

**Community Building in
Post-Conflict Mitrovica, Kosovo**

To What Extent is the Political Context Decisive?

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'Agree to Disagree'

(Aferdita Sylaj, Executive Director CBM)

Summary

In 50 percent of the countries affected by violent conflict, violence reoccurred in the first decade of the post-conflict period. This indicates the need for sustainable peacebuilding to prevent conflict from reoccurring. In many cases, community building is a part of the peacebuilding process. Community building aims to restore the non-physical aspects of trust, hope, identities, and social ties. These are addressed through the perceptions and behaviours, intergroup relations, and social structures of post-conflict communities. The initiation and implementation, as well as the results, are very diverse. There are many different aspects influencing the community building process, and this thesis focuses on the role of the post-conflict political context with respect to community building. The following research question has been leading: To what extent does the political context determine post-conflict community building?

A post-conflict political context is created by the construction of domestic power sharing and governance. In cases of external intervention, the construction is part of a democratic state building process.

The origin of bottom-up approach to community building is part of the critique against top-down approaches that partly create the political context. Community building intends to overcome the community contradictions that caused conflict. The concept of community building has often been criticised, and there are doubts as to the feasibility of activities supposed to (re)unite (former) conflicting communities.

For the purpose of this thesis a case study has been undertaken in Mitrovica, Kosovo. The case study has been the basis for answering the following research question: How are successes and failures of activities initiated and implemented by Community Building Mitrovica, influenced through the different political contexts in North and South Mitrovica?

The post-conflict situation in Mitrovica is characterised by a clear division between the North and the South. In the South there lives an Albanian majority and in the North a Serbian minority.

There is a distinction between the political context in the South and North. The political context in the South is characterised by a fairly successful democratisation process. Whilst in the North, the political context is characterised by the refusal of the (parallel) northern municipality to recognise Kosovo's independency.

In this context the NGO Community Building Mitrovica (CBM) aims to implement projects that contribute to a multi-ethnic society in Mitrovica. CBM initiates and implements community building activities parallel in North and South Mitrovica, but the results and willingness to participate are significantly better in the South than in the North. This thesis shows how the political context influences these results.

The current political context in North Mitrovica created an atmosphere in which any kind of external influence is undesirable. The attempt of external organisations to 'interfere' in North Mitrovica, is interpreted by the Serbian community as an effort to increase control over the Northern part of Mitrovica by the governing body in Pristina, and thereby a threat for their self-competence.

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1. Introduction

While you read this, a conflict is underway somewhere in this world.

Over the centuries there has not been a single moment without conflict, somewhere on earth. Many individuals, institutions, organisations, governments, and others are in one way or another involved in resolving these conflicts. Probably the best known international organisation is the United Nations. As with many others, their intent is to initially prevent conflict, resolve established conflict, and realise post-conflict developments. At the same time, (inter)national non-governmental organisations are active and contribute to the prevention of conflict, the resolution of conflict, and the realisation of post-conflict developments. These different organisations are involved in many different ways.

In 44 per cent of all post-conflict situations (when open war has finished), conflict reoccurs in the first five years after the initial open war came to an end. In 50 per cent of the countries affected by violent conflict, violence has reoccurred in the first decade of the post-conflict period (Junne and Verkoren, 2005). These numbers emphasise the necessity, and challenges of sustainable peacebuilding to prevent conflict from reoccurring.

1.1 Introduction to Thesis

Often, post-conflict regions suffer from the collapse of organisational systems: physical, financial, economic, technical, political, and social systems. Before, these systems functioned within a state structure that ensured the possibility for these regions to function peacefully.

The reconstruction of these systems and the state structure is a substantial part of peacebuilding. The ultimate objective of a peacebuilding process is sustainable peace. In various places and in many different ways peacebuilding processes take place. The initiation and implementation of these processes is guided by different organisations from all over the world, and the aim to contribute to sustainable peacebuilding is what these organisations have in common.

The many different peacebuilding initiatives can be categorised into two groups: top-down (hereafter T-D) approached and bottom-up (hereafter B-U) approached developments. The initiation and implementation of T-D approached developments are determined by the political leaders and/or elite of a post-conflict nation and/or the international community. The initiation and implementation of B-U approached developments are determined by the activities of local people and shaped by the social norms, customs, traditions, beliefs, and values of individuals within a society (Easterly, 2008, pp.95). An ongoing discussion is about the T-D and B-U approached peacebuilding developments that

are initiated and implemented simultaneously. This thesis investigates the concerns around the mutual influences, due to the inevitable interconnections between the two approaches.

According to Call (2008, pp.) these categories can be contradictory as well as complementary. Pouligny (2005, pp.496) argues that the approaches can and should be complementary. She states that contemporary nongovernmental organisations implementing B-U approached activities are considered as part of the process of democratisation, which includes also T-D elements. In this context nongovernmental organisations are supposed to complement other components of democratic programs, such as elections, on behalf of legitimate and democratic institutions. The addressing of crucial social and cultural elements can support the process of democratisation and ensure the functioning of democratic institutions (Pouligny, 2010, pp.1-3).

Community building is a form of B-U approached peacebuilding. A more specific discussion addresses the question to what extent community building can contribute to a peacebuilding process while the reconstruction of the state structure is still in progress (Paris and Sisk, 2007). The reconstruction of the state structure is decisive for the political context in a post-conflict region. The discussion leads to the following question:

To what extent does the political context determine post-conflict community building?

A case study has been executed to be able to better understand the interrelations between the community building successes and failures, and the political context. The field work took place in Mitrovica, Kosovo. Mitrovica has more or less 100,000 inhabitants (OSCE, 2011) and is geographically divided by the Ibar river. Besides this geographic division there is a demographic one. All sorts of events that took place after the war in 1999 finally led to a situation in which the Serbian minority lives North of the Ibar and the Albanian majority to the South. Another effect of all these events is the clear institutional and thus political distinction that exists in Mitrovica. Different governance administrations North and South of the river do not only function differently but are completely separate as well. In the meanwhile, many different organisations (international, national, regional, and local) are active in Mitrovica with the objective to contribute to peacebuilding and thus sustainable peace. Since the end of the war in 1999 until today, many activities have taken place initiated and implemented in various ways: T-D as well as B-U approached.

Exactly because of this Mitrovica has been a very interesting place to execute a case study on behalf of this thesis. First, the institutional context is clearly divided: there are parallel institutions in the North and in the South. As a result, there is a discernible difference between the political context in North and South Mitrovica. Second, the actual case study was conducted in cooperation with the

nongovernmental organisation (hereafter NGO) Community Building Mitrovica. This organisation initiates and implements B-U approached activities. This multi-ethnic organisation aims to bridge the divides between the Serbian and Albanian communities in Mitrovica. CBM aims to identify and resolve the common concerns of Mitrovica's citizens and empower both communities to work together by active project participation and establish the means for peaceful coexistence (CBM, 2011). Due to the current security situation, Community Building Mitrovica's activities are separately implemented in North and South Mitrovica. The same activities with the same objectives are put into place simultaneously in the North and South part of the city. If possible CBM initiates activities that bring the simultaneous projects together. This overall context led to the following research question:

How are successes and failures of activities initiated and implemented by Community Building Mitrovica, influenced through the different political contexts in North and South Mitrovica?

The case study will give insight in the way the independent variable, political context, influences the dependent variable: community building in Mitrovica. The difference between the political context in North and South enables variance on the dependent variable. No matter what the outcomes are it is important to realise that other variables can also have consequences for the community building activities. One of these possible variables is mentioned above, namely security. The overall security situation can be influenced by many events. Violent protests against international attendance for example. Such an event can cause a deteriorated security situation and affect the community in a way that they no longer wish to participate in community building activities. This situation can especially occur when one of the conflicting parties sees a community building initiator as partial. This can lead to a situation in which community building participants are an exception among the community. In a situation in which the security situation deteriorates, it is preferable to be part of the majority group rather than being part of a minority/outsider group.

An example of another variable that could have major impact on Community Building Mitrovica's (hereafter CBM) activities is financial funding. CBM largely depends on external funds to be able to implement activities.

At the same time it is possible that other variables are affected through community building. Two examples are mentioned by Belloni (2001, pp164) in his article "Civil Society and Peacebuilding in Bosnia and Herzegovina". First, he states that *"Only the presence of a social network of informed, politically aware, and responsible citizens will allow the process [for sustaining a viable postwar democratic transition] to move further toward a more substantive level of democratic stability."* A case specific context in a post-conflict region can lack this network. That is a dependent variable but

one that can be addressed by certain community building activities. These activities can intend to create a network as mentioned by Belloni. This network can contribute to community development. The necessity of this development is put forward by the second example: *"...the essential reality of civil society, which is a space where ethnic elites maintain their domination by fostering social fragmentation and insecurity."* This variable causing social fragmentation and insecurity can be addressed partly through community building. Community building activities focused on reconciliation can prevent (further) social fragmentation.

As the examples above demonstrate it is hard to make a clear distinction between dependent and independent variables because of the diverse interconnections. Over development of a certain variable can also lead to unanticipated consequences for the same, or other variables, and even lead to the failure of intended peacebuilding (Paris and Sisk, 2007). Hence, when answering the case study question, the objective has been to take into account the diverse interrelations between the different variables. In case other variables than the political context seemed to have influenced community building activities this is made as clear as possible and where necessary outcomes are nuanced.

The final part of this thesis focuses on the empirical aspect (the case study) related to the theoretical aspect (the theoretical framework) by answering the research questions. Besides answering the case study research question the intention is to provide a less case specific view regarding community building activities and how these can be influenced by the political context. A less case specific view can create new insights and questions which can contribute to the discussion described above.

1.2 Societal Relevance

The (re)occurrence of conflict affects millions of people all over the world directly or indirectly. When a conflict ends, the involved community can try to resume their normal social and economic activities. In practice this turns out to be very hard because of the widespread destruction of critical economic, political, and social institutions. The necessary developments are part of a long term interconnected process. It takes decades to realise effective sustainable developments (Kumar, 1997, pp.2). The reoccurrence of conflict would mean destruction of critical institutions again and necessary but undesirable renewal of the decades long development process. This thesis will address the interconnections between the political context and community building. Furthermore, it will suggest how community building activities and outcomes are influenced by the political context. This

will present insights into the interconnections between the political context and community building. These insights can then suggest better routes to improved community building, as part of the total interconnected peacebuilding process. Improving this process will mean a decreasing possibility of conflict reoccurrence, and thus sustainable improvements of the living circumstances of a former war torn society.

The societal relevance of this thesis is best shown in the case study. The case study among others examines the activities that are undertaken by CBM. CBM is a grassroots organisation that initiates and implements community building activities. The community in Mitrovica is divided along ethnic lines between the Albanian majority and the Serbian minority. This division was a determining factor for the onset of the conflict and is still an obstacle today for the ongoing peacebuilding process. CBM's objective is to decrease the existing division and thereby prevent the reoccurrence of conflict and contribute to an improved peacebuilding process.

CBM implements its activities in cooperation with the local community. The aim is that the local participants will experience an improvement of their living circumstances as an outcome of the activities: even if this experience only takes place during the actual participation. The influence CBM activities have on the rest of the community is hard to measure. What I do argue is that the intention of CBM is to affect through their activities not only the participants but the rest of the community as well. When the participation rate increases it is assumed that the contribution of activities to the actual community building increase as well. Firstly, with a higher rate of the total community participation. Secondly, the possibility that non participants have contact with participants, increases communication concerning community building activities thus encouraging it to take place. In this process the influence of community building activities on the living circumstances of Mitrovica citizens can grow step by step. These small steps can be part of the community building mentioned above. The intention of CBM's activities is to contribute to this long term community building process, and with this contribution CBM aims to realise developments that contribute to sustainable peacebuilding in Mitrovica (CBM, 2011).

CBM is a clear example of an NGO that approaches peacebuilding B-U. In practice it is more than likely that CBM initiates and implements activities that influence or are influenced by other peacebuilding processes. Contradictions and complementarities can occur. The case study of this thesis will analyse the way CBM activities are affected by the political context in Mitrovica. The recent (2008) declaration of independence of Kosovo will entail necessary changes over the coming years. So far, the political context resulting from the transformation following the declaration of independence, stagnated rather than promoted CBM's community building efforts. The community

division seems to be intensified due to the different views of the communities regarding the ongoing transformation. This thesis will give insight in opportunities to improve CBM activities and especially try to contribute to enhanced outcomes of these activities. Bearing in mind the likelihood that the political context somehow has impact on both these aspects, it can be very useful for CBM to know what this impact is, and how activities and activity outcomes are influenced. This approach is based on the starting point that CBM activities can contribute to an improvement of the living conditions in Mitrovica.

1.3 Scientific Relevance

The end of the Cold War opened new possibilities for international action in war torn societies. With this the concept of peacebuilding was introduced. The intention was to create a context in which the international community would intervene collectively as a neutral party and resolve violent conflict and support sustainable developments in the affected countries. Since then, peacebuilding exists of multiple and at times contradictory initiatives and activities (Tschirgi, 2004). This multiple approach creates the possibility for development activities that are contradictory and/or complementary (Call and Wyeth, 2008), and many peace building strategies tend to be inadequate as a result of not recognising the interconnectedness that comes with the combined approaches (Fisher and Zimina, 2009). A possible consequence is emphasised by Tschirgi (2004, pp.i): *"...post-conflict peacebuilding remains a fragile undertaking with mixed results."* According to Fisher and Zimina (2009, pp.13) this inadequacy is caused by a lack of clarity regarding values and the establishment of objectives and the short term implementation of peacebuilding processes. Overall they argue that self-reflection of peacebuilding organisations and practitioners, is necessary to improve peacebuilding processes, and thereby be able to contribute to the realisation of sustainable peace. This self-reflection can provide an insight in the way the different approaches influence one another. Hereby, it can become clear how the approaches can be contradictory or on the other hand complementary. With this knowledge peacebuilding organisations and practitioners can implement complementary instead of contradictory peacebuilding processes.

This thesis focuses on two specific elements of peacebuilding and their interconnectedness: the political context and community building. This thesis contributes to the discussion concerning the effectiveness of community building in a post-conflict political context.

The political context is largely determined by post-conflict state building. Since the end of the Cold War, state building has been an essential aspect of development strategies in post-conflict regions. This approach follows the fact that many conflicts occurred in a context that lacked a good governmental system (Wolff, 2010, pp.129). Paris and Sisk (2007) as well as Brahim (2007) argue that state building through the establishment of a democratic institutional structure, is crucial when creating the context for a sustainable post-conflict transformation.

In many occasions the mobilisation of human and financial capacity did not lead to the desired outcomes. Despite the great efforts by means of external assistance, newly found regimes stayed fragile or even collapsed and conflict reoccurred. An important critique regarding state building is the implementation of democratic institutions by means of a T-D approach. Two critiques are that the T-D approached implementation of a democratic system lacks local involvement and that there is insufficient knowledge and understanding of the case specific conditions (Brahimi, 2007, pp.2). Involvement of the communities that are supposed to actually live in the newly found democracy is essential to establish sustainable democratic institutions. Frequently heard critique is that external intervention strategies are too much designed from a Western point of view. The case uniqueness is often not sufficiently taken into account; these case unique characteristics often determine the causes of conflict.

Conflict does not only destroy economic and physical infrastructures and formal institutions but also trust, hope, identities, and social ties (Pouligny, 2005). Pouligny (2005, pp. 496) argues that rebuilding society by means of B-U approached community building (by addressing trust, hope, identities, and social ties) can create the foundation for a peaceful post-conflict transformation. During this community building process a context can be created in which the former conflicting communities identify and recognise the previous conflict causes. By addressing these causes together action can be undertaken to prevent the reoccurrence of conflict and create a context in which sustainable developments can be implemented.

Burde (2004) argues that a weak state is a bad place for rebuilding divided communities. Shortly after a conflict the tensions between the conflicting communities can still be strong. The implementation of community building activities can have undesired or even negative effects. Attempts to create interaction among the conflicting communities can increase the possibility that conflict reoccurs.

Another critique addresses the sustainability of community building activities. Great efforts can be eliminated by minor incidents. An institutional decision can have great impact on the state of mind of a community (Heathershaw, 2007, pp.225-227). If the state of mind of a community is

negatively influenced by a certain institutional decision, or an arbitrary incident, then tensions between (former) conflicting communities can be intensified with all possible consequences. This argument is closely linked with the following paragraph that is about the interconnections between the political context and community building.

As mentioned before, Paris and Sisk (2007) and Brahim (2007) argue that democratic institutions are essential to create a context in which sustainable post-conflict developments can be established. Pouligny (2010) argues that a rebuilt society can be the instrument that makes these democratic institutions function. These arguments show that the two approaches could well be complementary.

Nevertheless, case studies have shown limitations regarding the initiation and implementation of community building activities in a post-conflict context. Belloni (2001, pp.163-164) for example studied civil society and peacebuilding in Bosnia and Herzegovina and concluded that the results of community building are disappointing. Furthermore, he argues that the contribution of community building to a comprehensive peacebuilding process turned out to be limited. According to Belloni this is because *“The international community’s idealized conception of civil society differs dramatically from actual conditions in which Bosnian civic groups and organizations function”* (Belloni, 2001, pp. 163). In addition, Edwards and Hulme (1998, pp. 1-2) find *“...that much of the case for emphasizing the role of NGOs/GROs rests on ideological grounds rather than empirical verification.”* They especially doubt the long term contribution of community building activities.

This thesis aims to contribute to existing research and policies by examining similar community building processes in two different political contexts. This will give insights into the possibilities to adjust community building approaches, and assisting the case specific political contexts to be more successful.

1.4 Structure of Thesis

In chapter two the research methodology and methods are described. Chapter three consists of the theoretical framework in which the research is conducted. The development of a political context in a post-conflict region and community building are studied, and is concluded by the formulation of a hypothesis. The fourth chapter is the introduction to the case study - an overview of Kosovo, and Mitrovica in particular and the NGO CBM is introduced.

Chapter five describes the political context in Mitrovica. The analysis has been divided into North and South to emphasise the political context differences. Hereafter, chapter six describes in detail the parallel implementation of four community building projects by CBM in South and North Mitrovica. Furthermore, the way these projects are influenced by the political context in which they are executed is examined.

Chapter seven is the conclusion of this thesis presenting answers to the research questions.

