Grant Agreement Number: 285368

ALTERNATIVE
Developing alternative understandings of security and justice through restorative justice approaches in intercultural settings within democratic societies

Deliverable 6.2
Research report on interethnic conflicts and citizens' perception of security

SEVENTH FRAMEWORK PROGRAMME
COOPERATION PROGRAMME

Project start date: 01.02.2012
Project duration: 48 months
Deliverable 6.2 due date: M24 (January 2014)
Submission date: 11 February 2014
Dissemination level: PU (public)
Workpackage: WP6
Workpackage leader: VDS
Contact person: Project Manager, Dr. Inge Vanfraechem
Project URL: www.alternativeproject.eu

Conflicts, security and justice in intercultural context of Serbia

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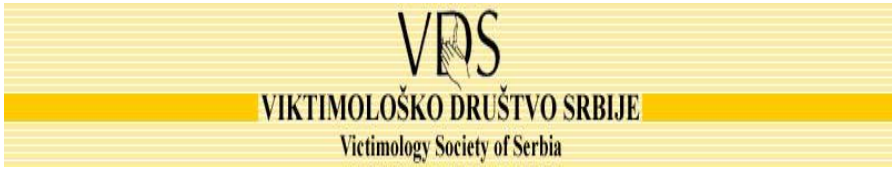

Executive summary

During 2013, within the project ALTERNATIVE, the Victimology Society of Serbia conducted an empirical research study with the aim to find out how people from multiethnic communities in Serbia deal with interethnic conflicts in their everyday life and to identify both problems and positive experiences in solving them. In addition, it analysed how victims were treated, how security was perceived by the citizens, and what the place is of restorative approaches in dealing with conflicts and security. The research consisted of two parts: a qualitative research and a quantitative survey on interethnic relations, existing micro-level interethnic conflicts and ways of dealing with them by citizens in three multiethnic communities in the border regions of Serbia: 1) Bac and Backa Palanka (the region of Vojvodina), 2) Medvedja (South Serbia), and 3) Prijepolje (South-West Serbia). The research had a strong action dimension.

The research methodology

Within the qualitative research, the data was collected through the qualitative interviews with 17 persons from NGOs and state institutions in the research sites (ten of them were Serbs, three Albanians, three Bosniaks/Muslims, and one Croat). The basis for the methodological approach in collecting data about victimisation and conflicts in the quantitative part of the research was a victimisation survey. The survey was conducted on the sample of 1,423 persons. The ethnic structure of the sample was as follows: in Medvedja 243 (63.6%) respondents were Serbs and 139 (36.4%) Albanians; in Prijepolje, there were 304 (49.8%) Serbs and 306 (50.2%) Bosniaks; and in Bac/Backa Palanka 346 Serbs (80.3%) and 85 Croats (19.7%). A respondent-driven sampling was used bearing in mind the social context of the post-conflict society.

The main research findings

The survey findings showed that about a quarter of respondents endured some form of victimisation in the period from the 1990 until the time of the survey. A total of 1,367 victimisation incidents were reported by 383 respondents. Most of these victimisations were interethnic. The finding that about a third of the respondents knew someone from their own as well as from another ethnic group who was victimised by a member of another ethnic group, suggests that interethnic victimisation is much more widespread in the society.

The biggest proportion of victimisations occurred during the 1990s, coinciding with armed conflicts in Croatia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, and Kosovo, while the smaller proportion occurred after 2000, which was expected and confirm the findings of the qualitative analyses.

Albanians most often answered that they were victimised comparing to other ethnic groups. Respondents were aware of interethnic victimisation of members of other ethnic group less than of members of their own. Similarly as to the qualitative data, survey findings show that most often ethnicity was perceived as the reason for victimisation, while political reasons were also given a prominent place, suggesting that ethnicity and political affiliation are strong factors that influence victimisation and conflicts in our research sites, as well as the safety of citizens. Nevertheless, not all the conflicts between members of different ethnic groups are perceived as intercultural.

The majority of the victimised respondents reported actions in the aftermath of the victimising event in terms of looking for assistance and support and trying to solve the consequences of the victimisation, which speaks in favour of victims' agency.

A large majority of respondents reported feeling safe living in their communities at the time of the research. Most of respondents feel safer today than during the 1990s, while a third feels the same. Respondents from Prijepolje responded feeling much safer today in comparison to the respondents from other research sites. Victimised respondents reported feeling unsafe nowadays more often than those who did not have a victimisation experience. Moreover,

victimised respondents answered feeling less safe during the 1990s than nowadays. The connection between previous negative experiences of victimisation and the current feelings of safety was confirmed at the level of all three research-sites.

The survey findings confirmed the existence of all aspects of safety that appeared in the qualitative analyses: physical, economic, legal, social and political (un)safety. Inefficiency of the state in solving problems and economic factors, similarly as in qualitative analyses, appeared as the greatest contributors to respondents' personal feelings of insecurity. Consequently, economic measures (more jobs), more communication between people about problems and various ways of increasing efficiency of the state were recognised as the best measures for increasing safety. Finally, victimised respondents do not support severe punishments for those who endanger the safety of the citizens significantly more that those who do not have such experience. Thus, it seems that respondents give more importance to restorative and social than to retributive measures as possible ways of increasing the safety of citizens.

Both restorative and retributive measures were recognised as solutions that may bring justice in cases of interethnic conflicts in which the respondents were victimised. Punishment is still very much seen as an important form of reaction in the aftermath of different forms of victimisation, particularly by the respondents from Medvedja. Nevertheless, even those who saw punishment as a mechanism suitable to achieve justice, did not always consider it as the only mechanism but rather recognised restorative approaches as those that could be complementary to punishment. In this respect, knowing why what happened has happened, which requires some form of encounter and communication, together with the dialogue are seen as important mechanisms, which confirms the findings of the qualitative research. The survey findings also suggest that respondents use different restorative approaches, particularly dialogue and informal mediation, for solving everyday problems. In addition, respondents' answers prove to open space for the broader use of restorative approaches in cases of victimisation where power imbalance exists.

One fifth of the respondents had talked to someone about interethnic relations in their community during the year that preceded the research. More than a half of them discussed this issue in a constructive and positive way in terms of how to improve interethnic relations and what would be possible ways to resolve and overcome interethnic conflicts. The survey findings also suggest very high level and frequency of interaction of our respondents with people of different ethnic group, although some differences between research-sites were noticed: respondents from Medvedja have to a greater extent answered that they never visit people from a different ethnic group, while interaction of people from different ethnic groups is the biggest in Prijepolje. Finally, the best ways to improve interethnic relations are seen in more interaction and conversation, tolerance and respect for diversity, as well as in overtaking social measures for prevention of conflicts.

Further steps

The empirical research suggests there is a potential for restorative justice, but there is still a lack of awareness about its importance, as well as the lack of institutional support for its broader use in practice. Within our action research in the third year of the project implementation, the process of working on raising awareness and capacity building in the three research-sites by bringing back our findings to the local communities will start. The research results will serve as a basis for coming, together with people from the local communities, to the ideas about restorative models suitable for dealing with conflicts on micro, meso and macro levels. This process will bring together citizens, representatives of the civil society organisations and representatives of the state institutions on the local level into the democratic intercultural dialogue (inclusive process), who will also test the applicability of different restorative approaches in dealing with conflicts.

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1. Introduction

Within the ALTERNATIVE project, the Victimology Society of Serbia intends to identify, propose and implement a restorative model of conflict resolution in multiethnic contexts through involving all citizens, in particular victims. We intend to look for the potential that exists in Serbia for using alternative restorative approaches as tools for enhancing the security[1] of citizens and to consider the position and the role of victims in existing methods of dealing with interethnic conflicts. In that regard, our objective is to elicit ideas of how to involve citizens from multiethnic communities, particularly victims, in democratic processes for peace-building and conflict resolution, as well as how to stimulate the cooperation of citizens and state institutions in order to develop long term civil security and justice solutions for multiethnic communities.

In order to achieve these objectives, during the first year of the project we conducted theoretical research, i.e. a literature review and qualitative research of civil society's and state's dealing with interethnic and related political and intercultural conflicts in Serbia in the period 1990-2012 (Nikolic-Ristanovic and Copic 2013).[2] It provided a basis for the operationalisation of the empirical research on interethnic relations, existing conflicts and ways of dealing with them by citizens in three multiethnic regions in Serbia that was conducted during 2013, i.e. during the second year of the project implementation.

The aim of the empirical research conducted during 2013 was to find out how people from multiethnic communities deal with interethnic conflicts in their everyday life and to identify both problems and positive experiences in solving them. In addition, we intended to find out how victims are treated, how security

[1] For more on the concept of security please see Foss *et al.* (2012) and Pali (2012).
[2] The research report on dealing with conflicts by NGOs and the state *Dealing with interethnic conflicts in Serbia and the place of restorative justice and victims* is available at the website of the project ALTERNATIVE (http://www.alternativeproject.eu/assets/upload/Deliverable_6.1_Research_report_on_dealing_with_conflicts_by_NGOs_and_the_state.pdf) and the website of the Victimology Society of Serbia (www.vds.org.rs).

is perceived by citizens, and what the place is of restorative justice approaches[3] in dealing with conflicts and security. The results of both theoretical and empirical research should provide a basis for developing an action research study in three multiethnic communities in Serbia aimed at testing the applicability of the restorative justice approaches identified as suitable for dealing with interethnic conflicts. The action research study will be carried out in 2014 (i.e. in the third year of the project) in the form of the participatory and process oriented seminars in the research sites. Together with the findings of the theoretical and empirical research, the results of the action research study will provide for the basis for developing a proposal for the victim fostered restorative justice model of dealing with interethnic conflicts in Serbia. Once developed, the proposal will be sent back to the participants of the seminars in the research-sites for their comments and suggestions before being finalised.

The empirical research was conducted in three research sites, i.e. in three multiethnic communities in the border regions of Serbia:

1. Bac/Backa Palanka, which are situated in the region of Vojvodina, close to the state border with Croatia, where the relations and conflicts between Serbs and Croats were explored;

2. Prijepolje, which is situated in the region of South-West Serbia, on the border triangle of Serbia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, and Montenegro, where we explored interethnic relations and conflicts between Serbs and Bosniaks/Muslims;[4]

3. Medvedja, which is situated in the region of South Serbia, close to the border with Kosovo, where the relations and conflicts between Serbs and Albanians were in focus.

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[3] For more information on the concept of restorative justice and the way it is used within the project ALTERNATIVE see Foss *et al.* (2012) and Törzs (2012).

[4] In some parts of the report, in particular the one on the analysis of the qualitative interviews, we will use both terms, alternately – Bosniaks and Muslims, depending on how the interviewees declared themselves (some of them declared themselves as Bosniaks and some Muslims), while in the rest of the research report, and particularly in the part in which the data from the quantitative survey are presented, we will use only the term Bosniak.

The empirical research consisted of two parts: the qualitative and the quantitative research on interethnic relations, existing micro-level interethnic conflicts and ways of dealing with them by citizens in three multiethnic communities in Serbia.[5]

The aim of this research report is to present the results of the empirical research, including the findings of both the qualitative and quantitative research carried out in the second year of the project. We will first briefly describe the research sites in which the empirical research was conducted. This will be followed by a description of the research methodology. The third part will present the analysis of the findings of the qualitative research on interethnic relations, existing conflicts and ways of dealing with them. In the fourth part we will present the analysis of the findings of the quantitative survey on existing micro-level interethnic conflicts and ways of dealing with them by citizens in the three multiethnic research sites in Serbia. Finally we will present the conclusions and discuss to the directions of our further work on the project.

[5] The qualitative research in the three multiethnic communities in Serbia was not envisaged by the project description. However, during the implementation of the ALTERNATIVE project in general and the theoretical research done in year 1 by the Victimology Society of Serbia in particular, we realised that in order to be able to operationalise the survey and to contribute to the qualitative dimension and action-oriented character of the ALTERNATIVE project we needed a qualitative research. Thus, we decided to conduct a qualitative research on interethnic relations, existing conflicts and ways of dealing with them by individuals in the three multiethnic communities in Serbia.

2. The research sites

2.1. Selecting the research sites

Starting from the initial proposal in the project description and based upon the findings of the qualitative research carried out in the first year of the project implementation (Nikolic-Ristanovic and Copic 2013), official statistical data on the ethnic structure in the three multiethnic regions in Serbia, which are in the focus of the research (Vojvodina, South Serbia, and South-West Serbia)[6], and in consultations with the members of the WP6 Advisory Board[7], research-sites have been selected in each of the multiethnic regions that include four municipalities: Bac and Backa Palanka in the region of Vojvodina, Prijepolje in the region of South-West Serbia and Medvedja in the region of South Serbia. In these research-sites we intended to explore the relations and existing conflicts between Serbs and Croats (in Bac/Backa Palanka), Serbs and Bosniaks (in Prijepolje), and Serbs and Albanians (in Medvedja), and the way people solve them, including how victims are treated, security perceptions and the place of restorative justice. In selecting the research-sites we were guided by three main criteria:

1. The location of the research-sites. Research-sites should be located in the border regions and to border with Croatia (in the region of Vojvodina), Bosnia and Herzegovina (in the region of South-West Serbia), and Kosovo (in the

[6] Republicki zavod za statistiku. 2012. *Popis stanovnistva, domacinstava i stanova 2011. u Republici Srbiji: stanovnistvo: nacionalna pripadnost: podaci po opstinama i gradovima*. Beograd: Republicki zavod za statistiku.

