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Synthetic Report on the Role of Human and Minority Rights in the Process of Reconstruction and Reconciliation for State- and Nation-Building in the Western Balkans
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The authors were affiliated to the University of Graz (Austria), one of the partners in this project.

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MIRICO: Human and Minority Rights in the Life Cycle of Ethnic Conflicts
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1. Introduction

This synthetic report is neither a simple executive summary nor a traditional comparative study based on compilation and comparison of case (country) studies. Regardless of the common structure and methodology of the country (specific) reports, which was specified and agreed upon within the MIRICO project, both of the two approaches indicated proved impossible. Namely, all country reports produced show asymmetries, pluralities and diversities that exist within every country and within the region of the Western Balkans as a whole. In addition to presenting the actual asymmetries, pluralities, diversities and the complexity of situations, these country reports and additional (thematic) studies present an incredible diversity of perceptions and (re)interpretations of historic situations and developments, conditioned by specific ideologies and viewpoints, and reflect an enormous variety of concepts, definitions and theoretical approaches.

Consequently, in accordance with its title, this study focuses on conceptual and theoretical issues and attempts to present a synthesis that derives from the analysis, comparison and critical evaluation of situations, developments, processes, (key) definitions, concepts, approaches, models and (theoretical and historic) frameworks presented in the following country reports and special (thematic) studies:

Country specific reports on:
- Bosnia and Herzegovina;¹
- Croatia;²
- Macedonia;³
- Serbia;⁴
- Kosovo.⁵

Specific reports/studies:
- “My Truth, Your Truth — Our Truth? The Role of Truth Commissions and History Teaching for Reconciliation”;⁶
- “An Additional Research Report on the Constitutional Regulation of Ethnic Diversity, the Protection of National Minorities and the (Special) Rights of

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¹ Asim Mujkić, Zarije Seizović and Dino Abazović, “Reconstruction and Reconciliation in Bosnia [and Herzegovina]: Human Rights and Human Wrongs in the State and Nation Building Processes” (Working paper for internal use), Sarajevo, November 2007.
Persons Belonging to National Minorities and/or National Minorities: The Countries of South Eastern Europe and the European Context”;7

- “Strategies for the Prevention, Management and/or Resolution of (Ethnic) Crisis and Conflict: The Case of the Balkans”;8
- “EU Policies and the Stabilisation and Association Process”.9

In addition to the reports and studies listed above, country and synthetic reports and specific studies from the previous Work Packages of the MIRICO project have also been taken into account. Additional literature and sources used directly or referred to in this study are cited adequately.

As a synthetic report on the role of human and minority rights in the process of reconstruction and reconciliation for state- and nation-building in the region, this study follows the main directions agreed upon and indicated in the “Guidelines for country reports and specific studies for the WP4: The role of human and minority rights in the process of reconstruction and reconciliation for state- and nation-building of the 6th Framework Project MIRICO” (hereafter: “Guidelines”).10

The citation and/or recapitulation of individual reports and studies this synthetic report focuses on the selected theoretical issues and concepts that we consider relevant for the adequate analysis and understanding of the historic and contemporary developments and situations in the region and in individual countries, as well as for foreseeing possible future developments and trends. The multi- and inter-disciplinary nature of ethnic and minority studies and of diversity management necessitates the use of diverse research methods and approaches from the social sciences (especially sociology, political science, peace and security and ethnic studies), law, and the humanities, which were applied in the listed (predominantly) analytical and descriptive country reports and specific studies. The same methodology and approaches are used in this synthetic study, which is based primarily on a comparative and synthetic approach.

Using the aforementioned approaches and methodologies, this synthetic report detects and examines a number of issues that we consider relevant (directly and/or indirectly) to the presentation, analysis and understanding of the role of human and minority rights in the process of reconstruction and reconciliation for state- and nation-building. These selected issues could be considered key research considerations/questions (RC) that help direct and conceptualize our research and frame our interpretations, conclusions and synthesis:

RC1. As the county reports and specific studies show, historic developments, processes, trends, (social) phenomena and current situations as well as their perceptions differ substantially from environment to environment. While we can detect certain similarities and communalities in environments that are studied, the differences and specificities are more frequent and—in our opinion—more important. Consequently, we should be very careful in every interpretation and evaluation of research findings from specific environments and, especially, in

10 See, Appendix 1.
their comparison and generalization. The same is true for interpretations of concepts and perceptions that differ even more from one environment to another. Additionally, we should take into account the (often substantial) differences that exist within individual environments. Any uncritical comparison and/or generalization of findings and concepts (without listing and stressing all specifics, differences and diversities of the individual environments) might be very misleading and problematic. This also presents a major problem for any attempt at creating a synthesis.

**RC2.** Concepts and definitions listed and presented in country studies should be considered theoretical frameworks and (generalized) yardsticks (measures) necessary to make interpretations and comparisons rather than actual descriptions or reflections of the current situation and the conditions in a specific environment or in the region. One of the important results of the MIRICO project is the discovery of the diverse concepts and definitions that exist in theory and scholarly literature, as well as in public perceptions, media and political discourse in the region and in individual countries. Country reports and special studies facilitate a compilation of these concepts and definitions and their diverse perceptions, which we consider an important aid in better understanding the region and its countries.

**RC3.** This phase of the MIRICO project focuses on the post-conflict situation in the environments analyzed in the country reports. However, we should be aware that the determination of a post-conflict situation in a specific environment might be schematic and problematic. The determinations of pre-conflict, conflict and post-conflict situations in individual environments should be considered a research approach and theoretical tool rather than actual definitions of historic developments and current situations. Namely, what is defined as a post-conflict situation considering a specific historic time and/or conflict might turn out to be a pre-conflict or a latent conflict phase, if we take into account the future development of a specific environment.

**RC4.** In this synthetic study, special attention is paid to the concept of reconciliation, its applications and impact on individual environments and the region. Considering the experiences with reconciliation, and particularly the problems that were detected in individual countries and in the region, there is a need to revisit and revise this concept or, possibly, to develop adequate alternative concepts. Although we recognize the importance of justice and agree that perpetrators of crimes should be adequately prosecuted and punished, our estimate is that the current concepts of reconciliation have not produced the desired results. Consequently, we believe that approaches such as normalization and developing adequate conditions for coexistence and cooperation based on common long-term interests might be better and more productive concepts and options. We would suggest that rather than focusing on reconciliation, the international community and relevant internal actors could achieve better results by investing their efforts, resources and time in establishing basic conditions for stable future coexistence, tolerance and cooperation in a post-conflict environment.

**RC5.** Lists of relevant actors in the sphere of human and minority rights and reconciliation in individual country reports and special studies are rather similar and indicate the same actors, or at least the same groups of actors. There are also many similarities in the assessment(s) of their role and impact. In this context we could single out a few important deficiencies, especially their lack of adequate coordination and cooperation and the lack of a coherent (especially long-term) strategy for the exercise and promotion of human and minority rights.

**RC6.** The country reports and special studies show a relatively satisfactory normative framework of human and minority rights in individual countries and high
standards of constitutional and legal protection of national minorities. They also indicate that important differences exist among the countries. Nevertheless, they detect a substantial gap between the normative framework and the actual situation of minorities, as well as several problems that appear in the exercise of minority rights that determine the actual level of their protection.

Taking into account the structure of country reports that was agreed upon, this study’s central chapter focuses on the general presentation and interpretation of a few key (theoretical) concepts and definitions that were presented and used in the reports and studies listed. These concepts and definitions, and their impact and relevance are discussed in considerable detail in an attempt to present a synthetic theoretical framework for the MiRICO research project. The study continues with a brief presentation of the relevant actors indicated in the country specific reports and additional studies. In this context, some attention is paid to the situation(s), role(s) and performance of national minorities and their organizations and institutions in these countries and territories. This section is followed by a brief description of the life-cycle of a conflict and definitions of its pre-conflict, conflict and post-conflict phases — taking into account the specific situations and characteristics of diverse environments. The following section addresses some questions relating to the concept of reconciliation and its impact on individual countries and on the region. The study’s concluding section notes some basic conclusions and common characteristics. Based on the analysis presented in studies listed above and in previous sections, this section also represents an attempt to present a synthetic overview and interpretation of the role of human and minority rights in the process of reconstruction and reconciliation for state- and nation-building in the region.
2. (Key) Concepts, Phenomena, Definitions and Processes

In addition to the key concepts listed in the “Guidelines” we have identified a number of concepts and definitions found in the country reports and special studies that we consider (directly) relevant for the better understanding, exercise and promotion of human and minority rights and for the improvement of the situation of national minorities.

All social phenomena, situations and developments should be observed and interpreted in their specific historic and social contexts, while also taking into account their temporal dimension. There are a number of internal/national and external/international — social, economic, political — processes, trends, relations and actors and their specific interplay, that in an individual environment determine a specific social and historic context, relations, and situation that change over time. Consequently, social phenomena and concepts should be observed and understood as processes in a specific time-frame. The general theoretical framework for their interpretation and evaluation is provided by political, sociological, economic and legal theories and philosophy, as well as by other disciplines and fields of social sciences and humanities — including history, geography, psychology, social linguistics, public administration, diversity management, peace and conflict studies, communication sciences, informatics, etc. However, in the European context the main substantive criteria and standards for the interpretation and evaluation of societies, social situations and processes and the role of social actors are the rational and individualistic ideas and ideals of the Enlightenment and liberal democracy.

The traditional institutional and organizational framework for the study of human and minority rights is a state. Today, states are usually perceived as nation-states, or more precisely, as the single-nation-states (one-nation-states) of “titular nations”. The concept of a (single) nation-state is a product of specific historical developments in Europe that began as early as the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, and witnessed its first important turning point in the seventeenth century after the Peace of Westphalia (1648). This historic process intensified in the nineteenth and twentieth century (with important turning points after WW I, WW II — in the process of decolonization, and after 1989) when the majority of the existing nation-states were formed. However, the process of state-and nation-building/formation continues in the new millennium. In the past centuries the formation of (modern) nation-states went hand in hand with the process of formation of the modern European nations as specific ethnic communities. In this process states, acquired an ethnic dimension and identity — being perceived as tools for the realization of the “national interests” of their “titular nations”. In this context, nation-states were perceived as being ethnically homogenous, which translated into the myth of the ethnic homogeneity of single-nation-states. This concept could be explained by a simple equation: state = nation = people. Yet in reality, nation-states have never been ethnically

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11 See e.g., op. cit. note 4, 12.
12 See e.g., ibid, 14.
homogenous, and a certain level of ethnic and cultural diversity has always existed in almost all societies. New technologies in transportation and communication, increased mobility and migrations, international cooperation, the global economy and global interdependence are some of the factors that contribute to the increase of this diversity in the late twentieth and early twenty-first century. Nevertheless, the traditional concept of nation-states has not been transformed substantially and there is little evidence that it will evolve into a more adequate concept, such as that of the multiethnic state. Consequently, the existing constitutional arrangements and political systems continue to be built on the myth of ethnic homogeneity and traditional concept of single-nation-states that do not correspond to the multiethnic reality of modern societies and lack the necessary flexibility to reflect adequately the existing diversities and asymmetries.

Considering the case studies and the time period analyzed within the MIRICO project, we could say that they examine the specific and dynamic processes of state- and nation-building in the Balkans in the late twentieth and early twenty-first century. The broader context was the process of the SFRY’s transformation and disintegration, which was marked by escalated (political, economic, social) crises and conflicts — including wars. Consequently, we could say that in addition to state-building and consolidation, this project also addresses the issues of state transformation and destruction — in all cases focusing on human and minority rights, diversity management and the protection of national minorities.

In a way, we could observe the current developments in Kosovo (in the beginning of 2008) as one of the final stages of the Yugoslav crisis and disintegration that will — as in all other stages and development — no doubt have an impact on human and minority rights and the protection and situation of minorities. Like all other successor states, Kosovo wants to become an internationally recognized and independent nation-state with Kosovo Albanians (Kosovars) as its titular nation. To satisfy their desire to establish a nation-state of their own, Kosovo leadership might have to make the necessary concession of formally recognizing traditional and existing diversities and guaranteeing the adequate protection of minorities, under pressure from the international community whom they would wish to provide international recognition of the new state. Their desire is conditioned by the fact that states, or more precisely nation-states, continue to be the only full and equal members of the international community. However, in the definition of states as persons of international law and in the definition of their rights and duties, there is no reference to their ethnic dimension or to the perception of states as nation-states.

