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Multiple Voices of the Past: (Hi)stories and Memories from the Ethnically Mixed Neighbourhoods in Pristina

Abstract

Using the Bakhtinian term *heteroglossia* developed by Andrea L. Smith, this article analyses the multiple and sometimes internally contradictory narratives, memories and stereotypes articulated in everyday talk about the common past in Pristina that could be heard nowadays in post-war Kosovo (mostly among Kosovo Albanians) and among the people who used to live in Kosovo prior to 1999 (mostly Kosovo Serbs) and then left the country for Serbia (Belgrade, Niš, etc.) or went abroad. The study explores the existing memories, images and stereotypes shared among the current and former citizens of Pristina (Kosovo) – both Albanians and Serbs – about each other and their city. It relies on the basic tools of cultural memory studies and applies them to the analysis of existing local narratives in the present-day Albanian and Serbian communities that used to be parts of one and the same city of Pristina. The article offers a discussion of the opposition between urban and rural models of mindset in changing Pristina and its importance in

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Publisher: Institute of Slavic Studies, Polish Academy of Sciences

Editor-in-chief: Jolanta Sujecka

Conception and academic editing: Maciej Falski, Linda Kovářová

understanding some of the factors of ethnic conflict in Kosovo. The basic social unit selected for analysis is ethnically mixed neighbourhood and its memory due to the fact that this social and spatial entity functioned as the primary condition and source of interaction, mutual familiarity and cooperation both during peace and war. The empirical data for the study were collected in 2010–2020 during short visits to Pristina (Kosovo) and Niš (Serbia).

Keywords: Kosovo, Pristina, neighbourhood, cosmopolitanism, tolerance, localization, memory, culture.

As the result of ethnic tensions between Albanians and Serbs in Kosovo and the subsequent war in 1998–1999, the overwhelming majority of non-Albanian Orthodox population were forced to leave Kosovo for Serbia proper (Niš, Belgrade, Novi Sad, etc.) or go abroad. Having abandoned their home, they took with them the precious memories of their previous experience of peaceful coexistence with their Albanian neighbours and colleagues. So did the Albanians – they may denounce Vaso Čubrilović, comrades Aleksandar Ranković and Slobodan Milošević and others of that ilk, but they will never say a bad word about baker Uncle Marko or watchmaker Uncle Ivan who used to work in their neighbourhood or in the city bazaar area, called *çarşı* (Alb. *çarshia*, Serb. *čaršija*). “We could get on well with each other, and we did, until we were split by our politicians” – those words could be heard very often while talking to both Albanians and Serbs about what has been happening in Kosovo for the last several decades.

By adopting a discourse-centred approach to collective memory (Gramsci, 1971; Smith, 2004), I try to show how difficult it may be to speculate about the past when several contradictory voices exist in dynamic interaction. My research supports the idea that it is not unusual for people in post-crisis reality to retain multiple and sometimes conflicting viewpoints on one and the same problematic situation. In this paper, then, I discuss the reasons for this multivocality of narratives about the past. As a basic social unit for my analysis I choose ethnically mixed neighbourhoods due to the fact that they functioned as the primary condition and source of interaction, mutual familiarity and cooperation both during peace and war. The issues of ethnicity, religion and inter-ethnic relations within a neighbourhood are also crucial (and will become even more important in the future) for contemporary European cities characterized by a high rate of immigration

(Kouvo & Lockmer, 2013, pp. 3305–3322; Kuppinger, 2014, pp. 29–42).

In this essay I also stress the opposition between urban and rural models of mindset in the changing Pristina and their importance in understanding some of the prerequisites of ethnic polarization and subsequent conflict in Kosovo. I use the basic tools of cultural memory studies, applying them to the analysis of existing local narratives in the present-day Albanian and Serbian communities that used to be an obvious part of the social landscape of Pristina. It is common to regard Serb-Albanian relations as being extremely conflictual, but I try to demonstrate that there used to be another reality – that of mutual familiarity and credibility supported by the long-standing coexistence, which is still insufficiently acknowledged. I also try to show how the Balkan city – although religiously or ethnically divided into several neighbourhoods (old Ottoman *mahallas*) – grace to the *çarşı* area (Karahasan, 1994, pp. 8–10; Lockwood, 1975, pp. 7–9), and in the post-Ottoman period due to the ethnically mixed neighbourhoods, could serve as the primary setting and source of interaction, inter-acquaintance and cooperation that has helped to establish and foster a sense of cultural, ethnic and religious acceptance and even partnership between different ethnic groups both during peace and war.

The empirical data for this essay were collected in 2010–2020 during my nine short visits to Pristina, Kosovo (two-week visits annually, in 2014 and in 2015 twice, except 2016). I conducted forty-two semi-structured retrospective oral history interviews (in Pristina) with the Commune of Pristina administration representatives (former and current), scholars, architects and ordinary citizens, both local-born (*prishtinali*) and ones who moved there in different periods (starting from the 1960s). The special segment of my fieldwork was devoted to interviewing Kosovo Serbs (June 2014, 2015 in Pristina; August–September 2014, 2015, 2020 in Belgrade and Niš, Serbia) who used to live in Pristina until 1998–1999, but were forced to leave the city during and after the last war and are now scattered around Serbia (mostly, in Niš and Belgrade); their experience of Pristina is very different, especially considering the period 1990–1998. The overall fieldwork material consists of around 65 hours of audio recordings (in Albanian and Serbian) and 6 diaries with handwritten notes. During this study I was invited several times to the studios of Kosovo TV channels (RTK, RTV 21, BIRN and others), where I commented on my research. This experience also helped me in my fieldwork – following the broadcasts several old citizens of Pristina found me and were eager to share some of their memories. On two occasions (2014, 2015) I participated in the celebration of St Nicholas day (22 May) – the saint patron’s day of the Orthodox Church in Pristina. This gave me the possibility to continue my

research in Niš (Serbia), as it was there where I met and made acquaintances with former residents of Pristina who had been forced to move to Serbia in 1999. All my interlocutors (Albanians, Serbs and Turks, aged from 21 to 83) share deep intimate ties to the city. As many of them said, they agreed to be interviewed so that they would have the possibility to voice their memories, emotions (of loss, frustration) and hopes, as well as to focus on the pristine multicultural nature of Pristina.

A Brief History of the City: Multicultural Pristina on the Crossroads of States and Ideologies

It is worth mentioning that Pristina has not often featured as a topic of interest among historians or travellers making notes about and descriptions of places they visit.¹ This is why we know quite little about everyday life in Pristina not only in the late Middle Ages but also even in the nineteenth century.

