

*The Kosovo war tour:
dealing with
the country's war history
as a tour operator*



Image 1. "Adem Jashari" memorial complex, Prekaz, Kosovo. 31 May, 2018.

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*** Preface ***

The first time I visited Kosovo was three years ago in 2015. The country caught my interest and I have been going back there every year since. This is why the decision to focus on Kosovo for my research was quickly made. As a tourist, you stand out, because there are not many there. I have seen the beautiful and positive sides of Kosovo but at the same time I have noticed how the country, years after the war, still has a long way to go. With my research, I want to give a helping hand and combine tourism with the development of the country and dealing with the war history.

I have written this thesis for my master's degree in Human Geography: Cultural Geography & Tourism at the Radboud University, Nijmegen. I went to stay in the capital of Kosovo, Pristina, for three months and experienced what it is like to live there instead of just being a tourist. I hope this thesis can be of value to the person reading it.

Sarah Driessen

Gendt, 7 August, 2018

* Summary *

This research looks at the possibility of offering a war tour in Kosovo as a way to handle the war history of the country as a tour operator. Kosovo has a negative image among Dutch people, which is mostly caused by the country's war history. This is often also one of the only things that pops up in the minds of Dutch respondents when thinking about Kosovo.

The Kosovo war took place from February 1998 until June 11th 1999. The Kosovo Liberation Army fought against Serbian security forces. In 2008, the country finally declared its independence from Serbia. Kosovo is one of the poorest countries in Europe and has a high unemployment rate. It is not a popular tourist destination yet and the country is at the beginning of developing their tourism sector, so now is the time to figure out how the war history fits in there. Attracting more tourists to Kosovo can help the weak economy.

Dark tourism is a popular form of tourism and it is even becoming a larger part of the tourism offer around the world. This means that dark tourism offers the possibility for Kosovo to develop its tourism sector. Croatia has ignored the war history completely in their promotion, while Bosnia offers war tours through Sarajevo. These Sarajevo war tours are a success and provide an example to Kosovo.

Data is collected through surveys, interviews, and visiting the war locations myself. I also went on a tour myself and visited some locations with another Dutch tourist. I made use of observations and experiences, talking to people along the way, and e-mailed tour operators in Sarajevo. Important theoretical concepts are *dark tourism*, *authenticity*, *(un)ethical*, and the *tourism destination image*, which I looked at throughout my research. The opinion of locals is also included, which is often left out in dark tourism research.

Until now, the tour operator only included a few war locations in another type of tour, but they do not offer a complete Kosovo war tour. They are open to the idea and think it is the right time.

The war is still present in the landscape of the country and locals have not forgotten about it. Besides the memorial sites, there are smaller memorial sides alongside the road, statues and monuments in the capital, the national war figure Adem Jashari is portrayed at multiple places throughout the city, and war souvenirs and instruments are being sold. Memorial sites have benches for visitors and some have many flowers that are laying on the

graves.

Locals, however, are open to talking about their experiences, because it gives them the opportunity to teach foreigners about what happened. Talking about can also become part of the emotional process for some people.

The in-depth analysis of the experience at Kosovo war locations of another Dutch tourist has again showed that the war tour would work to attract Dutch people to the country. The tour guide is important if a tour is a success, which I have also noticed when I went on the tour through Pristina. It should not be rushed and there should be time for questions. The guide should also include personal experiences and tell stories that cannot be found online.

The negative war image of Kosovo can be used in a positive way, which is offering tourists a Kosovo war tour. This means that the negative tourism destination image of Kosovo can be used in a positive way, which can help change the image of Kosovo in a positive way. The war tour exists out of the places Račak, Prekaz, Pristina, Meja, Gjakova, and Gllogjan (Glodjane). The focus should be on educating people, making the prices not too high, and nothing leaving anything out. This will make the tour more ethically correct as well as authentic. The war tour includes beautiful surroundings and possibilities to sit down and eat and drink something.

Future research can focus on the results of having a war tour, whether this is in Kosovo or another country, when it comes to the number of tourist it attracts. This research is limited to Kosovo and only sets the first step towards a war tour by seeing it is a good idea and if the country has enough potential tour locations. The next step is to put the Kosovo war tour into practice.

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* Introduction *

When I told people I was going on vacation to Kosovo, they were surprised. My family asked me why I would want to go there or asked me questions such as “isn’t that a country in war?”. Even while I was in Kosovo, local people would ask me why I would choose to go on vacation here instead of a “typical” summer destination. This indicates that not a lot is known about the country except for the more negative images that are formed, among other things, by the war history. It also means that the reputation of Kosovo as a tourism destination is not good and has to be worked on.

The Yugoslavian wars have had a huge negative impact on the tourism sector of the region. Some of the tourist locations were directly targeted. Countries such as Bosnia, Croatia, but also Kosovo, saw a decrease in the number of tourists (Naef & Ploner, 2016). On the one hand, the wars resulted in the tourists staying away from the region. On the other hand, the wars created a whole new form of tourism, namely the touristification of the war memory. This is also called “war tourism” (Naef & Ploner, 2016), which is the general topic of my research and already exists in other countries, including Bosnia. The touristification of the war memory is done by placing war memorials and museums as well as organizing war tours (Naef & Ploner, 2016). I wonder how a tour operator can manage the war history of a country in a positive way.

In Croatia, for example, the Croatian tourism politics tries to distance the country from its war history as well as the image of being a war-torn country (Naef & Ploner, 2016). Yet, international bodies, such as UNESCO and the European Commission perceive tourism as a potential instrument to create peace. Tourism, however, can also increase a rise in the tensions surrounding memorials (Naef & Ploner, 2016). The management of tourism is an important research aspect to get a better understanding of memorial issues when looking at former-Yugoslavia (Naef & Ploner, 2016). This shows that war tourism can both have positive and negative effects (peace and tension) and that the management of war tourism is important. Most of the research is done in the regions that are seen as “the most war-torn”, for instance Sarajevo. Kosovo, however, has also been affected by the wars and, as said before, the Kosovar tourism sector also saw a decline in tourists. Nowadays, former-Yugoslavian

countries such as Croatia and Bosnia seem to be more appealing for foreign tourists and Kosovo does not fall under the category of popular Balkan destinations.

Since Kosovo is a young country, tourism is still at the beginning and the war is still recent as well. Now is the time to figure out if and how to make use of this war history. My interest in this topic is formed by visiting Kosovo multiple times myself and having seen with my own eyes that it has a lot of potential, but also noticing the negative questions and remarks about the country.



Image 2. Newborn Monument, Pristina, Kosovo. 16 April, 2018. Photo by Sarah Driessen.

The Newborn monument in Pristina, Kosovo (image 2) refers to the country's independence and it being a young new country. The seven letters were revealed at the moment that Kosovo declared its independence from Serbia. The design of the letters have been changed multiple times over the years. At first, they were yellow and people wrote their names on it. After five years, the flags of all the countries that recognize Kosovo as an independent state were portrayed on it (Kosovo Information, 2018). This year (2018), the letters "B" and "O" are replaced by the number "10" to mark the 10-year anniversary of Kosovo. This monument also marks their "victory" in the Kosovo Independence War. Victory is probably not the right word, but they eventually got their independence from Serbia as Kosovo wanted during the Kosovo war.

Behind the Newborn monument, you can see the picture of Adem Jashari in the distance. He was an important figure during the Kosovo war and is a national figure

nowadays, which will become clear later on. Adem Jashari is part of the road that led to the independence of Kosovo and the Newborn monument that symbolizes it.

On the 9th of April, 2018, I went to Kosovo to begin my research and learn more about the country's war history and what is left of it ten years after their independence from Serbia.

* Research questions & objectives *

The main question that I want to answer with my research is *how can the war history of Kosovo be used by the tour operator in order to attract more tourists, so should this history be ignored while promoting the country to tourists or can it be used in a positive way by offering a war tour?*

To answer this main research question, I will first provide answers to these sub-questions:

- The research internship organization: Which elements of war are already included by the tour operator and in what way? Which aspects are left out and why? How do they try to step away now from the negative image of being a war-torn country? Which war locations in Kosovo does the company suggest for the war tour? What is their view on a Kosovo war tour?
- What general image does Kosovo have among Dutch people? In how far is the war history part of this image? Do Dutch people show any interest in visiting Kosovo?
- Which locations related to the Kosovo war should be included in the war tour? Why or why not? What are my own experiences and observations at the war locations?
- What kind of war tour does Bosnia, another former-Yugoslavian country, offer to tourists? Is this a success? What are the positive and negative aspects of these war tours? How do the locals feel about this?
- What are the responses of a Dutch tourist on two of the war locations, besides my own experiences and observations?
- How do locals feel about tourists visiting their country specifically for the Kosovo war? Are they open to sharing their own experiences in the war?

Countries such as Germany, The Netherlands or England have also been in war, but the war in Kosovo has been more recent. Not many people are still alive that have been through the Second World War and especially not the First World War. Yet, in Kosovo the events are still present in the minds of the locals. The opinion of the locals is important to me, because, on the one hand, maybe not everyone wants to be confronted with the war history since the conflict is not that long ago and they might rather forget about it. On the other hand, some locals might want to talk about it and give tourists their side of the story and make it

part of their healing process.

One tour operator, *Kosovo Holidays DMC*, said to me that they want to move past the war by focusing on other elements of the country, such as the beautiful nature, culture, and food. They do not offer anything that is related to dark tourism or war (*Kosovo Holidays DMC*, personal communication, 8 January, 2018). Their response indicates that they definitely would not want to organize a war tour through Kosovo. They do not want to promote dark tourism in the country, because they view Kosovo as a young and dynamic country. Besides this, they feel that Kosovo has a lot more to offer than war tourism. According to them, the interest in the war will fade away eventually and the war is something in the past (*Kosovo Holidays DMC*, personal communication, 8 January, 2018).

Yet, I feel that the history should not be pushed aside and people should not pretend it never happened, because it is part of how the country grew to be the way it is now. I, too, see Kosovo as a young new country, but that does not mean that the country has not got any interesting history. Even though I agree Kosovo has more to offer than just the war, I think the war can be part of how Kosovo is promoted for tourists. I find it weird that they think that the interest in the Kosovo war will fade away, because, as said before, the interest in the first and Second World War have not faded away either. Of course, these have been way bigger wars than the one in Kosovo and more countries involved, but it does show the tourists' interest in war. Plus, every war has a huge impact on the people experiencing it, whether it is a small or large war.

My survey among Dutch people will indicate if the Kosovo war is still in the minds of people that could be potential tourists, which I suspect is the case. In addition, that the tour operator wants to move away from it does not mean that the foreign tourists have forgotten about it, because the negative image connected to the war still seems to exist by the responses I get from visiting Kosovo, specifically from Dutch people. The tour operator has to deal with the war elements in one way or the other, so why not use it in their advantage?

Tourists are often interested in the history of a country, so then why should it be left out when wars are part of that history. Typical examples are Auschwitz and first and Second World War museums which are popular tourist attractions and are given much attention as being important aspects of history.

In Bosnia-Herzegovina, tours are already given that focus on the Bosnian war. There are, of course, a lot of sites around the world that are connected to war and suffering. I, however, would like to make a comparison between a tour operator in another former-Yugoslavian country and Kosovo, which can give an example and possibly show a good way

to include the war history in the tourism supply of Kosovo.

A limitation of my research could be that not everyone would want to talk to me about the war subject, but this response can also indicate that, then, promoting tourism focused on this subject is not a good idea either. If not many people are open to the idea of “opening those old (but quite recent) wounds”, then the tour operator should probably leave it out. Another issue might be that information is not available in English, whether this is at the war locations or online. At the war locations would show that there is no focus on foreign visitors (yet).

I do not intend to say that Kosovo should focus on their negative image and promote themselves as a “bad” country to tourists. Instead I am saying that the war history and elements related to the war that are visually present in the country can be used in a positive way to attract tourists.

The outcome of my research could be that the tour operator should focus on other elements than the war in order to attract tourists. I do, however, began this research with the mindset that including the war elements can help attract more tourists and create a more positive image of Kosovo.

My research is limited to Kosovo, since no case study is exactly the same. Yet, this gives an in-depth look at the chosen case study and it can provide an example for other countries. Besides this, the dark tourism sites for my research are also limited to the interests of the organization, but this is a result of looking at the topic from their perspective.

As I said before, there are way more “obvious” dark tourism sites than Kosovo, meaning that these dark tourism locations are already popular among tourists, but this also made Kosovo as a case study more interesting to me. The country has the potential to become a dark tourism location as well. Kosovo is at the beginning of developing their tourism sector and is a young country, so a lot of research can still be done and I would like to help cover one aspect of it, namely how to positively include the war history in the promotion of the country.

I will research if the general theory of dark tourism does or does not work in Kosovo by seeing if it is possible and a good idea to organize a war tour through the country. In other words, the dark tourism theory will be applied in Kosovo. If it turns out to be a bad idea, then it shows that creating the possibility for war tourism is not always a way to attract more tourists. First I will begin with looking at the scientific and societal relevance of my research.

* Scientific & societal relevance *

Kosovo's poverty rate is 29.7 percent and the unemployment rate is 32.9, according to the United Nations (UNDP, 2018). Kosovo takes up third place in the top 10 poorest countries in Europe (World Atlas, 2018). Attracting more tourists could have a positive effect on the development of the country. Tourism is one of the most important drivers for socio-economic process and many developing or less developed countries benefit from this sector. In addition, tourism is one of the sectors that has seen the most growth in the past couple of years (UNWTO). This gives the opportunity for Kosovo to be part of the growth in tourism and war tourism can be one of the ways to attract more tourists. The fact that the Kosovo Tourism Council has been formed and the Law of Tourism has been approved, indicates that Kosovo is aware that tourism is important for the economic development of the country (Halili, 2018). As said in the introduction, the Yugoslavian wars caused a drop in the number of tourists visiting the region, so my research can, hopefully, help flourish the tourism sector in the country.

Philip Stone mentions that the literature available about dark tourism is wide-ranging and remains theoretically weak (Stone, 2006). Stone also says that there is a lot of research and media interest in the field of dark tourism (Stone, 2006). Between 1996 and 2010, only three to seven articles about the subject appeared in a year. From 2011 until 2016, every year between 14 and 25 articles were peer-reviewed (Bitran, 2017). This indicates that the phenomenon has become a more popular research subject over the past few years. The Institute for Dark Tourism Research is promoting dark tourism research. It shows that still a lot is left to research.

I add something to the dark tourism debate, more specifically that of war tourism in a former-Yugoslavian country. I will mostly add if dark tourism can be applied in a country that has experienced war, but where dark tourism is not a popular phenomenon yet. In addition, I am looking at a way to use a war for a positive cause, namely attracting more tourists to a country, specifically Dutch people. This also answers the question if Dutch people are a

potential dark tourism market to focus on for Kosovo.

The attraction of locations associated with death and disaster will probably become an important part in the tourism sector, mostly in Europe. Knowledge and sensitivity are needed for tourism professionals (Liyanage & Coca-Stefaniak & Powell, 2015). I am focusing on a country in Europe. In addition, it is good to have more knowledge about dark tourism in this country so that the tourism businesses can use the rise of dark tourism in their advantage.

I did find scientific articles about dark tourism in other former-Yugoslavian countries, such as Bosnia and Croatia, but nothing specifically about dark tourism in Kosovo. I only found a blog and an article about people who visited and analyzed a few dark tourism sites in Kosovo. Yet, the blog focusses on the motivations for war (The Bohemian Blog, 2016) and the article only talks about the memorials dedicated to the KLA (Di Lellio, 2013). I am including this way of doing research (visiting the places) in my own research as well. They, however, do not focus on what I am researching, namely if these war locations in Kosovo can be used as a way to attract tourists with a war tour and therefore using the war history in a positive way.

The perspective of local communities is often forgotten in dark tourism research. New research should focus on how local communities are impacted by and their response on being a dark tourism destination (Light, 2017). This is one of the aspects that I focus on to see if it is a good idea to offer a war tour, so I am adding to the research of local opinion when it comes to this subject.

My research with Kosovo as a case study could also be useful for other countries and tour operators by providing an example, as I will use Bosnia as an example. Countries where war is part of the history but this history is not as obvious as it is in other countries. For instance, Germany's history of the Second World War is a lot more obvious. This will give the less famous tourist destinations a chance to use dark tourism as a way to attract more tourists as well if it can work in Kosovo.

Kosovo is not a popular tourism destination (yet), so more information to attract more tourists is surely helpful. While I was already in Kosovo, Lonely Planet, a popular travel guide, published a top 10 of the best destination to visit in Europe for 2018. (Balkan Insight, 2018). This again indicates that Kosovo is at the beginning of becoming popular. Assuming the negative image of Kosovo among Dutch people, which I will research later on, this is the time to win over tourists to come to Kosovo. Being in the top 10 of destinations can give people an extra push to visit. Now is the time to figure out what to do with the war history when promoting the country.

* Literature review & theoretical framework *

The main general concept that refers to connecting war with tourism is *dark tourism*. The concept of dark tourism gives an idea of the positive and negative aspects of using war elements as a way to attract more tourists. Dark tourism refers to people visiting places that are associated with death or human suffering. These places can be affected by, for instance, natural disasters, violence, wars, and political unrest. Dark tourism at war locations is also called war tourism. It is said that places associated with war can be seen as possibly the “largest single category of tourist attractions in the world” (Stone, 2006).

Philip Stone, who is the executive director of the Institute for Dark Tourism Research, writes about dark tourism and his work pops up in multiple other articles, which indicates he has a big influence in the field of dark tourism research. He notes that people are curious to find out more about what is going on in the world. Modern society is fast and globalized. We have access to different kinds of social media, such as Facebook and Twitter, so it is logical that people have become more aware of what happens on the other side of the world and can be interested in this (Stokes, 2013).

Dark tourism exists out of multiple categories, according to Philip Stone. War-related sites are only a subcategory of all the places that are associated with death and suffering (Stone, 2006). Stone distinguishes seven categories of dark tourism attractions. The first category consists out of *Dark Fun Factories*. These are very commercial and have an entertaining purpose, such as a Dungeon (Stone, 2006). The second category is *Dark Exhibitions*, which are meant to educate people and they have a message to commemorate or reflect. These do have a commercial focus and tourism infrastructure to some extent. They are also located away from the actual event (Stone, 2006). *Dark Dungeons* take up the third category. These Dungeons refer to prisons and courthouses. The fourth category are the *Dark Resting Places* that are cemeteries or grave markers (Stone, 2006). The fifth one is called the *Dark Shrines* and these places want to remember and show respect for the deceased people. They are near where the event took place and were put there after a short period of time

(Stone, 2006). *Dark Conflict Sites* are put together in a sixth category and these places and activities are connected to warfare (Stone, 2006). The last category is *Dark Camps of Genocide*. These sites have the common theme of genocide, cruelty, and catastrophes (Stone, 2006). The seven categories by Philip Stone are overlapping, because, for example, *Dark Conflict Sites* can be used to educate people and genocide can be part of warfare as well.

Having all these different categories of dark tourism can cause problems. The difference between the significance of history and humanity at one site, such as Auschwitz, and the insignificance of this at other places, such as dungeons, is huge. Random phenomena are put together in the same category (dark tourism). The risk of dark tourism research is that the results can have multiple different interpretations (Roberts and Stone, 2014).

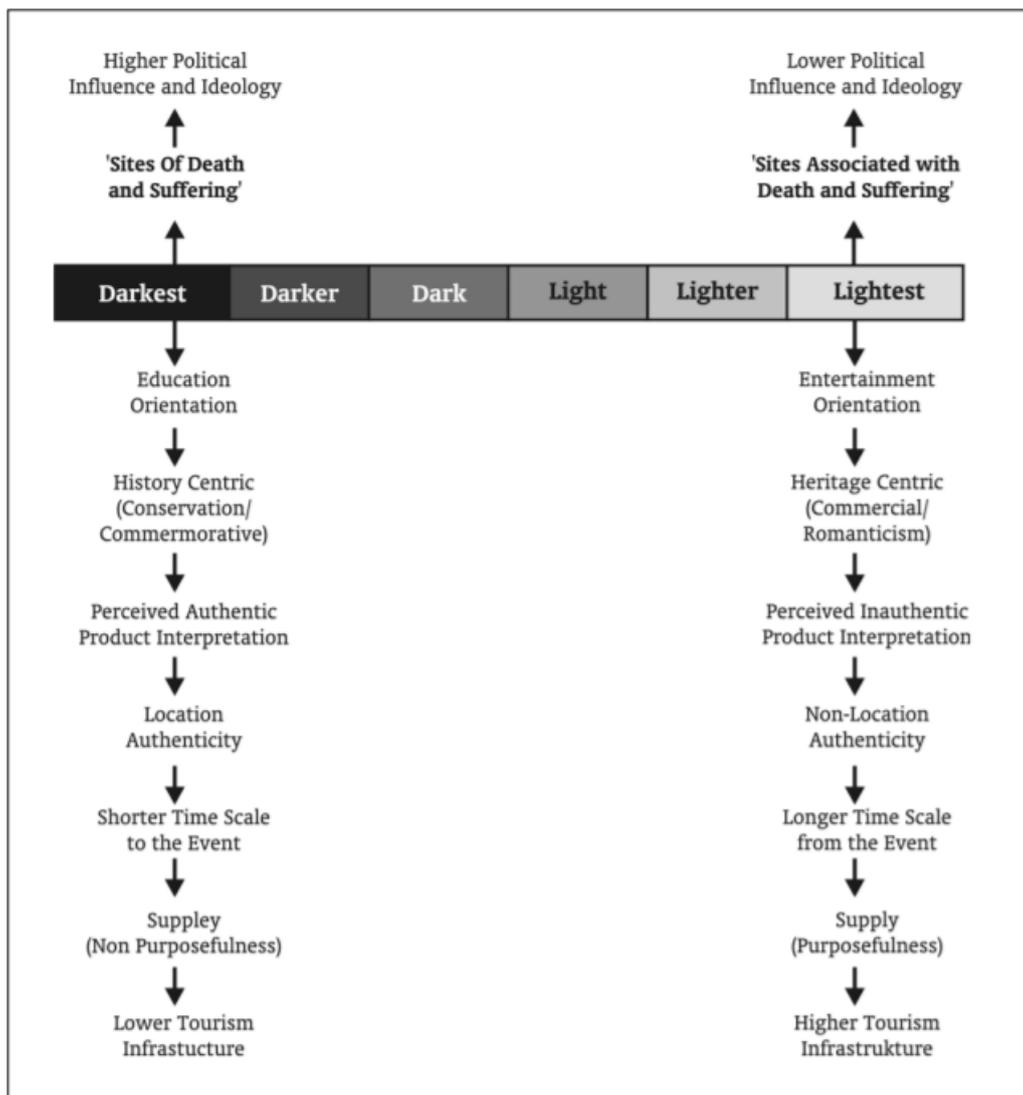


Image 3. A dark tourism spectrum: perceived product features of dark tourism within a 'darkest-lightest' framework of supply. From: Stone, Philip. (2006). "A Dark Tourism Spectrum: towards a typology of death and macabre-related tourist sites, attractions and exhibitions."

Stone talks about the dark tourism spectrum and tries to make a conceptual framework for the supply of dark tourism attractions. This gives a “*darkest-lightest tourism paradigm*” (image 3), which means that there are supposedly different “shades” of dark tourism. The darker the tourist place, the shorter the time between now and the event. These events can be recalled by the living, so the tourists can have more empathy. The places on the darker side of the scale mostly have location authenticity, because it actually happened at that place. There was also no intention to make this place an attraction, but it became one. Stone sees the interpretation of a product as something authentic. The darker tourism sites are also often at the center of history and people try to present it in an educational or commemorative way. Yet, the darker tourism sites have less infrastructure than the lighter ones, since the lightest ones are designed for tourism. The darkest ones have more political influence and ideology is involved (Stone, 2006).

Stone also offers a *thanatological framework*, which refers to studying death. It looks at the relationship between social-cultural perspectives from this time, the way people feel about human mortality, and the role of dark tourism to confront people with death (Stone & Sharpley, 2008). This framework focusses on helping individuals (tourists) to find a meaning of life. The idea is that dark tourism eventually says more about life than death. In addition, dark tourism confronts people with reality, that of life and social order. This framework sees dark tourism as a way to improve the overall well-being of someone and it helps them get a feeling of security (Stone & Sharpley, 2008). This seems to be a positive perspective to take on dark tourism, instead of seeing dark tourism as just something gruesome.

A *sociological framework* is given by Robert Hertz. Dark tourism is said not only to be a way of paying respect, but it also helps to overcome the negative feelings about a place. In this way, the dark tourism trip becomes part of an emotional negotiation process (Amirtha, 2015). This seems similar to *the thanatological framework* by Philip Stone, since both assume that dark tourism can positively help the individual in some way.

Common wisdom notes that tourism does not exist in places where there is political or social unrest. Yet, there are many examples that show dark tourism is really happening there. This form of tourism could possibly give local tourists the opportunity to confront themselves and recognize the (former) dangerous or difficult situation, instead of ignoring the events (Amirtha, 2015).

Foreign tourists can have multiple *motivations* to visit a dark tourism site. These motivations can be curiosity, empathy, and simply the interest in horror. Another motivation can be that the place is of religious significance to a person (Amirtha, 2015). Some people

say that dark tourism is about searching for the “forbidden”. Other say it is not necessary about searching for death. Many scholars report that the motive is that people want to learn about events from the past, which drives them to such places. Yet, respondents do not want to be seen in a negative light. This can result in doubts about the truth in the data received, especially when it is about sensitive topics, and make it difficult to find out about accurate motives (Bitran, 2017).

Dark tourism is also not *experienced* by every visitor in the same way. They can feel patriotism or have a fascination with the site. Besides this, friends and families can come to the place to mourn or deal with other emotions, since they are the ones who have to process the trauma (Amirtha, 2015).

The issue with dark tourism is that it can be seen as *unethical*. Visiting a dark tourism site can be insensitive towards the local people who have suffered through it. Dark tourism can be very useful for the tourism industry, but then it has to be educational for tourists and beneficial for the locals in order for it to be more ethical (Amirtha, 2015). Communities can find it insensitive to use dark tourism products. It is viewed as opportunism and unacceptable. An example in South Australia shows that the community was not eager to have a development of dark tourism products (Kim and Butler, 2015). According to Stone, there is a lot of literature about this ethical issue in dark tourism and the opinions about it turned out to be divided among locals (Kim and Butler, 2015).

One article says that people need to respect the places that they visit. No things should be taken or touched and no happy selfies should be made in front of a place where something terrible happened. If dark tourism sites are respected by people from the perspective that life is valuable, instead of people visiting these places because of excitement, then the author believes that people will not behave negatively (Bitran, 2017).

Another article says about this issue that the way people act at a dark tourism location remains important, because tourists can still act disrespectful or unsympathetic at, for instance, a memorial place. In that way, the real purpose of a memorial is diminished. So, it is a difficult process because there has to be a balance at these dark tourism locations. The tourists should be motivated to visit a memorial, but they have to act in a certain way when they arrive at the location. This type of behavior should conform to the ideals of those people who try to keep the memory of the events alive and want to tell the political narrative that belongs to a place. This indicates how complex the issue is and that dark tourism can be damaging as well as helpful (Stokes, 2013).