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18 This generally accepted definition in the Article I of The Montevideo Convention on Rights and Duties of States of 1933 reads: “The State as a person of international law should posses the following qualifications: a) permanent population; b) defined territory; c) government; and d) capacity to enter into relations with other states.” (See also, J. G. Starke, Introduction to International Law, 10th edition. (Butterworths, London, 1989).)
The establishment of new nation-states was observed in the context of disintegration of the SFRY and was interpreted as the realization of the right of peoples to self-determination. Such an approach was consistent with an understanding of the nature and foundations of the Yugoslav multi-national federation. Namely, following the traditions of the federally organized national liberation movement, this federation was seen as the realization of the right of “Yugoslav nations” to self-determination during and after WW II. Consequently, this right was included in the first Yugoslav federal constitution (the Constitution of the Federal Peoples Republic of Yugoslavia) of 1946 and was referenced in the Preamble of the Constitution of the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia of 1974 that guaranteed broad autonomy to the republics defined as the sovereign nation-states of respective “Yugoslav nations”. In the 1990s, the realization of this right in most parts of the former federation was understood as the formal precondition for the independence and sovereignty of successor states (which thereby became internationally recognized as equal members of the international community and full persons under international law) and was proclaimed the central “national interest” of individual nations.19

To provide a theoretical framework for the discussion of the disintegration of the SFRY, it might be useful to address a few issues connected with the principle of and right to self-determination and their historic evolution. The introduction of this principle after WW I provided the formal foundation for the disintegration of multi-ethnic empires and enabled decolonization after WW II. The right to self-determination was interpreted as a practical realization of this principle of international law that often (from its very conception) was considered problematic and contradictory to some other basic principles of international law (e.g., territorial integrity of states, sovereignty, etc.).20 International law provides that “all peoples have the right of self-determination” by the virtue of which “they freely determine their political status and freely pursue their economic, social and cultural development.”21 This right can be understood and realized in different ways as: (1) “the right of people to chose their own form of government within existing borders...”; (2) “the right of an ethnic, linguistic, or religious group to redefine existing national borders in order to achieve separate national sovereignty;” (3) “the right of a political unit within a federal system... to secede from the federation and become an independent sovereign state;” (4) “the right of an ethnic, linguistic or religious group within an existing sovereign state to a greater degree of autonomy and linguistic or religious identity, but not to a sovereign state of its own.”22


20 The Declaration on Principles of International Law concerning Friendly Relations and Co-operation among States in accordance with the Charter of the United Nations (Resolution 2625 [XXV] of 1970) recognizes the principle of self-determination as one of the basic principles of international law but at the same time sets limitations stating that: “nothing in the foregoing paragraphs shall be construed as authorizing or encouraging any action which would dismember or impair, totally or in part, the territorial integrity of political unity of sovereign and independent States conducting themselves in compliance with the principle of equal rights and self-determination of peoples as described above and thus possessed of a Government representing the whole people belonging to the territory without distinction as to race, creed or colour.”


Consequently, we can draw a distinction between internal self-determination, which can be interpreted as the right to freely choose a government and/or to increase autonomy within an existing nation-state (without interfering with its sovereignty), and external self-determination that leads to the creation of a new independent and sovereign state. Schematically and formally, we can differentiate the following options:

(i) internal self-determination by:

(a) devolution and increasing autonomy of the local government;
(b) regional autonomy;
(c) creating a federal state system; and

(ii) external self-determination by:

(a) secession (of a certain region or part of territory of a formerly existing state);
(b) partition or division of a state;
(c) dismantling a state.

In analyzing the content and nature of the right to self-determination, we could describe it as a collective right of peoples. In the European tradition it was often interpreted as the (inalienable) right of nations (as specific ethnic communities). In a way, this approach would mean that we could speak of ethnic self-determination rather than of civic (democratic) self-determination that would recognize and respect the existing diversities in a certain territory.

If we analyze the disintegration of the SFRY, surely we could say that the predominant perceptions and concepts of self-determination were ethnic ones. It was understood as the self-determination of the (former) Yugoslav nations, which aspired to become “titular nations” of new nation-states. In multiethnic environments, such as Bosnia-Herzegovina, the implementation of the “ethnic approach” to self-determination might prove disastrous. Considering the existing standards, however, the right to self-determination should be interpreted and realized as the right of the population (individuals with voting right) living in a certain territory to determine their (administrative) status. Traditionally, such a decision is based on a plebiscite (referendum), in which participation should be assured to everyone (living in the territory) who possesses the right to vote. The decision should be made by the majority of the (total) population in the territory and not only by the majority of members of a certain nation or ethnic community.

To ensure the adequate rights and protection of minorities (e.g., national (ethnic), linguistic or religious minorities) in a certain territory, these minorities should be entitled to internal self-determination and adequate protection. The main deficiency of this approach is that the international community has not developed adequate and effective mechanisms to ensure the realization of the highest standards of minority rights and to provide for the adequate autonomy of distinct minority communities.

Observing secessionist tendencies and movements throughout the world, we could conclude that the nature of the current international community is among key reasons for their existence and continuation. The community of states has not developed any adequate mechanisms to ensure the adequate position and protection

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23 See e.g., op. cit. note 1, 3.
24 Only in extreme cases when the very existence of a certain national minority is endangered it might be entitled to an external self-determination. More, see e.g., Mitja Žagar, “Ethnic relations, nationalism, and minority nationalism in South-Eastern Europe”, in Michael Keating and John Mcgarry, (eds.), Minority nationalism and the changing international order. (Oxford University Press, New York, 2001), 325-341.
of minorities, indigenous peoples and other distinct communities, and in particular the equal position of nations without their own nation-states (stateless nations). However, it is possible to conclude (observing different cases in different parts of the world) that the opposition to secessionism and the denial of claims for self-determination by states and the international community actually strengthens nationalism and perpetuates secessionist claims. Secessionist movements (especially secessionist nationalists) describe their opposition as unfair, claiming that these positions are held by politicians and governments of states that had already benefited from the realization of their right to the self-determination and sovereignty of their own (nation) states before they changed their position to deny the same right to the others, fearing that others’ self-determination might hurt their interests.

We would argue that the main problem lies in the actual nature of existing nation states and the lack of adequate alternative concepts. Namely, the central goal of secessionist movements is usually the establishment of a nation-state of their own — based on the same exclusive concept and myth of ethnic homogeneity that continues to perceive existing diversity as a problem — and are reluctant to grant adequate protection and status to minorities or distinct communities that exist in the territory.

In this context it, might also be useful to address the concept of sovereignty and the differing understanding of the concept of national sovereignty. Although it was traditionally associated with the independence and sovereignty of states, nationalist movements extended and changed the meaning of the concept of national sovereignty to include sovereignty of nations as specific ethnic communities. This established the term’s ethnic basis and nature, which, in their view, surpasses its civic nature. Such an approach is consistent with the myth of the ethnic homogeneity of nation states that are perceived as the ultimate tools to realize the national interests of their titular nations and in the context of which diversity is seen as obstacle.25

Such an approach can also explain practices that can be described as aggressive (policies of) nation-building (e.g., in specific circumstances, when more than a third of the territory of Croatia was occupied by Serb rebels).26 The same (nationalist) logic can be used to interpret and argue for state disintegration (e.g., in the case of the SFRY) and/or state integration (e.g., reintegration of the occupied territories in Croatia), which might be (and, in the cases described, were) very costly, economically challenging and painful.27 However, usually economic and other costs and difficulties are not the most important factors in nationalist discourses. They are seen as acceptable in the context of realizing key national interests, including achieving national unity, which also explains the efficiency of nationalist rhetoric in the public mobilization for war. In the context of the disintegration of the SFRY, the nationalist rhetoric produced and used for its purposes (particularly for the political mobilization of the masses) a general feeling of “being exploited by others” (e.g., more developed federal units felt exploited by the less-developed because of the aid that they had to provide, and vice versa — less developed regions felt exploited by more developed ones, which used their natural resources).

In trying to achieve its goals of attracting and mobilizing as many followers as possible within their ethnic community and environment, nationalist rhetoric often uses one-sided, emotional, adjusted and/or false (re)interpretations of the past and history. Actually, ideologically, politically, morally (ethically) and ethnically conditioned (re)interpretations of the distant and recent past, as well as of the present, are traditional and frequently used tools of political technology and

25 See e.g., op. cit. note 7, 11-13; op. cit. note 19.
27 Ibid, 10-11.
propaganda throughout the world and history. So it is not surprising that these tools have also been used in the SFRY and its successor states — in all environments and by almost all actors involved. 28 In this context, we should single out the role (and responsibility) of the state controlled media in promoting specific and official perceptions and (re)interpretations of reality and of the past that served the ruling regimes. 29

As is a frequent practice in nation-states, the SFRY successor states and the leading ethnic politicians sought to impose ethnic homogeneity in all environments through socialization carried out by educational systems that promoted the myth of ethnic unity and reinforced the constituent myths of the respective nations. Analyzing the history and development of nation-states, we could say that often their “titular nations” imposed their own definition of ethnic and national homogeneity, and then used the state to build a nation around it. The state in this context becomes more than just a socially neutral way of organizing society; it became an ethnically defined or (at least) ethnically conditioned agency for building the society itself. Consequently, it is not surprising that such nation-states are reluctant to grant recognition and protection to minorities living in their territory, which in turn provokes dissatisfaction on the part of minorities (actually, all non-state ethnic groups, including stateless nations). If their dissatisfaction is not addressed properly, they might come to see the only solution to their dissatisfaction with the current situation, status and arrangements (within the existing nation-states) as being the establishment of new ethnically based nation-states of their own. 30

We can agree with Kymlicka’s conclusion, presented in the Serbia country report, that in their nation- and state-building efforts, the states studied and their ruling elites have tried, and still are trying to develop a new societal and political culture “through the policy of the official language, centralisation of power, the uniformed system of national education, drawing of borders of administrative units, and the policy of migration and naturalisation”. 31 The national (political, economic, cultural, etc.) elites want to develop a new soci(et)al and political culture (which covers both public and private sphere and is linked to a specific territory, culture and ethnicity) that is consistent with their specific perceptions and interests.

Although the country reports and the specific reports do not discuss the concepts and definitions of pluralism (with the exception of political pluralism) 32, diversities and asymmetries directly and extensively, the phenomena that they are depicting are very much present. Obviously, there is a relatively high level of agreement regarding their content and social relevance.

Regarding the use of the terms pluralism and diversities, we could say that they refer to the presence/existence of any kind of different and diverse elements/components/structures and/or actors/entities — including their (inter)relations/interdependence. Taking into account the complexity of contemporary societies, there are almost countless dimensions of pluralities and diversities. The term asymmetries is usually used to indicate the fact that the constituent parts and elements of all contemporary societies and environments are not symmetrical and homogenous — in contrast with traditional perceptions of societies as homogenous and symmetrical entities, with diverse theoretical models, and with the currently existing constitutional/political systems of nation-states.

28 E.g., op. cit. note 2, 16ff.
29 E.g., op. cit. note 4, 6.
30 See e.g., op. cit. note 19.
Directly and indirectly, the county reports examine political pluralism. The term refers to the political space(s) and process(es) in which different actors take part — ideally in a democratic setting. Often, political pluralism is understood as the existence of a multi-party political system, although it cannot be reduced exclusively to the existence of diverse political parties and the institutions of the political system within which they act. Political pluralism can be described as the space or open society that enables free competition of political projects and actors, who compete for (political) power under equal terms within specific (political) systems determined by constitutions and laws.33

Nevertheless, the central topics of the country reports, the specific studies and of the MIRICO project at large are the ethnic and cultural dimensions of pluralism and diversities, especially issues relevant to national minorities, their rights and their protection. Considering their ethnic makeup, all Balkan countries studied in the MIRICO project are multiethnic, multicultural, and ethnically heterogeneous.34 In this context, we could say that the term multicultural society refers simply to the fact that in a certain environment different distinct ethnic, linguistic and/or cultural communities (co)exist. Sometimes this situation is described as multi-ethnicity. However, these terms might acquire additional meanings when they are used in the political context or in programmatic documents. Therefore, the Council of Europe guidelines for the creation of a “genuinely multicultural society” (e.g., in Serbia35) and international community requests for “multi-ethnicity” in Kosovo36 should be interpreted as urgent calls to ensure the necessary conditions for peace and social stability, ethnic coexistence and cooperation, democratization and consolidation of democracy, and the adequate implementation, improvement and promotion of human and minority rights in these multiethnic environments, which is only possible if racism, xenophobia, (aggressive) nationalism and intolerance are fought.