2. Research Methodology and Methods

In this chapter the research methodology and methods are described, and explanation to the way research questions are answered.

2.1 Methodology

In this section the research questions are once more exposed, and an explanation is given about the methodology used to answer these research questions.

To what extent does the political context determine post-conflict community building?

The answer to this research question will be the conclusion of this thesis. Conclusions drawn from the case study are the starting point, with case specific conclusions analysed within the theoretical framework. The reason to relate the empirical research with the theoretical one is to generate less case specific conclusions. The less case specific conclusions will give insight in the interconnections between the political context and community building, which in one way or another can be then applied in other post-conflict cases.

As stated, the generalised conclusions can only contribute in other cases, and never be some sort of a blue print. This is due to the uniqueness of every post-conflict case. Secondly, this is because the transformation into a broader context of the variables is based on a personal interpretation of the research results.

How are successes and failures of activities initiated and implemented by Community Building Mitrovica, influenced through the different political contexts in North and South Mitrovica?

A case study was executed by means of this question in Mitrovica, Kosovo from the end of April 2012 until the beginning of August 2012. This studied contemporary events within a real-life context of which the boundaries between events and context are not clearly evident. This case study made it

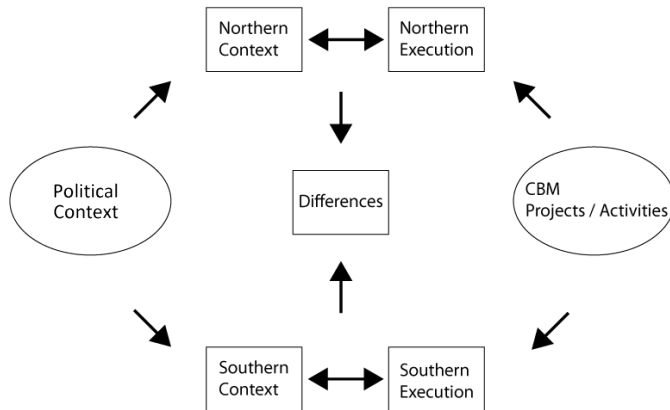
possible to illuminate a decision/event/action: why decisions/events/actions were taken, how they were implemented and what the outcomes were (Yin, 2003). This case study made it possible to gain insight in the way different political contexts in Mitrovica influence CBM activities. A great advantage of a case study is that the outcomes can be used in the specific case. In this case that means that CBM activities can be developed on the occasion of the case study findings in a way that positively affects the results. At the same time this indicates a weak aspect of a case study. The specificity will make it difficult to use the findings in other cases because it is likely that the events and/or contexts are dissimilar.

The internal validity refers to the causal relations between CBM activities and the political contexts of South and North Mitrovica (RUG, 2005). To create internal validity, it has been important to visualise in what way the political contexts influenced the same CBM activities. It was essential that the activities to be investigated were initially implemented identically. To strengthen the internal validity and minimise bias, a balanced group of interviewees has been essential (more about this later). Participatory observation has been another important research instrument to minimise bias. This made it possible to analyse information gathered through interviews, whilst bearing in mind that the overall objective of community building is a comprehensive long term objective, and not a short term project based objective. A project evaluation based on short term results can give a different insight in the successes and failures, than an evaluation based on long term results. Furthermore, in the interest of specifying the research results the terms success and failure are defined as follows:

- There is success if the community building activities in any way contribute to the objective set in advance.

- There is failure if the community building activities in no way contribute to the objective set in advance.

The main objective of the case study has been the analysis of CBM activities in the different political contexts in North and South Mitrovica. Below, the research is shown schematically.



2.2 Methods

This description of the research methods, outlines the activities that are implemented in practice to be able to answer the research questions. The case study and the analysis of the research results are executed within the theoretical framework (chapter 3). In the theoretical framework attention is paid to the establishment of the political context in a post-conflict region. Besides, theories are studied regarding community building as part of a peacebuilding process.

The research methods that are used are based on the case study theory designed by Yin (2003). As can be seen in the schedule above the case study is divided in two parts. The first part consists of the independent variable: the political context in Mitrovica. The second part focuses on the dependent variable: community building in Mitrovica.

Regarding the political context, a distinction is made between North and South Mitrovica. This distinction will give a better insight in the differences between the political context in North and South Mitrovica. The analysis of the political context starts with the description of the functioning of the governing bodies at the national level. A more detailed analysis has been made of the political context in Mitrovica. In the South the functioning of one institution (southern municipality) has been analysed. In the North the functioning of five institutions (northern municipality, United Nations Administration Mitrovica (UAM), the Municipal Preparation Team (MPT), Organisation for Security and Cooperation Europe (OSCE), and the European Union Rule of Law Mission in Kosovo (EULEX)) has been analysed.

By analysing these institutions an overview has been realised of the political contexts in North and South Mitrovica. The analysis shows the contexts per se, as well as the differences

between the contexts. The necessary data has been collected through four kinds of sources: public government publications and notes, interviews with officials (see appendix I and II), interviews with CBM staff members, and participatory observation. A few difficulties occurred regarding interviews with officials for the purpose of the political context analysis. Some officials were not willing to talk at all (especially officials of the northern municipality) and in other cases officials showed limited willingness to share information.

Nevertheless, the limited information collected through the interviews with officials in combination with the information gathered through the other sources made it possible to create a consistent overview of the political contexts in North and South Mitrovica.

The political context analysis of North and South Mitrovica will provide insight in the way community building activities implemented by CBM are (not) influenced differently by the dissimilar contexts they are executed in.

Secondly, the activities initiated and actually executed by CBM will be analysed. These community building activities are the core of the case study. To find out how the political context influences CBM activities four projects will be analysed. The projects are implemented in parallel North and South Mitrovica. A detailed description of the projects is part of the case study. The projects are implemented in parallel, hereby the differences between the Northern and Southern execution will become clear. These findings are the input for the concluding chapter of this thesis. Three sources are used regarding the CBM projects: project documentation, interviews with CBM staff members, and participant observation. The following research questions were the starting point:

- **What is the theory of change?**
- **What were the successes/failures?**
- **What caused the successes/failures?**
- **What were the differences between North and South Mitrovica?**

Eleven interviews with CBM staff members (see appendix III) took place in Mitrovica on the basis of a questionnaire that is included in this thesis as appendix IV. Two direct involved CBM staff members of each analysed project were selected: one active and living in the North and one active and living in the South. Furthermore, the executive director (living and mainly present in the South), the CRYM executive director (living and mainly present in the North), and a financial officer (living in the North and mainly present in the South working with CBM for years and also employee of EULEX) were interviewed.

A limitation of this list of interviewees is that there are no project participants included. As a result, the reviews of successes and failures are based on the interview outcomes with CBM employees and participant observation. In the case of CBM employees there is the possibility that they provided a more positive image of project outcomes than the reality because of their executive involvement. By means of participatory observation an attempt has been made to neutralise possible biased images.

The data collected through the methods described above is the input for answering the research questions.

3. Theoretical Framework

The theoretical framework of this thesis focuses on the political context, the initiation, and implementation of community building activities in post-conflict regions. Firstly, attention is paid to the origin of the political context and the role that this plays in the everyday society. Secondly, the concept of post-conflict community building is elaborated. This theoretical framework concludes with a hypothesis.

3.1 The Political Context

This section describes the process that leads to the creation of a political context in a post-conflict region. Furthermore it discusses how, and in which manner the political context can affect daily life in a post-conflict region.

The post-conflict political context is created by the construction of domestic power sharing and governance. Democracy is the dominant political philosophy regarding the construction of domestic power sharing and governance (Barnes, 2001, pp.86). In many post-conflict regions, the democratic state building process is partly determined by an externally assisted T-D approach.

The conclusion of the Cold War marked the end of the international division between the East and the West (Europe), and in this period the concept of state building was introduced. Previous military and economic assistance from the Soviet Union (later Russia) and the United States to their perceived allies declined. This opened the door for international organisations to become active in these regions, with more opportunity to become more directly involved in ending long-standing conflicts. The complex tasks of these international organisations involved the organisation of elections, human rights training and monitoring, and even temporarily taking over the administration of an entire state (Paris, 2004, pp.13-19). According to Boutros-Ghali (1996, pp3) the objective of this complex task is the realisation of a *“...democracy that is one of the pillars on which a more peaceful, more equitable, and more secure world can be built”*.

By means of externally assisted state building, the so called underdeveloped countries were supposed to develop and become part of the developed world. Over the last two decades, the United Nations, has conducted various peace missions of which the core concept was state building. According to Englebert and Tull (2008, pp.106) these missions aim to restore the state's monopoly on violence. Furthermore, these missions include the rebuilding of the governmental institutions, promotion of political participation and human rights, social services, and the economy.

The underlying idea, that a post-conflict state transformation can be the foundation for sustainable development and thus peace, has been widely shared. Nevertheless, since the early 90s liberal intervention critiques increased. Criticism was sparked due to the uneven nature of successful interventions. Brahim (2007, pp.2) mentions *"...that about half of the countries where peace operations were said to have ended in success, actually fell back into conflict within five years or less."* This is confirmed by Englebert and Tull (2008, pp.107) who argue that *"...the worldwide record is "mixed at best.""*

Over the following sections a number of critiques are discussed. Further, the possible effects of these criticised processes regarding the political context and thereby daily life in a post-conflict region are elaborated.

A common critique is that the state building approaches were predominantly based on one external state apparatus standard. This led to a situation in which many state building initiatives were characterised by a 'one size fits all' approach (Englebert and Tull, 2008, pp.110). The problem of a 'one size fits all' approach is that it does not take into account the region specific circumstances. The challenge is to find the right balance between the (locally) desirable and enforceable developments.

The non-observance of the region specific circumstances with respect to the state building process can have major influence on the establishment of the political context. This can be especially the case in ethnic divided communities.

One of the objectives of a democratic transformation process is to prevent the newly (re)built structure from being similar to the pre-conflict structure. The implementation of democratic institutions is often based on a multi-party system. The risk in post-conflict regions is that these parties are formed along the structures that are the remnants of the pre-conflict institutions. This is partly because these structures are deeply rooted (Brzoska, 2006), and the pre-conflict state structure determined the political context in which conflict arose. A successful transformation of the state structure can be the basis for a political context which differs from the previous context. This context transformation, can then be an instrument to prevent the reoccurrence of conflict. The challenge is to transform the state structure and exclude the aspects that caused conflict (ICGWtPC, 2012).

The risk that pre-conflict structures are reintroduced can be increased by the appointment of political leaders. In regions where state building is in progress often a political vacuum exists. In some cases this vacuum is partially and temporarily filled by a United Nation (UN) mission (Call, 2008). The UN work on the basis of a region specific long term mandate and multifunctional visions and intent to contribute to increasing and durable governance capacity (Paris and Sisk, 2007). The temporally filling of a political vacuum often takes place in cooperation with national political leaders. Due to the political vacuum these political leaders are not democratically elected. The appointment of these leaders often takes place based on the pre-conflict political climate. This causes two risks: first, the recreation of the pre-conflict political context, and second, the creation of a political context in which the political leaders are not a proper reflection of the political climate that prevails (Paris and Sisk, 2007, pp.4-6).

This second risk element, can also create a situation in which dissatisfaction prevails amongst the communities who do not feel represented by political leaders. This risk often exists in post-conflict regions where there are minority groups.

An additional democratisation difficulty is explored by Barnes (2001, pp.88), who argues that *"...democratization itself may destabilize a society, at least in the short run."* He states that in case former (political) elite feels threatened by democratic and political change they might use *"...ethnic sentiment or use ethnic violence to retain power."* (Barnes, 2001, pp.88). A satisfactory position in the newly found democracy and thus political order for this elite is a way to prevent the use of ethnic sentiment and violence.

The replacement of the political elite in this manner not only creates the risk that the pre-conflict political structure is being rebuild but also causes possible legitimacy problems.

The legitimate and effective construction of government institutions on national, regional, and local level is crucial to create the conditions for sustainable peacebuilding (Paris and Sisk, 2007). A legitimate government exercises state power in a way that is perceived as fair and in the interest of the nation as a whole by important segments of the society (Francois and Sud, 2006, pp.147). According to Brinkerhoff (2005, pp.5) reconstituting legitimacy involves participation and inclusiveness. Similarly, Call (2008, pp.71) argues that *"...when national or local leaders cater to foreign pressures and interests, they often lose legitimacy."*

In the case of political leaders that are not an appropriate reflection of the prevailing political climate, it is unlikely state power will be exercised in a way that is perceived as fair, and in the interest of the community. This may cause a political context with which the communities cannot

conform. Conformation with the political context in which the newly found government operates is essential to create support for the democratic transformation process in a post-conflict region.

As stated in the introduction of this paragraph, domestic power sharing helps determine the political context. The extent to which communities feel involved in the decision making process, is the main determining factor for their government support. An instrument to increase the political involvement of the communities is decentralisation, and a decentralised political system can contribute to the support for the democratic transformation in a post-conflict context (Pouligny, 2000, pp.25). It is hoped that decentralisation brings government closer to the people, leading to growing support and increased legitimacy of the government. The process leading to decentralisation requires community participation and inclusiveness.

However, participation and inclusiveness can have undesired side effects. A problem that may occur involves the previously existing governance structures. Many regions that suffered from ethnic conflict have an ancient history of ethnic dominance, and/or inequality (Simonsen, 2005). Participation and inclusiveness based on old structures can lead to a situation in which the pre-conflict context is being rebuilt. This can happen when old structures promote social, ethnic, and/or economic exclusion and inequalities (Brinkerhoff, 2005, pp.11).

To prevent the recreation of the pre-conflict political context and instead contribute to sustainable development common objectives can be helpful. Common objectives are needed between the international interveners and the conflict torn society regarding the democracy process. A wide range of aspects can induce difficulties when trying to reach consensus: coordination and coherence, local ownership, capacity building, legitimacy, dependency, accountability, and exits and transfers (Paris and Sisk, 2007). These difficulties are caused by different views and preferences. These differences can create a situation in which local manners and habits contradict the manners and habits that are internationally accepted as standard; a situation that will make it even more complicated to reach consensus. These value and opinion differences can be managed by means of participation (Paris and Sisk, 2007). Participation is not only important on the short term for stability but on the long term *"...stability seems to depend on groups having learned to transact with one another and perhaps having even developed new rules of conflict management on the basis of their interactions at the political center."* (Hartzell and Hoddie, 2003, pp.320)

Finally, the manner in which a state building process is primary initiated is very important, and this process can have major consequences for the political context in a post-conflict region. In addition to the issues raised in this paragraph above, the primary initiation seems to have a decisive role in many

contemporary peacebuilding processes. Post-conflict development by means of a democratic state building process aims to contribute to the reconstruction of the physical, financial, economic, technical, organisational, political, and social systems (UNDP, 2010, pp.6). The legitimate and effective construction of state institutions can provide a context in which differences can be accommodated and managed in a non-violent and political way (Wolff, 2010, pp.129). Institutions are *"...rules that, in addition to defining how decisions will be made by groups within the polity, allocate decision-making rights, including access to state resources, among collectives competing for power"* (Hartzell and Hoddie, 2003, pp.319). These state institutions ensure that *"...sustainability does not depend on any single individual, but on shared commitment to the principles, procedures and goals of the institution"* (Call, 2008, pp.67). Democratic institutions like this can create a political context in which decisions are made through consensus (ICGWtPC, 2012).

Here a major contradiction is visible: the T-D approached democracy implementation by the UN and the political leaders is anything but democratic. There is no consensus and majority vote preceded, but decisions are made unilateral. Curiously enough, this is international intervention that facilitates self-governance by instructing how to govern.

3.2 Community Building

This paragraph gives an overview of the concept of community building. The objective of community building, and the intended contribution of community building to sustainable post-conflict developments are described.

The origins of community building is part of the critique against the centralised T-D approached post-conflict developments (Easterly, 2008). Overall objective of community building is the nonphysical (re)construction after a conflict (Burde, 2004). It is important to overcome the contradictions that caused the conflict when nonphysical (re)construction is taking place. The role of the community in divided societies is *"...indispensable for the long term sustainability of peace processes."* (Belloni, 2001, pp.163).

The implementation of a nonphysical (re)construction that contributes to sustainable peace, is the most relevant to this thesis. The theory of change makes clear what the desired changes are. Furthermore, it describes the process through which change will occur and shows how the intermediate outcomes contribute to the desired long term change (Anderson, 2004). Shapiro (2006, pp.2-5) notes the following nonphysical aspects that need and can be changed: perceptions and behaviours of individuals, inter-group relations, and social structures.

Community builders aim to transform a community by means of changing perceptions and behaviours of individuals, inter-group relations, and social structures. Many post-conflict regions are characterised by a divided community. A divided community can be the cause, effect or both of the previous conflict. Community building aims to eliminate the community division. General belief is that the elimination of the community division will substantially contribute to sustainable post-conflict development and thus the creation of a non-violent living environment (Shapiro, 2006, pp.4).

CBM is an organisation that intends to address the behaviours of individuals, inter-group relations, and social structures by the implementation of many different community building activities. Examples of community building activities in practice are described and analysed in detail in chapter 6.

Essential for a successful community building process is broad support within the concerning community, as this promotes the likelihood of participating community members. Without a participating community the building process is doomed to fail. Participation can contribute to the realisation of an informed, politically aware, and a responsible community (Belloni, 2001, pp.163). The intention of informing divided communities is to create mutual understanding. Mutual understanding can arise by informing communities/community members about the motives of the 'other' community/community members, and assists in reducing levels of distrust. According to Lederach (2003) individuals are both negatively and positively influenced by conflict. Lederach (2003) notes that the influence "*...includes the cognitive, emotional, perceptual, and spiritual aspects of human experience over the course of conflict.*" Before, during and after conflict experiences can affect individuals. The events that were/are experienced determine whether the influence is negative or positive. What is often seen in (post) conflict regions, is that the 'other community' is always viewed negatively. Community building aims to minimise these negative thoughts, giving opportunity to the establishment of mutual understanding, and gradually minimising these negative thoughts. Community building activities aim to create a context in which participants are given the possibility to view the conflict situation from the opposite perspective. This can be the first step towards a community transformation, as mutual understanding begins to adjust perceptions and behaviours of individuals (Lederach, 2003).