There are articles available about war tourism in other former-Yugoslavian countries,

especially Bosnia. In Bosnia, handling the dark heritage after the war turned out to be difficult. The dark heritage became important in the way that it is the only physical evidence that is left of the war. It stops history from being re-written. In addition, these places keep the memory alive and it will be passed on to new generations. This is why they want to protect the dark heritage and it has to be conserved, not neglected. Besides this, tourism in a post-conflict country can help with social normalization as well as with creating social stability among different groups that are living together in a post-conflict environment (Kamber & Karafotias & Tsitoura, 2016).

In Croatia, they handled their war history completely different. The government has tried to portray Croatia as a conflict-free country. Besides this, it is supposed to be an European destination without any Slavic connections or local characteristics that stand out. The goal of this was to convince tourist that Croatia is a safe place to visit as well as a good place to invest as a foreigner. They say that without this, the country's economy would probably have collapsed and the capacity of the government to operate would have been questioned. Yet, this can cause issues in the future, because they have nothing to differentiate themselves from other countries and this can also result in political tensions. They have made a decision in what to include in the promotion of the country and what not (Rivera, 2008).

The *tourism destination image* is created by multiple sources, namely promotion, other people's opinions, the media, and popular culture (Govers & Go & Kumar, 2007). The destination image is important to gaining the loyalty of the tourist. A long-lasting relationship is achieved when the satisfaction of the tourist at the location is done proactively, which can be beneficial for the ones offering the tourism product as well as for the tourist. At the same time, the destination image helps the tourist to be satisfied and become loyal. When the overall image of a place according to an individual has improved, then it is more likely that they will be positive about their stay at that destination. The chances are higher that they will return and recommend the place to others. Literature has also shown that destination loyalty is important. In addition, the destination has to offer appropriate products and services so that competitiveness among destinations increases (Geng-Qing Chi & Qu, 2008).

According to an article about the "Management role in development of tourism, Kosovo case" by Halil Halili, *management* in the tourism industry is on its way of becoming very important in the development of tourist destinations. This means that the role of management is crucial in creating and managing the tourist offers, at levels varying from local communities to business organizations. The article also mentions that modern management plays an important part in tourism development. It is crucial to begin invest in

new tourism programs that will proceed the tourist offer. He specifically says that Kosovo should focus on the mountains, its heritage, medical tourism, and its history (Halili, 2015).

A new Netflix-original documentary *Dark Tourist* is about a journalist from New Zealand, David Farrier, who visits dark tourist sites all around the world. Every episode is focused on a particular country or region, such as Europa, Japan or Southeast Asia (Fryer, 2018). The fact that this is on Netflix shows that the phenomenon has become popular and interests people. It also indicates that research is being done on the subject. Besides this, it is still quite new and a lot can be found out and researched.

Throughout the documentary series, Farrier mentions multiple reasons why people would want to visit a specific dark tourism site. He talks about *escapism*, meaning that people go on a weird holiday to escape their own dull life. It pushes the tourists out of their comfort zones and in the end it can make them feel happier to be alive. During his visits, he asks tourists why they are visiting the place as well. Answers include that they just want to know more about the history and that they have no standpoint on the situation. Others just say that the dark tourist spot is an interesting place to come and check it out and they enjoy the creepy atmosphere. Farrier says here that dark tourism is all about finding something beautiful and unexpected (Fryer, 2018).

Farrier also includes some negative aspects of some dark tourist locations. In the United States, bachelorette parties are held on a tour about an infamous serial killer, Jeffrey Dahmer. Farrier also did not like it when the tour guide tried to call on the spirit of the serial killer. He said it was tacky, annoying, and disrespecting when it comes to the victims and their loved ones (Fryer, 2018). This agrees with the two articles saying that the way people act at a dark tourism site is very important.

The location of the John F. Kennedy assassination seems to be *exploited for money* and the business is flourishing. One tour guide said that he is not in the business for the money, but to spread the truth. Another tour guide has a creative take on history and makes some things up or exaggerates to make it sound more exiting. There seems to be a market for it and people want to be entertained. Farrier notes that maybe people have to be shocked so that the past is not forgotten (Fryer, 2018).

In addition, Farrier visited a Second World War reenactment where people dressed up as soldiers and roleplayed. It looks quite authentic, but they did not want to refer to the Germans as Nazis. They do not want to offend anyone, so they avoid the inconvenient parts of history (Fryer, 2018). Yet, this then makes it less authentic or maybe some aspects of history should not be brought back and remembered. This, however, is how Croatia handled

being a post-conflict country, but they went even more to the extreme by ignoring everything that happened and promote themselves as a conflict-free country (Rivera, 2008). It is said, however, that tourists are looking for *authenticity* when going on a trip (Uriely 983).

I will use some of these perspectives in my own research. This will be explained in the next chapter.

* Theoretical approach *

I will visit places in Kosovo and see what the (potential) dark tourist sites are like. I think this is the best way to see with my own eyes if the war places in Kosovo are interesting enough to attract dark tourists. The Netflix-original documentary *Dark Tourist* has given me confirmation that this way of doing research works, because he has found out a lot this way. The journalist has been able to ask the opinion of locals and ask tourists why they visit the place. In addition, it has shown some negative aspects and the business part of dark tourism. I mainly want to make sure that elements of history are not left out or exaggerated just to please the tourists. The tourists have to be given accurate information. The journalist from the documentary has been able to gather a lot of information by experiencing it himself and observing the negative and positive sides of war locations, so it seems to be a good approach for my research as well.

I want to use the concept of *dark tourism* as a way to find out if Kosovar tour operators should include the war in the promotion of the destination. Dark tourism is a popular form of tourism. This could then be a good way to promote tourism in Kosovo, since there is now a large market for it. I will look at the educational aspect of dark tourist sites. Other reasons to visit the places can be curiosity, empathy or the interest in horror (Amirtha, 2015). I do not want to attract tourists simply because it is entertaining. There has to be the possibility to learn more about the war history, which I will find out by visiting the places myself. I will then also find out in how far the sites are still places for family and friends to mourn (Amirtha, 2015). The tourists I focus on are the ones that are drawn to dark tourism places because they are interested in learning more about the past events, which can be one of the motives (Bitran, 2017). Besides this, mentioned in the literature is that they have to be respectful and, hopefully, that is what happens by focusing on attracting tourists who want to learn something about the war by offering this in a war tour.

For my research, looking at the seven dark tourism categories provided by Philip Stone, I will focus on the category that refers to war tourism, which is the sixth category of warfare *Dark Conflict Sites*. This seems to be the one that is most obviously connected to war

history. Yet, I think that other categories will be present in Kosovo, too, namely the fifth category of remembrance and respect (*Dark Shrines*) as well as the fourth category that refers to cemeteries (*Dark Resting Places*). These are indirectly connected to the war history. Besides these, the last and seventh category of genocide and cruelty also seems to apply to the Kosovo war (*Dark Camps of Genocide*).

These categories are overlapping and I will see combinations of these categories when visiting the war places in Kosovo. The cemeteries are sites of remembrance and respect. Genocide and cruelty have taken place before making the memorial and these events happened during warfare. I also wonder in how far dark tourism war sites can be seen as entertaining, because as a tourist you are usually going on vacation to have some fun but how much fun can a place be that is related to death without it becoming unethical?

The war sites in Kosovo are on the *darker spectrum*, meaning that they are focusing on educating, conservation, and commemoration. The events took place at those locations (location authenticity) and have not been that long ago so people who have experienced it are still alive, which in return gives the tourists more empathy, according to Stone. The war memorials were not build as an attraction, but to remember the people who died, and it is at the center of the history of a country. This works in favor of the war tour, because it would mean that the war tour would be more ethical and educational by existing out of darker tourism places. There is not much infrastructure, meaning not many people visit it, but I want to help with this by creating a war tour.

In addition, I will look at the *authenticity* and if parts are left out when visiting the war sites, which the documentary talk about as well, and find out more about the Kosovo war history. Maybe some people also feel that parts should be left out or they do not want to offend people, such as Serbs. Yet, I think that the war tour should be as authentic as possible, so that tourists will get well informed on the war history of Kosovo. Especially because it is difficult to find accurate information online in English. I am looking at the question if a Kosovar tour operator should ignore the war history, which Croatia did. Yet, I think the war tour can be a way to conserve the war history, because people will actually visit the war locations. The history will then not be forgotten or rewritten but instead it is spread among visitors. This agrees with the way Bosnia handles its dark heritage.

I also focus on creating a new tourism program that broadens the tourism offer. In this case I am looking at the history of Kosovo, which the article by Halil Halili mentions as one of the options that Kosovo should use. He also notes the importance of management in tourism (Halili, 2015). I will look at the *management* of tourism in Kosovo, because I want to

find a good way to manage their war history, and the war image it has created, by offering a war tour for tourists.

I will include a *sociological framework*. The idea is that war tourism can be negative, because it uses the pain of locals to make profit. This framework says that war locations are about paying respect as well as a way to overcome negative feelings, meaning it can be part of an emotional process (Amirtha, 2015). By using this framework, I can figure out if locals can profit from dark tourism, because it might help them process the events. Dark tourism has to be educational and beneficial for locals if it wants to be *ethical* (Amirtha, 2015). Locals can disagree with dark tourism and might view it as unacceptable (Kim and Butler, 2015). The locals and their experiences should also not be exploited for money. I wonder how the locals in Kosovo look at it.

I am not researching the motivations of tourists to visit Kosovo, because that would require a second research. Instead, I look at the offer of dark tourism. The purpose of the memorials are to commemorate. Curiosity and wanting to learn more are the motivations I hope exist among Dutch people in order to find out if the tour operator should offer a war tour. Most importantly, the *war image* should be a motivation to come to Kosovo because they want to learn more about it. If the dark tourism offer is done in the right way (educational) then people will probably be respectful and open to learn more about the war. This means that I am also focusing on how *unethical* it is to visit the places in Kosovo. Besides, I might see other tourists' behavior when I visit the places myself. I want to design a war tour that is focused on educating by giving the possibility to learn a lot about the history of Kosovo at the war locations, which is a more ethical way.

I will also look at the *tourism destination image*, because my focus is to turn the negative image (of war) in Kosovo into a positive image of the country by using the war as an advantage to attract tourists. I will look at the tourism destination image of Kosovo among Dutch people. The whole research idea came from the negative image of Kosovo as a tourism destination. The tour operator will have to include the war elements, or not, when promoting Kosovo to tourists and I will research if and in what way this should be done. I focus on the promotion of the country by the tour operator as well as on other people's opinions when looking at the concept of a tourist destination image. The opinions of locals as well as tourists matters to see if the image of the country can be improved by applying dark tourism.

So, my theoretical approach exists, to start with, out of visiting the dark tourism places myself. The concepts that I will use include *authenticity*, *management*, *(un)ethical*, and the *tourism destination image*. I will also look at Kosovo from the a *sociological perspective*. At

the heart of all of it is *dark tourism* with the possible war tour locations being on the darker side of the spectrum. The next chapter is about the methods I will use to obtain the data needed for my research.

* Methodology *

I will use qualitative research as well as a case study, which is Kosovo. Qualitative research gives the opportunity to find out more about the reasons, motivations, and opinions of people involved. The strength of case study research is then that I will get in-depth and detailed information about a specific case. In addition, a case study can prove that a general theory is wrong, because it does not apply to another case. Case studies also make it possible to get more insight in a phenomenon, when this is not possible in any other way. It gives the possibility to answer the questions “how?” or “why?”. I am looking at the “how” when doing my research.

Probably the biggest critique people have when it comes to a single case study is that it is, according to them, not possible to generalize a single case. This would mean that one case study cannot be worth anything to the scientific development of an issue (Flyvbjerg, 2006). An in-depth case study, however, is able to show a falsification within a theory. The observation of an element that steps away from the suggested theory makes a case study useful since it further develops the theory. This means that the case study can, unlike suggested, be useful when it is generalized (Flyvbjerg, 2006). Even when I do not find an element that does not agree with the theory, this does not mean that my case study will be useless. Finding evidence that the theory seems to agree with the practice is also useful, because it proves that the theory turns out to be right for this case study. Yet, from a distance it can look obvious, while an up-close look can show that not everything is so easily explained. A case study gives the possibility to get this closer look.

Besides this, some say that knowledge about a theory is more useful than knowledge about things in practice (Flyvbjerg, 2006). I very much disagree with this. The theory can be used to find out more about a specific case in practice. Theory is useful, but I am more interested about what happens in real life. I enjoyed the quote by Hans Eysenck who said that, “sometimes we simply have to keep our eyes open and look carefully at individual cases – not in the hope of proving anything, but rather in the hope of learning something!” (Flyvbjerg, 2006). I would like to have this state of mind when researching my topic. Of course, using

theory is important but it is more exciting to find something out yourself instead of just following the footsteps of the theory. If I do that, I probably miss a lot of relevant and interesting information.

The issue with using a case study can be to construct validity. This means that someone can say that it is purely my opinion, so it is subjective. If I, however, make my case study as specific as possible, then it is not all based on opinion. I should also make it as transparent as possible, meaning that other people can follow my footsteps and understand how I came to my conclusions. I will explain my experiences and observations clearly.

The perfect case study should include five elements, namely the elements of significance, completeness, alternative perspectives, evidences, and written in an interesting way (Fridlund, 1997). This shows that a case study is more than just an opinion. In addition, the biggest reason to do a case study is because the real-life situation cannot be explained by using surveys or experimental strategies (Fridlund, 1997). It actually indicates that a case study gives an extra dimension, namely that something goes from paper to real life. This also shows that not everything can be done by just using theory, because the situation in real life is usually too complex. What I want to do is bring the idea of war tourism from paper to real life by creating a Kosovo war tour.

An instrumental case study uses the case study as a tool to get more insight in a phenomenon. The phenomenon in this case is war tourism and the case study will show an in-depth analysis of this phenomenon.

Using a case study fits my research, because I am looking to answer the question if war history can be used in a positive way to attract more tourists. Every country has another history, so I focus on one specific case study, which is Kosovo, to see if it is a good idea. The war tour could be really put into practice. Kosovo is the right case study, because the country is at the beginning of developing its tourism sector and dark tourism is not yet a popular phenomenon there. The war has not been that long ago, so now is the time to figure out what to do with this war history when it comes to tourism.

Unfortunately, the Institute for Dark Tourism Research in England does not have the possibility to help me with my research. I approached them through e-mail, but the response was that they receive many requests from all over the world and they are not able to provide this many people with extra help. Instead they sent some useful websites where I can find sources. This, however, does show that many people are interested in dark tourism research, but also that there is still much left to be researched about the phenomenon. That there even is a special institute that focusses on dark tourism already shows that it is a big part of tourism in

general.

As I mentioned in the theoretical approach, I will visit the war locations myself and include my own experiences and observations. Most importantly, this will give me an answer to the question if the war location is interesting enough and worth the effort to visit. I will also observe in how far the war locations still show the importance of the war to people nowadays and learn more about the war itself. I will describe my own experiences to give a specific atmosphere for other tourists, so I am using a narrative, story-telling form.

When visiting the war sites, I will focus on elements that show the importance of the place, such as flowers and benches, and how much information I can gain about the events at the locations. I will also get an impression of how popular the sites already are by the number of visitors that are there besides me. Hopefully, I will run into people who can tell me more about the Kosovo war. The amount of time I spend there depends on the size of the place and how interesting it is. I will make notes and take pictures that are related to these questions. On a day I will visit one or two war sites. I will go to the war sites by myself and use busses as well as taxis to get there. Later, I write down my experiences/observations in a narrative way and include pictures to provide an even better image of the places.

I am using this method, because I want to attract more tourists by designing a war tour. The descriptions of my visits give a clear impression of what it is like for a tourist to visit the locations and the locations have to be worth it, otherwise a war tour is not a good idea. I am a tourist myself so I am giving a tourist perspective on the war locations. I will visit some places more than once, because I will go by myself at least once and with another Dutch tourist. The reason for this is to find out what another tourist thinks about the places as well as to see if anything is different the second time.

I will hold two surveys, one among Dutch people and the other one among locals in Kosovo. The first one to get an image of the way Dutch people think about Kosovo and if this image includes the war. This provides some evidence that the war history does have an influence on how Kosovo is perceived nowadays. I will do this survey before visiting any war locations. The second survey is to find out if locals are open to war tourists, which I will hold in the weeks that I am visiting the locations. I can reach a large number of people by using a survey, because it is easy to spread and easy to access. In that way, I will hopefully get many responses and it will also give me a quick overview of the data. It could, however, happen that some people do not completely fill in the survey and I will have to ask the right questions in order to get the right data. People taking the survey can also be biased (Qeryz, 2014-2017). Yet, I am looking for people's opinion.

I will use Qualtrics to make the surveys. Qualtrics gives me an easy overview of the recorded data and it automatically provides me with diagrams, if needed. I will make print screens of the questions and look at the answers of the respondents. For surveys, quantitative research can be used, but I am more interested in the kind of answers that people give than the number of times the same answer is given. I will, of course, see how many people have been in Kosovo and/or want to visit it as well as how often war pops up in their image of Kosovo, but this is just a simple math question. Yet, the qualitative analysis will be the main method by looking at the different answers, whether they are positive or negative

Besides this, I will gather information by having three semi-structured interviews. Two of them will be with the CEO of the research internship organization and the operational managers of the company. I want to get an insight in how the company works, their opinion on war tourism, and in how far the war is already included by the tour operator in other ways, because I am looking at handling the war from the perspective of a tour operator. They are also the ones that will suggest the possible location for the war tour so that again I look at the Kosovo war sites from their perspective. Then I will decide or these locations should be added to the war tour by visiting the places.

The third interview is with Kiki Peters, another Dutch tourist who will visit some war sites in Kosovo. This interview will be held after we visit some of the war locations together. I want to see her perspective on war tourism and the war locations in Kosovo to get a more in-depth analysis of a Dutch tourist after having done the survey.

A disadvantage is that these three interviews will cost a lot more time than the two surveys, especially because I have to use the program ATLAS.ti to process the interviews. Yet, it will give me a deeper understanding of some questions that I have, which will result in more information for my research. The interview guides can be found at the end of the thesis. I will transcribe the interviews first. Later, I will code the transcribed interviews with a focus on information I can use to underpin my research or that helps me design a war tour. Memos will be used to keep in mind certain connections and get a better overview. The important aspects of the answers I got from the interviews will be put down in a story-telling way. I will also ask people questions along the way, for example when meeting someone at a war location or a friend in Kosovo in a casual conversation.

I will go on a tour through Pristina to see for myself what a tour through Kosovo is like and how much of the war is already included. It will also give me an idea if Pristina should be included in the war tour or not.

I will make a comparison with Bosnia, but this does not mean I am using a

comparative case study. These real-life comparisons will be used to gather information and examples, the same way as I am using the literature. I will contact tour operators that offer war tours in Sarajevo by e-mail and ask them questions related to my research if they are open to helping me. This will give me the opportunity to find out more about an already existing war tour, which can be used as an example for the one in Kosovo.

So, I will make use of different methods to gain information for my research. The case study is Kosovo and the instrumental case study is war tourism. I will use qualitative research methods. Most information will be gained by visiting the locations myself, but also through two surveys and three interviews. I will also talk to different people along the way and go on a tour myself. In the next chapter, I will begin with method of using a survey to research the image of Kosovo among Dutch people.

*** The image of Kosovo among Dutch people ***

I want to show that the image of Kosovo is mostly negative among potential tourists. My research is based on the idea to turn the negative image into something positive. So, I will first look at this negative image before continuing with my research in Kosovo.

Dutch tourists can become a source of income for the Kosovar tourist industry. First of all, I chose this group of tourists because I am a Dutch tourist myself and I noticed the negative opinion a lot of Dutch people have about the country. Secondly, my survey will show if the war image of Kosovo is present among this nationality, which would make them a good target audience for the war tour. In addition, since I am Dutch, it would make it easier for me to do research among Dutch people and I can give a Dutch perspective as well. Not many tourists have visited Kosovo either, which would make them a new group of tourists in Kosovo instead of an already existing tourist group, such as Asians. I have seen a lot of tour groups walking around Pristina that are from Asia, so these tourists already show an interest in Kosovo. Yet, this does not mean that I do not think other tourists will be attracted by the Kosovo war tour besides Dutch people, but for my research I focus on the Dutch tourist.

I e-mailed the Kosovar embassy in The Netherlands, hoping they could provide me with some data about Dutch people's view on Kosovo. Unfortunately they did not respond, so I decided to hold a small survey among Dutch people. This will also give me a more specific overview, because I can decide for myself which questions I would like to have answered.

The survey consists of four questions and it only takes a minute for people to fill it in. I made the survey in Dutch, because I only wanted to find out more about Dutch people's opinion. This would also make it easier for people to fill it in and would hopefully result in more responses. Another reason to do it in Dutch was to make sure that English-speaking Facebook-friends would not respond. Their age does not matter and the respondents can be both male or female.

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Wat komt er in je op wanneer je denkt aan Kosovo?

Ben je ooit eens in Kosovo geweest?

Ja
 Nee

Zou je Kosovo (nog) een keer willen bezoeken?

Ja
 Nee
 Misschien

Kun je vertellen waarom wel of niet?

Image 4. Print screen survey questions “Onderzoek beeld van Kosovo”. 18 May, 2018. By Sarah Driessen.

Image 4 provides an overview of the survey questions. The first question is an open question: “what comes to mind when you think about Kosovo?”. The second question is “have you ever been in Kosovo?” and can be answered with a “yes” or a “no”. The third question also offers the additional answer “maybe” and is “would you want to visit Kosovo (again)?”. Finally, the fourth and last question is “can you explain why (not)?” and refers back to the third question.

I opened the survey on the 8th of May. I put the link to the survey on my Facebook page and I sent links to my friends and family and asked them to spread it to other people. Since it are only four questions and takes a minute to fill in, I was hoping many people would provide me with useful information for my research. My friends and family were definitely willing to help, which I appreciate a lot.

The survey will give me a general view of Kosovo among Dutch people. I am hoping that people will answer the two open questions with war or something related to war. Then, my hypothesis is right about people having a war image of Kosovo. Knowing the responses I got from my surroundings, I was quite sure that I would get these responses on my survey as well. I used this survey to underpin my first assumptions about Dutch people’s opinions. I wonder when Dutch people have a war image about Kosovo if they said they do want to visit Kosovo someday or not. The image of war can also be positive, so then people would want to

visit Kosovo while having this perception. Everyone is allowed to fill in my survey, no matter the age or gender, because I want to get a general image among Dutch people to underpin my assumptions.

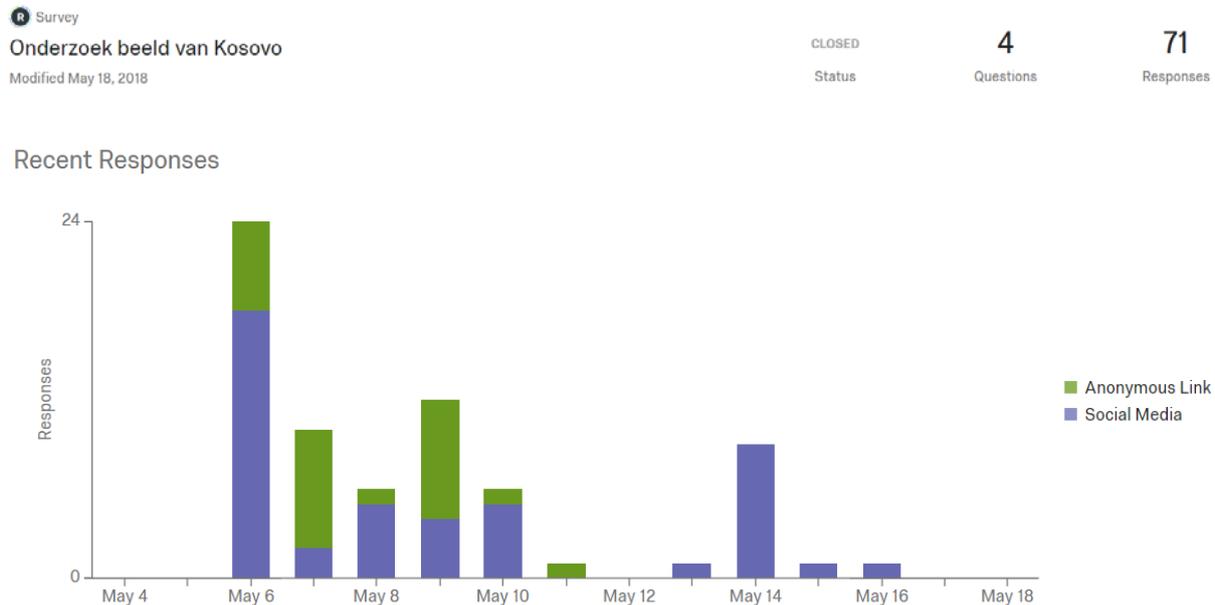


Image 5. Print screen overview of survey “Onderzoek beeld van Kosovo” and Print screen bar graph number of responses and channel used. 20 May, 2018. By Sarah Driessen.

After twelve days, I decided to close the survey, because I did not receive any new responses in the last couple of days. Eventually I got 71 responses (image 5), but one response was blank, which probably went wrong, so the final number of responses is 70. I did not expect to get this many responses, but I am very happy with this number. The more responses, the better I get an idea of the image Kosovo has among Dutch people and in how far war is a part of this.

The bar graph shows the number of responses per day. In addition, it gives an image of the way people got on the survey, either through an anonymous link or Social Media (image 5). Most of the responses came through Social Media.

Q2 - Zou je Kosovo (nog) een keer willen bezoeken?

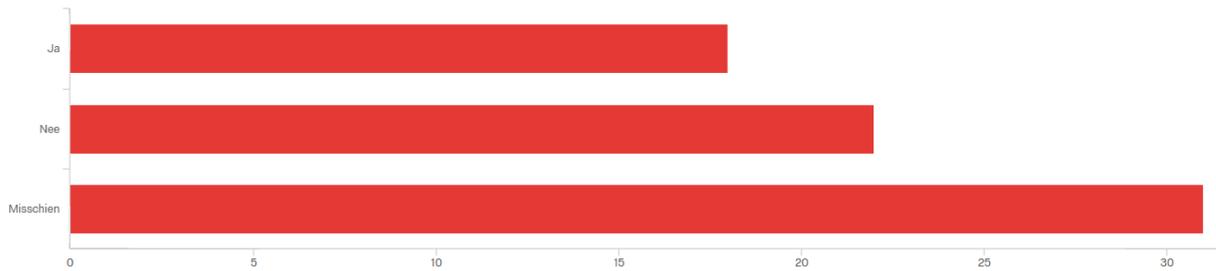


Image 6. Print screen number of people responding “yes”, “no”, and “maybe” on question 3: “would you want to visit Kosovo (again)?”. 20 May, 2018. By Sarah Driessen.