[7] As far as the research of the VDS is an action-oriented research we wanted to include representatives of organisations from three ethnically mixed regions in Serbia in the project implementation from the very beginning. This was done through initiating and establishing Advisory Board of the WP6, which was established in May 2012. It has nine members of Serbian, Croatian, Albanian, Bosnian and Hungarian ethnicity. Members of the AB are representatives of local NGOs and state institutions, as well as one journalist and one attorney at law. The role of the AB members is to advise the research-team on the tasks to be undertaken within the WP6 research; to assist VDS in finding out NGOs, individuals, IOs and representatives of state agencies from their local communities who may provide valuable information on the subject of the research (within tasks 6.1 and 6.2); to assist VDS in distribution of questionnaires in their regions within task 6.2; to assist VDS in organising seminars in their regions within task 6.3.

region of South Serbia) in order to be able to explore possible impact of the wars in these parts of the former Yugoslavia on the interethnic relations and conflicts in Serbia both during 1990s and afterwards. As the research carried out in year 1 suggests, ethnic conflicts from the 1990s and the way the Serbian state dealt with them had a strong impact on the long-term depreciation of interethnic relationships in Serbia itself (Nikolic-Ristanovic and Copic 2013). Many unresolved problems, conflicts and tensions on both the level of the state and between individual citizens remained after 1990s. Even today, relationships and conflicts between members of different ethnic groups in Serbia are still very much under influence of the wars from the 1990s and their consequences, which is particularly visible in the parts where multi-ethnicity is the most emphasised (e.g. parts near the southern, western and northern borders). Therefore, in Serbia the security of citizens requires dealing with both past and present interethnic conflicts as well as with their very complex interconnectedness (Nikolic-Ristanovic and Copic 2013).

2. Multiethnic communities. Research sites should be multiethnic and comprise both Serbs and other ethnic groups (in particular, Croats, Bosniaks and Albanians) that were in conflict during the wars in the Former Yugoslavia in the 1990s live in these areas, in order to be able to explore their relationships both during the 1990s and afterwards.

3. The proportion of Serbs and members of other ethnic groups. We selected sites with differing proportions of population ethnicity. We have intentionally chosen one research-site with almost the same proportion of Serbs and members of another ethnic group (Bosniaks), and two sites in which Serbs constitute the majority, while other ethnic groups (Croats and Albanians) present the minority. Thus, Prijepolje is the town in which the number of Serbs and Bosniaks is almost the same. The other two regions included in this research study contain no towns with approximately the same number of Serbs and other relevant ethnic groups, i.e. Croats and Albanians. That is, at least to some extent, the consequence of the huge migrations both during the 1990s and afterwards. Due to that, we have chosen other two sites – Bac/Backa Palanka in Vojvodina, and Medvedja in South Serbia –in consultation with the WP6 Advisory Board.

2.2. Description of the research sites

2.2.1. Medvedja

The municipality of Medvedja is located in South Serbia in the Jablanica district, and together with Bujanovac and Presevo constitutes the so-called "Presevo valley". It extends to an area of 524 km[28] and borders with Kosovo in the South. According to the 2002 census,[9] the municipality had 10,760 citizens. Serbs constituted two thirds of the population (7,163 or 66.0%), and Albanians around a quarter (2,816 or 26.2%). However, the current number of citizens in the area is unknown as Albanians boycotted the 2011 census. A great number of Albanians have emigrated to Western European countries and Kosovo. It is estimated that today there are around 400-500 Albanians living in Medvedja. The number of Serbs has decreased as well, but not to that extent.

Conflicts in Kosovo in the 1990s, especially during 1998 and 1999 between Serbian army and police forces, on one side, and the Liberation Army of Kosovo, on the other, worsened the situation as well as the multiethnic relations in this border region. During the armed conflicts, military and police points were set up and Serbian security forces dispersed throughout Medvedja. This contributed to the feeling of insecurity amongst local Albanians. The situation was even worse during the NATO bombing of Serbia, when insecurity increased because of the cases of torture, harassment, arrests and robberies of Albanian citizens performed by members of the Serbian army and police forces. Consequently, a number of Albanian families fled to Kosovo and Macedonia, feeling that it would be safer there. Some of them remained there, particularly in Kosovo, while some have returned to Medvedja. Pressures on the members of the Albanian ethnic community have continued even after 2000. They were discriminated against and prevented from exercising their civil rights. There were also cases of physical violence against Albanians performed by the members of the Serbian police.

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[8] http://www.medvedja.org.rs/index.php/sr_cir/o-medvedji/licna-karta.html - Website of the municipality of Medvedja, accessed on 6 June 2013.

[9] http://www.mtt.org.rs/Srbijapopis2002.pdf, accessed on 6 June 2013.

The fountain, which is located in the centre of Medvedja, can illustrate how citizens of the Serbian and Albanian nationality look at what was happening in this municipality in the recent past. On this fountain there are two memorial plaques with the following words: "The glory to the combatants of the second battalion from Djakovica[10] who died in defending the homeland from the Shqiptar terrorists and NATO forces"[11] and "To the combatants who died in defending the homeland from the NATO forces; Grateful citizens of the municipality of Medvedja."[12] We asked the people we interviewed for more information regarding the circumstances of the death of people whose names are on these plaques and the inscription itself. One Albanian said he knows what is written, but he did not know why and for whom the monument was set up. On the other hand, one Serb said that this was a fountain that has the names of three Serbs killed in Kosovo, but he did not know that there is another plaque with fifteen names.

2.2.2. Bac and Backa Palanka

The municipalities of Bac and Backa Palanka are located in the Autonomous Province of Vojvodina in the South Backa region. These municipalities extend to an area of 946 km² (Backa Palanka 579 km² and Bac 367 km²[13]) and belong to a region that borders with Croatia by the river Danube, which presents a natural border. According to the data from the 2011 census there were 14,405 citizens in the municipality of Bac: 6,750 (46.8%) Serbs and 1,209 (8.4%) Croats. The

[10] Djakovica is a town in Kosovo.
[11] Names of 15 (Serbian) solders are engraved on the plaque. As to the name Shqiptar (Šiptar in Serbian), it is an Albanian language ethnonym, by which Albanians call themselves. However, in Serbian language it has a negative connotation and it is considered to be an insulting term.
[12] Names of three (Serbian) men are engraved in this plaque.
[13] http://serbia-locations.rs/municipalities-srb/municipality.php?ID=26, accessed on 7 June 2013.

population of Backa Palanka is 55,528, out of which 43,843 (79%) are Serbs and 819 (1.5%) are Croats.[14]

The war and the proximity of the border with Croatia contributed to the feeling of insecurity and fear of citizens, especially Croats, during the 1990s. There were also pressures over the Croats by formal and informal groups (such as the police, paramilitary groups, members of volunteer corps), as well as cases of verbal and physical violence.

One of the characteristics of this research-site is the bridge called "May 25th"[15] on the river Danube in Backa Palanka, which was opened in 1974. This bridge, which was built on the banks of the two former republics of the former Yugoslavia - Serbia and Croatia in the glory of brotherhood and unity, connects the two nearest places Backa Palanka in Serbia and Ilok in Croatia. The bridge was damaged during the NATO bombing in 1999 and was not repaired until 2002. When it was restored and opened for traffic, the bridge once again became a link between Serbia and Croatia.

2.2.3. Prijepolje

The municipality of Prijepolje is located in the South-West part of Serbia on the border triangle of Serbia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, and Montenegro in the region called Raska or Sandzak.[16] It extends to an area of 827 km².[17] According to the 2011 census, the municipality has 37,059 citizens, out of which 19,496 are Serbs (52.6%) and 16,335 are Bosniaks (44.1%).[18]

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[14] Republicki zavod za statistiku. 2012. *Popis stanovnistva, domacinstava i stanova 2011. u Republici Srbiji: stanovnistvo: nacionalna pripadnost: podaci po opstinama i gradovima.* Beograd: Republicki zavod za statistiku.

[15] During the socialist time, the 25th of May was celebrated in Yugoslavia as the Youth day.

[16] Two names are used for the south-west part of Serbia: Sandzak and Raska oblast (the area of Raska). The former is mainly used by Bosnikas, while the latter one is used by Serbs. Hence, using one or another term automatically places a person on the side of one or another ethnic group, being a source of disputes.

[17] http://www.opstinaprijepolje.rs/OPSTINA-PRIJEPOLJE-Osnovni-podaci-o Prijepolju_83_6_1__cir - web site of Municipality of Prijepolje, accessed on 7 June 2013.

[18] Republicki zavod za statistiku. 2012. *Popis stanovnistva, domacinstava i stanova 2011. u Republici Srbiji: stanovnistvo: nacionalna pripadnost: podaci po opstinama i gradovima.* Beograd: Republicki zavod za statistiku.

During the 1990s when the war in Bosnia and Herzegovina escalated, there were arrests (and harassment) of Bosniaks in Prijepolje and the whole region by the police. The most important event that occurred during the 1990s, which disturbed relations between Serbs and Bosniaks, was the kidnapping of 19 Bosniak civilians from the train in Strpci on 27 February 1993. Among the kidnapped were nine citizens of Prijepolje. Members of the Serbian paramilitary group took the passengers from the train to the village near Visegrad (in Bosnia and Herzegovina) where they were lined up, robbed and beaten. Afterwards, they were executed not far from the river Drina. This event brought insecurity, mistrust and fear among citizens in Prijepolje.

Good examples that illustrate the current interethnic relations in Prijepolje are two monuments. The first one, which is in front of the Museum in Prijepolje, presents a mother with two sons: one an Orthodox Christian and the other a Muslim. This monument reflects the harmony and good interethnic relations that traditionally exist in this municipality.

The other monument in the shape of the traditional Muslim tombstone is dedicated to the victims of kidnapping in Strpci. The local authority was united in deciding about building the monument, which was erected in 2009. It has an engraved message: “Whoever in this land forgets the station in Strpci and 27 February 1993 has given up the future.”

3. The research methodology

In this part we first discuss the subject and aim of the empirical research before proceeding to describe the methodology of both the qualitative and quantitative research.

3.1. The subject and aim of the empirical research

The subject of the empirical research was interethnic conflicts that exist at the micro level and the ways of dealing with them by citizens in the three multiethnic regions in Serbia that are the focus of the research. The aim of the research was to find out what kind of conflicts existed in the period from 1990 up until the moment of the research or still exist between members of different ethnic groups in the three multiethnic regions in Serbia, and how people solve them. In addition, we intended to look into how people perceive interethnic relations and conflicts, and their own security, as well as how victims are treated, and what is the place of restorative justice in solving the conflicts.

Through the research we explored relations and conflicts between Serbs, on the one side, and Croats (in Bac/Backa Palanka), Bosniaks (in Prijepolje), and Albanians (in Medvedja), on the other. Our main research questions were:

1. What are the relations between members of different ethnic groups in the research-sites like today?

2. How prevalent are victimisation/conflicts in the research-sites, what kind of victimisation/conflicts exist and between whom?

3. What is the awareness about victimisation of others, including members of one's own ethnic group and members of other ethnic groups, by interethnic violence?

4. Who is perceived as a victim and who as a responsible party?

5. To what extent do citizens feel safe and what impacts their feeling of (un)safety?

6. What do victims do after victimisation and to what extent are they satisfied with the treatment and outcomes?

7. What is the place of restorative justice approaches in solving conflicts in multiethnic communities?

It is important to emphasise that questions about victimisation/conflicts were asked in a way so as not to limit the interviewees and respondents on interethnic conflicts, but rather they were asked in a way that they could give answers about conflicts within one's own ethnic group, too. In this way we intended to get a broader context of relations and conflicts in the research-sites.

Starting from the qualitative research on the civil society's and state's dealing with interethnic conflicts in Serbia, which was undertaken in year 1, for the purpose of the empirical research a broad definition of conflict was used. Namely, the conflict was operationalised through a wide range of behaviours that were hurting or otherwise unpleasant for the respondents, including: insults, threats, violence, attempted or planned murder, forced to leave the place of residence, damage of property, pressures due to the political affiliation, house search, arrest, suffering because a family member was killed, kidnapped or is missing, inability to realise one's rights, feeling embarrassed because of the ethnic belonging (e.g. due to the hate speech, hate graffiti, damage of gravestones), etc.

3.2. The methodology of the qualitative research

The qualitative research on interethnic relations, existing conflicts and ways of dealing with them by individuals in the three multiethnic communities in Serbia was done as part of the preparation for the quantitative survey and as the beginning of the action research in the selected sites. Through the qualitative research we intended to get more knowledge about the social context of the research-sites.

The data was collected through the qualitative interviews with 17 persons from the research-sites: five in Bac and Backa Palanka, six in Prijepolje and six in Medvedja. Out of 17 interviewees, eleven were male and six female. Ten of them were Serbs, while there were three Albanians, three Bosniaks/Muslims and one

Croat. Except in one case, interviewees were activists of the local NGOs and representatives of state institutions (such as the museum, centre of social work, healthcare institution, municipality office, high school and library). Out of these 17 interviewees, seven were later on involved with the quantitative survey as interviewers.

For collecting the data we developed a semi-structured questionnaire. Only the part of the questionnaire on socio-demographic data was structured, while questions in other parts of the questionnaire were open-ended. Thus, the questionnaire served as guidelines for conducting interviews. It consisted from the following parts:

- General data about the respondent;
- General impressions on living in a multiethnic community and interethnic relations;
- Feelings of personal safety (today, during the 1990s and before 1990);
- Experience with the conflicts during the 1990s and after 2000;
- Ways of solving and preventing conflicts;
- Perception of victims and perpetrators;
- Social distance;
- Comments and suggestions.

Interviews were carried out in the research-sites during the field visits in March and April 2013. In organising field visits we had a great support from the members of the WP6 Advisory Board. They introduced us into the local context of the research-sites and assisted us in getting familiar with the research-sites, in organising qualitative interviews and in participative film-making, which gives this research action character.

Each field visit started with a meeting with the contact person(s) in the research-site, i.e. with the WP6 Advisory Board members and persons who later on assisted us in collecting the data for the survey. We introduced them to the ALTERNATIVE project and the research of the Victimology Society of Serbia. We also presented them with a plan for activities to be undertaken during 2013 and

2014. This was followed by the qualitative interviews, which were carried out with these persons initially and than followed by interviews with other persons they asked to be our interviewees.