A continuing community building process can also address the intergroup relations. To change intergroup relations, establishing communication between the (former) divided communities is necessary. This process can lead to an improvement of poorly functioning communication and in the meanwhile strengthen the mutual understanding (Lederach, 2003). The essence of

communication is emphasised by Vrebensky (2009) who argues that transparent and open interaction between the inhabitants of post-conflict regions is crucial for the realisation of sustainable developments and thus peace. Community building organisations such as CBM, are intent to organise activities in a safe and reliable environment for the participating divided communities. Such a context helps nurture the mutual understanding, and mutual communication between the divided communities in a post-conflict region.

The third aspect mentioned by Shapiro (2006, pp.2-5) is the transformation of social structures. Of interest to this thesis, is the social structure that addresses the relation between the social and political order. The objective of community building regarding the transformation of the relations between the political and social order (and thereby the social structures), is to organise community participation regarding the political decision making process. The primary aim is to achieve awareness among the community concerning their democratic rights. Initially this is about making the community aware about the fact that they have a voice concerning decision making processes. This form of participation has another benefit, namely the possibility to take advantage of local knowledge. Local knowledge is lost particularly in case of international interference to a great extent. Local knowledge can be very useful for the purposes of programming and implementing (Junne and Verkoren, 2005). According to Smithey (2008, pp.52) “...*non-prescriptive methods of analysing root causes and exploring mutually acceptable compromises involve...local people*”. This local knowledge can be the key aspect regarding the first element of the theory of change: what should be changed. Local communities are better placed to identify their shared needs and the activities that are necessary to meet them (Bigdon and Korf, 2002, Haider, 2009 and Pouligny, 2005). These participation processes can also create a form of community ownership, which can contribute to sustainable post-conflict developments (Haider, 2009, pp.4).

One of the objectives of community building is to enable self-determination, and that this is engaged in the contribution to sustainable post-conflict developments. A self-determining community should be able to introduce the theory of change in practice. However, the self-determined change can have limitations. The risk is that communities are rebuilt similarly to the pre-conflict situation, which is triggered by the often deeply rooted conflict causes in ethnic divided communities. To decrease the risk it is essential to exclude the roots that were the core of the conflict causes, and to overcome the reproduction of the pre-conflict context. Overcoming the reproduction of the context that caused previous conflicts requires the community to identify and recognise these concerns by themselves, and collectively undertake action. When this can be realised through community building in the

meanwhile common future interests can be produced. In this case the community building process facilitates the ability to identify and analyse problems, develop solutions, collect resources and realise the implementation (Lundy and McGovern, 2008). Pouligny (2005, pp.499) argues that the creation of a common view (for example regarding future interests) is not only unrealistic but undesirable as well. First, she argues that this is unrealistic because of the post-war period context, and second, she states that this would reduce the main characteristics and richness of any society namely its diversity. Despite the logical reasoning I would argue that dialogue between divided communities is necessary. If community building can be achieved based on dialogue between divided communities it is plausible that these involved communities will contribute in maintaining the redesigned community. This form of shared commitment will increase the sustainability of (community) developments.

As mentioned in the introduction of this section, the origin of community building is part of the critiques against T-D approached post-conflict developments. However, looking at the establishment of CBM and other NGO's that are related to community building this can be questioned. Many of these so called local organisations are established, or at least in the beginning assisted by external organisations. It is plausible that these external organisations were influential regarding the stated objectives. This means that these objectives are (partly) external determined (Stubbs, 2006). This does not mean that by definition the stated objectives do not correspond with the locally desired objectives. Nevertheless, this can mean that in some occasions the framework in which a community building organisation operates creates limitations. Limitations can occur if locally desired community building activities do not fit within the (partly) externally designed framework.

Something comparable can be seen regarding the funding of community building projects. The funding of projects is often accompanied by a framework that (partly) determines the spending of funds. The process that precedes the financial support shows how limitations can occur, and usually external funds are made available following an approved project proposal. These project proposals are reviewed by the organisations that provide the funds, and the approval of project proposals is based on the framework of the external organisation. This more or less means that in this case the external organisation determines which community building developments are desired and/or necessary in the concerning post-conflict region (Stubbs, 2006). Due to this, in practice it can happen that a local organisation implements activities that do not fully correspond with the local needs and desires. A reason for local organisations to implement activities like these is that otherwise there would be no funding at all, and this would mean that local community builders become inactive or even unemployed, with community transformation stagnating.

3.3 Hypothesis

In this final section, a brief overview is given of the previous described theories and it is concluded with the establishment of a hypothesis.

The origin of a post-conflict political context is determined by the manner in which domestic power sharing and governance is/will function(ing) and the way it is perceived by the communities.

Domestic power sharing and governance are basically determined by a state building process, and the implementation of a democratic state building process is internationally seen as the core aspect of a peacebuilding process.

Nevertheless, it turned out that democratic transformations are not always without risks: especially the risk that pre-conflict structures are rebuilt. The reconstruction of the pre-conflict structures increases the likelihood of conflict reoccurring. In this case a political context is being constructed that is similar to the pre-conflict political context. Various causes can contribute to this similar construction.

The appointment of political leaders who are not a proper reflection of the political climate that prevails is seen as a possible cause. Furthermore, a risk can occur if the formation of political parties is based on the same characteristics that determined the pre-conflict distinction. Equal to the pre-conflict context, a threat is that parties will not be able to manage contradictions in a non-violent manner.

Another aspect that can have a major impact with respect to the construction of the political context is a lack of governance legitimacy. In effect, a lack of legitimacy means former conflicting communities cannot confirm themselves with the new governing bodies. This can create a situation in which one or more of the conflicting communities reject the prevailing political climate.

The overall aim of community building is the nonphysical (re)construction after a conflict. The objectives of community building are a transformation of perceptions and behaviours of individuals, inter-group relations, and social structures. The core aspect of community building is the abolition of the community division. An important community building mechanism is participation, through which the objectives of community building can be addressed. Without sufficient community participation community building is probably unrealisable.

Community building activities are supposed to be initiated and implemented from within or at least in cooperation with the local community. The idea is that a transformation that has broad support within the community will be more sustainable than an externally driven transformation.

There are doubts as to the extent to which community building organisations are able to operate independently, particularly when facing difficulties regarding the supposed initiation and implementation from within, or at least with the local community. This is especially the case when locally desired objectives do not correspond with the objectives set by donors and in some cases influential support organisations.

The remainder of this thesis focuses on a selected case study. Based on the theories discussed, the following hypothesis is drawn:

If a post-conflict political context does not dissociate from the pre-conflict context, then the extent to which the political context determines successful community building will be decisively negative.

This hypothesis will be the starting point for the research question in the final concluding chapter. The following chapter is an introduction to the case study.

4. Mitrovica, Kosovo

In this chapter a general profile of Kosovo, Mitrovica and CBM are described.

4.1 Kosovo

Kosovo is part of the Western Balkans in Central Europe. Below, the left-hand map shows Kosovo in relation to other fragments of the former Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia and Europe. The right-hand map shows the current boundaries of Kosovo and its neighboring countries.



(Figure I, Reprinted from [US Central Intelligence Agency] [2012]. Copyright 1992-2013 by Circlist. Retrieved from <http://www.circlist.com/rites/kosovo.html>)

Since the end of the Second World War until 1999, Kosovo was a province of the former Yugoslavia. After Yugoslavia's communistic leader Tito died, the situation in former Yugoslavia changed rapidly. In all possible levels of society radical changes took place. Many conflicts occurred all over the formerly autocratic ruled Yugoslavia. Part of the settlement that was agreed in 1995, stated that Kosovo remained a province of Serbian territory. After the end of the Balkan war in 1995, the ongoing tense situation in Kosovo eventually led to violent conflict in 1999. Step by step the Albanian community living in Kosovo lost their autonomy. Official employment possibilities decreased and in other sectors the Albanian community got excluded as well. The Albanian community reacted with the founding of parallel institutions and the creation of their own economy. This led to a situation in

which the communities lived completely separated. Nevertheless the tensions continued and even grew. The Albanians had established the Kosovo Liberation Army (KLA). By means of attacks against Serbian forces and the Serbian community they fought against the suppression of the Albanian community by the Serbian regime. The tensions between Serbians and Albanians living in Kosovo steadily increased, leading eventually to violent conflict between the Serbian military forces and the KLA. Whilst bearing the horrific events during the Balkan war in the beginning of the 90s, the international community felt compelled to intervene. By means of (NATO led) airstrikes, directed against the Serbian military forces and the Serbian regime through strategic bombings, Kosovo was 'liberated' after 89 days (Judah, 2008). After the 'liberation' Kosovo was supervised by the international community (Aliuh, 2012). In the following decade numerous developments took place that brought Kosovo closer towards independency.

On February 17th in 2008, Kosovo unilaterally declared its independency, this marked the end of nine years of unresolved status since the end of the war in 1999. Since the unilateral independence declaration, a gradual transition is taking place with the aim to found an independent multi-ethnic democratic state. From the beginning until today this process is characterised by trial and error.

Today, Kosovo has around two million inhabitants. Besides the Albanian majority (90%) there are living Serbs (5%), Turks, Bosniaks, Gorani and Roma, Ashkali, and Egyptians (together the remaining 5%). Current tensions exist mainly between the Islamic Albanian majority and the Orthodox Serbian minority. The majority of the tens of thousands Serbians are living in North Kosovo (Judah, 2008).

By January 1st, 2013, 98 countries recognised Kosovo's independency. Among these countries are 22 of the 27 European Union (EU) member states and the United States (US). Cyprus, Romania, Spain, Slovakia, and Greece are the five EU members that do not recognise Kosovo's independent status. The UN Security Council members China and Russia neither support the independency declaration of Kosovo (kosovothanksyou.com). Serbia not only rejects Kosovo's independency: it stated in its constitution that it will never accept Kosovo's independency (Ristic, 2012).

4.2 Mitrovica

Mitrovica is located in the North of Kosovo, with a population of around 100.000. The city is geographically divided by the Ibar River, into a Northern and Southern part, then also with a strong ethnic division as well. Approximately 70.000 people are living in the southern municipality. Besides the Albanian majority there are also around 2000 Turks, 470 Bosniaks, 470 Ashkali, 100 Roma and 2

Serbs. The northern municipality has approximately 30.000 inhabitants. Besides the Serbian majority there are living around 4900 Albanians, 1000 Bosniaks, 580 Gorani, 210 Turks, 200 Roma and 40 Ashkali (OSCE, 2011).

Despite frantic efforts of many institutions, organisations, and individuals the ethnic division is still intact. Since 1999, all sorts of developments took place aiming to bridge the divide between the communities that are living in Mitrovica. All sorts of successes and failures have surfaced. Three key events without doubt had a profound effect on the living situation in Mitrovica during the last decade. Many post-conflict developments were suddenly offset by these events. Even today, the influence is still (in)visible present in Mitrovica.

In 2004, three Albanian children drowned in the Ibar River. Within hours rumours were spread that the children drowned after being chased by Serbians. The same day this led to protests that ended in days of violent confrontations between Serbians and Albanians. Close to ten people were killed and more than 300 injured. Serbians living in the South and Albanians living in the North were displaced and their properties destroyed. The KFOR (the international peacekeeping force) was not able to prevent the violent clashes and could not protect personal and community property. After weeks, peace returned, but the mutual bond was relentlessly damaged and the separation between the communities worsened.¹

Kosovo unilateral declared independency in 2008. This unilateral declaration caused a situation in which the Serbian community in Kosovo felt extremely excluded. Their fear to be excluded from the decision making processes became reality. The following protests remained free from serious violence but the political positions of many Serbians hardened. Among others this is shown in the boycott of elections. The majority of Serbs refused to vote for national and municipal elections to show their dissatisfaction with the independent status of Kosovo. They argue that voting for these institutions would mean the recognition of the independent status of Kosovo.

On July 25th 2011, events took place that till today, have enormous impact on the livelihood in Mitrovica. An attempt by the Kosovo police forces to take over border control (between Kosovo and Serbia) led to serious riots. The Serb minority set up road blocks and barricades in North Kosovo in order to decrease Kosovo government control over the region. This again led to the intensification of the separation between the North and South. This is further emphasised by the barricade on the main bridge in the city centre. The barricade made it impossible to cross the bridge other than by

¹ Interview with M-Magazine coordinator F. Kumnova, June 11th 2012.

foot. The KFOR is on top of that conspicuously present at the foot of the bridge in the South to control the situation.²

This is the post-conflict situation that shaped the political context in which international organisations and local civil society organisations, continuously attempted to decrease tensions, and rebuild the community in Mitrovica torn by ethnic differences. The research conducted on behalf of this thesis was executed in cooperation with one of these local civil society organisations.

4.3 Community Building Mitrovica (CBM)

CBM is a local civil society organisation operating in Mitrovica and surroundings. The organisation was initiated by the Interchurch Peace Council (IKV) from the Netherlands in March 2001. In the beginning of 2003, CBM officially registered as a Kosovar Civil Society Organisation (CSO). The main office is located at the foot of the main bridge in the Southern part of the city in the so called Confidence Area. There is also a small office located in North Mitrovica. The staff of CBM (+/- ten employees) consists of both Serbian and Albanian citizens that grew up in the region. The overall aim of CBM is *“...to facilitate contact and dialogue between citizens in the whole of Mitrovica municipality.”* (CBM, 2012). The intention of CBM is to support projects that directly address the needs of the local community. CBM is active in the fields of media, culture, youth, women, minorities, dialogue, and the return of internally displaced persons (IDPs). Depending on the project CBM cooperates with other NGO's, local governmental institutions, and international organisations. CBM initiates and implement community building activities based on the following:

- *“Vision of CMB: Mitrovica a safe, diverse place where accountable institutions, civil society and active citizens appreciate differences in a democratic culture.*
- *Mission of CBM: CBM is an interethnic grassroots organisation that identifies, encourages and facilitates joint actions of citizens in the Mitrovica region in order to promote cooperation, co-existence and democratic values.”* (CBM, 2011)

The community building activities and results determine the actual content of the vision and mission. Without sufficient and sustainable achievements the vision and mission are an empty shell. In chapter six the contribution of CBM to sustainable post-conflict development is further examined.

² Interview with D. Beisiegel, Acting Regional Representative of UNMIK, May 11th 2012 and CBM Executive Director A. Sylaj, July 21st 2012.

The intention of CBM is to implement project activities that satisfy the needs of the communities in Mitrovica and surroundings. However, the freedom of project choice is not unlimited due to its funding dependency. To be able to start-up a project and implement the necessary activities, external funding is essential. Since CBM does not have the financial ability here for itself, this can create tensions between the possibilities and the actual community needs. As became clear during a debate (in Mitrovica in the summer of 2012) that was visited by community members active for civil society organisations in Mitrovica external funding often is accompanied by guidelines regarding the project goals and implementation. Nevertheless, CBM intends to find herein a compromise that satisfies the needs of the communities in Mitrovica and surroundings optimally.

The projects that are initiated by CBM (with or without external assistance and/or guidelines) are centred on the mentioned field's media, youth, women, minorities, dialogue, and the return of IDP's. In the first phase a project proposal is drawn that in the following phase becomes the basis of the project plan. An approved proposal (and thus funding) marks the start of a project. The project plan describes the process that is supposed to lead to the achievement of the project goal(s). The first step that takes place in which the community is involved aims to find potential participants. One or more Albanian and one or more Serbian employees are leading this process. Their intention is to find people in their own community to participate. Once the number of participants is sufficient the project activities start. During the project activities the intention is to bring members of the Albanian and Serbian community together. The phase within the project at which the communities are brought together differs. In some occasions this can be at the very beginning of a project and in other cases this can take up to the final phase. A project is closed by means of an internal evaluation. From here lessons are learned and if desirable a follow-up project can be commenced or proposed.

By bringing people from different communities together CBM aims to normalise the relations between the different communities. By means of the different project activities, CBM initiates interaction between the communities. Following the formal objectives of CBM and my personal attendance and cooperation with CBM, I conclude that in practice there are three main objectives.

First, in the case of adult participants, interaction can lead to mutual understanding and thereby decrease incomprehension. Mutual understanding regarding the situation one is in, and the way one reacts as a consequence of this situation.

Second, for both adult and youth participants cooperation between the different communities can give insight in common needs and interests. Being aware of these common needs

and interests creates the opportunity for CBM to design project proposals based on these common needs and interests. The idea is (and previous projects showed) that cooperation in the interest of fulfilling these common needs and interests can increase the bond between members of the different communities. This in turn will also contribute to the first and third objective.

Third, in the case of youth participants, projects aim to create friendship. It is supposed that young people are less influenced by historical events. Due to this, the image youth has of the other community is less negative. This makes it easier to bring youth from different communities together. Lasting (sustainable) friendships (of which there are some examples) will be able to contribute to the further expanding of sustainable community building today and in the future.

An aspect that applies in all the three cases is that CBM hopes that the active participants will spread a positive message concerning community building in (a part of) their own community. The expectation here, is that a more positive/less negative image will be created within the different communities regarding members of the other community.

Four projects implemented by CBM are analysed in chapter 6, and these explain in detail the functioning of the process described above.

Prior to this is in the following chapter the political context in Kosovo and Mitrovica analysed.

5. The Political Context

This chapter consists of a description of the political context in Kosovo and specifically Mitrovica. Paragraph 5.1 describes the political context at the national level. In paragraph 5.2 the political context of Mitrovica is analysed. Both these paragraphs are closed with a conclusion.

In paragraph 5.2 a distinction has been made between the political contexts in North and South Mitrovica. This distinction will give insight in the differences between the political contexts in which community building projects are parallelly executed.

The political context analysis is based upon the existing (local) government policies, and the way these are implemented and function. In addition, the way the implementation and functioning is perceived by the communities has been studied, and the research results are analysed within the theoretical framework included in this thesis as chapter 3.

5.1 The Political Context at National Level

Since the end of the war in 1999 until today, the political context of Kosovo has been shaped by several international organisations and the national government. When the war ended in 1999, Kosovo was placed under temporary UN administration. Kosovo was ruled by the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo (hereafter UNMIK) until 2008 (Judah, 2008). February 17 2008, the assembly of Kosovo unilaterally declared Kosovo independent. Independent Kosovo stayed supervised by UNMIK until September 2012, however the end of the supervision did not mean the end of UNMIK's presence in Kosovo (UNMIK, 2012).

