

NGO AKTIV

Report on Research Results



Trend Analysis 2019.

Attitudes of the Serbian Community in Kosovo

North Mitrovica

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INTRODUCTION

The document that you find in front of you is research that has been carried out by NGO Aktiv for five years in a row, in the goal of identifying the most significant attitudes and perceptions held by Serb community in Kosovo in relation to key social, economic, political and other processes that have a direct or indirect impact on their lives. The data received offers insight into the effects that those processes have on the Serbian community in Kosovo, their needs and priorities, and how they can constitute a valuable source of information for the creation of civil initiatives, strategies and policies on all levels of governance that seek to answer to the tangible needs of the population. The results of this research can and should become a foundation for those sorts of efforts, whether or not they are development initiatives, social dialogue or even political solutions for certain problems that have for years prevent the normalization of everyday life in Kosovo.

When methodologically justified, the most important conclusions of this year's research have been presented through a comparative analysis with the results of past public opinion research. This allows for a chronological overview of a number of given trends, or more specifically, attitudes of the Serb community (covering a period from 2015, when the research was first carried out, until today) as well as insight into numerical fluctuations that allows for an analysis of their causes when compared with relevant socio-political events that took place within the same period. For example, a correlation was noted in this year's research between a fall in support for the formation of the Association of Serbian Municipalities and the emergence of the idea of territorial partition.

Between the years 2015 and 2018, the research entitled *Trend Analysis* dealt exclusively with the Serb community in the north of Kosovo. The sample has been expanded from this year to include the Serbian community south of the river Ibar, something that makes the scope/range of attitudes of Serbs in Kosovo more representative. The expansion of the sample to include the Kosovo Serb community in its entirety is in line with Aktiv's strategic plan to expand its activities to the central level. Nevertheless, the most important reason behind expanding the scope of the research is to gain better insight into the significance of the socio-political juncture where we currently find ourselves. Ideas and political initiatives are being promoted that will, in many respects, determine the fate and future of the entire Serbian community in Kosovo. One of those ideas is the current political 'behemoth' that is the concept of territorial exchange, an idea that created a new reality in the relationship between Serbia and Kosovo, put the Brussels Agreement 'ad acta', and overtook the political space and dialogue across the Western Balkans, E.U, as well as the great powers such as the U.S.A and Russia. Due to these factors, for the first time, this year's research included a series of questions on the idea of territorial exchange, and analysis is offered from a comparison of perspectives of respondents from the south and the north of Kosovo.

By examining the attitudes, goals, concerns and priorities of the entire Kosovo Serb community, we hope to assist decision-makers to reach solutions that will take into consideration the interests and outlooks of all Serbs in Kosovo rather than just one part of it.

Miodrag Miki Marinkovic
Programme Director, NGO Aktiv

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Research method: Face-to-face field surveys (F2F)

Survey: Questionnaire comprised of forty (40) questions

Timeframe: 15th of July – 5th of September 2019.

Sample size: 540 survey respondents (270 in the north of Kosovo, 270 from Serb-majority areas south of the Ibar river.)

Sample type: Stratified random sampling – stratification on the basis of the municipality of residence.

Focus groups: North Mitrovica, Leposavić, Gračanica, Štprce

Interviewees: Ljubomir Stanojković, Political Scientist

Srđan Simonović, Director, NGO Humanicentar,
Mitrovica

Darko Dimitrijević, Editor-in-Chief, Radio
Goraždevac

Tatjana Lazarević, Editor-in-Chief, KoSsev Portal

Nenad Radosavljević, Director, RTV Mir

KEY RESEARCH FINDINGS:

92%

of respondents think that general trends in Kosovo are not going in their favor and aren't encouraging for the Serbian community in Kosovo.

50%

of respondents believe that the effects of current political processes are the greatest threat to their security and the security of their families (increase from previous surveys.)

41,6%

of respondents state that unemployment and a poor economic situation are the biggest problems that they face.

60,2%

of respondents say that there isn't a single politician in Kosovo that they trust.

12,6%

of respondents claim that they do not possess documents issued by Kosovo authorities.

2,82%

is the average score (out of five) that the government of Serbia received in response to the question *are you satisfied with their performance?* The government of Kosovo received an average score of 1.98.

51,2% of respondents think that the idea of the formation of the Association of Serbian municipalities has been abandoned.

46,9% of respondents thinks that independent attitudes and critical thinking are not present enough in media in Kosovo.

75,6% of respondents claim that they do not feel free to express their political beliefs

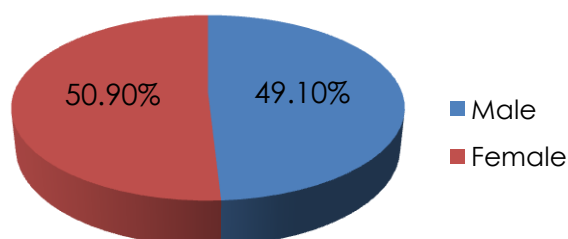
55,3% of respondents say that they do not see themselves in Kosovo in the next five years or will leave should the opportunity arise. More than two-thirds of them are university-educated.

73,3% of those surveyed do NOT support the idea of partition, including nearly 80% of respondents from Serb communities south of the Ibar and around 66% in the north of Kosovo.

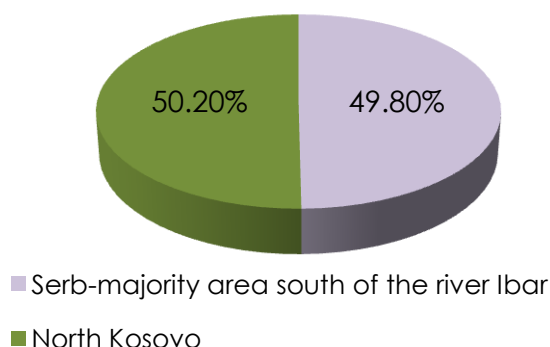
SAMPLE DESCRIPTION:

In total, five-hundred and forty (540) individuals were surveyed, of whom slightly over half live in communities south of the river Ibar. The aim of the methodological approach was to achieve maximally representative results, as well as high representation of the basic demographic characteristics of the sample (gender, education, employment status etc.) Basic data on the structure of the sample used for this study can be found below:

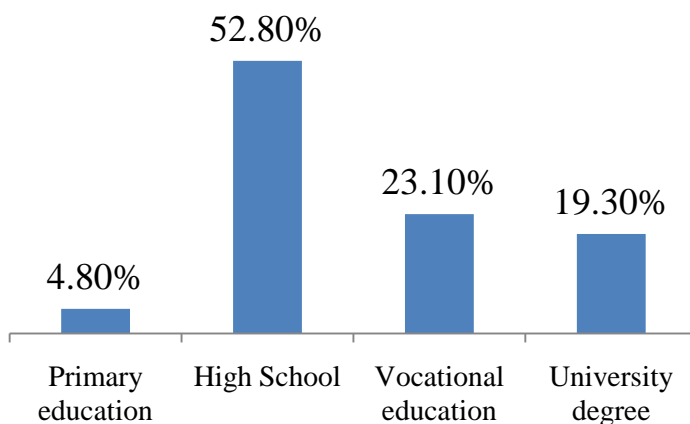
1.1. Sample structure according to respondents' gender:



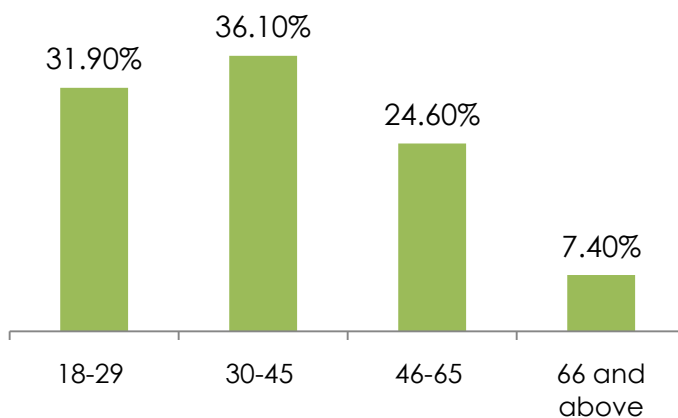
1.2. Sample structure according to respondents' place of residence:



1.3. Sample structure according to the respondents' level of education:



1.4. Sample structure according to respondents' age:



1.5. Sample structure according to respondents' employment status:



RESEARCH RESULTS:

GENERAL ATTITUDES:

1. On a scale from 1 to 5, with 1 being “very bad” and 5 being “very good”, please rate:

	Average score
Your material situation	2,39
The economic situation in Kosovo	1,79
The political situation in Kosovo	1,79
Safety/security in Kosovo	1,89

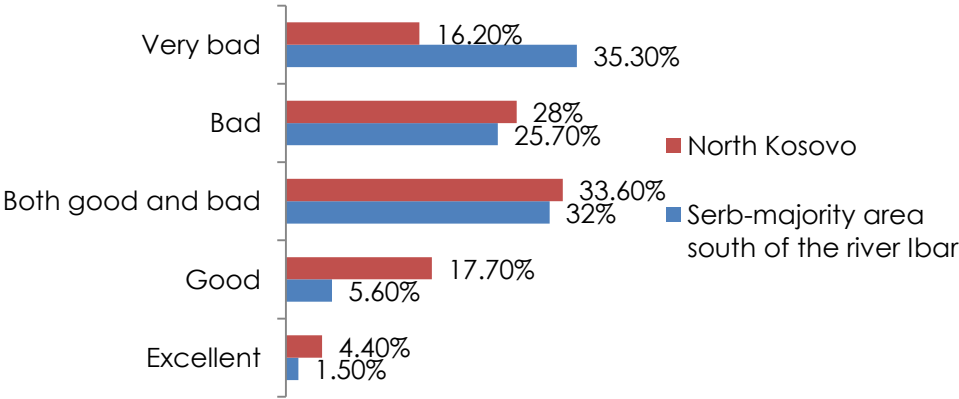
The first question put to survey respondents related to their general perception of key social trends and their assessment of their personal material well-being (income, property, employment etc.) We can see in the table above that they rated their material situation as “both bad and good” while they rated the political and security situation as being ‘bad.’ These results are in line with those from research conducted in 2018.

Respondents’ age is not a reason behind variations in perceptions of the political, security, and economic situations in Kosovo. Additionally, a comparison of results according to a place of residence reveals that a significantly higher percentage of respondents who live south of the river Ibar assess their personal material/economic situation as ‘very bad’ or ‘bad’ than do their compatriots from the north (table 1.1.) This meaningful difference in perception was incorporated into a group of questions used for qualitative analyses (focus groups and interviews), where participants explained the disproportion by bringing up the ‘preferential treatment’ the north receives in terms of investments,

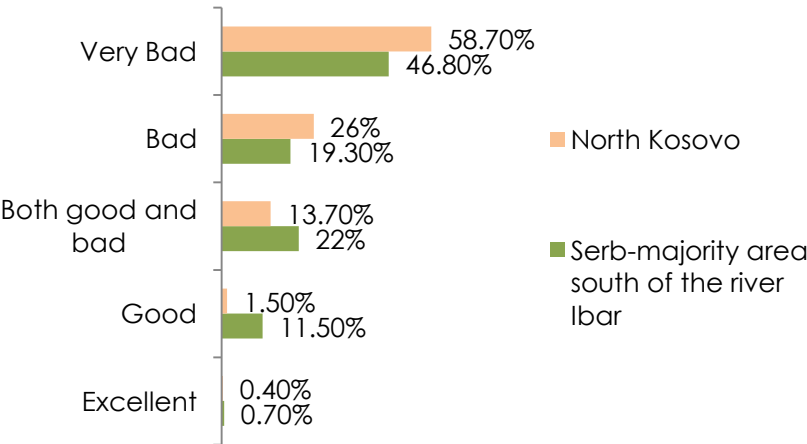
donations and grants from all relevant actors, including Belgrade, Pristina and the international community.

