
match between the EU's expectations and the expectations of the local communities
(Hehir 2019).

Bridges across the Ibër/Ibar river as spaces of divisions and connections

As the border between the parallel structures of governance in Northern and Southern
Kosovo runs across the river Ibër/Ibar, the bridges in Mitrovica have become manifest
spaces of tensions. There are four bridges in Mitrovica across the river Ibër/Ibar. This
includes the Main Bridge (sometimes referred to as the New Bridge) in the centre of
town; the Railway Bridge/Bislim Bajgora Bridge (or Secondary Bridge) in the north-
eastern part of town; the Pedestrian Bridge, just west of the Main Bridge; and a bridge
on the south-west outskirts of town. From 1999, there were a number of attempts by
Kosovo Albanians to cross the Main Bridge – usually to visit relatives and, on some
occasions, forcible attempts – which were perceived as threatening by local Kosovo
Serbs and resisted. As a result, there have been systematic efforts by Kosovo Serbs in
North Mitrovica to guard the bridges and block them to regular traffic. To do so, an infor-
mal security organization called the Bridge Watchers was formed in North Mitrovica in the

aftermath of the conflict. These were originally citizens who volunteered to guard the bridges and even take on quasi-policing functions in 1999–2001, when the nascent UNMIK Police lacked an effective presence in North Mitrovica. Very quickly, the Bridge Watchers virtually took over the role of the main law enforcement agency (Parallel Structures 2003, 11).[8] The Main Bridge has since been a space of tension and even armed violence, culminating in the death of at least 14 people and hundreds wounded in March 2004.[9] Such incidents re-occurred with various degrees of intensity over the years.[10]

Given the history of clashes and violence on and around the Main Bridge, this space came to be seen as a symbol in the process of 'normalization' of relations between Kosovo Albanians and Kosovo Serbs in Kosovo. For this purpose, in August 2015, the EU High Representative moderated a dialogue between the two sides resulting in an agreement stating that the Main Bridge should be revitalized and re-opened to pedestrians allowing them to pass freely between the northern and southern parts of the town. The EU decided to support this by the grant of €1.2 million. As the European External Action Service argued, the revitalization of the bridge would contribute to everyday peace by 'facilitating contacts between all people of Mitrovica North and South and will thus contribute to exchanges and understanding'.[11] The Serbian side demanded that the King Petar Street – the main street of North Mitrovica – should be turned into a pedestrian zone, preventing traffic passing into the northern part of the city.

The EU's difficulties in establishing itself as a legitimate actor became clear as its initiatives and actions were repeatedly rejected by the local population in the north. As a result of tensions, the Kosovo Serb local authorities built a two-metre-high concrete wall on the northern side of the bridge, arguing this was a supporting wall for the riverside promenade. The Kosovo authorities saw this as an attempt to block public traffic and ordered the wall to be demolished.[12] It was demolished on 5 February 2017 with no incidents, but to date the bridge has not yet been opened for traffic – due to the refusal of the Municipality of North Mitrovica to open it as well as rising tensions between Serbia and Kosovo.

In sum, bridges in Mitrovica represent not only a physical border but also a perceptual identity boundary between structures of governance and ethnicity in the town. Crossing these divides and the ability to extend the governance of the Pristina-based political order in Kosovo will depend on the ability to overcome ethnic divides and differences in how populations on both sides of the bridges view the governance order. Arguably, the nature of the challenge lies in overcoming the divides on the level of perceptions, practices and behavioural patterns. Our research team collected data on perceptions as well as practices and behavioural patterns of the population in North and South Mitrovica related to the bridges in the town. In what follows, we report first on the findings regarding metaphors and future visions of the bridges as seen by the local population. This helps us capture the socially constructed meanings associated with bridges as spaces of social interaction. Second, we analyse our findings regarding practices within spaces and around the bridges.

Metaphors and narratives of the future related to bridges

In local public perceptions, the Main Bridge in Mitrovica is associated with following concepts – division, final frontier, obstacle and battleground (MCM Research 2017, 19). This could be explained by the long history of violent clashes and incidents at and around Main Bridge since the end of armed conflict in 1999.