Besides UNMIK, the European Union Rule of Law Mission in Kosovo (hereafter EULEX) and the Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe (hereafter OSCE) were active to support the democratisation process in Kosovo.

When describing the political context at the national level, a distinction has been made between the role of the national government and the international organisations.

5.1.1 The National Government of the Republic of Kosovo

The national government is based in Pristina: the capital of Kosovo. The public administration exists of seventeen ministries (see appendix V). UNMIK and the national government approved a document for the reformation regarding local governance and decentralisation in 2005. The objective of this was to create policies, establish new municipalities, and implement the process of

decentralisation. There are 37+1 municipalities in Kosovo at the time of writing. There are no other government levels between the national and municipal level (balkananalysis.com, 2010). As mentioned in the introduction, in Mitrovica the municipality is divided into the Serbian led northern municipality and the Albanian led southern municipality (hence, the +1 symbol).

The implementation of the decentralisation policy is a focal point of the national government. The decentralisation policy is implemented under the direction of the Inter-ministerial Group for Decentralization (IGD). The objectives of the Inter-ministerial Group are: the reformation of legislation for self-government, the establishment of new municipalities, transfers of competencies and resources, and the raising and development of municipal capacities. Guided by these objectives, and to become an effective and well-functioning local government there are five criteria's each municipality should meet:

- 1) Clearly defined administrative borders;
- 2) A democratic election system that contributes to legitimate institutions;
- 3) Responsibilities and competencies that are defined and guaranteed by law;
- 4) Sufficient financial sources and financial autonomy to meet its responsibilities;
- 5) Human and administrative capacities to be able to exercise its responsibilities and provide sufficient service to their citizens (State Portal of the Republic of Kosova, 2009).

The objective of the decentralisation policy in Kosovo is to create support among the population for the democratic transition. Growing support increases the governments' legitimacy. However, the decentralisation process in Kosovo led to institutional partition in the North. Based on the region's ancient history the Serbian minority in Kosovo feared ethnic dominance and inequality in the supposed decentralised institutional context. As a reaction they hold onto their previous (Serbian ruled) institutions, and because of that parallel institutions have being founded (Judah, 2008 and ICGWtPC, 2012). Therefore from the Serbian perspective the opposite has happened, and the national governments' legitimacy decreased. It is clear that the criteria for stable local government are not being met. In particular the first two criteria are not met as a counter effect of the decentralisation policy of the national government. It is almost impossible to achieve the other criteria without sufficient realisation of the first two.

5.1.2 The International Organisations

The UN, OSCE, and EULEX have an important role regarding state building in Kosovo. The attendance of these organisations points out that the international community acknowledged the importance of state building as part of a comprehensive post-conflict development approach. For the

national actors in a post-conflict society, it is almost impossible to reach consensus: one will always favour over the other. Especially in ethnic divided societies such as in Kosovo, where only international organisations are able to operate neutrally and mediate to establish consensus (Call, 2008, pp.63).

The Special Representative of the UN is responsible for a coordinated approach by the international civil presence, this is with regard to the implementation of activities under the United Nations Security Council resolution 1244.

5.1.2.1 The United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK)

UNMIK is mandated to help ensure conditions for a peaceful and normal life for all inhabitants of Kosovo and advance regional stability in the western Balkans. In total UNMIK has a staff of 418, of which 236 are local. UNMIK cooperates with several other UN agencies (see appendix VI) that are stationed and active in Kosovo. Together with these agencies UNMIK assists Kosovo's communities and engages with the authorities in Pristina and Belgrade (Serbia). Another activity is engaging with regional and international actors in Kosovo. A key aspect of UNMIK is to facilitate participation by the Kosovo institutions in regional multilateral meetings. To decrease tensions and the number of incidents that highlight the strong potential for instability UNMIK addresses issues causing friction between the communities. Especially in North Kosovo inter-ethnic relations were marked by tensions and incidents. The main task in the Northern region is to engage and mediate between the communities and serve as a bridge between this region and the authorities in Pristina (UNMIK, 2012).

In accordance with its mandate, UNMIK operates as a neutral institution in the ethnic divided Kosovar society. This neutrality is expected to assist mediation between the ethnicities and establish consensus. However, participatory observation has shown that the implementation of consensus based policies turns out to be extremely difficult. Every act of UNMIK is critically taken into account by the ethnicities. Due to the deep rooted mutual distrust and a lack of trust in any authority the different ethnicities always fear to be disadvantaged. In practice this led to a situation in which UNMIK is trying to preserve its neutral status above all else, and because of defensive stance is hardly able to initiate and support institutional development.

5.1.2.2 The European Union Rule of Law Mission in Kosovo (EULEX)

EULEX became fully operational in Kosovo in April 2009. The objective of EULEX is to assist and support the authorities in Kosovo in the rule of law area, specifically in the police, judiciary, and

customs areas. The mission is technical in nature and consists of monitoring, mentoring, and advising. Over 2000 international staff members and more than 1000 local staff members are employed by EULEX. The main task of EULEX is to assist the Kosovo authorities, judicial authorities and law enforcement agencies in their attempts to realise sustainability and accountability. The intention is to contribute to the development and strengthening of an independent, multi-ethnic justice system, and a multi-ethnic police and customs service. It is ensured that these institutions are free from political interference and function to internationally recognised standards (EULEX, 2012).

A functioning legal system is indispensable for a legitimate democracy. This is even more necessary in post-conflict and fragile regions where justice needs to be seen in practise. The contribution to the development of a sustainable legal system in Kosovo by EULEX is hampered through a lack of its own legitimacy. In all parts of the community in Kosovo complaints can be heard regarding the role of EULEX. This became clear in the streets as well as during several conversations I have had in Mitrovica and surroundings.³ Doubts are raised as to the overall functioning of EULEX and especially regarding their neutrality. Officially EULEX has a neutral status because of the disagreement in the EU regarding the recognition of the independency declaration of Kosovo. Among the different communities there are major concerns regarding this neutrality. This complicates the functioning of EULEX in Kosovo. Cooperation with the community often proved impossible. An example that clarifies these complications that EULEX faces is described in paragraph 5.2.3.

5.1.2.3 The Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE)

The OSCE intends to support democratic institutions and good governance, promotion of human and community rights, and improvement of security and public safety. These intentions are elaborated to nine objectives in OSCE's mandate (added as appendix VII).

The OSCE has 30 field teams active in five regions: Gjilan/Gnjilane, Mitrovica, Pejë/Pec, Pristina, and Prizren. In total there are 189 international staff members and 495 local staff members working on behalf of the OSCE mission in Kosovo. The main activity is maintaining contact with municipal institutions and the community in general. The field teams observe the daily activities of the municipalities. Through monitoring the municipal activities the OSCE tries to advise the municipalities regarding observed shortcomings: the determination of shortcomings is based on

³ In various public places in South and North Mitrovica anti EULEX slogans are/were visible. Conversations with Serbian and Albanian community members showed dissatisfaction with the functioning of EULEX in Kosovo, Mitrovica. Events in the summer of 2012 led to a situation that was no longer considered safe to live in for EULEX employees.

OSCE's good governance and human rights standards. The information that is gathered through the monitoring activities is also used for developing detailed municipal, regional, and national strategies and projects (OSCE, 2012). Regarding local governance (including the municipalities in Mitrovica) the OSCE has four mission priorities:

- Strengthening legislative oversight;
- Improving the quality of municipal legal acts;
- Supporting the local government reform process;
- Increasing public participation in decision making.

A comprehensive overview of these priorities is included as appendix VIII.

5.1.3 Conclusion

The biggest obstacle that Kosovo's fragile democracy faces is the non-recognition of independent Kosovo by its Serbian population and Serbia. The objective of the state building process in Kosovo was to include all the ethnicities living in Kosovo. The refusal of Serbian citizens to be part of the democratic system in Kosovo was characterised by the establishment of parallel governmental structures. In the South of Kosovo these Serbian parallel structures are disappearing step by step. By means of far-reaching decentralisation the Serbian population in the South found a way to keep their own identity and be part of the governing body in Pristina. Nevertheless, in the fields of education and healthcare the Serbian governing body in Belgrade still has a leading role in these Serbian dominated municipalities in the South of Kosovo (ICGWtPC, 2012 and Judah, 2008).

However, the improving situation can also be interpreted differently. The situation in South Kosovo led to an exodus of Kosovar Serbians (ICGWtPC, 2012). This is confirmed by the ICGWtPC (2012, pp.3) who notes that *"A decade ago, two thirds of Kosovo's Serbs lived south of the Ibar,...one third in the heavily Serb North. That north-south Serb balance has shifted toward parity."* This shows that democratic transformation of Kosovo is hampered by numerous obstacles.

Also important is the political standing of the Serb minority in Kosovo. The UN enforced a number of parliamentary seats for the Serbian minority no matter what the election outcomes would be (Judah, 2008). Formally this is an undemocratic determination. This procedure, in this specific case is understandable at the same time. It was an attempt by the international institutions to ensure participation of the Serbian minority at the national decision making level because of the possibility that the Serbian minority would boycott the from Serb point of view illegal elections.

5.2 The Political Context at Municipal Level

Paragraph 5.2 is divided into five parts. First, the political context in South Mitrovica is described. Second, the political context in North Mitrovica is described. Third, the role of EULEX is described. Fourth, the role of the OSCE at the municipal level is described, and finally a conclusion is given. Particular attention has been paid to the role the political context has for the daily living circumstances in Mitrovica.

5.2.1 South Mitrovica

The southern municipality, part of the governing body in Pristina, is the only governance that claims to be the legal representative of the community in South Mitrovica. The current assembly composition is based on the election results in May 2010. The assembly has 41 seats: 40 members are Albanian and one member is Turkish. There are fifteen female assembly members. The municipal administration is headed by the mayor and deputy mayor. The municipal administration consists of fourteen departments (see appendix IX) and their directors. The department budgets are provided by the national government (OSCE, 2011).

The current situation makes it impossible for the southern municipality to govern in the Northern part of Mitrovica. Partly because the northern municipality is seen as a parallel institution, and there is no direct cooperation between the southern and northern municipality. In the assembly meetings of the southern municipality there is no room to discuss the role of the northern municipality in Mitrovica.⁴ In case the southern municipality intends to exert influence in the Northern part of the municipality this strictly takes place through UAM (more on the functioning of UAM in paragraph 5.2.2.3). The UAM is financially supported by the national government in Pristina through the southern municipality, with its annual budget determined by the southern assembly.⁵ The assembly meetings have shown that the UAM budget is supposed to be spent on security, housing, and reconstruction projects on behalf of the Albanian citizens living in the Northern part of Mitrovica.⁶

⁴ Information derived from an available abstract of an interview with Peci, F., assembly member of the southern municipality.

⁵ Information derived from an available abstract of an interview with Citaku, Z., budget officer of the UAM and Kamberi, S., assembly member of the southern municipality.

⁶ Information derived from an available abstract of an interview with Peci, F., assembly member of the southern municipality.

In the Southern part of Mitrovica several developments are ongoing. Municipal initiatives led to the maintenance of diverse buildings by means of upgrading the streetscape. The improvement of the infrastructure is another important aspect of the municipality policy. One of the most important developments that was going on in the summer of 2012 was an upgrading of the water supply infrastructure. For over a decade the citizens of Mitrovica had to deal with an inadequate water supply, especially during the summer months when the water supply was insufficient for many hours every other day.⁷

The southern municipality has shown willingness to cooperate with CBM by accepting the invitation for future cooperation and add a CBM program officer to the official contact list. This ensures CBM of invitations for municipal activities, assembly meetings, and committee meetings.⁸ Hereby, CBM is able to see whether the southern municipality does or does not meet up with the five criteria of good local governance. CBM is now in the position to directly ask questions and place comments on behalf of the community in case the southern municipality does not meet or seems to fail the criteria.

This willingness of the southern municipality can be the first step of a process that leads to participation and inclusiveness. Participation and inclusiveness can be the instrument that creates the possibility for the local community to include their interests in municipal policies. Hereby, the legitimacy of the municipality will increase.

5.2.2 North Mitrovica

The disruptive administrative situation in North Kosovo led to two other public administrations being active in the North, besides the Serb run northern municipality. The two institutions are the UNMIK administration Mitrovica (UAM) and the Administrative Office of Northern Mitrovica (AONM). The UAM is mandated by the UN resolution 1244 and specifically put in place to govern throughout the Northern part of Mitrovica (UNMIK, 2012). The AONM replaced the Municipal Preparation Team (MPT) by the end of the summer of 2012. The former MPT was implemented as part of the Ahtisaari plan, formally the Comprehensive Proposal for the Kosovo Status Settlement (CSP). The CSP covers a wide range of aspects related to the status of Kosovo. The

⁷ The insufficient water supply for many years was mentioned several times during the interviews I held. Furthermore, I experienced the insufficient water supply during my three months stay in Mitrovica.

⁸ Information derived from an available abstract of an interview with Perini, M., assembly coordinator of the southern municipality.

plan was commissioned by the UN and designed by the United Nations Office of the Special Envoy for Kosovo. Due to disagreement between the UN Security Council members regarding the plan content it was never presented to the UN Security Council. Nevertheless, Pristina implemented a part of the plan by the establishment of the former MPT in North Mitrovica.

5.2.2.1 The northern municipality

The northern municipality is supported politically and financially by the Serbian government in Belgrade. The current assembly composition is based on the elections that were held in May 2010, with the municipal assembly in North Mitrovica having 30 seats. 29 members are Serbian and one is Kosovo Bosniak. Among the assembly members are several women. The municipal assembly has a chairperson and the chairperson's deputy. The municipal administration is headed by the municipal president and the deputy municipal president. The role of the municipal president is comparable with that of a mayor. There are seven departments (see appendix X) and department directors.

The department directors are not politically affiliated (OSCE, 2011). Due to this it is possible that the composition of the departments is not a proper reflection of the political climate that prevails in North Mitrovica. This can lead to a situation in which the political elite's interest prevails over the community interest. In response to various meetings and conversations in Mitrovica and surroundings, I suggest that among international and national civil society organisations it is suspected that a small group of people determines the atmosphere in North Mitrovica. And this is promoting a nationalistic atmosphere where there is no room for dialogue.⁹ In everyday life this is visible through reoccurring protests, which often serve to show dissatisfaction with all kind of cases that seem to strengthen the independency of Kosovo. I argue that it is doubtful whether the rigid and almost hostile attitude of the northern municipality towards the administrative institutions (which are part of independent Kosovo) and especially the southern municipality in South Mitrovica, is a correct reflection of what is happening in the society in North Mitrovica.¹⁰ It can safely be said that at

⁹ All the interviewees (that is to say including the Serbian interviewees) outlined this situation.

¹⁰ Serbian interviewees (CBM project officer monitoring the institutions in the North anonymous, July 19th 2012, Editor M-magazine in the North anonymous, July 30th 2012, CBM Finance Officer N. Nestorovic, July 21st 2012, and CRYM executive director T. Mihajlovic, July 27th 2012) explained that the protests are mainly visited by officials and their relatives of the northern municipality. These officials are not elected representatives and sometimes not even party related. It was mentioned that the protests are also an instrument to protect their own functions/employment.

least a part of the community shows a different attitude, that focuses more on finding solutions for the problems that make daily life harder.¹¹

The political agenda of the northern municipality was decisively influenced by the events in the summer of 2011. Since then the agenda is hijacked by security aspects. The available finances are spent on security issues, salaries of officials, and maintenance. The security issues created the requirement for border checkpoints between Serbia and Kosovo and the barricades that are spread throughout the North of Kosovo. Maintenance (including buildings and infrastructure) is only performed on a small scale and development investments are even rarer because of budget insufficiency.¹² This has created a grey streetscape over the years. In addition, the daily life is impeded by a failing electricity and water supply. A failing tax system contributes to the financial inadequacy of the northern municipality.

The current agenda in combination with the limited financial possibilities, leads to a diminished situation for the implementation of policies that focus on capacity building and other civilian participation linked aspects.¹³

According to the law applicable to the northern municipality there has to be at least one assembly meeting in three months. The meetings are supposed to be public. However, an invitation (to be approved by the municipality) is necessary. In practice it turned out to be almost impossible to attend meetings. The municipal motivation for this is often that topics that are being discussed are too sensitive to discuss in public. As an effect of the events in the summer of 2011 the municipality is no longer willing to cooperate with the NGO sector.¹⁴ This is particularly true for NGO's that are registered in Pristina, it is becoming very hard to achieve anything in the Northern part of Mitrovica. For NGO's that are registered with the government in Belgrade it is less difficult to implement

¹¹ Four Serbian interviewees (CBM project assistant in the North anonymous, June 6th 2012, CBM project officer monitoring the institutions in the North anonymous, July 19th 2012, CBM Finance Officer N. Nestorovic, July 21st 2012, and CRYM executive director T. Mihajlovic, July 27th 2012) as well as other community members with whom I had conversations presented a different attitude towards the (decentralised) governing body in Pristina. They indicated that they want an improvement of the current living circumstances. The administrative transformation which underlies this improvement is of minor importance.

¹² Information based on available abstracts of an interview with Kostic, R., public relations of the northern municipality and an interview with A. Gay, OSCE monitor officer in North Mitrovica, June 13th 2012.

¹³ See note 10.

¹⁴ Information based on available abstracts of an interview with Kostic, R., public relations of the northern municipality.

activities. The reason that NGO's registered in Pristina as well as international NGO's are not welcome in North Mitrovica, is on the assumption that these organisations support the independency of Kosovo. This makes these organisations look biased, unable to act neutrally, and likely to act on behalf of the Albanian majority and therefore against the Serbian minority living in Kosovo.¹⁵

An important obstacle in North Mitrovica is the fact that the northern municipality is part of the pre-conflict context. It is part of a political context in which Kosovo is a province of Serbia and is not independent. In this context it is hardly possible to achieve any sustainable progress. On different occasions the political elite became firmer in their political views. Supported by the small group of people that is supposed to determine the atmosphere in (North) Mitrovica it seems that these occasions grab the whole community. I experienced personally that even a minor demonstration (+/- 100 people) directly influences the daily life of (North) Mitrovica citizens. Especially the freedom of movement in the direct surroundings of the demonstrations decreases.¹⁶ These developments aggravate the ethnic division in Mitrovica.