The VDS research team members conducted qualitative interviews.[19] Interviews were audio-recorded throughout except in three cases. In addition, parts of seven interviews were also video-recorded.[20]

Transcripts of the interviews were sent back to the respondents to go through them, check them and intervene if necessary (make necessary changes, give additional explanations, add some new information they recall in the meantime, etc.). Thus, the respondents themselves did the final editing of the transcripts.

Transcripts were processed with the use of the Atlas.ti program version 7, and a qualitative analysis, which is presented in this research report, was done. On the basis of the data obtained through qualitative interviews, observations of the VDS research team members and informal conversations during the field visits written in their research diaries, as well as consultations with persons with whom we did qualitative interviews about the research methodology, we were able to operationalise the quantitative research.

Finally, during the field visits, research assistants were engaged in filming research-sites, meetings with contact persons and parts of some interviews. This material was used for editing a film on the research-sites. It will be used in two further ways as well: for further film editing with the aim of presenting the project, raising awareness on the possible ways of solving interethnic conflicts and for education, as well as research material to be used throughout the project.

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[19] Prof. dr Vesna Nikolic-Ristanovic, prof. dr Jelena Srna, dr Sanja Copic, dr Nikola Petrovic and Bejan Saciri.

[20] All interviewees were informed about the research orally. They were also given an information sheet with the information about the project ALTERNATIVE and the research of the Victimology Society of Serbia. Prior to starting the interview they were all asked to sign the consent forms for taking part in the research, as well as for being tape and/or video recorded.

3.3. The methodology of the quantitative survey

3.3.1. The method

The basis for our methodological approach in collecting data about victimisation and conflicts experienced by our respondents was a victimisation survey, accommodated to serve the needs of our research aims.

The data was collected through the questionnaire, which was distributed by the interviewers (activists) in the research-sites. Respondents were asked to complete the questionnaires on their own. The interviewers were instructed not to leave the questionnaires to the respondents, go and collect them later, but rather to stay with them and to be present while respondents were completing the questionnaire in order to be able to provide them necessary information, give additional explanations and inform them about organisations that are providing assistance and support to victims. Only in exceptional cases (if a person was illiterate, blind or due to some other reasons not able or not willing to fill in the questionnaire by him/herself), interviewers conducted *face-to-face* interviews, asking questions and reading out possible answers to the respondents.

3.3.2. Developing the questionnaire

For collecting the data a semi-structured questionnaire was developed. It mainly consisted of closed questions, with some open-ended questions. The process of developing the questionnaire went through several phases. The questionnaire was drafted by the VDS research team members on the basis of the results of the qualitative research on dealing with conflicts by NGOs and the state done in year 1 and the findings of the qualitative research on interethnic relations, existing conflicts and ways of dealing with them in the three multiethnic communities in Serbia done at the beginning of year 2.

This was followed by piloting the questionnaire in the three research-sites by five interviewers who were our contact persons and/or members of the WP6 Advisory Board and who had also been our interviewees in the qualitative part of

the research. Therefore, they were already familiar with the research (methodology). The interviewers were given precise instructions on how to pilot a questionnaire. We asked them to pilot the questionnaire with six persons in each research-site, including three Serbs in each site and three Albanians (in Medvedja), three Bosniaks (in Prijepolje), and three Croats (in Bac/Backa Palanka). For the purpose of piloting the questionnaire they could distribute the questionnaire to persons they know (their friends, relatives, colleagues, even persons with whom we already did qualitative interviews) and ask them to fill in the questionnaire on their own. In the end, 14 questionnaires were filled in: two in Bac, six in Prijepolje and six in Medvedja.

After piloting the questionnaire, we organised a meeting with the interviewers.[21] The aim of the meeting was to get feedback about the questionnaire (whether questions were clear, whether there were some misunderstandings, inconsistencies, uncertainties, etc.) and pilot interviews they did (in terms of noticed problems and possible obstacles). In addition, the aim of the meeting was to discuss and organise further work on collecting data in the research-sites based on the experiences from piloting the questionnaire.

On the basis of the completed pilot questionnaires, as well as the comments and suggestions given by the interviewers during the meeting, we finalised the questionnaire. In the end, it consisted from the following main parts:

- General data about the respondent;
- The data on the interethnic relations. In this part respondents were first asked to answer the question on whether they had spoken to someone about interethnic relations in their local community during the year prior to the survey, and if yes, what they had spoken about. This was followed by the question about victimisation experienced, including the questions on the form of victimisation, who was the perpetrator (a member of one's own ethnic group, a member of other ethnic groups or both), how many times each form of victimisation had

[21] The meeting was held in Belgrade on 25th May 2013.

happened and when. Finally, the two last questions in this part related to the awareness of respondents about victimisation of both members of their own ethnic group and of members of other ethnic groups by interethnic violence. Thus, they were first asked if they knew that persons who were of the same ethnicity as they had been exposed to any form of victimisation by the members of another ethnic group, and then if they knew that people who belong to another ethnic group were victimised by the members of the ethnic group to which a respondent belongs.

- Description of one particular victimising event (conflict) that was experienced by the respondent. In this part respondents were asked to shortly describe one victimising event that was unpleasant for them, that resulted in hurting, suffering, denying of human rights, etc. In this respect they were asked to answer when the victimising event had happened, who had been the perpetrator, what was the reason for being exposed to such a behaviour, who had been injured, and who had been perceived as a victim and who as a responsible party in the concrete case. This was followed by questions on respondents' agency, i.e. if and what had they overtaken in the aftermath of the victimising event and whether they had been satisfied with the treatment and the outcome. They were also asked what would be in their opinion a solution suitable to bring justice in the concrete case of victimisation. Finally, respondents were asked about having contacts and communication with the perpetrator(s), i.e. whether they had contacts with the perpetrator(s), and whether they would like to have contacts with perpetrator(s) if they did not have them.
- Mechanisms of a conflict resolution suitable to achieve justice. In this part respondents were asked if they had used some restorative approaches in solving everyday problems, as well as what would be solutions suitable to bring justice in the given case of victimisation

(given scenario) developed on the basis of the results of the qualitative research.

- Feeling of safety. In this part respondents were asked how safe they felt and what their feeling of safety was in comparison to the period of the 1990s and before 1990. In addition, they were asked to state what impacts their feeling unsafe or feeling less safe at any time and what needs to be done in order to feel safe or safer. Final questions related to social contacts with persons who belong to other ethnic groups. At the end, respondents could give their proposals about what can be done in order to improve relations between members of different ethnic groups.

The questionnaire was in Serbian, which is an official language in Serbia. However, based on our experience with the qualitative interviews with Albanian interviewees, we were aware that there would be respondents of Albanian ethnicity who do not read or understand Serbian language very well. Consequently, we translated the questionnaire into Albanian.[22] Thus, a certain number of questionnaires in Albanian language was distributed in one research site (Medvedja).

3.3.3. Sampling

The survey was conducted on a sample of 1,423 persons: 610 respondents in Prijepolje, 431 in Bac/Backa Palanka and 382 in Medvedja. According to the project description we planned to conduct the survey on the sample of 1,800 respondents – 600 in each research-site. We intended to have approximately the same number of Serbs as respondents from other ethnic groups in each subsample, i.e. in each research-site. In Prijepolje, where the ethnic balance is present, i.e. the proportion of Serbs and Bosniaks is almost the same, this meant

[22] We would like to thank our colleague Valdete Osmani from the OSCE Mission in Serbia for providing us assistance in translating the questionnaire into Albanian on a voluntary basis.

to have the same ratio as it exists in reality. In the two other research-sites (in Bac/Backa Palanka and in Medvedja) where Serbs constitute the majority of the population, while the percentage of Croats (in Bac/Backa Palanka) and Albanians (in Medvedja) is very low, we intended to have oversampling of minority ethnic groups. However, we managed to have the desired sample structure only in Prijepolje, while oversampling of minority ethnic groups in two other sites was not achieved. The reason for that was that, unlike in Prijepolje, the response rate was lower in the other two research-sites in general, as well as in relation to minority ethnic groups, particularly Croats. Namely, citizens are still not ready to speak about either their experience of victimisation or the experience of others, primarily due to distrust and fear, which is still very much present in these research-sites particularly among citizens who belong to ethnic minorities. It was particularly hard to approach respondents of Croatian ethnicity in Bac/Backa Palanka, which resulted in having less than 100 respondents from this ethnic group. This is one of the limitations of this quantitative survey and that is why one needs to approach the data related to Croat respondents with some reservations.

At the end, the ethnic structure of the sample was as follows: in Medvedja 243 (63.6%) respondents were Serbs and 139 (36.4%) Albanians; in Prijepolje, there were 304 (49.8%) Serb and 306 (50.2%) Bosniak respondents; and in Bac/Backa Palanka 346 Serb respondents (80.3%) and 85 Croats (19.7%).

For the purpose of this research, we used a respondent-driven sampling method. In collecting the data, interviewers were instructed to contact persons they know first ("primary referral points") (Klinger and Silva 2013) and then to ask them to recommend other person(s) to be respondent(s), and to broaden the circle of respondents in that way. In addition, interviewers could question more than one person in a household, but they had to take care of the age and gender structure of the sample (i.e. they could question more persons in one household, but in that case these had to be persons of different age and gender).[23]

[23] The interviewers were instructed how to control the gender, age and ethnicity structure of the sample. They had grids in which they could mark these characteristics of each respondent and to

In this way we intended to decrease the number of refusals, because, keeping in mind the findings of the qualitative research, we were aware of still existing distrust and fear among citizens, in particular amongst those belonging to ethnic minorities. By choosing the respondent-driven sampling we tried to avoid some limitations and problems in applying standard sampling techniques when using random sampling in surveying vulnerable population in post-conflict societies (Klinger and Silva 2013). This was particularly applicable to South Serbia, where some of Albanians who left Serbia at the end of the 1990s now only occasionally live there. In addition, there are no precise data about the number of Albanians in Medvedja, the residential layout is chaotic, etc.

Thus, our sample is not statistically representative either for Serbia or for the regions in which the research was conducted, which may result in some limitations of the research findings. Nevertheless, from the point of view of the importance of the findings for the project and further activities, the sample is correct because in general it reflects the ethnic structure of the population in these regions.

3.3.4. Action dimension of the survey

Although quantitative, this research had a strong action dimension, too. Its aim was not only to collect the data on the subject of the research, but also to inform the citizens (respondents) about existing NGOs, institutions and independent state agencies that could provide certain services (assistance, support, information, legal aid, mediation, etc.) to victims of violence, discrimination and other forms of human rights' violations, including those that are ethnically motivated. An additional aim was to raise awareness about interethnic relations and conflicts, victimisation, security issues and restorative justice through the questionnaire and/or interviews.

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have at any time the information about the structure of the sample. Hence, based on that, they could in one moment try to find respondents of certain age, gender or ethnicity.

Prior to conducting the quantitative survey we did research on organisations, institutions and independent state agencies that provide services (assistance, support, protection, information, mediation, etc.) to victims of violence, discrimination and other forms of human rights' violations, including those that are ethnically motivated, particularly focusing on the regions where the research-sites are situated. The aim of the research was to collect data on relevant organisations, institutions and agencies; to develop a database; and to prepare informative material with a list of relevant organisations, institutions and agencies in the three multiethnic regions with their contact details, target groups and available services.

We started this research by selecting NGOs, state institutions and independent state agencies on the basis of the qualitative research on dealing with interethnic conflicts by NGOs and the state done in year 1. Additional data on the way state institutions, NGOs and independent state agencies are dealing with interethnic conflict ,was collected at the beginning of year 2 and further research into the existing databases of NGOs in Serbia was carried out. For collecting the data we developed a questionnaire, which consisted from several parts: data on the organisation/institution/agency, data on the target groups and data on available services (such as emotional support, information, legal aid, mediation, preventive programmes, etc.). Data was collected through the electronic questionnaire.

On the basis of the collected data, we developed a database of these organisations, institutions and independent state agencies, and prepared informative material that was later distributed by the interviewers to the citizens (respondents) in the research-sites during the quantitative survey. In that way, citizens were informed about existing organisations, institutions and independent state agencies.

3.3.5. Collecting and processing the data

The data was collected from June 1st to October 1st 2013 in the towns of Bac and Backa Palanka, Medvedja and Prijepolje, and twenty villages that belong to these municipalities.

Ten interviewers in total (who are contact persons for the research-sites, members of the WP6 Advisory Board or persons they recommended us) collected the data.[24] Interviewers were persons with long-term experience in projects related to interethnic dialogue and cooperation, and they enjoy trust in their communities, which was important for approaching respondents from different ethnic groups, trust building and distributing questionnaires. In addition, we involved persons from the research-sites to collect the data because all three research-sites are 200-300 km away from Belgrade and it was easier to have people in these places assisting in collecting data.

After finalising the questionnaire, we sent its printed version to the interviewers who also got detailed guidelines for collecting data (in terms of how to choose respondents, how to approach them, how to do the questionnaire or the interview, how to control the age, gender and ethnic structure of the sample, etc.), as well as informative materials to distribute to respondents.

During the data collection, interviewers had permanent support from the VDS research team. We had regular contacts with interviewers through email or telephone conversation. In addition, we organised field visits to each research site in July and the beginning of August 2013. The aim of the field visits was to support the interviewers, to see if they were facing any problems in collecting the data and to find a way to overcome them. Moreover, VDS team members went with the interviewers into the field to see how they do the questioning, to meet the respondents and have informal conversations with them (about the research subject, their opinion on the questioning, on the interethnic relations, etc.).

[24] The data was collected by Ljiljana Zizic and Bojana Petkovic (Backa Palanka and Bac), Mirsad Duran, Nermina Duran, Erna Duran and Edo Duran (Prijepolje), and Zoran Radenovic, Jasmina Andjelic, Albert Salihu and Besnik Salihu (Medvedja). We would like to thank them for their commitment and dedicated fieldwork and support they provided us in conducting this research.