The metaphors used to describe it, however, project different understandings of the desired political order by Kosovo Albanians and Kosovo Serbs.

> For the majority of Kosovo Serbs (30.1%), the bridge symbolises the *final frontier*, Kosovo Albanians (38.7%) consider it to be a *symbol of division*, Bosniaks (28.9%) see the bridge as a *connection*, while Gorani (50%) and Turks (38.5%) do not put much meaning into the bridge. (MCM 2017, 19)

Arguably, the relatively dominant perception of the Main Bridge as a symbol of 'division' and as the 'final frontier' could also be indicative of the logic of national sovereignty/territorial sovereignty permeating this space. It reflects the boundary embedded in the logic of people in the everyday life in which passing from one side to another can be detrimental to physical security. It needs to be noted, though, that our data suggests merely correlation between perceptions and practices and further research would be required to established whether there is also causality.

Future of bridges

The different understanding of political space is also reflected in ethnically polarized visions of the preferred future of the Main Bridge according to MCM Research (2017, 11). Different hopes and fears of the future are reflected in the desire for different material expressions of governance over the bridge. Visions differ relative to ethnicity and age. A majority of Serbs would want the Main Bridge as a border – shut down completely (30.11%). Among young Serbs aged between 16 and 25, this percentage is even higher (36%). This also indicates that the Main Bridge as a space is permeated by the institutional logic of territorial and/or national sovereignty. The other preferred option for Kosovo Serbs is to use the Main Bridge as a barrier to massive movement of Kosovo Albanians to the north and they would want to see it open only for pedestrians (21.7%) or open for pedestrians as a public space (12.2%).

Only 14.6% of the Serbs would support opening the Main Bridge for traffic. In contrast, 61.8% of Albanians would prefer that solution, while only 6.5% of them would want the bridge closed completely, 14.6% open only for pedestrians. Young Kosovo Albanians are over-represented among those who are in favour of change and of opening the Main Bridge for traffic (64.5%). In the perception of Kosovo Albanians, there is an organic link between both sides of the town, hence the closure of the bridge is seen as an obstacle in mobility and normal life (KCSS 2018).

The view on the desired future for the Main Bridge may be explained by the difference in ethnic perceptions of security if the Main Bridge opens for traffic (MCM 2017, 24). A majority of Kosovo Serbs (42.1%) expect negative effects on security if the bridge is opened for traffic, while a majority of Kosovo Albanians (46.4%) expect positive effects on security. This is in line with the findings from previous research that security is one of key indicators of peace in the areas temporarily and geographically close to the conflict (Firchow and Mac Ginty 2017).

These findings suggest that there is correlation between perceptions of the security consequences of opening the Main Bridge and the perception of this bridge as a space characterized by notions related to national/territorial sovereignty. This is reflected in the perception of the bridge as such (i.e. 'final frontier', symbol of division – see Figure 1) as well as in prevalent perceptions about its future development with a majority of
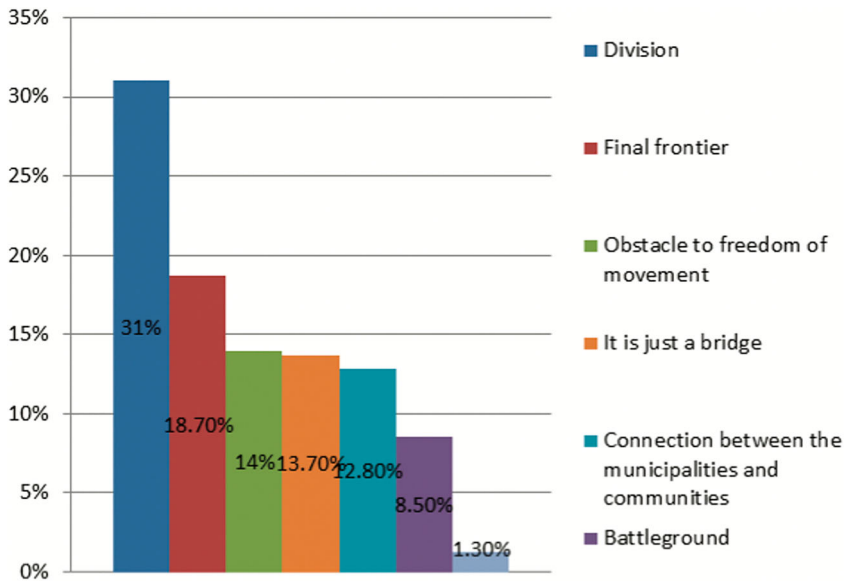
Figure 1. What is Main Bridge a symbol of?
Source: MCM (2017, 18).