5.2.2.2 The Municipal Preparation Team (MPT)/The Administrative Office of Northern Mitrovica (AONM)

The MPT was established for the purpose of the process that has to lead to local self-governance in North Mitrovica. The MPT has been replaced by the AONM in the summer of 2012. The office of the MPT was located in the city area called Bosniak Malhalla. This area at the foot of the second car bridge is seen as neutral. The AONM has taken a new office in use near Bosniak Malhalla in the Northern part of the city. The AONM can be seen as a renewed/elaborated version of the MPT and will be functioning under the umbrella of the national Ministry of Local Government Administration in Pristina. The establishment of seven departments (added as appendix XI) headed by a principal executive officer and deputy principal executive officer should lead to a new extended professionalism. From the beginning the departments will have a staff of 56 (M-magazine, 2012).

¹⁵ Interviews with CBM project officers F. Hajdari, July 11th 2012 and anonymous, July 19th 2012. Furthermore, this was argued during a debate with the topic 'public participation in decision making processes' that was visited by several community members active for civil society organisations in North and/or South Mitrovica that was held in North Mitrovica on June 21 in 2012.

¹⁶ In one occasion a demonstration prevented me from crossing the bridge and accompanying CBM colleagues in the summer of 2012. During demonstrations CBM employees choose not to cross the bridge.

Until now the MPT implemented several infrastructural projects in the Northern part of the city. They contributed to the realisation of sport facilities and a few other small scale projects. Another function of the former MPT and the current AONM is that of a registry office. The issuing of ID's, license plates, birth certificates, business registrations, and others is part of their daily activities. The registry office logically functions under the umbrella of the government in Pristina.¹⁷

Participatory observation has shown that this is determining the current functionality of the AONM.¹⁸ The AONM is, likewise the former MPT, seen as an instrument of the government in Pristina. Many Serbians argue that the AONM is put in place to strengthen the influence of the government in Pristina regarding all sorts of matters in North Kosovo. Hence, few Serbians take advantage of the services provided by the AONM.¹⁹ The legal status of the AONM is not recognised by the northern municipality nor is it recognised by the UNMIK.

The installation of the AONM in the summer of 2012 was coupled with a lot of application procedures. Different stories regarding these procedures were ongoing. First, the director of the MPT (who later became director of the AONM as well) announced that many Serb citizens of Mitrovica applied for diverse functions that were released as an effect of the installation of the new administration. Hereby she also argued the necessity and desirability of the new administration. On the other hand local news agencies²⁰ published that some Serbians that applied were threatened by other Serbians to prevent the AONM from being able to function sufficiently. The number of Serbians that applied stayed unclear: only unreliable and very divergent numbers were published or otherwise available.²¹

¹⁷ Interview with A. Hodzic, director of MPT/AONM, May 11th 2012.

¹⁸ During conversations with community members in North Kosovo it became clear that the MPT/OANM is seen as an instrument of the governing body in Pristina. Besides, during these conversation and the interviews with CBM employees it became clear that many community members are not aware of the services MPT/OANM has to offer. I personally regularly (more or less twice a week) passed the MPT/OANM offices. I have almost never seen any activities in or around the premises.

¹⁹ Interview with F. Hajdari, CBM project officer, July 11th 2012.

²⁰ During my stay I daily checked the website of M-Magazine. At that time they still broadcasted local news items daily.

²¹ Outside of the CBM offices I had almost daily contact with two Serbian colleagues. During these conversations they kept me informed concerning the ongoing events in North Mitrovica. Despite the valuable information they provided me with they neither were able to clarify the progress.

5.2.2.3 The UNMIK Administration Mitrovica (UAM)

The UNMIK does not recognise the northern municipality in North Mitrovica.²² The UAM was founded as an alternative to fulfil municipal tasks and prepare self-governance in North Mitrovica. The UAM is functioning on an interim basis since November 2007. At the moment there is uncertainty about the continued existence of the UAM. The UAM has eight departments (see appendix XII), 123 staff members, and an annual budget of 2.5 million euros that is provided by the national government of Kosovo. The eight member board was created in 2003 and had the following formation: six Serbs, one Kosovo Bosniak and one Albanian. The Board is supposed to provide advisory recommendations to the head of the UAM on the subject of authority and responsibility. Special attention is supposed to be given to the delivery of municipal services to non-majority communities (Ndiaye, 2011).

The functioning of the UAM is hampered by their interim status, with the term of UAM's functioning undetermined. Due to their status and the limited available budget the development and implementation of long term policies is not optional for the UAM. They focus on the daily needs of citizens and the provision of registry services.²³ Problems that are seen regarding these services is that they are taking place under the umbrella of the government in Pristina. This is for many Serbians in the North, a reason to neglect these services. They argue that using these services would mean recognition of the legitimacy of a governmental structure that is controlled by the governing body in Pristina, therefore they state that using these services would mean recognition of independent Kosovo.

It was noted that the implementation of a democratic system by means of an undemocratic intervention is rather doubtful. Something comparable was noted by the Acting Regional Representative of the UNMIK.²⁴ He states that the UNMIK intent to promote democratisation and civil society participation through an undemocratic institution like the UAM: for the fact that the UAM is not democratically installed. D. Beisiegel stated that the only 'legal' institution in the North is the northern municipality because it is installed based on election outcomes.

²² Interview with D. Beisiegel, Acting Regional Representative of UNMIK, May 11th 2012.

²³ Interview with A. Balaskas and T. Markovic, UAM Capacity Building and Programme Development, May 11th 2012.

²⁴ See note 22.

An internal audit report published in 2011 shows the difficulties the UAM is facing. To illustrate, two conclusions of this report are described. First, from January 2006 to December 2010 the Board was supposed to meet 60 times, but only 17 meetings took place in that period. Board members gave the reasons for not attending these meetings as salary arrears. Second, the Inspection Department of the UAM faces difficulties regarding enforcing construction standards and codes. This was caused by the fact that enforcing these standards and codes often results in tension in the region. In 2010, there were 118 cases of illegal construction out of which 28 cases had to be demolished, though none was actually demolished. The initiation of dialogue is the only instrument the UAM has to implement their policies (Ndiaye, 2011).

Participation is seen as an important instrument to involve the society in the decision making process, as participation can increase the legitimacy of governmental institutions. A condition for participation is administrative transparency. As mentioned before, the structure of the governing bodies is everything but clear in North Mitrovica. This becomes even more obvious looking at the tasks of UAM as described in paragraph 5.2.1. The southern municipality assumes that the provided budget is spent on security, housing, and reconstruction projects on behalf of the Albanian citizens living in the North. In the meanwhile, the actual UAM policies are aimed at developments that benefit the whole society. This lack of transparency makes it difficult for the community to participate and show commitment, because it is almost impossible to know what to expect and how to participate.

5.2.3 The Eulex at Municipal Level

The EULEX has enormous difficulties to function properly. Especially in the Northern part of Kosovo they encounter resistance. This makes it virtually impossible for the EULEX to execute their tasks sufficiently and in accordance with the community.²⁵

In an attempt to improve its position in the society, and thereby become better able to sufficiently meet their objectives a meeting was organised. During the meeting it became clear that the distrust among the community towards the EULEX is enormous.²⁶ The presumption of partiality

²⁵ See note 3.

²⁶ The meeting was held in North Mitrovica in July 2012. I have been able to attend the meeting personally. Besides three EULEX employees other guests were people involved in civil society organisations. This was the first time since the attendance of EULEX in Kosovo that a meeting between employees and people representing the community was organised in North Kosovo.

has caused a situation in which cooperation seems impossible, regardless of the subject or the role of ethnicity.

5.2.4 The OSCE at Municipal Level

Monitoring the municipalities is the main task of the OSCE field teams that are stationed in the Mitrovica region. One monitoring team is active in the South and one in the North. Each monitoring team has three members: two local employees and one international employee. The monitoring includes the following aspects: attending (parallel) municipal assembly meetings (in the North OSCE's presence is accepted after years of overtures), media monitoring, informal meetings with assembly members/officials, contact with the civil society, and participation in the UAM meetings.²⁷

In the South, the monitoring activities are running efficiently. The transparency in the southern municipality is acceptable and workable for the OSCE monitoring team.²⁸ Occasionally meetings take place where OSCE monitoring team members advise and discuss relevant topics with the concerning officials.

In the North, the OSCE monitoring team is facing difficulties. These difficulties are caused by the informal advisory role regarding good governance of the northern municipality. This makes it very hard to contribute to necessary process changes on behalf of good governance. This is caused by OSCE's guideline that is based on the 1244 UN resolution. This resolution states that the northern municipality is invalid. The implementation of projects contributing to the overall aim of the OSCE is hampered by accordance to their policy invalidity of the northern municipality. Other than in the rest of Kosovo the northern municipality is not a partner/participant in the by OSCE supported projects.²⁹

The implementation of projects without the northern municipality as participant negatively affects the sustainability.³⁰ There is a lack of common supporting objectives that aim to prevent the

²⁷ Interview with A. Gay, OSCE monitor officer in North Mitrovica, June 13th 2012.

²⁸ Information is derived from an abstract available of an interview with Fraccaro, P. and Karakashi, F., senior democratisation officers of the OSCE.

²⁹ See note 27.

³⁰ Following the interviews, conversations, and personal experiences I argue that the implementation of activities without direct involvement of the Serbian community, are experienced as external interference. Based on conversations with community members in North Mitrovica who were not active in the NGO sector I argue that this external interference is seen as an instrument of the governing body in Pristina to strengthen its position and influence in North Mitrovica. People indicated that they see the (institutional) interference as a

re-building of the pre-conflict context. Subsequently, the possibility to encourage sustainability by local initiative and participation regarding the implementation of a project is lost.

5.2.5 Conclusion

A clear difference can be seen between the political contexts in South and North Mitrovica, primarily the way that the state building process is perceived by the communities. The externally assisted state building process determines the way domestic power sharing takes place, and the interpretation of the governance administration. This process is perceived as desirable by the Albanian majority in South Mitrovica, whilst the same process is perceived as undesirable by the Serbian minority in North Mitrovica. The consequence is the existence of a cooperative and a non-cooperative community in the same city. This community discord has led to a situation in which Mitrovica is characterised by two almost opposite political contexts.

These contextual differences are aggravated by the ongoing administrative developments, which increase the differences between the contexts in North and South. The southern municipality (under the umbrella of the governing body in Pristina) can rely on a high (and increasing) degree of legitimacy. Despite attempts of the government in Pristina and international organisations, in the North the opposite process took place. The (parallel) northern municipality is the only governing body that has legitimacy among the Serbian community.

The democratic functioning of the southern municipality is improving, due to an increasing degree of transparency and public participation in the decision making process. These aspects ensure the increasing legitimacy of the southern municipality by the Albanian community.

In contrast, the attempts to increase control over North Kosovo (among others by the implementation of the MPT/AONM) led to an increasing legitimacy of the (parallel) northern municipality by the Serbian community.

The legitimacy of the southern municipality can largely be attributed to the fact that the Albanian community supports Kosovo's independency. The opposite situation in the North is primarily a consequence that the Serbian community does not support the independency of Kosovo. However, other developments have undeniably contributed to the current political context in North Mitrovica. This relates to the attempts of the national government in Pristina and the international organisations (UNMIK, OSCE, and especially EULEX) to increase administrative control in the

way to decrease Serbian control over the North, and that external interference without their permission/cooperation is counteracted.

Northern part of Mitrovica. These attempts led to the opposite, and thereby (if there has been any) a decrease of their legitimacy by the Serbian community.

The failed attempts to increase influence are to some extent the effect of the ignoring of the local circumstances in North Mitrovica. Despite repeated failed attempts (as an effect of local resistance), efforts to increase administrative control in North Mitrovica continued, with the Serbian community having no influence concerning these efforts. Based on this and the functioning of the international organisations (UNMIK, OSCE, and EULEX) it can be stated that in contrast to the situation in South Mitrovica, there is no question of transparency and public participation in the decision making process in North Mitrovica.

From a democratic perspective this is a most remarkable state of affairs. Legitimacy is essential to create a political context that is desirable for all concerned. Governance legitimacy can be created by involving the concerned communities regarding administrative matters and especially the decision making process. This can be accomplished through governance transparency and public participation in the decision making process. None of these aspects are reflected when examining the functioning of the MPT/AONM, UNMIK, OSCE, and EULEX in North Mitrovica.

The manner in which the current political context affects the communities differs. The Albanian community in South Mitrovica perceives the political climate as desirable. Whilst in North Mitrovica, the continuing attempts of the MPT/AONM, the UNMIK, the OSCE, and the EULEX to increase their administrative control has created a political context in which the Serbian community feels excluded. Therefore they conceive external interference as a possible threat for their self-determination. In response they adopted scepticism towards external influence, and in most cases refuse any cooperation with external organisations.

The following chapter analyses four community building projects that are simultaneously initiated, and implemented in the different political contexts described above.

6. Community Building

This chapter examines community building activities in Mitrovica. implemented by the local NGO Community Building Mitrovica (CBM). Four projects that are (partly) initiated and implemented by CBM are studied. All four are thoroughly studied by means of the ‘theory of change’. A theory of change as a guideline for community building outlines answers to the over-arching questions about what should be changed, how much change is needed, where change should start, when changes are most effective, and how change actually happens (Shapiro, 2006, pp.2).

In the sections 6.1, 6.2, 6.3, and 6.4 the projects are described in detail. First, the objectives of the projects are mentioned by means of answering the following questions: what should be changed?; how much change is needed?; where should change start?; and when are changes most effective?. The answers to these questions show how the different projects intent to contribute to the possible and necessary change of: perceptions and behaviours, intergroup relations, and social structures. Thereafter, the following question is taken into account to examine the implementation of the projects: how does change actually happens? The parallel execution of the projects is based on similar project proposals in the North and South of Mitrovica. Every project section will be closed with a review summary. On the basis of a schematic overview the objectives that were set, the actual achievements, the contribution to community building in Mitrovica, and possible causes in case of project outcome differences are described. The chapter closes with a summarizing conclusion.

6.1 My Mitrovica, My Decision

The objective of the project ‘My Mitrovica, My Decision’ as described in the project plan was to increase the political representation and participation, responsiveness and accountability through an informed dialogue between civil society and the institutions in Mitrovica. The aim has been to raise awareness among the community regarding the fact that they are entitled to be part of the decision making process. This project intends to contribute to the creation of a participating, informed, politically aware, and responsible community.³¹ These aspects are essential to realise functioning democratic institutions in Mitrovica. The identification of common needs which the municipality should meet has been another part of the project. By identifying the needs of the community, advantage is taken of local knowledge. As an effect of the international interference, local knowledge is lost to a great extent in Kosovo and thus Mitrovica. In the (near) future this local

³¹ Interviews with CBM monitoring project officers anonymous, July 19th 2012 and F. Hajdari, July 11th 2012.

knowledge can be very helpful regarding the implementation of diverse projects, activities, information sharing, and others.

The overall objective is to create a situation in which public participation in the decision making processes is regarded as normal by the community as well as by the institutions.³² The availability of information is an important aspect that can contribute to project success. On the one hand transparency and information provision by the municipalities, and on the other hand, the possibility for the community to have this information and be able to contact the municipality when there is the need. Information sharing can contribute to a transformation of the relation between the political order and the community. This can be the beginning of a situation in which transparent and open interaction between the former conflicting communities is normal, and continuously contributes to the prevention of the pre-conflict situation and thus sustainable peace.

Monitoring the institutions has been the instrument to achieve the objective during this one-year project. An Albanian CBM project officer had the task to monitor the institutions in the South and a Serbian CBM project officer had the task to monitor the institutions in the North. The monitoring took place in different ways: attendance of the assembly and other sorts of municipal meetings, media monitoring, and interviewing officials.

The extent to which the intended changes are successful depend on the degree to which sustainable transparency is achieved. The preferable situation shows openness of the municipal institutions and willingness of the community to approach these institutions when the situation is called for. These results can lead to a standard dialogue between the political order and the community that is able to determine common future interests. The identification and analysis of problems can be the first step that leads to the common development of solutions, gathering of resources, and finally the implementation of actual post-conflict developments.

6.1.1 My Mitrovica, My Decision in South Mitrovica

The monitoring that took place in the South was a continuation of former monitoring projects. During this project, specific attention has been paid to the role of the southern municipality regarding the Albanian population living in North Kosovo (including North Mitrovica). The project officer in the South had two main tasks: first, attending institutional meetings in South Mitrovica, and secondly to collect institutional policy documents regarding North Mitrovica. Most of the policy documents could be found on the municipal website or obtained from the municipality. Due to the years of interaction between CBM and the southern municipality it was not a problem for the project

³² Interviews with CBM monitoring project officers anonymous, July 19th 2012 and F. Hajdari, July 11th 2012 and CBM executive director A. Sylaj, July 25th 2012.

officer to attend municipal (assembly) meetings. Below, table 1 shows an overview of the (quantitative) project targets and results in the final phase of the monitoring project.³³

Table 1: (quantitative) project targets and results

Subject	Target	Result
Monitor and report on meetings of the Mitrovica south municipality	7	4
Monitor and report on meetings of Policy and Finances Committee of the southern municipality	7	5
Monitor and report on meetings of the MPT Mitrovica	30	2
Hold and report on meetings with stakeholders from the southern municipality, MPT, and international representatives	20-30	16

A summary of the policies of the southern municipality regarding the population in North Kosovo has been the input for a folder. This folder was still in progress in the autumn of 2012. The distribution of this folder among the population of Mitrovica was supposed to help increase the awareness of the population about the responsibilities the municipality is supposed to meet and the possibilities for the population itself to engage. Awareness was supposed to be raised about the possibility and rights to participate in the municipal decision making processes.³⁴

6.1.2 My Mitrovica, My Decision in North Mitrovica

Besides the overall objective, monitoring in the North also aims to visualise what the different institutions have to offer the community. At first the intention was to accomplish these objectives by collecting policy documents from the different municipal institutions and attend institutional (assembly) meetings in the North. Due to the circumstances in the North, media monitoring became an important monitoring instrument.³⁵

The political environment in North Mitrovica made it almost impossible to monitor the institutions through the attending of meetings. Despite regulations and attempts by the project officer it turned out to be impossible to attend assembly meetings of the northern municipality. After requests were rejected it was also made clear that future requests would not be appreciated.³⁶ During a meeting

³³ Interview with CBM project officer monitoring the institutions in the South F. Hajdari, July 11th 2012.