Only one person out of the 70 has been in Kosovo before and he/she would also like to visit Kosovo another time again. I did not expect someone to have been in Kosovo at all, so this surprised me. Out of the 70 people, eighteen people would like to visit Kosovo someday and twenty-one people would not want to visit Kosovo. The difference between the “yes” and “no” is not as high as I expected. Thirty-one respondents answered the question “would you want to visit Kosovo (again)?” with a “maybe”. This shows that approximately 44% of the respondents can be convinced to become a tourist in Kosovo. Another 25% is already open to the idea of visiting the country, meaning that 18 people answered the question with “yes”. Approximately another 31% of the respondents, which is recorded as 21 times “no”, does not want to visit Kosovo at all. Image 6 gives an overview with the “maybes” being the largest group and no large difference between the number of “yes” and “no”.

Recorded Date	Q1 - Wat komt er in je op wanneer je denkt aan Kosovo?	Q4 - Kun je vertellen waarom wel of niet?	Q3 - Ben je ooit eens in Kosovo geweest?	Q2 - Zou je Kosovo (nog) een keer willen bezoeken?
May 7, 2018 9:21 AM	Oorlog	Land trekt me niet echt aan!	<input type="radio"/> Nee	<input type="radio"/> Nee
May 7, 2018 8:37 AM	Kosovaarse Oorlog	Misschien wel, om te kijken hoe het land zich hersteld heeft en hoe Europees ze zijn.	<input type="radio"/> Nee	<input type="radio"/> Misschien
May 7, 2018 8:22 AM	Niet al te rijk land, voormalig Joegoslavië.	Ben benieuwd hoe het daar nu is.	<input type="radio"/> Nee	<input type="radio"/> Misschien
May 7, 2018 7:56 AM	Oorlog...	Zou wel willen, maar het is te kort bij..	<input type="radio"/> Nee	<input type="radio"/> Misschien
May 7, 2018 5:28 AM	Oorlogsgebied? Servie, onafhankelijk	Zulke landen trekken mij niet. Het lijkt mij geen land waar ik in de zon kan liggen met een cocktail in mijn hand. Meer waar ik gevoel van onveiligheid zal ervaren, in plaats van ontspanning.	<input type="radio"/> Nee	<input type="radio"/> Nee
May 7, 2018 4:56 AM	Voormalig Joegoslavië, conflict met Servie, zichzelf onafhankelijk verklaard.	Lijkt me niet prettig een conflictgebied te bezoeken. Ik weet niet precies hoe erg de situatie is daar. Wil sowieso eerst de landen dichterbij afstrepen voor naar landen in die richting te gaan kijken.	<input type="radio"/> Nee	<input type="radio"/> Nee
May 7, 2018 1:36 AM	Oost-Europa	Heeft mijn interesse niet	<input type="radio"/> Nee	<input type="radio"/> Nee
May 6, 2018 5:07 PM	Natuur, verschillende culturen, oorlog/conflict van een aantal jaren terug.	Volgens mij is het best een mooi land met veel cultuur. Dus wellicht de moeite waard.	<input type="radio"/> Nee	<input type="radio"/> Misschien
May 6, 2018 3:34 PM	Conflict	Lijkt me interessant om te zien hoe een gebied wordt gevormd/aangetast door conflicten	<input type="radio"/> Nee	<input type="radio"/> Misschien

Image 7. Print screen of an overview of some of the responses on the survey. 20 May, 2018. By Sarah Driessen.

The most important question for my research, which is also the first question, is “what comes to mind when you think about Kosovo?”. Image 7 gives an overview of some of the responses on the survey. Thirty of the seventy responses (43%) included the word “war”, which is a literal reference to the Kosovo war. Other responses (10 exactly, which is 14%) show another indirect reference to the struggle of Kosovo, such as “conflicts”, “country that has not been recognized”, “involvement of NATO”, “bad reputation”, and “former-Yugoslavia”. This is a total of 57% that has a negative/war image about Kosovo, which is more than half. A lot of the remaining people responded by saying that they do not know anything about Kosovo or only that it is located in Eastern-Europe/Balkan. So, it is mostly that they either do not know anything about the country or that they know about the war (or something related to the war history).

Two people answered the question “what comes to mind when you think about Kosovo” by referring to a Dutch song. It is the song “Wat zou je doen” by Marco Borsato and Ali B, a 2009 collaboration between a famous Dutch singer and a famous Dutch rapper. I think a lot of Dutch people are familiar with this song, especially the ones born between 1990 – 1998. The song became very popular and Kosovo is mentioned in it more than once. I never noticed it myself, but when I looked up the lyrics it turned out to be true. The song refers to wars around the world, including the one in Kosovo. The rapper says (in Dutch) “how bad would it be in the Balkans?” and then (also in Dutch) “most people don’t understand it at all”.

This song shows that Kosovo was known for the war when it was 2009, but since this was also a response on my survey, it shows that the song has created an image of Kosovo as a war among some people. This song might be the only thing people have heard about Kosovo, so they do not know anything else about the country.

I then looked at the responses to the last question that asks for an explanation why they do or do not want to visit Kosovo (again). One person wrote that they would only want to visit Kosovo if there is any information for tourists available. Besides this, it should be completely safe to visit the country. Someone also said that the reason they do not want to visit Kosovo is because it makes them feel unsafe. This unsafe image of Kosovo is related to the war, because people are sometimes not certain if the war is even over.

One person responded by saying that they would probably feel more unsafe than relaxed when visiting the country, which is why they would not want to visit it. Another one says that they do not think that they would feel comfortable visiting a conflict zone, even though they mention that they are not aware of how bad the situation is nowadays. Someone else also refers to the country as still being violent. This indicates that not everyone is aware that the war has officially ended.

Many responses about why they do not or might want to visit Kosovo include that they do not know anything or just a little about the country. Thirteen people said something about not knowing anything or not enough (yet) to make an effort to go visit it. Another notes that they have not heard any good stories about the country. Someone else notes that they are curious what is going on there nowadays, but the reputation of the country is an obstacle for them to actually go visit. Another person also says that they would consider it, but their safety has to be guaranteed. Two respondents said that they first need to know that the situation has become better. According to their response, some of them do might want to go visit Kosovo, even though they do not know much or are apprehensive about the place, so there is a chance that these people could be convinced.

There are also a few positive responses, for example some people referred to Kosovo as sunny, a beautiful country with a lot of culture, nice old buildings, history. It also has attractive nature and landscapes. Another respondent says that they have heard positive stories about the country, while before I mentioned that someone else has only heard negative stories. One respondent notes how not knowing much about the country at all as well as not hearing people talking about it actually awakens his interests in Kosovo. One person said that when they think about Kosovo, they think about social people that are not as rushed as Dutch people. Others are just interested in travelling so why not include Kosovo. Others mention

that they would like to visit it, because it is not so “touristy” as other places. There is no mass tourism, which can be unpleasant at other destinations. This is one of the reasons I went to Kosovo myself, because it is not a “standard” country to visit. These reasons are not related to war, even though most of the respondents have a war image of the country. This shows that the war image does not always take over and people can see other positive aspects of a country besides the war history and be interested in visiting. Yet, the fact remains that the first thing most of them think about is “war” before looking at other characteristics.

There are also some specific reasons related to the war why people want to or might want to visit Kosovo. One person notes how they feel curious. Their curiosity goes out to, among other things, the history. Besides this, someone mentions how the war is almost twenty years ago and that people have been very busy to rebuild the country. One respondent is curious how the country has rebuilt itself after the war. Another respondent even says that they find it interesting to be a dark tourist, which is a good mindset for the war tour. These reasons are directly related to my research, because these people already want or might want to visit Kosovo because of its war history/image and the war tour plays in on this interest.

This survey has shown that Kosovo has indeed a war image among Dutch people, because many mentioned the war popping up in their heads or things related to it when thinking about the country. This is then the *tourism destination image* Kosovo has among the Dutch respondents. The fact that 69 people have not visited Kosovo, but 18 respondents want to and 31 might want to (49 total possible tourists), shows that there could be a potential market among Dutch people for dark tourism, because the war image and interest in war history is present. Creating a war tour can attract some of the “maybes” as well as the “yesses” to Kosovo, because these Dutch people mostly know about the war, they might want to visit the country, and not all of them were negative about the war image but instead showed interest in it.

Kosovo Holidays DMC noted how they feel that the interest in the Kosovo war will fade away and that it is something from the past, as I mentioned before (*Kosovo Holidays DMC*, personal communication, 8 January, 2018). This survey has shown that the Kosovo war is not something from the past as in people who can be potential tourists still remember it and this is often the only association they have with the country. I do not know how this is going to be in a few years, but at this moment Kosovo is at the beginning of developing its tourism sector, so right now the war could be used in a positive way. Besides this, *Kosovo Holidays DMC* feels that Kosovo has more to offer than the war (*Kosovo Holidays DMC*, personal communication, 8 January, 2018), but this is what people know about the country. I think it

would be a smart move to use this limited knowledge people have about the country in an effort to attract them to Kosovo. From there on, tourists will discover the other characteristics of the country as well.

So, Kosovo definitely has a war image among Dutch people and this image can be used to attract Dutch tourists to the country. In the next chapter I will give an overview of the war history to provide a general background story for the research of the potential war locations for the Kosovo war tour.

* Overview history of Kosovo *

I will give a short overview of the history of Kosovo. I am giving this overview now and not earlier, because in the following few chapters I will focus on specific details from the war and visit the war locations. In addition, I will look in how far the war is included by the research internship organization. So, this general overview is the basis of the country's war history as well as my war tour research. One of the employees at *Be in Kosovo*, Besar Haxhikadrija, is interested in the history of the country and knows a lot about it, which comes in handy for me. History became a hobby of him and he can combine this with tourism, the same as I am combining a part of the history with tourism in the war tour. I tried to write about the Kosovo war before, but it is quite complicated since many articles say something that is a little bit different from each other. I will look at the history of the country from the side of Kosovo.

Covering the complete history would require a second thesis, instead I will give a general overview. I will try to be as objective as possible, but opinions are divided and it can be a sensitive issue. In addition, I will include some of the other occupations the area of Kosovo has faced to show that the country has come a long way to reach its independence.

The land that is now Kosovo has been occupied by many different groups and this already started with the Romans 200 years before Christ during the Illyrian war. In the year 300 after Christ, the Byzantines took over the land. The Slavic migration took place 700 years after Christ. In 1300, the land got occupied by the Ottomans. Albania declared its independence in 1912 and this year also marks the beginning of the Serbian occupation of Kosovo. In 1940, at the beginning of the Second World War, Albania got occupied by the Italians, while Kosovo got taken over by the Germans (B. Haxhikadrija, personal communication, 16 April, 2018).

The Yugoslavian occupation (Serbia and Montenegro) of Kosovo began after the Second World War in 1945. In 1981, pro-independence protests by students took place in Kosovo (B. Haxhikadrija, personal communication, 16 April, 2018). The provincial autonomy of Kosovo got reduced in 1989, while they had this autonomy since 1974. Besides this, more measures were taken, which, for instance, caused many Kosovar Albanians their jobs and cultural activities got limited. Because of these changes, riots and protests emerged, performed by Kosovar Albanians (Frontline, 1995-2014). Then in 1991, forceful measures were taken by the Yugoslavian government. You had to be a pro-Serb or otherwise you would get fired from your job. As a result of this, many people lost their jobs. The year 1998 got described by Besar Haxhikadrija of *Be in Kosovo*, as the beginning of the genocide. One year later the NATO bombings on Serbia started in March. The pro-independence protests by students in 1981 indicate that the search for independence already began years before the Kosovo war began (B. Haxhikadrija, personal communication, 16 April, 2018). The break-up of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia began with Slovenia and Croatia declaring their independence in 1991. Ethnic Albanians also revealed in the same year that they wanted to create an independent Republic of Kosovo. Yet, at this point it did not gain much international recognition (Frontline, 1995-2014).

The Kosovo war is the most recent war in Kosovo, which began at the end of February 1998 and lasted until June 11th 1999. This is the war I focus on to create a war tour in the country. The Kosovo war was the first war that the NATO got involved in (Ash, 2000). On the one hand, Serbian people had been living in Kosovo for many generations and many of their monasteries are located in the region. On the other hand, Albanians and their forefathers

have been living in the region for hundreds of years. For multiple years, the Serbian government had taken away the rights of Kosovar Albanians and harassed them. At first the resistance of the Albanians was passive (Roberts, 2000). The Kosovo Liberation Army (KLA) was formed in 1996 and began attacking Serbian authorities in Kosovo on an irregular basis as a response on the Serbian government, so the resistance later became active. The Serbian authorities tried to suppress any student and ethnic movements in the region. In 1997, the violence in Kosovo increased, which resulted in the KLA attacking more and the Serbian security forces tried to suppress the Albanian population more (Frontline, 1995-2014). The Kosovo war officially began a year later. The KLA was fighting against Serbian forces, which included Serbian police and army (Roberts, 2000).

On 24 March, 1999, bombing by NATO began, which was more than a year after the war officially began. In a national referendum in Serbia, 95% of the voters did not want any foreign involvement to help solve the Kosovo crisis (Frontline, 1995-2014). In these almost-two-years-long Kosovo war, multiple killings/massacres of Kosovar Albanians took place, which I will mention later on when researching the war sites. The killings of the Kosovar Albanians and forcing them to leave their homes is referred to as an “ethnic cleansing”, done by Serbian forces (Law, 2009). In June, 1999, NATO liberated Kosovo (B. Haxhikadrija, personal communication, 16 April, 2018).

Ethnic Albanians began to move back to Kosovo on 14 June, 1999. This was the fastest refugee return in history with a number of more than 600,000 people returning within three weeks. At the same time, Serbs and Roma people fled Kosovo, because of the fear of being punished for the war. On 20 June, 1999, the NATO decides to end the bombing campaign and the last Serbian troops leave Kosovo. The day after that the Kosovo Liberation Army agrees to disarm under pressure from the NATO (Frontline, 1995-2014). The Kosovo war has claimed the lives of approximately 13,000 people, most of them ethnic Albanians (Messori, 2018). On the 17th of February 2008 Kosovo finally declared its independence from Serbia (B. Haxhikadrija, personal communication, 16 April, 2018). It took Kosovo nine years after the official end of the war to declare its independence from Serbia, which shows that the struggle for independence did not just end by having a marked ending of the war. Besides this, not every country has recognized Kosovo as an independent state. Out of 195 states 117 have recognized Kosovo on its 10 year anniversary. Serbia is among one of the countries that has not.

This short overview has given a short overview of the war history of Kosovo. In the next chapter, I will find out in how far the war is already included by the organization *Be in*

Kosovo and their view on the war tour. I will also go on a tour through Pristina to experience a tour in Kosovo myself.

* Research internship organization: *Be in Kosovo* *

The internship organization that I chose and gave me the opportunity to do the internship with them is *Be in Kosovo*, located in Pristina, Kosovo. This is a tour operator that offers multiple services, such as tourism consulting, event management, car rents, and guided tours. The company exists for more than ten years now. Their tours take up about 30 or 40 percent of the company, but in low periods it can drop to 10 percent (B. Haxhikadrija, personal communication, 23 May, 2018). I am looking at war tourism from the perspective of the tour operator as well as a tourist. Finding out if and how the war history can be included in their offer could help them grow as an organization and hopefully attract more tourists to Kosovo.

They specifically offer guided tours in which the war elements could easily be added or they can start organizing tours focused on the war history. I wonder in how far they would

be open to offering a tour completely designed around the war history, because that a complete Kosovo war tour is the focus of my research. My main question already shows that my research is done from the perspective of the tour operator, because I want to find out if and how they should include the war history in their tourism promotion. This shows that my internship organization is definitely embedded in my research. In addition, this is why I have to find out more about the organization itself, especially the tours they offer and their view on a war tour.

When I first met with the organization, they explained that every person is working on their own project. They have various projects besides tourism. One of the employees was working on creating a website to bring restaurants together and then people can order online. Another project for them could be to focus specifically on the war, which I am helping them with.

I am surprised that so many tourists actually visit Kosovo, because in The Netherlands this absolutely does not seem to be the case. The places that these tourists are coming from surprises me even more. The organization said that they had tourists from Thailand coming in for a tour. I wonder how someone from Thailand decides to pick Kosovo as their next destination, while a Dutch person, being geographically a lot closer to Kosovo, has not visited Kosovo and only 18 out of 70 respondents is sure they would like to visit the country in the future.

Something that got pointed out to me by the organization is that I should not mention that I am from The Hague. In fact, I am not from The Hague, but it does show that the war can still be a sensitive issue for some people. They would not want to talk to me, because The Hague is the city where Kosovo's freedom fighters were trialed at the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia (ICTY). I will take this into account when I visit the war sites.

I often automatically refer to a war as a conflict, but not to a conflict as a war. I do not intend to say that the Kosovo war was anything less than a war when I refer to it as a conflict. I was not aware that this could be an issue. Articles sometimes also refer to the Kosovo war as a conflict. When I referred to the war as a conflict to the CEO of my research internship company, he corrected me and I think he was right for doing that, because I was not aware that it can have different meanings to people.

I then looked up the two terms and there are multiple explanations. Conflicts are part of a war, but this does not mean that every conflict results in war or is part of a war. The online dictionary gives multiple explanations for the noun "war", namely "a state or period of

armed hostility or active military operations,” “a conflict carried on by force of arms, as between nations or parties within a nation; warfare, as by land, sea, or air,” and “a contest carried on by force of arms, as in a series of battles or campaigns,” (Dictionary, 2002). So, it seems that war is mostly described as an active form of a conflict, but a conflict is not necessarily a war, which can lead to confusion and/or downplaying the events when using the two terms. The tourism phenomenon is also called war tourism and not conflict tourism. I will use the term “war” instead of “conflict” from now on when referring to the Kosovo war so that it will not be diminished.

I held an interview with both Alban Rafuna and Besar Haxhikadrija, because I wanted to get more insight on dark tourism in Kosovo from the perspective of a tour operator and in how far they include it in their tourism offer. In addition, I asked questions about the company itself so that I can get a better idea of how the war tour can be put into practice.

** Interviews with Alban Rafuna and Besar Haxhikadrija*

I had a small interview with the CEO of the company, Alban Rafuna. I wanted to get some first ideas on how he looked towards war tourism. Rafuna said that it is not a bad idea to use the war for tourism purposes, even though it sounds as if it means using someone’s feelings, because it has been so many years ago. He notes that it can turn the emotional disadvantages into an advantage (A. Rafuna, personal communication, 16 April, 2018), which is also what I am trying to do with my research, namely turning the disadvantage of a war history into an advantage to attract more tourists.

His perspective on it was definitely positive. He feels that it is a good time right now to begin using the war for tourism, but also noted that a war is never forgotten, whether it is a recent war or it has been a longer time ago. In addition, he said that freedom is nothing when the economy is not developed. Dark tourism should also not be seen as bad tourism, but instead as a way to learn more about a country’s war history (A. Rafuna, personal communication, 16 April, 2018). Tourists learning more about the war history as well as the war tour helping the economy are two positive outcomes of a war tour.

Rafuna said that the war tour could take three, five or seven days. The tour should include other things besides the war, such as food and leisure activities. Yet, he also said that many visitors do not have the time to spend three or five days on dark tourism (A. Rafuna, personal communication, 16 April, 2018). I did not expect for the war elements to already be included by the tour operator, instead I expected it to still be a sensitive issue. The company

tries to include as many locations as possible when giving tours to visitors, such as Prekaz, Meja, and Račak (A. Rafuna, personal communication, 16 April, 2018). This does mean that they do not have a set tour that focusses specifically on dark tourism, but some locations are sometimes included.

Rafuna noted that they want to be as unbiased as possible when answering questions from tourists about the war. They do not leave anything out on purpose (A. Rafuna, personal communication, 16 April, 2018). This seems to be a good idea, because the tourists will get an authentic history lesson. Things are only left out when the tourist does not have enough time or is not interested in the war. The tourists always have a negative image about Kosovo when they arrive, but they leave with a positive perspective about the country (A. Rafuna, personal communication, 16 April, 2018), which is what I also hope to achieve with the war tour. The war tour will explain the war history and at the same time people get to see a lot of the country, which then hopefully changes their negative image and they might even come back a second time.

Later, I wanted to have another interview with Alban Rafuna, but he was in Bosnia for an unspecifiable period. Luckily, the operational manager of the company, Besar Haxhikadrija, was willing to help me gather some more information about the company. I arranged a meeting on the 23th of May, 2018 to ask some follow-up questions about the company itself as well as questions about war tourism.

Besar said that the size of the tour groups can differ from 1 to 40 people, which all depends on the type of tour that they want. When it is a large group of tourists, the tour is usually one through Pristina, which takes 2.5 to 3 hours. A smaller group can ask for a specific tour, which can take multiple days. Everything in between is also possible. This depends on the preferences of the tourists. If they want to see many places in Kosovo, they will have to be willing to spend multiple days on the tour (B. Haxhikadrija, personal communication, 23 May, 2018). So, this would also be possible for the war tour. Since the war locations are spread around the country, the war tour will almost certainly take up more than one day. They have about one tour every week or every two weeks, in the summer period more than in the winter. Looking at the prices, a tour for one person can become more expensive because large groups can spread the costs over multiple people. Besides this, it all depends on what they want and how many days it takes. A tour through Pristina for one person costs around 10 or 20 euros (B. Haxhikadrija, personal communication, 23 May, 2018).

Besar mentioned some aspects that I will take into account when designing the war

tour. The number of places that you want to visit have to fit in the amount of time that you have, so you do not want to, for example, go to a place in Pristina and then walk ten minutes to the next stop and walk back to the beginning again. There has to be a nice flow going from one location to the other. You also have to take into account that there are no events at the tour locations. The company has planned routes for tours that they like to follow (B. Haxhikadrija, personal communication, 23 May, 2018). My war tour can become one of those planned routes.

Besar has visited the war locations himself, but only a few times with tourists. These groups usually exist out of people from NGOs. Račak and Gjakova are then the most popular places to visit and they want to look at the facts (B. Haxhikadrija, personal communication, 23 May, 2018). I also want war tourists to look at the facts during the war tour. Besar said that describing these visits as “fun” might not be the right word, because the NGOs are looking for signs of conflict, even though the places are nice. He, however, is sure that the guests had a good experience. War tourism is new to the area, but Besar does say that people want a possibility for this type of tourism (B. Haxhikadrija, personal communication, 23 May, 2018). Rafuna also noted that they do try to include war locations when designing a tour for tourists (A. Rafuna, personal communication, 16 April, 2018), so it does sometimes happen whether it is for people from NGOs or for other tourists. Yet, most importantly, they do not have a standard tour that revolves solely around the war history of Kosovo. I will design a war tour that does.

When going on other tours, which are not specifically about war, it is impossible to not mention the war, because you are passing, for instance, the Newborn monument, and the Bill Clinton statue, which are both related to it. History has to be explained to some extent, but it depends if people are interested in the history and want to learn more about it or they just enjoy looking at the statues (B. Haxhikadrija, personal communication, 23 May, 2018). When I asked Besar what the perfect tour through Kosovo would be, he did not include specific war memorial sites, but he did mention Pristina and Gjakova, including the old bazaar that was burned down during the war (B. Haxhikadrija, personal communication, 23 May, 2018). These two cities are possible locations for my war tour and you have to mention the war when visiting them. Besar, even though he did not include war memorial sites in his perfect tour, is positive about offering a war tour. He says that the war locations are beautiful and at the same time can teach people a lot (B. Haxhikadrija, personal communication, 23 May, 2018). This is what I hope to reach with the war tour and the places have to be interesting enough to see in order to be worth a visit.

I also asked some questions specifically about the tourists visiting Kosovo. Besar said that some tourists seem to be more familiar with the Kosovo war than others. The tourists that go on a tour through Kosovo are from Asia, Eastern-Europe, Turkey, and sometimes Northern-Europe. He noted that this is the same as the general tourism demographics in the area (B. Haxhikadrija, personal communication, 23 May, 2018). This also means that Dutch people are not a popular tourist group in Kosovo (yet). Usually, the tourists are not familiar with Kosovo so they let it up to the company to design a tour (B. Haxhikadrija, personal communication, 23 May, 2018). In my survey, I have noticed that many Dutch respondents were not familiar with Kosovo or only with some war history. The company can then offer a war tour. Besar also said that tourists have to take into account that a custom-made tour will cost more and take up more time (B. Haxhikadrija, personal communication, 23 May, 2018).

I also asked how *Be in Kosovo* promotes itself and its product, since I want to promote Kosovo with the war tourism product. This also relates to my question why someone from Thailand would come visit Kosovo. Besar said that the company has connections with companies in that area that recommend *Be in Kosovo*. They do not have official contracts with those Asian companies, but these companies are positive and put in a good word. A lot of the promotion of *Be in Kosovo* depends on word-of-mouth, but they also make use of Social Media (which reaches a lot of people), promotional materials, and social networks. Good work and good relations can result in recommendations that also helps to attract people and business (B. Haxhikadrija, personal communication, 23 May, 2018). The war tour can be promoted through these kind of channels as well. They mostly promote cultural tourism and ecotourism (B. Haxhikadrija, personal communication, 23 May, 2018). War tourism is part of cultural tourism, so it would fit their tourism offer.

The only negative aspect he mentioned were the political issues. Kosovars still have problems getting a visa to go to another European country. According to Besar, it is difficult for Kosovars to acquire a visa for Bosnia. This would mean that a tour through the former-Yugoslavian area (through multiple countries) becomes difficult, because they cannot easily get to Bosnia (B. Haxhikadrija, personal communication, 23 May, 2018). This could be a plan for the future if the war tour through Kosovo is a success.

In addition, I asked Besar about Serbian tourists and how to deal with them. He noted that everyone is welcome. He also said that it is the choice of the tourist to have a different opinion about what the tour is telling them. There is freedom of speech. He noted that history is history, facts are facts, and our personal opinions are personal opinions. He, however, is not going to have political discussions with them, if that happens, because the tour is meant for

fun (B. Haxhikadrija, personal communication, 23 May, 2018). Here he did refer to the tour as “fun”, while before he said that this might not be the right word for a war tour. I think the war tour should be enjoyable, but in a respectful way and focused on learning about the history.

Besar noted how there is a healthy competition with other tour operators in Kosovo. The demand covers the supply and the supply has enough demand (B. Haxhikadrija, personal communication, 23 May, 2018). This could change when Kosovo hopefully gets more popular among tourists, which is the goal of this research. He also said that there are a lot of possibilities in Kosovo, even though it is a small country (B. Haxhikadrija, personal communication, 23 May, 2018). I will see if war tourism is one of the possibilities.

Since both Alban Rafuna and Besar Haxhikadrija are optimistic about having a war tour, it also gives me a lot of optimism that the Kosovo war tour is a good idea and will work. This is very different from the other tour operator in Pristina, *Kosovo Holidays DMC*, that did not want to connect the promotion of the country to its war history at all. *Be in Kosovo*'s positivity about offering a war tour indicates that they feel that locals are ready for it as well, otherwise they would advise me to wait a little longer and they said that enough time has passed since the war. What especially stood out to me was that Alban Rafuna mentioned that developing the economy and learning about the war history (A. Rafuna, personal communication, 16 April, 2018), which are also exactly my two biggest motivations to research the war tour and I hope it indeed has these outcomes when put into practice.