1.1. On a scale from 1 to 5, with 1 being “very bad” and 5 being “very good”, please rate:

a) Your material situation:



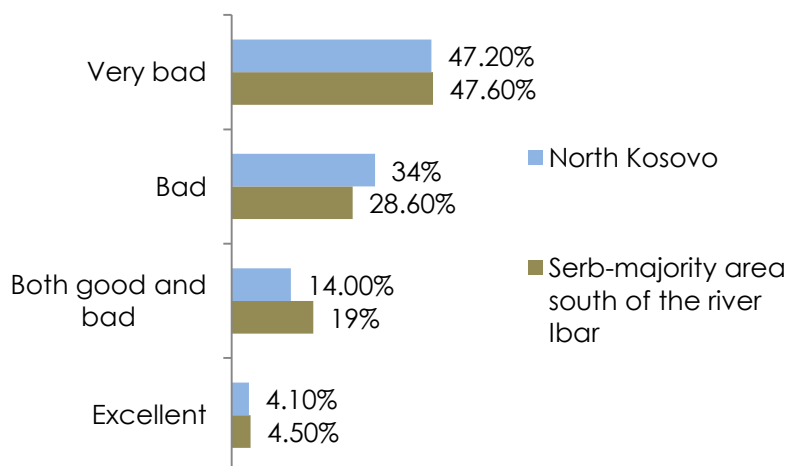
b) The political situation in Kosovo:



With some variations, the Serbian community in Kosovo (regardless of where they live), rates general political trends in Kosovo as being negative for their personal interests. Respondents who live in the four municipalities in the north of

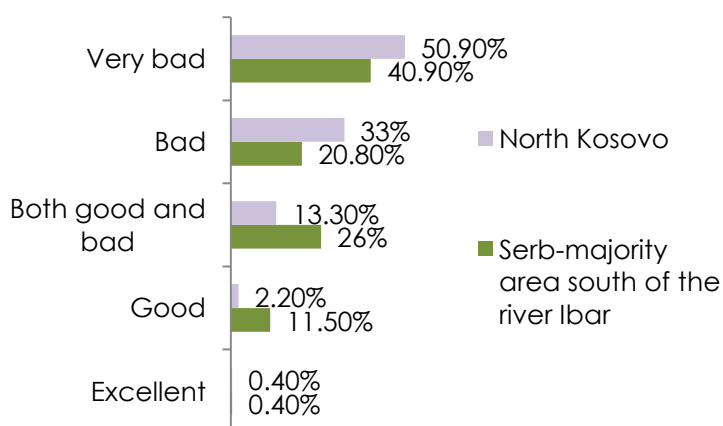
Kosovo are slightly more pessimistic when it comes to the overall political situation, where only 2% of them assessed the general political situation as 'good' or 'excellent' while that percentage (12%) is significantly higher among respondents in municipalities south of the river Ibar.

c) The economic situation in Kosovo



Similarly to the political situation, a majority of respondents assessed economic trends in Kosovo as very bad or bad (with no significant differences in perceptions between respondents from the north and the south of Kosovo)

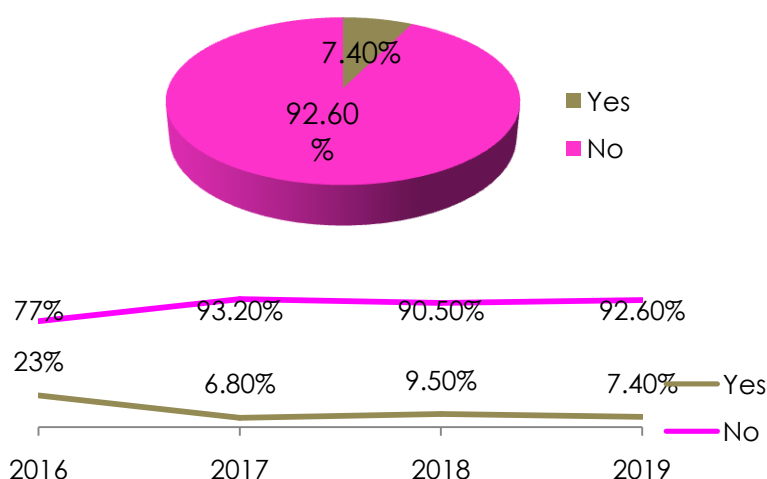
d) The security situation in Kosovo



The picture is similar when it comes to perceptions of the security situation – the highest percentage of respondents assessed the situation as bad or very bad. However, there are here some indications of a not-insignificant difference between respondents from the north and those from other parts of Kosovo. Namely, that four out of five residents (or more than 80%) of residents of Serb-majority municipalities in the north of Kosovo assess the security situation as being ‘very bad’ or bad’, while south of the river Ibar that same perception is held by three out of five respondents (slightly more than 60%.)

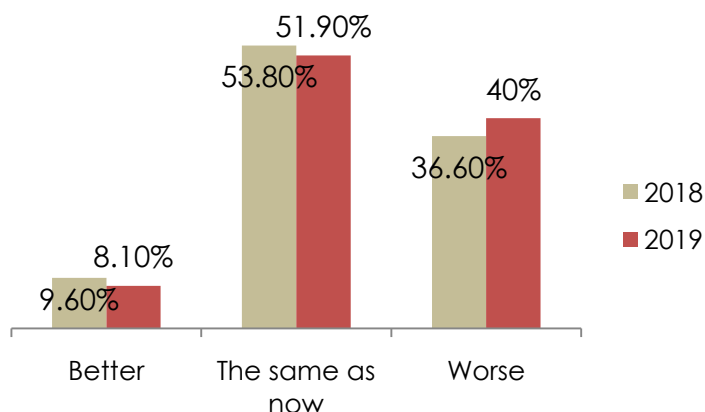
Past responses are indicative of the Kosovo Serb community’s widespread dissatisfaction with key socio-political tendencies over the past year. Over 90% of respondents describe those tendencies in negative terms. This trend emerged in 2017 and research shows that it (dissatisfaction) has been rising consistently over the past three years (Graph 2.)

2. Generally speaking, are things in Kosovo going in the right direction?

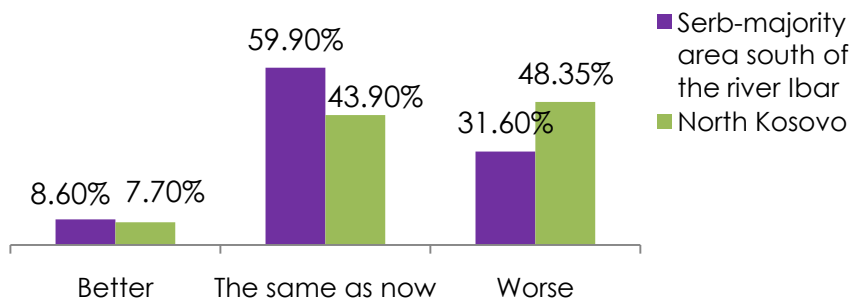


The obvious dissatisfaction that respondents with dominant socio-political tendencies in Kosovo is channeled into clear doubt that things can move in a more positive direction. Nearly 93% of respondents believe that overall trends in Kosovo are going in a negative direction, while only 8% think that their lives will improve over the next three years (Graph 3.) This sort of pessimism is stable and has generally manifested in similar quantities over the years. The difference in attitudes between respondents who live in the north and those who live in Serb communities south of the river Ibar (Graph 3) is almost non-existent.

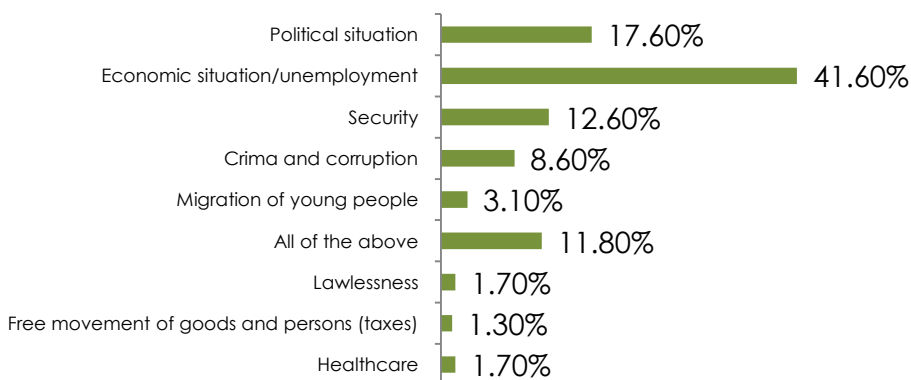
3. In your opinion, life for Serbs in Kosovo in three years will be:



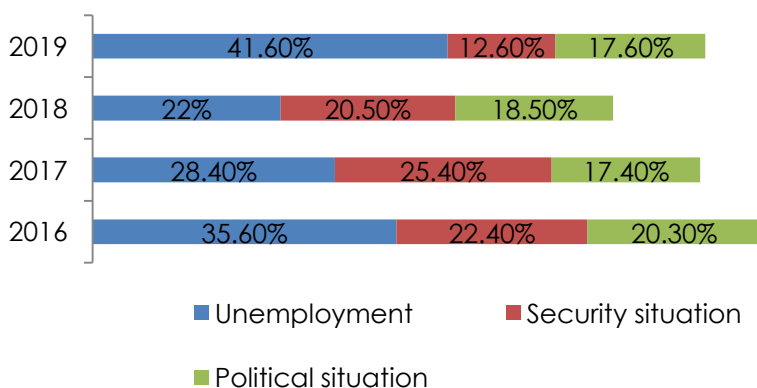
3.1. In your opinion, life for Serbs in Kosovo in three years will be:



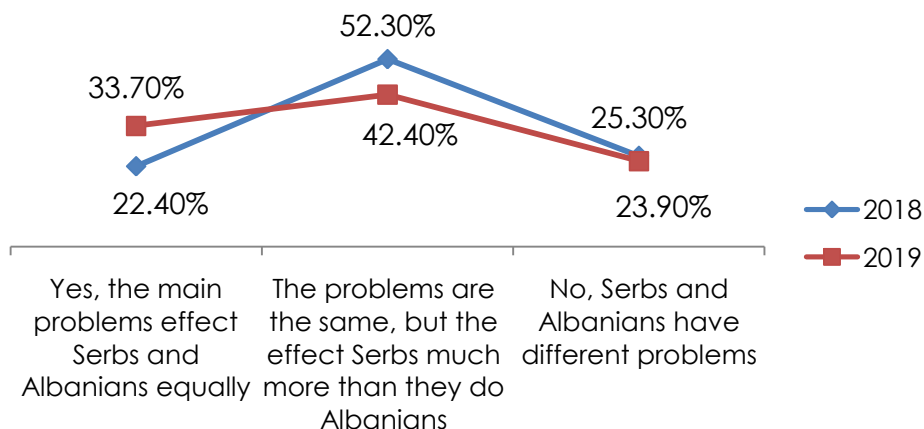
4. In your opinion, what is the biggest problem in Kosovo?



The largest percentage of respondents consider the main problem in Kosovo to be unemployment (41.6). This percentage has doubled since 2018 (when it was 22%) and the political situation (17.6%). After several years of constant growth, the number of respondents who think that the burning issue in the Serbian community in Kosovo is crime and corruption has significantly lowered when compared to the results of the research conducted in 2018 (8% in 2016, 11% in 2017, 20,6% in 2018, 8,6% in 2019). This comparative analysis has not confirmed that there is a trend because this year's research includes Serbian community throughout Kosovo, and not just in the northern part as was the case in 2018.



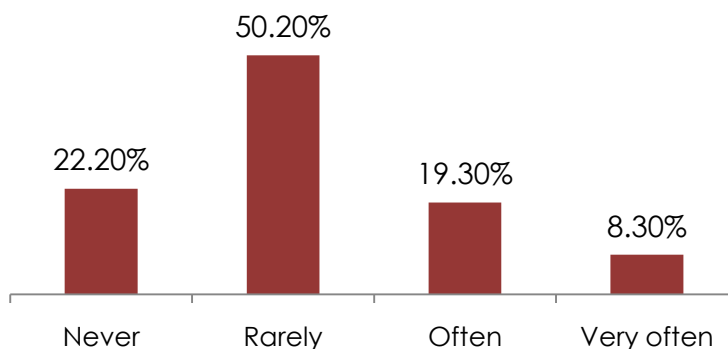
5. Do the main problems in Kosovo affect Albanians and Serbs equally?