³⁴ See note 33.

³⁵ Interview with CBM project officer monitoring the institutions in the North anonymous, July 19th 2012.

³⁶ See note 35.

with officials of the UAM it remained very vague as to whether it would be possible to attend assembly meetings. In addition, it also seemed that either nobody was aware or not willing to share the exact moment of the meetings.³⁷ A similar situation showed in case of the MPT/AONM.³⁸ Below, table 2 shows the quantitative results of the attempts to get in contact with the institutions.³⁹

Table 2: (quantitative) project targets and results⁴⁰

Subject	Target	Result
Weekly media monitoring reports on the northern municipality and UAM	20	Unclear
Establish lower level contacts within the northern municipality	6	2
Connect to higher level representatives within UAM and the northern municipality	15	3

During the collection of policy documentation several obstacles were encountered. The UAM policy documentation was difficult to find despite the clear proclamation of UAM officials. The only document that has been found was an audit report of the UN.⁴¹ An official website with information about the different departments and their tasks and responsibilities could not be found regardless of the repeated communication of UAM officials that there was a website providing this information.⁴² The policy documentation used to monitor the northern institutions was originated from the Serbian government in Belgrade. This information consisted of the generally applicable policies for Serbian municipalities.⁴³ Despite attempts by the project officers and myself the policy documentation concerning the MPT/AONM was not found.

Media monitoring took place mainly by examining publications on the website of M-Magazine. This website i.a. publishes local political news and audio interviews with politicians.⁴⁴ There was a substantial proportion of information available through these media. However, the information lacked any form of depth. In my opinion the information was rather superficial and did

³⁷ Interview with A. Balaskas and T. Markovic, UAM Capacity Building and Programme Development, May 11th 2012.

³⁸ Interview with A. Hodzic, director of MPT/AONM, May 11th 2012.

³⁹ See note 35.

⁴⁰ The project targets in table 1 and table 2 differ because of the different institutional structures in North and South Mitrovica.

⁴¹ Ndiaye, F. (2011). *Final Audit Report*. United Nations Internal Audit Division, OIOS.

⁴² See note 37.

⁴³ Interview with CBM project officer monitoring the institutions in the North anonymous, July 19th 2012. Besides the interview this information is based on the three-month cooperation between myself and the interviewed.

⁴⁴ Interview with CBM project officer monitoring the institutions in the North anonymous, July 19th 2012.

not give noteworthy insights about the actual functioning of the municipal institutions on behalf of the community.⁴⁵

The project proposal suggested several other activities to monitor the institutions in the North. On the basis of two of these potential monitoring activities insight is provided in the project operation and progress.⁴⁶

One of the actions was to contact the OSCE and request for advice on capacity support. One of the OSCE contacts was a member of the OSCE monitoring team in the North. Years of attendance made that this team is regularly invited for assembly meetings in the North. Despite the commitment, the information the OSCE collected during these assembly meetings has never been forwarded.⁴⁷

The other activity was the organisation of a debate in North Mitrovica.⁴⁸ The debate on 'public participation in decision making at local level' was held on June 18. This was the first time a public debate focussing on the relation between the community and the municipal institutions took place in the North. The debate was visited by approximately 25 people. The majority of the participants were active for civil society organisations in Mitrovica. The aim was to give the participants the opportunity to discuss participation in decision making processes and to give suggestions to strengthen the interaction between the municipal institutions and the community. The participants agreed that the implementation of small scale activities that directly improve the living circumstances is the best instrument to increase public participation in decision making processes. Especially if local governing bodies are involved by the implementation of these small scale activities, mutual awareness can arise regarding the possible benefits of cooperation. Another topic was the monitoring of the municipal institutions per se. The majority of the participants argued that monitoring the institutions in the North is an unrealistic objective and therefore attention and effort could be better spent.⁴⁹

⁴⁵ During my stay I daily checked the website of M-Magazine. At that time they still broadcasted local news items on a daily basis.

⁴⁶ See note 37.

⁴⁷ Interview with A. Gay, OSCE monitor officer in North Mitrovica, June 13th 2012.

⁴⁸ I was able to personally cooperate with the CBM monitoring project officers during the preparation, the event, and the evaluation of the debate.

⁴⁹ For a report of the debate see:

http://www.cbmitrovica.org/index2.php?option=com_content&do_pdf=1&id=132

6.1.3 Project South vs. Project North

Table 3: schematic overview

Objective	Increase the political representation and participation, responsiveness and accountability through an informed dialogue between civil society and the institutions in Mitrovica.	
	South Mitrovica	North Mitrovica
Actual achievements	A discussion has been started in which the municipality is involved regarding public participation in the decision making process.	The topic public participation in the decision making process is brought to the attention of the municipality.
Community building contribution	The first step has been made in the process that can lead to actual community participation in the decision making process.	None.

To make the monitoring project successful the project officers depended on interaction with the municipal institutions. As described above, there is an obvious dissimilarity between the approachability of the southern municipality and the municipal institutions in the North of Mitrovica.

The current situation shows a different institutional structure and level of institutional transparency. The southern municipality has a clear structure and a high level of transparency (this certainly applies for CBM because of years of interaction with and monitoring of the municipality). In this context the project officer in the South has been able to start a discussion with officials about public participation in decision making.⁵⁰ The situation is completely different in the North. The structural situation as well as the level of transparency has made it almost impossible to monitor the institutions: let alone to cooperate and discuss public participation in decision making. A situation is created in which the community has no idea about the functioning of the municipal institutions and where to go with their needs. The unclear structure is strengthened by the existing of three different municipal institutions.

Furthermore, the future structure is completely unclear. It is not only unclear for the community but for the institutions self as well. It seems that this unclearness led to a situation in which the institutions became unwilling and/or unable to share any information. This situation is ongoing since the end of the conflict in 1999. These years have provided little clarity as to the future,

⁵⁰ Interview with CBM project officer monitoring the institutions in the South F. Hajdari, July 11th 2012.

leading to a situation in which the community is not willing anymore to put effort into the transformation of this situation.⁵¹ This makes it extra difficult to start the process that is supposed to lead to public participation in decision making at the municipal level.

6.2 Youth Together For Human Rights

The implementation of the project had a bilingual aim: educate the youth from the different communities on how to write and discuss regarding human rights issues, in a perceptive and peaceful way, and creating activity opportunities for high school youth outside of school.⁵²

The intention has been to change the way youth deals with different perspectives. For one thing the participants learn how to communicate their position by means of well-reasoned arguing. Meanwhile, they learn how to deal with contradictory/different perspectives. The intention has been to create dialogue instead of hostility in case of disagreement. In the long term, the underlying idea is that the participants become aware of dialogue (communication) as an important instrument for a functioning democracy that contributes to sustainable peace.⁵³ The initiation of dialogue and by that the ability to deal with contradictory perspectives is essential in processes that intent to lead to a form of consensus. In the long term this can be the foundation of well-functioning decentralised institutions. The functioning of these decentralised institutions determines the functionality of the future democracy.

In the North and South a CBM project assistant had to find participants. Through their own network they started raising awareness about this project. The project assistants approached those scholars who showed interest. Following a selection round, one group was formed in the North and one in the South.⁵⁴

To achieve the goals that had been set it has been necessary that the participating youth became aware of the possibility to deal with disagreements in a constructive non-violent manner. It has been essential that the participants became aware of the possibility that a certain topic can be seen from different angles. These different angles create different viewing points and thus different opinions. It has been important that the participants are able to argue from their point of view and simultaneously understand the arguments made from an opposite point of view. A transformation of the way members of the communities in Mitrovica act in case of disagreement will be necessary for

⁵¹ Interview with CBM project officer monitoring the institutions in the North anonymous, July 19th 2012.

⁵² Interview with CBM project assistant in the South L. Hakaj, June 11th 2012.

⁵³ See note 50.

⁵⁴ Interviews with CBM project assistant in the South L. Hakaj, June 11th 2012 and CBM project assistant in the North anonymous, June 6th 2012.

the purpose of a changing relationship between the divided communities and thus successful community building.

6.2.1 Youth Together For Human Rights in South Mitrovica

The first step was to advertise the possibility to participate in South Mitrovica. The CBM project assistant was allowed to advertise at secondary and high schools by means of posters. Therefore, permission was sought via the heads of the schools. More than 100 youngsters applied for the 30 available participant places. In cooperation with a more experienced CBM employee the project assistant selected the final participants, with participants selected on their willingness to learn and their motivation to speak freely and openly expressing their opinion.⁵⁵

The project took place from September 2011 until February 2012. In the first phase of the project, the participants attended eight meetings: four trainings regarding journalism and four workshops regarding human rights. A professional journalist was in charge of the journalist trainings and an expert on human rights organised the workshops around this topic. These meetings took place at CBM's office at the foot of the main bridge in South Mitrovica and were attended by both the Albanian and Serbian participants. During the second phase, the participants wrote an argument about human rights in their own environment. The articles were based on the participants own experiences, interviews, and others. The articles were supposed to be published in M-Magazine. However, this never happened because of a publication delay of the hardcopy of M-Magazine. The participants who completed the training sessions and the article were rewarded with a certificate.⁵⁶

6.2.2 Youth Together For Human Rights in North Mitrovica

The first step was to make possible participants aware of the project. The Serbian project assistant used his personal network to get in contact with possible participants. The local secondary and high school were not approached because of former failed attempts. Before, CBM employees did not get permission to advertise regarding community building activities. The local secondary and high school fall under the administration of the northern municipality. This is an example of the unwillingness of the northern municipality and related organisations (such as the school boards) to cooperate with an organisation like CBM that is seen as international. This is caused by the general opinion that is characterised by the idea that international organisations support the independency (process) of Kosovo. At the same time, in their opinion this means that international organisations

⁵⁵ See note 50.

⁵⁶ Interview with CBM project assistant in the South L. Hakaj, June 11th 2012.

(the UAM and the MPT/AONM leading the way) intend to decrease the influence of the (parallel) northern municipality.⁵⁷ Due to this the school boards were not willing to cooperate.

However there was one organisation outside his personal network that was willing to cooperate: the International Business College in Mitrovica (IBCM).⁵⁸ IBCM is not a governmental institution but is founded and funded by SPARK (a Dutch NGO). Probably because of this they were willing to give permission to advertise, and this encouraged seven participants. For the journalism trainings and human rights workshops they crossed the bridge and joined the participants from the South.⁵⁹

6.2.3 Project South vs. Project North

Table 4: schematic overview

Objective	The creation of activity opportunities for high school youth outside of school and educate the youth from the different communities on how to write and discuss regarding human rights issues in a perceptive and peaceful way.	
	South Mitrovica	North Mitrovica
Actual achievements	30 active participants (selected from over 100 applications).	7 active participants (for the 30 available places).
Community building contribution	The 30 participants have learned how to view the conflict from different perspectives. Besides, this community building project was introduced and well perceived by the high school board in South Mitrovica. This can contribute to the spreading of the community building message.	The 7 participants have learned how to view the conflict from different perspectives. However, the contribution to community building is limited due to the very limited number of participants. This complicates the transfer of the gained knowledge within the own community.

⁵⁷ This I found based on the interviews with CBM employees living in the North (CBM project assistant in the North anonymous, June 6th 2012, CBM project officer monitoring the institutions in the North anonymous, July 19th 2012, Editor M-magazine in the North anonymous, July 30th 2012, CBM Finance Officer N. Nestorovic, July 21st 2012, and CRYM executive director T. Mihajlovic, July 27th 2012, and Rock School Coordinator in the North N. Radicevic, June 7th 2012) and conversations with North Mitrovica community members.

⁵⁸ IBCM is located in the North and the South of Mitrovica. Students attend classes in the North or the South not both. The teachers are active in the North and the South.

⁵⁹ Interview with CBM project assistant in the North anonymous, June 6th 2012.

The most remarkable difference was the participation rate. In the South there were more than 100 applications for the 30 available places where it took a lot of effort to find only seven participants in the North. This can be partly explained by the different inhabitant numbers in the South and North. Nevertheless, the circumstances also seem to have played an important role. During the interviews with the Northern and Southern project assistants it became clear that the position of CBM in the society, is seen as differs. In South Mitrovica CBM is an accepted organisation that is seen as a movement trying to improve the overall living situation in Mitrovica. In North Mitrovica CBM is by a large part of the community seen as an international organisation that supports Kosovo's independency. The occurrence of this situation is partly caused by the political context in North Mitrovica. The continuing attempt of international organisations (mainly the UNMIK) and organisations (particularly the MPT/AONM) active under the umbrella of the governing body in Pristina to increase influence in North Mitrovica led to a counter-reaction by the northern municipality to maintain control. This counter-reaction consists among others of the attempt to exclude external influences. A large part of the Northern community sees this counter-reaction as the only instrument to maintain their self-determination. For the majority of the Serbian population supporting Kosovo's independency means repression of the Serbian population in Mitrovica. Due to this, the Serbian minority in Mitrovica experiences disadvantage compared to the Albanian majority. For Serbs this is a reason to become more hard lined towards international organisations, and those organisations that are registered in Kosovo. The effect is that potential Serbian participants feel threatened by this group of hard liners and therefore are not willing to participate in CBM projects.⁶⁰ Therefore, potential Serbian participants were reluctant to participate in the 'Youth Together For Human Rights' project.

Another significant difference can be noted regarding the cooperation that took place with secondary and high schools in Mitrovica. The secondary and high schools are part of the governmental systems in both South and North Mitrovica. In the South the school boards showed willingness to cooperate and created advertisement opportunities for CBM. The facilitation of these possibilities showed the support of these schools for the activities that are implemented by CBM. Regarding this project the southern CBM project assistant operated in a context that was supportive on behalf of the implementation of community building activities. The project assistant in the North was confronted with a completely different situation. The school boards were not willing to cooperate. The minimal response is most likely an effect of the position that CBM has in the Northern community. Due to this the project assistant was highly dependent on his own personal

⁶⁰ Interview with CBM project assistant in the North anonymous, June 6th 2012. During the interview the assistant literally used the word 'threatened'.

network of contacts. The context⁶¹ in which participants had to be found in the North led to the disappointing number of 7 participants.

6.3 Rock School

The Mitrovica Rock School was founded in 2008 with the intention to bring youth from different communities together, and promote interethnic cooperation to rebuild the ties between communities through music. The pre-war music scene in Mitrovica and surroundings was very well known in the region, and youth from different communities were previously connected through the music scene. This cooperation and communication by means of music is an initial first step to create an environment, in which not the differences are the centre of attention but a shared aspect is: music. This can be the beginning of a process in which the different ethnicities find out what their common interests are (Musicians without Borders, 2010). This provides opportunity for the different communities to focus on a common interest, rather than mutual differences. In this situation the ability arises to identify and analyse problems, develop solutions, collect resources and realise the implementation together.

Furthermore, in the North and South of Mitrovica a Rock School youth centre has been established. These centres give youth the opportunity to come together. The main activity is making music, but it also functions as a 'neutral' space within which to unfold other (cultural) activities.⁶²

One of the objectives of the Rock School is to create a multi-ethnic band on an annual basis. 24 participants from the North, 24 participants from the South, all the volunteers and the involved CBM employees make a trip to Skopje in Macedonia at the end of the year. In Skopje, they attend music workshops together. A few students are selected and form a multi-ethnic band and perform on a public stage by the end of the week. The success of this week depends on the cooperation among the band members and supervisors. Another aspect of this project is that it contributes to community outreach in Mitrovica through invitation of parents and family members. The parents, from different communities, are invited to visit Skopje together to see their children perform. The

⁶¹ Noteworthy is an event during my stay in Mitrovica that is not directly related to CBM but shows the position of international organisations (let alone organisations from Kosovo) in North Mitrovica. On the occasion of the start of the new study year 2012-2013 a billboard showed posters with IBCM advertisement in the centre of the Northern part of Mitrovica. The night they were put there in June, the posters covering the whole approximately 3 by 5 meter wide billboard were ripped off and shredded. This example obviously indicates the dissatisfaction among a part of the Northern community with the current situation and the interference of international organisations and organisations with Kosovo roots.

⁶² CBM Executive Director A. Sylaj, July 21st 2012.

intention is to create a neutral context outside of Mitrovica in which these parents can get to know and better understand each other.⁶³

There is a Rock School branch in the North and in the South of Mitrovica. The daily supervision of these branches is the responsibility of the North and the South coordinator. Together with several volunteers they coordinate and support the activities. In cooperation with the current participants they seek to increase the group of active participants. The formation of multi-ethnic bands is initiated and guided by the branch coordinators.⁶⁴

Community involvement and support are the essence of the activities implemented as part of the Rock School, and this is the necessary quality of activity to contribute to sustainable community building in Mitrovica. The establishment of a multi-ethnic band is the best example, with every year since 2007 a multi-ethnic band being established.⁶⁵ If this band turns out to last longer than the project period this could mean sustainable friendship and cooperation. Sustainable friendship and cooperation can be the foundation for long term mutual understanding. The effectiveness can be increased if this process applies similarly for the participants' parents when they are brought together during the trip to Skopje.

6.3.1 Rock School in South Mitrovica

In the summer of 2012, the South branch of the Mitrovica Rock School established a new music and youth centre, located near the city centre of South Mitrovica. Until then they had shared a facility with another NGO in the city centre. A free music concert is organised every month, which are well visited. There are music lessons guided by volunteering teachers from Monday to Friday. On average 45 students attend these lessons. The possibilities that are provided for the youth by the Rock School are well appreciated within the society of South Mitrovica, and the objective of rebuilding the communities in the whole of Mitrovica, is positively perceived by the community in the South.⁶⁶

Becoming independent to be able to contribute to community building in the long term is another aim of the Rock School. Independency will help to increase the sustainability of Rock School and thus the ability to contribute to long term sustainable community building activities. The intention of Rock School was to be registered as an independent organisation by the end of 2012.

⁶³ Interviews with Rock School Coordinator South D. Kosova, June 26th 2012 and Rock School Coordinator North N. Radicevic, June 7th 2012.

⁶⁴ See note 63.

⁶⁵ Interview with Rock School Coordinator South D. Kosova, June 26th 2012.

⁶⁶ Interviews with Rock School Coordinator South D. Kosova, June 26th 2012 and Rock School Coordinator North N. Radicevic, June 7th 2012.