* *Going on a tour through Pristina*

I would like to join a tour offered by *Be in Kosovo* with another group of tourists. Then I can observe how these tours work and see how/if this can be applied to the war tour. In addition, I can see for myself how much of the war is included by the guide and see the responses of the tourists on the tour.

I was invited to join a tour through Pristina on Monday the 28th of May. This time it was clear what the meeting-point would be beforehand and they also told me where the tour would end. I wonder from which country this group of tourists is. I had to meet the group at the Bill Clinton Statue around 9 o'clock in the morning. They officially met with their tour guide in Fushë Kosovë, a town near Pristina, but it was no use for me to go there and then go back to Pristina again.

Pristina could be a nice starting point for the war tour before going to Račak and Prekaz. It depends on how much gets mentioned about the war during the tour if a small visit through Pristina should be included in the war tour as well before visiting the other locations. I am not sure how much Pristina has to offer for tourists when it comes to war history and if this is enough to include it.

The tour guide did not mention anything at the Bill Clinton monument, but maybe he did this in the tour bus since they made use of one. Instead I looked it up myself and the monument was placed because the Kosovar population wanted to thank president Bill Clinton for his help with the country's struggle for independence (Drakulić, 2009). The boulevard where the statue is located is also named after him, the Bill Clinton Boulevard. Clinton stopped the cleansing of ethnic Albanians by Serbian forces, because he began the NATO bombings (Bytyci, 2009). The statue and street name show how thankful the Kosovars are with the support of the United States. This statue and street could be included in a war tour, since there is a clear connection with the Kosovo war.



Image 8. Tour group from Taiwan visiting university campus, Pristina, Kosovo. 23 May, 2018. Photo by Sarah Driessen.

Image 8 is a picture of the tour group. The tourists were from Taiwan and there were some older people who were not able to walk very well and needed to stay in the shade as much as possible. This made the tour go a bit slower and the guide had to keep this in mind. Since they were from Taiwan, this agrees with the tourism demographics mentioned by Besar Haxhikadrija who said that Asians visit Kosovo (B. Haxhikadrija, personal communication,

23 May, 2018). After the Bill Clinton monument, we all got in the tour bus and went to the city center. Walking from the monument to the city center takes about 30 minutes when walking at a medium pace. This has to be taken into account when thinking about the kind of group that goes on the war tour and the availability of a tour bus.



Image 9. Statue Zahir Pajaziti, Pristina, Kosovo. 21 June, 2018. Photo by Sarah Driessen.

The first thing we visited was the public library and the decayed church on the university campus. Then we went to the Sheshi by foot, which is the main street with both at the beginning and the end of the street a big square and it has many places to eat and drink. We stopped at a statue of the first commander of the Kosovo Liberation Army, Zahir Pajaziti (image 9). The tour guide did mention something about the Kosovo war, but only who he was and that the words underneath the statue mean “hero of the people” (Muameri, personal communication, 23 May, 2018). For instance, he did not say why this commander got a statue, what he did or what happened to him. I think more could be said about this statue when focusing on the Kosovo war, but this tour did not. Muameri noted how he was the first commander during the war (Muameri, personal communication, 28 May, 2018), but when I looked it up it turned out that he was actually killed before the war officially began. Yet, fights with the Yugoslav army already began before it was officially called a war. This statue could be included in the war tour as well.

The tour went slower because the group of tourists had their own guide, so there was another guide besides the one from *Be in Kosovo*. The tour guide from Taiwan sometimes

took over the tour, because he was telling the Kosovar tour guide to tell more about something and often decided to take a break or where to go next. This probably made it difficult for the Kosovar tour guide to give it his own Kosovar twist.

In addition, not all tourists were able to speak English, which is why their guide told everything in their own language as well. This means that I was not able to hear any questions or responses that could have been related to the war or showed their opinion on the tour itself. Yet, I do not think there were many, because not a lot of questions were asked during the tour at all. According to the tour guide Muameri, however, nine out of ten tourists ask questions about the war, describe parts of it or comment on the war (Muameri, personal communication, 22 June, 2018). This is a high number of tourists that are actually interested in the Kosovo war, so the war tour would play in on this interest. It also shows that, indeed, the war also gets mentioned during tours that do not focus on it.

The tourists were given a coffee break and they had lunch somewhere. The time this takes should be taken into account when deciding about the locations for the war tour. The tour also took longer than expected, which can happen with the war tour, too, and should be kept in mind as well. You would not want to rush the tourists or visit a memorial site in the dark.

Other things we visited during the tour were the mosque, which was very nice to see on the inside, Grand Hotel, the United Colors of Benetton building, and the guide gave an explanation about the Kosovo flag. The tour group also got a bit of free time and I was one of the tourist attractions myself, because a few women wanted to take a picture with me. Not everyone wanted to visit the inside of the mosque, which shows that a large group of tourists also means many different opinions on what they want to do during a tour. The tour ended at the Newborn statue, but I left before that because I had to go to Skopje. As you can see, there were not many elements of the tour related to the Kosovo war. I have mentioned the Newborn statue in the introduction, so this final location of the Pristina tour is connected to the Kosovo war and could definitely be included in the war tour.

Some aspects of the tour seemed to be spontaneous, such as the explanation of the Kosovar flag. In addition, the guide from Taiwan asked the Kosovar tour guide to explain something at some stops, which did not seem to be planned by him. The Kosovo war tour will definitely be more planned, because the distances between the locations are much bigger. The tour guide from Be in Kosovo noted that every tour is different. Yet, there is no tour that focusses on the Kosovo war yet, so it should be kept at one specific war tour for this time being until it can expand to variations on the war tour.

Not all of the tourists paid attention to what the guide had to say, whether it was the one from Taiwan or the one from *Be in Kosovo*. Some were taking selfies or standing so far away that they were probably not even able to hear the guide. This shows that no matter what the topic of the tour is it is important to keep the attention of the group and not just the ones that are standing in the front, because these were the ones that were mostly listening and interacting. Besides this, a part of the group stayed behind at a restaurant while the rest of the group visited more of Pristina. The walking pace was okay, even though we had to find some shade and could not walk too fast. The group of tourists was quite large, maybe a bit too large, because it seemed to be difficult to keep the group together. Muameri also noted that giving a tour can sometimes not be as fun as you think, because of the difficulty to keep the group together, which I have noticed during this tour (Muameri, personal communication, 28 May, 2018). This is why the war tour groups should not be too big.

The guide from *Be in Kosovo* did not tell many stories, not about the war but also not about other elements of the city. It seemed to be only the core of the story at every place, but I do not think he left things out on purpose, such as the war, but he just kept it short. I already knew most of it, so I was hoping to hear something extra such as an interesting story that I cannot (easily) find online. In case of the war tour, it would definitely make the tour more appealing if stories were told that cannot be found online, such as real life experiences. The tour guide did, however, tell something about himself, namely where his dad worked, so the guide can also talk about his own experiences when it comes to the war. The war tour will be more interesting when the guide can relate to what happened.

I asked the tour guide from Taiwan what they had visited before coming here and what they were going to visit after Pristina. He said that they were making a trip through the Balkan within twenty days. They had visited Macedonia, Albania, Montenegro, Croatia, and Bosnia. After Kosovo, they were going to visit Bulgaria, Romania, and then Russia before going home. So, this was definitely a quick visit in Kosovo and the country was only a part of their whole tour through the Balkans. This gives me the impression that they are probably not that interested in the war, since it seems to be more about visiting the Balkan countries and stripping them off their check list, which is what Asian tour groups are known for.

The Bill Clinton Statue was already the first connection to the Kosovo war. The statue of Zahir Pajaziti was another connection to the war. The tour was supposed to end at the Newborn statue, mentioned in the introduction, which is also connected to the war. So, the Pristina tour both began and ended at a war-related monument. The city could be added to the war tour, since Račak and Prekaz are located around Pristina and not taking a quick look at

the capital of Kosovo would be unfortunate. Besides this, it is a nice place to have a meal or sit down for a drink. I will later decide if Pristina should be included in the war tour for sure, since I will first have to find out more about the war locations of Račak and Prekaz.

The potential to tell more about the Kosovo war during a tour through Pristina is definitely there. The tour guide, however, did not do this and the tourists did not ask for it, which seems a pity to me. As the tour guide mentioned, every tour is different, so other tourists might ask questions about the war and be more interested in it compared to this tour group. It would be easy to include some more about the Kosovo war. The war is a very important part of the history of Kosovo, so I feel that tourists should at least learn a little bit about it when visiting the country, even when it is not specifically a war tour.

I will first give an introduction of the research of the war locations in the next chapter, for instance what to keep in mind when visiting the places and some first thoughts about the war tour. When discussing the war locations, I will give a short summary of some specific events that took place during the Kosovo war.

* Introduction to research of war locations *

Before visiting the war locations and talk about my experiences and observations, a few aspects should be highlighted that have to be kept in mind.

It is difficult to write about some specific events that took place during the Kosovo war at the possible tour locations, because many sources say something else which was also the case with the general overview. It also does not mean that what I say is the only way to look at it and I do not intend to choose any sides. I will include some different perspectives on the story. Yet, I am looking at this topic from the perspective of Kosovo, since I am doing my research in Kosovo and I am designing a war tour through Kosovo.

I do think that it is hard to visit some of the war tourism locations in Kosovo. The locations can be reached by bus or taxi, but many of them are villages. Visiting a city in Kosovo is much easier, because there is a better connection between the different places by bus. This means that the tourists need to have a lot of motivation to actually specifically go to these places and these places need to be interesting enough to make the effort. By offering a specific tour, tourists might be easier motivated to actually see the war tourism sites, since they do not have to figure out themselves how to get there.

These war tourism destinations need to have something to see for the tourists as well, meaning that just telling a story about what happened in what is now a field of grass is not interesting enough. Besides this, it would also be nice to have places to eat, drink, and sit down while visiting a war site. It might be so that these war sites need to have other tourist attractions, for example shopping places or other sightseeing elements, if the war elements alone are not interesting enough. I will find this out myself when I go visit these places. Maybe a better option is to make the war elements part of another tour instead of one tour focused only around war, but my research will give a better image of this.

I think that not many people read a lot about a place before visiting it. Of course, they hear or read something and then decide to visit it or they first decide to visit a place and then indulge themselves in some information. Yet, there are not many information books about Kosovo in English or another language besides Albanian, so you would have to search for the information online. You would have to know about specific war locations, because when

searching for Kosovo you do not get them as a result but more “touristy” places, such as the nature in the country and the city of Prizren. This means that it can be difficult to find information about Kosovo for a tourist, especially the war history, since it is not a popular tourist destination and there are no world-famous tourist spots.

Besides this, not many tourists will know the typical tourist locations in Kosovo, such as a beautiful waterfall or the lively capital. Yet, the Kosovo war is something that many people do know about or have heard about, since it is not that long ago and has been on the news. They could possibly be interested in finding out more about this war and then as a result visit more of what the country has to offer besides these war locations.

The war tour can open up the possibility for local people to tell their side of the story at the specific war locations. Talking about it can become part of the healing process. Locals might also just enjoy telling others about what happened and inform tourists about it. I will pay attention to the locals when I visit the war locations to see if they are open to having a tourist visiting the site, such as people living in the area as well as taxi drivers.

I had been in Kosovo four times before I came here again for my research. I honestly never went to any of the sites that are related to war, which shows that even me as a regular tourist in Kosovo do not take the effort to go to some of these locations. It was also because I did not know much about any of these war sites and I even wondered if there were war-related places that would be nice for a tourist to visit. When going to western countries, I usually went to visit the war-related tourism sites, such as a museum, but that is probably because those are at the same time popular tourist attractions.

Maybe I secretly thought that Kosovo does not have that much to offer when it comes to war-related sites, because other locations around the world are more obvious. I, of course, knew something about the Kosovo war, but even this was confusing. I was not sure about what exactly happened and only heard and read some bits and pieces. Besides this, I was not even sure if there were enough interesting places related to war around Kosovo for a tourist to visit. The company would later prove me wrong by suggesting multiple locations that might have the potential to be part of the war tour. All of this definitely made it more interesting to do this research for my thesis, because it would be the first time for me to visit these places and I would get to know more about the Kosovo war.

I can probably write a whole thesis about the history of the different war locations that I chose for my research. It is difficult to put the complete history in a small summary, since it is often not clear what exactly happened or why and there are multiple perspectives. I will try to give the best small history overview per location possible to get an idea of what happened

and the meaning behind the memorial.

I will visit the sites related to the Kosovo war and describe my own experiences and observations at the location in the next chapter and multiple ones after. In addition, I will give an explanation of what happened at the location. From that, I can decide if it is a good idea to include the place in the final tourism product, the war tour, or not and explain why I made that decision. These places were suggested to me by my research internship organization *Be in Kosovo*, namely the Račak village memorial, Meja village memorial, Gllogjan (Glodjane) village memorial of Haradinaj family, Gjakova: Old Bazaar, Krusha e Madhe & Krusha e Vogel villages, and the Prekaz village memorial of the Jashari family. I decided to add the Kosovo museum in Pristina in my research as well, because it could be part of the war elements in the capital as I discussed in the subchapter about the tour through Pristina. The company also suggested the Shala Bajgores village in, but after some research and comments from Kosovars, I decided not to include it in my research. There is nothing to see there that is related to the war, except for a field of grass.

* Račak village memorial *

The first village I decided to go to was Račak. Fourty-five Albanian were killed on 15 January 1999 in the village of Račak (Balkan Witness, 1999). The killings were done by Serbian security forces. The casualties were said to be Albanian civilians, while Serbian authorities said that the deceased were all members of the Kosovo Liberation Army. Another source notes that it included a boy and two women, but also nine KLA fighters (Roberts, 2000). Yet, this still means that 36 civilians were killed that day. This event was a big motivation for the NATO to step in and use force against the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (a federation existing out of Serbia and Montenegro). The Unites States was supposedly looking for a reason to intervene in the Kosovo war and the plans had already been made in August the year before (Roberts, 2000). Račak became the reason.

A special report by the Kosovo Verification Mission, from two days after the event, mentions that locals said that some of the Serbs were dressed as police offers, while others were wearing ski masks. The report also includes a list of the dead bodies they found and how they were killed. The person who wrote the report says that he has no doubt that the event was a massacre and that the Serbian security forces are responsible. The report confirms that the fact is unarmed Kosovar Albanians were disfigured, killed or imprisoned in Račak, which violates the international humanitarian law and the international human rights law (KVM, 1999).

I found an article that is called “The facts behind the “massacre” in the village of Račak in Kosovo” from a Serbian website. This one caught my attention because the word ‘massacre’ is put between quotation marks, which gives the impression that the article does not agree with this word, and it gives a Serbian point of view on the event. It is clearly a Serbian perspective, because at the end of the web page it points out that Serbian families are leaving their homes under pressure from the Kosovo Liberation Army (Serbian FBR, 2012).

I picked one part of the article that shows a different point of view on the event. The article refers to a French newspaper “Le Monde” that raised a few questions about the massacre. They wonder if it can actually be seen as a massacre at all. For instance, they wonder why there were only a few bullet shells lying around the bodies and why there was

only a small amount of blood, while supposedly 23 people got murdered at that spot (Serbian FBR, 2012). Another source notes how it can be seen as a battle instead of a massacre. The Serbs removed their own victims (Roberts, 2000).

These sources show that people can disagree with the explanation given at the war location during the war tour. Yet, I do not want to determine whether it is a good idea to organize a complete war tour by the opinions of others besides the Kosovars themselves, because it is about attracting tourists to Kosovo, helping the tourism sector in this country, and tell their history to foreign visitors. It also shows that finding accurate information online is difficult and visiting the place gives you at least an idea of what happened from the Kosovar perspective and see the memorial with your own eyes.

I went on Tuesday the 17th of April 2018 with the bus from Pristina to Lipjan, a town near Pristina, and from there I had to go by either taxi or bus to the village of Račak. I waited a long time hoping for a bus to come, but none of them went to Račak and the people I asked were not able to help me. Eventually, I found a taxi driver that called his English speaking friend/taxi-driver who could bring me to the village. This taxi driver, Granit Luma, told me that it takes three different busses to get to the village, which shows that the village is not well-connected to any city (G. Luma, personal communication, 17 April, 2018). Reaching the village would be difficult for a tourist, as it was for me as well. I was glad to have found this English-speaking taxi driver, because it also meant that I would have a taxi back to Lipjan. I noticed that there were no taxis close to the memorial at the time I arrived there. This might be different at another time, such as in the tourist season, but it could be an issue for a tourist to get back.

While sitting in the taxi, Granit told me that his uncle was one of the fighters that got killed during the Račak massacre (G. Luma, personal communication, 17 April, 2018). He offered to come with me and showed me the place where the fighters are buried (image 10). The fighters are actually buried separately from the civilians, which surprised me. This also shows that it were not just all KLA fighters who got killed this day, otherwise they would not make two burial places, so this does not agree with the Serbian source.



Image 10. Graves of fighters Račak massacre, Račak, Kosovo. 17 April, 2018. Photo by Sarah Driessen.

I probably would not have seen the burial place of the fighters if the taxi driver had not showed me, since it was quite a few meters away from the rest. Granit showed me the grave of his uncle. I asked if it was okay to take a picture of it and he answered that it was fine. He later did a little prayer in front of his uncle's grave. He also took pictures at the memorial himself, which shows that it was also interesting for him to go visit it. Besides this, the fact that he was willing to help me in general, even though he has a personal connection with the memorial, shows that he had no problem with being confronted with this war history. Granit also said that tourists do visit the place, but in the tourist season. I expect this is the period from June till August, but when I went there in April there was nobody else.



Image 11. Račak village memorial, Račak, Kosovo. 17 April, 2018. Photo by Sarah Driessen.



Image 12. Račak village memorial, Račak, Kosovo. 17 April, 2018. Photo by Granit Luma.

Another aspect that stood out to me was that there are a lot of flowers at the memorial place (image 11). Every year on the exact date that the killings happened (15th of January), a commemoration is held where they put flowers at the graves. Yet, I visited the place on the 17th of April, three months after the commemoration, and the flowers still looked fresh. This indicates that the memorial site is well-maintained and that people still care a lot about what happened in 1999. When looking at these flowers, the memorial site seems to be a place for

people to mourn, which is one of the functions of a war site mentioned in the literature review, and the place can then help them process the event.

The pictures of the civilians that got killed make the memorial more personal, but also more impressive (image 12). You can see the face of every person, including women and a child. The kid was only twelve years old. Next to the pictures is a text in Albanian as well as in English. They refer to the Serbs as barbarians and beasts. It also emphasized that the civilians were innocent and vulnerable. I am not sure in how far the Serbian tourists who might want to go on the war tour would appreciate being referred to as a barbarian/beast, but I guess they should be able to understand that it is a Kosovar perspective and a war memorial. The text also indicates the pain of the Kosovan population, which makes the war memorial even more impressive.



Image 13. Račak village memorial, Račak, Kosovo. 17 April, 2018. Photo by Sarah Driessen.

The memorial is on higher grounds compared to the rest of the village (image 13). This gives the impression that the memorial place has a lot of meaning for the local people and they definitely do not want to forget about what happened. The memorial site also looks impressive, because it has multiple parts and the flowers make it even more striking. When standing at the memorial place, you have a complete view over the village, which is quite nice. On image 13, you can also see one bench to sit on. Even though there were not many benches at the memorial site, the amount of flowers is enough to assume that the place gets many local visitors who keep refreshing the flowers.

It is weird to think about the questions raised in the article from the Serbian website on the one hand, while on the other hand Granit told me the story about his uncle who was one of the people that got killed. In addition, all the pictures of the people who died as well as the huge amount of flowers at the memorial place show that the killings have had a large impact on the people in the village and in Kosovo.

There is also a statue of William Walker at the memorial location (image 14). This statue was revealed at the 18th anniversary of the Račak massacre. Walker is the one who told the world the story about what happened in the village of Račak. He blamed the Serbian forces in front of multiple television cameras when he arrived at the village a day after the event (Frontline, 1995-2014).



Image 14. Statue of William Walker, Račak, Kosovo. 17 April, 2018. Photo by Sarah Driessen.

Some people, however, believe that Walker had an influence in the attack on the village. He supposedly helped the Kosovo Liberation Army in creating a Serbian attack. This massacre could then be used to justify military action. It was said that the Kosovo Liberation Army took off the uniforms of their dead soldiers and dressed them in clothes that made them look like civilians (Rusila, 2017). After being at the memorial myself, it is strange to think that some people have this view on the event, because the pictures of the people killed as well as the separation between the burials of the civilians and fighters shows a lot. The article by Rusila is also very suspicious, meaning that while reading it, it feels as if the writer does not

agree with the statue. Rusila refers to the massacre as a “so-called massacre”. So, the Račak massacre is often disputed.

This war location should be included in the war tour, because it is an impressive war memorial, especially because of the large amount of flowers. The place as well as its surroundings look nice. As a tourist, it would be better to have someone there with you. Granit said that there is no one there who can inform tourists, so you would have to find someone in the village yourself. Seeing it as part of a war tour would make it easier for tourists to get there and get information about the location. For instance, the statue by William Walker would indicate that he was an important person (in a positive way). A tourist would not know that some people disagree with having this statue and it would be interesting to learn while visiting the war site that there are disputed opinions about the event, but also to learn more about the impact of the event on Kosovo.

* Kosovo museum *

On the same day as I went to Račak, I went to the Kosovo museum in Pristina. If the Kosovo museum has some interesting things to offer that is related to the Kosovo war, the museum could potentially be part of the war tour when visiting Pristina. The Kosovo museum is the national museum of the country. The entrance is free, so you can just walk in whenever you want. The building itself was built by Austria-Hungary for the Turkish army and it has been used as a museum since 1980. Before this, it was used as a military headquarters for the Pristina region during the rule of former-Yugoslavia (Database of Cultural Heritage of Kosovo, 2014).

When I arrived earlier at the museum on Monday, it was unfortunately closed. However, the gate and the door were open and the website said it should be open on Monday, so that was confusing. This should be taken into account when (if) including the museum in the war tour, because you do not want to put tourists in front of a closed door.



Image 15. Kosovo museum, Pristina, Kosovo. 17 April, 2018. Photo by Sarah Driessen.

I tried again on Tuesday and this time it was open. The building looks very nice from the outside with big stairs leading up to the entrance (image 15). I was a bit disappointed when entering. The building has a lot of potential, but then there is not much to see on the inside. It is also in the center of Pristina, so tourists could easily visit it when visiting the city as well and learn something about the history of Kosovo.



Image 16. Motorcycle Adem Jashari at Kosovo museum, Pristina, Kosovo. 17 April, 2018. Photo by Sarah Driessen.

It was not clear to me what exactly was related to the Kosovo war and what was of another time period. Everything was just standing next to each other and all the explanations were in Albanian. It would help a lot if the texts were also in English, because then foreign tourists would actually know what they were looking at. I asked someone who worked at the museum to tell me something about it, but his English was not that good and he did not tell me more than the things I already found online. He also included more time periods than I asked for, which made it confusing for me to understand what was related to the Kosovo war and what not. Maybe another employee would be able to tell more interesting stories.

There was also a video playing of people talking about their experiences during the war, which would have been very interesting. Unfortunately, everything was again only in Albanian, so English subtitles would be very useful to add so that tourists can hear the stories, too. One attribute that stood out to me in the museum was the motorcycle of Adem Jashari (image 16), who I have mentioned before in the introduction and who is an important figure of one of the other potential war tour locations.

I would not include this museum in the war tour. It can be interesting to see some of the weapons that were used, but the museum does not offer a lot when it comes to finding out more about the Kosovo war. The museum, however, does have a lot of potential to attract tourists if they improve the things that I mentioned, such as providing the explanations in English. The pictures taken of people fleeing from the war were interesting to see, but these you can also find in books or online. So, it is not worth the effort for now.

* Meja village memorial *

The cemetery in Meja village is referred to as a “Field of Tears”. In 1999, more than 300 civilians were killed in the village of Meja, a village close to the city of Gjakova. The executions were done by the Serbian police as well as Yugoslav army forces. On 27 April, thousands Kosovar Albanians were forced out of their homes. These people were from villages around Djakovica and they had to move to Albania. There was a refugee checkpoint in Meja where the men were taken from the convoys and then killed. The rest of the family was forced to move along to Albania (Daly, 1999). The reason for the murders was revenge for the killings of six Serbian policemen, executed by the Kosovo Liberation Army (Messori, 2018). The article by Messori says that 372 people were killed, while the International Committee of the Red Cross mentions 376 people (ICRC, 2014). So, the exact number of people that died is not clear and again sources do not agree with one another.

An article from 2015 shows that villagers were still waiting for justice that year, while it had already been 16 years ago. Interpol had issued warrants for seventeen fighters from Serbia connected to the massacre (Collaku, 2015). This shows that the terrific event stays on people’s minds for a long time, because the civilians do not get the closure they need and want. Some people are still missing and families do not know what has happened to them (Collaku, 2015). During this massacre, the highest number of people disappeared in Kosovo during the Kosovo war. The bodies that were found were mostly discovered in mass graves in Batajnica, Serbia, but also in gravesites in Kosovo itself (ICRC, 2014).

There are still many people missing eighteen years after the Kosovo war. Many years later, 12,000 cases are still not solved. The Youth Initiative for Human Rights – Kosovo helps support the rights of the families who are still waiting for answers about their loved ones. This organization organizes public activities on the National Day of Missing Persons as well as on the International Day of Enforced Disappearances. They calculated that in 2017 the relatives had spent 204 months; 6205 days; 148920 hours not knowing what has happened to their loved ones. Many of the activists from the organization were born after the war, but they do still want to bring the topic in the spotlight and do not give up on finding out what happened to the missing persons (Hoxha, 2016). This shows that the war is still important for some people until this day, even ones that have not experienced the war. Teuta Hoxha from the IHCR notes that the family members of the missing persons respond positively when invited for the activities. She also says that they feel a bit relieved, because they are not the only ones in their fight to honor and solve the problem of their missing loved ones (Hoxha, 2016).

For many people the results of the Kosovo war remain part of their everyday lives. The organization tries to bring it to attention and continues to call on the Kosovar government to do more (Hoxha, 2016). The war tour can help bring attention to this issue and the missing persons by mentioning and explaining this. Even though it has been many years ago, the effects of the war are still present in the country and people still suffer from it. Having a marked end of a war does not mean that everything is perfect after the events or that the suffering has stopped. In Pristina, there is a small monument dedicated to the missing persons, but there is no explanation of the issue or why they put the monument there (Hoxha, 2016). This marble monument will not help raise awareness of the problem. It is not worth it to include this in the tour when walking through Pristina, because the issue of missing loved ones can be talked about while visiting Meja and other war memorial sites.

I went to Meja on Tuesday 24th of April, 2018. I had to go by bus from Pristina to Gjakova first. It took around 1,5 hours before we arrived at the bus station of Gjakova. One tip for every female tourist who comes to Kosovo: do not go to the toilet at a bus station. They should not even be allowed to call it a toilet, because it is just a hole in the ground, which does not matter for a guy but for a girl this can be quite uncomfortable. Even when I turned around after two seconds and decided to find a little restaurant with a better toilet, the guy in front of the “toilet” still wanted his 20 cents.