In the first decades of the sixteenth century Pristina's role as a social and economic centre of the region decreased (Nušić, 1986, p. 188): although it was situated at a trade crossroads, it remained in the shadow of more important and better developed Prizren, Skopje and Niš (Malcolm, 2002, pp. 6–8). At the same time Pristina, if we can say so, was in constant competition for economic superiority with another local centre – Vučitrn (Halimi, 1955, pp. 163–166). During the nineteenth and twentieth centuries Pristina was numerously visited by European travellers and diplomats, and all of them pointed out the multicultural nature of the town. Austrian geographer of French descent Amie Boué visited Kosovo in 1836–1838 in the course of his fieldwork in European Turkey. He estimated the population of Pristina at 7–9 thousand, among whom there were “a good deal of Orthodox Serbs and Albanians, as well as half-Turkicized Serbs” (Boué, 1854, pp. 202–203). According to Serbian consul Branislav Nušić, at the beginning of the twentieth century the population of Pristina did not exceed 12 thousand, with 3,170 Turkish and Albanian, 420 Serbian, 100 Roma, 50 Jewish and 10–15 Vlach households (Nušić, 1986, pp. 15–26). These data correspond to the Ottoman sources from the period (Frashëri, 1984, pp. 132–135). It is very important to stress that the term “Turk”, especially

¹ One of the best earlier overviews of the historical and structural development of Pristina may be found in Urošević, 1951, pp. 3–12. During the socialist period there appeared some monographs describing social, economic and cultural development in the city. However, their description of socialist realities was enthusiastic and uncritical; see Mekuli & Ćukić, 1965.

in the urban centres of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, did not refer to ethnicity – it was rather a socio-cultural designation: “Turks” who lived in the towns and cities of the Ottoman Empire were native-born urbanities of Muslim faith (Urošević, 1951, pp. 22–23; Yenigün, 2008, pp. 517–518). For them, Ottoman Turkish was the language with the highest social status and prestige, and their affiliation with the Ottoman culture was an integral part of their identity regardless of their ethnic origin.² According to my informants, communicative skills in Turkish were an obligatory requirement for locals in Pristina (sing., Alb. *prishtinali*, Serb. *Prištevac*) even in the second half of the twentieth century.

The structure of the city that had developed naturally for several centuries was abruptly changed after World War II. Before that Pristina was an exemplary Balkan city. By the term “Balkan city” we understand an Ottoman urban centre consisting of the central part (bazaar or *çarşı*) and several neighbouring districts (*mahallas*).³ Historically, Pristina was divided into several major sectors (*Panađurište*, *Tophane*, *Varoš*, *Lokač*, *Ciganlija*, *Četiri Lula*) by two principal roads: one of them was *Divan Yol* (from Turkish ‘the road leading to the Divan’) – the main street until the middle of the twentieth century. The historical structure of the city consisted of the core district with numerous shops of traders and craftsmen (Turk. *dükkan*) and several dwelling districts that reflected common Balkan principles of confessional, language, professional, ethnic and cultural division of the citizens into different groups.⁴ In the centre of *çarşı* there were private houses and shops, mostly owned by the rich Jewish families; there was even a synagogue – destroyed in the second half of the twentieth century. Far from being the majority in Pristina, Jews (sing., Alb. *ja(h)udi*, Serb. *Jevrej*) used to be a very influential and prosperous group in the city (Namani, 2007; Prlinčević, 1985, 1987–1988; Todić-Vuličević, 1999, pp. 105–108; Urošević, 1951, pp. 25–26). The Jewish community in Pristina, as well as in the other urban centres (Peć/Pejë, Đakovica/Gjakovë), did not survive World War II, and after the liberation of the city in 1944 the number of Jews did not exceed a couple of dozen (Namani, 2007, pp. 103–109). There are two Jewish graveyards situated in the city.

The other influential social group were the Turks (see above), who

² This fact could be explained through the system of *millet*s, which classified the population of the Ottoman Empire according to religion.

³ About the types of settlements in the Balkan region see also Hysa, 2015, pp. 272–277; Sobolev, 2013, pp. 110–134; Todorov, 1972.

⁴ About the historical division of Pristina into districts in the early and mid-twentieth century see Nušić, 1986, pp. 193–194; Urošević, 1951, pp. 28–33.

got their power and property during the Ottoman rule.⁵ The *çarşı* itself was divided into several sections-neighbourhoods named after the noble and prosperous families who lived there. The urban microtoponymy has preserved the memory of those families until today (e.g. *Hundozi* and *Zulufi*), even though for around seventy years there have been neither houses nor people who owned them. Old residents say that those families composed the local Ottoman elite, and together with thousands of their compatriots they were pushed out of the Yugoslav state from 1953 and moved mostly to Turkey (see further below). Even though their property (houses, shops, warehouses) was either sold privately, bought by the state or just destroyed, their family names have been preserved and still function in the oral collective memory of the city. One part of the historic centre is called *Te Plepät* (from Alb. ‘by the poplars’), and it is not a hard task to guess why. Interestingly, this local toponym can be traced back to the 1920–1930s, when the poplars were planted to honour King Alexander I⁶ and his wife Maria on their royal visit to Pristina in 1927 (Todić-Vulićević, 1999, pp. 93, 116).

It was the time when Pristina entered modernity and the first projects that reshaped the cultural landscape of the Balkan city were initiated: the eclectic hotel “Union” was built in 1927 (later on it was also named “Nacional”, “Skander Beg”, “Nova Jugoslavija”); in 1928 electricity, street lighting and cinema halls appeared in Pristina (Todić-Vulićević, 1999, pp. 24, 28). But, as mentioned above, the drastic changes of city landscape happened in Pristina after World War II, when the city was truly modernized.

Starting from 1953 Pristina faced a full-scale redevelopment of the central part of the city⁷ – the old marketplace (*çarşı*), which functioned as the meeting point and the centre of social and economic life for all communities, and was the area where the most prosperous citizens had their houses. In the 1950–1960s the old Muslim urban population was forced to leave Pristina for Turkey, and the whole spatial layout of the marketplace area was transformed drastically (Sylejmani, 2010, pp. 39–57). This outflow of Muslim population from Pristina (as well as from other urban centres in Yugoslavia, especially in Kosovo and Macedonia) was a direct result of the Balkan Pact between Yugoslavia, Turkey and Greece, concluded in 1953

⁵ There were several social classes of civil and military nobility in the Ottoman Empire: *sipahis*, *aghas*, *beys*.

⁶ Alexander I Karađorđević (also known as Alexander the Unifier, 1888–1934) – the ruler of the Kingdom of Serbs, Croats and Slovenes (1921–1929) and the Kingdom of Yugoslavia (1929–1934).

⁷ The urban planning projects (1953 and 1957) are kept in the Archives of the Commune of Pristina.

(Hadalín, 2011, pp. 362–364; Yenigün, 2008, p. 519). Nowadays Kosovar intellectuals regard this event as the implementation of the notorious memorandum entitled “The Expulsion of the Albanians” (Serb. *Isterivanje Arnauta*, 1937), which is said to have been proposed in the interwar period by Serbian politician and historian Vaso Čubrilović (n.d.). The stories about friends, neighbours and colleagues who were forced to leave Pristina for Turkey still play a very important role in personal narratives of old residents reminiscing the city of their youth (Gashi, 2013, pp. 66–75).

Speaking about Pristina under socialism, it is difficult to say whether the city might be unambiguously called ‘socialist’ or ‘socialized’ (French & Hamilton, 1979, p. 6). Indeed, it was not a city built anew seeking a true realization of socialist ideals by means of urbanism, but one with the pre-socialist social, political and economic fabric that needed to go through crucial functional adaptation after World War II. One- and two-storeyed houses from the nineteenth and twentieth centuries were replaced by higher buildings of four and more storeys, which housed state and municipal offices and shops as well as apartments of the Party functionaries and cultural elite. However, since the mid-1950s the *çarşı* area was also gradually destroyed, and in 1961 a project which was magnificent in its symbolism was developed on the site: the Liberation square with the Brotherhood and Unity monument (arch. B. Jovanović, M. Pečić) replaced the former core of the Ottoman Pristina. Apart from this, there were other developments in the central and southern parts of the city: the of National Theatre (1949), the hotel “Kosovski Božur” (1957–1963), the University of Pristina complex (since 1969), the National and University Library of Kosovo (1971–1977), the hotel “Grand” (1978), the palace of sports “Boro and Ramiz” (1977–1981),⁸ as well as numerous shopping centres, restaurants and cafés. After this total reshaping of the city centre, Marshal Tito Street was appointed to be central.