This process has only been partially successful due to the limitations regarding financial independency, and still today, Rock School still depends on external funding.⁶⁷

6.3.2 Rock School in North Mitrovica

The Rock School in the North is located near the city centre. The building is shared with several other civil society organisations. The monthly concerts that are organised are well visited. The daily music lessons are guided by volunteers and attended by approximately 30 students. The Rock School is a well-respected organisation in the North despite the 'international' background. Personal networks of the management, volunteers, and students are the most important instrument to increase the participation rate. The aim to become a sustainable independent organisation, faces difficulties caused by the overall limited economical situation in North Mitrovica. The possibilities for local funding are very limited. The amount of organisations, companies and others that are able to find support financially is insufficient. Increasing student fees is not an option because the students are simply not able to afford the extra finances. This combination with the daily costs of the Rock School makes sustainable independency for the moment impossible.⁶⁸

Rock School Mitrovica has organised an annual trip to Skopje in Macedonia over the last six years. The trips were made by a combined group of students, teachers, volunteers and the managements from the South and North. The multi-ethnic band that was formed in 2012 showed the intention to gather in Mitrovica as well. Despite the intentions, by August 2012 this did not happen yet. The circumstances in both the North and the South created an atmosphere in which the students do not feel safe to visit the other side of the bridge.⁶⁹ Based on observation participation and interviews⁷⁰ I find that the role of the majority of teachers, volunteers, and management in this is very passive. They argue that they cannot take the responsibility and that the participants are too young to be encouraged to break this barrier. In the meanwhile, the teachers, volunteers, and management also barely cross the bridge and thus rarely visit their colleagues and the branch at the other side of the river. During the summer of 2012, the direction of CBM made clear that the management was

⁶⁷ See note 66.

⁶⁸ Interview with Rock School Coordinator North N. Radicevic, June 7th 2012.

⁶⁹ Interviews with Rock School Coordinator South D. Kosova, June 26th 2012 and Rock School Coordinator North N. Radicevic, June 7th 2012.

⁷⁰ I found there role passive because I have not seen any self-initiated attempt to organise something to bridge the divide in practice. To me it seemed that the motivation is missing to actually change the situation. This personal view was only enhanced during the interviews with the coordinators.

obliged to attend meetings in the South or in the North. This is a first step to increase the mutual interaction between the two branches in Mitrovica itself.

6.3.3 Project South vs. Project North

Table 5: schematic overview

Objective	Bring youth from different communities together and promote interethnic cooperation to rebuild the ties between the different communities.	
	South Mitrovica	North Mitrovica
Actual achievements	Many participants during the weekly activities in the South and an essential contribution to the annual trip to Skopje in Macedonia.	Many participants during the weekly activities in the North and an essential contribution to the annual trip to Skopje in Macedonia.
Community building contribution	<p>There is a clear difference in the success rate between the weekly and annual activities.</p> <p>Weekly: Limited because there is no question of activities that actually bring the divided community members together.</p> <p>Annual: Very successful because there are not only sustainable relations created between the participating youth of the divided communities but between other community members (mostly close relatives) as well.</p> <p>Overall I argue that the current limited successes of the weekly activities are a missed opportunity to expand the annual success.</p>	The same applies to the North.

The Rock School projects per se are meeting good results. Questionable though is in what ways the separated branches in the North and the South, contribute to sustainable community building in Mitrovica. The annual trip to Skopje is a clear example of a way to bring the divided communities closer together, with the trip being a great success for years. Both sides were well represented. Furthermore, the participants’ parents made the trip to Skopje together and some

bonding took place on the way there.⁷¹ Nevertheless, it is doubtful what this has contributed to community rebuilding in Mitrovica so far. It seems that the separated branches are functioning so well that they do not need each other. This lack of interconnection between the South and the North can be the reason that both branches do not face any difficulties to find participants. The participants are in a position that gives them the opportunity to use the facilities offered by an organisation, without having to engage with the original ethos of the community rebuilding process.

A practical example provides a clear picture about the difficulties that Rock School is facing regarding the reconnection of the communities in North and South Mitrovica. During the annual trip to Skopje in 2011, the band 'The Architects' was founded. The band has two Serbian and three Albanian members, and is less than one year old. Despite the intentions of the band the Rock School coordinators have not been able to provide a location for the members to meet in Mitrovica. An interview with the Rock School coordinator in the South revealed one of the possible obstacles. Until then, the coordinator had not crossed the bridge herself since 1999. It seems that it is unrealistic to expect this coordinator to be able to facilitate a situation in which the band members feel confident to meet in Mitrovica. Especially in this case of a group of young people that is already familiar with each other, this looks like an enormous opportunity to motivate them to actually meet in Mitrovica.

It seems that the role of the political context is maintaining these obstacles, but that the reasons are indirect. The current problematic context in which Rock School operates is a consequence of the ongoing state building process in both Kosovo and Mitrovica. The external implementation of the UAM and the MPT/AONM in North Mitrovica have emphasised the division between North and South. This is because South Mitrovica is part of the governing body in Pristina, and intent on increasing its influence in the North. This led to the situation by which every external organisation (those without Serbian roots) is set equal to the UAM and the MPT/AONM by the Serbian community, and thus is seen as an organisation that intent to increase the influence of the governing body in Pristina in North Mitrovica/Kosovo. In this context the division between North and South Mitrovica is emphasised: the opposite of what Rock School aims to achieve, namely the elimination of the community division in Mitrovica.

⁷¹ During the interview with the Rock School Coordinator South D. Kosova, June 26th 2012, it was explained to me that the participants parents in the beginning were communicating along ethnic lines but that along the road communication between Serbian and Albanian attendants took place and common topics of conversation were found.

6.4 M-Magazine

The availability and accessibility of information is an important element that can contribute to sustainable post-conflict development (Palmer, 2001, pp.186-187). Contradicting information regarding all sorts of topics, negatively influenced the community and actually contributed to the ethnic division in Mitrovica for years. This context made CBM intent to support free, independent, and unbiased media. M-Magazine was established by CBM following the events in 2004 and the violent conflict that occurred as a result of these events. The overall aim of CBM is to provide objective and solution based information to the community, and contribute to bridging the divide instead of aggravating divisions.⁷²

The extent of change should lead to a situation in which objective media is the norm. The broadcasting of news should not be influenced by ethnicity or at least be presented to the community from both perspectives: both Albanian and Serbian. The broadcasting of news from both perspectives can help to create mutual understanding. The first intention is to create mutual understanding: not per se acceptance. In time, the creation of a mutual understanding can be an essential part of the process leading to a situation in which the multi-ethnic community in Mitrovica will identify and analyse problems commonly. This can mean that common interests are produced without the involved communities being aware of the commonalities.⁷³

Today, M-Magazine aims to be a unique and daily online publication and a printed magazine twice a year in Albanian, Serbian, and English. The publication team is mixed and has residences in the North and South. CBM provides a non-conflict oriented way of looking at the daily developments and events in Mitrovica. The team wants to publish a mixture of independent (unbiased) local and regional news, broad entertainment, and articles devoted to a wide range of special interests.⁷⁴

To be effective and contribute to the bridging of the divide it is essential that the community is aware of the existence of the online and printed publications, and actually use these media to be informed. Until now, M-Magazine depends on external funding to function. An increasing coverage of the online and printed publications could lead to financial independence, and from that develop new possibilities. The extra possibilities can be a qualitative improvement of the staff and thereby an upgrading of the magazine, the option to address new topics, more in-depth features, and others.⁷⁵

⁷² Interview with M-Magazine Coordinator F. Kumnova, June 11th 2012.

⁷³ Interview with CBM Executive Director A. Sylaj, July 21st 2012.

⁷⁴ Interviews with M-Magazine Coordinator F. Kumnova, June 11th 2012 and M-Magazine Editor in the North anonymous, July 30th 2012.

⁷⁵ See note 70.

The risk of the funding dependency showed in the summer of 2012 when it became clear that the survival of M-Magazine in 2013 is very doubtful.⁷⁶

6.4.1 M-Magazine in South Mitrovica

The editorial office of M-Magazine's South branch resides on the first floor in the same building as CBM. During the summer of 2012, there were eight people working for M-Magazine: a coordinator, a photographer, journalists, and translators. Their main activity is the publication of daily news items through the website of M-Magazine. The South branch covers the news items from South Mitrovica. The translation into English takes place in the South and for the Serbian translation the articles are sent by email to the North and translated by a Serbian translator who is working for the North branch. In 2012, the website had an average of 8500 clicks a month.⁷⁷

The hard copy magazine is released twice a year. The magazine can be bought at several locations in the Southern part of Mitrovica. During the summer of 2012, the publication was delayed as an effect of unclear agreements with the publisher. This in turn caused a deficiency of article input. As far as known, the magazine has not been released in 2012.⁷⁸

6.4.2 M-Magazine in North Mitrovica

The North branch of M-Magazine has about five employees. There is the coordinator, photographer, translator, and (part-time) journalists. Their daily task is to cover the news items in North Mitrovica and the Northern surroundings of Mitrovica. Comparable with the situation in the South, is that most activities take place from within the office. One of the journalists mentioned that they intend to broadcast news from the scene but that this is only possible if there is a car available. This unpredictable variable makes it difficult to sufficiently execute journalism. The translation of the news items coming from the North, into Albanian, is done by an Albanian employee that is working in the South.⁷⁹

The hard copy magazine's content is substantively the same as in the South, only the language differs. Regarding the distribution there has been a clear difference. It has not been possible to find public locations to distribute the magazine in North Mitrovica. The magazine is seen by part of the Serbian population as an Albanian publication and they argue that the magazine

⁷⁶ During my stay in the summer of 2012 it became clear that the funding procedure would stop by the end of 2012. At the time of my departure (August 2012) there was no clarity on possible funding substitution.

⁷⁷ Interview with M-Magazine Coordinator F. Kumnova, June 11th 2012.

⁷⁸ See note 70.

⁷⁹ M-Magazine Editor in the North anonymous, July 30th 2012.

provides a spurious impression of impartiality. Due to this potential disseminators choose not to be part of the distribution process. Lastly, a circulation of 50 magazines was distributed among the employees and volunteers of M-Magazine and CBM that were active in North Mitrovica. The rationale was that these magazines would also end up by family and friends of these employees and volunteers, and by that the magazine’s range would increase.⁸⁰

The journalists in the South and the North did not seem to be very pro-active regarding the exploration of possible news items in Mitrovica. This I have found by observing the daily affairs of the M-Magazine offices in North and South Mitrovica. This was compensated by the use of information derived from other available news broadcasters. However, this method caused a lack of background information covering the news items. The omission of background information is justified by stating that this will contribute to the neutrality of M-Magazine.⁸¹ The side effect of this method is that the M-Magazine news receivers (the communities in Mitrovica) will never get familiar with the underlying context in which events took place. An unbiased representation of this underlying context is essential for the news receivers to better understand why a certain event took place. News publications accompanied with the unbiased presentation of the underlying context in which (undesired) events occurred can help transforming the (non-physical) response. This process can involve the transformation of the mind-set from condemnatory towards more understanding.

6.4.3 Project South vs. Project North

Table 6: schematic overview

Objective	Support free, independent, and unbiased media to provide objective and solution based information to the community and contribute to bridging the divide instead of strengthening the divide.	
	South Mitrovica	North Mitrovica
Actual achievements	The establishment of a relatively well-visited news broadcasting website.	The establishment of a most likely moderate visited news broadcasting website.
Community building	I argue that for two main reasons the contribution is nowhere near what it could be.	The same applies to the North.

⁸⁰ See note 70.

⁸¹ Interviews with M-Magazine Coordinator F. Kumnova, June 11th 2012 and M-Magazine Editor in the North anonymous, July 30th 2012.

contribution	<p>The news broadcasting is far from neutral and therefor lacks depth. The effect is that events continue to be discussed from only one perspective.</p> <p>The staff division that has been seen in the daily practice rather increases than decreases. In a broader context this rather increases than decreases the community division in Mitrovica.</p>	
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One of the important differences is the place that M-Magazine occupies within the communities. In the South, the magazine is perceived as an unbiased and multi-ethnic magazine that aims to provide the whole community of Mitrovica with an objective representation of the daily news items. In the Northern community, the magazine is perceived as an Albanian oriented publication that falsely claims to be neutral. The consequences for the hardcopy of the magazine are mentioned above. Despite the lack of figures it is generally believed that the website has relatively lower attendance in the North than in the South.⁸² In this situation it is difficult to provide the whole community with objective news. Furthermore, this complicates the process that is supposed to lead to a mutual understanding of the underlying context of events in Mitrovica. This is especially true in case of events that can cause friction between the different communities in Mitrovica.

In my view, another aspect that makes it difficult to truly operate as a multi-ethnic magazine is the staff composition and especially the office housing. Though the staff composition as a whole is multi-ethnic, the daily practice shows a clear division. The South and North offices operate independent from each other, and despite the daily contact, the news reporting takes place parallel to the existing North-South division. This is clearly contradictory with the ultimate objective of M-Magazine. The fact that events in the South are being reported by Albanians and events in the North reported by Serbs makes it very difficult to report neutral.⁸³ The news is published from within the context that is supposed to be transformed. In case of an event in the South a Serbian journalist would be the ideal person to put the event in another context (and vice versa). Cooperation in this

⁸² Interview with M-Magazine Coordinator F. Kumnova, June 11th 2012.

⁸³ During my three months stay in Mitrovica I was living in the North and mainly working in the South office of CBM. Hereby, I was daily confronted with the events in North and South. The offices of M-Magazine were located in the same building as CBM (in the South and North). Due to this I have been able to visit the M-Magazine offices regularly. The conversations during these visits gave me insight in the working methods and the understanding between the South and North branch of M-Magazine.

case between a Serbian and Albanian journalist could lead to the publication of neutral news and furthermore create an unbiased underlying context in which a certain event took place.

During the interviews and observation of M-Magazine it became clear that the ethnic division of M-Magazine's staff is problematic. On both sides employees of M-Magazine are critically about the commitment of the 'other' side. The solution seems to be simple: cooperation and thus the creation of insight in each other's work methods and commitment. However, the opposite can be seen. The absence of insight in the work methods and commitment of colleagues that are active for the other branch increased the gap between the North and South branches. This division is further exacerbated by the sort of news items that are reported. On both sides, it was indicated that in general the news items reported in the South are more or less positive, and in the North are about negative events.⁸⁴ This has created a situation in which the Northern branch argues that the Southern branch has a simple task and does not put in extra effort to further develop the magazine. Vice versa, the Southern branch argues that the Northern branch does not completely report neutral on the negative events that occur in the North. Nevertheless, the South branch does understand that the situation in the North can impede the realisation of decent journalism.

The influence of the political context with respect to the functioning of M-Magazine has two aspects. First, the influence is indirect. This is comparable to the situation explained in paragraph 6.3.3: the implementation of the UAM and the MPT/AONM led to an increased refusal of the northern municipality to cooperate with any external institution and/or organisation. Secondly, there is an influential aspect following the previous. The possibility to broadcast news concerning municipal matters (and thus influence the communities) differs between North and South. The southern municipality shows an increasing degree of transparency. Hereby, M-Magazine is able to inform the community in the South concerning municipal matters that might affect the political context and thereby their living circumstances. The situation in the North shows less clarity, partly because there are three different municipal authorities. In paragraph 6.1 the lack of transparency of these authorities became clear. This lack of transparency makes it difficult for M-Magazine to inform the community regarding municipal matters that might affect the daily living situation in North Mitrovica. The result is a lack of news and that in turn contributes to the uncertainty with respect to future developments in North Mitrovica.⁸⁵

⁸⁴ Interviews with M-Magazine Coordinator F. Kumnova, June 11th 2012, M-Magazine Editor in the North anonymous, July 30th 2012, CBM monitoring project officers anonymous, July 19th 2012 and F. Hajdari, July 11th 2012.

⁸⁵ The desire for institutional clarity was mentioned during interviews with CBM monitoring officer anonymous, July 19th 2012, CBM Finance Officer N. Nestorovic, July 21st 2012, and CRYM executive director T. Mihajlovic, July 27th 2012.

6.5 Conclusion

The overall picture shows a situation in which the initiation and implementation of community building activities by CBM is more successful in the South than in the North of Mitrovica. The question is to what extent this difference is an effect of the political context in Mitrovica.

The aversion of the northern municipality towards Kosovo's independency is obvious. The northern municipality is the only local institution that so clearly conveys this resistance. With regard to CBM's community building activities this has two consequences: firstly, the northern municipality is absolutely unwilling to any form of cooperation with CBM. Secondly, the atmosphere that this creates offers no space for external interference. This situation might be seen as a logical consequence of the events in Mitrovica and surroundings over the last decades.

Nevertheless, the current situation is also influenced by the political affairs that took place in North Mitrovica over the last few years. The implementation of the UAM and the MPT/AONM by the UNMIK and the governing body in Pristina is seen as an attempt to include the Northern part of Kosovo into administrative Kosovo. For the northern municipality and community the implementation of the UAM and the MPT/AONM is seen as a threat for their self-competence. This led to an increased resistance of the northern municipality and (part of) the community against external interference in North Mitrovica.

An effect has been that any external interference is seen as an attempt to strengthen Pristina's administrative position in North Mitrovica, and thereby weaken the self-competence of the Serbian community and the northern municipality. Here the problem CBM is struggling with becomes clear: despite its neutral status CBM is in North Mitrovica, seen as an international organisation that supports the governing body in Pristina.

The community building activities that are implemented by CBM, aim to address the perceptions and behaviours of individuals, intergroup relations, and social structures.

The change of perceptions and behaviours of individuals takes place in the first phase of the process that aims to (re)build the community in Mitrovica. This process tries to persuade community members to participate. CBM aims to create a context within which community members can be open to new and/or different views and insights regarding the divided community in Mitrovica.

When reviewing the parallel implemented projects in North and South Mitrovica the results in the South seem to be better. I make this statement partly based on the participation rate during the project activities. On the other hand this appears to me because the achieved results in South Mitrovica contribute substantially more to the objectives that were set by CBM. It is important to note that there is a population number difference, and that the analysis of the community building projects (initiated by CBM) are not based on the experiences and opinions of participants.