This brings us to the catchy, but complex concepts of multiculturalism and interculturalism. They can be understood as political principles, ideologies, approaches, specific policies and measures, as well as theoretical concepts and models for the regulation and management of ethnically and culturally pluralistic environments. Following Taylor37, Gutman38 and Kymlicka’s39 lines of thought, we

33 Ibid, 25-26. - Using the definition by Nenad Dimitrijević: “Political pluralism is a segment of a historical type of the society. It is meaningful and possible only as a component part of a whole resting on certain social, political and ideological preconditions and it is reproduced in accordance with certain laws. It concerns such type of communal living which is labelled as a modern society and which, emerging on the ruins of an organically structured society, can be recognised by the separations of the civil society and the state...” In the context of an open society it enables “free competition of particular political projects which compete for power under equal terms”.(Nenad Dimitrijević “Samoupravljanje kao utopija u Nacionalističkom ključu: Jugoslovenski socijalizam”, in Slučaj Jugoslavija, socijalizam, nacionalizam, posledice, (Belgrade 2001), 54, 56 - cited from op. cit. note 4, 25-26.)

34 Discussing ethnic heterogeneity in societies, we should be aware of the existing diversity in the labour force and market, where ethnicity might be an important factor of its segmentation and organization. In this context reference can be made to fractionalization in labour market. See op. cit. note 2, 11.

could say that **multiculturalism** refers to the principles, regulations and policies in a multiethnic society that formally recognize and affirm the existence of diversities and distinct communities, establish and guarantee their (special) rights, equal status (possibly with autonomy) and adequate protection, with the central aim of establishing conditions for the coexistence and cooperation of all distinct communities in an environment and for the preservation and development of their distinct cultures. In addition to these elements, **interculturalism** includes not only firm rules, mechanisms and measures for the coexistence and equal cooperation of distinct communities within an environment that guarantee their preservation and distinct development, but pays special attention to their intertwined existence, their common interests, and the activities that lead to new cultural and other practices in the context of constantly evolving cultures and common existence in all other spheres. Consequently, rather than the preservation and coexistence of distinct cultures, the central goal interculturalism is to enable their intertwining, cooperation and active common existence, while aware that in such processes distinct cultures are constantly transforming. However, both terms are frequently defined in the same way and are used as synonyms, which might be attributed to the evolution of the concept of multiculturalism over time. In any case, the two concepts are important elements of integration and integration policies that, in democratic and diverse environments, should replace or at least complement the (traditional) ideology, policies and practices of involuntary assimilation.

In this context there is a permanent:

Need for building of the political culture and raising the level of tolerance between the people who are still heavily burdened by the recent past. Work of the civil sector is important in eradication of prejudices. Also educational reform with inclusion of the principles of **multiculturality** and **interculturality** into all aspects of school activities would help the cause.

Although multiculturalism and interculturism are usually evaluated positively, there are justified criticisms of specific models of multiculturalism that might be applied – or misused (according to advocates of multiculturalism) – in the context of ethno-politics. One such model could be found in Bosnia-Herzegovina. This “model of essentialist multiculturalism focuses on consolidating the position of an ethno-cultural community as the [central] holder of fundamental rights” and the main political entity. Based on the principles of the Dayton constitution that constructs the state predominantly on the basis of the ethnic identities of “constituent peoples”, this model ignores all other dimensions and spheres and, consequently, puts everyone who does not belong to these “constituent peoples” (but also those

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41 Op. cit. note 2, 47.
who belong to the “wrong constituent peoples”) in a certain territorial-political entity in an inferior position and automatically excludes them from candidacy for key political offices that are reserved only for members of “constituent peoples”. Rather than increasing cohesion within the state by developing common interests and stimulating cooperation, one of the consequences and side-effects of this system is that it creates new differences among “constituent peoples” and reinforces existing ones, by making these differences become very important.43

An additional problem of this constitutional arrangement is that it was imposed by the international community from outside, which was acceptable as a necessary measure at the moment that this external intervention was needed to end the war. However, in the post-war situation, when democratization is set as one of the country’s main development goals, the democratic deficit inherent in this arrangement becomes a problem.

Consequently, considering Bosnia-Herzegovina specifically (but also other multiethnic environments in the Balkans and worldwide) we could agree with the proposal that:

Maybe the principle of justice as fairness in a multicultural society would be as follows:

1. Equality in the most widest access to basic rights and liberties for every citizen of BiH;
2. Ethnic inequalities are just only if as a consequences they have balanced benefits for everyone, and especially for those worst off members of society - minorities, be they non-constituent, or constituent;

In other words, it is not unjust to improve the position of the worst off - who are in marginalized position due to their group affiliation - through the affirmative action in a multicultural society. Indirectly, one can argue that these measures would improve the position of all citizens because one advanced secure and democratic ambiance is thus created. To reach for such a hypothetical strategy would confirm our readiness, or better put political maturity. Thus formulated ‘rules of the game’ would establish one liberal-democratic framework only within which one can argue on plurality of social forms without ‘right to pass’. In this way it will be shown that the liberal democracy does not annul differences, but that only within such a framework such differences can attain their full reach.44

Identity is an important issue when discussing multi-ethnicity and multiculturalism/interculturalism. All the country reports directly or indirectly address this issue without paying much attention to the definition of the concept. The identities mentioned and described are collective identities, most frequently ethnic or state identities that can be classified as specific types of collective identities. Consequently, it might be useful present the following simple working definition of collective identities:

Every collective identity is the feeling of belonging to a certain entity, defined by different objective and subjective criteria. For collective identities the feeling of belonging and criteria should be agreed upon and shared by persons belonging to a certain collective entity (members).

To this simple definition I would add that every (individual and collective) identity as a social phenomenon is a process and not a state; it appears, changes, transforms and eventually ceases to exist. Collective identities

43 The authors of the Bosnia country report describe this process as the reverse chain of inference. See op. cit. note 1, 5.
Influence and in certain ways define individual identities of persons and vice versa.\footnote{Mitja Žagar, “New European identities: Central Europe the EU eastern enlargement and identity formation”, in Jody Patricia Jensen (ed.), Europe bound: Faultlines and frontlines of security in the Balkans (Savaria books on politics, culture and society, 4). (Savaria University Press, Szombathely, 2003), 301-325.}

In addition to self-identification and acceptance by members of a certain collective identity, in some cases the definition and acceptance of others might be also relevant to establish the membership of a collective entity.


The reports discuss **national and supranational identity**, which is clearly understood to be broader than the direct connection of a specific ethnic identity to a respective statehood. In a way, we could speak of a **state identity** that is not ethnically neutral. The main characteristics of such a state identity are (the status of) citizenship of a respective state and a strong feeling of belonging and loyalty to this state, which is usually identified as **patriotism**. We could say that **constitutional civic patriotism** is a concept, identity and practice that is completely lacking or, to a large extent, is not adequately developed in the region and all of its countries.

An interesting example of the complexity of ethnic and state identities is the Constitutional Court of the Republic of Macedonia’s ruling on the use of the flags of the communities in the republic. The ruling determined that:

... [T]he members of the communities have an undisputed right to hoist their flag together with the flag of the Republic of Macedonia in the cases when competitions or other meetings of cultural, artistic or sport character are organised, or celebrations and ceremonies having as its aim expressing, fostering and developing the identity of the members of the communities. This for a reason, that the hoisted flag of the members of the communities in such cases will reflect their specifics and identity, and will enable to differentiate them from the other participants in such manifestations for the purposes of which the flags are actually used as symbols.

However, that cannot be said also for international political meetings, international competitions, international scholarly gatherings at which solely the Republic of Macedonia may be represented or take part with a view to expressing, fostering and developing the identity of the Republic of Macedonia, as a sovereign state.\footnote{Op. cit. note 3, 21.}

The Court, respecting specific ethnic/community identities, puts them in the context of the state (national) identity of the republic, which requires and deserves to be expressed, fostered and developed. However, the question remains as to whether this state identity is seen as open, inclusive, and able to encompass all identities that exist within the country. The problem might be that some communities, especially the Albanians, might sometimes (or at least in some cases) see the Macedonian state/national identity as a predominantly ethnic identity based on the (Slavic) Macedonian ethnic nation and culture and consequently consider it alien and exclusive.
In Bosnia-Herzegovina there is also a recognized need to establish a “Bosnian-Herzegovinian supra-national identity” that would become a cohesive factor and force at the state level. However, for the time being we could conclude that ethnic identities, and particularly those of the “constituent peoples” clearly dominate, while a state supra-national identity hardly exists at all.

The alternative of “ethnic” versus “civic” is not only a problem of institutional structures and elites, but also of the population at large. There is almost no overarching “Bosnian” identity and loyalty to the state of BiH, not only because of the ethnic cleavages. Paradoxically enough, almost only the foreigners in the institutions of BiH (The Central Bank, the Constitutional Court, the Human Rights Chamber) developed a “Bosnian” identity.

Although the international community would like to see a civic (state) identity emerge in Kosovo that would eventually overcome ethnic identities, this is not likely to happen soon. Many politicians and NGOs are advocating a new collective identity — the “Kosovar” national identity, which would be an open and inclusive collective identity that would allow for the inclusion of all existing ethnic identities. Nevertheless, ethnic identities still dominate and the “Kosovar” identity continues to be seen as predominantly Albanian. It is therefore less attractive to the Serbs and other minorities. With the improvement of the human and minority rights situation and continuous democratization, the attractiveness of this new collective identity might improve. However, such developments are likely to take a long time, providing that democratic and peaceful options for development materialize.

Hopefully, these new collective identities will develop as civic (citizenship) based identities, built on the recognition of and respect for diversities. They would consequently not be ethnically neutral, but ethnically and otherwise inclusive — open in their nature and content, acceptable to everyone and to every distinct community in a certain environment. However, as they are conceived and are being promoted, they do not exceed the respective nation-state borders. Consequently it might be better to determine them as new types of inclusive state/citizenship identities or trans/supra-ethnic identities. On the other hand, considering the use of the concept of supra-national and supra-nationality in international law and international relations, true supra-national identities should exceed borders of nation-states. Such supra-national identities could be common European and EU identities (considering the supranational nature of the EU itself) that are shared by people from different environments/countries/states, possessing different citizenship, who are (or at least might be) of different ethnic origins. Such European and EU identities are also attractive to the people(s) and countries of the Western Balkans who aspire to become EU members and impatiently expect its further Eastern and South-Eastern enlargement. They would like be included in these identities and to share them with other “Europeans”. To be truly successful in the accommodation and management of diversities and asymmetries (both those already existing and new ones expected to appear in the future), which is a central issue of the MIRICO project, and to become a real cohesive force in contemporary European societies, these common European identities should be(come) open, inclusive and multiple (plural and multilayered), commonly accepted and shared, designed so as to accommodate and include the existing and transformed ethnic, local, regional, national and state identities in Europe.

Discussing ethnic, trans-supra-ethnic, national and supra-national identities and other concepts presented above, we touched upon the central issues that pertain to the use and understanding of the terms and concepts *ethnic* and *national*. Not surprisingly, in the MIRICO reports and studies from all the phases (WPs) completed so far, we can detect a relatively high level of consensus in their use, understanding and definition, although some differences and divergent approaches could be found. We could summarize the approaches to the definition and understanding of ethnicity as functionalist, instrumentalist and constructivist. These approaches contrast with the understanding, interpretation and (public) use of ethnicity, which is predominantly primordial(ist) and essential(ist) in almost all environments, and which has been frequently used for the political mobilization of people along ethnic lines. It is important to note that these primordial(ist) and essential(ist) concepts have been, and are, promoted by (state) educational systems throughout the region and in all educational programs, and have thereby become an important element of the political socialization of people. **Ethnic mobilization** proved particularly effective in environments that lacked appropriate and developed democratic (political) infrastructure, culture and structures (institutions — including traditional political parties and systems), and in which nationalists (nationalist politicians and movements) stressed and used ethnic divides to define and mobilize their followers in political processes, particularly in the first multi-party elections in the beginning of the 1990s. Ethnicity, ethnic differences, and nationalist rhetoric and policies were considered the most readily available, strongest and the most effective political basis for building successful political parties and for the realizing political goals, including the central goal of capturing political power in their respective environments. These motivators proved more effective than the political and ideological divisions that traditionally play a central role in the democratic processes in developed western democracies, which had evolved (with occasional interruptions) over the past two centuries and did not exist or only started to develop and evolve in the former Yugoslavia. Now we can assess that such developments had a negative impact on all environments. The consequences were especially negative and tragic in ethnically plural and diverse environments, such as Bosnia-Herzegovina.