Serbs in North Mitrovica preferring it to remain closed for regular traffic as they perceive such developments as having negative impacts on their security (see Tables 1 and 2). Apparently, the Main Bridge is a space perceived by the North Mitrovica Serb population through the lens of notions such as frontiers, borders and external security threats, i.e. notions commonly associated with territorial sovereignty in states. While the perceptions are those of individuals, they coalesce around relatively stable collective patterns informing practices in a given space. This institutional logic of territorial sovereignty makes it difficult to 'normalize' the space of the Main Bridge as a space of interactions, connections and public thoroughfare – an option apparently preferred by most of the Kosovo Albanian population in South Mitrovica. Differences between institutional logics informing spaces in and around the Main Bridge and the Easter/Bislim Bajgora Bridge become even more apparent if we analyse and compare the locals' practices in these spaces.

Practices around bridges

Once we analyse the degree to which the North Mitrovica population uses the three bridges in town, we can see different institutional logics in place governing the use

Table 1. In your opinion, the Main Bridge on Ibar River should …

| Preferred future of Main Bridge	Serbian	Albanian	Bosniak	Gorani	Turk
Be closed altogether	30.11%	6.5%	2.5%	8.3%	15.4%
Be open only for pedestrians	21.7%	14.6%	32.5%	8.3%	7.7%
Open for pedestrians and public space	12.2%	9.1%	22.5%	16.7%	15.4%
Open for pedestrians and traffic	14.6%	61.8%	25.0%	33.3%	46.2%
I do not care	19.8%	7.4%	17.5%	25.0%	15.4%
Other	1.6%	0.6%	0%	8.3%	0%

Source: MCM (2017, 11).

Table 2. How would opening of the Main Bridge to traffic affect your security?

Effect on security	Serbian	Albanian	Bosniak	Gorani	Turk
Yes, it will have a negative effect on security	42.1%	12.3%	20.0%	16.7%	0%
Yes, it will have a positive effect on security	13.9%	46.4%	25.0%	25.0%	30.8%
It will not affect the security situation at all	11.0%	16.2%	17.5%	8.3%	30.8%
I do not know	33.0%	25.0%	37.5%	50.0%	38.5%

Source: MCM (2017, 24).