In response to the findings in this chapter, I argue that the will to participate in the processes leading to mutual understanding, are more visible in South Mitrovica than in North Mitrovica. Besides the participation rate this became clear to me by observing the efforts made by (a part of) the CBM employees in order to realise progress and cooperation.

The change of intergroup relations is the aspect that can be seen as the actual community building. The most important aim of CBM is to change the relation between the Serbian community living in the North and the Albanian community living in the South. As evidenced by the project analysis in this chapter the results are mixed. The biggest obstacle is to find a location in Mitrovica that provides a sense of security for both communities. So far, the location of choice has always been one in South Mitrovica. This is the case because in general it is believed that it is safer for Serbians to be in South Mitrovica than for Albanians to be in North Mitrovica.

This undesired situation is an effect of the continuing political unrest. The ongoing/intended developments of the municipal administrations in North Mitrovica cause dissatisfaction among the Serbian community. This led to a situation in which the Serbian community not only expresses its aversion towards the organisations that assist the administrative transformation (UN, OSCE, and EULEX) and the governing body in Pristina, but also the communities that support these municipal transformations. Among them is the Albanian community in South Mitrovica.

Another 'solution' for this problem is to locate activities outside of Mitrovica. An example of this is the annual trip made by Rock School students from both branches to Skopje in Macedonia.

Albeit a form of community building, since the gathering does not take place in Mitrovica it is questionable to what extent this solution is able to contribute to a transformation of the daily living situation and thereby sustainable change. I argue that this is only possible if these annual activities are followed by the initiation of gatherings somewhere in, or at least around Mitrovica because that will make it a daily and independent possibility. The implementation of this sequel can actually contribute to sustainable community building. However, this follow-up has until today taken place insufficiently in order to speak of sustainable community building.

There is an exception in the case of activities take place without participants (project preparation and meetings for example). These are organised on both sides. These activities show the commitment of (a part of) the CBM staff. A transfer of this commitment to both the communities would contribute to the realisation of CBM's mission: joint actions of citizens to promote cooperation, co-existence, and democratic values. As already concluded, this has occurred in too less instances in order to speak of sustainable community building.

The final aspect of community building includes the change of social structures. This aspect intends to address the relation between the governing bodies and the community. The aim of CBM is to create awareness regarding community involvement within the decision making processes controlled by these governing bodies. A well-functioning democracy provides this possibility.

Again, a clear distinction has been visible between achievements in the South and in the North of Mitrovica. In the South, CBM has been able to contribute to a process that is leading towards more transparency of the municipal administrations. This process might contribute to the legitimacy of the southern municipality in Mitrovica, in which increasing legitimacy can in turn create a political context in which sustainable peacebuilding can be realised.

The situation is completely different in the North. My observation has shown that the community sees the attempts to raise awareness (regarding municipal functioning) as an instrument of the government body in Pristina to include the Northern part of Mitrovica/Kosovo into the Kosovo legislation. As a result, there is no question of participation. Due to this the attempts to increase transparency and raise awareness among the community in North Mitrovica are failing.

The final part of this conclusion addresses an aspect that is mentioned in the theoretical framework, and concerns the doubts that are raised regarding the community building approach. CBM was initiated by a Dutch NGO in 2001. The establishment took place through cooperation between the Dutch NGO and local community members. The objectives were formulated based on starting points of the Dutch NGO and these local community members at the time.⁸⁶ Due to this the framework in which CBM operates is formed by local and Dutch (international) principles, and this means that the framework is not strictly locally initiated and shaped.

A comparable tendency can be seen when it comes to the funding of community building projects. CBM depends on external funding, with most of the available funding opportunities

⁸⁶ Interview with CBM Executive Director A. Sylaj, July 21st 2012.

accompanied by guidelines on how to spend these funds. To be eligible, these guidelines must be taken into account and followed, and also can be a determining aspect in respect to the content of a project. These guidelines can be contradictory with the preferences of the local community.

7. Conclusions

This final chapter is divided into two parts. Firstly, the case study question will be addressed, taking account of the social relevance and assessing how it might improve CBM's activities. Secondly, the core research question will be answered through testing of the hypothesis. Attention is paid to the scientific relevance and possible (policy) recommendations.

7.1 Community Building in Mitrovica's Divided Political Context

How are the successes and failures of activities implemented by Community Building Mitrovica, influenced through the different political contexts of North and South Mitrovica?

CBM aims to address the perceptions and behaviours, intergroup relations, and social structures of the communities in Mitrovica. The project results are characterised by a clear difference between the successes and failures in the North and the South, with projects being more successful in the South than in the North. Furthermore, a difference is visible with respect to the results accomplished regarding the three target areas of perceptions and behaviours, intergroup relations, and social structures. Therefore, it can be concluded that the attempt to change intergroup relations is a structural failure.

The biggest obstacles for CBM are the unwillingness of the northern municipality to cooperate in any way, and the negative atmosphere that is created, which allows no space for external interference.

This thesis has shown that there is a clear distinction between the political context in South and the political context in North Mitrovica. This distinction is characterised by a different opinion with respect to the independency of Kosovo: desirable from Albanian perspective, and undesirable from Serbian perspective. Additionally, the political context at the local level is shaped by the local governance and decision-making processes. These greatly affect the daily living environment of the communities in Mitrovica.

The difference is the way the functioning of local governments is perceived by the communities. The functioning of the southern municipality is improving, both as a consequence of increasing transparency and public participation in the decision making process. In the North, a political context has been created in which the (parallel) northern municipality is the only legitimate

government. Partly due to the attempts of external organisations (the UNMIK, the EULEX, the OSCE, and the MPT/AONM) to increase their control over North Mitrovica.

Governance legitimacy is essential to create a political context in which sustainable peacebuilding can be accomplished. The functioning of the local governance has to be perceived as fair, and in the interest of the communities, by the communities to achieve legitimacy. This is clearly not the case in North Mitrovica, with the organisations (the UNMIK, the EULEX, the OSCE, and the MPT/AONM) attempting to increase control there, not a proper reflection of the political climate prevailing in North Mitrovica. Therefore, the Serbian community fears that the increasing control of these organisations will decrease their self-competence.

Within this political context it has proven almost impossible for CBM to successfully implement community building activities. Intergroup relations between the Albanian and Serbian communities has not progressed in line with the aspirations of the peace building organisations. Furthermore, it is an entrenched view by the Serbian community that CBM is an organisation that supports Kosovo's independency, and thereby not able to represent the Serbian interests.

An important aspect of the obstacles CBM is facing in North Mitrovica is the refusal of the northern municipality to cooperate in any manner whatsoever. The attempt to cooperate seems by definition injudicious, and the current political context in North Mitrovica shows the remnants of the pre-conflict political context. The northern municipality per se, and its poor functioning is the evidence, for instance that public participation in the decision making process is out of the question. Most importantly is the fact that the composition of the northern municipality is similar to the one that existed in the pre-conflict context, and troublingly, part of the political context in which conflict arose. A transformation of the pre-conflict context is necessary to create the conditions for sustainable peacebuilding, this would enable organisations such as CBM to achieve its aims. Key to this would be the increasing political transparency, and public participation in the organisations that have the key objective to transform the pre-conflict (political) context.

The attempt of CBM to change intergroup relations encounters considerably resistance, so a more acceptable approach should be initiated. At first, CBM should focus on the realisation of legitimate governance administrations in both North and South Mitrovica (excluded the northern municipality). First by increasing the transparency and public participation in decision making. Then in the future, it

is certainly not inconceivable that these municipal administrations will (have to) increasingly cooperate.

Intergroup relations in Mitovica can be positively transformed, in a reflection of T-D approached externally assisted democratic state building. But only if the creation of a political context is made through consensus decision-making, and that legitimacy is created through cooperation between the currently divided communities and municipal administrations.

7.2 Post-Conflict Community Building and the role of the Political Context

To what extent does the political context determine post-conflict community building?

A post-conflict political context is determined by the domestic power sharing and governance processes. Community building intends to transform perceptions and behaviours, intergroup relations, and social structures. Based on the theoretical framework the following hypothesis has been stated:

If a post-conflict political context does not dissociate from the pre-conflict context, then the extent to which the political context determines successful community building will be decisively negative.

The prevention of (re)building pre-conflict structures is one of the objectives of a post-conflict democratisation process. If peacebuilding processes contribute to the reconstruction of structures similar to the pre-conflict ones, then the possibility of conflict reoccurrence increases. In accordance with the hypothesis this will negatively affect community building.

When the political context created is comparable to the pre-conflict political context, several problems will follow. That the context is characterised by the inability to make decisions through consensus, and that intergroup relations and social structures will subsequently resist the decision making processes. A political context in which the ability to make decisions through consensus is missing will then undermine the conditions for community building aiming, to transform intergroup relations and social structures.

The transformation of intergroup relations in community building processes can be hampered by many obstacles. Rebuilding the (former) conflicting communities in a post-conflict political context

seems almost unfeasible, and this is the picture confirmed by the analysis of the community building efforts of CBM.

Based on this research I argue that the focus of community building activities should be the transformation of individual perceptions and behaviours regarding governance and decision making at the local level. When achieving community participation a process can start that contributes to municipal transparency and participation in decision making. This process will subsequently create the essential municipal legitimacy. Legitimacy is essential for local governances to function properly. In the meanwhile, the overarching state-building process is supposed to create a context in which decisions will be consensus based. With local governances functioning legitimately, this process will automatically contribute to the transformation of intergroup relations and social structures. The transformed intergroup relations and social structures create a context that is the opposite of the pre-conflict context in which conflict occurred. This transformation can be part of sustainable peacebuilding.

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Appendices

Appendix I

Table 7: Interviews attended

	Name (s)	Organisation	Function(s)
1	Adrijana Hodzic	MPT	Director
2	Ana Gay	OSCE	Member of the North Mitrovica monitoring Team
3	Detlef Beisiegel	UAM	Acting Regional Representative
4	Georgios Makeroufas	EULEX	Political Advisor
5	Fehime Kurshumliu and Perparim Shala	OSCE	Political Advisors
6	Antonias Balaskos and Tomica Markovic	UAM	Capacity Building and Programme Development

Appendix II

Table 8: Interviews of which extracts were available

	Name (s)	Organisation	Function
1	Cevat Atila Ozturk	UAM	Liaison Officer
2	Faton Peci	Southern municipality	Assembly Member
3	Merita Perini	Southern municipality	Assembly Coordinator
4	Paolo Fraccaro and Fehime Karakashi	OSCE	Senior Democratisation Officer
5	Radmila Kostic	Northern municipality	Public Relations
6	Safet Kamberi	Southern municipality	Assembly Member
7	Sanja Jovanovska	Southern municipality	Local Community and Reporting Officer
8	Zenel Cetaku	UAM	Budget Officer

Appendix III

Table 9: Interviewees oversight

	Name	Nationality (cited)	Function
1	Anonymous	Serb	Project Assistant in the North
2	Davina Kosova	Kosovar/Albanian	Rock School Coordinator in the South
3	Fisnik Kumnova	Albanian	Coordinator of M-Magazine
4	Florentina Hajdari	Kosovar/Albanian	Programme Officer in the South
5	Anonymous	Serbian	Editor M-Magazine in the North
6	Lulzim Hakaj	Kosovar	Project Assistant in the South
7	Anonymous	Serb	Programme Officer in the North
8	Nikola Radicevic	Serbian	Rock School Coordinator in the North
9	Nemanja Nestorovic	Serbian	Finance Officer

10	Aferdita Sylaj	Albanian	Executive Director
11	Tijana Mihajlovic	Serbian	CRYM Executive Director

Appendix IV

Questionnaire

The following questionnaire has been the starting point for interviews regarding the implementation of activities by CBM in order of community building in Mitrovica and the way these are influenced by the political context.

[How are CBM activities influenced through the different political contexts in North and South Mitrovica?]

Personal and research introduction

Personal introduction (background) of the interviewee

Name:

Age:

Nationality:

With CBM since:

Function:

- What is the theory of change?
 - o What is the overall aim/objective of CBM?
 - o Is there a division between short and long term aims/objectives?
 - o How are projects supposed to contribute to these aims/objectives?
 - o What was/is the role of the community?
 - o Were/are there other parties involved?
 - o Was/is the municipality a participant/partner?

- Which aspects are successful? How come they are successful?
 - o When did they take place?
 - o What makes these aspects successful?
 - o How do they contribute to the overall aim/objective?
 - o What/who contributed in making these aspects successful?
 - o What role played other participants/partners?
 - o Was the municipality involved in one way or another?
 - o What were regarding the municipality as participant/partner obstructive factors?
 - o What were regarding the municipality as participant/partner supportive factors?
 - o In what way has the institutional context been obstructive?
 - o In what way has the institutional context been supportive?

- Which aspects are less successful? How come they are less successful?
 - o When did they take place?
 - o What makes these aspects less successful?
 - o Do they negatively influence the overall aim/objective?

- Who/what contributed to the aspects that caused these less successful developments?
 - What role played other participants/partners?
 - Was the municipality involved in one way or another?
 - What were regarding the municipality as participant/partner obstructive factors?
 - What were regarding the municipality as participant/partner supportive factors?
 - In what way has the institutional context been obstructive?
 - In what way has the institutional context been supportive?
- What are the differences between North and South?
- Do you have any idea about success differences taking place in parallel projects?
 - Do you have any idea what causes these differences?
 - Do you see differences in the role/influence of the municipality as a participant/partner?
 - Do you see differences in the role/influence of the institutional context?

Appendix V

Table 10: The ministries in Kosovo

1) Agriculture, Forestry and Rural Development
2) Community and Return
3) Culture, Youth and Sports
4) Economy and Finance
5) Education, Science and Technology
6) Energy and Mining
7) Environment and Spatial Planning
8) Foreign Affairs
9) Health
10) Internal Affairs
11) Justice
12) Kosovo Security Forces
13) Labour and Social Welfare
14) Local Government Administration
15) Public Administration
16) Trade and Industry
17) Transport and Telecommunication Ministry

(State Portal of the Republic of Kosova, 2009)

Appendix VI

Table 11: Organisations active and stationed in Kosovo cooperating with UNMIK

1) United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)
2) United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-HABITAT)
3) United Nations Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO)
4) United Nations High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR)
5) United Nations Children Fund (UNICEF)
6) United Nations World Health Organisation (WHO)
7) United Nations Volunteers (UNV)
8) United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA)
9) United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN Women)
10) The United Nations Office for Project Services (UNOPS)

11) International Labour Organisation (ILO)
12) The International Monetary Fund (IMF)
13) International Organisation for Migration (IOM)
14) The Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR)
15) World Bank (WB)

(UNMIK, 2012)

Appendix VII

Table 12: Objectives of the OSCE mission in Kosovo

1) The protection of community rights, including returns and reintegration of displaced persons, safety and freedom of movement, property rights, non-discrimination, participation in public life, access to education and other services, and language and culture preservation.
2) Municipal governance reform with a view to bettering the quality of services and public participation in decision-making.
3) Rule of law and human rights monitoring within the municipalities, courts and the police.
4) Support to and further development of independent institutions working with human rights, rule of law and elections.
5) Supporting anti-trafficking efforts.
6) Enhancing Assembly procedures and the oversight role over the executive, as well as all the communities' participation therein.
7) Further development of the public safety sector, including the police, customs and correctional services.
8) Strengthening print and broadcast media regulators.
9) Improving access to and quality of higher education for all communities.

(OSCE, 2012)

Appendix VIII

Table 13: OSCE objectives and means

Objective	Means
Strengthening legislative oversight.	By establishing a functional system of checks and balances and strengthening the role and impact of assemblies and the legislative committees a better implementation of municipal policies that contributes to improved public services can be realised.
Improving the quality of municipal legal acts.	The mission intends to help (local) government institutions to increase transparency. Advice is given to improve the quality of municipal legal acts that are submitted to the central government institutions for review. As will be explained below, a high level of self-regulation is exercised by local institutions. Assistance is offered in order of self-regulation that ensures human rights and good governance principles.
Supporting the local government reform process.	In order of self-regulation local government institutions are developing ongoing. To ensure local government autonomy part of the mission is continues monitoring and advising regarding self-governance developments. OSCE helps local governments by adopting competencies that are transferred from the ministries in Pristina. At the same time the mission facilitates the communication between the national and local government institutions. Another aspect is facilitating best practice exchange between the municipalities in order to support municipalities to deliver services to all communities in an optimal way.

Increasing public participation in decision making.	Part of the mission is encouraging the establishment of mechanisms that can help increase public participation in decision making. Through municipal, regional, and national projects and municipal dialogue with residents OSCE tries to raise public awareness of these mechanisms. On the other side, the mission aims to support civil society involvement in municipal decision making, especially of women, youth, and non-Albanian community organisations.
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(OSCE, 2012)

Appendix IX

Table 14: The municipal departments in South Mitrovica

1) Administration and personnel
2) Health
3) Education
4) Finance, economy and development
5) Urbanism and spatial planning
6) Cadastre, property and geodesy
7) Public services and infrastructure
8) Agriculture and rural development
9) Environmental protection
10) Inspection
11) Protection and rescue
12) Culture, youth and sport
13) Procurement
14) European integration and social welfare

(State Portal of the Republic of Kosova, 2009)

Appendix X

Table 15: The municipal departments in North Mitrovica

1) Inspection
2) Legal and property department
3) General administration
4) Finances
5) Social affaires
6) Economic development
7) Urbanism

(OSCE, 2011)

Appendix XI

Table 16: The departments of the Administrative Office of Northern Mitrovica

1) Department of General Administration
2) The Department of Finance and Economic Development
3) The Department of Local Communities Affairs and Public Relations
4) The Department of Health and Social Services Relations
5) The Department of Urban Planning, Cadastre and Inspections
6) The Department of Public Services and Infrastructure Investments
7) The Department of Education, Culture, Youth and Sport

(A. Hodzic, pers. comm., May 11th 2012 and F. Hajdari, pers. comm., July 11th 2012)

Appendix XII

Table 17: The departments of UNMIK Administration Mitrovica

1) The Department of General Administration
2) The Department of Finance and Economic Development
3) The Department of Local Communities Affairs and Public Relations
4) The Department of Health and Social Services Relations
5) The Department of Urban Planning, Cadastre and Inspections
6) The Department of Public Services and Infrastructure Investments
7) The Department of Education, Culture, Youth and Sport
8) The Department of Inspection

(UNMIK, 2012)