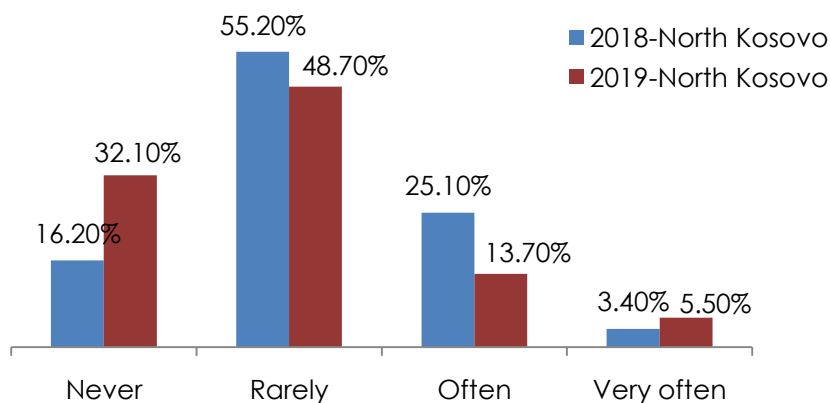
This year, as last year, the largest percentage of respondents believe that Serbs and Albanians face the same problems, but that their effect on the Serb community is more damaging. That certain amount of compassion that arises due to familiarity with the problems faced by citizens of all ethnic backgrounds, is not the result of frequent inter-personal contact and the increased understanding that grows from it. In Graph 6 we see that among the general sample, only one-fourth (1/4) of respondents from the north of Kosovo frequently go to areas with an Albanian majority.

A comparison of answers from respondents from the north of Kosovo from 2018 and 2019 (the table below) shows a percentage decrease of those who have more frequent interactions with Albanians (there is a 10% drop). In the qualitative part of research (focus groups and interviews), this percentage decrease is understood in relation to worsened political tendencies (such as taxes) and a “more aggressive” rhetoric that follows it.

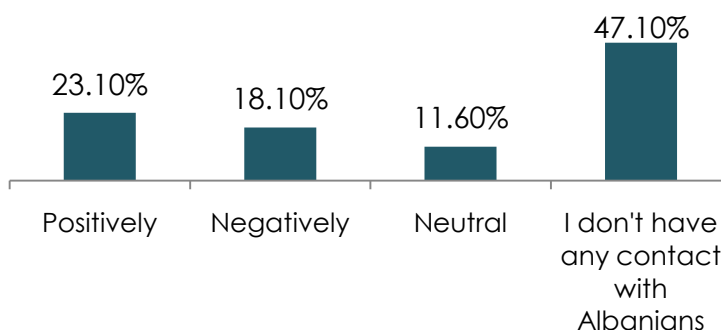
6. How often do you visit areas with Albanian majority?

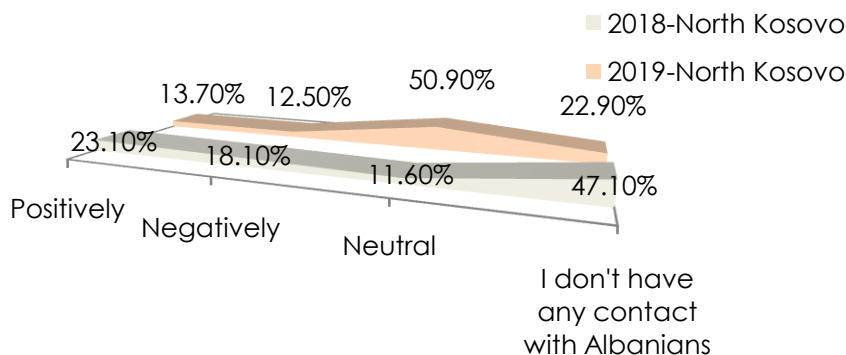


6.1. How often do you visit areas with Albanian majority? - comparison



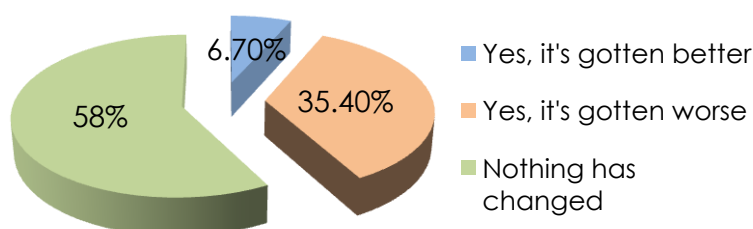
7. Your experiences of personal contacts with Albanians are mostly:





We analyzed the ways in which respondents among our sample who are in touch with members of the Albanian community perceive that contact. Only about 17% of respondents see these contacts in a negative light. On the other hand, the percentage of respondents who have positive experiences with Albanians (19.3%) is slightly smaller than in 2018 (23.1%), but it is still larger than in 2016 (14.9%) and 2017 (15.6%). This correlation only refers to the sample from the north of Kosovo because Serbian citizens who live south of the Ibar river were not included in previous research.

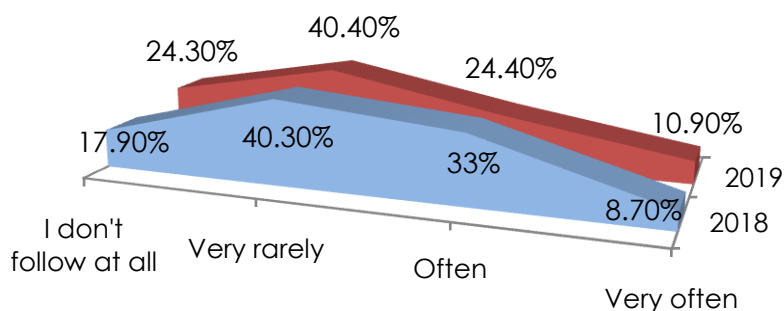
8. Has the economic situation in Kosovo changed over the last year?



This year over 50% of respondents stated that nothing has changed in Kosovo over the past year. This result is almost identical to that from 2018. On the other hand, the percentage of respondents who think that the situation has improved (6.7%) is slightly lower than it was last year (8%).

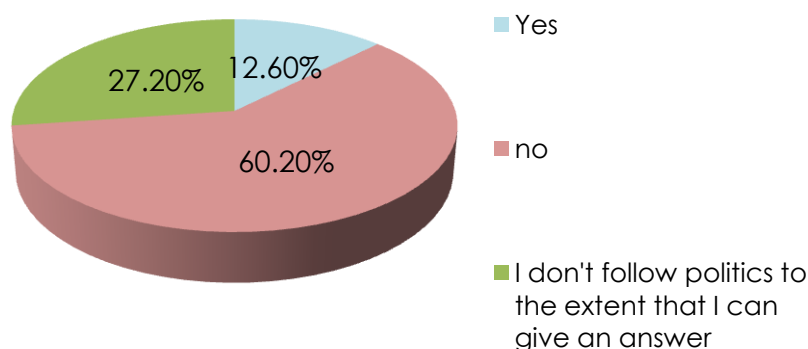
TRUST IN DECISION MAKERS

9. How often do you follow political events?



A slightly lower percentage of respondents (35.3%) claim that they are following political events, unlike last year when the percentage was 41,7%. This insignificant decline in interest in political events that are significant for their daily life is related to the overall opinion (outlined in the first part of this research study) that the main political tendencies over the past year are going the wrong direction. The lack of trust in political leaders in Kosovo is an obvious manifestation of this pessimism i.e. negative perception (graph 10).

10. Do you trust any politicians in Kosovo?



Nearly two-thirds of respondents (just over 60%) claim that they do not trust any politician in Kosovo. On the other hand, 12.6% of respondents have some trust in Serbian politicians from Kosovo, which is in line with findings from the previous year (11.9%), but the percentage is still lower than it was in 2016 (19%) and in 2017 (23%). Our conclusion is that trust in political leaders in Kosovo is consistently low among the representatives of the Serbian community.

	Frequency of respondents from the sample categorized by age	Average grade according to the frequency of categories
18-29 years	172	6,39%
30-45 years	195	14,87%
46-65 years	133	16,54%
66 + years	40	15%

After the results were analyzed according to respondents' age, the conclusion was that the lack of trust in political leaders is lowest among representatives of younger generations (18 to 29 years of age) and the percentage raises with age.

Similar to these results, when asked to identify one politician whom they trust, 88.7% of respondents did not name any Serbian politician, while 99,2% of them have stated that they do not have an answer to the question "which Albanian politician do you trust the most." The lack of trust in politicians is a stable tendency since 2016, confirming that such crisis in trust is grounded in the persistent perception that political leaders insufficiently address the true interests of the Serbian community in Kosovo. Tatjana Lazarević, Editor in Chief of the KosSev internet portal, reached the same conclusion and

stated that „politicians do not stand for the interests of the citizens, not even for the smallest percentage of their needs“¹. According to NenadRadosavljević, the chief executive of RTV “Mir” from Leposavić, “politics has become a means for getting rich which does not require knowledge or rank but only political affiliation”². According to Radosavljević, such this conception of political engagement leads to “defining politics as a type of private business” which is the principal reason for the lack of trust in politicians in the Serbian community in Kosovo. SrđanSimonovic, chief executive of NVO HumaniCentarMitrovica agrees with this opinion and says that politicians are “promoting nepotism (which has reached its peak with this generation of politicians) and corruption which is present in every pore of the society instead of promoting human values”³.

However, the results of the recent snap parliamentary elections in Kosovo paint a different picture. According to the preliminary results available when this report was published, around 98% of voters in Serbian areas voted for SprksaLista. This dichotomy was presented to focus groups, who found an explanation in Belgrade's open support for the above-mentioned political party, and implied that the voters base their opinion on the continuity of the Serbian Government's support even though they do not necessarily trust their representatives in Kosovo.

¹ Interview with TatjanaLazarević, 20.9.2019.

² Interview with NenadRadosavljević, 26.9.2019.

³ Interview with SrđanSimonović, 17.9.2019.

Serbian Politicians	%	Albanian politicians	%
Ivan Todosijević	0.2	GonđaČauši	0.2
Goran Rakić	2.4	HašimTači	0.2
Rada Trajković	0.2	VetonSuroi	0.2
Igor Simić	0.6	RamušHaradinaj	0.2
AdrijanaHodžić	0.2		
DaliborJevtić	1.3		
NenadRikalo	0.2		
SlavkoŠimić	0.2		
Zoran Todić	0.6		
BratislavNikolić	3.5		
SrđanPopović	0.9		
Bojan Stojanović	0.2		
NenadRadosavljević	0.2		
Slobodan Petrović	0.2		
Marko Đurić	0.4		
I do not trust any politician	88.7	I do not trust any politician	99.2%

11. In the context of foreign policy and lobbying, Serbs from Kosovo should mostly rely on:

Sample Percentage	2016.	2017.	2018.	2019.
EU	17.3%	5.3%	13.1%	8.3%
Russia	75.5%	64%	51,2%	45.2%
USA	2.8%	4.1%	2%	5.6%
No Reply	4.4%	26.5%	33.7%	37.6%

Given that the question of the status of Kosovo on the international level has influenced regional stability as well as

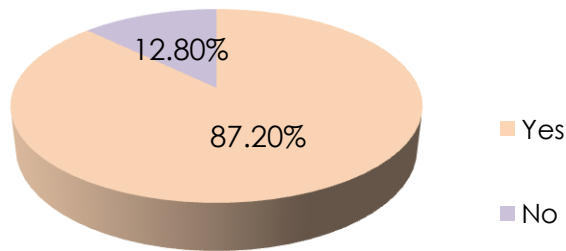
the complexity of ethnic relations within Kosovo, this research tracks the opinion(s) of the Serbian community related to the question: which international diplomatic organization can provide the largest amount of support for their interests. Regardless of a downward trend over a long period of time, Serbs from Kosovo have been of the opinion that their biggest ally is Moscow and the Russian Federation, which supports Serbia's interests regarding Kosovo in international institutions. A much lower percentage of them see the US in this role (just over 5%) and the EU (around 8%).

However, this year, the percentage of respondents who see Russia as their biggest ally has dropped to below 50%. Tatjana Lazarević, editor in chief of the KosSev portal thinks that the reason for this is a combination of factors such as a) *actual Russian policies are practically invisible in the Serbian community in Kosovo; this includes the Russian office in Priština* and b) *the weakened Serbian community is in a state of deep apathy and pessimism; citizens are aware that they are "left alone"*⁴.

⁴ Interview with Tatjana Lazarević, 20.9.2019.