At Gjakova, I had to find a taxi that could bring me to the village of Meja. Unfortunately, none of the taxi drivers could speak English, so one of them called his son to translate for me. I also asked the taxi driver if he could wait for me at the memorial site in Meja and then bring me back to Gjakova. I am glad I asked him to do this, because at the memorial site there were no taxis to be seen. The “Field of Tears” was located in the middle of nowhere.



Image 17. Memorial site, Meja, Kosovo. 24 April, 2018. Photo by Sarah Driessen.

When I arrived there, I saw that they were rebuilding the memorial, so the site was under construction, as you can see on image 17. This made it less impressive to see and it made it harder to envision the horrible massacre that had happened at the location. There were bricks lying in between the different graves. The picture that I saw online was way more impressive than what I saw with my own eyes. Before it was really a field with gravestones everywhere and the field was covered with flowers. This gave it a more sentimental element. Now, they have turned it into a modern graveyard with marble graves and marble stones on the ground, so it has become sort of a platform that you can walk on. The mountains in the distance (image 17) make it a beautiful location for a memorial. This memorial site is also a place for people to mourn their loved ones. There were a few benches for people to sit, which shows that they do expect visitors (locals or tourists), but there were not as many flowers as in Račak.

It did catch my attention that a lot of the people who died were of a younger age. For example, I saw graves of guys being 17, 22, and 33 years old when they died. What makes the graveyards in Kosovo, including the one in Meja, even more impressive is that they put a picture of the face of the deceased on the gravestone. They do not do that in The Netherlands and it makes it easier to remember that it is a real person that has died.

There was nobody around for me to talk to, besides some construction workers. It is difficult for a tourists to get there by themselves. They would have to find out that they should go to Gjakova first. Many taxi drivers are able to speak French or German, but I,

unfortunately, do not speak those languages well. Even after six years of French in high school, I would rather have a taxi driver who speaks English. For a French or German tourist, it would probably be easier to find a taxi driver to easily communicate with.

It would be interesting to have someone there who has lost someone in the massacre or who can tell some stories about what happened, whether this is a local or the tour guide. This will give the place more meaning to the tourist and it is always better to hear it from a Kosovar person than read it somewhere on the internet. It would have to be a coincidence when visiting the place by yourself, as in my case, but the tour operator can organize this or provide more details and personal stories about what happened that day.

I would, however, include the Meja memorial in the war tour. The tourists would not have the transportation issues like me, because the tour operator arranges this for them when it is part of the war tour. The memorial site will probably also look a lot better when the construction workers have finished, but the location is already beautiful. Besides this, the grave site is quite big, which makes it more impressive and the background story is interesting. The travel time between Gjakova and Meja was also not that bad, so that makes it easier to just go take a look at the memorial when visiting the city of Gjakova. It is also a good location to mention the people that are still missing after the Kosovo war.

* Glllogjan (Glodjane) village memorial of the Haradinaj family *

I could not find many sources about the memorial in Glllogjan, at least not in English (search term: “Glllogjan village memorial”). Sources are often in Albanian, not in English so that makes it extra difficult for a tourist to find information. This would make it hard for a tourist to even know about the memorial. The village as well as the area around it were destroyed during the Kosovo war by Yugoslavian forces. Both civilians and soldiers died and the war memorial honors the soldiers (Rachel, 2018). The pictures I found of the memorial were interesting and impressive, so I really wanted to pay a visit to this memorial. A blog said that the memorial is only accessible by car (Rachel, 2018), which relates to me saying that it is difficult to visit a memorial site. I also expect that there will not be many taxis around, so that can be quite complicated for me.

Then I started to look up information about the Haradinaj family. The house of the current prime-minister of Kosovo (since 2017), Ramush Haradinaj, is located next to the memorial site. I found a lot of information about issues surrounding the prime-minister in the past few years. This made it difficult to find out what happened with the family during the Kosovo war itself. Haradinaj was a KLA-commander and two of his brothers were killed while fighting for the KLA. Ramush Haradinaj has had two trials for war crimes at the UN war crimes tribunal in The Hague (BBC News, 2017).

Later I found out that Glllogjan is also called Glodjane, which made it possible to find more sources about what happened in the village. A potential tourist would probably not search as much as I did to find this other spelling of the name of the village. This agrees with my first thought that it is difficult for tourists to find information about the specific war locations. Of course, the spellings of names are often different in other languages including for the other war sites, but the other names provided me with search results while “Glllogjan” did not as much.

The battle of Glodjane refers to the fights between the Kosovo Liberation Army and the Yugoslav military as well as Serbian forces, in 1998, during the Kosovo war. The family home of the Haradinaj family was used as a command center to plan and execute the crimes during this war (Flottau and Mayr, 2007). Glodjane was one of the largest strongholds of the KLA that was left. Serbian forces wanted to tackle the presence of the KLA in Kosovar-Albanian villages. There was a gun battle between Serbs and the KLA to get power over the place. Eventually the KLA was pushed out and Serbian forces took over control in Glodjane (Mojsilovic, 1998).

There is a little museum that looks like a “Kulla”, which is a traditional Albanian house made out of stone and it has windows that are embedded deeply into the stone (Flattau and Mayr, 2007). These stone tower-houses were a target of destruction by Serbian forces, because they are Albanian traditional architecture. There were around 500 “Kullas”, most of them built in the 18th and 19th century and many generations of the same family lived in these houses, but after the war there was only about 10% left of the “Kullas” in Kosovo (Law, 2009).

On the same day as my trip to Meja on Tuesday the 24th of April, I went to the Haradinaj memorial in the village of Gllogjan. I went back to the bus station in Gjakova and from there I would have to take a bus to a town called Deqan. The second I arrived there I saw a bus driving away with “Deqan” on it. I did not know that a bus to the city Peja would also stop in that town, so after a lot of confusion and people trying to help me, they put me in the bus to Peja. I asked the woman next to me to tell me when we arrived in Deqan as well as another guy in the bus, even though the woman barely knew English. People get everywhere on and off the bus, which shows that they are definitely not as structurally organized as in The Netherlands when it comes to bus stops. This causes even more confusion for me, because I never know when to get out of the bus. Eventually I did arrive in Deqan.

In Deqan, I did not see any taxis, so I asked someone at a cafeteria and he called a taxi for me. He did not speak English very well, but with half German and Google Translate, we figured it out. The taxi driver did not speak much English either. After fifteen minutes, we arrived at the memorial site of the Haradinaj family in Gllogjan (Glodjane).

It was not as I expected. First of all, there was no one there besides me and a guard. I asked if he only guards the place or that he could tell me something about it. His response was that his only job is to guard it and that he could not speak English. I was hoping he could get someone for me to tell me more about the place, but unfortunately he did not. I would also not ring the doorbell at the house, because I do not think that the person living there wants to be bothered by tourists.

I did, however, expect someone to be there, but considering that there was no one else there besides me, it seems logical that someone is not going to wait around for a visitor to come. I was not able to find a lot of information about the place online, so it is unfortunate to not have found someone to talk to. This would be necessary if more tourists visit the place, so the tour operator should provide a guide who can explain more at this location or someone should already be at the location in the future.



Image 18. Memorial site of the Haradinaj family, Glogjan (Glodjane), Kosovo. 24 April, 2018. Photo by Sarah Driessen.

I expected more visitors to be at this war memorial, because it is quite a big area and looks good (image 18). I thought this memorial would be an important one, since Ramush Haradinaj is a famous modern figure in Kosovo. It might be as important, but this was then not shown by the non-existing number of visitors that day, besides myself. This could be different at another moment.

There were only a few flowers at the graves, while in Račak there were many of them. The memorial is definitely a place to mourn, but it is not as visible as in Račak. In addition, this memorial site only had a couple benches, less than at the memorial in Meja. I would have expected there to be more benches for visitors to sit on, but it can also be a sign that not many people visit the memorial.

In addition, there was supposed to be a small museum in the “kulla”. The building looked nice and give the memorial something extra (image 18). I asked the guard if I could go inside and that was okay. The inside of the building was mostly empty. There was a bed where the guard seemed to sleep in. There were some empty glass stands and some extra materials that could be used for the memorial. I was a bit disappointed by this.



Image 19. View on memorial site from inside “Kulla”, Glllogjan (Glodjane), Kosovo. 24 April, 2018. Photo by Sarah Driessen.

I took a picture from behind the bars in the window, because it was a nice view of the memorial site from inside the “kulla”, which was the only interesting thing to see from inside the building. The “kulla” has to potential to be a museum for visitors, which would make the memorial site more interesting for tourists. I would like to have seen more related to the killings or the traditional way of living in a “kulla” and some background information about the battle of Glodjane. The information about the “kulla” being a target during the Kosovo war, which I mentioned earlier, I found out after I visited the place, which is unfortunate. This should be included in the war tour, because it will explain why the “kulla” is there.

I, again, asked the taxi driver to wait for me, which was a good decision since I did not spot any other taxis in the village. The taxi driver made pictures of the memorial himself, which the taxi driver who brought me to Račak did as well. This surprises me, because he is a taxi driver in Deqan, so I would expect that he is familiar with this memorial. It also shows that he had no problem looking back at the war history, because he was interested in it himself, too.



Image 20. Memorial site of the Haradinaj family, Gillogjan (Glodjane), Kosovo. 24 April, 2018. Photo by Sarah Driessen



Image 21. Family house Haradinaj family, Gillogjan (Glodjane), Kosovo. 24 April, 2018. Photo by Sarah Driessen.

This memorial site also looks over the rest of the village (image 20), which symbolizes its importance, the same as the one in Račak. The place looks very good and modern compared to the houses in the village. The images also show that the surroundings of this locations are beautiful with the mountains in the distance. The house of the prime-minister Ramush Haradinaj is located next to the memorial site and looks like a fort to me (image 21). It is built in the same style as the “Kulla”, so it matches with the memorial site. At first I

could not find the graves of the Haradinaj family members, but they were in the third row, which is odd because I would expect them to get a more special place.

After spending 30 minutes at the memorial site, the same taxi driver brought me back to Deqan. I waited for the bus to Pristina at the little eating place of the guy who helped me get a taxi. He asked me if I was a journalist and how I knew about the Haradinaj family. This was the first time I noticed that me being a foreigner coming to visit a memorial site raised questions. Probably because a lot has happened concerning Ramush Haradinaj, which has been in the news, so I could be doing a report about this as well. I do not know how he would have reacted if I told him I was a journalist, but he believed me when I told him I am a student. There was a direct bus going back to Pristina from Deqan, so that was handy.

I would include this location in the war tour, mostly because Ramush Haradinaj is an important public figure in Kosovo so it would be good to know more about the history of this family related to the Kosovo war. It is also difficult to find information about the memorial, so a war tour would be good to inform tourists about it. Besides this, the memorial looks nice and it is at a beautiful location, but having a museum and a guide would make it better.

* Gjakova: Old Bazaar *

The City of Gjakova is at the center of some of the villages that have a connection to the Kosovo war. This is why the city will become a central point in the war tour. It is easy to go to this city first by bus and from there take a taxi to the different villages as a tourist, but it is also a nice central point for the war tour. The city itself does not have specific visual elements (memorials) connected to the Kosovo war, besides the Old Bazaar. Yet, since it has this central location, it would be nice to visit it and see some things other than memorials and cemeteries.

Gjakova has about 150,000 inhabitants, mainly Albanians because no Serbs have returned since the war. The city was under siege during the Kosovo war. On 24 March, 1999, NATO began bombing in Gjakova. Locals perceived these bombings as a way to stop the violence against Kosovar Albanians. Nowadays, this city is high on the list of cultural heritage in Kosovo, including the Old Bazaar (Kasapolli, 2009).

Two historic bridges in Gjakova were supposedly damaged by NATO bombing, but they remained intact. It is also said that the old urban center of Gjakova got destroyed by arson. The historic structures that show the culture and religion of the Albanian population in Kosovo was the target for the attack, because other (modern) buildings in the area were not damaged at all (Law, 2009).

The Old Bazaar in Gjakova was one of the parts that got destroyed in 1999 during the war, as a response on the NATO bombings. This bazaar is the oldest as well as the largest bazaar in Kosovo and it is a kilometer long. Two million euros has been invested in rebuilding the whole center neighborhood, such as mosques and churches, and the bazaar. The money came from international as well as domestic funds and donations (Kasapolli, 2009).

An estimated amount of 6,500 houses were destroyed during the Kosovo war and 1,870 inhabitants died. The number of people who died has been going up since the end of the war, while the number of missing people has declined. At the end of the Kosovo war, 600 people from Gjakova were reported missing (Kasapolli, 2009).

When I googled Gjakova, the first article I got was “13 reasons to NEVER visit Gjakova in Kosovo” (Kinga, 2016). On the one hand, I did not want to click on this, because the day after I would pay the city a visit. On the other hand, I was intrigued by this article that seemed to have nothing positive to say about the city. I was curious if it would be worth it to include this city in the war tour. When I decided to read the whole article, I noticed the author was actually really positive about the city. I would later find out myself that Gjakova is a nice

city to add to the war tour.

The first time I arrived in Gjakova, I only used the bus station in this city as a central point for my visits to Glllogjan and Meja. Three days later, on the 27th of April, I decided to go back there and take a look at the city itself, with the main focus on the Old Bazaar. This time I already knew it would take me 1.5 hours to get from Pristina to Gjakova. It was a fun ride, because the bus was a double decker and I was sitting in the front seat of the second floor. Knowing that the roads are not always as good in Kosovo as well as the bus being old, it felt a bit like a rollercoaster. When I arrived there, I wanted to use Google Maps and walk to the Old Bazaar. I immediately walked the wrong way and decided to ask the taxi drivers at the bus station if they could bring me there. After I showed them the translation of Old Bazaar, they pointed me in the right direction, which turned out to be very easy. It was about one kilometer away from the bus station and I only had to walk straight.

I arrived at the Old Bazaar around 11 o'clock in the morning, so there were not many people yet (image 23). I decided to go look for the Tourist Information Office, but after walking up and down the street three times, I gave up. Maybe the office is not there anymore, because I did see a few empty shops. The article I read beforehand mentioned an information office as well (Kinga, 2016), but this article is two years old so things could have changed in the city. Having it been there before or it being there (maybe another location) without me finding it does indicate that tourists visit the Old Bazaar and probably also the rest of Gjakova. The Old Bazaar is aware of these tourists and offers (or offered) a place for them to gain more information.



Image 22. Old Bazaar, Gjakova, Kosovo. 27 April, 2018. Photo by Sarah Driessen.



Image 23. Old Bazaar, Gjakova, Kosovo. 31 May, 2018. Photo by Kiki Peters.

The bazaar looks really nice and there are many places to eat and drink (image 22). I sat down at a small place and ordered something to drink as well as a sandwich, which tasted very good, and as time passed it began to get more crowded in the street. There are also many shops at the Old Bazaar, but a lot of them offer traditional Albanian clothes and I noticed that there are many jewelry shops. It is not possible to shop there in the same way as in a real shopping street, but it is nice to take a look at the different shops for a tourist, especially the

traditional clothes.

I decided to go see if I could get closer to the mosque next to the bazaar, but as I tried to enter the location, I noticed that people were about to start their prayers. In addition, I visited the clock tower, which was already visible from a distance. Nearby there was a small river with a bridge as well as a hotel that had some resemblance of the Grand Hotel in Pristina. After this, I walked through a park and I went inside a luxury shopping mall with brands such as Gucci and Louis Vuitton. So, Gjakova has more to offer than just the Old Bazaar and the city is a nice place to have a relaxing day. My way back to Pristina was in a small bus, very different from the bus on the way to Gjakova, but this bus could also drive a lot faster.

I did notice some of the things mentioned in the article “13 reasons to NEVER visit Gjakova” by Kinga (Kinga, 2016). The Old Bazaar is definitely taken over by the large amount of cafes, but this is also why it is so appealing. It is true that the place has something cute. The city does not have any big food chains, but it is fun to try out to local food and drinks and this will give the war tour something extra. After the Kosovo war, poverty went from 7% to 20%, many houses were put for sale, and many inhabitants left the city (Kasapoli, 2009). Having more tourists visiting the city because of the war tour can definitely have a positive impact on the locals, because tourists can, for instance, enjoy the food.

I would include the city of Gjakova in the war tour, because I enjoyed visiting the place and, as said before, it gives the war tour some variety besides the war memorials. At the same time, the place has a war history, which can be mentioned while walking through the city and visiting the Old Bazaar. Gjakova has more to offer than the Old Bazaar, but the bazaar should be the focus during the war tour because it is most related to the war.

* Prekaz village memorial of the Jashari Family *

Adem Jashari is seen as one of the people who founded the Kosovo Liberation Army. He was also the leader of the resistance against the Serbian president and his government. Serbia had Adem Jashari on its most-wanted list, but they failed to capture him multiple times. On 22 January, 1998, the Jashari family was attacked by the Serbs, but no one got killed since they were hiding in the woods. On 5 March, 1998, the family got attacked again and this time they fought back against the Serbs. The attack lasted for more than three days and eventually Adam Jashari and fifty family members, including women, children, and elderly, were murdered. Only one family member survived, namely his niece who was only ten years old (Krasniqi, 2016).

Because of the murders of the Jashari family, protests emerged in Kosovo as well as among Albanian people (Frontline, 1995-2014). In response, Serbs had counter-demonstrations (Frontline, 1995-2014). The international community began to pay attention to the conflict and it caused the Western powers to force limited sanctions on the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia. The Albanian newspaper *Koha Ditore* noted that more than 500,000 people took part in the protests against the attack on the Jashari family by the Serbian army. Kosovo also had two days of mourning after the event happened and a large number of Kosovars attended the funeral of the family (Krasniqi, 2016).

The deaths of the Jashari family was seen as a sacrifice for the nation. Adam Jashari was commemorated as “the legendary commander”. The family’s sacrifice was seen as a sign of heroism because they fought back and died. Besides this, it was seen as a fight and struggle for political change. The event played a big role in Kosovo’s fight against the Serbian oppressor during the Kosovo war, but it also became important in their fight for independence after the war. It became commonly used in national ideologies of Kosovo, narratives about the Kosovo war, and state-building operations in the country (Krasniqi, 2016).

The houses that the Jashari family lived in have been preserved after the attack during the Kosovo war in 1998. There is a whole structure around the houses that is supposed to help preserve the buildings, so that the history of the attack as well as the aftermath stays intact.

I went to Prekaz on Thursday the 26th of April, 2018. I had to take the bus from Pristina to Skenderaj, which took about an hour to get there and from there go to the village of Prekaz. From previous experiences, I did not want to go to the toilet at the bus station, so I asked to go to the toilet at a small bakery close to the station. Unfortunately, this toilet also turned out to be just a hole in the ground, so I searched for another toilet. Luckily I found one

in the same street. This time I thought it would be possible to walk from the bus station to the Jashari memorial site, because it was just little more than one kilometer away. Yet, when I arrived there I saw that the direction I had to take, existed out of a road going up a hill. So, not being used to walking up hills as a Dutch girl as well as it being over 25 degrees, I decided to be lazy and take a taxi after all. The taxi driver, again, only spoke German and a little bit of English.

I arrived at the memorial complex pretty fast and it was very big, especially compared to other war memorials in Kosovo, and it looked quite nice and modern. The first thing that caught my attention were the two tour busses and some other tourists. This was the first time in Kosovo that I was at a war site where I was not the only tourist there. It was also an indication that the location was going to be interesting as well as it being the most important location related to the Kosovo war. The size of the memorial also indicates its importance. At other locations related to the Kosovo war, I felt a bit uncomfortable because it did not seem like a common thing to visit these places, being the only one there and taxi drivers often being surprised that I wanted to visit it or not even knowing about the place. At the memorial complex, there were also guides who could tell visitors more about the Jashari family and the war. The guide, Ilaz Halimi, told me that everyday people come visit the location. According to him, there have been twelve million visitors since the killings happened. Twelve million visitors in 20 years is equal to 600,000 visitors per year. To me, this already seems like a huge amount of visitors when keeping in mind that Kosovo is not a popular tourist destination. Most of the visitors, however, are from Albania, but people from other parts of the world visit it as well. According to the guide, these other visitors are generally from other parts of Europe, the United States, and Turkey.

In addition, this memorial site includes two places where you can sit down to eat and drink and it also has a toilet. If I had known about this toilet beforehand, I would not have had to search for one near the bus station. The memorial site has a museum as well, which was the first time that I could get some extra information and could see some other things related to the event besides a memorial. There is a little path leading up to the hill, which gives you a nice view over the memorial complex. Lastly, the memorial site has multiple benches spread around the location, so visitors can sit down, for example next to the fountains, which is a nice place to sit. The fountains make the memorial complex even more impressive. This seems to be the only function of that area, because it has nothing related to the attack itself. These elements all show that the memorial complex has been adjusted to the many people that

come to visit the place. It already has a lot of visitors, especially compared with the other war locations.



Image 24. Graves Adem Jashari family, Adem Jashari Memorial Complex, Prekaz, Kosovo. 26 April, 2018. Photo by Sarah Driessen.

The first thing I did was visiting the cemetery where Adem Jashari himself is buried. The cemetery part of the memorial complex is guarded by two soldiers (image 24). These soldiers were walking away before I arrived there, but they have to come back as soon as someone visits the graves. Thus, the soldiers turned around and went to stand back next to what seemed to be the most important graves, because they stood side to side next to four graves while there were many more graves. I asked if they could tell me something about the place, but they did not speak English well and it quickly became clear that they were only there to guard the graves, not to inform visitors. One of the soldiers was standing next to the grave of Adem Jashari. I asked if it was okay to take a picture of the grave and later I also took a picture together with one of the soldiers.



Image 25. Museum at Adem Jashari Memorial Complex, Prekaz, Kosovo. 26 April, 2018. Photo by Sarah Driessen.

After this, I went to the museum, which is not that big on the inside and looks very modern next to the destroyed houses of the Jashari family (image 25). A guide, Ilaz Halimi, was giving a German tourist a tour through the museum, so I asked to join them. His English was sometimes hard to follow. Yet, he took the time to repeat something if necessary, because he did know English well, and the possibility for foreign tourists to learn more about the place is there. The guide explained what all the objects were and told us more about the images hanging in the museum, such as the family tree and pictures of every family member. What stood out to me was the orange truck that a child used to play with and who was killed during the attack. Another object that was shocking were the bullets from the bodies and the clothes that family members had worn. Even though the museum is small, it portrays a more shocking image of the killings, because as a visitor you can empathize more by seeing additional things besides just a grave or memorial. It makes it easier to realize that the attack really happened and many people were killed.

I bought a little brochure in the museum, because they did not have a lot of books in English. The only real books were focused on one specific aspect of the war, namely children

that were killed or released documents, which is not what I need for my research. Yet, the fact that they have all these books and the brochure shows that they want to provide their visitors with as much information as they can. Other war related sites in Kosovo do not have this information available, so you need a guide or have to look up the background information yourself.

The brochure is quite handy though, because it gives a short but detailed and interesting overview of what happened. In addition, it includes parts that are focused on one specific figure, which, of course, includes Adem Jashari (Fylli et al, 2012). So, you also get to know the person a bit better, not just the event, which again shows how important some specific people are. The writing style is nationalistic, which makes it even more interesting. To me that shows the importance of the event for the Kosovar population during the war as well as now. This writing style helps to glorify the Adem Jashari family. The title already says enough: “Prekaz, a legacy of the brave” with a sort of remark underneath saying, “He is alive” (Fylli et al, 2012). Adem Jashari is “alive” for the Albanian population and still very important to them. I think this gives the impression that they would like to share this story with the rest of the world, so having more tourists visiting this place would be good.

The story “of the brave” in Drenica (region including Prekaz) already begins in 1912, according to the brochure. The brochure includes more than just the Jashari family and massacre. The massacre of the Jashari family is referred to as a “sublime sacrifice” from the family, which helped the country to reach its freedom. Even the village of Prekaz is referred to as the “birthplace of Kosovo’s freedom”, (Fylli et al, 2012). This indicates how important the place and the family are for the country and that they are admired for their actions.



Image 26. Portrait Adem Jashari, Adem Jashari Memorial Complex, Prekaz, Kosovo. 26 April, 2018. Photo by Sarah Driessen.



Image 27. Jashari family houses, Adem Jashari Memorial Complex, Prekaz, Kosovo. 26 April, 2018. Photo by Sarah Driessen.

After the museum, I went to the Jashari family houses. I walked past this huge art work of the face of Adem Jashari (image 26) as well as a statue of him in front of the houses. The number of times that Adem Jashari's face is portrayed at the memorial complex makes him look even more significant. There was a large group of tourists standing in front of the big house, listening to the same guide that gave me the tour through the museum (image 27).



Image 28. Constructions around Jashari houses, Prekaz, Kosovo.
31 May, 2018. Photo by Kiki Peters.



Image 29. Constructions around Jashari houses, Prekaz, Kosovo.
26 April, 2018. Photo by Sarah Driessen.

The constructions built around the houses offer the possibility to look inside the buildings, because you can walk on the scaffoldings (image 28 & image 29). These, however, did feel a bit unstable, but the guide assured me that it was safe and it offers the possibility to see the building upclose. After I took some pictures, Halimi finished his tour with the group of tourists and was able to give me as well as the German guy some information about the houses and the attack, which was very interesting. It is always better to hear the story from someone while you are at the location, instead of searching for the information online or in a book.

The guide, Halimi, said that the Jashari family actually got attacked three times, despite online sources saying that it was “only” twice. He explained that the first attack took place before the Kosovo war officially began. The guide showed us a hole of a bomb in the house, which was interesting to see. In addition, Halimi told this story about a girl who survived the attack on the Jashari family. She was the daughter of Adem Jashari’s brother. The girl was only 11 years old and the Serbs caught her that day. The Serbs showed her all of the dead bodies, including her five sisters, her two brothers, her mother, and her father. They wanted to traumatize her and make her tell people in surrounding villages about what had happened in Prekaz. Halimi, however, also mentions that she did not get a trauma from what

the Serbs tried to do to her and that she is now a grown-up with a husband and children (I. Halimi, 26 April, 2018). It seemed that the guide wanted to emphasize that the Serbs failed by saying it did not work out as planned. Besides this girl, a boy escaped who was carrying a gun, according to the guide.

This does not agree with what I mentioned earlier, because online sources only mention a girl and the source I read before visiting Prekaz said that he was 10 years old. Halimi said that there are many date mistakes in books about the Kosovo war (I. Halimi, 26 April, 2018), which is also what I noticed before because sources do not agree on the details. It is more believable to hear these details from a guide at a war site, because he informs many tourists about the Kosovo war but I cannot be sure which sources are correct about these details. The guide did know a lot about the Kosovo war and he told me that he is a history teacher. This makes him trust-worthy. He is also the person who informs other visitors at the memorial complex, so this is the story everyone gets to hear.

Halimi also noted that many people want to forget about the war, which is why there are not many books about the Kosovo war. Most of the books that do exist focus on a specific place or person, instead of the whole war. He explained that the Kosovars see it as something that is part of history, it is behind them so they do not focus on it anymore (I. Halimi, 26 April, 2018). This would mean that these Kosovars would not enjoy tourists to bring up the Kosovo war again and again, because they just want to move on with their lives. Looking at the Prekaz memorial complex, they do focus on the war, but on a more positive aspect, namely remembering a hero and his family. Since not many books are available and the details are not all the same, it is difficult for a tourist to find out more about the Kosovo war without visiting the places. Going on the Kosovo war tour can provide them with a lot of information and see it with their own eyes.