In trying to define the term *ethnicity*, we should recognize that it can refer to two concepts. On the one hand, it describes a specific *group/community*, defined and characterized by the ethnic characteristics (both objective ones — such as language, religion, common ways of life, history, territory, constituent myths, etc., and subjective ones — such as specific collective identity and feelings of belonging, solidarity, belief in a common origin and history, etc.) that are shared and recognized by the members of a respective community, but that are also recognized by others who are not considered members of this community. On the other hand, it refers to the ethnic *belonging* of an individual or a group, a specific collective identity, a state of being ethnic, etc. In this context, the term *nation* (ethnic/ethno nation) refers to a specific type of ethnic community that emerged in the modern period concurrent with the emergence and development of capitalist economy and ideology, as well as with the elaboration and development of modern nation-states. Thus nations are not only ethnic, but also political and economic communities. Ethnic characteristics and identities might be the strongest factors supporting their (internal) cohesion, while also defining their (ethnic) nature and specific contents. They differentiate respective (ethnic) nations from all other nations and types of

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51 See e.g., *op. cit.* note 4, 5.
(contemporary) ethnic communities, such as minorities and diverse distinct communities/groups. In nation-states, a specific status and role is established for their titular nations, which often places other distinct communities within the borders of the respective states in a somewhat subordinate or secondary position. In other words, titular states dominate their nation-states. The fact that modern ethnic nations and nation-states (as a specific type of states) developed and evolved simultaneously had an impact on the development of some languages that use the same term “nation” for both phenomena and concepts, which might cause some terminological and conceptual confusion. Consequently, it might be beneficial if, in scholarly discourse in these languages, a practice and standard would be established to clearly define the use of this term in a specific case (possibly by using adequate adjective – e.g., ethnic nation – and or concepts – e.g. nation-state).53

Reviewing the MIRICO reports and studies conducted so far, we could establish that the term nation is used predominantly to indicate specific ethnic communities, in the sense of an ethnic nation. However, to be consistent with the terminology of international relations and international law, the term international is used to describe relations between/among states,54 while the term (inter)ethnic relations is used to describe any kind of social relations with a distinct ethnic dimension. In other words, ethnic relations are those in which ethnicity plays a role or which are conditioned by ethnicity. Traditionally, ethnic relations are used to describe relations between/among all types of distinct ethnic (collective) entities, including modern nations as ethnic communities and their members.

As mentioned, the majority of existing nation-states are perceived as single nation-states that are ethnically (at least relatively) homogenous. Our ethnic reality, however, has been and is different; it is plural and diverse. Only a few states officially recognize this reality and are formally defined as multi-ethnic or as (ethnically neutral) civic states. In reality, as we tried to show, civic states are not truly ethnically neutral. Deriving from a nation-state model, the existing models of multi-ethnic/national state might also not be adequate solutions. As it is the case in Bosnia-Herzegovina, by establishing the concept of constituent peoples/nations and giving them special status and rights, such models might neglect other dimensions of diversity and/or might put other distinct (non-constituent) communities in an inferior position and discriminate against them.55

In this context, it is useful to examine the concepts of demos and ethnos and their relationship. Usually, the term demos refers to the people or citizens of a certain state who are the addressees and carriers of political rights. The term ethnos describes the phenomenon of ethnicity, or more precisely, diverse ethnic communities and, particularly in the present day, nations. However, such schematic and simple explanations might be misleading. An analysis of the constitutions of European countries shows that formally they declare the principle of popular sovereignty.56 However, one should not automatically assume that their definition/understanding of the people — as the body of their respective citizens — is ethnically neutral. To the contrary, our discussion of the concept of existing nation-states reveals their ethnic dimension and nature, which is — at least implicitly — already demonstrated by the use of the respective official language. Some constitutions, and in particular their preambles, that reflect the national(ist) sentiments at the time of adoption of every respective constitution, directly refer to national sovereignty, and usually more specifically indicate its ethnic dimension and

54 See e.g., op. cit. note 9.
55 See e.g., op. cit. note 1, 17-18; op. cit. note 7, 5.
the popular (citizens) and ethnic (nations) basis of sovereignty. Our analysis of the preambles detects a few diverse understandings of the concepts of the people, peoples and nations that could schematically be presented and classified in the following way:

- People vs. Nation;
- People that is Nation;
- Nation that is People;
- Nation and Others; and
- Explicit acknowledgment of the multiethnic composition of the population.

Regardless of all proclamations of democracy and democratic principles, as our discussion so far shows, usually the ethnic and ethnos still dominate the civic and democracy in the countries of the region. However, conclusions that ethnos dominates demos completely and/or that ethnos and demos are irreconcilable with each other might be considered exaggerated.

The existing theoretical concepts and models of (liberal) democracy are civic ones. Usually, they neglect the ethnic dimension of diversities and pluralism altogether. Our position is that democratic models should not ignore ethnic diversity as one of the important dimensions of the social diversities that influence the emergence and elaboration of specific interests, which in turn have an influence on the political process. We believe that every true democracy should not only formally recognize and respect ethnic and all other existing diversities, but should establish mechanisms that would address them adequately, enable their preservation and development (if members of distinct communities desire so) and integrate their specific interests into the political process, guaranteeing them adequate influence.

In reality, however, we can often find societies in which the ethnic principle becomes the dominant principle in all spheres of life — including politics. If the ethnic principle becomes the dominant organizational principle and the dominant criterion in decision-making, this practice might not only limit democracy in every (ethnically and otherwise) diverse environment, but might also undermine and/or prevent it altogether. This can be especially problematic and dangerous in environments in which the dominant ethnic/racial/religious communities introduce a system of government and politics that exclude or discriminate against others based on different ethnic/racial/religious characteristics (e.g., the system of Apartheid in South Africa or the situation of non-Aryans in Nazi Germany, to name a few of the most extreme and universally known cases). Although it is less extreme and exclusive, the constitutional system in Bosnia-Herzegovina, as determined by the “Dayton Constitution” might be considered problematic as well. Stressing the principle of the recognition and equality of “constituent peoples” that we consider relevant, legitimate and (even) urgent in a multi-national environment, the current constitutional system of Bosnia-Herzegovina is an exclusive and discriminatory system because it establishes and requires ethnic criteria. An individual must belong to the “constituent peoples” to obtain key public offices, and anyone who does not declare himself/herself a member of one of the “constituent peoples”, including all individuals belonging to diverse minorities, is automatically excluded. Such a system might contradict the principle that no one should be forced to declare his/her ethnic

57 Ibid.
58 Ibid, 5-8.
60 Ibid, 9.
61 Ibid, 9-10.
62 Ibid, 10-11.
belonging in order to exercise equal rights within a democratic political system. Consequently, the introduction of such an exclusive ethnic criterion as “constituent peoples” in a multi-ethnic and multi-religious environment in which a number of minorities traditionally live is also problematic from the perspective of the principle of the equality of individuals. Additionally, it might be considered a system and a policy of enforced assimilation that is involuntary imposed on persons belonging to minorities.63

The situations and practices described are a few visible examples of the ethnicisation of politics — ethnically based, determined and directed politics that can be described as ethno-politics. Similar practices can be found in other parts of the world and are possible in environments in which ethnicity is or can become a relevant (or even dominant) social and political issue and, consequently, the basis for social and political mobilization. Extreme forms of the ethnicisation of politics are different forms of ethnic entrepreneurship. These practices that can be described as (shameless) (mis)uses of ethnicity for political and economic ends/profit. They include (re)producing and strengthening ethnic and cultural differences that help increase and better define ethnic borders and cleavages in ethnically diverse environments.65 They might be attractive to various ethnic and/or national elites, and are most frequently employed by nationalist politicians, movements and parties. These political actors see these practices as viable, potent and effective approaches, and are not bothered by the fact that they contradict and undermine traditional perceptions of (liberal) democracy and democratic politics. Strategies involving the constant invention, (re)production and strengthening of ethnic and cultural differences and cleavages, which nationalists apply in many environments, reinforce perceptions of divided societies and of ethnicity and culture(s) being key factors and delineators of these cleavages and divisions. The reproduction of divided societies demarcates current clearly defined cleavages and divisions. Capitalizing on the fact that the concept and standards of national interest might be rather illusive, nationalists defend their claims and politics by presenting and defining their particular interests and politics as national interests, often declaring them vital national interests.66

As almost all MIRICO reports and studies (including this report) frequently refer to nationalism, nationalists and nationalist policies, and considering the vast number of different definitions found in the literature, it is necessary to explain and define these concepts and the way in which the terms are being used.

Nationalism was not only the force that played a key role in the elaboration and development of the concept of the nation-state in the past two centuries, but it was also a key factor in shaping developments in the territory of the former Yugoslavia and its successor states in the past decades. The term can refer to different phenomena and concepts, and — in this context — might have several different meanings,67 such as, among others:

63 See, Ibid.
Additionally - from the perspective of the principles of equality and freedom of expression of ethnic belonging - we should mention a problem of a status and situation of members of a certain “constituent people” who live in an entity that “belongs” to other “constituent people(s)” and is, consequently, “dominated” by it (them).
64 See e.g., op. cit. note 9, 22.
Strong feelings of individual and collective ethnic identity and belonging to a specific ethnic community — the nation. Nationalism is considered to be the strongest collective identity and that usually is defined in a negative way, determining one's own ethnicity against that of others;

Strong ethnic sentiment and emotion, often exaggerated and directed against 'others' that demands homogeneity and unity of a specific nation and its members;

Political and social ideology and a specific type of political philosophy that stresses importance, uniqueness, superiority of a respective nation in comparison with others and, if necessary, at the cost of others;

Specific political and social principles, also used as criteria for the recognition of belonging to, and membership of, a certain ethnic community;

Specific, usually ethnically exclusive, policy of social movements, political parties or nation-states;

Political or social movements;

Political concept and strategy aimed at political mobilization of people who feel they are members of a certain ethnicity ...;

A doctrine of political legitimacy; etc. etc.

The meanings and concepts listed above are just a few that we consider directly relevant to the MIRICO project. A superficial analysis of the scholarly literature and media could produce a list several times as long. However, all the meanings and concepts listed, and possibly almost all additional ones we could identify, share a common characteristic, regardless of their differences:

All these concepts and phenomena are based on the idea of homogeneity, monolithism, and natural or enforced ethnic unity. The main objective of nationalism is to promote and defend the “national interests” as formulated by the nationalist movement, party, or government. National interests are supreme and worth any sacrifice, including death. Whoever questions these supreme national interests risks being branded a traitor and can be expelled. An individual’s duty to the polity, which represents the nation, “overrides all public obligations, and in extreme cases (such as wars) all other obligations of whatever kind”. Consequently, nationalism is the most demanding form of ethnic or group identification and identity.

Considering the potency and role of nationalism in the process of the elaboration, development and evolution of modern nation-states, it might be surprising how scarce the scholarly literature on nationalism was until the 1990s. However, after

nationalism and the changing international order, (Oxford University Press, New York, 2001); etc.

Montserrat Guibernau, “Nations without states: Catalonia, a case study”, in Keating and Mcgarry, ibid, 133-154 at 133.


Op. cit. note 8, 19

the resurgence of nationalism at the end of the twentieth century, the situation changed substantially with an ever-increasing volume of works being published.\(^73\) In the scholarly literature, in MiRICO reports and studies, in media and in current scholarly debates, we can find several varying interpretations and concepts, such as:

- **Ethno-nationalism (ethnic nationalism)**, which stresses the ethnic basis of nationalism and refers to a legitimate claim of every ethnic group to sovereignty. However, it might be considered a tautology taking into account the aforementioned description of common characteristics of diverse concepts and meanings;\(^74\)
- **Aggressive nationalism**\(^75\) is forceful and brutal in its rhetoric, form and action, and can be either inward or directed outward. It might be carried out by nationalists — individual politicians, nationalist movements and/or parties — usually with aims to mobilize and unify their followers, and possibly the whole ethnic community, and to capture power within a state. It is also often directed outwards, in an attempt to “recapture” or “conquer” territories or symbolic space that is perceived to belong to a respective ethnicity. If it is outward-oriented, especially if it is carried out by the ruling elites and/or governments (as a means of national politics), it might be considered especially dangerous and threatening to neighbors and can be defined as (offensive) hegemonic nationalism;
- In contrast with the aggressive nationalism that is considered a negative and dangerous phenomenon, **defensive and/or liberating (national-liberation) nationalism** has been viewed as a mostly positive political and social force and concept in the nineteenth and twentieth century, especially in the context of the emancipation of modern European nations and in the process


\(^74\) See e.g., op. cit. note 2, 3.