Those drastic changes in the urban landscape (between the late 1940 and 1970s) gave a new image to Pristina and served as real manifestation of Yugoslav socialism. It looked like this new city appeared in one moment together with the victory of the Communist party and the liberation from the Fascist occupation in 1944. This image was constructed in mass media⁹ and was disseminated in the literature about Pristina (Mekuli & Ćukić, 1965; “Prishtina”, 1974, etc.). During this period in the local newspapers (first

⁸ Named after people’s heroes of Yugoslavia, a Montenegrin Boro Vukmirović and an Albanian Ramiz Sadiku, who were executed by the Nazi troops in April 1943. Those figures and their deeds became a symbol of “brotherhood and unity” principles in socialist Yugoslavia.

⁹ In socialist Kosovo the main (and for a certain period the only) newspapers were *Rilindja* [The Revival] in Albanian, *Jedinstvo* [The Unity] in Serbian and *Tan* [The Dawn] in Turkish.

of all, in the *Rilindja* [The Revival]) there were a lot of articles published on the construction of new multi-storeyed districts, hospitals, schools, stadiums and hotels. At the same time, Pristina's architectural heritage (mosques, the Turkish bath, houses from the sixteenth to nineteenth centuries) that survived the urban reshaping of the 1950–1960s and remained in the city centre was hardly mentioned in this public discourse. Thus, the urban morphological continuity that a socialized city is characterized by (e.g. Warsaw, Budapest, Kraków) was intentionally downgraded and in many cases even destroyed in Pristina (Grime & Kovács, 2001, pp. 131–133).

Although the main task for the urban planners at that time was to create an optimum living environment and comfortable conditions for work and life of the Yugoslav elite – political, military and cultural – settled in the centre and newly-built quarters around, old behaviour patterns and attitudes, stereotypes and legacies of the pre-socialist society were partly kept (French & Hamilton, 1979, pp. 5–6). This could be illustrated on the example of Marshal Tito Street, which became a semiotic bridge between modern “Yugoslav” districts in the south of the city and the “Balkan” (or post-Ottoman) neighbourhoods surviving in the north. Later this street hosted the *korzo*¹⁰ – a traditional evening promenade of residents (Hoxha, 2012, pp. 41–43; Stojković, n.d.; Todić-Vulićević, 1999, pp. 56–58). On Tuesdays *korzo* was performed mostly by the villagers who lived in the region of Pristina and came weekly to sell their goods in the market. Old citizens say that villagers came to Pristina wearing their traditional raw-hide shoes (Serb. *opanci*, Alb. *opingat*) and when the market was over they put city-style shoes on and went out for a *korzo* stroll. For people from the country *korzo* was both a way to learn and practise some features of urban culture and to get new trade contacts among themselves.¹¹ However, starting from a certain moment (most probably, after the Albanian demonstrations of 1968) *korzo* in Pristina became divided along ethnic lines: Serbs took the left side of the street (north-western, looking on the map); Albanians walked on the right side (Stojković, n.d., pp. 43–44, 49, 68–69).

1968 and 1981 were marked by the demonstrations of the Albanian community demanding a broader political autonomy for Kosovo within federal Yugoslavia. The social situation was blown up in April 1987 following the notorious visit of Slobodan Milošević to the town of Kosovo Polje and his meeting with the representatives of the Serbian community in Kosovo. Those dates – 1968, 1974 (when the new Yugoslav constitution

¹⁰ *Korzo* (from Italian *corso*, ‘course, movement, a wide street’) – a pedestrian street in Mediterranean cities and a corresponding tradition of evening promenades.

¹¹ These principles of economic and cultural exchange between cities and surrounding rural areas seem to be more or less universal, cf. Duijzings, 2010, pp. 97–98.

was introduced) and 1981 – are mentioned by Serbs as a watershed in the relations between Serbs and Albanians (as my Serbian interlocutors put it: *Kad počelo je...* – When it began...).¹² In their turn, Kosovo Albanians claim that the situation changed drastically and irreversibly in 1989, when the political and cultural autonomy of Kosovo was greatly reduced – the local parliament was dissolved, mass media in Albanian ceased to function normally, a lot of Albanians were dismissed from their posts in administration and military structures.

In 1990–1993 the ethnic polarization in Kosovo reached its peak – the so-called parallel structures in the political, educational and public health care spheres were created by and for the Albanian community and functioned on a large scale (Kostovicova, 2005, pp. 97–120). The northern districts of Pristina (Kodra e Trimave, Medresja, Vneshta, Kollovica, partly Velania) played the role of base-camps for those structures: from late 1990 – early 1991 private houses hosted kindergartens, schools and first-aid points (unofficially called “Mother Teresa points”, Alb. *pikat «Nënë Tereza»*), as well as the faculties of Pristina university (Kostovicova, 2005, pp. 108–112). At first the structures functioned on a voluntary basis, but starting from 1992 workplaces with regular payments appeared (they were partially funded from a 3% informal tax that was paid by Albanian labour migrants from Kosovo working in European countries, mainly Germany, Austria and Switzerland). In May 1992 the Albanian community in Kosovo held independent presidential and parliamentary elections.

Ethnically Mixed Neighbourhood: Between Memory and Locality

It is very much clear that while researching social relations *in situ*, especially under the circumstances of ethnic tensions, one should keep in mind that the attitude to one and the same event or situation could vary drastically among people representing different social, political or religious parties and groups. My work aims to study those different voices heard in and/or about the city of Pristina – contradictory narratives, memories and stereotypes articulated in everyday talk about the common past that can be heard nowadays in post-war Kosovo (mostly among Kosovo Albanians) and among the people who used to live in Kosovo prior to 1999 (mostly Kosovo Serbs) and then left the country for Serbia (Belgrade, Niš, etc.) or went abroad. For this purpose, I have chosen *ethnically mixed*

¹² About temporal categories in the discourse of Serbian refugees from Kosovo see Ćirković, 2012, pp. 81–112.

neighbourhood as a basic social unit for my analysis due to the fact that in the Albanian-Serbian relations on the ground those neighbourhoods have been the primary condition and source of interaction, inter-acquaintance and cooperation that has helped to establish and foster the sense of cultural, ethnic and religious acceptance and even partnership in the alternate periods of peace and conflict in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries under different political regimes and social conditions. Moreover, and it is even more important, the ethnically mixed neighbourhood could be regarded as a meeting point of different voices of the past that are heard nowadays.

It also seems crucial to focus on this social unit while analysing personal (hi)stories in post-conflict urban societies as “neighbourhood belonging represents an emotional bond to a place which is seen to be positive – for example, because it can result from and in local social networks and engagements which are associated with individual wellbeing and building of community identity” (Finney & Jivraj, 2013, p. 3324). It is obvious that in different urban centres different types of ethnically mixed or, on the contrary, homogeneous neighbourhoods could be found and prevail – they can develop naturally according to numerous socio-economic, historical and cultural factors or can be purposely created by the local authorities or even by the national governments. However, various types of spatial segregation in the urban tissue (all kinds of ghettos and *mahallas*) could produce the sense of mistrust among different communities (Hirsch, 1983, pp. 40–67; Nightingale, 2012). For instance, the British government set to create ethnically mixed neighbourhoods in order to reduce the negative effect of segregation (van Ham & Manley, 2009, pp. 407–409).