of these different spaces. The Railway/Eastern/Bislim Bajgora Bridge is clearly most often used for crossing the river Ibër/Ibar to South Mitrovica. The Main Bridge and the Pedestrian Bridge are used far less frequently (see Figure 2). Second, there seems to be an ethnically conditioned divide in terms of bridge use. While Serbs surveyed in both
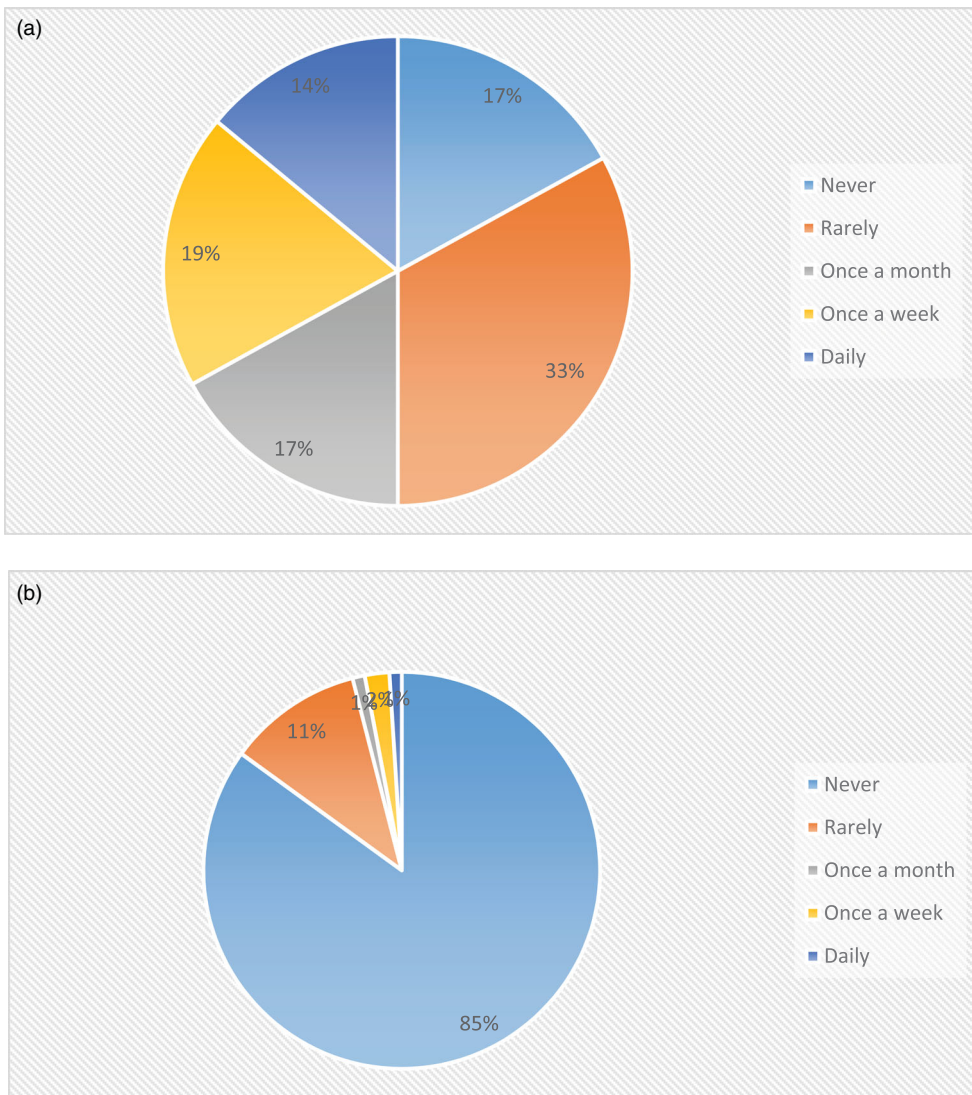
Figure 2. (a) How often do you cross the Railway/Bislim Bajgora/Eastern Bridge? (b) How often do you cross Pedestrian Bridge?

Table 3. Frequency of crossing the Main Bridge (data from both North and South Mitrovica).

Frequency	Kosovo Albanian	Kosovo Serb	Nationality: both KA and KS	Other nationality	Total
Never	3.2%	55.6%	40.6%	33.3%	32.9%
Rarely	27.0%	25.0%	35.5%	0%	27.6%
Once a month	9.5%	5.6%	6.3%	0%	7.1%
Once a week	11.1%	6.9%	9.4%	33.3%	9.4%
daily	49.2%	6.9%	6.3%	33.3%	22.9%
Total	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%

North and South Mitrovica mostly use the Railway/Bislim Bajgora Bridge, Kosovo Albanians' use of bridges is more evenly distributed. Bosniaks are the other ethnic group that uses Main Bridge more frequently. Moreover, the bridges are more frequently crossed by Kosovo Albanians (Table 3).

It seems that the composition of population affects frequency of crossing boundaries. Albanians living in South and North Mitrovica more frequently mentioned visits to family and friends as the reason for crossing the bridges. As there is only family of a Serbian Orthodox priest living in South Mitrovica, few Serbs chose this reason for crossing the Main and Pedestrian bridges. They cross to the southern part of town mostly when going further south to visit family in other Serbian-inhabited areas. For this purpose it is most convenient to use the Railway Bridge connected to the regional road.