During a field visit to Medvedja, a VDS research assistant also did interviews on his own. Finally, during some field visits we made additional filming of the research-sites. VDS team members kept the research diaries from the field visits.

For processing the data we used the SPSS 18.0 programme. The data was processed by the use of descriptive statistics, Hi square test and ANOVA. In addition to the quantitative, a qualitative analysis of respondents' answers to open-ended questions was performed.

3.4. Collecting the data: challenges, problems and lessons learned

During the empirical research, both researchers from VDS and persons from the research-sites involved in data collection were keeping research diaries, noting down their experiences and impressions related to the fieldwork. On the basis of the analysis of the research diaries, the text that follows illustrates some of the challenges and problems faced during the research, as well as lessons learned that could be helpful in both our further activities on the project and for some further research. We first shortly elaborate on experiences the impressions from the qualitative research and then proceed with presenting some impressions from the survey. Based on that, we point out to some lessons learned within this empirical research.

3.4.1. Experiences and impressions from the qualitative research

The field visits to the research-sites and qualitative interviews were important for introducing the research-sites and their social context, for introducing persons who were later on involved in collecting the data within the quantitative survey, for operationalising the quantitative survey, and for understanding the survey findings in order to be able to interpret them. Based on the VDS researchers' diaries from the field visits to the research-sites during the qualitative research, we can give some impressions of places we went to, the people living there, the qualitative interviews and the interviewees.

Our research-sites are quite calm places surrounded by beautiful nature. However, it was evident that the economic situation is very bad; poverty is rather visible, particularly in Medvedja, but also in Bac/Backa Palanka, and the unemployment rate is high. As one interviewee from Medvedja pointed out, "a hundred years ago this place had a cinema; today there is no cinema or theatre, while the house of culture works just occasionally." Contrary to this, in Prijepolje, there are more cultural institutions that regularly work, such as the library or the museum, which seems to be a positive example.

One of the main impressions from the field visit to one research-site (Medvedja) was the presence of police officers in the streets. Police officers were rather visible, staying in different places all around this small town. They even approached us when we were organising ourselves to film the place, asking who we were, where we were from and what we were doing. We engaged with them, explained them who we were and what were we doing, and we had no problems. At first, their presence made us feel uncomfortable, but then we got used to it as did the citizens and people we had spoken to. However, we could feel the tension in the air and we noticed anxiety and some caution among our respondents, in particular Albanians, during the interviews. This was heightened by the fact that we had to conduct the interviews in different public spaces, such as the faculty, school, restaurant or hotel. The reason for that was the non-governmental organisation managed by one of our contact persons, who was also an interviewee, does not have premises in which we could have performed the interviews. Keeping all that in mind, we had to take care of the safety of the interviewees, but also of our own safety as researchers during the interviews. The flexibility of the research enabled this: thus, we could easily adjust to the given circumstances, as well as to adjust the way of talking to the interviewees, to their needs and feelings (e.g. to make a pause, to continue interview in another premise, etc.). Nevertheless, despite the police controlling everything, we managed to do our interviews by paying attention to not being disturbed by the police.

In all three research-sites we found that people were quite nice, they were polite, ready to talk and helpful. Informal conversations with citizens in the

research-sites (in the restaurant, café, hotel, taxi, bus, in front of the supermarket, at the street or the fair) were very useful for getting to know these places and understanding the social context. In some cases they even showed their solidarity. For example, after our first field visit in Bac/Backa Palanka, on our way back to Belgrade, quite near Backa Palanka we had a flat tyre. The driver could not manage to repair it. We were on the road, it was cold. Some people, who live nearby, stopped and helped us, showing their solidarity and readiness to help. We were very grateful to them.

Our interviewees within the qualitative research were open-minded, intelligent persons, both professionals and activists, with a lot of experience, knowledge and memories. In general, they trusted us as researchers, providing us with a lot of useful material for the qualitative analysis. We found out that one of the very important moments for gaining their trust was the fact that we told them that once we had finished the transcripts of the interviews with them, we would send the material back to them to look at, check and add new information to or provide additional explanations. This strengthened their trust, which was particularly important in the cases when they did not have enough previous information about the research and this helped us in getting such rich material for the analysis. Thus, as pointed out by one VDS researcher, "establishing contact and continuous nurturing of authentic human relations" was very important for bringing over the interviewees, who opened themselves easily and were spontaneously answering the questions, and for establishing co-operation with them.

However, we also had an interesting experience of not being given enough space to build the trust with two interviewees during our first field visit to Backa Palanka. Two young persons, activists of the local youth organisation who had experience with projects relating to interethnic relations, dialogue and tolerance, came to the interview. The idea was to do qualitative interviews with them first and then to involve them in the survey as interviewers. However, when they came, they were so frightened; they did not want to be audio or video recorded and their answers were rather parsimonious. We were confused and did not know what the reason was for such a fear and distrust towards us as researchers, but

also towards their colleague who was one of our contact persons in that research-site, who invited them to be included in the research and who had worked with them for some time. They did not even leave us a space to build the trust. This was also an important point to see how building trust is crucial in this kind of research and this is why in the second field visit we decided to let the interviewees know that we would send them the transcripts of the interviews. In addition, this experience convinced us of how important it is to meet and introduce potential interviewers prior to staring the survey. In this particular case, these two persons were not included as interviewers in the survey.

Except in three cases, interviewees agreed that we could tape record the interviews. In addition, some interviewees gave their consent to be video recorded as well. In that regard it is interesting to point out that Serbs in Medvedja wanted to stay completely anonymous due to the fear that they would loose their jobs or have other negative consequences if people in the local community, particularly in the local government, would find out that they spoke about interethnic relations to someone from outside the community. As we learnt from our interviewees, this is a consequence of the political situation in this research-site and a negative attitude towards the civil society work and activism, which was also confirmed in the survey. On the other hand, Albanians were not insisting on their anonymity; consequently, interviews with them were both audio and video recorded; they all said that they could be quoted in the research report, although they also pointed to the fact that except those close to the ruling political parties, other civil society organisations are not in favour. Finally, our impression was that Albanian interviewees were more ready to speak and share their experiences and experiences of people they know in comparison to Serbs. We noticed that Albanian interviewees wanted to open up, to tell their stories and to let us know about different victimisations of their ethnic group and conflicts that are not known or at least not as well known. On the other hand, we noticed that Serbs were more reluctant to speak about victimisation, because of strong political pressures.

Most of the qualitative interviews were conducted by at least two researchers. This also proved to be a good strategy. Namely, one researcher could concentrate on the interview, being able to listen to the interviewee actively and to guide him/her trough the conversation, while the other one could concentrate on keeping notes, particularly in cases when the interviews were not tape recorded, but also being able to intervene and ask questions that were omitted or ask for additional explanations.

The research was a learning process for us. Each step was important for developing and implementing the next one. We found out that we needed to adjust ourselves as researchers to the social context of the research-sites and to the interviewees. This is also why we added some questions during the interviews and excluded or changed some questions that seemed not to be important or useful.

3.4.2. Experiences and impressions from the survey

At the beginning of the survey, the data was collected by five interviewers (one in Bac/Backa Palanka, two in Prijepolje and two in Medvedja). Shortly after the beginning of data collection, one interviewer from Medvedja quit from further work due to personal reasons and the fear that he would not be able to fulfil the obligations in terms of the number of questionnaires to be distributed and collected. He suggested to involve a person who was interviewed within the qualitative research and so we did. Two months after we started with data collection, another interviewer from Medvedja resigned since she faced the problem of approaching potential respondents, she had a lot of refusals due to the distrust of people and she was afraid that she would not be able to perform the duties related to the number of questionnaires to be done. However, she stated one more reason, which seemed to be even more important: she was afraid and under pressures at work, risking to be fired if she continued collecting the data, which confirmed what we already found out during the qualitative interviews. She also suggested a person from that research-site to whom we spoke within the qualitative research. The interviewers in Bac/Backa Palanka and

Prijepolje believed they would need more persons to be involved in the data collection in order to be able to meet the deadlines, consequently one more person was involved as an interviewer in Bac/Backa Palanka and two more in Prijepolje. Thus, ten interviewers in total were involved in data collection.

The interviewers were instructed to keep diaries of the field work, i.e. to note the refusals of potential respondents to participate in the survey and, if possible, to write down the reasons for that, as well as to note their impressions from the field work (e.g. motivation of the respondents to participate, emotions expressed by the respondents during the questioning, problems faced during the work, etc).

Although the interviewers were instructed to note the refusals, they did not do that properly, so it is not possible to find out about the refusal rate.[25] According to our interviewers, the reasons for refusing to participate in the survey or in several cases to quit from further questioning were: distrust, fear that the answers will be misused, particularly for political purposes, the nature and structure of the questions, ethnic belonging of an interviewer,[26] having no time for filling in the questionnaire and not being interested to participate in the survey.

Distrust, particularly amongst potential respondents from the ethnic minority groups, was noted in Bac/Backa Palanka and Medvedja. In addition, as pointed out by interviewers in Medvedja, there was a problem of motivation, i.e. the lack of motivation among citizens, particularly of Albanian origin, to participate in the survey. Thus, interviewers needed more time to explain the aim

[25] According to the notes of the interviewers from Prijepolje, they had only five refusals. In their opinion, they did not have many refusals because of the way of getting the respondents (using a respondent driven sampling). However, we do not have exact number of refusals for the other two research-sites.

[26] One Serb interviewer in Medvedja considered that one of the reasons why some Albanians he approached were not willing to participate in the survey was his ethnic belonging and the fact that he is rather active in the public life in their town. He was of the opinion that he could possibly succeed in getting them as respondents, but he did not continue in bringing them over, because he assumed that in that case the answers would not reflect real opinions and experiences. Hence, he was not trying to convince these potential respondents to accept to participate in the survey. On the other hand, he did not have any problems in getting Serbs as respondents and their motivation to participate, because, as he noted, most of them know him and trust him.

of the survey, gain trust and get potential respondents, even though, as pointed out before, we used a respondent driven sampling. It is interesting to note that one interviewer of Albanian origin who mainly distributed questionnaires among Albanians in Medvedja motivated potential respondents to accept to participate in the survey by telling them this would be for their own good, for the good of Albanians who live in this research-site.

Fear among potential respondents that their answers would be misused particularly for political purposes was noticed in Medvedja (both among Serb and Albanian respondents) and in Bac/Backa Palanka (particularly among Croat respondents). The reasons for such a situation in Medvedja, as pointed out by some interviewers, were strong political pressures of the local ruling political party and negative attitudes of the president of the municipality of Medvedja towards activities of the civil society organisations, who tries to suppress their work and to put them under his control. Thus, sometimes it was hard to explain to respondents what the purpose of the research was; that they will stay anonymous and that nothing they say would be misused.

We could see in the qualitative research that trust and the process of trust building are rather important in these kinds of surveys. We are convinced now that it was better to have people from the research-sites to collect the data, because, based on their impressions, we could assume that we as researchers who do not live in these communities would have encountered even bigger problems in approaching citizens, gaining their trust and getting them to participate in the survey. Hence, it seems that working in close co-operation with local people would also be important for our action research in the research-sites planned for 2014.

Apart from some refusals and the need to motivate and source the respondents, the interviewers did not face any major problems or obstacles during the data collection. They found this work interesting and important for their communities, as well as an opportunity to learn, to meet people and communicate with them.

On the other hand, interviewers were asked to write down their impressions related to respondents and their views of the survey. The

respondents thought that the questionnaire was rather long and filling it in was time-consuming. Regarding the subject of the survey, interviewers noted during informal conversations that for some respondents it was hard; some were unwillingly to recall the events from the 1990s, while some wished to forget some events and repress their memories about them.

Some categories of respondents were more interested in the survey and they were filling in the questionnaire with more patience and attention. For example, older respondents filled in the questionnaires with more attention in comparison to those younger; while younger respondents were filling in the questionnaire faster, but with not so many details, having no additional comments. This was particularly visible in Prijepolje and Bac/Backa Palanka. Refugees (in Bac/Backa Palanka) paid more attention when filling in the questionnaires, expressing their emotions, so, in these cases questioning lasting longer, because they also wanted to talk with the interviewers about all the events they had survived during the war period.

In some cases, recalling the victimising events and answering the questions about that was rather hard for the respondents, resulting in their feeling anxious. In some of these cases interviewers stayed with them for a while after the questioning, talked to them and tried to provide them support and to encourage them.

3.4.3. Lessons learned

Based on all impressions from both the qualitative research and the survey, we may conclude that there are several lessons learned that should be emphasised:

- Establishing trust is an important prerequisite for encouraging interviewees and respondents. According to our experience, this is tightly connected to the following:
    - Using respondent-driven sample, which is a good way of ensuring that people will trust researchers;
    - Involving people from the research-sites in collecting data or other activities, which proved to be useful and a good way to

work, because of the easier approach to their fellow citizens and trust building;

    - Having close, human relations towards interviewees and respondents, respecting their needs, feelings and fears, showing understanding and taking care of their safety are relevant for bringing over people who become more willing and open to participate.

- Flexibility and taking care of the safety of both those questioned and those involved in data collection are necessary.
- Importance of support and empowerment of those interviewed or questioned, as well as of informing citizens about organisations that could provide assistance and support, which was appreciated.
- Regular contact with persons working on data collection, providing them with support and assistance were important for both them and us as researchers to understand the context better, as well as for them to feel more in control of what we did and to feel safe.

Thus, all these lessons are valuable and useful for our further activities in developing the action research in the three research-sites during 2014.

4. Qualitative analysis of interviews in the three research sites

In this part of the research report we present findings of the qualitative analyses of interviews that we conducted as part of the preparation for the quantitative survey and as the beginning of the action research in the research-sites. The issues we explored include: the experience of living in a multiethnic community, conflicts, safety, perception of the responsibility for conflicts and the victims, as well as conflict prevention and resolution.