As this research addresses a city in South-Eastern Europe as the main field, the attendant understanding of the notion of neighbourhood seems fair. In the majority of cases a Balkan neighbourhood is defined by the term *komshillëk* (Alb.), *komšiluk* (BCMS) (from Turk. *komşuluk*, lit. ‘neighbourhood’; in local Kosovo variants: *kojšillëk/kojšiluk* – to be used hereafter). Coming from Ottoman Turkish, this term refers to the structural unity within a Balkan city with special social relations. *Kojshillëk/kojšiluk* is usually understood as part of the Ottoman cultural heritage. In current anthropological research in the field of Balkan studies *kojšillëk/kojšiluk* is sometimes regarded as a notion that can function as an efficient barrier against the nationalist projects of ethnic cleansing (Maček, 2000; Rihtman-Auguštin, 2000; Žunić, 1998, pp. 116–123). On the other hand, Xavier Bougarel is less optimistic about its peacemaking nature: in his view tolerance and interpersonal proximity in a Balkan neighbourhood are fragile and limited to the situation whence the state is absent (Bougarel,

1996, pp. 114–125). Although there are contradictory opinions on the matter, the academic debates both on the notion of *komšilik* and its nature, as well as on its social functioning, continue (Baskar, 2009, pp. 158–160; Sorabji, 2008, pp. 97–112).

Before moving on, it is necessary to distinguish and explain two notions: *kojshillëk/kojšiluk* and *mahalla*. By the term *mahalla* we understand a quarter within Balkan, Western and Central Asian urban centres with ethnically or religiously homogeneous population (i.e. Turkish, Greek, Jewish, Armenian *mahallas*). This socio-spatial segregation based on religious affiliation appeared as the implementation and result of the famous *millet* system. However, the aim of my research is to analyse the memory and oral history of *ethnically mixed neighbourhoods* that seem to have appeared in Balkan cities after the decline of the Ottoman administration and could be regarded as its result. Another difference lies in the fact that *mahallas* within Balkan cities usually have names (either officially proclaimed or informally used – for Pristina, see above), while a *kojshillëk/kojšiluk* is often defined by its dwellers using the names of nearby streets (e.g. our *kojshillëk/kojšiluk* at Drinska). In L. H. Lofland's terms, the *kojshillëk/kojšiluk* is a perfect example of the parochial realm that is characterized by “a sense of commonality among acquaintances and neighbors who are involved in interpersonal networks” (Lofland, 1989, p. 455).

In order to contribute to the analysis of Balkan neighbourhoods, in this study I discuss the phenomenon of *kojshillëk/kojšiluk* as having both social and spatial dimensions that comprise two notions – *memory* and *locality*, i.e. this is the box where certain people limited by certain physical borders and social relations could keep their memoirs, joys and sorrows, everyday duties and outstanding moments of common life. The *memory* within *kojshillëk/kojšiluk* is based on narratives, personal and collective (hi) stories, memories of the past. This approach to memory could be especially important while studying post-conflict societies and communities, as the position of ordinary people usually stands apart from the official agenda and political propaganda. In this way, the analysis of these narratives will contribute to new interpretations and explanations of conflicts that took place in the recent past. One cannot but agree with Cornelia Sorabji and her point that “people’s memories of traumatic events [...] will continue to affect the social fabric in some perhaps intangible but nevertheless important way” (Sorabji, 2006, p. 1). Unwelcome memories of the past may support the feelings of frustration and even hatred towards enemies of the past. However, I claim that the opposite is also possible and that positive memories may help in reaching reconciliation in the situation of post-

conflict traumas and foster the reshaping of problematic issues of social and ethnic relations.

By the *locality* of *kojshillëk/kojšiluk* I mean the fact that for the dwellers their neighbourhood has a clear spatial reference and physical borders – an area with a certain number of houses delineated by several streets. *Kojshillëk/kojšiluk* has also clear social characteristics due to the fact that this is a local community with more or less constant membership and a strong network of relations with very limited residential mobility. Moreover, old citizens of Pristina often state that they feel the difference between the local word *kojshi* (Alb.) / *kojšija* (Serb.)¹³ ('a neighbour', Lit. Alb. *komshi*, Lit. Serb. *komšija*, from Turk. *komşu*) and its correspondent synonyms in standard Albanian (*fqinj*) and Serbian (*sused*). They say that the term *kojshi/kojšija* sounds for them more "local" and more "cityish" and this fact also affects the usage of the synonymic chain: they use *kojshi/kojšija* referring to their long-term neighbours with whom they have good relations or to narrate about their common past (especially when it comes to mixed neighbourhoods where Serbs, Albanians, Turks, Jews, etc. used to live together), while the terms *fqinj* and *sused* are used about newcomers or to describe the present-day state of affairs.¹⁴

It thus becomes clear that the old citizens of Pristina regard the borrowing from Turkish as being more natural for them and even "more theirs". In fact, this concerns not only this particular word, but the whole lexical field that is used to describe urban life and its realities (naming professions and crafts, food, institutions, parts of the house, etc.). *Kapixhik/kapidžik* is another important concept in understanding the structure and functioning of *kojshillëk/kojšiluk* (Gashi, 2013, p. 76). This borrowing from Turkish means a small door in the side or back wall dividing the plots of land belonging to the houses of two neighbours. If the neighbouring families were in good relations, they would communicate and visit each other using *kapixhik/kapidžik* rather than the front door leading to the street. There used to be a special term – *kapikojshi/kapikojšija* – that meant the closest neighbour.¹⁵

¹³ These forms are also given in Elezović, 1932, p. 301.

¹⁴ It is also true that after the war some of the Kosovo Serbs I talked to settled in Belgrade and Novi Sad, where the term *sused* is more widespread.

¹⁵ This means much the same as *prvi komšija* (lit. 'the first neighbour'), which is used in the BCMS language area. In the region of Prilep (North Macedonia), along with this lexical unit (*капицик, kapičik*), the term *комиши пенџере (komši pencere*, from Turk. *pencere* 'a window') is also used. See Jašar-Nasteva, 2001, p. 64.

Multiples Voices of the Past: Conceptualizing Vernacular Cosmopolitanism

This huge difference in urbanism in different parts and neighbourhoods of Pristina contributed greatly to fundamental discrepancies between communities living in them. On the one hand, the construction of multi-storeyed residential buildings in the central and southern parts of the city during socialism – where political and intellectual elite and privileged working-class lived (regardless their ethnicity) – aimed to influence the core ideas of private and public space and alter the relations within the family and between neighbours, as well as to contribute to the expansion of the nuclear family type.¹⁶ On the other hand, private houses in the central and northern parts (see further below), especially in the districts of Kodra e Trimave (Vranjevc), Kollovica, Vneshta, Medresja, could house three to four generations of one extended family who lived behind stone walls. Usually those houses were owned by Albanians who came from the surrounding rural areas during the 1960–1970s and built them without any official permission from the local authorities (Hoxha, 2012, pp. 213–216). The turbulent social changes in Pristina in the second half of the twentieth and the first decades of the twenty-first centuries generated different (sometimes totally opposite) narratives about the past that currently circulate among members of different communities. All the narratives mentioned further below describe different approaches to multiculturalism conceptualized from the viewpoints of urbanities living in Pristina.