The frequency of using Eastern Bridge/Bislim Bajgora Bridge are explained by the logic of the market. The reason for crossing Eastern Bridge is that it connects to the shopping mall in South Mitrovica which is used by both populations. It is also the main path for Kosovo Serbs from the rest of Kosovo who study at the University of Prishtina temporarily relocated to North Mitrovica. Even Albanians living in North Mitrovica prefer Eastern/ Railway Bridge as the main crossing point (100% cross it daily), compared to the other two bridges. For Kosovo Albanians, it is also the path to Bosnjacka Mahala/Mahalla e Boshnjakëve, the inter-ethnic settlement in North Mitrovica, next to the Railway Bridge, where some of them live and many of them trade with businesses from the north (e.g.
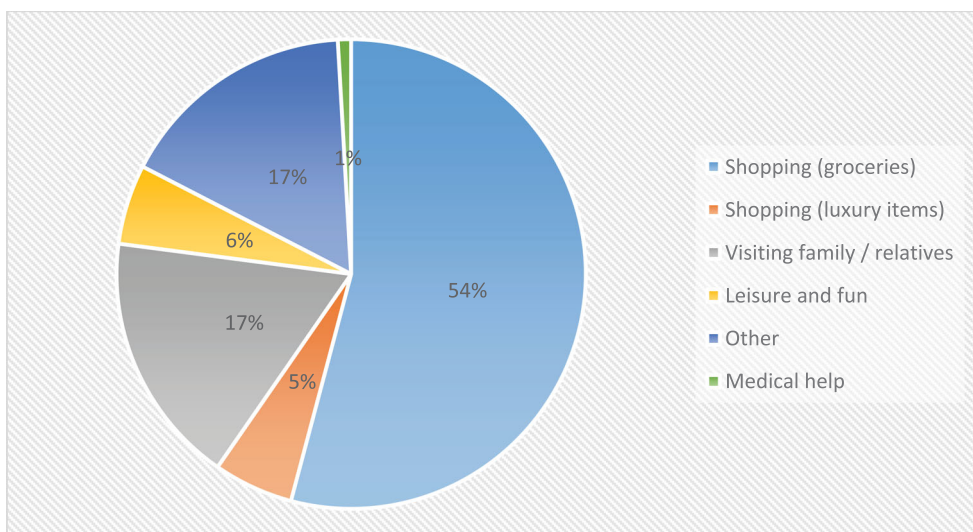
Figure 3. Reasons for crossing Railway/Bislim Bajgora/Eastern Bridge (only North Mitrovica).

selling to the restaurants and shops). Kosovo Albanians stated that they usually cross the bridge also to buy certain goods and medicines (Figure 3). Arguably, the presence of the shopping mall in the close proximity of the Bislim Bajgora/Railway bridge could be contributing to the 'reconfiguration of difference' as discussed by Hirblinger and Landau (2018).

While in the past, Kosovo Serbs had difficulties with travel by car, nowadays the bridge is frequently crossed by cars, especially due to the increased registration of cars from Mitrovica North at the Kosovo Civil Registry Agency, which has led to an increasing number of cars having Kosovo number plates (Sefaj 2018). The latest decision of the Kosovo government in accepting the Serbian-issued driving licence further contributed to this mobility. It led to increased frequency of crossing the bridge, especially from Mitrovica North for the purpose of visiting shopping malls but also driving in the rest of Kosovo.

Ethnic boundaries are enforced by gender

The perception of risk associated with crossing bridges is gendered among the respondents in North Mitrovica. Women very rarely cross the Pedestrian Bridge near the multi-ethnic Three Skyscrapers and use the Main Bridge less often than men. However, they use the Railway/Eastern Bridge more frequently than men.