4.1. Living in a multiethnic community

This part of the research is related to the perception of the relations between people of different ethnicities in the three multiethnic research-sites. Specifically, in order to find out more about the positive and negative aspects of relations between Serbs on the one side, and Croats, Bosniaks and Albanians on the other, interviewees were asked to indicate their general impression related to the experience of living in a multiethnic environment and a border zone, and the relationship with members of other ethnic groups at the moment. They were asked to tell what first came to their mind. This was our introductory question with which we started interviews. Some of the interviewees compared the period before the 1990s and the period after the 1990s and how these relations are concerned. Others mentioned the question of mixed marriages in these research-sites and so we decided to add a question regarding mixed marriages in the subsequent interviews.

Prevalent among the answers were those that point out the positive impressions about the way of life in a multiethnic community on the citizens' level. Interviewees spoke about correct relations with their neighbours of different ethnicity, togetherness, socializing, trust, tolerance and respect in their local communities. On the other hand, the disturbance of interethnic relations as the unfortunate consequence of war conflicts in the 1990s was also mentioned.

Most interviewees agreed the situation was better before the conflicts of the 1990s. They talked about their negative impressions about life in their communities mostly during the period of the 1990s. The interviewees spoke about avoidance, feelings of being distanced (feeling left out) and other unpleasant feelings, prejudices, disrespect of religion of the other or non-acceptance of the diversities, as well as a differentiation between "us" and "them". The interviewees also spoke about intolerance and injustice as well as the mixing of the politics in relations. They said that relations were also disturbed by mistrust and provocations.

There is a difference in the assessment of interethnic relations between interviewees from Bac/Backa Palanka, Prijepolje and Medvedja. Also, Croatian, Albanian and Bosniak interviewees as members of ethnic minorities were exposed to unpleasantness more than Serbs and they talked about their experiences and the discomfort they felt.

4.1.1. Positive aspects of living in a multiethnic community

Some interviewees pointed out the importance of coexistence with people of different religion and ethnicity. The interviewee from Backa Palanka who declared himself as Yugoslav (Serb male NGO activist) claimed that it is "wealth" to live in such a multicultural community, to get to know other people, their way of life. An Albanian male, an NGO activist from Medvedja, is of a similar opinion: "a multiethnic society has a double human potential, people tend to show their humanity in these societies. You learn about the other. People make bonds between themselves more often, prejudices and stereotypes are minor and they have tendency to lessen by conversations." A Serb female ethnologist from Prijepolje perceives that "life in a multiethnic environment presents benefits." She had very positive attitudes and experiences regarding these matters and said: "I would rather choose to live in multiethnic environment every time." An optimistic view on religion and ethnic differences was noticed both in the area that has survived a hard time during the breakdown of Yugoslavia, as well as in

the region around Medvedja close to Kosovo where the conflict took place much later.

General impressions from Bac/Backa Palanka, Medvedja and Prijepolje are that ordinary citizens tend to foster good relations regardless of the ethnicity or religion of their fellow citizens. There were statements that some will help a member of a different ethnic group rather than a member of their own. A Serb male NGO activist from Medvedja said: "Living with Albanians is actually good. Whenever you need help, they are there for you. Sometimes an Albanian will help you before a Serb does." A Serb male historian interviewee from Prijepolje made a similar observation on relations between Serbs and Bosniaks in Prijepolje: "If in any case a Bosniak asks for help from his Serb neighbour, you may be sure that the Serb will help him by all means because he considers that it is his obligation. The same applies when a Serb asks a Bosniak for help. That rule exists here for centuries."

Although interethnic relations were impaired during the wars in the 1990s, the interviewees mostly talked about normal interethnic relations before and after the conflicts. A Bosniak male economist from Prijepolje considers that relations between Serbs and Bosniaks in Prijepolje are: "correct, good and that enough is done for these relations to still last and be maintained in some state which represents the only perspective." Asked to estimate in a few words her experience as a Muslim woman in the multiethnic environment in which she lives, a Muslim female interviewee from Prijepolje said: "it is wealth, variety, tolerance, getting to know one another, understanding." A young Serb male NGO activist from Backa Palanka said that there are no problems between Serbs and Croats in the area and added: "We on this side are open… no one asks you who you are here, we hang out, there are no attacks on others…" An older Serb male NGO activist from the same town said that hate could not be seen as clearly as today, but probably was "unconscious and later erupted." He added: "We did not need laws to know how to behave towards the Croats, we were friends, helping each other, going to their houses… everything was different before the 1990s."

Some Albanians from Medvedja, like our male student interviewee said that despite all that had happened, when they returned from Kosovo to Medvedja

all Serb neighbours welcomed them back, there were no pressures. “There were never problems with our neighbours. The institutions of the state were the problem” An Albanian male teacher from the same town has good relations with other employees in the school where he works, but he highlighted that these people are the most educated in the municipality and thus they see things differently.

Interviewees also spoke about respect, tolerance and trust. A Serb male historian from Prijepolje said: “We always congratulate the holidays to each other, here the tradition is still respected.” A Serb female special pedagogue from Prijepolje also spoke about the respect for the religious holidays: “When it is Easter we invite them for eggs. When it is their (Bosniak) holiday I go there and I eat baklava.[27] The people here are peaceful, we tend to avoid conflicts and to be tolerant.” Speaking about their Albanian neighbours, a Serb female NGO activist from Medvedja said: "They had the trust to ask that if something accidentally happens to them, if we would protect them in that situation? If by chance someone came to hurt them, would we hide them? We trusted them and we could also hide in their house. Yes, that is how much we trusted each other.”

The interviewees testify about the coexistence between members of different ethnicities. A Bosniak male economist from Prijepolje described how Serbs and Bosniaks are socializing: “They go to joined celebrations and funerals. It is not a life of one living besides the other, they are living together.” A Serb female special pedagogue from this town also said: “We went to their weddings, celebrations…”

An Albanian male teacher, pointing out differences before and after 1999, said: “Before 1999 the situation was normal. Albanians were very loyal to the state. There were friendships, celebrations, Albanians were best men at Serb weddings… We worked together, helped each other, there were no problems”. Some things have changed for the better according to the Serb female NGO activist from Medvedja: “There are no separate clubs for going out, we all live

[27] Pastry traditionally made by Muslim population.

together. Before my Albanian friends couldn't go out with me, now they can. We visit each other. I even learned how to cook their meals. We are all equal now, no differences except in names." A Serb male NGO activist from the same town said: "We live with the Albanians. I would say that the relations are good. There are differences and some political problems, but no problems that would endanger the security of the citizens. I wouldn't speak of general relations, but when it comes to personal relations, some have very close Albanian friends, some business partners and some just respect their neighbours, but have no relation with them."

As for the war, it inevitably had a negative impact on the quality of interpersonal relationships. Based on the interviews it can be concluded that the relations before the 1990s were at their best. While acknowledging that today the situation is ok, we will quote the Muslim female interviewee from Prijepolje who described the views of the majority of interviewees best: "Before the collapse of Yugoslavia the relations were on a better level." During the interview a Bosniak male doctor (and also an NGO activist) from the same town recalled his beautiful childhood days in the period of "brotherhood and unity", a period which "was never bad."

4.1.2. Social distance, divisions and worsening of interethnic relationships

The consequences of the wars of the 1990s are still present today. "After the conflict the situation is very slowly gradually improving", said an Albanian teacher from Medvedja. A retired male interviewee from Bac, by ethnicity a Croat, said that relations are now much better than those of the 1990s, but that people still do not trust each other. A Serb female ethnologist from Prijepolje said: "We as a people have degraded culturally and in terms of civilization during the 1990s."

As mentioned before, the interviewees also shared their negative impressions about the way of life in their communities. Some mentioned examples of interethnic division and others of a distance between the ethnic

groups. A Serb female special pedagogue from Prijepolje mentioned the "us versus them" dichotomy that existed before, and is still present especially in the older population. She said: "My grandmother would ask my brother who brought a friend to our house – is it one of ours or one of them? Older women asked me the same question at some occasions. However, people would try not to offend you. They would just say that they respect their own religion and have nothing against you."

This interviewee also mentioned another example related to disrespect of religion in one family she witnessed at her workplace: "The women said 'I am going to my father for Easter.' The husband said 'ok, but you will not go with my child'." Classes about religion in school have also divided some children during war conflicts. Our interviewee, a Serb female NGO activist from Backa Palanka, said that children started only playing with those who went to the same religion class during the 1990s. She heard children saying: "Who exits the class is not one of ours. You can be friends with those who stay."

We heard from other interviewees there is avoidance. A Serb female NGO activist from Medvedja said: "In one school here, children would not play together. They divided the playground." An Albanian teacher from the same town said: "I live 10 years in my building. There are 22 families there and I am the only Albanian. For these 10 years, they never knocked on my door. Some do say hello when they meet me, some ignore me, but that is their problem."

An example of feeling of being distanced was presented in Bosniaks in Prijepolje during the NATO bombing who perceived that the state does not trust them. A Bosniak male doctor from this town said: "Bosniaks were discriminated by not being mobilised into the army to defend Serbia. It created a feeling that they do not trust us, and therefore we could not get weapons. We were not equal citizens." A Muslim female interviewee from Prijepolje confirmed she felt undesirable: "During the NATO bombing crisis I felt the vast rift between the two ethnic groups Serbs and Bosniaks. We should have gone through those hard times together, and only a few did."

The lack of acceptance of differences and intolerance are subjects that were best described by Albanians from Medvedja. An Albanian male NGO activist

said: “We had separate classes… When there were recitals, Albanians could only read one in Albanian language and the Serb children would react badly.” The Albanian male teacher said: “When I proposed that a few Albanian songs should be played at graduation, the Serbs protested. They asked why, how…” An Albanian male student from this town concluded there are prejudices between young people and added: “We have to raise awareness about these kind of reactions, about prejudices.” In Prijepolje, the interviewees also spoke about lesser tolerance and lesser understanding among youth. A Muslim female interviewee said: “There is a lot of young people that do not remember the good old days.” A Serb female ethnologist from the same town said: “My children are less tolerant than me. They hang out with Muslims, but they have some prejudices. It seems that media propaganda and friend pressure is stronger than family upbringing. I do not condone the attitudes of my children.” In Backa Palanka, the female Serb NGO activist described an attempt of cross-border cooperation of women that failed when the women tried to decide the alphabet (script) in which the magazine about their activities would be written. Women from the Croat side did not want the magazine to be in cyrillic because Croats do not like it and do not know how to read it. “It caused an argument and a rift”, she added.

Interviewees also mentioned provocations which they experienced and heard about. The retired Croat male interviewee from Bac told the following story: “My older son was a soldier in Kosovo in the Serbian army. One night a car stopped by our house and started playing Chetnik[28] songs. My sons came out of the house. Those in the car tried to provoke them, acting like they are great Serbs, and they have not even seen Kosovo.” A Serb female NGO activist from Backa Palanka described the following example of provocations: “I remember when Serbia and Croatia played a football match; young people would go to the river Danube then and shouted some bad things to the other side (in Croatia)”. She also mentioned graffiti on the local Catholic Church with a message: “Death to

[28] Chetniks were a WWII movement for liberation of Yugoslavia. In the war in Croatia during the 1990s the Croats usually called all Serb soldiers Chetniks as a derogatory term. Some Chetnik songs have an anti-Croat sentiment.

Croats." An Albanian male student from Medvedja mentioned provocations by the police who acted arrogantly and an Albanian male NGO activist said that sometimes in the local schools some things are "written on the blackboards, usually about Kosovo. These graffiti have a provocative tone."

A Serb female special pedagogue from Prijepolje mentioned an unpleasant event she experienced when she was on a market. One Bosniak sold watermelons and when she asked him to find her a good one, he threw one on the ground and said: "Slobodan Milosevic[29] should find you a watermelon!" She also gave an example of injustice and unfair treatment of Bosniaks: "One Bosniak was my neighbour and a public prosecutor. He lost his job and said it was because he was a Muslim", she said. Also she witnessed people saying: "You do favours just for Serbs, if I was a Serb you would help me..."

A Serb male NGO activist from Medvedja talked about the mixing of politics in the relations of people and the artificial creation of the problems. He argued that sometimes Albanians complain they could not exercise their rights for no reason and added: "My impression is that the incidents were rare and misused for political purposes. If the Albanians think it is useful, they blow the case out of proportions and it affects the relations."

4.1.3. Mixed marriages

As mentioned at the beginning, some of the interviewees, like the Bosniak male doctor from Prijepolje, argued that: "If not for the wars of the 1990s, people would respect each other more, there would be more mixed marriages." That is why we decided to explicitly ask interviewees about this issue.

According to our interviewees, mixed marriages were not very common in our research sites before the war, and they are also not common nowadays. The responses of our interviewees suggest there is disapproval and distance towards mixed marriages. The main reason is religion, not ethnicity. Our Serb female NGO activist from Backa Palanka said that Croats and Germans marry, as well as

[29] President of Serbia in the 1990s.

Croats and Hungarians - in order to preserve their catholic religion. “I was dating a man from a different ethnic group once, and my grandfather was not pleased. My parents told me watch the movie ‘Vukovar – one story[30]’ and remember that love doesn't always win”, she added. The older Serb male NGO activist from the same town said: “When a Serb marries a woman from a different ethnic group, other Serbs will be angry at him. ‘Why did not you marry one of ours’, they would ask?” A young female interviewee from this town said she would marry a member of a different ethnic group in theory, but does not know if someone would react badly.

An Albanian male teacher from Medvedja said: “I would accept if my child would want to marry a Serb, but I would be afraid of how others would react.” An Albanian NGO activist from the same town said: “Out of a 100 marriages, only 1 or 2 are mixed. Maybe it was different before. I know that love knows no boundaries, but religion is the major issue. You know that your parents will be happy if you marry a girl of the same religion and you do not cause problems.”