\(^75\) See e.g., op. cit. note 4, 7.
of decolonization. Its actions are aimed at defending a certain (politically mobilized and organized) ethnicity against actual and/or possible/perceived external and internal threats/dangers to its very existence, at improving its situation and/or providing for its development. Often (in European nations) it is connected with ethnicities’ aspirations for self-determination. In this context we mention Blokker’s consideration that nationalism:

[As] a movement for self-determination for an ethno-culturally and pre-politically defined group, is often interpreted as being highly distinct from the ‘benign’ nationalism which evolved in polities with already sedimented collective identities. Ethnic nationalism is deemed exclusionary, integral, and the definition of collective autonomy and self-determination that it contains is seen as being distorted and exclusionary towards non-members, as opposed to civic, emancipatory nationalism which promulgates the ‘benign’ forms of inclusion, national belonging and political community building.\(^76\)

- The ethnic dimension/nature of contemporary societies seems to be more or less an omnipresent phenomenon, with more than 6,000 ethnicities (distinct ethnic communities/groups) listed worldwide. Considering the political and social potency of ethnicity as the basis for ethnic identities/identification and political mobilization, we could identify different forms of nationalism — as a specific type of ethnic ideology, policy and organization — in all parts of the world. Although the perceptions and evaluation of nationalism presented above describe it as a predominantly negative phenomenon that is inherently incompatible with democracy, we could not ignore nationalism’s social role and importance. We could also not ignore its rather positive perception in many environments and historic epochs. Consequently, some authors tried to define less unacceptable or even positive and democratic types and models of nationalism that might be seen as positive concepts of inclusion, nation- and state-building, even democratic political community building. In this context, benign, civic (citizens’), emancipatory and/or liberal nationalism can be cited as political concepts that might be used by democratic actors in pluralistic societies to neutralize negative forms of nationalism. As Tamir concludes, nationalism is such a powerful social and political force that democratic and liberal actors cannot surrender to nationalists and their aggressive ideologies and policies — at least not as long as adequate and equally successful alternative democratic and inclusive concepts, ideologies and models are developed.\(^77\)

- Mainstream nationalism focused on nation-building, nations and nation-states, perceived as ethnically homogenous (single) nation-states of “titular nations” sees the very existence of minorities and especially their nationalism(s) as problems and as obstacles to realization of their central national interests and goals. However, we should not ignore phenomena that can be described as “nationalism of nations without states” (stateless nations), “diaspora nationalism”, “regional nationalism”, and “minority nationalism” in multi-ethnic states.\(^78\)

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nationalism to a large extent depends on the local or regional situation of the minority group. Usually in environments in which relatively small national minorities are granted and guaranteed substantial minority rights and protection, minority nationalism focuses on the preservation of the national minority and its distinct ethnic, cultural, linguistic and historic identity. This kind of minority nationalism can be described as defensive nationalism that, although still exclusivist, does not build on a hostility towards ‘others’ — in this case towards persons belonging to the majority population and, possibly, towards persons belonging to other minorities. In some cases, particularly if minorities are very small, even certain elements of inclusion and integration might be present.

The situation might be very different in multi-ethnic environments in which national minorities represent a considerable share of the population. We realize that the size and political organization of a national minority can be considered an important factor in minority nationalism. If a national minority represents a relatively large share of the local or regional population, or even the local/regional minority, we could expect diverse proposals for territorial autonomy that might intensify if the proportion of the minority population increases. If a certain national minority is the local or regional majority, proposals for federalization of unitary (nation) states or for the increased autonomy of federal units in federations are also possible — especially if the minority is unhappy with the existing arrangements. If the dissatisfaction of such a national minority continues to increase or if minorities feel endangered within or even by the existing nation-state, we could expect claims for independence and requests for secession that argue for the principle of self-determination. Such developments took place in the formation of new nation states in post World War I Europe and world-wide during the process of decolonization, in which the nationalism of stateless nations and minority nationalism played important roles as the central ideological basis of national liberation. Considering the focus of the MIRICO project, Kosovo’s struggle for independence and its recent declaration of independence might be considered the most recent case of such a development.


80 More see e.g., Mitja Žagar, “Ethnic relations, nationalism, and minority nationalism in South-Eastern Europe”, in Michael Keating and John Mcgarry, (eds.), Minority nationalism and the changing international order. (Oxford University Press, New York, 2001), 325-341. The implications of the declared independence of Kosovo and its immediate international recognition by some states (e.g., USA, several EU member states, etc.), while other states (including the Russian Federation and China) oppose its recognition and consider it contrary to the principles of international law are yet to be studied. Although those countries that recognized the independence of Kosovo declared it a specific - sui generis - case, it might become an important precedent that will be used by other distinct entities (regional, ethnic/national, religious, etc.) in different parts of the world that are unhappy with their
Analyzing the MIRICO reports/studies and examining historic developments in the Balkans over the past two centuries, particularly the recent past, it could be concluded that exclusive ethnically based nationalism — in whatever form it appeared — played a predominantly negative role and might be considered an imminent danger to peaceful coexistence and stability in all the individual environments within the region. Even in cases such as the building of modern ethnic nations and nation-states in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, when nationalism was considered a positive and/or (at least) relatively benign phenomenon, it did have largely negative impacts and consequences. It remained an exclusive concept and ideology that advocated the internal homogenization of the respective societies, which were perceived above all as specific ethnic entities. It thereby limited or even eliminated their internal diversities and pluralism, while simultaneously excluding and marginalizing all others, particularly national/ethnic minorities, regardless of the principles proclaimed regarding their protection. Consequently, special attention needs to be paid to the phenomena and concepts of nationalism as well as to nationalist ideologies, policies, movements, political parties and politicians that exploit nationalism for the political mobilization of their followers. Ideally, studying these phenomena and concepts can contribute to the development and improvement of early warning mechanisms that will indicate the danger of a possible escalation of tensions and conflict in individual environments as the result of intensifying nationalism(s) and its political effects. It would be even more important for such studies to contribute to the elaboration of alternative democratic and inclusive ideologies and policies of coexistence, cooperation, inclusion and integration based on equality and the adequate protection of national and other minorities. Such ideologies and policies should recognize, respect and build upon all interwoven diversities and asymmetries that exist and constantly evolve in every environment declaring, presenting/promoting and treating them as relevant comparative advantages. Such a concept of diversity management, if advocated by the EU and promoted by the international community, might offer a viable alternative to the existing nationalist ideologies and policies that impact, and to a large extent still dominate, the region and its individual countries.

Simultaneously, this concept of diversity management might be used as a framework and yardstick for research and analysis of asymmetrical, plural and diverse contemporary societies. It would be particularly useful for studying (inter)ethnic relations (as continuous processes in these societies) and the possible escalation of tensions, crises and conflicts in this context.

As already mentioned above, the term and concept of (inter)ethnic relations are used to describe any kind of social relations with distinct ethnic dimension(s). Usually, they refer to relations between/among all types of distinct ethnic (collective) entities (including modern nations as specific types of ethnic communities) and their members. A similar approach can be used to define ethnic conflict as a specific type of conflict that has an ethnic dimension. Or, in Wolff’s words, as a type of conflict “... in which the goals of at least one conflict party are defined in (exclusively) ethnic terms, and in which the primary fault line of confrontation is one of ethnic distinctions.”

I would argue that we could always speak of ethnic conflict when at least one party to the conflict, or even an outside observer sees such a conflict as an ethnic conflict — e.g., because of the definition/perception of a single party or parties to the conflict, its/their goals...
and/or the definition of the fault line of the confrontation are defined in ethnic terms and/or along ethnic lines.

When defining ethnic conflicts as a specific type of conflict, we could use diverse traditional classifications of (social) conflicts to indicate their nature, organization, intensity and duration. Consequently, to define the intensity and type of conflicts we could use criteria and classifications suggested by Gurr, Wallensteen and Sollenberg, which the country report on Macedonia summarizes in the following way:

... 'War' can be defined as intense and protracted militarised violence that results in over 1,000 deaths. 'Moderate conflict' is a broad category meant to capture the middle ground between war and peace. It encompasses such actions as ethnic riots, inter-communal clashes, state-sponsored repression, and brief episodes of militarised violence (such as the ten-day war in Slovenia that left eight dead). Finally, cases of 'peace' are marked by the complete absence of bloodshed and the use of institutions to mediate ethnic differences. What is not implied by the peace category is interethnic harmony or dominant group generosity.

Nevertheless, these are just a few possible classifications of conflicts that can be applied. Considering the complexity of social phenomena and processes in general and of ethnic relations in particular, the study and analysis of crises requires that far more sensitive and precise classifications be used as reference frameworks and yardsticks. From the perspective of diversity management and especially for the prevention, management and resolution of crises and conflicts it is extremely important that possible conflicts are detected at their earliest possible stage, when their intensity is still low. The golden rule of conflict management and resolution is that the sooner conflicts are detected and the lower their intensity is, the better the chance for their successful and peaceful prevention, management and resolution — hopefully through democratic means. Protracted conflicts, even if they are of a relatively low intensity, are usually more difficult to manage and almost impossible to resolve. The longer they last and the more they become a part of the identity and perceived reality of those involved, which lessens the chances for their resolution. Some cases of protracted conflict, in which all sides have become accustomed to the tension and the intensity does not escalate substantially, become self-regulatory and a part of the everyday life of a certain environments.

For successful diversity management and for the prevention (of escalation), management and resolution of crises and conflicts in a specific environment, all relevant factors and actors that can contribute to the possible escalation of crises and conflicts need to be detected and addressed adequately. This would require continuous monitoring and studying of ethnic relations and relevant social processes and the development of effective mechanisms and measures for the

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early detection of intensifying tensions and the possible escalation of crises and conflicts. Such measures need to be built up permanently and complemented by the mechanisms and measures for the prevention of the further escalation of crises and conflicts as well as for their management or resolution. Recognizing that crises and conflicts, the possible consequences of diverse and possibly conflicting interests, are normal phenomena in every plural and diverse environment — environments of both constructive and destructive potential — it is especially important to prevent their escalation and possible transformation into violent conflicts by managing and/or resolving them adequately in a democratic way. However, plural and diverse societies should also develop adequate mechanisms that could be activated when the prevention and management mechanisms and measures that are being applied are not successful in the prevention, management and/or resolution of existing and escalating crises and conflicts and when they transform into violent conflicts, which are especially difficult to manage and resolve.

Inadequate mechanisms and measures for the prevention, management and resolution of crises and conflicts, as well as the use of disproportionate (institutional) repression and violence by a (possibly nationalist) government, can lead to the further escalation of conflicts and violence in a country. This violence can be ethnically based and conditioned and might result in such extreme outcomes and forms as genocide. Usually, aggressive nationalism is a key factor and source of such politics and actions. However, in addition to political and ideological reasons for the escalation of violence and conflicts, one should not forget the importance and impact of economic interests and motivations — including criminal ones. Consequently, crime, and especially organized crime and criminals, can become a key factor and key actors in an ethnic conflict.  

Schematically, the life-cycle of a conflict is often divided into three main phases: a pre-conflict phase, a phase of intensified conflict (when its escalation and intensity reach their peaks and are followed by a de-escalation) and a post-conflict phase. In practice, it is often almost impossible to delimit these phases (and their sub-phases) in the life of a specific conflict, since two or even more phases can unfold simultaneously. Additionally, a post-conflict situation of a certain conflict can coincide with a pre-conflict phase of another conflict and/or indicate the beginning of the escalation and the phase of intensification of yet another conflict. Consequently, classifications of phases of conflicts are above all analytical tools for studying and analyzing specific conflicts that can help us better understand their dynamics and life cycles. They might be very helpful for successful diversity management and for the prevention, management and/or resolution of crises and conflicts.

As this report speaks constantly about “diversity management” in general, as well as the “prevention, management and/or resolution of crises and conflicts”, it is necessary to define these concepts more precisely. We should point out again that there is no universal consensus regarding these concepts and their definitions. Consequently, the definitions presented are an attempt at defining common ground and an indication that, when concepts are used, one should always explain which

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85 E.g., the country report on Serbia states: “The examination of the nature of these conflicts sheds a new light on the motivation for the participation in this war. Behind the slogans of the defence of Serb inhabitants in other republics there was in reality a widespread system of plunder, unlawful acquisition of immense natural resources, arms and oil deals among all parties in the conflict. This led to the enrichment of criminals close to the Serbian secret services, of the police and army generals and the political leadership of Serbia.” (Op. cit. note 4, 7.)

86 See e.g., op cit. note 84, Žagar (2007).
concept is being used, present its contents and list relevant references to avoid possible misunderstandings and/or misinterpretations.