For example, within the sample for North Mitrovica, 60% of women in contrast to 41% of men have never crossed the Main Bridge. Very few women regularly cross the Main Bridge (1.9% cross daily or once a week), in contrast to men (5.7% daily, 9.4% once a week). On the other hand, women more frequently cross the Eastern Bridge/Bislim Bajgora Bridge that connects North Mitrovica with the ETC shopping mall as well as other shopping malls in that area. They cross the Eastern Bridge twice as often as men. This is in line with the average frequency of major procurements of groceries for the home. A majority of both men and women have never crossed the Pedestrian Bridge or have done it rarely, while men are more represented among those few that cross it monthly, weekly and daily (Table 4).

Economic status and differences in practices

Economic status of those polled in North Mitrovica matters for crossing the ethnic boundaries. It seems that the risk of crossing the symbolically important Main Bridge is lower for those that are better-off. The self- categorized well-offs did not include anyone who never crossed the Main Bridge. A quarter of them (25%) cross the Main Bridge daily. It is also interesting to note that a majority of well-offs (75%) have confidence that the Main Bridge could be crossed even without an international presence. Half of those that declared they earned

Table 4. How often do you cross the bridge? (Men vs. women among respondents in North Mitrovica).

Name of the bridge	Gender	Daily	Once a week	Once a month	Rarely	Never	NA
Main Bridge	Men	5.7%	9.4%	3.8%	35.8%	41.5%	3.8%
	Women	1.9%	1.9%	3.8%	22.6%	60.4%	9.4%
Eastern/Railway Bridge	Men	15.1%	17.0%	11.3%	34.0%	18.9%	3.8%
	Women	11.3%	18.9%	20.8%	28.3%	13.2%	7.5%
Pedestrian Bridge	Men	1.9%	3.8%	1.9%	13.2%	75.5%	3.8%
	Women	0%	1.9%	0%	7.5%	84.9%	7.5%

Table 5. How often do you cross the bridge according to economic self-classification of respondents in North Mitrovica?

Name of the bridge	Economic wealth self-classification	Daily	Once a week	Once a month	Rarely	Never	NA
Main Bridge	Very poor				33.3%	66.7%	
	Below average	5.3%	5.3%		21.1%	57.9%	
	Average	2.9%	5.9%	4.4%	29.4%	50.0%	
	Above average		16.7%	16.7%	16.7%	50.0%	
	Well-off	25.0%			75.0%		
Railway Bridge	Very poor	33.3%	22.2%	11.1%	33.3%		
	Below average	10.5%	10.5%	5.3%	36.8%	26.3%	10.5%
	Average	10.3%	17.6	19.1%	29.4%	17.6%	5.9%
	Above average	16.7%	16.7%	16.7%	50.0%		
	Well-off	25.0%	50.0%	25.0%			
Pedestrian Bridge	Very poor				11.1%	88.9%	
	Below average		5.3%		5.3%	78.9%	10.5%
	Average	1.5%	1.5%	1.5%	8.8%	80.9%	5.9%
	Above average				33.3%	66.7%	
	Well-off				25.0%	75.0%	

more than average are also not afraid of crossing the bridge without an international guarantee of security. This stands in sharp contrast with those that classify themselves as very poor, who never (66.7%) or rarely (33.33%) cross the Main Bridge (Table 5).

In contrast to the Main Bridge, the Railway Bridge/Bislim Bajgora Bridge is crossed by people of various kinds of economic status. More than half of those who self-classified as very poor regularly cross the Eastern Bridge (66.6%). If we combine this with the finding related to shopping as the reason for crossing this bridge, we can conclude that the market is the dominant institutional logic in relation to this bridge. The interesting finding regarding practices of those living in North Mitrovica is that among those that never or rarely cross the Railway Bridge are people who have classified their income as average or below average. It seems that this category is less susceptible to changes in behaviour driven by market reasoning.

The Pedestrian Bridge is not favoured by anyone: the very poor never (88.9%) or rarely (11.1%) cross it, while those who classified themselves as well-off also never (75%) or rarely (25%) cross it. There are very few people who regularly cross this bridge, which relates to the finding from focus group with pollsters that this bridge is associated with morally dubious behaviour, e.g. 'it is crossed at night by ladies and thieves'.