A Bosniak male doctor from Prijepolje said: “I would not have a problem if my child would marry a Serb, but some would not see it as a good thing, they would not applaud such a move.” He says that even if before it was not recommended, now such marriages are more criticized. A Serb male historian from Prijepolje said: “The issue of mixed marriages is very complex and it is related to tradition. There were always such marriages and I am sure there will always be, but not so many, because besides religion, tradition and customs also influence the choice of a partner. However there are still mixed marriages in Prijepolje. I think it is better to stay inside your religion.” A Serb female special pedagogue from this town said she is against Serb-Bosniak mixed marriages: “It carries a burden. The woman must leave her old identity and adopt a new one. It

[30] “Vukovar – one story“ is a film about love and suffering of a young Croat woman and a young Serb man caught in the whirlwind of war. Ultimately war triumphs over love, as they drift apart under the influence of propaganda and the conflict itself. The slogan of the film is “Nothing is stronger than love, perhaps only war.“

was always like that. We could be friends, but when you get married usually one side of the family does not approve."

4.1.4. Conclusion

The qualitative analysis suggests that the general impression of the interviewees about their experience of living in a multiethnic environment and a border zone as well as about their current relationships with members of other ethnic groups is mostly positive. Interviewees spoke about correct relations with their neighbours of different ethnicity, togetherness, socializing, trust, tolerance and respect in their local communities, coexistence of members of different ethnicities; thus, pointing out the good relations between citizens on a micro level.

However, as pointed out by our interviewees, interethnic relations were disturbed during the 1990s under the influence of the wars, and the consequences of the wars are still present today. Interviewees also spoke about avoidance, feelings of being distanced and other unpleasant feelings such as intolerance, injustice, mistrust, provocations, prejudices, disrespect of the religion of the other or non-acceptance of diversities, as well as of differentiation between 'us' and 'them', etc. As the qualitative analysis showed, Croat, Albanian and Bosniak interviewees were exposed to victimisation and unpleasant experiences more than Serb interviewees.

Although interethnic relations have been gradually improving since the end of the wars, and despite the fact that ordinary citizens tend to foster good relations regardless of ethnicity or religion to their fellow citizens, there is a certain social distance between ethnic groups in their communities today. This is, for example, visible in a distance towards and disapproval of mixed marriages, although it seems that the main reason for this is religion, not ethnicity.

4.2. Conflicts

In this part of our study we have discussed the issue of conflict between Serbs and Croats in Backa Palanka, Serbs and Bosniaks in Prijepolje and Serbs and Albanians in Medvedja during the 1990s, as well as after that period. In relation to conflict we considered a wide variety of behaviour such as arguing, fighting, insulting, domestic violence, destruction of gravestones, graffiti that insults members of other ethnic groups and similar actions. Interviewees were expected to speak about conflicts they have personally experienced, or know about because a person they know experienced it, or about the conflicts that plagued the wider community in which they live. They were asked to describe the events, to say what exactly happened, who was involved, where it happened, what the reasons were that lead to such behaviour, when it started, if it happened more than once, as well as to answer the question: "do you think that such behaviour was motivated by differences in ethnicity?"

On the basis of the interviews, we can state that our interviewees generally agreed that conflicts, regardless of type, were far more common during the armed conflicts of the 1990s and are now rare, but do still exist. They cited a number of different forms of conflict and thus spoke of specific crimes in which victims were their relatives: physical violence, different pressures, intimidation, threats, harassment, arrests, property damage, looting, offensive graffiti, political conflicts and various other isolated incidents.

4.2.1. Experiences with conflicts in the 1990s

Interethnic conflicts in Serbia between people of different ethnicities were far more frequent and severe during the 1990s than conflicts that arose later, after the war, and that occur today. A general impression is that conflicts in the 1990s were intended to intimidate the non-Serb ethnic groups of the three municipalities that were in the focus of our research. The following section will analyse these conflicts by looking at each research-site separately.

4.2.1.1. Bac and Backa Palanka

Interviewees from Backa Palanka have said that during the 1990s they used to see graffiti with offensive content often and that there were serious pressures on the non-Serbs at that time, as well as intimidations and harassments, which resulted in people being forced to leave the region of Backa Palanka. Both Serb and Croat interviewees described various pressures against non-Serbs, including threats, hate graffiti, harassment by the police during a house search, throwing of a bomb at a house and property damage, as well as the forced leave of Croats at the beginning of the 1990s.

Serb interviewees spoke about the various events such as hate graffiti, but also about some more serious events such as pressures on non-Serbs to leave the place of residence or intimidating threats. All these events were directed against non-Serbs. The Croat interviewee confirmed all of this, as he personally experienced threats and pressures. The police harassed him, his property was damaged and he even got a bomb thrown at his house. We can see that the conflicts they described include conflicts on the citizen level, but also a conflict between Croat citizens and the Serbian police who were harassing them, and also condoning interethnic violence between citizens.

A young Serb male NGO activist from Backa Palanka recalled the tension during the fighting around Vukovar in the 1990s, but said it did not last long: "About ten days and then it was all over." However, then he was a child and he does not remember everything. Also, he said that his grandmother did not have problems and she was a Croat. A young female interviewee from the same town, when asked if she knew anything about the problems, disagreements or conflicts between Serbs and Croats in the 1990s, answered she “did not know, but that there certainly were some.” A Serb female NGO activist said that there was graffiti in the 1990s with the text "Death to the Ustashe.[31]"

An older Serb male NGO activist from Backa Palanka, stated that in the 1990s "... intense pressures on people were carried out." He said that non-Serbs

[31] Croat Nazi movement in WWII. In the war of the 1990s a derogatory term for Croats.

were listed, that they were called on the phone, threatened, demanded to move out, to leave. He said: "They were watching what was written on the doors in flats - first and last name. I was in one flat when they said 'these ones should be immediately slaughtered', with those words, a woman who lived there and was my host shook from fear." He also said: "Sometime in 1991 in front of the municipality building a large group gathered, who wanted to go to war and to kill Ustashe." Owing to all this, a large number of Croats and Hungarians left. The interviewee offered a more detailed view on these happenings: "There were never individual attacks. I firmly stand behind my statement that all these attacks were group attacks. Because they are cowards, none of them individually has any power to do anything. They are not people... simply, they are sick people who should be treated. They have power only when they are in packs, and they alone have not, as far as I know, carried out any single attack." As he founded a non-governmental organisation and therefore started to be treated like an enemy of the Serbian people and the state, the interviewee had himself experienced discomfort: "During the 1990s, let's say we were working, we maintained ties with war zones over the amateur radio station, as I was a president of that club. Several of us were maintaining radio contacts, including myself. Two times was our club was broken into and radio equipment was stolen. (...) We had a bunch of information; the police took all the books, never returned them, so these records all disappeared forever."

The retired male Croat interviewee spoke about the events about which the previous interviewee, the Serb male NGO activist, spoke as well about some others. He described the period between the 1990s and 2000 as very difficult. He said he experienced insults, threats, harassment, house search, property damage, being brought to the police to be questioned and even that a bomb was thrown in front of the window of the house in 1993/94. He did not report the bomb to the police, because: "there have been cases where it turned out that the people themselves were throwing bombs at their own houses at the end of the police inquiry. Those who really threw them were guarded by police, and the government knew what was going on." He thought that "all that work was done to provoke terror, so no one would trust anyone." He also said: "Police gave

weapons, bombs, and protected those who were doing it. The locals were the perpetrators."

This interviewee was very anxious when he talked about the problems he experienced: "No one can grasp what I've survived, stress and anxiety cannot be erased from my memory", he said and added: "In the 1990s they locked up all my cafés, they blackmailed me with my children... they threatened me by phone by saying 'Ustasha, we will suck your blood'." One Serb told him that all Croats should be forced to leave their homes." At the beginning of the 1990s the list was made in Novi Sad of who should be killed. My family was on the list."

When the police came to search his house on one occasion, he said that they threw all the laundry of his wife out of the closet, stepped on it to see if there were any weapons, as they could not ask her to pull it out herself. He also mentioned that many Croats during the war left for Croatia from Bac and neighbouring places and they never returned: "I would like to see some of them return, the same as those Serbs who came here from Croatia, as refugees, who stayed and never returned to their homes."

Otherwise, for the period prior to the 1990s, the interviewee stated: "It was good, I have lived well. I was financially strong back then... That is why the ruling Socialist Party of Serbia tried to get me on their side when the conflict started, but I wouldn't and then I became a target. Those Croats who did join the ruling parties did not suffer as I did."

4.2.1.2. Medvedja

As for the situation in Medvedja during the 1990s, the description of interethnic conflicts by Serbian and Albanian interviewees differs, but also contains some similarities. Albanian interviewees described interethnic conflicts between Serbian police and Albanians as the predominant one, while Serbian interviewees did not mention this kind of interethnic conflicts. But all interviewees seem to agree that conflicts between ordinary citizens are rare or non-existent.

As we will show in the quotations from the interviews that follow, Albanian interviewees shared their personal experiences of victimisation, which

included threats, intimidations, insults, physical abuse, police brutality, imprisonment and humiliation. According to Albanian interviewees, people were leaving their homes as a consequence of the insecurity caused by the actions taken by the Serbian police and the state's lack of will to punish such behaviour. However, Serbian interviewees said they were not aware of victimisation of Albanians and explained the migration of Albanians with the difficult living conditions in their town. Thus, unlike Albanians, they did not stress ethnicity and violence as the main causes for leaving Medvedja by Albanians,

A Serb male interviewee from Medvedja, when asked whether there were any conflicts between Serbs and Albanians during the 1990s, replied: "As far as I know there were none. However, it is possible that there were. I say it may be possible, but maybe someone doesn't want to talk about it in order to avoid any problems." After the bombing, when the Serbian Army pulled out of Kosovo, he said: "They came here. The school was packed with soldiers. They lived there, slept there. But whether they were staying in local houses I cannot remember..." As this was the Serbian Army, the interviewee said he felt safe, but he cannot claim that the same sentiment was shared with Albanian part of the population: "Whether our local Albanians had any problems and issues with them I truly cannot say." Asked to comment on the resettlement of people, he said that resettlements started even much before 1999: "Both Albanian and Serbian villages were getting abandoned at the same rate, honestly. When you do not have a job, you are forced to leave. They left because it was very hard to live here; at least from the financial standpoint. In one period one was doing anything to keep the people here. If certain roads were finished back then, if people were provided with phones, water, electricity, they would have stayed and lived here."

Another Serb male from Medvedja, an NGO activist, also said the basic reason for the migration of people in his environment "was economic in nature" and that being a Serb, Albanian or something else was the least likely reason behind such resettlements. "However, after 1999, I can say that Albanians have left Medvedja. To the most part, they just normally packed up and left. Many of them exchanged houses and apartments with Serbs who lived in Kosovo, but some did not. They are visiting even today. No one is preventing them from

returning to their homes. Their houses are here, their belongings are here, everything remains untouched." Asked to comment on conflicts between Serbs and Albanians during the war, he replied: "Of course, when you have a general atmosphere of insanity and war, warmongering in newspapers and media, and on top of that have a subconscious sentiment that when the country is at war you cannot go and build beautiful relationships. But I am telling you that this was certainly not the cause of any conflicts here in Medvedja. I am saying that this is my impression. And I consider myself as rather objective and impartial. I again say, that there might have been some conflicts where Albanians were harmed, where Roma were harmed and where Serbs were harmed, but all this can be attributed to individual and small-scale cases. Not to the general treatment of Serbs toward Albanians or otherwise. Now, of course, when you have conflicting political interests, many things can go unnoticed."

A female Serb NGO activist from Medvedja also spoke about the resettlement of people after 1999. She said: "When the bombing was ove,r a general chaos ensued, the army came back from Kosovo, the Albanians suddenly started leaving, I did not even get a chance to say farewell to many of them and I never heard of them again, and this was, of course, difficult. But believe me that we are not to blame for why they left, and even they do not blame us for leaving." Asked for the reason of such resettlement, she said: "Whether our politics or their politics were behind this, we do not know." According to her, at that time there was a trust established between Albanians and Serbs: "If something by chance started happening here, we planned to hide at one another's places." She also said that at that time of 'men and guns' she was also afraid as a woman, and that she understood if someone wanted to leave, adding that Serbs were also leaving as they had hard time providing for their families and themselves. She also mentioned that some of these people who previously left, were now returning to visit their homes, but now a certain distance can be felt: "They are maybe not confident in us any more so we are no longer such good friends as we once were ... or the distance did its part?" She claimed that with people who stayed throughout 1999 and later she had the same relations as they used to be. She also

claimed that she did not hear that any Albanians were abused, but she did not exclude the existence of fear during that period.

An Albanian, a male teacher from Medvedja, claimed that during the period before the 1990s and even during the bombing, there were no conflicts between Serbs and Albanians, adding: “There were some random conflicts, but as frequent as anywhere else for that matter, but these were isolated cases. There were no real problems.” He also said problems started after the bombing: “In the moment when the army and police came back from Kosovo, this is when it all started, that was the beginning.” He himself had some unpleasant experiences. He was insulted and threatened. A guest at his neighbour’s flat approached his apartment door at about one o'clock in the morning and started cursing his Albanian mother. Also one policeman in 1999 held him, without any reason whatsoever, at gunpoint, saying that he would no longer be teaching Serbian children. He said this policeman was a drunk and committed suicide years later. He said people were physically beaten in 1999 and suffered severe body injuries, while no action was ever taken regarding these humiliating incidents. “I personally held in my hands medical records of a man who was tied with chains to an automobile tow bar, he was dragged down the street, he was forced to lick tyres on that vehicle with his tongue, and I presented all this. A sixteen-year-old boy was tied by a policeman to a tree in the wood and this was just a child, without any reason, just for kicks of it, as he was of another ethnicity. And this man is still on the force, he is even being promoted and what else is there to say?” Because of direct and indirect pressures, about which this interviewee spoke, a large number of Albanians left during 1999. As he said, thousands have left, and he and his family also left with them.