Ilaz Halimi mentioned something interesting about the president before the Kosovo war (until after the war), Ibrahim Rugova, who wanted to separate Kosovo in a peaceful manner by negotiation. Yet, he added that a country in the Balkans cannot just do that, which the Kosovo war has showed. Halimi explained to me why this attack with this family is so special. He emphasized that his family did not try to run when they got attacked. Other people and families who got attacked tried to escape. The Jashari family also had the possibility to escape, but they decided to stay and fight. Actually everyone in the neighborhood stayed and fought against the Serbs (I. Halimi, 26 April, 2018). This is another positive note made about the family and the neighborhood, which again shows that Kosovars are proud of this.

The Prekaz memorial complex looks more like a place for people to learn about the

Kosovo war and the event, instead of a place to mourn such as the memorial in Račak, because it is already more focused on tourists. One of the reasons it looks this way is because of the large amount of visitors, Kosovar as well as foreign, while, for example, the Račak memorial is certainly not as popular as Prekaz. In addition, The Prekaz memorial did not have any flowers either. This indicates that the local population would also have less of a problem with having visitors opposed to the locals in Račak who are still showing putting flowers down at the memorial. The chances of the latter being opposed to having many tourists in their village looks bigger, even though the taxi driver, Granit, seemed open to it.

The Adem Jashari memorial complex should definitely be included in the war tour. It is the most important location for the Kosovars, so it also an important part of the war tour. You would be missing a lot when leaving this war location out of the tour. The guide(s) present at the location can provide the tourists with information about the attack, but also about the Kosovo war in general. They are specialized in this part of the war. It is not so difficult to get to the Jashari memorial, because it is only an hour away from Pristina, but it is approximately 2.5 hours driving from Gjakova. Especially since the memorial complex is so close to the bus station, it is easy to find the place and taxi drivers know about it. The memorial complex looks nice and there are a lot of different aspects to see and learn about.



Image 30. Picture Adem Jashari, Pristina, Kosovo. 27 May, 2018. Photo by Sarah Driessen.

On my way back to Pristina from the Prekaz memorial, I also noticed that his picture is hanging on the gate of the Kosovar military base, which is also called “Adem Jashari”. This

is an indication that he is important to Kosovo, also when it comes to fighting and protecting the country nowadays. A few days later, I noticed the picture of Adem Jashari on a building near the center of Pristina as well (image 30). I had seen his picture here before, but now I finally know who he is exactly. As mentioned in the introduction, his picture is shown behind the Newborn monument (image 2) and zoomed in on image 30. That his picture is hanging in Pristina more than once shows that Adem Jashari is still an important figure for the Kosovar population to this day.

* Krusha e Madhe & Krusha e Vogel villages *

The Krusha e Madhe and Krusha e Vogel villages are an example of how people learned to deal with the horrific events during the Kosovo war, specifically after the massacres that happened in both villages. It is said that the killings were done as revenge, because the two villages supported the KLA (Human Rights Watch, 1999).

The massacre in Krusha e Madhe took place on 25 March 1999, which was one day after the NATO began bombing Yugoslavia. The men and boys were separated from the rest of the population and later killed by a special police unit. Reports from the Human Rights Watch say that it involved 90 men and boys. The women and children were driven out of the village (Revolvy). None of the males ever returned to the village. The village is nowadays known as the Village of War Widows (Plesch & Zaragovia, 2018).

The massacre in Krusha e Vogel is said to be the largest massacre during the Kosovo war, according to the EU Rule of Law Mission to Kosovo (EULEX). The same happened in this village, so the males were separated from the women and children. Not all the bodies have been found of the 113 people that got killed. Only twenty-seven bodies of the total of 113 (Aliu, 2012). An article notes that around 50 men escaped Krusha e Vogel. Yet, these men also thought “only” 50 people were killed, but the number is now at 113 (The Guardian, 1999).

Other sources explain the massacre by combining the two villages, while separately the villages are given another number of killings by different sources. This shows how difficult it is for a foreign tourist to find accurate information on an event. The war tour can fix this problem by well-informing the tourists.

The head of the village of Krusha e Madhe, Selami Hoti, said that, “We think that it is never too late so we are asking our government to not allow this humiliation and the EU not to ignore the crimes committed by Serbia,” (Isufi & Duraku, 2017). This indicates that the people are not over the war history yet and the war tour could bring more attention on the crimes that were committed by Serbia and the consequences for the Kosovar citizens. In addition, the prime-minister said that Kosovo, “will never forget fallen ones, whose sacrifice allowed us to be free,” (Isufi & Duraku, 2017). Here the prime-minister viewed the deaths as a sacrifice, the deaths of the Jashari family were seen as a sacrifice as well.

In 2017, the villagers of Krusha e Madhe tried to put pressure on the international community. They wanted the international community to increase its attempts to gain more attention for the massacre that happened in the village. This massacre resulted in 140 widows

and 502 orphans (Isufi & Duraku, 2017). This number does not agree with the Human Right Watch saying that it involved the killings of 90 men and boys, so this is, again, confusing and there is no exact number. The article probably refers to both the killings in Krusha e Madhe as well as Krusha e Vogel. It does mention “who were killed in March,” (Isufi & Duraku, 2017), but it refers to both the ones killed in march as well as just the ones killed in Krusha e Madhe, which complicates it.

The head of the Association of Families of Missing Persons in Krusha e Vogel, Agron Limani, says that there are multiple reasons why the international justice bodies were delaying a formal investigation of the massacre. According to Limani, the international justice bodies waited for some witnesses to die. Another reason was that people would have forgotten about most of the details. EULEX as well as the UN Mission to Kosovo were also aware that the killings were done by local Serbs. If they had charged the Serbs, they extended the return process of the refugees (Aliu, 2012). The last reason seems to be a “nice” reason, because they kept the refugees in mind. The other two reasons seem weird and in favor of the Serbs.

I decided not to go to the two villages. I learned from earlier experiences that it is difficult to get to a Kosovar village. Other memorial sites looked more impressive when I searched for them online. When I searched for Krusha e Madhe, I only found two images of the memorial site and the other results were places that are not even located in Kosovo. The memorial site did not look as impressive as the ones in Gllogjan, Meja, and Račak. Another aspect that stopped me from going there was that I was hoping to talk to someone from the Krusha company. I mailed them on three different e-mail addresses, but all three of them returned with a message saying that the e-mail address did not exist. The chance I would find someone at the location who could speak English and tell me more about it was little, because not many people in villages speak English.

I also wanted to go to the village from the city of Gjakova. I had been there one time before and all the taxi drivers were not able to speak English, which would make it very difficult again to get there. It would take 30 minutes to arrive in the village and another 30 minutes to get back to a city. The villages are exactly in the middle between Gjakova and Prizren. The combination of all of these aspects made it seem not worth it to me to go visit these villages.

Later I decided to send the Facebook page of the Krusha e Madhe village a message. I got a positive response including a Facebook contact. A couple of days later I received an e-mail from the company, of which I was not sure if my e-mail had reached them. They asked me to specify my questions and I sent them an e-mail back. I did not hear back from them for

two weeks, so I decided to send a follow-up mail. I got a response the same night, but only a small part of my questions were answered. I tried to get more answers, but they did not respond anymore.

The short explanation that I did receive was mostly about the company itself. The e-mails did not include any name of the person that I was in contact with. So, I do not know for sure if it is a he or a she, but since the company is set up by women, I will refer to the person as a she. She said that the women of Krusha tried to find their male relatives after the war. They tried this for multiple years, but with no result. Eventually, in 2005, they began to process and conserve different groups of agricultural products. The reason for this pointed out by her was that the women had to raise their children as well as pay for their education and get them ready for life (KB Krusha, personal communication, 19 May, 2018). An article notes that, "Without this initiative for Krusha's women, the aftermath of the war would have been a second war for them," (Plesch and Zaragovia, 2018). This agrees with the idea that the war does not just end for people when there officially is a marked end. People still have to deal with it on an everyday basis.

Nowadays, the organization covers the entire market of Kosovo, which exists out of more than 200 supermarkets. Besides this, they export their products to Germany as well as Switzerland. Sixty-four women work for the organization during the summer season and they have more than seventy contracts with farmers that supply the vegetables. She also said that tourists regularly come visit them from all over the world. They are open to this, because they are getting more popular every day (KB Krusha, personal communication, 19 May, 2018). I wonder where the tourists are coming from exactly and what they do during their visit, then I could have want to visit the same things, but unfortunately I did not get a further explanation. Since their product is sold in supermarkets as well, the war tour could offer the possibility to get a taste of the products without actually visiting the villages, since the products are sold at many places. This could be done in the bus on their way to another location.

I messaged the Facebook contact, which was suggested to me by the Krusha e Madhe Facebook-page. The next day I did receive a message and he was willing to help me with extra information about the massacre, but he was not able to help me with my questions when it comes to tourism.

I would not include these villages in the war tour. First of all, I did not see enough reasons to go visit them myself. I am looking at these villages from the perspective and observations of an individual tourist like myself. Having a translator would make it more interesting, because you would be able to talk to someone, hopefully one of the women who

experienced the massacre and now works in the village. Yet, the average tourist does not have a translator and would not make the effort to get one.

Secondly, it would not be necessary to go there to hear about the story, because the tour operator can tell this story or invite someone to come talk about it to tourists (for example in Gjakova or in the bus). The story behind the places are really interesting, so it should definitely be included when moving from one location to the other to give an overall image of the war in Kosovo. I would choose Krusha e Madhe out of the two villages, because this one has a memorial place so there is something to see. Seeing the village itself, however, does not add a lot of value to the war tour, mostly because the memorial site is not as impressive as the other potential war tour locations. As said before, everything about the Krusha villages can be done in Gjakova or in the bus during the war tour, mainly tasting the products.

It was a slow and a bit of a difficult process to get additional information, even though the Krusha e Madhe Facebook-page, the Facebook-contact as well as the company were willing to help and welcomed me in the village. This did not give me the extra push to visit the village or include it in the war tour. Besides this, having six locations with per day one central location surrounded by two villages is a good number for the war tour. Adding another village, which is also quite far away from the central city of Gjakova, would also result in too much time having to sit in the bus during the war tour and the war tour would become too long. In the next chapter, I will describe the finalized Kosovo war tour after having visited the locations myself, which were suggested by the research internship organization.

* Final product: the Kosovo war tour *

In this chapter I will give a complete picture of the Kosovo war tour, because it will give an even better image of a possible war tour in practice and hopefully urge Kosovo to offer them to tourists. It will also function as an overall conclusion on the different possible war locations. This finalized version shows that a war tour through Kosovo is possible and attractive enough for tourists. The final war tour is the way I suggest the tour operator *Be in Kosovo* should handle the war history of Kosovo. This is a positive way of using the war tour in benefit of the tour operator as well as the country and the final product shows that a Kosovo war tour is possible. It can help attract more tourists to Kosovo and change the negative image of war that the country has to deal with. Besides this, I will mention two extra elements that can be added in the Kosovo war tour.

The war tour will take two days and two nights, from morning till evening. This is shorter than the three, five or seven days suggested by the CEO of *Be in Kosovo*. He, however, also noted that tourists do often not have a lot of time. Two days covers a lot of Kosovo's war history, but it does not take up as much time. This will make it easier for tourists to participate in the war tour.

The first day will exist out of Pristina, Račak, and Prekaz. The second day will include Gjakova, Meja, and Glllogjan. This will also be the order of the different locations, because that will create a nice flow. According to the CEO of *Be in Kosovo*, visiting three locations in one day should be manageable in terms of time (A. Rafuna, personal communication, 18 June, 2018). Both days have the central location of a city, namely Pristina and Gjakova. This means that I have decided to include Pristina in the war tour, since it is a good central point for the other two war locations on the first day and has enough to offer when it comes to war history. The company *Be in Kosovo* already includes Pristina and Gjakova in their tours, because I have been on a tour through Pristina myself and Gjakova gets promoted on their Instagram. These are the capital and another big city in Kosovo, so it would be nice for tourists to see these cities during the war tour and, of course, they are both connected to the Kosovo war as mentioned earlier in my research.

The war tour has variation, because some war sites are small and located in villages while the tour also includes two large cities. In addition, it has a nice balance between unpopular and already popular sites. I liked that Prekaz already is a popular tourist destination, which I definitely did not expect to see in Kosovo. Meja, for example, is the opposite and is absolutely not a popular tourist destination. The tour has three war memorials

that are places to mourn, namely Račak, Meja, and Gllogjan (Glodjane). Prekaz has become a place to learn about their national war hero, instead of only mourning him. This makes the tour a bit more special, because I think people can appreciate it to visit places that not every tourist will see and is not overcrowded by tourists while at the same time visiting two cities during the tour. Besides this, the war locations are all looking good, some more impressive than others, and are located in beautiful areas, whether it is in a village or in the city.

I suggest to have a standard meeting point for every tour where the tourists have to meet before starting their tour, so this also applies for the war tour. I did not expect the organization to not have standard meeting points for their tours. They told me they would let me know short-notice what the location for the start of the tour was going to be on that Friday. Yet, when I asked Besar about it, it turned out that this only happened on that day, meaning that they usually do not decide on the meeting point on such a short notice.

The website of *i-House Travel* mentions that the meeting point for their war tour is in front of the building where their organization is located (FreeTour.com, 2015). The office of *Be in Kosovo* is located a bit outside of the center of Pristina, which makes it an unpractical location for tour groups to meet. For the war tour, I would suggest the Bill Clinton statue in Pristina as the starting point, because it is one of the war locations in Pristina and there are some seats for people to wait.

So, the war tour will begin in Pristina. From Pristina to Lipjan, a town near Račak and Pristina, takes about 40 minutes. From Lipjan it takes 15 minutes to arrive in Račak. After visiting Račak, the tour group can take a break in Lipjan before going to Prekaz. From Račak to Prekaz takes a bit more than an hour. At Prekaz, it is possible to sit down, but this can also be done at Skenderaj, which is five minutes away, or this can be done when arriving back in Pristina. Pristina will be the location to spend the night before the start of the next part of the war tour. I decided not to include the Kosovo museum and the Krusha e Madhe and Krusha e Vogel villages. While travelling from one location to the other (near Gjakova), tourists can get a taste of the Krusha e Madhe products and some explanation about the history of the two Krusha villages. The fact that people are still missing their loved ones, because they were never found after the war, should also be mentioned, because it shows how the war is still present on a daily basis. The smaller memorials alongside the road should be pointed out, because these also show that the loss of people during the war is present everywhere across the country, not just at a memorial.

Pristina is approximately 1,5 hours away from Gjakova. Some meals and drinks will definitely be enjoyed at the Old Bazaar in Gjakova. This is the perfect place to sit down. This

is also the city where the second night will be spend and the next day the tour group will go back to their own vacation stay or go home. The tour group can also decide differently and not include the second night in the war tour.

When it comes to food, drinks, and accommodation, everything can be done according to the wishes of the tour group. Breakfast should always be included at the accommodation, but lunch and dinner can be decided together with the tourists. Some tourists want to go on their own, while others want it to be organized by the tour operator. When they want lunch and dinner arranged as well, this should be done in a traditional or semi-traditional place. It depends on the size of the tour group which vehicle will be used during the war tour. The organization has cars, busses, vans, and minibuses, so there is a lot of choice (A. Rafuna, personal communication, 18 June, 2018).

This also means that the size of the group can vary from one person to, I would say, around 10 maximum, because having too large groups makes it difficult to manage, especially when you have to travel to multiple places and some of these war sites are small. The tour through Pristina has showed that a large group of tourists can become very difficult, so reducing the maximum to ten people can help with the quality of the war tour.

The only aspect that is not changeable for this war tour are the six locations and the order of visiting them. The rest of the war tour can be adjusted to the preferences of the tourist. When looking back at the Dutch tourist, the war tour should be given in English. Since the tour is quite big, tourists have to be aware that it takes up the whole day and also takes some energy, even though there is enough time to eat, drink, and relax as well. It is up to the company to decide on the price per person for the war tour, but it should not be too much so that it is more ethically correct, because you want to attract people, teach them something, and the war locations should, of course, not be exploited.

A Kosovar tour operator will, obviously, give the tour from the perspective of a Kosovar. Yet, it would be good to mention the disputed opinions about specific events, so that the tourist becomes aware of the difficult relation between Kosovo and Serbia (that is still present nowadays). Nothing should be left out on purpose, so that tourists get informed well about the Kosovo war and the war tour is authentic with facts. The company noted that they do not leave anything out on purpose (A. Rafuna, personal communication, 16 April, 2018). and they include facts about the history as well as personal opinions B. Haxhikadrija, personal communication, 23 May, 2018). Other opinions should just be accepted if anyone disagrees. The different war locations can teach people a lot, while at the same time they are located in beautiful landscapes. This will make the tour enjoyable, but in a respectful way.

A lot, of course, depends on the tour operator itself if a tour will be a success. The war tour can be done in the same way as the tour operator organizes other tours. The promotion of the war tour can be done by using Social Media, word-of-mouth, promotional materials, and personal contact. The same as they promote their other tours (B. Haxhikadrija, personal communication, 23 May, 2018). The organization of the tour has to be good, the people should be interested enough so they keep paying attention, and some interaction between the guide and the tourists would be great, such as asking questions. The guide should be able to tell the stories in an interesting way and having experienced the war himself will make the tour better as well.

** Extra elements for the Kosovo war tour*

I would like to add two extra elements to the Kosovo war tour. Both of the extras show that the war is still important for the Kosovar people.



Image 31. Keychain “UÇK” & magnet “Adem Jashari”. 17 June, 2018. Photo by Sarah Driessen.

While walking down the Sheshi in Pristina, I noticed a keychain on one of the tables of a guy selling souvenirs on the street. This keychain had the logo of the Kosovo Liberation Army (KLA) on it, in Albanian the *Ushtria Çlirimtare e Kosovës* (UÇK). If there was no interest in this key chain, he would stop trying to sell it. It also indicates that the guy who sells it sees a significance in portraying the KLA logo. I even saw this logo on the hood of a car while sitting in the bus to Skenderaj (near the Prekaz memorial), so to some people the

Kosovo Liberation Army is definitely still important so many years after the war. The logo is also present on the sign near the Jashari family houses (image 27). Other smaller war memorial sites and graves next to the road include this logo as well. Image 31 shows this keychain and a magnet of Adem Jashari. I found the magnet in a souvenir shop in Pristina, which also had other magnets of the war hero and some souvenirs with the Kosovo Liberation Army logo on it. The memorial complex Adem Jashari in Prekaz also offered some souvenirs, which can be bought by tourists when visiting that location.

Souvenirs are an important and fun aspect of being a tourist and I think almost no tourist goes home without at least buying one souvenir. The souvenirs are an important part of the tourist experience. Tourists want something to remind them of the experience they had and the souvenirs are evidence of these moments (Wilkins, 2010). In Sarajevo, even key chains and pens made out of war materials are being sold to tourists (Schuessler, 2015). The keychain with the KLA logo and the magnet with Adem Jashari on it would be a nice touch of the Kosovo war tour, because it are souvenirs specifically related to it. So, the war tour should give the time and possibility to buy these souvenirs.



Image 32. Traditional Albanian instruments "qifteli", Pristina, Kosovo. 21 June, 2018. Photo by Sarah Driessen

Another idea that adds something extra to the war tour besides visiting the memorial sites is the war music of the Kosovo war. A famous war singer is Ilir Shaqiri. A recent poem of this singer from 2018 is named "Adam Jashari". This poem is so recent that it, again, shows how important Adem Jashari remains until this day as well as the war itself.

Shaqiri was a member of the KLA's Military Artistic Corps and he showed his support of the KLA by giving concerts across Europe. One of his songs is called "Pavarsia" which means "Independence". This is a direct reference to the Kosovo war. Parts of the lyrics are "soil planted with centuries of men who fell for freedom", "oh today Kosovo celebrates, a big joy in our heart", and "the day of independence has come". This song shows the proudness and joy of reaching their independence.

The music by Ilir Shaqiri can be played and his poem can be read and explained more about while driving from one war location to the other, the same as the products and history of the Krusha villages. In this way, some additional information can be given in the bus about Shaqiri and his work during the war tour instead of just waiting to arrive at the next location. In Pristina, a guy sells the traditional instrument on the street that is used to play the war songs with, which would be nice to take a look at the first day of the war tour (image 32), since it is near the statue of Zahir Pajaziti (first commander of the KLA). The guy, however, is not selling them every day, so it would really be an extra element if he is there on the day of the tour.

These two extra elements, the souvenirs and the music, show that more can still be found in Kosovo related to the war besides the memorial sites, which add something extra to the tour. I have now given a finalized version of the Kosovo war tour, which can be applied by the tour operator in their promotion to attract tourists to Kosovo. In the next chapter, I will look at an already existing war tour in Sarajevo and compare this with the Kosovo war tour, which has now been finalized in this chapter.

* Comparison to another former-Yugoslavian country: the Sarajevo war tour *

I want to take a look at another former-Yugoslavian country where war tours are being offered by tour operators. In the literature, I have mentioned how Croatia and Bosnia handle their war history. This can provide an example of how Kosovo should handle its war history. I chose Bosnia, more specifically Sarajevo, because there the most war tours seem to be given. In addition, I chose a former-Yugoslavian country because their war history is just as recent as in Kosovo, while, for instance, the war history of Germany is a longer time ago. The locals and the international community have tried to breathe new air into the tourism industry in Bosnia, trying to change the negative war image of the country, and helping the economy. War tourism is one of the types of tourism that has begun to grow in the country (Hawton, 2004). This, however, has already been fourteen years ago, so Bosnia has a head start on Kosovo. It also shows that war tourism and changing the negative war image can go together.

I will look at some reviews of war tours to see if people enjoyed the war elements of the country and hopefully get some information, experiences, and opinions from a Bosnian tour operator that offers a war tour through Sarajevo. The war tours in Sarajevo also provide me examples when it comes to the details and what elements to keep in mind, such as the size of the groups, the prize, and duration, because these are already existing war tours, while Kosovo does not have any yet. I will also mention how things mentioned by the tour operator can be applied in Kosovo.

Unfortunately, I did not have the time and resources to go on a war tour in Sarajevo myself. I would have liked to visit Sarajevo and experience a war tour, because this would have given me a great example of a war tour. Thankfully, a tour operator located in Sarajevo responded to my e-mails, so I could ask for as much information as needed.

I approached, through e-mail, five different tour companies in Bosnia that offer a war tour online. The first one is *Sarajevo Funky Tours*, which was the first result I got when I googled for it, but they have not responded. The second one is *Toorico Tours*, who said that they would like to know more if I come visit Sarajevo before deciding if they want to take part in my research (Toorico Tours, personal communication, 10 May, 2018). Yet, I have not been able to. The third tour operator, *i-House Travel*, said that they do not have an opportunity to sit down with me, because they are getting ready for the tourist season (i-House Travel, personal communication, 12 May, 2018). They, however, did give a short answer in the e-mail related to my research. The company *Balkantina* did respond to my e-mail, willing to answer my questions and help me out more. The fifth one and last one,

Jayway Travel, did not respond.

Since I could reach out to so many different companies, it shows that many tour operators in Sarajevo offer a war tour, while in Kosovo there is no specific war tour yet. This also does indicate that there is a demand for war tours in Sarajevo, otherwise not so many companies would offer them. Even though Kosovo has no war tours yet, this does not mean there cannot be a demand for war tours. Kosovo is still at the beginning of developing their tourist sector, so the overall demand by tourists is not high up till now. Promoting the country, especially its war history, should enhance the demand in Kosovo as well.

* *Two Sarajevo war tour operators*

A manager of *i-House Travel* said that they offer multiple tours based on a theme. The tour focused on the Bosnian war is the Mostar Shelter Tour. He said that this war gets treated the same as any other historic event. Besides this war tour, they have tours that focus on Yugoslavia, the Cold War, and the Ottoman Era (*i-House travel*, personal communication, 12 May, 2018). He also gave a short opinion when it comes to the idea that war tourism can be seen as a way to misuse the suffering of people. Personally, he does not think that he uses the tragedies of the country or his people to make profit. Instead, he feels that he gives the opportunity to people to find out more about the history from a firsthand source. In that way, tourists can get a better understanding of the history of the Balkans. The manager is very positive about historical tours, but with the condition that they have to be well-organized (*i-House Travel*, personal communication, 12 May, 2018).

It is a positive way to think about a war as just another historical aspect of a country. This can also be done when it comes to tourism, because seeing it as one of the historical tours instead of a war tour, makes the tour less dark and maybe more acceptable to people.

In addition, I got a response from someone at *Balkantina*. The tour guide from the company, Aldin Djonko, already answered a few of my questions in his first response and was open to helping me if I have any more questions. Djonko said that many tourists show interest in the war in Sarajevo. According to him, the reason for this was that Sarajevo was infamous for the war during the 90s. The tourists wanted to know what life was like in this situation, what was actually going on in the besieged city, and how they lived during that time (A. Djonko, personal communication, 16 May, 2018). Kosovo is also known for its last war, which the survey among Dutch people has shown.

Aldin Djonko mentions that many tour operators offer a tour that is related to the war in some way, in which the famous Tunnel of Hope is often included. This tunnel was of great

importance to people during the siege of Sarajevo. The company *Balkantina* offers a food war tour with the intentions to give an in-depth view of the war situation in the city as well as Bosnia itself. They tell stories and tourists are offered the possibility to taste the food that are made with the authentic recipes that were used during the war (A. Djonko, personal communication, 16 May, 2018). I like how this food element gives an extra dimension to the war tour and it definitely makes it extra fun. Djonko says that the food war tour offers to chance for tourists to, “hear, feel, and taste the atmosphere during the war in Sarajevo,” (A. Djonko, personal communication, 16 May, 2018). During the Kosovo war tour, the focus is also on eating at traditional or semi-traditional restaurants in order to submerge in the culture. I also added some extra elements in the final product besides just the war locations, namely the music and souvenirs.

In addition, Djonko notes that the Balkan countries are all connected by their war history, even though these histories are different, every country had to deal with war in some way and they all used to be part of the Ottoman Empire (A. Djonko, personal communication, 16 May 2018). This is definitely the reason why I wanted to compare Kosovo to another former-Yugoslavian country, since there are some similarities with the biggest one being that they used to be part of the same country.

When it comes to the locals in Sarajevo, Djonko only says that they feel positive about the war tour. The locals feel that it is important for the world to know the truth about what happened and they want to show the facts about the war in the right way. The war tour opens up the possibility for this (A. Djonko, personal communication, 16 May 2018). Later he notes that he has not heard any locals complain about the war tourists before and that these tourists get treated the same as any other. Yet, some locals can feel overwhelmed by tourists visiting the city in general (A. Djonko, personal communication, 4 June, 2018).