TRUST IN INSTITUTIONS

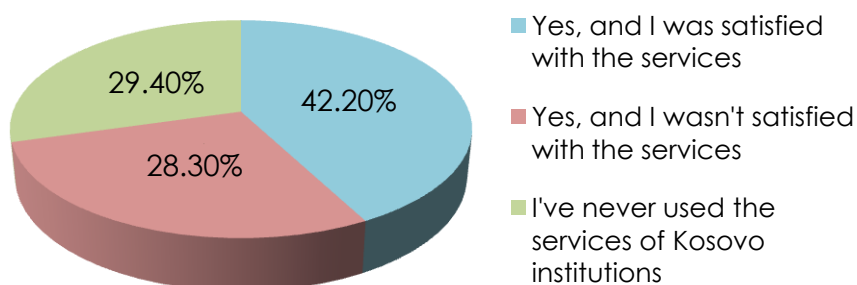
12. Do you have personal documents issued by Kosovo institutions?



The question of possessing personal documents issued by the institutions of Kosovo is directly connected to the process of the integration of Serbs in Kosovo. Over a long period of time, having these documents was considered to be act of “betrayal” of the interests of the Republic of Serbia and resistance to this process, especially in the north of Kosovo, became a dominant political choice. However, since the beginning of the negotiations as part of the Brussels (in 2013) process, stigmatization of this has begun to fade and a number of citizens who have decided to obtain personal documents from Kosovo institutions in order to realize their rights is rising consistently. From almost 60% in 2017, and just above 70% in 2018, the number of respondents who possess these documents has risen to almost 90% (87.2%, to be more precise) in the past year. Even though it is methodologically inconsistent (due to the fact that sample has included the entire Serbian community in Kosovo and not just the north), this trend is significant because it points towards a “depoliticization” of this act and its reduction to a “practical gesture” which is necessary to realize the rights of Kosovo’s citizens. Additional legal simplifications of this process (AKTIV has given warnings about this in its proposal of the practical

policies named “Access to Documents in Kosovo: General Obstacle to Integration of Minority Groups”⁵⁾ will contribute to a further increase, and will enable all the Serbian citizens to enjoy rights guaranteed by the law.

13. Have you used services provided by Kosovo institutions?



Having documents issued by Kosovo authorities implies a fulfillment of the basic condition(s) for the realization of rights i.e. a more frequent interaction with institutions formed in accordance with the Constitution of Kosovo. Consequently, this parameter has a stable growth trend. This year, 70.5% of respondents stated that they have used the services of Kosovo institutions, with the largest percentage of them claiming to have had a positive experience which is partially in line with the results of the study from 2018 (out of 67% respondents who have claimed that they used there services, 44% were satisfied).

⁵⁾[http://ngoaktiv.org/uploads/files/Pristup_li%C4%8Dnim_i_putnim_dokumentima%20\(1\).pdf](http://ngoaktiv.org/uploads/files/Pristup_li%C4%8Dnim_i_putnim_dokumentima%20(1).pdf)

	Frequency of respondents in the sample by age	% using the services	% satisfied with the services
18-29 years	172	61%	31.98%
30-45 years	195	74.36%	47.70%
46-65 years	133	71.43%	45.86%
66 and above	40	90%	47.5%

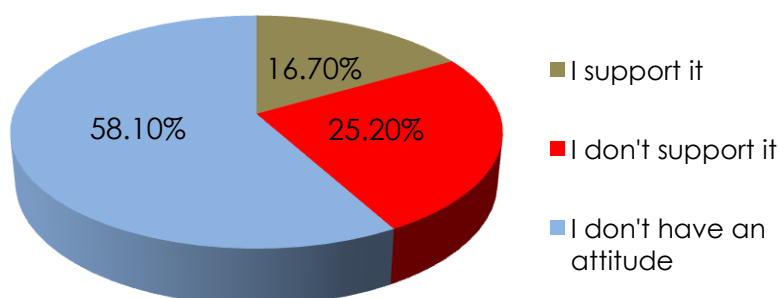
Just like results in 2018, this year's results show that the largest percentage of respondents using services provided by Kosovo institutions are older, while the percentage of those of 18 to 29 years of age is smaller. Increased interactions with the institutions of Kosovo allow a more credible assessment of their work as well as the work of other segments of government or institutions which have a role in events in Kosovo (table 14).

Overall opinion indicates that the level of citizens' trust and satisfaction with the work of institutions is in decline. Similar to last year's research findings, this one shows that respondents from the Serbian community in Kosovo have the most trust in work of the Serbian government while they trust the EULEX mission and the government of Kosovo the least. Citizens' trust in the work of the European Union Office in Kosovo is also at a consistently low level.

14. On a scale of 1 to 5, assess how satisfied you are with the efficiency of the following institutions:

	Average			
	2016	2017	2018	2019
Government of Serbia	3	2.6	2.9	2.82
Office for Kosovo and Metohija	2.8	2.5	2.9	2.51
Four newly formed Kosovo municipalities in the north	2.4	2.4	2.8	2.46
Temporary local organs of self-government	2,5	2,5	2,5	2,41
Serb Assembly members in Kosovo	2,1	1,8	2,5	2,29
Sebr ministers in the Kosovo government	2	1,8	2,4	2,25
UNMIK	2,2	2,2	2,2	2,04
Kosovo Police	2,3	2,1	2,1	2,02
KFOR	2,4	2,4	2,3	2,01
The Kosovo government	1,7	1,6	2,1	1,98
The Office of the E.U in Kosovo	2	1,9	2,1	1,9
EULEX	1,9	1,7	2,1	1,86

15. What is your opinion of the Brussels Agreement?

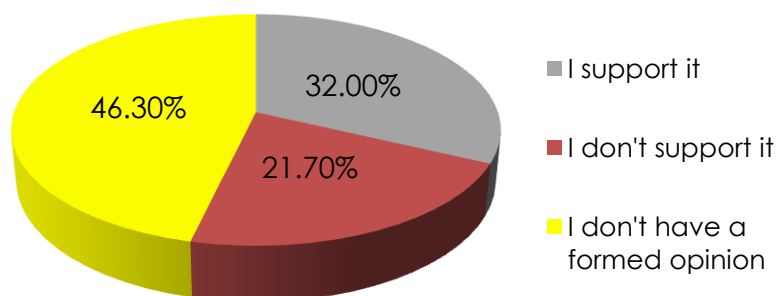


While the percentage of respondents who have said that they do not support the Brussels Agreement was 42% in 2018, the percentage fell this year to 25,2%. Moreover, there is a larger percentage of respondents who have said that they do not have an opinion this year (58,1%), while the percentage was 42,2% in 2018. In the qualitative part of the research, respondents from focus groups explained this significant decline in support for the Brussels Agreement by the emergence of the concept of the territorial delineation (partition) of Kosovo as an alternative which has made the "Brussels process" obsolete. At one of the focus groups in the Serbian community, it has been stated that *"easy and naive acceptance of the idea of delineation by the European Union means giving up on the pressure to implement current and future agreements between Belgrade and Priština. The lack of this pressure was a release for both governments which have stopped working on the implementation of the agreement. According to Tatjana Lazarević, "weak and declining support for this process has roots in its strong lack of transparency' as well as the feeling that this process has been in a deadlock for in the last year". She also stated that the decline in support is the consequence of the practice of excluding citizens from the political decision-making process and the state in which "political processes have been taken away from citizens, while citizens are a part of them only to a degree and when they are treated as 'objects' because they need to complete processes directed by authoritarian representatives of governments."*⁶

⁶ Interview with Tatjana Lazarević, 20.9.2019.

OPINION ON ACTIVE PARTICIPATION IN POLITICAL PROCESSES IN KOSOVO

16. What is your opinion on the participation of Serbs in Kosovo institutions?

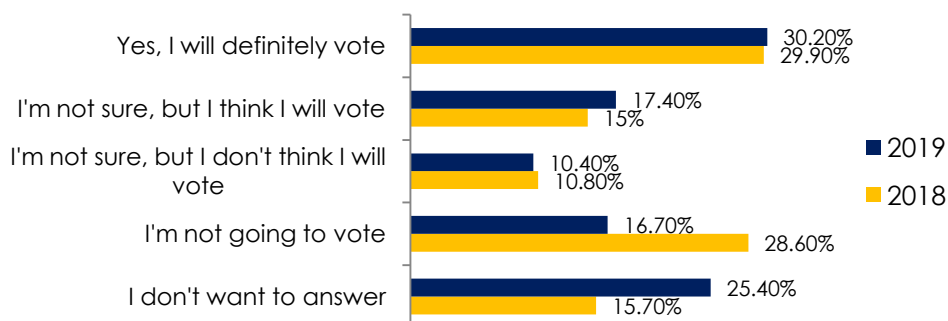


Similar to the trend in the rise in the number of respondents who have personal documents issued by Kosovo institutions, the number of respondents who support the participation of Serbs in Kosovo institutions is also rising. The research study from 2018 shows that one in four respondents (24,8%) claims that they support the institutional activities of the representatives of the Serbian community in Kosovo while this year, the same opinion was expressed by one in three respondents (32%). Consequently, the number of respondents who have expressed a negative opinion on this question has fallen significantly; from 35% in 2018 to 21,7% this year. A comparative analysis of this trend to low scores on questions of trust and satisfaction with the work of Serbian representatives in Kosovo institutions is interesting: A growing lack of trust and satisfaction with the efficiency of their own representatives does not influence the opinion of the Serbian community on whether or not they should participate because, as we have stated before, the number of Serbs who support participation in political processes is rising consistently.

This implies that the cause of dissatisfaction lies in the solutions offered by political actors rather than in the institutional or legislative obstacles to obtaining satisfactory results by participating in government.

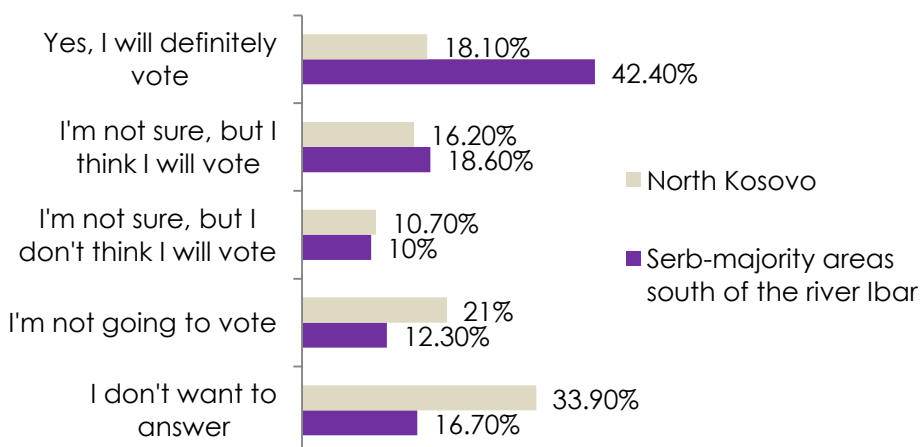
The results from the graph 17 and questions regarding the attitude to participation in elections within the constitutional and legal framework of Kosovo are confirming the trend of rising support for institutional participation among representatives of the Serbian community in Kosovo. The number of respondents who have express unequivocal willingness to participate in elections is rising; nearly half of them claim that they will probably or certainly vote, while the number of them who explicitly decline to vote is steadily falling (from 28,6% in 2018 to 16,7% in 2019). It is important to emphasize that when interviews were conducted, there were indications that early parliamentary elections will be held in Kosovo but had yet to be announced officially. It was established, on the basis of an analysis of data on the level of readiness to participate in elections were analyzed in relation to the age of respondents (table below), that that the percentage of those who have replied that they will certainly participate was highest among older generations (older than 66 - 45%) and the lowest was among the younger generations (18 to 29 - 18,6%.) The results are similar to those from earlier research projects and they are in correlation with the general conclusions of this and other research studies by AKTIV, which indicated widespread defeatism and dissatisfaction among younger members of the Serbian community in Kosovo.