“In 1999, because of police attacks, people had to leave their homes, whether they liked it or not, because of their families”, said an Albanian male student from this town who also fled to Kosovo with his family and lived there between 1999 and 2002. He also spoke about provocations, insults, police brutality, that all occurred in front of children. Police used to stop them and ask for their IDs frequently, and on one occasion they even slapped his father

repeatedly. “Once you've experienced this you cannot stay calm and peaceful”, he added.

An Albanian male NGO activist told how he left Medvedja with his family and relocated to his relatives in Macedonia even before the bombing in 1998. They decided to move because of the insecurity they felt when his father was sent to prison. His father was, as it turns out, arrested in the moment when he was driving Albanian civilians on a tractor who were “Living in Kosovo and wanted to move here. There were children, women and older people. (…) The police pulled him over and arrested him. They took gold from more than 30 women. They forced women and children to leave their homes, and took older men and my father here to the police station. He was beaten there several times and sent to prison. They did many things to them. The abuse was horrible.” Also, he said that his father spent two months in prison, but was never charged with anything during all that time. “He was just kept there and abused.” When his father was released from prison, he went to Macedonia, after which they all moved to Kosovo, where they were joined some time later by his grandfather and grandmother, who were also threatened while they were still in Medvedja, and who were also intimidated: “They were intentionally shooting in our yard, shooting in the air.” He said that abandoned Albanian houses were plundered and looted during 1999, which was also the case with their house.

4.2.1.3. Prijepolje

Interviewees from Prijepolje, regardless of ethnicity, talked about the period of the 1990s in a very similar way. They stressed that in this town ‘common sense’ prevailed and conflicts between Serbs and Bosniaks were avoided despite the destabilisation provoked by the horrific crime known as the ‘Kidnapping in Strpce’ when nine Bosniaks from Prijepolje were killed. Both Serbs and Bosniaks spoke about fear and tension after the kidnapping in Strpce, and were very proud of their fellow citizens that disorder and conflicts did not spread out.

Both Serbs and Bosniaks stressed that the conflicts were between the state officials such as army personnel or police officers, on the one side, and Bosniak

citizens, on the other, and not between ordinary citizens of Prijepolje. Serbs mentioned the 'Kidnapping in Strpce' and condemned it, but also spoke about the harassment of Bosniaks by the army at road checkpoints. Besides from talking about the kidnapping in Strpce event and their victims, the Bosniak interviewees mentioned pressures that forced the Bosniaks to leave their homes, including Serbian military reservists firing the mosque and police brutality towards Bosniaks during the search for alleged weapons.

The female Muslim interviewee said that during the 1990s there were no concrete conflicts between Serbs and Bosniaks: "No one had an easy time in this period", adding that: "during the nineties we, Muslims, felt very insecure and unsafe." A Serb male historian said for Prijepolje it represents the "most positive example of the functioning of a multiethnic population in the most difficult circumstances." According to him, even during the 1990s during the time of war (in Bosnia, Croatia, followed by clashes in Kosovo) "there were almost no conflicts, there were no arsons, throwing of hand grenades in cafés or conflicts on ethnic grounds, which were all happening in the neighbouring cities." A female Serb ethnologist said: "Prijepolje, the city itself and surrounding places, have not had such negative, difficult experiences during this unpleasant period. There were no, absolutely no bad things happening here… This is positive, but also strange, that there were mainly no incidents in Prijepolje in spite of all that was happening."

An event which could have led to conflicts in 1993 was the kidnapping in Strpce and this is what the female Serb ethnologist said: "After that event there was a danger of escalation of conflicts. There must have been pressures on Bosniaks in Prijepolje to react in the negative sense, but they acted with dignity and there were no unnecessary provocations concerning this event." Therefore, according to the interviewee: "A large number of Prijepolje residents, regardless of their ethnic origin or religious belonging remained confident that no one from Prijepolje took part in this… every normal person in Prijepolje condemned this event", so there were no riots after this terrible crime.

The female Serb special pedagogue described the 1990s as "turbulent. They introduced a greater sense of fear and everyone somehow felt endangered."

She listed as the most traumatic event of that time the crime in Strpce: “This was the moment when I started fearing that something could actually happen to me, my family, and this situation was extremely tense for me. I was afraid that someone would cause some conflict which would escalate on everyone and that such euphoria would cause a general conflict.” She also mentioned that there were pressures from her compatriots at that time, as she was meeting people of other ethnicities: “I was criticised to some extent because I was meeting and talking to them.” She also mentioned her experience when she, guided by her sense of justice, clearly and publicly stated on television that Serbs also mind when some of them befriends and hangs out with Bosniaks: “… and then all Serbs came down on me. But all Muslims applauded me…” She also recalled that during the 1990s on one occasion, reserve army units were passing through the city and opened fire on a mosque, but she added that these people were not from Prijepolje. According to her, there were no other desecrations of religious facilities in this town.

The Bosniak male doctor from Prijepolje said the 1990s were the years with many problems, and that he too, did not feel comfortable because of ongoing media propaganda, but that he or his family did not personally have any bad experiences. However, he said that it was originally planned for him to return from Belgrade, where he was finishing his medical specialisation, to Prijepolje on the same train from which these people were kidnapped and executed in Strpce, but he changed his mind at the last minute and decided to go back a day earlier. This is why he experienced this event with a feeling of dread and uneasiness, which follows him until this very day. He described the abduction in Strpce: “This horrific crime, which fortunately, let me say it like that, failed to reflect on community and spread further, which prevented the crime from spiralling and disturbing very fragile interethnic relations. This was a true test for all the people living in Prijepolje. There were several protests and gatherings… but the common sense seems to have prevailed.”

The event which also heightened tensions and protests during the 1990s was, according to a Serb female ethnologist, the placing of checkpoints

controlling vehicles passing along the highway to Belgrade or Montenegro, where soldiers who were not from the territory of Prijepolje used to harass Bosniaks.

The Bosniak male economist described pressures on Bosniaks and their forced leave from Prijepolje as follows: “In this period one cannot talk about functioning of the system or functioning of the state, as it was obvious that a certain policy of pressure against Bosniaks was in force, a sort of a violent change in structure of the population. This was partially achieved, as a large number of local Bosniaks fled the city.” He also said that Muslims were at that time, allegedly, illegally buying weapons, but there are doubts that state bodies were behind all this, as “everyone knew everything, who sold and what, in which numbers, they had this information.” Citizens of Bosniak ethnicity were taken to the police for questioning because of this: “But they did not confess to this immediately, which is why they were beaten into confession. Because of such excessive use of force and unauthorized actions certain people were legally processed.” Asked whether there were disagreements and conflicts between Serbs and Bosniaks in Prijepolje, he said: “There was nothing major happening, at least here in Prijepolje there were no special disagreements, as both sides secretly condemned what has happened, as they understood that this kidnapping in Strpce was aimed against both ethnic groups, for the purpose of causing a war and unrest in this region, where Serbs would be sacrificed as well. I claim that certain tradition and good neighbourly relations preserved the peace in this community.” When asked whether he or his family had any problems during the 1990s, he replied: “I, personally, had no problems, but my brother was among the ones kidnapped and killed in the Strpce incident.”

4.2.2. Experiences with the conflicts since the 2000’s

Our interviewees argued that the period after the 1990s brought changes for the better, with a significant decrease of interethnic conflicts. In Prijepolje and Bac/Backa Palanka interethnic conflicts are nowadays rare, but there is an increase in conflicts related to political interests, including conflicts among the members of the same ethnic group. In Medvedja, on the other hand, the

interviewees still mention some conflicts that appear similar in nature as those from the period of the 1990s, such as police brutality against Albanians or fights between Serbian and Albanian youth.

4.2.2.1. Bac and Backa Palanka

The interviewees from Backa Palanka and Bac said very little about conflicts in general in the period after the year 2000. They claim that interethnic conflicts are rare now and that some other conflicts arose that are not ethnically motivated or their origin and nature is not clear. For example, one Serb interviewee mentioned his NGO work as the cause for the attack on his house, but the conflict cannot be categorised as interethnic in nature, as it is more probable that members of his own ethnic group attacked him. The male Croat interviewee described two incidents of which one is politically motivated and the other is an act of vandalism, for which he is not certain whether it is ethnically motivated.

Speaking about this period, a young male NGO activist from Backa Palanka denies any kind of conflict between Serbs and Croats. He said that if there were fights, they were not on an ethnic basis, while he only saw the graffiti that said 'Kosovo is Serbia'. Conflicts were also denied by the young female interviewee and the Serb female NGO activist from Backa Palanka. The Serb female NGO activist emphasised that today there are current divisions between different hooligan groups (football fans) and the conflict exists between these groups.

The older Serb male NGO activist also said that the conflicts are non-existent now because the possibilities and conditions are not adequate for conflicts, since people hardly have occasions to meet each other due to the bad economic situation (e.g. they do not have jobs, do not have money to go out, etc.), but mentions that in January 2000 a bomb was thrown into his house. Apart from the broken window, there was no damage "as they did not activate the bomb - either they did not know how to activate it, or just wanted to warn me", he concluded. To the question whether he knows who has done it, he replied: "Even

the police does not know, let alone me." He suspects those involved were members of his own ethnic group and that the incident is related to his NGO work.

The retired male Croat from Bac speaks about this period as follows: "Since the year 2000 till 2004 I was in the municipal government. During this time I was stronger than the president of the municipality, I brought him to power. Although I am a Croat by ethnicity, I had more votes than the other and many Serbs voted for me." Despite the fact that opportunities improved as the 1990s passed, the interviewee mentioned two unpleasant events, but there are no indications that they are ethnically related (they could be rather politically related or there might be something else in question). He mentioned an event in 2003 when a group of young painters, members of the art colony, spent a night and ate in his café, and, although he claims the municipality was supposed to pay for their stay, they failed to do so. For that reason, our interviewee did not want to hand over the paintings the members of the art colony made in his café to the municipality. The paintings were taken from him, and he dropped the charges in connection with that case, because his son called him: "He asked me why I have made a fuss", which he interpreted as "They were pressuring me through him." The second event described happened two years ago: "They were throwing mud at my café and when I reported that to the police, the vandals sprayed my gate with the cement milk everywhere. I do not know who did it, nor do I even know why. I have not turned to anyone else for help, but no one helped me."

4.2.2.2. Medvedja

In Medvedja, the interviewees have the impression that the situation is today far better than in 1999, even though there are still certain problems predominantly related to the functioning of institutions and police. Both Serbian and Albanian interviewees pointed out the misuse of politics/power as the main cause of problems in Medvedja. Albanians also spoke about some incidents that could be interpreted as interethnic conflicts such as police brutality against Albanians, the continuing leaving (of town) of Albanians under pressure as well as fights

between Serbian and Albanian youth. Serbs again seem unaware of victimisation of Albanians.

The Serb male interviewee from Medvedja said that he is not aware of any problems and conflicts between Serbs and Albanians and that nothing bad happened to him during all this time. The Serb male NGO activist from Medvedja also denies conflicts on ethnic or religious basis. He says that today conflicts are mainly based on politics and that people are being misused for political or certain personal interests: "It all depends on how this suits certain interests. If Albanians feel like interpreting a conflict as endangering of their rights, they raise it to a higher level than necessary."

That conflicts today are mainly related to politics was also confirmed by a female Serb, an NGO activist from this town: "Only politics dominates and the same applies to Albanian and Serbian political parties." She mentioned that during the pre-election campaign people are being exposed to enormous pressures: "People are being manipulated in any imaginable way."

Asked to describe the present situation compared to 1999, an Albanian male teacher from Medvedja said there are certain improvements, giving the following example: "If a policeman stopped you in 1999, for example, on the road, ninety nine percent of them would have tried to harass you, to be offensive towards you… Now there are no such occurrences, responsibility is greater now, there are improvements. I say, this is a small community, it can be brought to order." However, certain problems still exist, as he said: "I have a concrete case, for example, a uniformed policeman came to the house of one of my brothers. Then without any reason he had beaten my brother, my brother's wife and his three children. And this policeman is still working in a place where my brother can see him every day. He could have at least been transferred to another post."

The Albanian male student interviewee returned to Medvedja with his family in 2002, after a refugee period in Kosovo, and he said they had no problems upon their return. Asked whether there were any problems or incidents recently, he said that some policeman made some trouble in the village in the vicinity and that the family he abused left that village. Asked whether he or some of his friends experienced any provocations recently, any abuses when he goes to

college, or if cannot go to cafés, freely walk down the street, etc., he said: “Not now, at least not that I am concerned.”

An Albanian male NGO activist interviewee also returned in 2006 to Medvedja with his family. His home was completely looted, he said, so they initially slept on the floor: “However, in that period we were bought and returned some things by municipality, but these only included some most basic items. I do not know who plundered our home, I really do not. We were given beds, just beds I think. We had no other assistance, from any side, even though there were many organisations that were providing assistance locally. But there were many thefts, as some people took this assistance and distributed it only to those they wished to.” Asked about which ethnicity those were who manipulated with this assistance, he replied that they were Albanians who were connected to these humanitarian organisations and who remained on similar positions even today. He also said that his father, who taught technical education in school, lost his job, as he was not ‘politically suitable’ (to Albanians) and that people of Albanian ethnicity were responsible for this: “Because of his disagreements with their ideas, if you fail to appear to vote, then you lose a job, but this happens all over Serbia, such political employment.”

For conflicts on ethnic basis he said that they exist and that they were especially visible among youth, mainly in high schools: “There is a problem among youth because they fail to see that this is not the way it is supposed to be, that's the first thing. And the second reason is the prejudice against people of another ethnicity and this frequently happens in high schools. There are also physical conflicts.” Asked whether he can determine who starts these conflicts first, he replied: “It cannot be determined generally at this time, as both sides are picking fights, but for certain individuals it had been known for a long time that they were always like that.”