Djonko notes that many people ask him questions about his personal experience, since he was a kid living in Sarajevo during the war (A. Djonko, personal communication, 16 May, 2018). I asked how he feels about tourists asking him about it. He, would like to forget about the war, but it is part of his past and he grew up in those circumstances. Djonko also says that everyone has faced some sort of consequences from the war, whether it is short-term or long-term. Some of these consequences involve PTSD. He, however, feels proud that he was there during the war and did not flee from it. In addition, he is always open to getting questions from tourists and he never gets tired of talking about the war either (A. Djonko, personal communication, 4 June, 2018).

Djonko does not think that the war tour becomes part of an emotional process for the

locals. This does not agree with my first thoughts that people talking about it with tourists can help them with healing. He does say that it can differ if it helps an individual or not, so the possibility is there and for some people talking about the war with tourists can help them process the war. Djonko, however, sees it as another part of business, meaning that when it provides people with an income, it is okay to offer war tours (A. Djonko, personal communication, 16 May 2018). Yet, in the series *Dark Tourist*, it has been shown that money gets in the way of telling the historical truth. I then asked them about the viewpoint that war tourism exploits the suffering of people because it wants to make profit. Djonko responded by saying he does not think this perspective is fair, because he feels that people need to know what happened in Sarajevo and war tours are not bad. Besides this, locals should not be mentioned by name so that their privacy is maintained (A. Djonko, personal communication, 16 May 2018). The CEO of *Be in Kosovo* also noted that war tourism is not bad and that an improvement of the economy would be a good outcome (A. Rafuna, personal communication, 18 June, 2018).

I definitely do not think that war tours are bad, but it should be offered in the right way so it is morally correct. An article notes how a local was expecting a normal job after the war. It helps support his family, while living in a country with a high unemployment rate (Schuessler, 2015). Kosovo also has an high unemployment rate, so it can be a solution there as well. The local also says that it took people ten years to understand that tourism is a job (Schuessler, 2015). Kosovo celebrated its ten years of independence this year (2018), so that would mean that Kosovars might also be ready to understand war tourism as a job. In addition, the article mentions that there has to be a balance between educating without threatening it lightly, which can be difficult (Schuessler, 2015). This means that it can, indeed, provide an income, but it has to be done in the right way. The tour has to be educative.

The tour guide from *Balkantina* also mentions a negative side of the war tour. The issue with the war tour in Sarajevo is that groups from Serbia sometimes visit it. He notes how important it is to try and stay objective at all times. The tour operator sometimes keep the information at a minimum during the war tour if the group of people does not show a lot of interest or they were the enemy in the war. Djonko notes that I should also take this into account when creating a war tour in Kosovo. Besides this, he said that I should built the war tour around places/objects that played an important part in either an event or battle during the Kosovo war (A. Djonko, personal communication, 16 May 2018), which is what I did for sure in earlier chapters. Besar Haxhikadrija from *Be in Kosovo* noted that he would not have political discussion with tourists, because a tour should be for fun (B. Haxhikadrija, personal

communication, 23 May, 2018). I would say that it mainly has to focus on educating the tourists, but of course the war tour should be fun as well otherwise no one will go on the tour or pay attention.

I asked if they have ever had negative responses on their war tour, specifically from Serbs. Djonko said that the focus is on not mixing emotions in the war tour in case a group of Serbs visit the city. The war tour should not represent the Serbs in a negative way. They do not want to make the Serbs feel bad or portray them as criminals. He notes that the Serbian people visiting can have family or friends who fought in the war as well and possibly got hurt or died (A. Djonko, personal communication, 4 June, 2018). I like how Djonko is aware that the fighters were under the control of a commander and were just following orders. In addition, he does not refer to the war in Sarajevo as “aggression from Serbia”, but instead as a “war for independence” (A. Djonko, personal communication, 4 June, 2018). This is definitely also the case with the war tour in Kosovo, because the idea is not to show tourists what Serbia has done to Kosovo, but Kosovo’s fight for independence.

The example with the Serbs visiting Sarajevo is also what I should take into account with the war tour in Kosovo. Since Kosovo declared its independence from Serbia and Serbia still does not recognize the country, I think that it will be even more of an issue in Kosovo to offer a war tour as well as dealing with the Serbian responses on it if they are interested in taking part in the Kosovo war tour. Avoiding topics or events that are disputed or keeping this to a minimum seems like a good way to have a peaceful war tour through Kosovo with a Serbian group if they show any disagreement with certain events. Even when they do not agree with something, it is probably best to accept this and not go into a heated discussion. Before I have mentioned that an online Serbian news page does not agree with, according to them, the (according to them) “so-called” massacre in Račak, which shows that people can disagree with what gets said during the war tour.

The Kosovo war tour, however, is not based on coming to an agreement on the events that took place during the war, but it is a way to attract more tourists to Kosovo and that should be the main goal. It also gives Kosovars the opportunity to show their truth to tourists who want to hear it. Besides this, Serbs that completely disagree with the perspective of the Kosovars on the Kosovo war will probably not make the effort to go on a war tour, so I do not expect a lot of problems. The ones that will go on the war tour will most likely be open to hear the side of Kosovo.

Aldin Djonko from *Balkantina* notes that most tourists coming to Sarajevo to partake in the war tour are from western countries, namely the United States, Canada, the United

Kingdom, and Australia (A. Djonko, personal communication, 4 June, 2018). These are different countries compared to the ones that visit the Adem Jashari war memorial complex in Prekaz, according to the guide at the location, which were Europe, Turkey, and also the United States. So, the war tour in Kosovo could potentially attract the same tourists as the war tour in Sarajevo, meaning tourists from Canada, the United Kingdom, and Australia, since these people show interest in another Balkan war. This shows that, besides the Dutch people that I focus on, Kosovo can attract many other possible tourists with the war tour in the future.

The reasons for taking part in the war tour can vary from having it heard on the news to being involved militarily in the Bosnia war. Djonko is not surprised that people show interest in the war history, since, as mentioned before, Sarajevo is infamous because of it. He also refers back to the beginning of the first world war that began with the assassination in Sarajevo (A. Djonko, personal communication, 4 June, 2018), which gives the city a history of being infamous because of more than one war. As in Sarajevo, Kosovo also has a history of many occupations and wars, but the country is definitely most well-known for the Kosovo war. Tourists, including Dutch ones, have probably also heard about Kosovo in the news when the war took place, which has formed the contemporary war image of the country.

I asked Djonko if the war image of Sarajevo helps to attract tourists or that it actually stops tourists from coming. As mentioned earlier, many tourists do show interest in the war history of the city. Djonko notes that it helps to attract some specific groups of tourists, namely ones that are adventurous, backpackers, and ones who seek alternative history (A. Djonko, personal communication, 4 June, 2018). These can then also be specific groups of tourists, besides the Dutch people in general that I focus on, who can be attracted by the Kosovo war tour.

These war tours in Bosnia take place in one city, while in Kosovo, you will have to go to multiple locations to see the highlights of the Kosovo war. One specific city would make it a lot easier, because of the short distances. Yet, having the locations spread across the country also means that the tourists will see a lot more of Kosovo than just the war elements while travelling from one place to the other.

* *Reviews on Sarajevo war tours*

Online I have found many positive responses on war tours in Sarajevo. For instance on Tripadvisor, 236 out of 262 reviews have given the war tour by *i-House Travel* an “excellent” score. The war tour by Sarajevo Funky Tours is reviewed with 95% of the people saying it is an “excellent” tour as well. Some responses notice that the war tour is “extremely informative

and gave us a real insight in the war” and “learned so much about the history of this interesting country” (Tripadvisor, 2018). The food war tour of the tour operator *Balkantina* takes up twenty percent of the food tours in the city, so there is definitely a demand for war tours. The company generally get positive reviews when it comes to their food war tour, according to Djonko. He also said that the war tour meets the expectations of the tourists and sometimes it even goes beyond their expectations in a positive way (Djonko, personal communication, 4 June, 2018). These kind of responses is also what you would like to receive on the Kosovo war tour.

The war tours in Sarajevo seem to be a success, so this is an encouragement for Kosovo because it could work here as well. Tourists are attracted to Sarajevo because they want to find out more about the war that took place. Locals are okay with it and it is a way to provide them with an income. The responses on Tripadvisor and the reviews of *Balkantina* also show positive responses on war tours through Sarajevo. Hopefully this will also be the case with the Kosovo war tour.

In the next chapter I will again visit three out of the seven war locations in Kosovo with another Dutch tourist to see their view on the locations as well as on war tours in general.

* A Dutch tourist perspective *

I have given my view on the different war locations in Kosovo and decided which ones are suitable for the war tour, but I would like to see what another tourist thinks about it. I want to try out the locations of the war tour on another Dutch tourist to see if it a good product to offer tourists. We will, however, still use our own transport, which will take up more time and effort and we will not have any guides or translators, besides myself being able to provide a background story after doing my research. Because of the survey, I now have a clear overview of the image Dutch people have of Kosovo, but I would like to find out some more in detail. I will then base my decision to include the specific war locations not completely on my own experiences and observations.

I actually ran into a Dutch guy at the bar of my favorite café in Pristina. He told me that he was visiting the city for three days with two friends and before arriving in the Kosovar capital, they went to Prizren, another city in Kosovo. I was surprised to see some Dutch tourists. There are many foreign students in the capital, but these tourists were here just for fun. This shows that Dutch tourists are not completely against visiting Kosovo. A couple of weeks later, I went to Prizren myself and a guy who owns a hostel in the city told me that he had forty Dutch people in the past few weeks staying at his hostel, which is another indication that Kosovo is not totally unfamiliar among the Dutch tourists. There is, however, the possibility to attract more Dutch tourists to Kosovo, which my survey has shown.

A friend of mine, Kiki Peters, was coming to Kosovo for a few days, so this was a good opportunity to try out some war locations on another Dutch tourist. She had never been in Kosovo before. The only former-Yugoslavian country she had visited before was Croatia. Kiki is interested in places that are related to war, so she was open to visiting some of the memorials and cemeteries of the Kosovo war. She is definitely someone who enjoys visiting dark tourism sites and she often does this while on vacation. Kiki has also been on many tours during her vacations, which makes her a good test subject because she can compare it to earlier experiences.

Kiki did say that having to travel four hours to get to a place might be a little bit too much. She thinks the stories behind those memorials are very interesting, but she would not have been able to find those places on google if I had not mentioned the names. As mentioned earlier, it is not easy to find specific war locations to visit when you google for Kosovo. Only if someone specifically starts looking for massacres that happened in Kosovo, they might be able to find some villages but the question is how do you know which places are worth to take

a visit. You do not want to end up at a grass field where a battle has taken place but now there is nothing left to see.

Kiki arrived in Pristina on the 28th of May and stayed until the morning of the first of June. It was a short trip to Kosovo and we were not able to do the complete designed Kosovo war tour, so we decided to go to Prekaz and Gjakova in the same day. Kiki chose these two places because these already focus on tourists by having something to eat and drink and there already is some extra information available at these war locations. Besides this, the locations were quite big and the stories interested her the most (K. Peters, personal communication, 31 May, 2018).

I will pay attention to her reactions while we are at the locations and ask her what she thinks about it. In addition, I will have an interview with Kiki to find out more about her opinion and experiences. Dutch tourists is what I focus on to attract to Kosovo, so seeing and hearing the opinion of another Dutch tourist will give me more insight in what the war tour should offer and if it can be a success. I did the interview in Dutch, because I wanted to make it as easy as possible for her to answer my questions.

** Visiting war locations with another Dutch tourist*

We first went to Prekaz by bus to Skenderaj and then a taxi. The taxi driver did not understand me when I told him we wanted to go to Prekaz, but the moment I mentioned the name “Adem Jashari” he got enthusiastic right away and knew what I meant. When we arrived, we noticed there were two tour busses full of school children at the location. The fact that children already visit and learn about this place at a young age indicates the importance of the family and the memorial complex. First we went to the graves where again the two soldiers had to come down and guard it while we looked around. There were a lot of school children at the Jashari houses, so we decided to visit the museum first. Having all these school children at the memorial site is a very bad timing for a tourist to visit the place, because they took over the whole scaffolding of the house and made a lot of noise.

The soldiers did not want to talk with us or even allow us to take a picture of them, while the first time the soldiers were a lot more welcome. We did not see any guides at the memorial complex this time either. So, as a tourist you have to be lucky to be there at a right time with no school children and guides available to explain more about it. The first time I visited the place, I spent a lot of time talking with the tour guide, but this time we finished looking around pretty quickly. This should be kept in mind during the war tour. People can be faster or slower than me, which also depends on their interest. Kiki seemed to have finished

looking around quite fast.

Kiki wondered why Adem Jashari does not have a special grave compared to the other ones (K. Peters, personal communication, 31 May, 2018). I was also wondering this myself and why he is the third one in the row of graves, since he is portrayed as the most important figure of the family at Prekaz. She also pointed out that she does not understand why people take selfies in front of a house where something horrible has happened (K. Peters, personal communication, 31 May, 2018). It could be a problem for locals that tourists take selfies in front of it. Yet, this time a Kosovar, the school teacher, took a picture of herself in front of the building and the Dutch tourist did not understand, so it was the other way around. I would also understand if other locals do not like it when a tourist takes a happy picture in front of it. This also seemed a bit unethical to do, because a lot has happened at that location so making a happy picture in front of it seems wrong. In addition, Kiki found it weird that people could look inside of their house with all the bullet holes (K. Peters, personal communication, 31 May, 2018). This might be sensitive to locals as well, but they would not have built the scaffolding if they did not want tourists to look inside. Yet, Kiki thought the houses of the Jashari family were impressive to see (K. Peters, personal communication, 31 May, 2018).

There are no taxis at the memorial complex, which I already noticed during my first visit. I asked the same guy again to bring us back to the bus station as the first time I was there. On our way back to Pristina, we noticed some small war memorials alongside the road, but it is hard to visit them as tourists without a guide since you cannot ask the normal bus to stop there and wait for you. It might be nice to stop at one of them during the Kosovo war tour, because these war memorials seem personal and with a guide it would be easier to take a look. I am, however, not sure if it is interesting enough, since I was not able to stop there, but it is nice to see on your way to bigger memorials.

After Prekaz, we went back to Pristina and from there took the bus to Gjakova. Every time I used this bus it was on time and took exactly 1.5 hours. This is really a part of the war tour where you can have some relaxing time, eat, drink and enjoy visiting a city, which is what Kiki and I did. We saw a group of Japanese tourists, which shows that Gjakova is already a destination for Asian tourists, same as Pristina.

It has to be kept in mind that the busses in Kosovo can take longer than planned when going from one city to another. The bus from Pristina to Skenderaj should take 1 hour and 3 minutes, but it took us at least 1,5 hours to arrive at our destination. Using your own transport will probably take shorter, because you do not have to drop off or pick up passengers along the road. Yet, you do not want to rush through the country with the tourists. Kiki did point out

that the busses do always leave on time. It just depends on how many people are in the bus if the bus arrives at the destination on time.

Going from Pristina to Prekaz, Prekaz to Pristina, and from Pristina again to Gjakova was too much for one day. Kiki agreed with this. It made it difficult to really relax at the locations and take your time to look at everything, because the focus was more on making sure to be on time for the last bus. These war locations definitely have to be spread over multiple days.

I visited the Kosovo museum with Kiki as well, hoping that this time there might be another guide present who could tell us more about the Kosovo war. Unfortunately, we did not see a guide at all. They changed a few little things inside the museum, but as far as I remembered which things belonged to the Kosovo war nothing had changed. It was still as confusing as the first time and I was not able to tell Kiki what was what, because the signs in Albanian did not help me. To be honest, one of the only attributes that I was sure of was Adem Jashari's motorcycle (image 16). So, I did not change my mind about not including the Kosovo museum in the war tour.

Knowing that money is important to Dutch people and that they love discounts, the fact that the prizes of the bus, food, and drinks are very cheap in Kosovo compared to The Netherlands is definitely a nice bonus during the war tour. A sandwich in Gjakova, for example, costs 1.50 euros and an Ice tea or coffee is 1 euro. The bus ticket to Gjakova is 4 euros per person and the one to Skenderaj is only 1.50 euros per person. Kiki was also amazed by these prices.

** Interview with Kiki Peters*

I held an interview with Kiki to get some insight on the opinion of another (Dutch) tourist. Before visiting a destination, Kiki does look up some things such as tips, taxis, and customs. She also did this before arriving in Kosovo, but she was not able to find a lot. In addition, she searched for information about some of the war locations that I mentioned. She did not know much about Kosovo, but searching for some information, mostly about the war, before visiting the country gave her a better image. She was also interested in visiting the capital, because she could not find much about the war there (K. Peters, personal communication, 31 May, 2018). The capital, Pristina, is also included in the war tour.

Kiki pictured Kosovo as an eastern-European country, unexplored, lagging behind western countries, and similar to Romania. The war was also a large part of her image. Her image has changed after visiting Kosovo, because she feels that the war is less present than

she expected. For instance, in Berlin, she can still feel the war around her when walking through the city (K. Peters, personal communication, 31 May, 2018). Yet, I think a big reason for this is that Kiki knows more about the war in Germany than the war in Kosovo, so it is harder to pinpoint the war elements. Getting informed about this, through the war tour, can help make her more aware.

Kiki is often interested in war history. If she visits a country that has been in war, she will visit war elements. Before Kosovo, she had only visit places where the war has been a longer time ago (K. Peters, personal communication, 31 May, 2018). This is probably the case for more Dutch people, so that makes Kosovo a bit more special. It makes a war more realistic when visiting war elements, because she does not have an image of what a war is like herself, and you can see what a damage a war can do (K. Peters, personal communication, 31 May, 2018).

As said before, Kiki had only been in Croatia before of all the former-Yugoslavian countries. Here she did not visit any war elements (K. Peters, personal communication, 31 May, 2018). Instead, it was a sun vacation, which agrees with the image that the Croatian government has tried to portrayed by ignoring the war history. This is not what I think Kosovo should do, which I have showed in my research.

I asked her about her experience with Prekaz and Gjakova. It was not how Kiki expected it to be. She expected it to be less structuralized at Prekaz. Other war location she had visited were older, outdated and that is how she expects a war location to look. Yet, both locations were good examples of what happened during the Kosovo war and were beautiful places to see. The house of the Jashari family made the biggest impression. In addition, Kiki noted that the information available was probably more than at other locations, but she still wanted more information. Without reading about it beforehand, you will probably miss a lot of important information, according to Kiki. A guide or the possibility to listen to audio-recordings at certain places would really help (K. Peters, personal communication, 31 May, 2018).

I thought Kiki was done looking around pretty fast, but when I asked her about it, she said that this is what she always does. She wants to read the information and see everything, but she does not have to walk around for hours (K. Peters, personal communication, 31 May, 2018). When it comes to the war tour, one war tour might go faster than the other, which has to be taken into account. Travelling from one place to the other was fun, because Kiki enjoys seeing the surroundings and we passed some smaller war memorials that indicate the war took place everywhere. The trip was quite long, but the war tour will take another route with a

better flow.

I asked if she would have made the effort to visit these places by herself. She said she would have tried to figure it out and if it was possible by bus, she had done it. Yet, it is not worth the effort if it is too difficult (K. Peters, personal communication, 31 May, 2018). After visiting the war locations myself, I have noticed that it can be very difficult to arrive at a location. This will stop tourists from visiting places. Again the war tour can fix this because everything is already arranged for you.

Kiki said that she would not go to a country specifically for a war tour, but if the offer is there then she would like to go on the tour. The country should already be attractive in another way, but she does show interest in the Kosovo war tour and said a war tour would be the first thing she would do if that is available (K. Peters, personal communication, 31 May, 2018). This is the opinion of one person and I do think that others can feel this way as well. Yet, I still think that the war tour can attract Dutch tourists to Kosovo, because of my results from the survey as well as the attractiveness of dark tourism and Kosovo having interesting war locations to visit. Besides this, the war tour is one of the activities Kiki would do on vacation.

Kiki would like to have multiple options when it comes to a war tour, so that she can choose between what she gets to see and how many days she wants to spend on it (K. Peters, personal communication, 31 May, 2018). This could be something for the Kosovo war tour in the future, but first the war tour has to be put into practice.

I asked her opinion about dark tourists in general. Kiki did find it disrespectful that people were making selfies in front of the Jashari family house, which I mentioned earlier. She wonders if people then even realize what has happened there if they do that, so she does not like sensation seekers. Yet, dark tourists are okay if they just want to know what happened and show interest in it. Tourist should give a country a bit of time to recover before visiting it (K. Peters, personal communication, 31 May, 2018). Kosovo has had some time and the war tour can help with it, economically and mentally.

Kiki thinks that the tour guide is important for a tour to be a success (K. Peters, personal communication, 31 May, 2018), which also applies to the Kosovo war tour. They can give you more information than you can find online and they know how to get the most out of one day (K. Peters, personal communication, 31 May, 2018). I have mentioned before how difficult it can be to find (the right) information yourself, so the Kosovo war tour can help with this.

She has also had negative experiences with tour guides, for instance that they would

read everything off a piece of paper. The tour guide is allowed to tell a different story on another day as long as he mentions the most important aspects. You do not want to get the feeling that he is just does the tour to collect the money. It should be brought with some creativity and interesting stories (K. Peters, personal communication, 31 May, 2018).

In addition, some tour guides did not offer the possibility for any questions and the organization of the tours she has been on was not always that good either. The guide should involve everyone and let people ask questions, because tour prices are often quite high. Kiki said that sometimes it happens that the tour guide only focusses on the people in the front and the rest are forgotten. They also sometimes rush people to be done in time, so then there is not time for questions. (K. Peters, personal communication, 31 May, 2018). This agrees with the manager of *i-House Travel*, who also noted that it is important to have a well-organized war tour (i-House travel, personal communication, 12 May, 2018). Otherwise the reasons for organizing a war tour in the first place can get lost, for example the tourists do not get informed well on what happened exactly during the war. This shows how important tourism management is, because it can be done in the wrong way, negatively affect locals and wrongly inform tourists. The tour guide also has to have some skills to make the tour work, which I mentioned in the final product and agree with Kiki's view.

Besides this, Kiki thinks that having some options to eat and drink at the locations is important, but they should definitely not commercialize the monuments by selling souvenirs or focusing on food and drinks. You have to be aware that you are visiting a place, but at the same time the possibility to eat or drink something, and go to the restroom would be nice (K. Peters, personal communication, 31 May, 2018). Prekaz is the only place where you can buy something to eat and drink today. This place is a bit more commercialized, because you can also buy some souvenirs. The place is big so it is not sold right in front of the Jashari family houses, which would be disrespectful. Kiki would probably think that souvenirs made out of bullets in Sarajevo would go too far. When it comes to the war tour, eating and drinking will be done in the two cities, Pristina and Gjakova. I agree that the memorial sites should not be commercialized, because it has to be about remembering the people who died during the war and learning more about what happened.

When I asked her about the perception that some people see it as taking advantage of the local people. She noted that it can be negative for local people, because it might be their only way to earn some money, no matter how badly it affects them, so they do not have a choice. Some people do not want to talk about it, but others might be open to it, because they do not want the war to be forgotten. As a tourist you are also responsible for this by making

sure there is no sketchy organization behind it that just want to make profit (K. Peters, personal communication, 31 May, 2018). This is why I also look at the local perspective of a war tour, because I want to see if anyone has a problem with it. In addition, the price should not be too high, as I mentioned before. It is a good thing that the war tour provides people with an income, especially since Kosovo is the third poorest country of Europe, but it should be done in a way that people are not doing it involuntarily.

Yet, having a local during the tour is a bonus, according to Kiki. The tour guide is often better, because he can talk English and explain everything well. If there are three locations and one of them has a local speaker that has went through it and gives a little tour at the location, that is a nice extra (K. Peters, personal communication, 31 May, 2018). The possibility of meeting a local during the Kosovo war tour is always there. The company can arrange this as well, but the tour guide can also make it more personal.

I later asked Kiki to take a look at the final product to see if she would be interested in doing the whole tour after getting a small taste of it. She would like to go on the complete Kosovo war tour. Mostly because it also includes two big cities and there is enough variation between the different places during the tour (K. Peters, personal communication, 26 July, 2018). This agrees with my thoughts that tourists will value these two characteristics of the war tour.

Kiki had had an overall good experience in Kosovo visiting war locations. War was a big part of her image of Kosovo. She has showed that it is difficult to find information about the war in the country. In addition, she pointed out some elements that should be get in mind for the war tour, such as the price and the qualities of the tour guide. A local person would be a bonus, but it has to be made sure that locals are not negatively used by companies. So, another Dutch tourist has had a good experience and learned more about the war history of Kosovo during her visit.

** Signs at the war locations*

Since I am looking at Dutch tourists, I would like to include two Dutch examples of how tourism organizations in The Netherlands have dealt with the history of the Second World War in the country. These examples could possibly be applied in Kosovo as well and be part of the Kosovo war tour. During my observations at the potential war locations, I have mentioned that the amount of information available at the locations is limited or non-existent. The two examples offer a solution to this.

The Regional Bureau for Tourism Arnhem Nijmegen (RBT KAN) has come up with an initiative in 2008, namely the Liberation Route. This route follows the liberators of the Second World War from South-England to Normandy, Paris, the Belgian Ardennes, and then to Brabant, Arnhem, and Nijmegen in The Netherlands to Hürtgenwald, Berlin, and Gdansk. So, this route goes through multiple countries including The Netherlands. At the war locations, people can listen to the events that took place on their smartphones by using an app (De Gelderlander, 2015). Kiki also mentioned the possibility of audio-recordings (K. Peters, personal communication, 31 May, 2018). This could be done at the Kosovar war sites as well, but making an app or another way to listen to an audio takes a lot of time, so this could be something for the future when more people visit the war locations. The next example might be easier to apply in Kosovo.

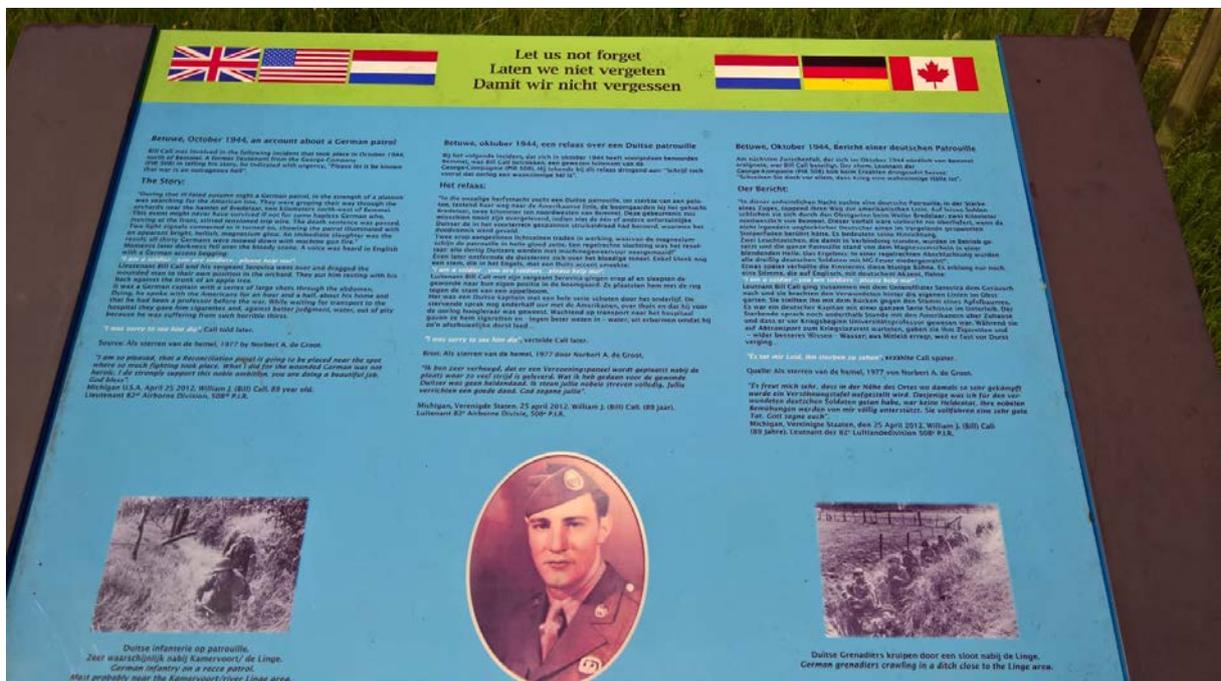


Image 33. Sign frontline Second World War, alongside cycle/walking route, Over Betuwe, The Netherlands. 15 June, 2018. Photo by Gerie Driessen.