Conclusions

This article argues for adding a spatial dimension to the concept of 'everyday peace' (Mac Ginty 2014, 2017). Spaces structure interactions between communities in post-conflict settings. They are governed by particular institutional logics, which can foster boundary building and boundary transgression. The current article thus proposes an extended version of the concept of 'everyday peace', including a focus not only on micro-level individual actorness in social interactions but also on an important meso-level dimension in the analysis of social behaviour and variation in institutional logics governing spaces where social interactions take place. We applied these concepts to the study of perceptions and practices across the river Ibër/Ibar in Mitrovica in Kosovo. There are several key findings here.

First, bridges across the Ibër/Ibar connecting North and South Mitrovica play different roles in the two communities. The Main Bridge has become the symbol of an ethnically divided town and has drawn considerable attention both from actors seeking to remedy ethnic tensions (e.g. the EU) and from opponents of reconciliation on both sides. This has resulted in diverging practices around this bridge, including considerable financial resources being spent by the EU and other donors with the aim of opening up the bridge and reno-vating the adjacent areas on both sides to enable regular access. However, it has also led to various practices on the North Mitrovica side hindering the opening of the bridge, including the irregular building of both a park and a wall, in addition to various kinds of bureaucratic delays. The situation is different on and around the Railway Bridge, which has been regularly used by both North and South Mitrovica population for routine affairs such as shopping or visiting relatives. Arguably, the presence of a major shopping mall close to this bridge in South Mitrovica may have contributed to increasing the number of visits by citizens from North Mitrovica.

These different practices and symbolic meanings associated with bridges resulting in different practices around them suggest that different institutional logics may be associated with these two spaces. The high levels of support among the Kosovo Serbs for the notion of the Main Bridge as a frontier and boundary to be defended suggests that this bridge as a space is governed by practices and rules associated with the institutional logic of national and territorial sovereignty. Similarly, although from the opposite angle, the Kosovo Alba-nians see the bridge as an artificial division of the town which fits the overall national and sovereignty logic. There is a remarkable difference when it comes to practices and associations with the Eastern Bridge/Bislim Bajgora Bridge. Here, the dominant pattern in the collectively performed practices by population from both sides is using the bridge for shopping purposes. This allows us to suggest that the Eastern Bridge/Bislim Bajgora Bridge as a space is informed by the institutional logic of the market (different from the logic of national sovereignty characterizing perceptions and practices around the Main Bridge). Arguably, in both these spaces, actions of individuals and groups aimed at achieving everyday peace in Mac Ginty's (2014, 2017) sense would be embedded in sets of norms and meanings attached to a particular spatial location. Further research is needed to investigate how these different logics of space were constructed in the first place. While individuals obviously act instrumentally to ensure everyday peace, they may also be making choices regarding spaces that carry particular logics attached to them with that same purpose. As we have shown, the same action – simply walking across a bridge – may have very different meanings and potential consequences attached to them in a post-conflict setting like Mitrovica. Hence, adding a spatial dimension to the concept of everyday peace may be useful in explaining patterns of action taken by individuals and groups in post-conflict settings.

Hence, in terms of practical policy, this article demonstrates that it is useful for the EU and other conflict management actors to study the spatial dimension in post-conflict settings to make appropriate decisions regarding support for local dynamics and locally conditioned institutional logics that help in alleviating tensions and bring about everyday peace. This means, for instance, deprioritizing financial support to nor-malization of spaces informed by the institutional logics of territorial sovereignty and thereby more likely to be surrounded by tensions and conflicts, focusing instead on support for solutions enabling growth in the volume of trade and other kinds of

business interactions – i.e. on enhancing spaces governed by the institutional logic of the market. Specifically, in Mitrovica, this could mean, for instance, financial stimuli for expanding the shopping mall close to the Eastern/Bislim Bajgora Bridge or setting up modern sports facilities open to the public.