Voice 1: “We are people with culture”: Urbanities as Opposed to Peasants

My interlocutors claim that in the 1940–1960s the social landscape of Pristina drastically changed:¹⁷ instead of old citizens who moved to Turkey – those “people with culture” as my informants call them – the city drew people from the countryside, both Serbs and Albanians (pejorat., sing., Alb. *katun(d)ar*, malok; Serb. *divljak*, *seljak*):¹⁸

¹⁶ However, even living in apartments in socialist blocks, people might continue to have extended families or organize their mode of life in a multi-local fashion, keeping up their relations with family members living in the countryside.

¹⁷ Compare to the situation in Belgrade as described in Simić, 1973.

¹⁸ Literally ‘villager, highlander, wild man’.

The mindset of citizens of Pristina, Prizren and Gnjilane is similar. We have the same rites and rituals, everyday habits. They are based on the Turkish Ottoman culture. [...] The countryside is different. The culture of Kosovo Serbs living in the countryside is different from that of urban people. Everything is hugely different – food, dress, rites. [...] After the war Serbs from the villages moved to Pristina – they graduated from primary and high schools, and went on to Belgrade. But still we remained different. It wasn't easy to get on well, no one wanted to marry a "villager"... It was a kind of disdain... I couldn't stand those people from the countryside. They moved to the city and made it a village... (G. R., fem., Serbian, born in 1945 in Pristina, rec. in Niš, September 2014).

Before the escalation of ethnic conflict in Kosovo the hidden boundary within the urban community was rather one between old residents and newcomers than different ethnic communities (Serbs, Albanians, Turks, etc.). In the interviews my interlocutors often stress the fact that the old residents (sing., Alb. *prishtinali*, Serb. *Prištevac*) know how to live peacefully and respect one another in the multi-ethnic, multi-confessional and multi-cultural city of Pristina. Their identity has often been supra-ethnic and has been based on *locality* rather than on ethnicity, so an old resident may also be called *ven(d)ali* (lit. 'local') in Albanian or *starosedeo* in Serbian. It is clear that this sense of "locality" rests on the general belonging to and involvement in the system of urban social relations, institutions and practices (e.g. everyday duties in the *çarşı* area). Old residents of Pristina were supposed to speak Turkish, and even nowadays this skill is a part of their local identity. One of my informants (Alb., fem., born in 1942 in Pristina) told me that in her childhood the residents of the city centre had spoken Turkish even at home; she had also learnt Serbian from her street mates and started to learn Albanian only at school. Another informant (Serb, male, born in 1950 in Pristina) said that in his father's youth the city residents had spoken Turkish and Serbian – the Albanian language had a low social status and was used only for communication with country people who sold their produce in the market on Tuesdays, so Albanian used to be called "the Tuesday language" (Alb. *gjuha e të martave*) (Gashi, 2013, p. 86).

The first massive wave of migration to Pristina from the countryside was in the 1960s–1970s and could be explained by the sizeable level of industrialization in post-World-War-II Kosovo and the opening of the University in 1969 (Lleshi, 1977, pp. 293–294). The outflow of the old Muslim population starting from 1953 was also a reason for that, as the northern districts (Kodra e Trimave (Vranjevc), Kollovica, Vneshta, partly Medresja), which consist of chaotically-built informal neighbourhoods, are situated on the former fields and vineyards of the "Turks". The second

considerable wave of migration to Pristina was connected with the Kosovo war (1998–1999), when the overall population more than doubled to over 500,000 people, and almost all non-Albanian and non-Muslim population was forced to leave the city (Duijzings, 2010, p. 107). Some of the houses belonging to those who had left were burnt down; some of them (including apartments) were occupied by Albanians who had just arrived from the countryside or got new positions and jobs.

The key concept that is used by the locals in order to distinguish themselves from the people coming to Pristina from the countryside is *culture*:

– We, old citizens of Pristina, are people with culture.

[Researcher] – What does it mean – to be “with culture”?

– Eh, look, If someone tells me that my child did something wrong and is guilty, I’ll punish him, but those – without culture – if I told them that their son did something like that, they wouldn’t punish him, they’d rather break my window the next night...

(R. I., male, Turk, born in 1937 in Pristina, rec. in Pristina, May 2015)

As we see from the passage above, the concept of culture functions as the main distinction between the two categories – old citizens and newcomers in Pristina. After some analysis of my fieldwork data, it becomes clear that for the old citizens the notion “culture” includes:¹⁹

– education in a broader sense,

– experience of coexistence in a multicultural environment,

– knowing each other (including languages, basics of religion and rituals),

– common cultural values (Ottoman, Yugoslav),

– sense of a shared past (first of all, Yugoslav),

even though my informants cannot usually give a plain definition of the concept.

Voice 2: “It was real brotherhood and unity”: Cosmopolitanism the Yugoslav Way

Under the Yugoslav regime, regardless of the declared ideals of socialism, the social class boundaries in Pristina were quite visible (and in many cases they remain so today). Alongside the blocks of flats with apartments for higher members of the League of Communists of Yugoslavia, functionaries, military and civil elite, as well as neighbourhoods of private

¹⁹ Compare to the situation in south-eastern Albania, where the concept of culture appears to be central to the construction of local identity in the Orthodox community, defined in opposition to the Muslim Albanian population living nearby, see de Rapper, 2002, pp. 193–200.

villas (e.g. the *Tashligjia* area),²⁰ the city was growing by numerous informal neighbourhoods built semi-legally without any proper urban planning.

According to my Serbian and Albanian informants who used to live in such a neighbourhood not far from St Nicholas Orthodox church (erected in 1830), in Drinska and Proleterska Streets (today: A. Bejta and F. Noli Streets), in their extremely poor ethnically mixed area there were children from all ethnic communities playing football and mingling together. On the other hand, in the neighbouring luxurious district of *Tashligjia* there were no children playing in the streets at all.

Our district was one of the first that nowadays we call “wild” – build without permission and proper urbanism. We had neighbours who were Serbs, Albanians, Ashkali – we were poor there, but we played football all together just in the street or went to *Tauk Bahçe* to play against other neighborhoods. My best friends were Serbs – Boban, Ivica and Milenko, Albanians – Nasër, Mentor and Ilir, and Ashkali – Idriz, Agim, Bashkim and Nasër. And we spoke both Albanian and Serbian. [...] We were very, very poor, you know, but we were proud of our country, real “brotherhood and unity”! It was so good then... (F. B., male, Albanian, born in 1972 in *Doshevc*, came to *Pristina* in 1975, rec. in *Pristina*, May 2015)

It is important to mention that the people who have lived in the city since the 1960s have the local urban identity (*I'm not a prishtinali, but the citizen of Pristina*), defined in opposition to the newcomers of the 1990s and 2000s. Those people, if Albanians, are certainly fluent in Serbian as well, while Serbs used to speak some Albanian, as all of them learnt those two languages.