Considering the developments of the past two decades, we can view diversity management as the broadest concept and (social) strategy that might be used in contemporary societies to deal with existing pluralities, diversities and asymmetries. Consequently:

... [D]iversity management should provide a social and normative framework in which all different existing and possible socially relevant diversities and asymmetries could be detected, expressed and recognized, but also taken into account in social and political processes when participating actors desire so and express their interests. In this process conditions, needs, interests, rights (including duties) and actions of every possible and detectable actor (mostly diverse collective entities with their formal or informal forms of organization, but also individuals) should be taken into account, however, in the context of global society taking into account specific and common conditions, needs, interests and rights of all other possible/detectable actors. Consequently, diversity management is a useful tool for the creation, promotion and strengthening of social cohesion in diverse societies, based on recognition and respect of existing and possible diversities - taking into account that societies (as well as all their components) rather than being static and permanent categories are processes with their temporal dimension in constant evolution and transformation. Diversity management should establish a normative and actual framework, and provide for democratic expression, reconciliation and coordination of all expressed interests and for the formulation of common interests - shared by all or almost all members of a society - that are long term frameworks for internal cohesion and stable existence and development of diverse societies. If such shared common interests do not exist and do not bind together and lead collective actions of diverse collective entities and individuals the consequence might be lack of the necessary social cohesion and possible crises and escalation of conflicts, especially in cases when certain collective entities, most frequently distinct communities and individuals feel exploited and/or discriminated against. For this reason I would like to stress the social importance of the adequate protection of diverse minorities and distinct communities and rights of minorities as the necessary elements of diversity management in contemporary societies.

Considering that diversities, asymmetries, existence of diverse and sometimes conflicting interests, and consequently possibilities for escalation of conflicts are normal phenomena in plural societies, necessary components of diversity management should be also strategies and mechanisms for the prevention of escalation of crises and conflicts and for their management and/or resolution in cases, when preventive strategies, mechanisms and measures do not succeed in preventing their escalation. Additionally, specific strategies, approaches and policies are needed for the management of diversity in post conflict situations, where again special attention should be paid to the situation and protection of diverse minorities and distinct communities. Taking into account complexity of diversities that include e.g., gender, social, labor and workforce, professional and all other socially relevant diversities...

87 See e.g., op. cit. note 8.
88 This was the reason for the development of the... MIRICO... [research project]... that is also the basis for the development of an international network specializing in these issues and for the development of a joint European doctoral program in diversity management and governance in the European and global context, initiated by the Universities of Bologna, Graz and Primorska / Littoral from Koper and by the New Bulgarian University from Sofia.
Successful diversity management and the necessary research that should adequately support must consider and reflect the immense complexity and multidimensionality of contemporary societies as well as the fact that relevant actors, factors and processes are interdependent and interwoven. One needs to define characteristics, actors and fields (e.g., the economy, education and training, institution building, democracy, human rights, etc.):

...[T]hat might in specific environments be identified as relevant for successful diversity management strategies should always take into account circumstances, situation, needs and interests that exist there and should be adjusted to these specificities. For this reason it is essential that a strategy for every specific environment clearly defines and specifies and tries to establish the broadest possible consensus regarding the following:

(1) General goals, especially long term goals;
(2) Specific approaches and goals that are derived from general, long term goals and should be considered their concretization;
(3) Institutional and organizational framework;
(4) Relevant actors, their relations and cooperation, and their roles regarding general and specific goals in all relevant fields.

It is equally important that relevant actors agree on their strategy regarding the acquiring of necessary resources of all kinds (financial, material, human, etc.) that should make the common strategy feasible.90

As presented, the concept and strategy of diversity management also includes the prevention, management and/or resolution of crises and conflicts as an important component. The concept of “prevention, management and/or resolution of crises and conflicts” is the result of the evolution of the concepts of “conflict resolution” and “conflict management”. Initially, these were two competing approaches to dealing with conflicts that both developed a number of very useful and effective approaches, methods, techniques, mechanisms, etc. However, the actual complexity of contemporary societies and diverse conflicts showed that often, the best results were achieved when an adequate and specific combination of diverse approaches, methods, techniques and mechanisms was developed taking into account specific circumstances, situation, needs and interests that existed in a particular historical moment.91

While speaking of the prevention, management and/or resolution of crises and conflicts, it might also be useful to comment on the concepts of “crisis” and “conflict” that are used simultaneously – indicating that the terms are not used as synonyms. Although they both refer to tensions that might appear in diverse societies as possible consequences and derivates of the varied and sometimes conflicting interests that exist in a certain environment, and although the phases of their life cycles might be determined in the same way (pre-conflict/crisis, conflict/crisis, post-conflict/crisis), the distinction between them is very useful for the purpose of diversity management. It is especially useful in performing an adequate analysis of the situation, developments and processes in a specific environment and for development of effective strategies and measures. As the definition of the concept of “conflict”, and specifically “ethnic conflict” was discussed above, here the concept of “crisis” will be briefly addressed.

When speaking of a crisis in everyday discourse, we often refer to a low intensity conflict that exists in a certain environment – usually as a protracted conflict – and influences life in it. However, in the context of diversity management and for the purpose of prevention, management and resolution, this

90 Ibid, 25.
91 See e.g., ibid, 10-22.
term usually describes a specific institutional context. Namely, in a specific environment we can speak of a crisis when the existing system (organizational arrangement) and its institutions and mechanisms is not successful in dealing with problems that are relevant for the people who live there and provokes their dissatisfaction, which in turn results in their demands for change. Ideally, the system and its institutions can respond to such a situation and resolve a crisis by developing and implementing various measures and activities that resolve existing problems and meet the demands of the people. Sometimes institutional reforms or the transformation of existing (and the development of new) mechanisms and institutions are required to address a crisis properly — in other words to manage and/or resolve it successfully. Crises can deepen and escalate, however, if the system is unable to respond adequately to the demands of the people. In such cases, the people’s dissatisfaction with the existing system grows and demands that it be adequately reformed and transformed. If a system is unable to reform and transform itself in a democratic way, it might try to respond through repression, which further increases the dissatisfaction of the people and worsens the crisis. This can lead to the escalation of problems and conflicts, possibly resulting in their transformation into violent conflicts or even revolution.92

The country reports address issues relating to the management, regulation, resolution and transformation of conflict, conflict and dispute settlements and peace building that are all relevant for individual countries and the region.93 As components of diversity management, these activities should be understood as a continuous — in some cases never-ending — process. The Macedonian report describes and conceptualizes them in the following way:

Conflict management (and the associated term conflict regulation) can be defined as the ‘attempt to contain, limit, or direct the effects of an ongoing ethnic conflict on the wider society in which it takes place.’94 In contrast, conflict settlement aims at ‘establishing an institutional framework in which the conflicting interests of different ethnic groups can be accommodated to such an extent that incentives for cooperation and the non-violent pursuit of conflicts of interest through compromise outweigh any benefits that might be expected from violent confronted.’95 The difference between conflict settlement and conflict resolution is that the latter ‘requires identifying the causal factors behind the conflict, and finding ways to deal with them.’96 To end or resolve a long-term conflict, a relatively stable solution that identifies and deals with the underlying sources of the conflict must be found. Resolution of a conflict implies that the deep-rooted sources of conflict are addressed, ‘changing behavior so it is no longer violent, attitudes so they are no longer hostile, and structures so they are no longer exploitative.’97 The

93 See e.g., op. cit. notes 1; 2; 3; 6; 8; and 9.
97 Centre for Conflict Resolution, “Introduction to Conflict Resolution: Draft Distance Learning Course”, (Department of Peace Studies, Bradford, UK, 2000). <http://www.brad.ac.uk/acad/confres/dislearn>
term refers both to ‘the process (or the intention) to bring about these changes, and to the completion of the process, so it is difficult to avoid ambiguity about its precise meaning.’ There is an on-going scholarly debate whether conflict transformation is an alternative to conflict resolution, or merely the last step in the conflict resolution process - understood as ‘the comprehensive term to encompass various approaches and methods used to handle conflict non-violently at all levels in society.’ Nevertheless, it is clear that conflict transformation means working on achieving the deepest levels of change in personal, relational, structural and cultural relations in society. This approach means transforming a conflict “from violence and destruction into a constructive force which produces social change, progressively removing or at least reducing the conditions from which the conflict and violence have arisen.” The peace which develops in that way will be deeply rooted and sustainable. Transformational interventions promote “non-violent mechanisms that reduce and ultimately eliminate violence, foster structures that meet basic human needs and maximise participation of people in decisions that affect them.”

The study “EU Policies and the Stabilisation and Association Process” discusses the role of the EU in diversity management and, specifically, in conflict management and resolution. It points out the importance of the regional approach, as well as its problems and failures. It describes the development and evolution of EU policies and responses, which was marked by the shift “from reactive crisis management to the emergence of a long-term incremental transformational approach to the entire Western Balkan region.” In short, the role and involvement of the EU can be presented in the following way:

The EU has clearly been on a steep learning curve as it sought to carve out appropriate policy responses to the rapidly changing developments in the Western Balkan region in the course of the 1990s. It has developed new instruments in its attempt to accommodate the dual challenges of conflict and post-conflict management coupled with post-communist transition. In this it has been influenced by (i) its early failures in conflict management and in handling the complex shifts in majority-minority relations in the Former Yugoslavia in the early 1990s; (ii) the accession process of the ten Central and East European countries (CEECs) that entered the Union in May 2004 and January 2007, a process which in the view of the Commission was fruitfully shaped by the pull effect of conditionality; (iii) intra-EU developments which post-Maastricht have been influenced by the attempt to develop an effective second pillar in the form of the Common Foreign and Security Policy; and (iv) the lack of EU legal base and accompanying institutional capacity which

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98 Ibid.
99 John Paul Lederach, the founder of the conflict transformation theory argues that “conflict resolution” implicitly implies that conflict is “bad” and should be ended, while conflict transformation sees conflict as a motor that can be geared to constructive change. See, John Paul Lederach and Michelle Maiese, “Conflict Transformation”, in Guy Burgess and Heidi Burgess, (eds.), Beyond Intractability. (Conflict Research Consortium, University of Colorado, Boulder. October 2003).<http://www.beyondintractability.org/essay/transformation/>

100 Centre for Conflict Resolution, “Introduction to Conflict Resolution: Draft Distance Learning Course”, (Department of Peace Studies, Bradford, UK, 2000). <http://www.brad.ac.uk/acad/confres/dislearn>

101 Ibid.
102 Ibid.
103 Op. cit. note 3, 4-5.
104 See, op. cit. note 9, 10-12.
would facilitate the meeting of the norm of ‘respect for and protection of minority rights’ in external countries.\textsuperscript{106}

This steep learning curve also produced the Stabilisation and Association Process (SAP), which was considered to be an adequate EU response to the challenges of contemporary development in the Western Balkans, and hopefully, a framework for future democratic development, peace and stability in the region. In this context the relevant question is:

...whether the SAP constitutes a considered policy approach to post-conflict resolution or whether it approximates (1) an indirect trickle-down approach based on presumed peace dividends from delivering economic and social stabilisation and closer EU integration (2) coupled with fragments of more targeted policies including in the area of minority rights - even if these have been less clearly and specifically formulated.\textsuperscript{107}

However, there is no doubt that human rights and minority rights, as their important constituent elements, are the principal ingredients of successful diversity management. The respect for and the full application of human rights are necessary preconditions for and key ingredients of a true democracy, which is considered the most adequate arrangement for diverse societies. In this context, we should stress the importance of the successful regulation and management of relations among several diverse majorities and minorities that can be defined according to different criteria (considering their social relevance) and along several possible dividing lines. Taking into account the importance, potency and (actual and possible) impact of ethnicity in contemporary and diverse societies, ethnicity constitutes one of the most important criteria and dividing lines that can be used as a forceful tool for the successful social and political mobilization of the people and of distinct ethnic entities. Consequently, diversity management should pay special attention to ethnicity and to the regulation and management of ethnic relations, including the protection of minorities. An important issue in this context, which was addressed in the Bosnia-Herzegovina country report, is the dichotomy and possible conflicts between individual and collective rights. Giving priority to one or the other group/type of rights could be very problematic, particularly if according rights and special status to a distinct group or to certain groups constitutes discrimination of other groups and/or individuals who do not belong to the favored group(s). The definition of the “constituent nations” in Bosnia and their constitutional status, as well as the structure of the existing system, are build upon the central principle of constitutional equality, which is translated into the adequate (proportional) “ethnic composition” of all institutions and offices. Such constitutional arrangements in all spheres of life, and especially in politics, can be considered to discriminate against other ethnic communities and against individuals who do not belong to constituent nations. These arrangements also discriminate against members of constituent nations who happen to live in the “wrong” entity.\textsuperscript{108} Consequently:

The functions of representation and decision-making, and the establishment of the legal framework, are permeated by discrimination on the basis of kinship. For example, Article 5 of the GFAP given Constitution of BiH provides that “The Presidency of Bosnia and Herzegovina shall consist of three Members: one Bosniac, one Croat, each directly elected from the territory of the Federation, and one Serb directly elected from the territory of the Republika Srpska.” This provision is extremely discriminatory. In particular, it

\textsuperscript{106} Ibid, 6.