Signs are put along the cycle/walking route of the Market Garden frontline next to the Linge river during the Second World War in the Overbetuwe region of The Netherlands (image 33). These signs give information about what happened at the locations, including pictures and maps. Signs should also be put at the memorial sites in Kosovo in multiple languages. I would suggest in Albanian, English, German, and French, since my focus lays with Western-European tourists. Most Dutch people speak English or German, so those two languages will reach more tourists than the Dutch language.

These signs can offer some information about the event that took place, the meaning

of the memorial site, and/or a personal experience. In this way, a guide is not necessary if a tourist wants to visit the place on its own and searching for all the information online is not needed either. Even during the war tour, tourists can get some additional information from the sign and look at the images/pictures, which is a lot better than searching on your phone. At some war locations that I visited in Kosovo, I stumbled upon this problem, for instance at the Gillogjan (Glodjane) village memorial of the Haradinaj family. I could not get any additional information on site besides on my phone, which I thought was unfortunate. In Prizren, there were already signs available at the Kalaja Fortress, which is a good Kosovar example that has kept the tourist in mind and should be applied at other (war) locations as well.

I have now given a more in-depth look at a Dutch tourist visiting war locations in Kosovo and her thoughts about it. In addition, I have showed some Dutch examples that can improve the information available at the war locations. In the next chapter, I will give a local perspective on the war tour, since they take an important part in the question if the war tour is a good idea or not.

* A local perspective on the war tour *

I will now look more specifically at the local opinion, the sociological framework. I have mentioned throughout my research some people and observations that indicate Kosovo would be okay with a war tour. I have not noticed anyone having problems with me visiting the war locations as a tourist. A specific example was that of the taxi driver in Račak, whose uncle was killed during the massacre. He was still willing to help me and show me around even though he has a personal connection to the massacre. According to Ilaz Halimi, the reason that there are not many books about the Kosovo war is because many people want to forget about it. He said that they want to see the war as part of history and not focus on it anymore. Yet, the many memorials, including the smaller ones alongside the road that I saw on my way to other locations, and the flowers indicate that it is not forgotten. The families who still have to deal with their missing loved ones are confronted with the war on a daily basis and Adem Jashari is still portrayed as a war hero around the country. Besides this, the music by Ilir Shaqiri and the souvenirs also show that the war is still remembered.

It seems to be more the case that locals want to tell their side about the war and help tourists learn more about what happened. In addition, it can make foreigners aware that the war can still hurt today. The local opinion on the war tour can be compared to the war tours in Sarajevo, Bosnia, because it is the same region and the same amount of time has passed since the war, so later I will make a comparison. This chapter will add some more perspectives on the Kosovo war tour by using a survey and asking individuals.

** Two more local opinions*

I asked the CEO of *Be in Kosovo*, Alban Rafuna, if he would be bothered by tourists asking him about his own war experiences. He noted that he sees his war experience as the worst possible experience. He does not wish anyone else to go through the same. He, however, would never feel bothered if anyone asks him questions about his war experience. He has went through Kosovo's occupation, then the war and freedom after it, as well as the independence a few years later, and nowadays being part of the development of the country. He feels that they, the people alive after the war, should tell the story, because they are the only ones who can share the real story. That is why he is glad when people ask him about it (A. Rafuna, personal communication, 18 June, 2018). This agrees with the idea that locals are open to share their side of the story.

Rafuna also noted that he does not know anyone who has a problem with being asked

about their war experience. Yet, he does point out that there is a difference between being reminded about the war and being asked to think differently about it. Someone can give the impression that their agenda is to change people's opinion about the Kosovo war. Rafuna himself would not be bothered by people trying to do this, but locals might have a problem with it. People want to stick to their own opinion and way of thinking (A. Rafuna, personal communication, 18 June, 2018). I asked him as well as the operational manager, and one of the guides to fill in the survey, because they have also been through the war and are the ones that will be mostly confronted with the questions of tourists when they offer the war tour.

I asked my friend in Kosovo, Kushtrim, some additional questions. Kushtrim said that he has visited Prekaz many times. He thinks this memorial complex is informative and it shows a lot of what happened. Besides this, he refers to the war memorial site as a place where people can see how the family has sacrificed everything so that they could stand up and fight against the Serbian regime (Kushtrim, personal communication, 24 June, 2018). This again shows that the deaths of the Jashari family is seen as a sacrifice for Kosovo. Yet, he has not been at other war location sites, so the war tour could also be interesting for locals to find out more about their country's way of remembering the war. He told me that he also got to learn some interesting stuff while helping me with my research.

Kushtrim does not think that companies will use the suffering of locals to make profit. Instead, he feels that it is a good idea to organize tours around these memorial sites, so that tourists can get informed about the events that took place and why these things happened. The war tour, however, should not cost too much, because then it could seem as if companies are using it for money instead of informing people. In addition, he notes that the memorials have significant emotional as well as patriotic values for the Kosovar population, so asking a lot of money for it would be a bad idea (Kushtrim, personal communication, 24 June, 2018). I agree with this, so the war tour should focus on being informative, not on making profit.

In addition, Kushtrim mentions that Kosovars use songs and sport to compete with Serbia in some way (Kushtrim, personal communication, 24 June, 2018). I have noticed this myself while being in Kosovo during the World Cup. After Switzerland won from Serbia, the whole country celebrated with car honks, fireworks, and waving Albanian flags, because the two goals were scored by two Albanian players. Yet, Kushtrim also mentions that many Kosovars are aware that not everyone from Serbia is a bad person or has taken part in the war (Kushtrim, personal communication, 24 June, 2018).

The pain that never goes away for the Kosovar population is the unwillingness of the Serbian government to cooperate and provide answers for the Kosovars with missing loved

ones. Victims were taken and buried in Serbia, so it is impossible for families to find them now. Besides this, there are many people who have not been confirmed dead, because they were imprisoned during the war and never found back after it ended. Lastly, Kushtrim told me about his own experience during the Kosovo war without me specifically asking for it, which again shows that Kosovars are open to sharing their experience.

* *Survey among locals in Kosovo*

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What is your age?

How do you feel about tourists visiting Kosovo specifically for the war?

Would you be bothered by tourists asking you about your own experience in the Kosovo war?

Yes
 No

Can you explain why (not)?

Do you know anyone in your surroundings who would have a problem with war tourists (for example family or friends)?

Yes, namely...

No

Image 34. Print screen survey questions "Research Kosovo war tour". 21 June, 2018. By Sarah Driessen.

I decided to hold a survey among local people in Kosovo (image 34). The reason for this was to get some evidence on my suspicions, observations, and experiences during my time visiting war locations. I included five questions, because again I wanted to keep it as short and simple as possible. The first question is "what is your age?", because it depends on their age how much they have been through and remember about the war. The second

question is “how do you feel about tourists visiting Kosovo specifically for the war?”, which gives the opportunity to write a response as long as they want. After this, I asked “would you be bothered by tourists asking you about your own experience in the Kosovo war?” and this can be answered by “yes” or “no”. In the fourth question they can explain why (not). The last question is “do you know anyone in your surroundings who would have a problem with war tourists (for example family or friends)?”. This can be answered by “yes” or “no” as well and the “yes” can be further explained by mentioning who.

This survey was definitely more of a challenge compared to the survey for Dutch people. Almost every day there are girls standing in the Sheshi to either advertise or raise money for many different causes. This supports my apprehension to ask for people’s opinion in the streets, because people are already getting approached a lot and I did not see a lot of people responding to them. In addition, a friend in Kosovo told me that surveys are often held here, so it is too much to bother for people. I tried to spread the survey through some contacts in Kosovo. At least the survey gives some idea of how Kosovars feel about war tourism, even though it is a small number of respondents compared to the survey among Dutch people.



Image 35. Print screen overview of survey “Research Kosovo war tour”. 20 July, 2018. By Sarah Driessen.

Eventually I managed to get eleven responses on the survey by spreading the anonymous link (image 35). The age of the respondents is between 24 and 45 years old, which means that some experienced the war as a child while others were already adults at the time. None of the respondents would feel bothered by tourists asking them about their own experience in the Kosovo war and none of them knows anyone who feels differently about this either. The question “how do you feel about tourists visiting Kosovo specifically for the war?” got all positive answers. Some of them were very positive, for example one person said that it makes them feel really good because they “feel proud about fallen ones during the war”. The proudness of Kosovar citizens when it comes to war heroes is definitely visible among the country, as mentioned before in my research.

Others think that every part of history should be experienced and the reality is that the war is part of this history. Some respondents say that it is nice when people show interest in your history and it gives the opportunity to share their experience with the rest of the world. The tourists can learn more about what really happened during the war. One of them also mentioned that visiting places because of a war is a common phenomenon. I have also

showed this throughout my research, so there is nothing weird about having this phenomenon in Kosovo as well.

None of the respondents would be bothered by tourists asking them about their own experience in the war. The best way for them to spread their story is through tourists, says one person. Another one noted that it could be painful to talk about their own experience, but it is worth it in the long run. It can also depend on the person, because some people will have more difficulty with talking about the war, which depends a lot on what they exactly went through. One person said that it will help with their grief, which agrees with my hypothesis that it can become part of the emotional process of locals. This shows that for some people this could be the case, but it really depends on the individual. In addition, someone else also answered the question by saying that sharing their experience with an outsider and show them how difficult the war was for them can reduce their pain. Lastly, one respondent mentioned that it gives the possibility to explain to tourists how the war still affects people nowadays after so many years.

These opinions on the Kosovo war tour by locals are quite similar to the local opinion in Sarajevo. Everyone seems to be open to the idea of having a war tour just like most of the locals in Sarajevo are fine with it. The locals in Sarajevo want to give an opportunity for tourists to find out more about the history and the truth about the war. The locals in Kosovo again agree with this. One local in Kosovo said that talking about the war is worth it in the long run. The tour guide from *Balkantina*, that offer a war tour through Sarajevo, also noted that he wants to forget it, but the positive aspects of talking about it are worth it. Both in Kosovo and in Sarajevo, locals show feelings of proudness. The tour guide was proud of himself not fleeing the war, while locals in Kosovo say they are proud of their war heroes.

Yet, the tour guide from *Balkantina* noted that it is okay to have a war tour if it provides people with an income (A. Djonko, personal communication, 16 May 2018). Kushtrim, however, notes that the war tours should not be too expensive so that it becomes more about money instead of history (Kushtrim, personal communication, 24 June, 2018). The CEO of *Be in Kosovo* noted two outcomes, namely helping the economy and teaching people about the war history (A. Rafuna, personal communication, 16 April, 2018), which combines the two opinions. The societal relevance of my research was to enhance tourism in order to help the economy of Kosovo. Money is also needed for the war tours to exist in the first place. So, the Kosovo war tour should provide people with an income, but I also agree that the prices should not be too high because the main motive is to educate tourists about the war in order for the war tour to be morally correct.

So, these examples indicate that, in general, locals will not have a problem with tourists going on the Kosovo war tour and being confronted with the war themselves because of the tour. These locals are willing to talk about their own experience and tell their side of the story to tourists. They are not bothered by war tourists. Some individuals might be, but there will always be some people who do not agree with the general opinion. The tour operator could include a local person at certain locations to tell more about the specific event, but I think that the tour guide can provide personal stories as well so it is not necessary to include a local. It can also be a coincidence to run into someone at a war locations who can tell more about it, such as the taxi driver in Račak.

* Conclusion *

The war history of Kosovo should not be ignored, instead it can be used in a positive way to attract more tourists. Kosovo definitely has multiple interesting war locations that are eligible for tourists to visit, otherwise it would not have been possible for me to design a complete war tour through the country. The country has the potential to become a more popular tourist destination, specifically among Dutch people. The promotion of Kosovo by the tour operator should include the war history by offering the possibility to join a war tour.

The general theory of *dark tourism* does seem to be possible in Kosovo and can be used in the tourism offer of Kosovar tour operators to attract more (Dutch) tourists. I have shown that the theory of dark tourism can be a positive way to use the war image of a country, so this theory is useful and applicable. This can then be used to change the *tourism destination image* of Kosovo from a negative to a more positive one.

Pristina, Račak, Prekaz, Gjakova, Meja, and Gllogjan (Glodjane) should be included in the war tour, but I decided to leave out the Kosovo museum and the Krusha e Madhe & Krusha e Vogel villages. Pristina, Gjakova, and Prekaz already have visitors, from inside and outside the country, while Račak, Meja, and Gllogjan (Glodjane) are still less popular. This does not diminish their value, because all locations are nice to visit, have beautiful surroundings, and have interesting war history. The war tour also has enough to offer when it comes to eating, drinking, and seeing some other aspects of Kosovo while focusing on the war.

The tour operator *Be in Kosovo* does already include a few war locations every now and then, but there is no complete Kosovo war tour in their tourism offer. They do not leave anything out on purpose and other opinions are accepted. The tour operator is interested in offering a war tour and they think it is the right time to begin.

The survey among Dutch people has shown that Kosovo indeed has a war image among the Dutch population. The possibility to attract these people to Kosovo is there, because many are at least open to the idea of visiting Kosovo, even though they have this war image or they want to find out more about this war history. I got an in-depth look at the views of another Dutch tourist who visited the war locations in Kosovo. The war was also a large part of her ideas of Kosovo. She had a positive experience, which supports the idea that Kosovans should offer a war tour to attract more tourists.

One of the most important things to keep in mind when offering a war tour is that it has to focus on educating people. It should be as authentic as possible by telling the truth and

not leaving anything out. The price should not be too high either, because the focus is on informing tourists, not on making money. Of course, the more tourists, the more money, which helps the economy in as well as the development of the country.

The amount of flowers and benches at the war memorials indicate how many people still visit and remember the events as well as how many visitors are expected to visit the places. Many people are still waiting for answers about their missing loved ones, which affects them every day. The war tour can bring international attention to this issue.

The importance of the Kosovo war is still present in the streets of Kosovo nowadays. Besides the memorial sites and statues, the portrait of Adem Jashari is shown at multiple places and the KLA logo can be found on souvenirs, cars, and smaller memorials alongside the road. All of this shows that the war is still in the minds of people on an everyday basis.

It is difficult for tourists to find accurate information about the Kosovo war, because not much information is available, it is not clear what to search for, and the details often differ from one another. The Kosovo war tour is the solution to this problem to give people a good firsthand impression of the war history.

Since my focus is on attracting tourists who want to learn more about the war history, I highly suggest to put signs at the war locations to inform visitors about what happened. This will make the war sites more attractive and eventually more popular, because it will be easier to understand the meaning behind the memorials.

The war tour does offer the possibility to help locals with their emotional process. For some people this is not the case, but others can profit from it. I have not come across any locals who are against having war tourists visiting their country. They are open to the idea of telling tourists about their experience and they want to educate people about the war history. Enough time has passed for them to be able to talk about it and make sure that it will not be forgotten.

The war tours in Sarajevo, a city also in former-Yugoslavia, are seen as positive by the tour operator, locals, and tourists, which is motivation for Kosovo to offer a war tour as well. It heightens the chances that the war tour in Kosovo will be a success, taking Sarajevo as an example.

I have researched if it is a good idea to put a war tour into practice in Kosovo. I have shown that the answer is “yes”. Future research can be done after the Kosovo war tour has been put into practice to see if the results are indeed as expected because it has attracted more tourists. Besides this, a lot more research can be done to cover the phenomenon of war tourism, such as the effects of war tourism on the emotional process of locals. In the case of

Kosovo, the war history can be used in a positive way.

Market research can show if Dutch tourists can become an important market for tourism in Kosovo. I have only shown that the war image is present among Dutch people and can be used for tourism. Besides this, I have only focused on Dutch tourists, but it can also be researched if other tourist groups can be attracted by having a Kosovo war tour.

I faced a few problems while doing my research. The information about Kosovo was often in Albanian, not in English, which I have used as an argument that tourists cannot easily find accurate information. Yet, at the same time, it made it difficult for me to find information for my research. I was also not able to get as many local opinions as I wanted. It was difficult to reach some people, because not everybody responded.

Research can always be improved by collecting even more data. More tour operators could be included. Besides this, collecting more local views would give an even better insight in the sociological framework of dark tourism.

The research can be used by more tour operators in Kosovo, so that more war tours will be offered, which is comparable to the number of the war tours offered in Sarajevo. The post-war situation will not be exactly the same in other countries and I cannot say that dark tourism is a good idea to attract tourists in every other country with a war history. Yet, Kosovo can be used as an example.

I have looked at Kosovo and in the process I have learned much about the war history as well as how the war still affects people till this day. Kosovo wants to move on and develop as a country, but at the same time the war is still present in the landscape and people have definitely not forgotten about it. Kosovo has a long way to go, but developing the tourism sector is one step in the right direction.

* Advice for *Be in Kosovo* *

My advice for *Be in Kosovo* is to offer a Kosovo war tour in their promotion of the country for tourists. This means that you should not just have a tour ready in case anyone is interested, but make it visible for tourists that they have the option to go on a war tour. The detailed description of the war tour can be found in the chapter “Final product: the Kosovo war tour”. The war image of Kosovo exists among Dutch people. *Be in Kosovo* could focus on specifically attracting Dutch tourists and my research has shown that a way to do this is by offering a war tour through the country. The war can also be mentioned during other tours to inform people about it, but the complete tour will give a more complete image and most importantly connect tourists with the war history in a positive way.

For the war tour, I suggest to add some extra elements to the war tour, namely giving tourists the chance to buy those war souvenirs, to see the instruments, listen to war music, and get a taste of the products made by the Krusha e Madhe women. I have given a final product as far as possible after my research. The next steps are to see how this can be applied in the tour offer of *Be in Kosovo*.

As my research has shown, it is difficult to find (accurate) information about the memorial sites online or finding the memorial places at all as a tourist. This makes it difficult for tourists to request to go to a specific memorial place. If you offer the war tour as an already designed tour, tourists will at least see the possibility to visit the memorial sites and learn more about the war history.

The focus should lay on educating tourists about the war history of Kosovo. Of course money/profit has to be made in order for it to be called a success or to even be able to offer a war tour in the first place. The war tour has to be well-organized so that the right intentions of doing the tour will not get lost.

I would definitely suggest to include your own experiences and make it as personal as possible. Tourists are interested in personal stories and it will make the war history seem more real because they are talking to someone who has been through it, even if the tourists do not specifically ask for your own experiences. It will also make the tour more unique, instead of just hearing about the basics.

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Image 36. House cat, Dit' e Nat' café, Pristina, Kosovo. 28 April, 2018. Photo by Sarah Driessen.

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* Interview list *

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* Interview guides *

* *Interview Alban Rafuna (short):*

- What is your view on dark tourism in general?
- What is your view on a war tour? Wait a bit longer because it is still sensitive?
- Which elements of war are already included by you and in what way?
- How much do you tell about the war?
- Are people interested in including that when designing a custom-made tour?
- Do you notice the negative image of Kosovo?
- What are your experiences with dark tourism? In former-Yugoslavia?
- Do you leave anything out when talking with tourists about the war? Why (not)?

* *Interview Besar Haxhikadrija:*

Ask his exact name first (nickname Spike)

Tours:

- How many tours do you have per year/per week?
- Which are the most busy periods?
- How big are the tour groups? Do you have a maximum or minimum?
- How long does a tour take? What is the shortest tour and what is the longest tour? Multiple days? Different tours for the same group?
- How much does a tour cost?
- What are the preparations that have to be done before a tour?

- The war places I have visited for my thesis, have you brought tourists to all of these places before or just a few? (Račak, Gllogjan, Meja, Prekaz, Gjakova)
 - Which ones not?
 - Why do you think tourists do not want to visit
 - Or is it your choice not to include this one? Why?
 - Which ones where tourists mostly interested in?
 - Why this one? How did they hear about it? Tourist choose or you?
 - What were the responses?
 - positive/negative?
 - compared to other non-war related places?
 - How often do tourists show interest in war locations?
 - Have you had a tour specifically focused on the war?
 - Why do you think it is does not happen so often/only sometimes?
 - How much do tourists seem to know about the war history of Kosovo?
 - Do you know how they know about this or why they do not know anything about it?

- Where are most tourists from, which countries?
 - Why do you think they are from these countries and not from other ones?
 - How do they know about your company?
 - In Holland already negative responses to me going to Kosovo, so why you think would someone from Thailand choose Kosovo? Positive/negative reasons?

- Do tourists always give you their preferences or do they also let it up to you?
- Do you offer “standard” tours or are they always different? Do you always choose the same aspects of Kosovo?
- Which things in Kosovo do you include in a tour when the tourist lets it up to you (in case the tourists always give you their preferences, what would you do hypothetically)? So, what would be the perfect tour through Kosovo?
 - Why these things?
 - In how far are war locations part of it?
 - Why not so many? Why not at all?
 - Why these war locations? Why not the other ones?
- How do you feel about organizing/offering a complete war tour?
- How about Serbian tourists? Have you had them before? Did that go any different compared to other tourists? How would you handle them during a war tour, could be difficult?
- Why don't you have a standard meeting point for every tours, but you let them know on short-notice?

About the company:

- When was the company founded? How old?
- Did you work for the company from the beginning? How long do you work here?
- What is your job description? Are you an employee or co-owner or?
- What was the first thing this company offered (tours, events, car rental?) or just immediately offer multiple services? (if you know)
- How do you promote tourism in Kosovo?
- What efforts do you make to step away from the negative image of being a war-torn country?
- How do you promote your own tours?
- How about competition with other tour operators in Kosovo?
- How do you differentiate yourself?
- How big of a part of the company are the tours?
- What other things do you do related to tourism besides organizing tours?
- Which part of the organization takes up most of the time? Is this also the biggest part of the company?
- Do you work together with other companies? Which ones and why? Foreign companies?

- Can you describe this company in one sentence?
- What are the characteristics of this company?
- What is the vision of the company? Goals?
- What are the working hours? From Monday till Friday? Or also in the weekends?
- What are you working on right now?
- What are the plans for the future for this company? What do you hope to achieve? Do you want the company to become larger?

Working together:

- It seems to be working very differently here from what I know in Holland, so please tell me how things work here within the company on an everyday basis.
- Are these all the employees working for the company?
- How is the communication and collaboration within the company?
- At the first meeting you guys told me that everyone is working on their own project, so how do you bring everything together?
- How often do you all meet together?

Personal:

- Have you always been interested in tourism?
- Which education do you have? What did you do before this company?
- What do you find the best part of this organization? The most fun? The events, tours, others?
- What is the least fun thing to do to keep this organization going? Which aspects are part of the company, but would you rather not do?
- What is the most difficult thing about this job?
- Which skills are important to have to be able to do this work?
- What are you most proud of related to this company? A specific project?
- Can you describe what one day or week looks like for you? Taking your work home?
- Do you have any tips for me if I want to work in the tourism industry? Any more locations I should visit?

** Interview Kiki Peters*

- Hoeveel zoek je van te voren op over je vakantiebestemming? Koop je weleens van te voren een reisgids van je bestemming? Waarom wel/niet?

Hoeveel heb je over Kosovo opgezocht?

Kon je veel informatie vinden? Of alleen wanneer ik een paar dingen opnoemde?

Heb je specifiek informatie gezocht over de oorlogsplekken in Kosovo? Waarom wel/niet?

Hoe veel weet je over Kosovo nu? Welke plekken/dingen zou je willen bezoeken naast de oorlogsplekken? Wat weet je nu over de oorlog?

- Wat was jouw beeld van Kosovo voordat je hier kwam? In hoeverre oorlog onderdeel hiervan?

- Is je beeld veranderd nu je hier bent?

- Hoe geïnteresseerd ben je normaal in het bezoeken van oorlogslocaties tijdens je vakantie?

- Hoe vaak doe je zoiets? Bijna elke vakantie?

- Kun je voorbeelden noemen van locaties die je hebt bezocht?

- Wat vond je van deze locaties?

- Ben je weleens in een land geweest dat voormalig Joegoslavië is geweest?

Zo ja: heb je hier elementen van de oorlog bezocht? Wat vond je hiervan?

- Ben je weleens op een volledig georganiseerde tour geweest? Of bezoek je plekken altijd op eigen houtje? Wat vond je van deze tour? Hoe was de gids?

- Waarom wilde je liever naar deze plekken en niet de andere?

- Wat was je eerste impressie van de locatie?

- Welke plek vond je het meest interessant? Waarom?

- Wat vond je van de hoeveelheid informatie beschikbaar op de locaties? Te weinig?

- Was je snel uitgekeken?

- Wat vond je van de route naar de oorlogsplekken? Mooie dingen te zien onderweg?

- Denk je dat je zelf de moeite had genomen om deze plekken te bezoeken als je alleen in Kosovo was geweest?

Wilde je graag meer weten over de oorlogsgeschiedenis van Kosovo?

- Wat vond je van de reistijd? Te doen?

- Zou je nog een keer terug willen naar de bezochte oorlogsplekken in Kosovo of is één keer genoeg?

- Zou je zelf een oorlogstour willen doen in een bepaald land? In Kosovo?
- Zou je op vakantie gaan naar een land speciaal voor een oorlogstour? Waarom wel/niet?
- Wat vind je van een tour van meerdere dagen of hou je het liever bij één dag?

- Wat vind je van het idee dat reisorganisaties misbruik maken van de pijn van de lokale bevolking om zo winst te maken?

Heb je zelf weleens dit gevoel gehad toen je een locatie bezocht? Dat je voor je “lol” ging kijken wat voor iets gruwelijks de ander mee heeft gemaakt.

Zou je jezelf omschrijven als een “ramptoerist”?

Wat vind je van toeristen die een bestemming gaan bezoeken speciaal voor een ramp die recent is gebeurd? Moet er een bepaalde tijd tussen zitten?

Hoe belangrijk vind je het dat de oorlogsplekken in de buurt liggen van leuke plekjes waar je kunt zitten, eten en drinken?

Welke kwaliteiten moet de gids volgens jou hebben waardoor de tour beter wordt?

Zou je graag een lokaal iemand op een locatie erbij hebben die een eigen ervaring/verhaal deelt of is een gids genoeg?