When I was young [in the 1980s] there were two major types of identities among citizens of *Pristina*: firstly, the identity of old *Pristina* – for those people it was of huge importance to be born in *Pristina*, speak Turkish and share the Ottoman tastes – to sit by the mosques or drink tea at the bazaar. The identity of new *Pristina* is closely connected to the values of the Yugoslav period – it was a new type of intelligentsia who were pro-Western in their views. It was not so important to be born in *Pristina*, but to have university education. We listened to Yugo-rock, mingled at cafés and at friends' homes... We even spoke our secret language, a type of argot based on *Šatrovački* but with Albanian words... (B. R., male, Albanian, born in 1974 in *Peja/Peć*, lives in *Pristina*, rec. in *Pristina*, May 2014)

Such neighbourhoods remained a basic unit of social and spatial interaction of people, often different in their ethnic and religious identity.

²⁰ For example, this particular neighbourhood was where *Fadil Hoxha* (1916–2001) lived in his villa; he was a People's Hero of Yugoslavia and a prominent political figure in Kosovo during the Yugoslav era.

My informants – both Serbs and Albanians – remember their common celebrations of religious and civil festivals, as well as taking part in other socially important events, such as births, weddings, funerals, farewell parties for army conscripts. The neighbourhood community was a true source of constant moral and financial support in case of one's parents' death, business failure, etc. In the 1960s–1980s a lot of Serbs, especially those who lived in ethnically mixed neighbourhoods, were able to communicate in basic Albanian; some of my informants say that they became interested in the Albanian language and enjoyed learning it at school. However, to be honest, we should mention that, at least after World War II, the number of mixed marriages between Serbs and Albanians in Kosovo was about zero (although the most prominent political figures among Kosovo Albanians in the Yugoslav period, such as Ali Shukria, Sinan Hasani, Rrahman Morina, Azem Vllasi and some others, had Kosovo Serbian, Montenegrin or Bosnian wives).²¹

Voice 3: “I will never ever forget this...”: Cooperation at Wartime

As mentioned above, from the mid-1980s Serbian and Albanian communities became utterly divided. However, a small part of Albanians continued to collaborate with Serbian officials: in their community they were treated as traitors and received death threats, so many of them decided to leave Kosovo for Serbia or go abroad. Yugoslav politician of Albanian origin Rrahman Morina (1943–1990) became the symbol of Albanian collaboration of that time. He was a vigorous critic of the Kosovo independence project, and this fact is thought to have become the reason for his sudden death under suspicious circumstances (there were rumours that he had been poisoned). At that time in the Albanian community there was a euphemism for those who collaborated with Serbian officials: *shqiptarët e ndershëm* (lit. ‘honest/respected Albanians’), which is a loan translation from Serbian *poštovani Albanci*, as they were called in the Serbian social and political discourse. Such severe disregard for any form of communication between Albanians and Serbs in the 1990s affected in most cases the sphere of public political, social and economic contacts, especially if they involved state officials. In the 1990s the urban public space was gradually turned into the zone of protest against violence.

²¹ About Serbian-Albanian mixed marriages in general see Hisa, 2015, pp. 243–258.

Starting from the 1990s, when the police started to control the city centre, we were trying to avoid being in the square [Vidovdanska St, today: Mother Teresa Blvd] – only if we had some everyday needs. We tried to get to our neighbourhood as soon as possible; but later yes, the square turned into the place of our riots... (L. R., fem., Albanian, born in 1975 in Bujanovac/Bujanovc, moved to Pristina in the 1990s, rec. in Pristina, May 2015).

On the grassroots level the situation was quite different – here, mutual support was necessary in order to survive during the open ethnic tensions and ensuing wartime. Almost in every interview my respondents told me stories about their neighbours and how they hid each other while Serbian or Albanian paramilitary groups were patrolling the city. During the war in 1998–1999 neighbours shared food, water and candles, as well as used their landline phones to call relatives around Kosovo or abroad. Neighbours living in one *kojshillëk/kojšiluk* looked after their children and households when someone had to leave; they also looked after the property of those who went as refugees to Serbia, Macedonia or out of the region. One of the “classical” narratives tells a story about an Albanian neighbour who put up a red-and-black flag with the double-headed Albanian eagle on the house of his Serbian *kojšhi* in order to prevent it from getting burnt down or occupied by the Albanian paramilitary groups of the Kosovo Liberation Army (KLA – UÇK).

We used to live in the town of Kosovo Polje... When it all started, we were forced to move – the family decided to go to Novi Sad to our relatives. Our Albanian *kojšija* Agim promised my dad to look after our house. They often called each other. Agim told my dad that he had painted a double-headed Albanian eagle on the gates of our garage so that UÇK fighters would not plunder our house. When they entered the town and started to burn Serbian houses, they left ours alone... because of the eagle... But later another *kojšija* – also Albanian – told them what the matter was... And those UÇK-men piled car tyres and burnt our house down... (E. Ć., fem., Serbian, born in 1979 in Kosovo Polje, moved to Novi Sad in 1999, rec. in Gračanica, May 2015).

In the first months of 1999, when Serbs were forced to leave Pristina, their Albanian neighbours tried to make the resettlement to Serbia as less dramatic as it was only possible under those circumstances. Usually, Albanians living in the neighbourhood tried to buy the houses from their Serbian neighbours to prevent Albanians with rural background from coming into their *kojshillëk/kojšiluk*. However, some Serbs sold their property to newcomers and the deals were quite fair (considering the conditions). For instance, one of my Serbian interviewees (male, born in 1950 in Pristina) sold his three-storeyed house (350 sq. m in total) for

200,000 German marks, which was enough to buy two flats: one in Belgrade (66 sq. m) for his daughter, and the other – in Niš (60 sq. m), where he still lives with the rest of his family. Incidentally, the Albanian (originally from the region of Opoja/Opolje) who bought the house from him did not manage to establish good neighbourly relations in the *kojshillëk/kojšiluk* and finally gave up any interaction, as my informant wrapped up: *Because they have had the conflict of cultures*. There are numerous stories about Serbs who made quite a good deal when selling their property in Pristina and were able to start a new life in Serbia (at least, to buy a dwelling). When it came to flats owned by the state the situation was far from optimistic – after 1999 Albanian families occupied these apartments (especially, in the city centre and in the southern part, e.g. in the modern and well-organized Ulpiana district) and Serbs had no chance to get any compensation.

When NATO began the operation against Yugoslavia and bombed Pristina in March 1999 the Albanian community started to leave the city. My informant describes this episode as follows:

Our neighbour, a Serb, warned us about the bombardment. He just came to us and said: “It will get even worse here, leave and take care of yourselves”. The bombing started in March. We constantly visited each other; Serbs fetched food and candles, as there was no electricity... Finally our family decided to leave Pristina. On 3 May we left the city. We travelled by train to Kumanovo [a town in North Macedonia]. In the town of Fushë-Kosovë [Serb. Kosovo Polje] some old Serbian ladies helped us; they provided us with food and water. I will never ever forget this... (F. B., male, Albanian, born in 1972 in Doshevc, came to Pristina in 1975, rec. in Pristina, May 2015)

Most of my interlocutors claim that in the 1990s when the centre of Pristina was controlled by the Yugoslav police and the level of interethnic tension grew severely, relations among Serbian and Albanian neighbours (especially elderly people) did not change. There was no time to argue about current political issues – everyday problems were more important.