\textsuperscript{107} Ibid, 7.

\textsuperscript{108} See op. cit. note 1, 2-5, 23-27.
is anti-Semitic, in that it prevents a Jewish citizen of Bosnia from becoming president. 109

In Bosnian case maybe a more accurate description of an ethnic group, or "constituent people" in BiH could suggest that an ethnic group represents social construct based on religious and political background that ensures politically and culturally opportune feeling of belongingness only upon the encounter with the other and different. Such a construction undermines freedoms of BiH citizen because of narrow socially and politically structured role it ascribes to him or her.110 This construction is characterized by phrases, metaphors and discursive patterns that only at the first glance have pre-political form because they are expressed in terms of blood origin, predestination by birth, etc.; indeed they appear to be very effective tools of political domination.111

Collective rights are often associated with the former communist regime and its ideology of collectivism112. They are therefore frequently criticized, particularly by those who emphasize the individual nature of human rights or even consider the collective dimension incompatible with human rights, which they view as exclusively individual. However, I would argue that certain rights, such as minority rights, do have a dual nature that cannot, and should not, be separated. These rights simultaneously include the individual rights of persons belonging to minority communities who are the titulars (addressees) of these rights, as well as the collective rights that belong to distinct minority (ethnic) communities and enable their survival, development (especially the preservation and development of their distinct culture and identity) and equal integration.113 Although some still argue that the concept of special rights, such as rights of minorities, is inconsistent with the general principle of equality and is consequently discriminatory, the majority – at least in Europe – recognizes that such special rights are necessary to ensure equality in a diverse society by equating the starting positions of those individuals and distinct communities that are (socially) excluded, marginalized and/or in a non-dominant position. These views also constitute the foundation and logic of diverse programs and measures of affirmative action. In this context, they should be considered important elements of the successful prevention of discrimination and of anti-discrimination measures in diverse societies. A typical example can be observed in the issue of ensuring equal labor market access to persons belonging to minorities, particularly in conditions of economic crisis or deprivation.114

Human rights, human rights standards, minority rights and the protection of minorities, and equality and non-discrimination are especially important for societies in transition. An issue that is often not given adequate attention is that of gender equality as well as the participation of women in the public and political life. The position, rights and protection of minorities, equal opportunities, and gender equality are not just important litmus tests of equality and democracy in general, but also tools to measure the success of anti-discrimination policies.115

All societies studied are societies in transition. They are undergoing a substantial and rapid transformation – to a large extent stimulated and

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109 Asim Mujkić: „We, the Citizens of Ethnopolis“, 14(1) Constellations (2007), 112-128 at 117.
110 Within [the] present ethno-political framework a citizen of BiH is politically relevant only as a member of this or that constituent group.
112 See e.g., op. cit. note 4, 14-15.
114 See e.g., op. cit. note 2, 5.
115 See e.g., op. cit. note 2, 28-29.
conditioned by their desire to participate in Euro-Atlantic integration. They are particularly eager to join the EU, which tries to stimulate and direct them using so-called “conditionalities”. The formal introduction of political pluralism and multiparty political systems marked a turning point and beginning of a new phase in processes of democratization. This process has been specific and different in each of the countries, and is often marked by dramatic developments, crises and the escalation of conflicts. Consequently, the development and promotion of a democratic political culture, institution building, and the consolidation of democracy and democratic institutions remain key tasks in all countries.116 Although the EU perspective might be the key force that stimulates these countries to prioritize these tasks and to achieve some progress in these fields, any success in this respect would benefit the people and civic society by improving their access to, and their opportunity to exercise influence on the democratic political process. Additionally, success in these fields can contribute to the improvement of (good and democratic) governance, positive practices of governance and the democratic accountability of politicians and the government. These developments are possible only if the principle of the rule of law is being followed and applied fully. That would also imply the implementation of the highest standards of human rights in these societies. The logical practical consequences of such developments should be the substantially improved legality (both as a principle and daily practice) and consequently, increased legitimacy of politics, political systems and governments, as well as of societies as the whole.

The realization of these goals and developments might take time and should be observed as a long-term process of profound reforms that can be successful only if based on a general consensus in the respective society. Considering multiple and diverse observed structural, normative and institutional deficiencies and obstacles, including economic and social issues, such reforms and developments require the involvement and mobilization of all available (internal and external) resources in concerted efforts. They also demand adequate political leadership that is capable of constantly detecting, building, promoting and reinforcing common interests and social consensus regarding democratic, equal and inclusive social development, while simultaneously rejecting and fighting nationalism and other exclusive and discriminatory ideologies, policies and practices.

Unfortunately, in all environments one of deficiencies and obstacles detected is the lack of such leadership. In some environments, especially in Bosnia and Herzegovina, substantial constitutional reform is urgently required. This reform must address several issues, deficiencies and problems, such as: the exclusive nature of the existing arrangements that based on the principle of the equality of “constituent nations” reduce the existing pluralism and diversity and exclude all who are not members of the “constituent nations”; the ethnicization of politics (including the perpetuation of nationalism(s) and their political monopoly); the need for inclusive and democratic citizenship, based on the principle of equality; extremely complicated procedures; complex but ineffective parallel or even multiple structures, institutions and governments; (un)accountability and (in)efficiency of institutions and offices, which can result in undemocratic rule and failing democracy; etc.117

In this context it is necessary to address the central questions that the country report on Bosnia Herzegovina presents in the following way:

Somewhere along the way of ethno-political supremacy a citizen has been lost, and that is not a problem any more. Yet if something does not impose itself as a problem that does not mean that there is no problem. In other

116 See e.g., op. cit. note 4, 15, 26-28.
117 See e.g., op. cit. note 1, 6, 23-.
words, ‘the political authority of a group, however, does not justify the
oppression of individuals within the group.’118 But in order to prevent such
oppression, there should be available ‘legally legitimate ways of protecting
basic rights.’119 In the light of current constitutional debates all key players
to the debates should be warned that ‘nationalism, whether writ large or
small, does not justify absolute authority or violation of basic rights of
individuals. Conversely, to limit the power of nations does not deny national
groups self-governing authority. It denies them absolute authority, which no
nation should have over individuals.’120

Indeed it can be speculated that such an imposition of basic rights could be
counterproductive. In fact authors such as Kymlicka warn us that ‘in the end,
liberal institutions can only really work if liberal beliefs have been
internalized by the members of the self-governing society, be it an
independent country or a national minority’121, and ‘that group
representation is not inherently illiberal or undemocratic, and indeed is
consistent with may features of our existing systems of representation.’122
But what if the group representation in BiH is proven illiberal and
undemocratic, that is, what if the group representation in BiH lacks basic
legitimacy? What if current ethno-political set-up with its practices of fear,
discrimination - during post-conflict, and with its practices of the illegal use
of force and genocide - during war, in fact continually prevents
internalization of liberal beliefs. Should one go on to conclude, in a rather
‘orientalist’ manner that certain group of people is not fit for liberal
democracy?123

In environments that are as ethnically plural and diverse as the Balkan societies,
one cannot ignore ethnicity and its social relevance. However, reducing the
recognized plurality to just a few (constituent) ethnic entities and thereby granting
their members privileges while in many ways excluding all others can be considered
a very problematic concept. Consequently, one can understand the dilemma of the
choice between and/or the adequate balance of the concepts of “ethnic” and
“ethical” equality,124 or between “individual” and “collective” rights.125 In my
view, considering specific circumstances in an environment, a political choice
might be to give priority one concept the other in certain time periods. If the
individual nature of rights and equality is being ignored, or the collective nature of
rights and equality is being stressed and privileged at the expense of individual
rights, as it is the case in Bosnia and Herzegovina, one should reinforce the
importance of individual rights and equality, especially the equal inclusion of every
individual – which also implies equal access to all jobs and offices.126 However,
considering all diversities that exist in the Balkans, a key priority in the long term
is to search for an adequate balance between individual and collective rights,
based on the recognition that by nature some rights, especially the rights of
minorities are simultaneously individual and collective. This is especially important
in environments in which a human rights culture still needs to be developed127 and

118 Amy Gutmann, Identity in Democracy, (Princeton and Oxford, Princeton University Press,
2003) 53-54.
119 Ibid, 54.
120 Ibid.
122 Ibid, 134.
124 See Ibid, 18-23.
126 See Ibid.
127 See e.g., op. cit. note 4, 24.
in which we can detect intolerance towards and discrimination against minorities.\textsuperscript{128}

In this context, we should also address the issues of adequate territorial and functional distribution of powers and competences within a system, as well as the administrative division and organization of the territory of a state. In other words, there is a need to pay adequate attention to local government, its position, competences and autonomy. This is especially important in countries that are rather centralized. In every ethnically plural environment, the existence of an inclusive, democratic and effective local government/level at which people realize most of their daily needs and interests, is of key importance for the position, protection, equal inclusion and voluntary integration of minorities and persons belonging to them. It is, consequently, not surprising that often minorities — if relations in local communities are relatively good, but if especially minorities represent local majorities in these communities — favor and demand the decentralization and increased autonomy of local government. However, especially in divided societies, decentralization might in some cases be seen as an attempt to divide the territory along ethnic lines and in ethnic terms.\textsuperscript{129} In this context, the issue of regionalization that is being discussed in all countries of the region might prove particularly delicate.

In some cases, federalism and diverse federal arrangements might be a very relevant tool for the adequate organization and administration of the state territory, for the management of ethnic diversity and — at least in some cases — for the adequate protection of minorities. Currently, the only federation in the region is Bosnia and Herzegovina, which might be considered an extreme case of ethnic federalism. In Bosnia and Herzegovina, due to the special position and status of “constituent nations”, even rights of individual citizens and their political participation are conditioned by their ethnic belonging.\textsuperscript{130} Consequently, we could say that an adequate balance between individual and collective/ethnic rights/equality is also of key importance in federal arrangements, especially when taking into account the fact that a functioning democracy is usually considered a necessary precondition for a successful federation.

\textsuperscript{128} See \textit{Ibid}, 14-15.
\textsuperscript{129} See e.g., \textit{op. cit.} note 5, 42-43.
\textsuperscript{130} See \textit{op. cit.} note 1, 4.
3. (Key) Actors

A discussion of (key) concepts, phenomena, definitions and processes would be incomplete if it did not include a discussion of the relevant actors. Consequently, this section tries to determine some key actors and their role in the societies studied, and particularly in the situations, contexts and processes discussed above. States and state institutions have been the main actors in the region. Nationalists often tend to see the creation of nation-states of their own as an ultimate goal and omnipotent tool for realizing their conception of their national interest. Of course, when speaking of states that are relevant actors in the Balkans, we do not refer only to the states in the region, but also to other states (including global and regional powers) in the international community that have played, play, might have played, or may play diverse relevant roles in the region.

Key institutions within states are governments — or more precisely, those institutions that formulate, adopt and implement state policies, especially the executive and legislative branches of government and the heads of states, depending on their constitutionally and legally defined powers and competences. As they result from democratic elections held in democracies, these state institutions are considered the expression of the balance of political power in a certain environment at the time of the elections. Ideally, in addition to regular elections, democratic systems also offer other possibilities for the people to directly and indirectly engage in democratic participation and influence democratic political decision-making. In non-democracies, instead of governments we often speak of the ruling regimes and of institutions that dominate all spheres of life. In the process of transition, the question remains of how and at what rate states in transition transform into democracies by replacing undemocratic rule and control (of the regime) in different spheres of life with democratic participation. In addition to the government, other state institutions might also be important for successful diversity management. The state/public administration, through its offices at different levels and its employees deals directly with the people and with various issues in diverse environments, and should therefore be mentioned as a relevant actor. Although they might not be a direct part of the state public administration, one should mention local communities, local government and institutions, which are most directly connected with the people, including members of various minorities.

States (attempting to promote a democratic image and present their government as democratic) attempt to showcase their roles, policies and impact as predominantly positive forces that contribute to the consolidation and development of democratic institutions and to successful diversity management. However, in the Balkans there are known cases when the states, their institutions and their ruling regimes were (and sometimes still are) the carriers and promoters of exclusive nationalist policies, and were sometimes even the institutional violators of human rights. Consequently, the role and impact of states always needs to be analyzed and evaluated to establish the state’s actual impact on democracy and democratic diversity management.