17. Will you participate in the forthcoming elections in Kosovo?



	I will vote for sure
	2019
18-29 years	18,60%
30-45 years	36,41%
46-65 years	31,58%
66 and over	45%

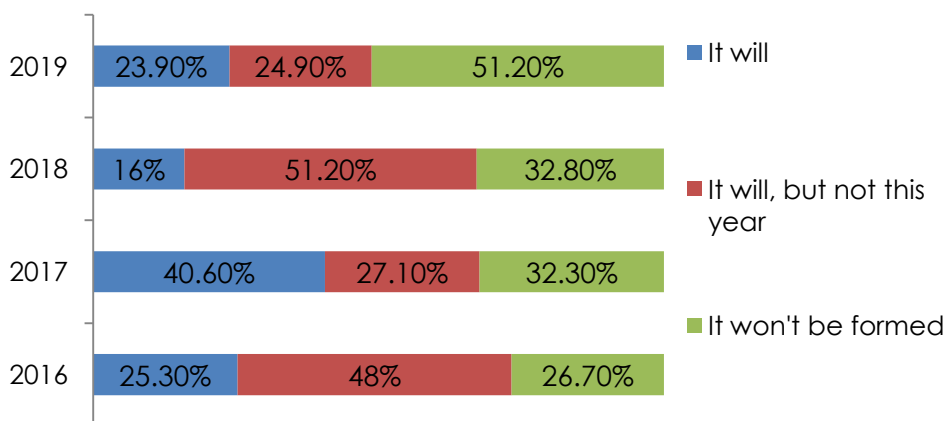
17.1. Will you participate in the forthcoming elections in Kosovo?



Considering that this year's 'Trend Analysis' research includes respondents from Serbian communities south of the Ibar river, we have the opportunity to analyze the readiness to participate in elections in relation to respondents' place of residence. This research has therefore shown that a considerably lower percentage of respondents residing in northern municipalities in Kosovo (Leposavić, ZubinPotok, Zvečan and Northern Mitrovica) have shown readiness to participate in elections (18,1%) while the percentage of residents of other municipalities across Kosovo is much higher (42,4%). The turnout at early parliamentary elections on October 6. 2019 show a deviation from these percentages in the northern municipalities where the turnout was considerably higher (according to data published on the KosSev portal the turnout in the north was the following: North Mitrovica 42,99%, Leposavić 46,35%, Zvečan 51,63% and ZubinPotok 57,34%)⁷. Participants of the focus groups that were part of the qualitative research undertaken as part of this study, explained that the difference in numbers is a result of various practices of pressuring voters to participate in elections (collective voting, parallel lists of voters who have participated in elections etc), which were more common in the northern municipalities. According to this line of thought, the difference in percentages is due to the voters who would not participate in elections if there was no pressure. The existence of such practices has been confirmed by the media that covered the elections and noted many irregularities.

⁷<https://kossev.info/izbori-u-brojkama/>, 7.10.2019.

18. Do you think that the Community of Serb Municipalities will be formed?



The question of the formation of the Association of Serb Municipalities in Kosovo has been a part of this research for many years, despite the fact that this idea has lost its momentum in the political area. The reason behind this is that this idea is of exception importance for Serbs in Kosovo. According this year's research data, pessimism regarding the formation of the Association of Serb Municipalities is steadily rising. This year, more than 50% of respondents believe that this community will *never be formed* which is much higher than in previous years (around 30% on average.) According to results garnered from focus groups, the reason for this is the idea of territorial delineation/partition of Kosovo. Since this idea disrupts the coherence of municipalities with a Serbian majority, most of which should be a part of this (proposed) community, the very concept of the Association is losing traction.

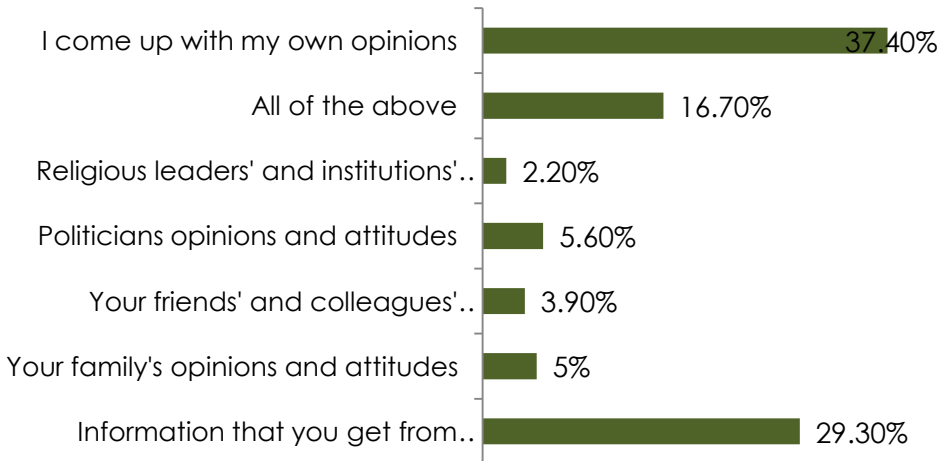
19. On a scale of 1 to 5 with 1 being "I completely disagree" and 5 being "I completely agree", how would you assess the following statements on the Community of Serb Municipalities?

	Average
The Community will contribute to an improvement in the position of Serbs in Kosovo	2,72
The Community will contribute to the integration of Serbs into the legal and political system of Kosovo	2,61
The Community will enable economic growth and employment	2,62

Just Like last year, respondents, on average, had a neutral opinion (they neither agree nor disagree) regarding the contribution of the Association of Serb Municipalities to economic growth, integration of Serbs into the legal and political system of Kosovo and a better position of Serbs in Kosovo overall.

FREEDOM OF SPEECH AND ACCESS TO INFORMATION

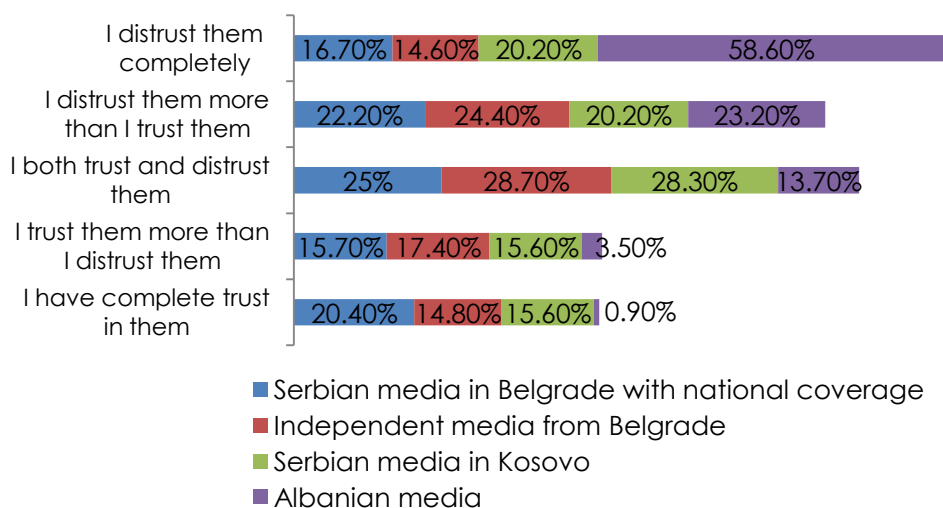
20. What are your opinions on politics and political events based on?



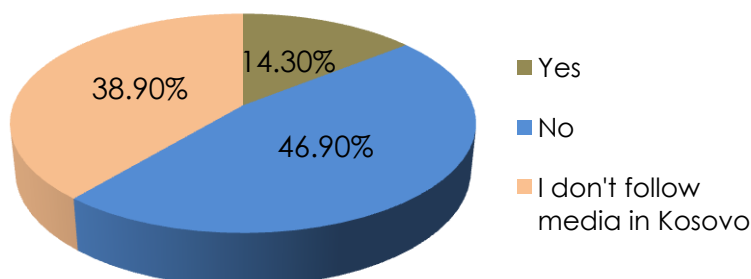
Similar to the results we obtained in previous years, respondents claim that they create their political opinions independently and of their own will (almost 40%), while still relying on information provided by the media. Trust in media (both media with national coverage, independent media based in Serbia and media based in Serbian municipalities in Kosovo) has risen (2,86; table 20). A small percentage of respondents said that they trust the information they receive from Kosovo media that report in the Albanian language. However, respondents who participated in focus groups have said that they do not trust Albanian media even though they don't follow them, but rather base their opinion on "principles" and stereotypes. The biggest obstacle seems to be the language barrier.

21. On the scale of 1 to 5 which 1 being 'I don't trust at all' and 5 being 'I fully trust', how much do you trust:

	Average
Serbian media from Belgrade with national frequency	3,01
Independent Media from Belgrade	2,93
Serbian Media from Kosovo	2,86
Albanian Media from Kosovo	1,65

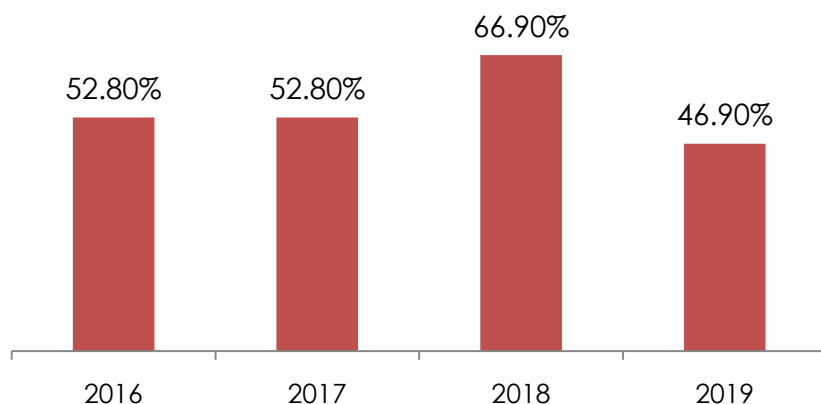


22. Is there enough independent opinions and critical thinking in the media in Kosovo?

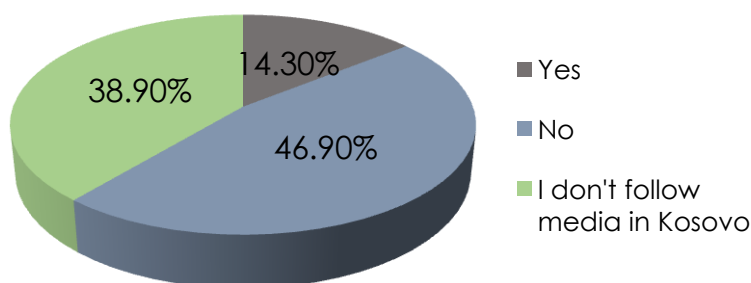


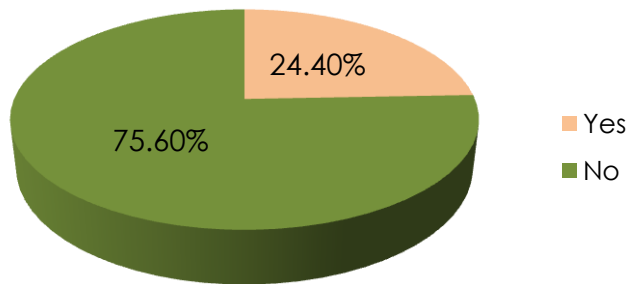
Even though the largest percentage of respondents think that media do not have enough independent opinions (graph 21) comparing to previous years, the trust in Kosovo media and their independence, as well as critical thinking, is rising. According to this year's research (graph 21.1), almost 20% fewer respondents claim that there is no independent criticism in Kosovo media when compared to the research from 2018. To be more precise, in 2018, 2/3 of respondents (66,9%) claimed this while one in two respondents made the same claim this year (46,9%).

22.1. Percentage of respondents who think independent opinions and critical thinking are not evident enough in Kosovo media, since 2016.