Voice 4: “It is the city that doesn’t exist anymore”: Kojshillëk/Kojšiluk as a Place of Memory

As observed above, *kojshillëk/kojšiluk* is characterized by both spatial (a limited area) and social (network of human relations) parameters. When this entity ceases to exist due to a certain reason (in our case it was the conflict and then war in Kosovo that brought fundamental changes in social relations in Pristina as well in the structure of the city itself), it remains in existence in the memory of its former members. The memories

of their *kojšillëk/kojšiluk* become a tool that helps them cope with their personal trauma of war, loss of social links and property, and the trauma of resettlement – either to some other districts of Pristina (nowadays many of old citizens (of Albanian or Turkish origin) live out of the historical centre) or to other cities and countries (not only to Serbia, but also to North Macedonia and even out of the former Yugoslavia). They often say that they failed to develop good relations with their new neighbours, especially if they moved to apartments in multi-storeyed blocks.

Under such circumstances, their common past and their experience of peaceful coexistence are often idealized and supported by positive stereotypes about their former neighbours or old residents of Pristina in general. As a result, after almost twenty years of living apart, Serbs and Albanians from Pristina talk about their pre-war past with great nostalgia²² and often try to praise and find warm words for each other.

In our mahalla called Tophane there used to live the Orthodox priest – we called him simply Pop Nikola; he was very kind to us, and we all loved and respected him. He was always the first who congratulated us on Bajram, and we went to his house for Easter with red coloured eggs. [...] It was such fun! (M. J., fem., Albanian, born in 1942 in Pristina, rec. in Pristina, September 2014).

We used to buy fruit and vegetables only from Albanians. Say you come to the market to buy a sack of peppers, but eh – you left money at home. He would give you this sack anyway, and the money – he would say “you’ll pay tomorrow”! And he would wish you good luck, and would give you some extra fruit for free. [...] Albanians are best traders, they will never cheat you! (L. J., fem., Serbian, born in 1953 in Čaglavica, lived in Pristina until 1999, rec. in Niš, September 2014).

Albanians are people of honour. If an Albanian gives you a “besa”, you can trust him – he will never cheat you. We, Serbs, aren’t like this, ‘cause they have other principles. There are a lot of good people among them, believe me... (T. R., male, Serbian, born in 1947, lived in Pristina until 1999, rec. in Pristina, May 2015).

We should be perfectly aware of the fact that such an ideal picture of peaceful coexistence in a mixed community of people of different faiths and cultures is the result of perception of positive experience and memories of the past of some people who lost something of their life and somehow try to cope with this by means of their memory.

[...] Prisitna is my city – there used to be my house there, but they [Albanians] took it... Here is my cemetery. But what do I have after fifty years? Only memory...

²² This is true only for privately shared narratives, while the public space in post-war Kosovo is notably free of any memory of Yugoslav socialism. See further in Schwandner-Sievers, 2010, pp. 96–99.

(R. T.-V., fem., Serbian, born in 1955 Uroševac/Ferizaj, lived in Pristina until 1999, moved to Niš rec. in Pristina, August 2014).

It goes without saying that in the bulk of the collected material there are also narratives about “bad” Albanians (and Serbs) but those stories very often lack the exact names and tend to describe impersonally a general state of affairs. One of the most popular topics reminisced by my Serbian interlocutors who tried to demonize Albanians in Kosovo is the narrative that during the 1980s some Serbian women from Pristina went to Skopje (North Macedonia) to give birth to their children there as they were afraid that Albanian medical staff in Kosovo would harm the health of their newborn babies (mainly, they mention potential castration of boys). Albanians usually blame Serbs for the so-called mass poisoning of children in 1990 (Kostovicova, 2005, pp. 75–77). My Serbian interlocutors do not comment on the unrest of 2004 in Kosovo as the majority of them had already moved to Serbia and did not witness them.

However, for many of the old residents of Pristina – both Serbs and Albanians – their neighbourhood and its life are associated with peaceful life in the city that “doesn’t exist anymore”. For them, the conflict in Kosovo became the milestone that divided not only their personal lives into two parts, but also, according to them, the history of the whole city – after having lost the ethnic, religious and cultural diversity, Pristina became, as they say, “the city without past and future”.

When I come to Pristina, I can’t recognize the city. I don’t learn the Albanian street names, I use old ones deliberately – those from my childhood: streets of A. Ranković, Yugoslav People’s Army... I’m used to them, these are the names of my Pristina, the Pristina that doesn’t exist anymore... Because I moved to Niš against my will, I’m not home here. My home is there.²³ Here we are aliens for them, Šiptars,²⁴ but there I’m a stranger – because my Pristina doesn’t exist anymore. Look, I’d put it this way: I’m a Serb from Pristina who lives in Niš... (N. J., male, Serbian, born in 1950 in Pristina and lived there until 1999, rec. in Niš, September 2014).

I can’t believe it is Pristina. After the last war “highlander” Albanians occupied the houses of Serbs, Roma and Albanians who left the city during the war. The population has increased almost thrice... After the war Pristina became settled by

²³ The binary opposition *ovde* (lit. ‘here’; in Niš, in Serbia) – *tamo* (lit. ‘there’; in Pristina, in Kosovo) is often used by Kosovo Serbs in their biographical narratives. Another system of spatial reference consists of three components: *ovde* (lit. ‘here’, with reference to the place of current residence, e.g. Niš) – *dole* (lit. ‘lower’, with reference to Kosovo) – *gore* (lit. ‘higher’, with reference to central and northern Serbia, especially Vojvodina).

²⁴ *Šiptar* (from Alb. *shqiptar* ‘Albanian’) – a pejorative word for Albanian in the Serbian language.

the people who don't appreciate culture and art, and don't have respect to others... (M. J., fem., Albanian, born in 1942 in Pristina, rec. in Pristina, September 2014).

Many former residents of Pristina tell me that they often see the city of their youth in night dreams. These imagined pictures of the past kept in their memory became this precious treasure that remains with them regardless of wars and involuntary resettlement. One informant (a Serb born in Pristina) with whom we made good friends told me that soon after leaving Kosovo for Niš he felt a need to paint pictures (and he had never done it before). A lot of his paintings show Pristina as he remembers it – tiny streets with Oriental-style houses and newly-built monuments from the socialist era. However, his favourite topic for painting is his former neighbourhood in Meto Bajraktari Street, where he spent his youth and met his first love. He says that when he was young this street was informally called “Love street” (Serb. *Ulica ljubavi*) as many couples appeared there because it was a venue of evening promenades.

Conclusion

The analysis of existing memories, narratives, images and stereotypes shared by the current and former citizens of Pristina shows that all this material opens the possibility for new interpretations of the Kosovo conflict, ones that have a social-class dimension and lie beyond the frames of “centuries-old” tensions between Serbs and Albanians or simple economic underdevelopment of Kosovo and social frustration of the people living in the region.²⁵ It seems that the old residents of Pristina shared something of what we can call vernacular cosmopolitanism and different approaches to it. As a result, their feeling of acceptance of ethnic, language and religious diversity was higher due to the experience of their coexistence and learning of each other's culture, and it seems that this tradition could be rooted in the Ottoman past, as both Serbs and Albanians refer to the Turkish community of Pristina as “people with culture”. The indoctrination and implementation of the officially sanctioned Yugoslav internationalism model also contributed (at least to some extent) to the mutual acceptance and cooperation between Albanian and Serbian communities (as major ones) in Pristina.