Notes

1. Local Kosovo Serbs refer to this bridge as Railway Bridge, Iron Bridge or Eastern Bridge. The Kosovo Albanians refer to it as the Bislim Bajgora bridge having in mind the contribution of Bajgora family in building the bridge in the late nineteenth century, during the rule of the Ottoman Empire.
2. See for example the special page on leading regional media: https://kossev.info/tematske-vesti/park-mira-most-na-ibru/, accessed on 2 May 2019.
3. Survey teams coordinated by the Belgrade Centre for Security Policy (BCSP) were deployed in North Mitrovica, 10–11 July 2017, and collected responses from 106 respondents. The five field researchers in North Mitrovica were students of the temporarily reallocated University of Prishtina gathered in the alternative culture shelter BesiMisao. They were native Serbian speakers and lived in the city, and therefore also seen as acceptable to talk to by the local population, which is often suspicious of outsiders. The poll was carried out in five locations close to the bridges in the city centre, on the street and in apartments, cafes and other venues. For comparative purposes, an identical survey was conducted on the same dates in South Mitrovica by four native Albanian-speaking researchers deployed by the Kosovar Center for Security Studies (KCSS). The survey was carried out near the Main and Eastern Bridges with respondents of various ages, sex and educational backgrounds. Responses were coded by field researchers using a standardized coding scheme. The ensuing data-set was summarized in Kvamme, Bjørkheim, and Bøås (2018).
4. Initially these three blocs in North Mitrovica were guarded by armed KFOR soldiers, but in the last few years this practice stopped as the situation improved.
5. This refers primarily to the following municipalities: Leposavić/Leposaviq, Zvečan/Zveçan, Zubin Potok and Mitrovicë/Mitrovica North. See also Kursani (2014).
6. To understand the depth of the challenge, it is worth noting that senior officials in the Serbian government's Office for Kosovo and Metohija would not see the North Kosovo governance structures as 'parallel structures'. They would see them as regular and legitimate structures of the Serbian state in a territory that belongs under its jurisdiction. What is more, as one senior official pointed out in a research interview with one of the authors in November 2017 in Belgrade, the governance structures in Prishtina were the 'real parallel structures'. Hence, from the point of view of the Serbian government, the border between North and South Mitrovica is arguably not merely a border between two administrative districts within Kosovo but also a border between what Belgrade would consider a sovereign territory under Serbian control (North Mitrovica) and Kosovo.
7. On the people's perception towards EULEX, including in both parts of Mitrovica, also see KCSS. Kosovo Security Barometeter (2012–2018), www.qkss.org.
8. Initially, the Bridge Watchers organization received political and financial support from Belgrade via the budget of the municipal hospital in North Mitrovica, falling under the Serbian Ministry of Health, but this support was later curbed (Parallel Structures 2003, 11).
9. The source of violence in March 2004 was a situation where two Albanian children drowned in the Ibër/Ibar after reportedly being chased by Serbs, which sparked unprecedented nationalistic response in the Kosovo Albanian media. In reaction to this and – following the frequent blockage of the national roads in Serbian enclaves – there was a drive-by shooting incident in which a Serbian youth was wounded, which agitated the Serbian population in North Mitrovica. Crowds of Albanians stormed the bridges and tried to enter North Mitrovica on 17 March 2004 and shooting incidents and grenade explosions led to death of six people. The violence erupted all over Kosovo with attacks registered against the international presence and the

Serbian community that led to the ethnic cleansing of Serbs in many Kosovo areas. UN and NATO troops rushed to the scene to contain the violence but they were largely inefficient in managing the crisis.

10. For a full review of major incidents around bridges, see Mitrovica Center Mediation (Centre for Mediation ADRC Program Team), 2017, *Beyond the Bridge: The Symbolism Freedom of Movement and Safety* (Mitrovica: Alternative Dispute Resolution Center – Mediation Center Mitrovica), pp.4–7.

11. Ibid.

12. See http://www.balkaninsight.com/en/article/kosovo-s-symbolic-mitrovica-bridge-opening-delayed-03-08-2017, accessed 10 March 2017.

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