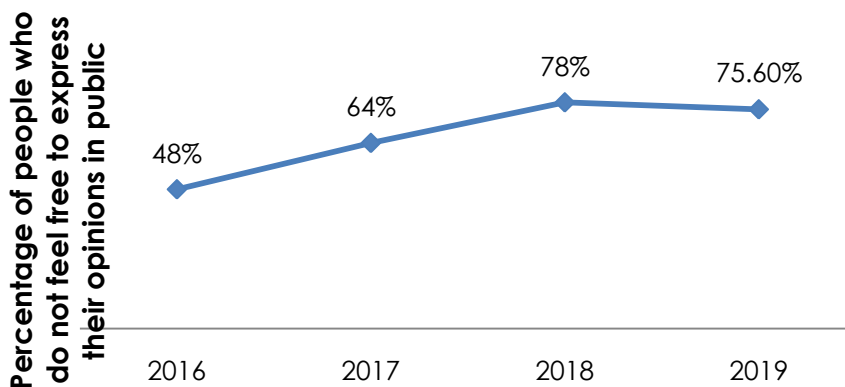


23. Do You Feel Free to Express Your Political Opinions?





A large percentage of respondents claim that they do not feel free to express their political opinions. Three in four of them (75,6%) thinks that their freedom of speech is jeopardized and that they do not feel free to publicly say what they think. The percentages were similar in last year's report. A slightly smaller number of respondents stated that they do not feel free to express their political opinions, but the increase seen this year is not significant enough to point to any real improvement. According to Tatjana Lazarević, the percentage of respondents who have claimed they can freely express their opinions is a surprise and even a "significant improvement" because *"sadly, I don't see this in everyday life"*⁸.



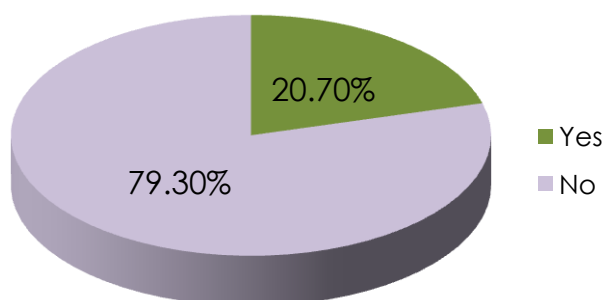
⁸ Interview with Tatjana Lazarević, 20.9.2019.

The graph above gives a comparison between the percentages of respondents who claim that they do enjoy freedom of expression in the four most recent annual research studies. There is a negative trend that began 2017 and continues up until today. Participants in focus groups in the north of Kosovo explain this significant rise in numbers as a consequence of pressures on Priština and Belgrade to reach a holistic solution or as an increasing desire of those in power to control public discourse in order to prepare the public for the solutions that are offered in response to this pressure. Sadly, this tendency is in complete opposition to the democratic practice of creating democratic dialogue among different actors about important political and, in this case, national issues. According to DarkoDimitrijević, editor in chief of Radio Goraždevac, a high percentage of respondents claiming that they are not free to express their opinions is a result of the repression of citizens in order to achieve certain political goals. Dimitrijević further says: *"The murder of Oliver Ivanović and demonizing opponents of the current government, insults in media controlled by Belgrade and pressures on the intelligentsia have created an atmosphere of fear and violence which is prevalent among Serbs in Kosovo"*⁹.

⁹ Interview with DarkoDimitrijević, 18.9.2019.

CITIZEN SECURITY

24. Have you or any of your family members experienced a threat to their security over the last six months?

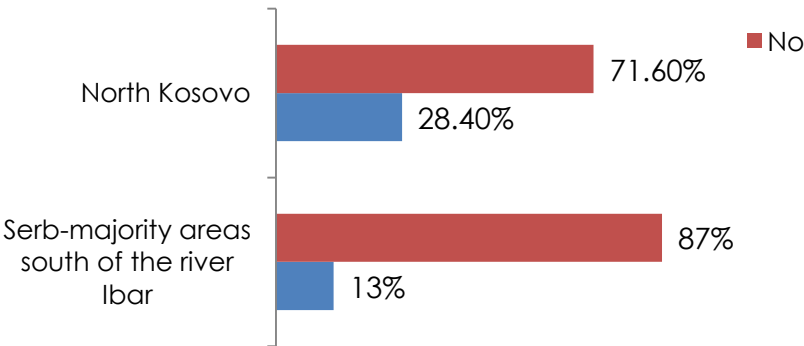


The issue of safety and security has changed significantly over the past several years. Of the entire sample (north and south) about 20% of respondents stated that they or their family members experienced a threat to their security. When compared with previous research, this shows a small rise in percentages (2016 - 13%, 2017 - 14%), which means that citizen security has worsened slightly. In light of this (graph 24), almost one in three respondents (30%) claims that the situation with security has worsened over the past year.

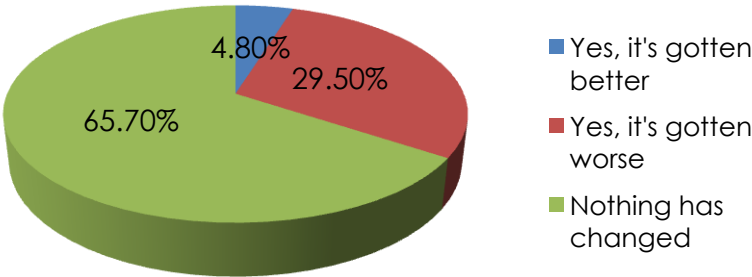
However, it is interesting that a larger number of respondents from the north experienced threats to their security (28,4%, when compared to 13% who experience security threats - graph below). Even though these statistics show that ethnic tensions are no longer the only cause of security violations in the Serbian community (this is due to the fact that more people experienced violations in the ethnically-compact north of Kosovo), this was impossible to claim based on this research considering the fact that there were several mass security incidents in the northern part of Kosovo in the last year (mass arrests and incidents in ZubinPotok, several critical

situations and use of special police force in Mitrovica etc.) About 50% of respondents (compared to 30% in 2018 – Graph 25.1) said that the main security risks were incidents that were caused by political instability or by other situations which respondents classify as being politically and ethnically motivated (such as arrests in case of murder or Oliver Ivanović.) According to NenadRadosavljević, chief executive of RTV Mir, all political parties in Kosovo use populism as a strategy to achieve political gains and under the ‘mask of patriotism and quasi-national interest, they are using inflammatory language which usually causes incidents’¹⁰.

24.1. Have you or any of your family members experienced violation of security over the last six months? – comparison

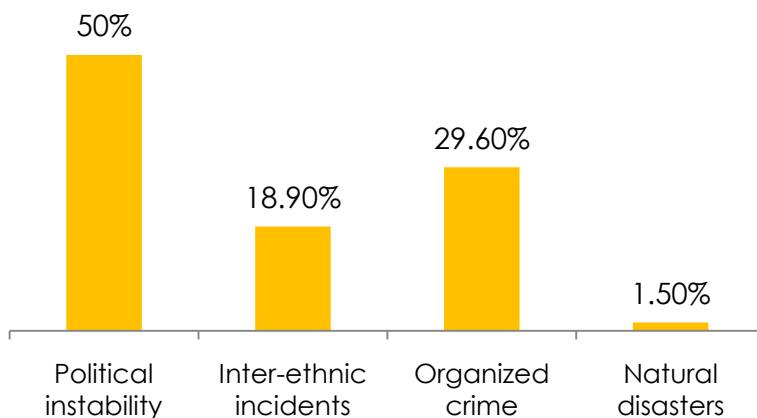


25. Has the security situation in Kosovo changed in the past year?

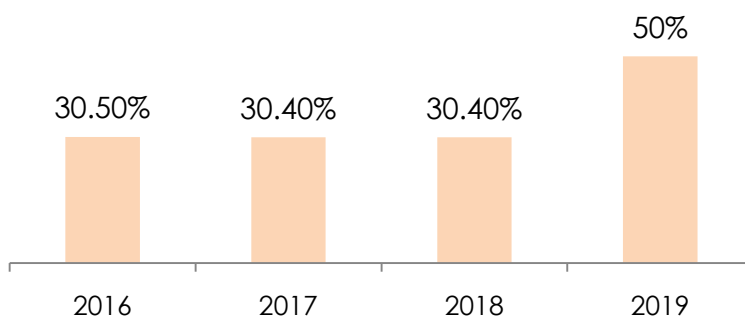


¹⁰ Interview with NenadRadosavljević, 26.9.2019.

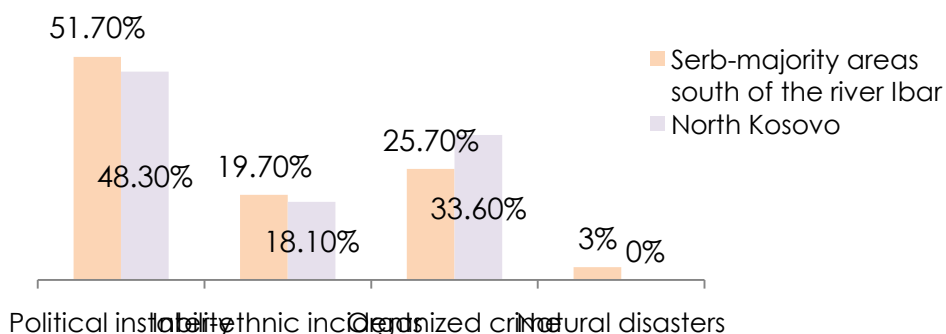
26. What are the biggest security risks in your surroundings?



26.1. Percentage of respondents in the sample who think that the biggest security risk in their surroundings is „political instability“, from 2016 till today.



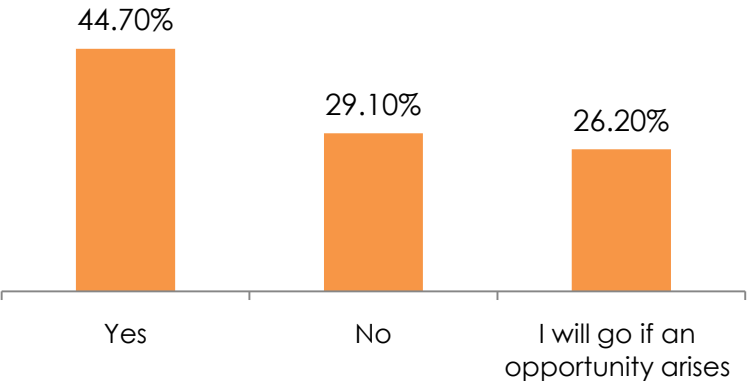
26.2. What are the biggest security risks in your surroundings?



In addition to political instability, a large percentage of respondents pointed to organized criminal activities as risks to their security as well as interethnic incidents (just below 20%) or criminal activities in their community (29%.) These results are largely in line with last year's results. The analysis of the sample according to the place of residence shows that there are no major differences in how respondents residing north or south of the Ibar river see the main risks for their security. The only difference is the percentage of respondents who have recognized organized crime (within the Serbian community) as the main threat to their security: in northern municipalities, such response was given by one-third of respondents (33,6%), while the percentage was slightly lower in municipalities south of Ibar river (25%).

MIGRATION TRENDS

27. Do you see yourself living in Kosovo over the next five years?



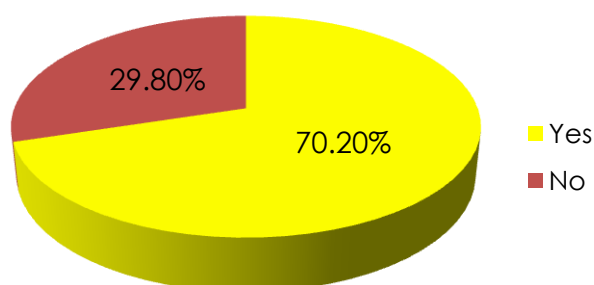
Do you see yourself living in Kosovo over the next five years?				
		Yes	No	I will go if I get a chance
Education	Elementary	73%	19,23%	7,69%
	High	45,42%	25,35%	29,23%
	Higher	47,2%	28,8%	24%
	University	32,69%	42,31%	25%

Data from the previous part of this research study show that representatives of the Serb community in Kosovo are largely unsatisfied with their living conditions, their security and the security of their families, property, economic prosperity, efficiency of their chosen leaders when it comes to protecting their interests and many other indicators of a secure and prosperous life. Hence it is not surprising that a large percentage of respondents intend to leave Kosovo in the next five years (around 29%), or they say that they would leave Kosovo if they would get a chance for that (around 26%).