In comparison with governments and other state institutions, education — and more precisely, educational systems and institutions — is often an even more influential actor in the field of the consolidation and development of democracy and diversity management. All countries of the region are trying to introduce and

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131 See e.g., op. cit. note 3, 7-8; 4, 16.
132 See e.g., op. cit. note 4, 20.
133 See e.g., op. cit. note 3, 17.
implement educational reforms that would reflect transition and adjust education to their changing situation and needs. Although the number of private educational institutions is gradually increasing, the majority are still state and/or public institutions. Considering educational establishments’ role in general, and in particular in civic education, the states do not want to lose their dominant role in education of their control over education and educational institutions. This attitude is also conditioned by the fact that education remains a key factor in political socialization, indoctrination and the promotion of ideologies. Consequently, it is also an important tool for the de-ideologization and de-politization that some governments and states proclaimed as long-term goals in the process of democratization. Education in ethnically pluralistic and diverse societies can pay an important role in the context of (inter)ethnic relations. In general, integrated educational systems and institutions are preferred, as they are important factors for the successful integration of all pupils/students regardless their origin and background into the society. However, in a democratic setting, they can play such roles only if they recognize and respect existing diversities and introduce adequate measures for the protection of minorities.  

We could list a number of non-state actors within individual states that played or can play important roles, such as:

- **Political parties**, especially considering their impact and role in political socialization, and political processes and decision-making, including their participation and roles in elections;  
- **(Political) dissidents and dissident organizations** (of different kinds) in undemocratic societies that opposed the ruling regimes (in countries of the region these were especially the former communist and nationalist regimes) and fought — in legal and illegal ways — for its their (down)fall and/or transformation;  
- **Social and political movements**, including new social movements. However, in almost all environments in the region, nationalist movements, politics and forces should be considered relevant actors and important forces that contributed to the tragic historic developments in the Balkans in the past two centuries, especially in the 1990s. They could also be considered possible dangers to successful diversity management and (inter)ethnic relations;  
- **Trade unions and diverse professional interest organizations** that, in addition to class relations, can also be relevant factors in diversity management and (inter)ethnic relations;  
- **Civil society**, including all its segments and actors, such as:
  - **Non-governmental organizations** and diverse associations of citizens that, through activities in various fields, can contribute substantially to the improvement of education and training, intercultural information, awareness raising, trust building, stimulating cooperation, inclusion and integration, etc., which are all important for successful diversity management in diverse societies;  
  - **Non-state economic actors**, private and public companies and enterprises. In the context of (inter)ethnic relations and diversity management, special attention should be paid to economic actors with

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134 See e.g., op. cit. note 1, 10, 22, 30; and 2, 5, 15; but also notes 3, 4; 5; 6; and 7.  
135 See e.g., op. cit. note 3, 7; 4, 18-19.  
136 See e.g., op. cit. note 4, 16.  
137 See e.g., ibid, 19.
particular ethnic backgrounds and identification that are especially important for developments and processes in divided societies;

- **Media**, and in recent times especially the electronic media, through their role in providing adequate information, in promoting interethnic understanding and cooperation, in education and training, including civic education, etc. This indicates their importance to successful diversity management. Considering their social and political importance and impact, they are sometimes described as the “fourth branch of government” in democracies; etc.

Finally, all country reports and specific studies mention the role of the **international community**, which encompasses a number of relevant actors who can impact (inter)ethnic relations and contribute to successful diversity management in different ways. The international community can stimulate and promote tolerance, (interethnic and international) communication and cooperation, and undertake diverse activities and measures that can contribute to successful diversity management, especially through their engagement in the prevention, management and/or resolution of crises and conflicts.¹³⁸ This group of actors includes:

- **States, as members of the international community** through international cooperation, preferably developing common policies and undertaking concerted activities and measures. However, as already mentioned, one should not forget the role that individual states can play — in this case usually following their specific national interests;

- **International organizations, treaties and integrations** through their institutions, bodies, policies, programs and measures aimed at the directing development and promoting peace and stability in specific regions. The MIRICO project pays special attention to the role of the EU, its policies, and their impact on developments in the Balkan region;¹³⁹

- **Foreign and international non-governmental organizations** through their direct involvement, projects and programs in the region and individual countries that contribute to the improvement of interethnic relations, building interethnic communication and cooperation, the prevention, management and/or resolution of crises and conflicts, etc. They are considered especially important for the development of civil society in “target countries”. Nevertheless, their actual results often fail to fulfill expectations, especially with regard to the development and self-sustainability of indigenous civil society in these environments.

¹³⁸ The involvement of the international community has been relevant in all countries of the region; however, it was in the case of Macedonia that it was actually successful in preventing major escalation of conflicts and their transformation into violent ones. (See e.g., op. cit. note 3.)

¹³⁹ See especially op. cit. note 9.
4. Phases of a Conflict: Pre-Conflict, Conflict and Post-Conflict

WP 4 focuses on the protection of minorities and diversity management in the post-conflict phase in the life-cycle of the conflicts in Western Balkan countries. This phase is described as the post-conflict phase because it follows a period of escalated, and in most cases violent, conflicts that can be described as wars (military conflicts) in individual countries. Although some tensions and occasional conflict escalations still exist, this post-conflict phase is marked by the absence of large scale violence and war and the by expressed desire of all countries to succeed in the democratic transition and to participate into the Euro-Atlantic integration process.

We should be aware that the schematic division of the life-cycle of a conflict into a pre-conflict phase, a phase of intensified conflict (when its escalation and intensity reach their peak and are followed by a de-escalation) and a post-conflict phase should be considered as an analytical tool and referential framework that can help us analyze and better understand the actual conflict that we are studying. Additionally, such classifications of phases of conflicts can be helpful for successful diversity management and for the prevention, management and/or resolution of crises and conflicts.

Nevertheless, when studying actual conflicts we should be aware that individual phases of the conflict might be very difficult to determine and that often several phases of conflicts, especially if there are simultaneously more conflicts in a certain environment, can overlap. Consequently, what is defined as a post-conflict situation considering a specific historical time and/or conflict, might turn out to be a pre-conflict or a latent conflict phase if we take into account the future development of a specific environment.
5. Reconciliation

Reports within this WP have consistently referred to reconstruction and reconciliation. The concept and process of reconstruction can be defined as the rebuilding, reparation and reconstruction of damage caused by military conflicts as materialized in several concrete policies, measures, programs and projects. The concept of reconciliation, however, is more complex and, in many ways, more problematic. The complexity of this concept can be seen from the specific report on reconciliation and truth commissions, which focuses particularly on the role of history, history teaching and various interpretations of history in such processes in an attempt to reach an agreement regarding the (historic) “truth.”

The concept of reconciliation can be associated with the process of “social reconstruction”, and in post-conflict societies can be defined as “a process that reaffirms and develops a society and its institutions based on shared values and human rights.” As the specific report indicates, the concept of “normalization” used by Puhovski might be appropriate as well. “Former belligerent groups and individuals have to find new ways of living together peacefully and promoting tolerance and inclusiveness.” To restore normalcy and return to normal life, they consequently have to “achieve the ‘building of relationship’, according to Jean Paul Lederach’s minimal definition of reconciliation.” According to his definition, the critical components of reconciliation include truth, justice, mercy, and peace. As the country report on Macedonia indicates:

Reconciliation is not an event but a process. It is not a linear process. It is a difficult, long and unpredictable one, involving various steps and stages. According to the authors of “Reconciliation After Violent Conflict” the first stage is replacing fear with non-violent co-existence; the second step is building confidence and trust and the third step is achieving empathy.

Galtung concludes that the best results can be achieved when all parties in a certain environment, especially those that were involved in a conflict agree to “cooperate in resolution and reconstruction.”

Usually reconciliation, especially inter-ethnic reconciliation, is understood as “a process that requires objective facing of the recent past on both sides of the conflict.” In other words, reconciliation is a specific process that leads to the commonly acceptable and accepted (re)interpretation of the past, especially of specific shared past traumatic developments. In a way, it is a past-oriented and usually painful process of healing that, however, has present- and future-oriented

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140 See op. cit. note 6, 3-4 (section 1.1. on definition of reconciliation).
goals and impact. Ideally, it can create the formal basis and conditions for peace, coexistence and cooperation in the present and future, and for the necessary social cohesion that enables the elaboration and realization of common interests. However, the danger is that this process, which should normally be limited to a certain, relatively short period, can become a never-ending, permanent process that constantly reinforces certain historic traumas.

As such, the concepts and practices of reconciliation can be problematic and even counterproductive, especially if reconciliation is attempted in an environment in which there are no clear-cut divisions between the victims and perpetrators, or between the victors and losers. In such cases it is often almost impossible to reach a consensus or even a compromise regarding the past and commonly acceptable interpretations of this past. The task becomes even more difficult in the process of transition and in societies faced with the dilemmas of transitional justice in which the democratic set-up of the society is still unstable.148 Additionally, there are several dimensions of justice and truth, often several truths — such as judicial, political and moral justice and truth.149

An effective process of reconciliation also requires a clearly defined and regulated procedural and institutional framework. The procedures and the participation of individuals and institutions should be precisely determined at the very beginning of the process, and agreed upon by all parties. Usually, “truth commissions”, which have the mission of establishing the truth and determining the responsibility of perpetrators, function as key institutions in this process. However, their composition, mode of operation, role, powers and competences can be defined differently in different environments. Ideally, they should be well adjusted to the specific circumstances and the needs of a specific environment.

One of main preliminary issues that is necessary for the successful work of truth commissions and for reconciliation is the precise definition of criteria for the determination of responsibility and accountability. Although there is often a collective blame associated with a certain party or collective entity that is seen as the main perpetrator of wrong-doing and/or atrocities in a certain environment, reconciliation requires the establishment of individual (or at least individualized), personal responsibility and accountability.150 Usually, it is expected that individual perpetrators will admit their responsibility and accountability as well as express their regret for the wrongs they have committed.

Reconciliation might also be considered the undoing of past wrong-doing through the perpetrator’s recognition of responsibility and accountability and remorse on the one side, and through their victims’ forgiveness on the other. Reconciliation with the past is a symbolic act, possible only if all relevant parties are willing to participate. Usually, before reconciliation can begin, certain necessary preconditions — such as reconstruction, the return of refugees and displaced persons, the introduction of adequate regulations, measures and policies for the protection of minorities, etc. — need to be ensured.

Reconciliation often appears in political declarations and diverse documents from the Western Balkan region. Usually, these documents speak of reconciliation in the context of human rights, the protection of minorities, refugee return, reconstruction, post-conflict development, democratization and consolidation of democracy, peace and stability, etc.151 and state that reconciliation could contribute to these goals. However, not only do they fail to define reconciliation’s principles and goals, but they also fail to define the process and procedure.

148 See e.g., op. cit. note 4, 11.
149 Ibid, 11-12.
150 See e.g., op. cit. note 2, 18.
151 See e.g., op. cit. note 9, 29-30.
Our observation is that attempts at reconciliation in the Balkans failed to reach the results expected. Furthermore, recent and current attempts have often produced the opposite results and even increased tensions.

6. Conclusions

This synthetic study shows the complexity of concepts and phenomena studied in the frame of the MIRICO project. Nevertheless, this study tries to develop a common theoretical and conceptual framework. Consequently, we can conclude that human and minority rights, the adequate protection of minorities, tolerance, inclusion, equal participation, integration and cooperation, etc. constitute necessary components of successful diversity management in contemporary plural societies. Focusing on national minorities and ethnic relations, the study stresses the importance of ethnicity, (inter)ethnic relations and minorities, as well as their adequate recognition, regulation and management for the peace, stability and successful development of these societies, and in particular for the process of reconstruction and reconciliation for state- and nation-building in the region.

We can say that the study to a large extent confirmed our research considerations. We can agree that any uncritical comparison and/or generalization of findings and concepts (without listing and stressing all specifics, differences and diversities of individual environments) might be very misleading and problematic.

The concepts and definitions presented could be considered a theoretical framework, a basis and (generalized) yardsticks (measures) for adequate research, for the interpretations of research findings and for comparative research, which must then to take into account specific historic developments, circumstances and conditions in individual environments.

The same is true of the division and classification of phases in the life-cycle of conflicts, considering the fact that each conflict is unique and can be considered a case sui generis. Consequently, it is even more important that in each case, the relevant actors and their roles and impact are detected and analyzed. In analyzing diversity management and reconciliation as one of the possible components of this process, a few important deficiencies have been detected, particularly the lack of adequate coordination and cooperation among the actors. An critical weakness of reconciliation and diversity management efforts is also the lack of a coherent (especially long-term) strategy for the exercise and promotion of human and minority rights.

Regarding reconciliation, we can confirm that the current concepts of reconciliation have not produced the desired results. Consequently, we believe that approaches, such as normalization — developing adequate conditions for coexistence and cooperation based on common long-term interests — might be better and more productive concepts and options. They should also take into consideration the fact that a substantial gap exists between the normative framework and the actual situation of minorities and that several problems appear in the exercise of minority rights, which determine the actual level of their protection, in every society studied in the Balkans.
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