This research also demonstrates that the existing narratives (or voices) on life in the ethnically mixed neighbourhood depict it as a cosmopolitan network which functioned as the primary condition and source of in-

²⁵ About a new theoretical explanation of the failure of Yugoslav socialist system in Kosovo see Ivković et al., 2015, pp. 153–172.

teraction, inter-acquaintance and cooperation helping to establish and foster the sense of cultural, ethnic and religious acceptance and even partnership, both during peace and war, especially among old residents of the city. According to these people, the valuation of cultural diversity is a social matter that can be learnt and it mainly consists in adequate education (in a broader sense) and experience of coexistence. This multivocality also demonstrates that there exists a huge gap between the present-day grassroots evaluations of the events that took place in Pristina before and during the last war in Kosovo. These evaluations could be based either on some distinguishing criteria (such as urbanities as opposed to peasants) or formal or informal unifying factors (the Yugoslav political agenda or difficulties of wartime conditions). In any case, the analysis of those memories (even if contradictory) could lead us to deeper understanding of what was happening in this region of Europe in very recent past.

Today's Pristina is an exemplary post-cosmopolitan city where "earlier links and boundaries are not forgotten; cosmopolitanism can shrink and attenuate, it can also mutate and transform into nostalgia for a city that is no more" (Humphrey & Skvirskaja, 2012, p. 6). It is also true that native urbanities remaining in Pristina perceive themselves as a "minority" surrounded by a homogenous mass of new urban dwellers (Humphrey & Skvirskaja, 2012, pp. 10–13), and this division is not only a matter of social reality, but also of cultural, political and ideological one (Duijzings, 2010, pp. 100–106).

The disintegration of the USSR and SFRY resulted in creating numerous post-cosmopolitan cities (such as Odessa, Baku, Tbilisi, Sarajevo, Skopje, Prizren, etc.) where every day *vernacular cosmopolitanism* turned into post-socialist and neo-liberal *tolerance* with instrumental and often anonymous relations (Duijzings, 2010, p. 118). Thus, if the officially proclaimed multiculturalism in Kosovo is more than a mere façade, adequate means of support of remaining cultural, language and religious diversity should be initiated by the state (e.g. introducing a compulsory course of the Serbian language in school education for Albanians, and vice versa, as it was in Yugoslavia).

The only possible way to build a civic nation that will unite all ethnic communities in Kosovo could be found in their common past – nowadays the level of nostalgia for the Yugoslav period among Kosovo Serbs and Albanians is quite high: my interlocutors often reminisce the times when Serbs and Albanians used to live, study and work together peacefully (both in cities and in rural areas),²⁶ helped each other in repairing houses

²⁶ As mentioned above, this tradition of good-neighbor relations was especially strong among

and cars, supported the same football clubs (be it FC Pristina or Crvena Zvezda), and listened to Yugoslav rock stars. This common memory of coexistence, which functioned for centuries in many neighbourhoods,²⁷ that has resulted in positive stereotypes on the grassroots level, even though sometimes idealized, could be used as a platform for new relations based if not on friendship then, at least, on mutual acceptance that would finally lead to the rethinking and reframing of the Serbian-Albanian relations in general.

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the so-called *starosedeoici* ('old-settlers'). My interlocutors, both Serbs and Albanians, constantly claim that the most troublesome were the relations with newcomers (regardless of their ethnicity) – be it Serbian and Montenegrin colonists (of the 1920s and 1930s) or just countrymen (Alb. *katun(d)ar*, Serb. *seljak*) who “came down from the mountains” (Zlatanović, 2011, pp. 77–87).

²⁷ For example, it is a well-known fact that for centuries Muslim and Catholic Albanian families guarded the most important Serb Orthodox monasteries, such as Peć, Visoki Dečani and Dević.

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Множественные голоса прошлого: история и память в этнически смешанных районах Приштины

Аннотация: Используя термин гетероглоссия, предложенный М. Бахтиным и разработанный А. Смитом, в данной статье я проанализирую многочисленные и иногда внутренне противоречивые нарративы, воспоминания и стереотипы, сформулированные в повседневных разговорах об общем прошлом в Приштине, которые сегодня можно услышать в послевоенном Косово (в среде косовских албанцев) и среди людей, живших в Косово до 1999 г. (в основном косовские сербы), а затем уехавших из страны в Сербию (Белград, Ниш и т. д.) или за границу. Моя статья направлена на изучение существующих воспоминаний, образов и стереотипов, разделяемых нынешними и бывшими гражданами Приштины – как албанцами, так и сербами – по отношению друг к другу и своему городу. В работе используются основные инструменты исследования культурной памяти, в их применении к анализу существующих местных нарративов в современных албанских и сербских общинах, которые когда-то были частью одного и того же города Приштина. В своей статье я буду обсуждать противостояние между городской и сельской моделями мышления в изменении Приштины и его важность для понимания некоторых предпосылок этнического конфликта в Косово. В качестве базовой социальной единицы для своего анализа я выбрал этнически смешанный район и его память в связи с тем, что эта социальная и пространственная сущность функционировала как основное условие и источник взаимодействия, взаимного знакомства и сотрудничества

как в периоды мира, так и во время войны. Эмпирические данные были собраны в 2010-2020 годах во время моих коротких визитов в Приштину и Ниш.

Różnorodne głosy przeszłości: historia i pamięć w zróżnicowanych etnicznie dzielnicach Prisztiny

Odwołując się do terminu polifoniczności, zaproponowanego przez Michaiła Bachtina i opracowanego przez Anthony'ego Smitha, w niniejszym artykule przeanalizuję liczne i czasem wewnątrznie sprzeczne narracje, wspomnienia i stereotypy, sformułowane w codziennych rozmowach o wspólnej przeszłości w Prisztinie, które dziś można usłyszeć w powojennym Kosowie (w środowisku kosowskich Albańczyków) oraz wśród ludzi mieszkających w Kosowie do 1999 roku (przede wszystkim wśród kosowskich Serbów), którzy wyjechali do Serbii (Belgrad, Nisz itd.) lub za granicę. Mój artykuł ma na celu zbadanie wspomnień, obrazów i stereotypów, podzielanych przez obecnych i byłych obywateli Prisztiny, zarówno Albańczyków jak i Serbów, w stosunku do siebie nawzajem oraz do samego miasta. W pracy nad analizą lokalnych narracji we współczesnych wspólnotach albańskich i serbskich, które kiedyś były częścią tego samego miasta – Prisztiny, wykorzystuję podstawowe instrumenty badawcze dla dziedziny pamięci kulturowej. W artykule będę omawiać sprzeczność między miejskim a wiejskim modelem myślenia na temat przemian Prisztiny, akcentując jego istotną rolę w rozumieniu niektórych przesłanek konfliktu etnicznego w Kosowie. Jako podstawową jednostkę społeczną dla mojej analizy przyjąłem etnicznie różnorodną dzielnicę wraz z jej pamięcią, ze względu na to, że ta społeczna i przestrzenna jednostka funkcjonowała jako podstawowe źródło wzajemnych wpływów, znajomości i współpracy, zarówno w czasie pokoju, jak i wojny. Dane empiryczne zostały zebrane w latach 2010-2020 w czasie moich krótkich wizyt w Prisztinie i Niszu.

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No competing interests have been declared.

The preparation of the article was self-funded by the author.

Publication History

Received: 2021-03-16, Accepted: 2021-04-30, Published: 2021-12-20