	Yes	No	I will go if I get a chance
18-29 years	9,83%	11,69%	10,39%
30-45 years	15,40%	10,76%	9,83%
46-65 years	14,47%	5,38%	4,82%
66 and more	5,01%	1,30%	1,11%

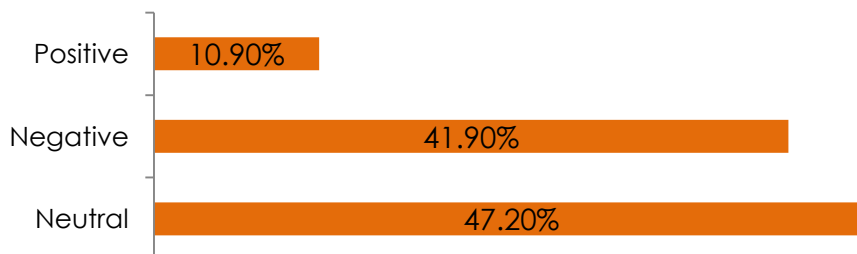
Similar to 2018, one in two citizens with a university degree expressed an intent to leave Kosovo in the next five years. These data are almost alarming because the departure of young and educated people has devastating consequences for the capability of the Serbian community to build a dignified and fruitful life in Kosovo. Proportions of this problem are visible in graph 27, according to which 70% of respondents claim that they know someone from their immediate surroundings who have left Kosovo in the past six months. In comparison to the results of previous research, an aggressive trend of upward growth is evident, and testifies to the Serbs' outward migration from Kosovo.

28. Has anyone from your surroundings left Kosovo in the past 6 months?



OPINIONS ON THE EUROPEAN UNION

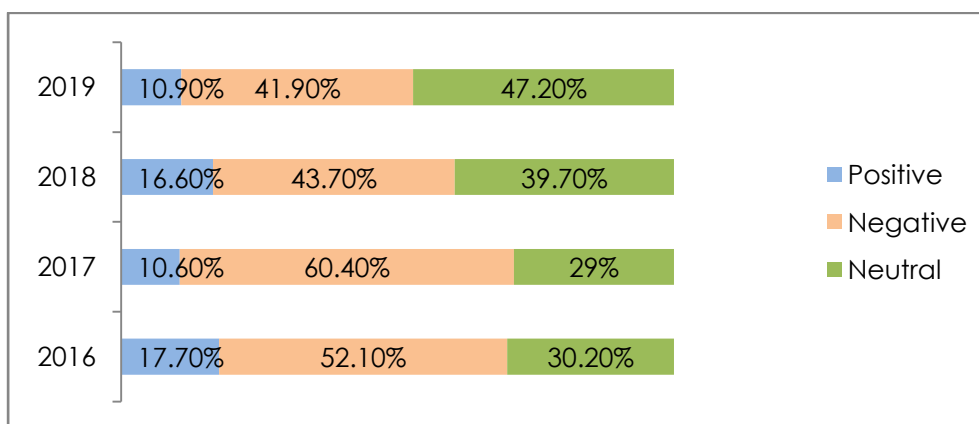
29. Is your first reaction to the words “European Union” positive or negative?



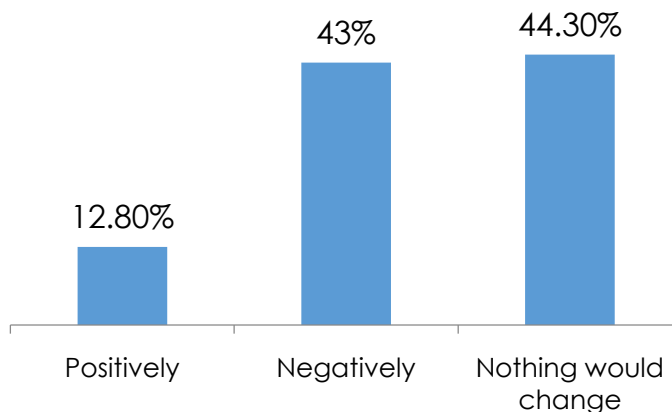
The perception of the European Union as not only as a system of values, but also as the main “generator” of social and political changes in line with ubiquitous aspirations for unification in the countries of the Western Balkans, is an important indicator of the direction that society is moving in. In the Serbian community in Kosovo, negative opinion about the European Union is pervasive (41%), while only 10% of respondents have a positive opinion about it (the EU.) Bucking regional trends, a large percentage of people between 18 to 29 years of age and up to 45 years of age share this negative opinion (see the table below.) Participants in the focus groups said that the dominant opinion in the Serbian community is that the EU is supporting the national interests of Albanians through their commitment to the independence of Kosovo on the international level, and through their neglect and “tacit approval” of the Kosovo government’s (and society as a whole) discriminatory practices towards the Serbian community. According to results obtained from focus groups, the role of the European Union as the main arbiter in negotiations between Belgrade and Priština is the foundation and the principal cause behind such opinions (of Kosovo Serbs). Moreover, the majority of them are identified the EU ascension process with Kosovo independence, which is why

43% of respondents (graph 29) thinks that accession of Kosovo to the EU would have a negative impact on them personally. When these results are compared with last year's results, (2018 – 37%), there is a larger percentage of respondents who are of the opinion that accession of Kosovo to the EU would not change anything (49,1% this year). A small number of respondents think that accession would be a positive thing for them, a result that is nearly identical to last year's (2018 – 13,9%; 2019 – 12,8%).

Age	Positive	Negative	Neutral
18-29 years	2,70%	15,18%	13,89%
30-45 years	5,37%	13,15%	17,59%
46-65 years	1,67%	10%	12,96%
66 and more	1,11%	3,52%	2,78%



30. How would the accession of Kosovo to the EU affect you personally?



31. On the scale of 1 to 5 with 1 being „I completely disagree“ and 5 being „I completely agree“, how would you assess the truthfulness of the following statements:

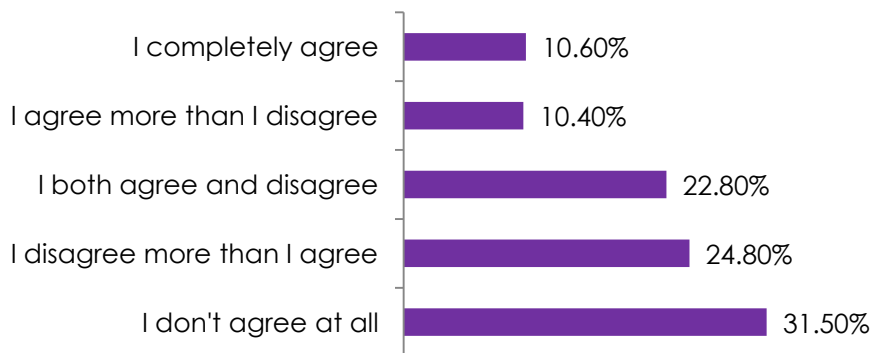
	Average 2019.
EU invests enough in municipalities with a Serb majority	1,90
EU plays a key role in interethnic reconciliation in Kosovo	2,15
EU plays a key role in solving problems of the Serbian community in Kosovo	2,26
EU has lost the role in the process of normalizing relations in Kosovo	2,44

The above-mentioned opinions of the Serb community in Kosovo regarding the European Union are clearly reflected in the results/opinions related to EU's engagement in Kosovo. These results become even more understandable when we

analyze the results/opinions related to the EU's engagement in Kosovo. According to the research, representatives of the Serbian population think that the EU is not investing enough in Serbian municipalities (the average score is 1.9). The negative quantifier "not enough" was explained through focus groups. It has been said that this classification "enough/not enough" is being used as a subjective evaluation of two factors: the needs of the Serb community for investment as well as balanced (equal) investment into both Albanian and Serbian municipalities in Kosovo. It can be concluded that the Serbian community, in general, thinks that the European Union makes proportionally larger investments in Albanian municipalities in Kosovo. Similarly, the respondents think that the European Union is not playing a key role in the reconciliation process in Kosovo (the score is 2.1).

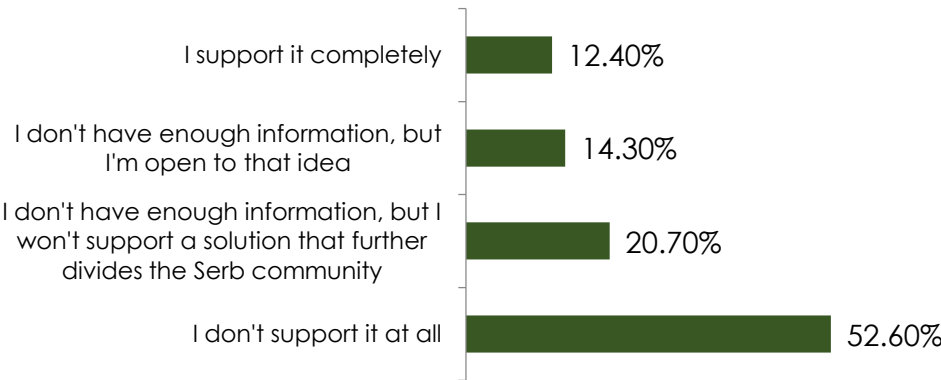
However, despite the negative perception of the EU's engagement in the problems that the Serbian community sees as their priorities, the EU still sees itself as an arbiter in the conflict between Serbs and Albanians or, to be more precise, as a leader in the process of normalization of relations in Kosovo. Just over 20 % of respondents (graph 30.1) think that the EU has lost this role, and about 80% still sees and expects the EU to be engaged in this manner. In the qualitative part of the research, participants clarified that this role was assigned to the EU due to the Belgrade-Pristina dialogue process. Respondents explained that the relative increase in lack of trust in the EU's leading role in the normalization process is a result of the emergence of the idea of delineation/partition which sparked a political crisis and blocked dialogue due to a lack of consensus within the EU (as well as inside the Kosovo-Serb community).

30.1. The EU has lost the leading role in the normalization of relations in Kosovo



**A SPECIAL REVIEW: OPINIONS ON THE IDEA OF
DELINEATION/PARTITION**

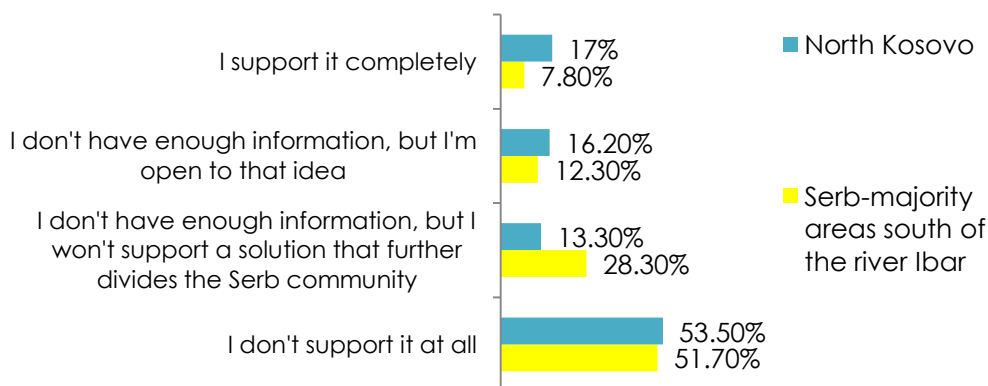
31. Do you support the idea of delineation/partition of Kosovo?



The idea of territorial delineation/partition between Serbs and Albanians is often referred to as the “division” and “border correction”. It is a controversial idea (in the sense that the details have never been officially revealed), which has caused new divisions in Kosovo, and also indirectly led to the sharpening of rhetoric and a political crisis due to new actions undertaken by authorities in Belgrade and Pristina. This idea, due to its potential significance, was included in this year's research and we attempted to determine not just the level of support it has in the Serbian community, but also its possible consequences.

The first and most noticeable trait is that the Serbian community largely does not approve of delineation/partition. Just above 73% of respondents said that they are opposed to the idea (regardless of the lack of details/information) while just under 27% supports it or is open to this suggestion.

31.1. Do you support the idea of delineation – comparison



Regardless of the “secrecy” that surrounds this proposed solution, and the ambiguous rhetoric present in communication regarding it, participants of focus groups and relevant interviewees perceive the idea of delineation as a division (across the Ibar river), which would allow four municipalities in the north of Kosovo to be annexed by Serbia. Since this delineation would have completely different consequences for Serbs in the north and those living south of the river, we also analyzed the support for this idea in relation to place of residence. This analysis revealed the following results: 66% of respondents who live in the north of Kosovo do not support the idea of delineation, while 33% of them think it is an acceptable solution; 80% of Serbs who live south of the Ibar river do not support the idea of delineation while 20% of them support it (graph 31.1).

While results from the south of the river Ibar are not surprising due to the insecurity that delineation could bring to the citizens of these municipalities, we were surprised by the high percentage of Serbs living in the north of Kosovo who do not accept the idea of delineation (only one in three respondents support the idea). According to Nenad Radosavljević, Chief

Executive of RTV Mir, *"many of the citizens who oppose to this idea think that Kosovo is a part of Serbia"* , while a number of them think that delineation as a principle *"can lead to new conflicts in the future"*.¹¹ However, Tatjana Lazarević, Editor in Chief of the KosSev portal says that 80% of respondents from the south who do not support the idea of delineation is surprising: *"Personally, I have never met a Serb from the south who would support delineation in the way the public understands it now due to explanations offered by politicians – that is that the northern part of Kosovo should stay in Serbia. This 80% result is surprising and I' am not sure that it is a representative sample."*¹² Srđan Simonović, the chief executive of the NGO Human Centre Mitrovica is also surprised by the fact that 20% of the Serbian population south of the river support the idea of delineation. He said that *"they must be employed by the Serbian government"*.¹³ Ljubomir Stanojković, a political scientist has a similar opinion: *"I personally think that 20% of people who support the idea of delineation is too much. I understand people are tired of negotiations and that they would accept anything to end them. But we do not know what does this delineation entail which has probably caused unclear answers."*¹⁴

Confirming the credibility of these results, NGO AKTIV obtained almost identical data after conducting research on the issue of delineation in December 2018¹⁵.

¹¹ Interview with Nenad Radosavljević, 26.9.2019.

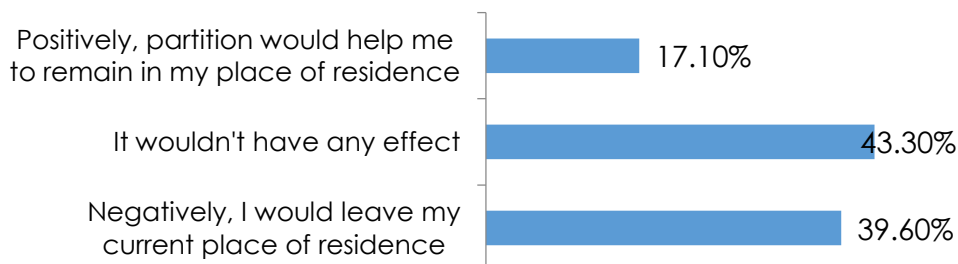
¹² Interview with Tatjana Lazarević, 20.9.2019.

¹³ Interview with Srđan Simonović, 17.9.2019.

¹⁴ Interview with Ljubomir Stanojković, 15.9.2019.

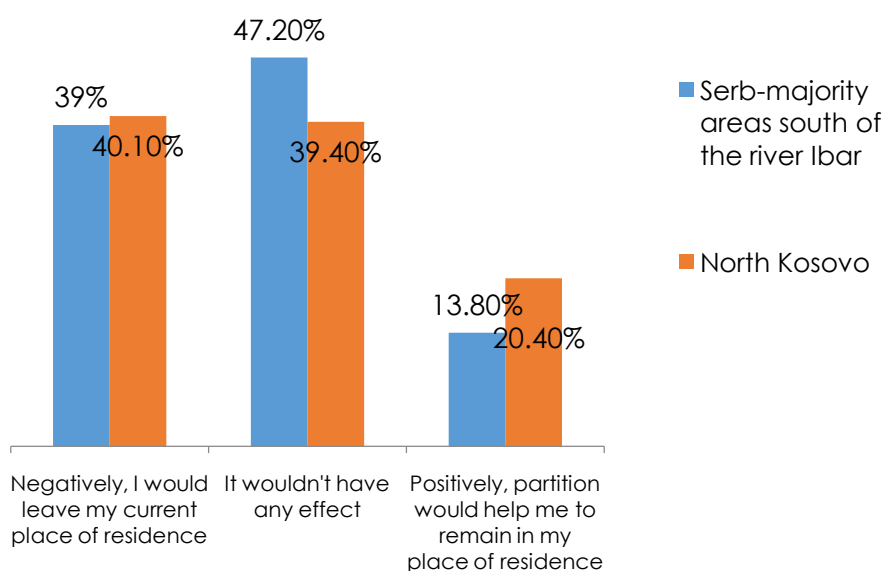
¹⁵ <https://civicenskycenter.org/new/wp-content/uploads/2019/10/Podela-Kosova-istra%C5%B4ivanje.pdf>

32. How would delineation affect your decision to remain in your place of residence?



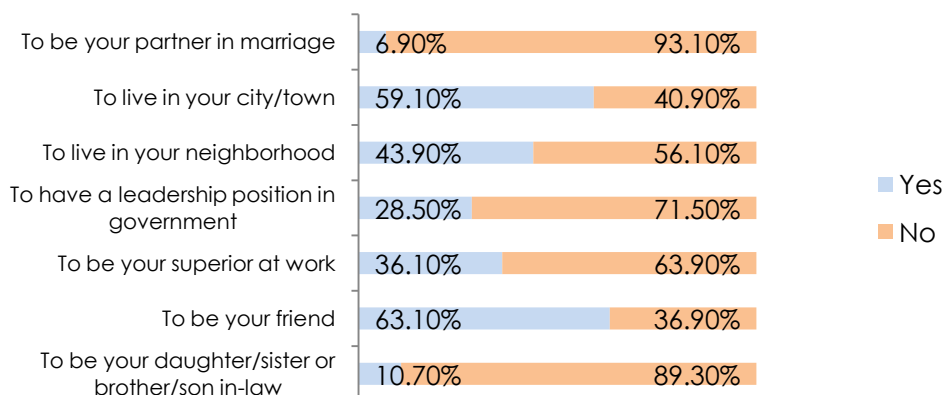
Realizing that the idea of delineation entails uncertainty regarding its consequences for the Serbian community, 40% of respondents expressed a readiness to leave Kosovo should delineation occur. This percentage is almost identical when the sample is divided between those residing in the north and south of Kosovo (graph 32.1).

32.1. How would delineation affect your decision to stay in Kosovo?



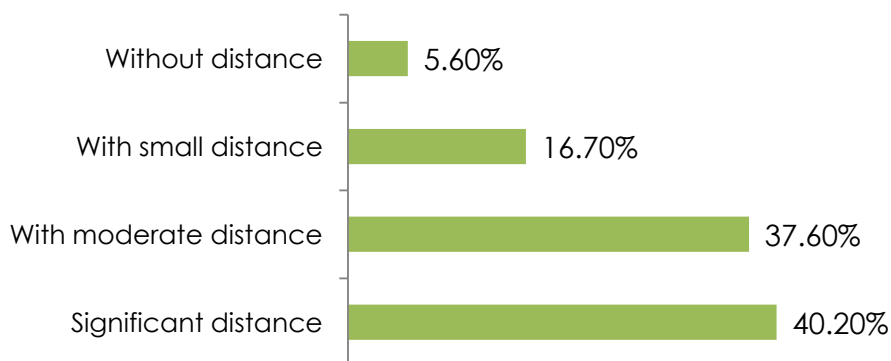
ETHNIC DISTANCE

33. Measuring ethnic distance – would you accept that an Albanian man/woman...?



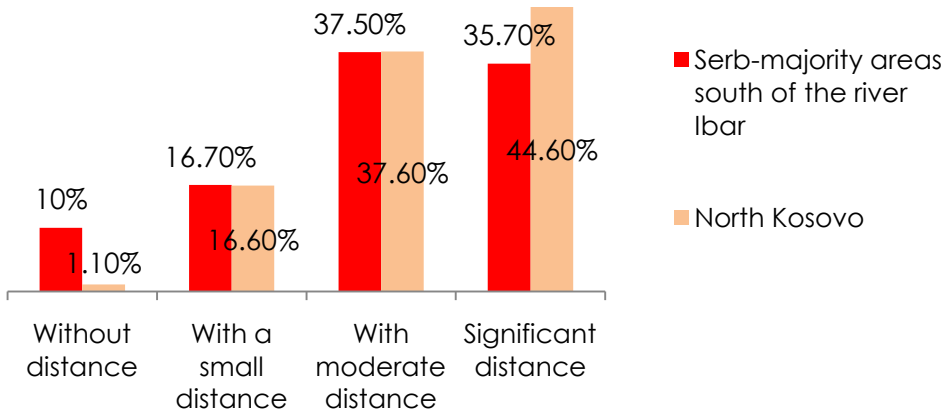
As last year, we divided respondents into four groups: ones who have no distance (0 negative replies), ones with a small distance (1-2 negative replies), moderate distance (3-5 negative replies) and significant distance (6-7 negative replies). We obtained the following data:

33.1. Measuring ethnic distance



These results show that distinct distance or animosity and negative opinion or stereotypes about Albanians prevail. We obtained almost identical results when we divided the sample between respondents from the north and other municipalities in Kosovo (graph 33.1), with only one deviation in the group of respondents who claimed that they have no distance. In the southern municipalities in Kosovo, 10% of respondents fall into the 'no distance' category, while the result in the north (1.1%) falls within the margin of statistical error.

33.2. Measuring ethnic distance – comparison

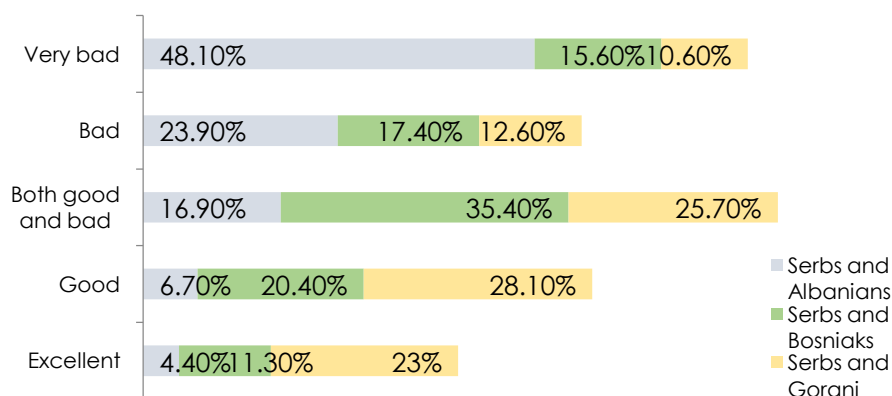


34. Asses the current state of interethnic relations between communities in Kosovo on the scale of 1 to 5, with 1 being “extremely bad”, and 5 being “excellent”:

	Average grade
Serbs and Gorani	3,40
Serbs and Bosniaks	2,94
Serbs and Albanians	1,95

Based on average values, we can come to the conclusion that Serbs rate relations with Gorani as the best while they are rate their relations with Albanians as the worst.

34.1. The state of interethnic relations in Kosovo – comparison



Although the percentage of respondents who rate relations with Albanians as excellent or good (11,1 %) is lower than in 2018 (18%), it is also twice as large as it was in 2016 and 2017. The percentage of respondents who categorize relations with Bosniaks as excellent or good (31,7 %) is lower than in the previous year (41,4%), while the view of relations with Gorani is relatively stable in comparison with 2018.

How often to you visit an area where Albanians live	Medium and large ethnic distance 2018.	Medium and large ethnic distance 2019.
Never	94,4%	92,5%
Very rarely	83,1%	79%
Often	72,7%	63,46%
Very often	53,5%	64,44%

	Medium and large ethnic distance 2019.
Primary education	57,69%
Secondary education	81,05%
Vocational education	80%
University degree	71,15%

In correlation with the data on the frequency of contacts with the Albanian community (graph 6), ethnic tends to be lower among respondent categories who stated that they had frequent contacts with representatives of the Albanian population (individuals). This indicates that a divided society, a lack of direct contacts, and other factors that contribute to societal segregation in Kosovo are the main cause of the distance between two main ethnic communities in Kosovo (table above). Moreover, persons who attended high school or college show larger ethnic distance than respondents who only have primary school education or who have a university diploma. Additionally, respondents find it acceptable to have Albanian friends but they do not approve relationships and familial relations with Albanians.

Ethnic distance was a subject of detail analysis conducted by NGO AKTIV in the second part of 2018. More details and the analysis of this issue are available as part of the research study "Mutual Perceptions of Serbs and Albanians in Kosovo"¹⁶.

¹⁶<https://civicenergycenter.org/new/wp-content/uploads/2019/10/Me%C4%91usobne-percepcije-Srba-i-Albanaca-na-Kosovu.pdf>



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