4.2.2.3. Prijepolje

Interviewees from Prijepolje, both Serbs and Bosniaks, only rarely mentioned some isolated cases of interethnic conflicts after the year 2000. More often, interviewees spoke about some endangering occurrences that may provoke larger conflicts. They also mentioned political pressures and manipulations as a disturbing factor for members of both ethnic groups.

The female Serb special pedagogue when asked whether there were any conflicts and clashes between Serbs and Bosniaks since the year 2000, replied negatively, but mentioned that there were some isolated cases.

Serb interviewees spoke about the possibilities for conflict in the way that the minority of Bosniaks could stir things up and give a reason for the conflict, for example: by cheering for Turkey instead of Serbia during football matches, making demands for autonomy, etc. Bosniak interviewees, on the other side, mentioned hate graffiti in the town that could provoke conflicts between members of different ethnic groups. The female Serb ethnologist denies the existence of concrete conflicts between Serbs and Bosniaks in the period since the year 2000 and says that today's problems faced by everyone were of existential nature. She also said that frequent mentioning of autonomy of this region recently could also potentially lead to intolerance: "I would be truly happy if they (Muslims) would accept Serbia as their country. If they could accept Serbia as their own country, then I would less mind such calls for a different language, which they artificially made different."

The Bosniak male economist said that relations between Serbs and Bosniaks after the year 2000 progressively improved and that there were no disagreements or conflicts between them. The Bosniak male doctor also said that there were no conflicts between Serbs and Bosniaks in Prijepolje in the period after the year 2000, but he mentioned that certain graffiti appeared occasionally in the city with a content that could "... in a way offend and provoke someone."

The Serb male historian said there were no conflicts between Serbs and Bosniaks in the period after the year 2000 and listed economic reasons as the cause for all problems today: "What we all have in common in this region,

regardless of our religion or ethnicity, is at this time the economic crisis, and I am afraid that this will remain so in the time to come." He argued that the topic current today is: "Why Bosniak Muslims in Serbia, when Serbian national football team plays against Turkey, cheer for Turkey and not for Serbia?" Regarding this issue the interviewee said: "I think that responsibility for this lies in the state, regardless of the fact that I could never agree with certain demands of the minority. The minority must not endanger majority, the same as majority must not endanger minority, which is why we need laws, which will regulate this issue in the same way the modern world has done."

He also talked about a political issue that could have brought up a conflict. When the sculpture of a mother with her two sons (one Orthodox and other a Muslim) was put in front of the Museum in Prijepolje, the Bosniak National Council said "This sculpture should be removed, as it insults Bosniaks." However, even though, as he said, those who initiated this issue thought that they could "make a case out of it" in the most negative connotation, this has failed to happen, in fact the opposite has ensued: "A group of Bosniak intellectuals immediately reacted and sent a letter to the president of Prijepolje municipality, informing him that such claims were not true, after which the donor also reacted and stated in a letter that his intention was completely different and well-intended, which was true." As a conclusion related to this event, he said: "This is only one of examples when someone outside of Prijepolje tries to forcefully stir things in Prijepolje which could influence the ethnic relations here. The reaction of responsible Bosniaks and Serbs was as Prijepolje deserves."

4.2.3. Conclusion

Our qualitative analysis shows that conflicts between members of different ethnic groups were far more common during the armed conflicts of the 1990s than nowadays. The analysis of interviewee statements suggests that most interethnic conflicts in all three research-sites occurred during the 1990s between the police, the army and other state bodies on the one side, and members of minority ethnic groups on the other. In all three research-sites the members of ethnic minorities

(non-Serbs) were facing some form of victimisation that forced them into exodus. The general impression of the interviewees from the non-Serb ethnic groups was that the victimisations that occurred in the 1990s were intended to intimidate the non-Serbs.

The qualitative analysis suggests that the period after the 1990s brought changes for the better, with a significant decrease in interethnic conflicts. However, some continuity exists, but new conflicts arise as well. In Prijepolje and Bac/Backa Palanka interethnic conflicts are nowadays rare and there has been an increase in conflicts related to political interests, including conflicts among the members of the same ethnic group. In Medvedja, Albanian interviewees mentioned some conflicts that appear similar in nature as those from the period of the 1990s such as police brutality against Albanians, fights between the Serbian and Albanian youth or continuing exodus of Albanians under pressure. In Bac/Backa Palanka no new interethnic conflicts were mentioned except the graffiti on the Catholic Church with a hate message against Croats.

In Bac/Backa Palanka and Prijepolje, interviewees from both sides showed that they knew the reasons behind the migration of non-Serbs during the 1990s and the victimisation that preceded it. It seems they share the same truth about what happened in their community during the 1990s and afterwards. However, this should be further explored, particularly bearing in mind attempts of inducing different truths from outside (e.g. in Prijepolje in regard the disputes about the sculpture in front of the Museum).

In Medvedja two completely different truths about what happened emerged. For Albanians the major conflicts have consistently been those between Serbian police and Albanian civilians, and they understood the forced leave of their compatriots to be a consequence of this conflict in particular. However, Serbs seem not to be aware of victimisation of Albanians and explained their migration by economic reasons. Similarly, Serbs from Medvedja were not aware of recent cases of victimisation of Albanians.

The analysis also shows that interethnic conflicts between ordinary people have been rare (including during the 1990s) in all tree research-sites, and did not represent a major problem.

4.3. Safety

In this part of the research report we present the findings of the qualitative analysis regarding the feeling of safety of our 17 interviewees in the three research-sites. In order to find out how safe they feel and what causes them to feel (un)safe, we asked them several questions. Firstly they were asked 'Do you feel safe in the town you are living in?' The interviewees were additionally asked if they felt less safe during the night in comparison to daytime or in some parts of their town, their homes, their street, their workplace, etc. In order to get even more details about what makes them feel safe or unsafe we also examined the reasoning behind such feelings by asking them to tell us what they think could be done for them to feel safer. In order to get as clear as possible the idea of the interviewees' feeling of safety nowadays, we asked them these questions in relation to three time periods that they could think about through comparison: nowadays, i.e. at the time of interview, during the 1990s and before the 1990s.

The variability of answers to these questions was a starting point in creating the questions for the quantitative part of our research. Also, these interviews helped to create close-ended questions like the one dealing with reasons for feelings of insecurity.

We deliberately did not offer any definition of safety in order to identify different understandings/concepts our interviewees relate to it. As can be seen from what follows, the interviewees connected their feelings of safety not only to physical safety but also to other aspects, such as legal, economic, social and political safety.

4.3.1. Feeling of safety nowadays

When they talked about their feeling of safety nowadays, our interviewees spoke about physical safety, as well as about legal, economic, social and political safety. As we can see, from the examples below, some of the interviewees felt safe in a physical sense, while others were feeling rather unsafe. Albanian interviewees in particular felt unsafe. On the other hand, the lack of legal, economic, political and

overall social safety was common for all ethnic groups in all three research-sites. State (non-)functioning seems to be an important factor that influences how safe our interviewees feel today. Our interviewees' feelings of safety are not connected to a specific time or place in their town, but rather to their ethnic and/or political belonging.

4.3.1.1. Physical safety in Bac and Backa Palanka

In Bac and Backa Palanka some interviewees said that they feel safe, while others answered they feel unsafe. Safety is endangered by members of other as well as by members of one's own ethnic group. Most of the Serbs seem to feel safe, but there are also some who feel differently. For example, the older male Serbian NGO activist from Backa Palanka said that the security situation was not good and that he is threatened by members of his own ethnic group – Serbs, because they threw a grenade at his house for his work as a peace activist, just a few years ago. The male Croat from Bac said that some unidentified people threw mud at his café (which is also his home) two years before our interview, suggesting that his security was threatened although he is trying to ignore that. He said: "I go out for a walk at any time, day or night, I am not scared... I can look anyone in the eyes."

4.3.1.2. Physical safety in Medvedja

Our findings seem to suggest that in Medvedja not only interethnic conflicts but also feelings of physical safety and perceptions of safety of another ethnic group are related to ethnicity. Albanian and Serbian interviewees in Medvedja feel completely different when it comes to physical safety. The Albanians feel unsafe even today and that can be attributed to the fact that they still do not trust the Serbian police, which is obviously over-present in that part of Serbia. Their feeling of insecurity is connected to their relationship with the Serbian state rather than to relationships between Albanian and Serbian citizens themselves, who seem to live quite well together.

On the other hand, all interviewed Serbs from Medvedja feel safe and it seems that they are not disturbed by police presence and do not notice how it affects security feelings of Albanians. However, Serbian interviewees also feel unsafe in relation to the state; this is not related to interethnic conflicts and physical insecurity but rather to political and legal insecurity. What is common for both Albanian and Serbian interviewees is their lack of trust in the state and its ability to protect its citizens, as well as the feeling that the state is the source of insecurity rather then safety/security.

Police presence is experienced not as a guaranty of security, but opposite - as the source of insecurity that reminds Albanians about old tensions and conflicts. The Albanian male student explained this best: "We feel safe in regards to our neighbours, but many policemen did bad things and they are still policemen. Now, when someone sees the policeman that did such things to him or his family, of course he will not feel safe."

In terms of physical safety, the Albanian interviewees agreed their town is not safe and this feeling seems to be connected to relics of interethnic conflicts from the 1990s. For example, an Albanian male NGO activist from Medvedja said that he cannot feel 100% secure because: "There are still policemen, that were active during the times of conflict in the Presevo valley in the 1990s and that were harassing Albanian citizens. Some of these men committed crimes and they were not punished. And they continue to act badly like the war is still going on." Another ethnic Albanian, a male teacher confirmed this: "The security is not 100%... there are still some active members of the police that should not be active." The Albanians we interviewed agreed that the presence of the police gives an impression of some sort of 'state of emergency' in their town. The teacher added: "It creates an image that something is wrong." For the Albanian male NGO activist seeing many people in uniforms induced a feeling "that he is being watched." He added: "Many who were harassed during the war feel badly because of it... The policemen can recognise those who are not from around here and when you are an Albanian they tend to question you... It all reminds me of the 1990s."

A Serb female NGO activist said that she feels safe in Medvedja even during the night, but she would feel unsafe if she crossed the border to Kosovo. “Here we do not lock our doors”, she added.

4.3.1.3. Physical safety in Prijepolje

Bosniak and Serb interviewees from Prijepolje ‘agreed’ that they currently feel safe in their hometown. A Bosniak male economist who lost his brother in the Strpce kidnapping, said: “After the war, when the state is functioning there is no reason to feel unsafe… I feel safe all the time.” A Female Serb ethnologist said: “Yes, I feel safe, I do not feel endangered like earlier.”

A general impression that can be drawn from these interviews is that the current situation in Prijepolje is very peaceful and all citizens feel mostly safe. We can also conclude that the good state functioning can be an influencing factor in the perception of the citizens regarding security and safety.

4.3.1.4. Economic and social safety

The lack of economic safety seems to be huge problem to all our interviewees regardless of ethnic origin.

The Albanian male NGO activist from Medvedja said: “The economic situation is bad and is forcing everyone to feel unsafe. People have nothing to hope for and they are leaving.” A Serb male NGO activist from the same town said: “Survival is very difficult here, those of us who stayed, we stayed before we have nowhere to go.” One other Serb male interviewee said: “Many Albanians left because of the economic insecurity.”

A Serb female ethnologist from Prijepolje also mentioned: “I feel quite safe in my town, but I have problems of existential nature like everybody else.”

A Serb female NGO activist from Backa Palanka said: “I feel safe in regards of not being afraid of physical attack, but if I would think about the economic situation, I would have to be less confident.”

It seems that in all three research-sites the effects of the recent economic crisis on unemployment levels and poverty can still be felt. Perhaps it is best described by the words of a Serb male historian from Prijepolje: “The thing common to all of us, regardless of ethnicity and religion is, I am afraid, the economic crisis.”

4.3.1.5. Political and legal safety

The next aspect of safety that our interviews identified relates to political and legal unsafety, i.e. the lack of rule of law.

Some of our interviewees mentioned politics as a source of unsafety as if getting a job depends on the belonging to a certain political party. “People feel unsafe when they are dependent and they depend on the politicians who use this to manipulate them”, said our interviewee, a Serb male NGO activist from Medvedja. A Serb female NGO activist from the same town added: “They manipulate people by giving them something on a small spoon, if you are good today you will get what you want, if you are not... I was pressured by the politicians while working in the NGO sector. Politics is above ethnicity here.” She also mentioned the policy of centralisation that left the local community of Medvedja neglected and poor.

A Serb female ethnologist from Prijepolje said she feels threatened by the “exaggeration of the minority rights of Bosniaks” which is similar to an answer of a Serb male NGO activist from Medvedja who mentioned that Albanian politicians “misused some incidents and have blown them out of proportion.” A Serb female special pedagogue from Prijepolje said that safety had increased “when Bosniaks entered the institutions.” She also argued that “the only source of unsafety is the political one, since you can’t get a job if you are not a member of a political party.” A Muslim female interviewee from this town said: “Religious messages of local religious leaders also have a political function. If the politics did not interfere, we would all live much better.”

We can see from these answers that politics have the most heterogeneous influences on the feeling of safety. On one side, getting a job is tightly connected

to belonging to a certain political party, being followed by different manipulations. But also, political unsafety for the Serb majority can obviously come from the minorities' actions, especially when it comes to asking for more rights or when they protest because of some incidents.

The Albanian male student from Medvedja with whom we spoke, said something that could illustrate legal unsafety: "The application of laws that should protect me is very poor and I cannot feel safe knowing that something could happen to me and I would have no one to complain to. Also Albanians can't get a job."

In addition, the Serb male NGO activist from Backa Palanka said: "We started to expect bad things from state institutions instead of good regulations." From these and other answers of our interviewees it became obvious that some of our interviewees experienced political or ethnic discrimination by state institutions, which made them doubt the efficacy of the state in implementing existing laws. Thus, we can conclude that bad state functioning is responsible not only for physical safety, but also for the political and legal safety of its citizens.

4.3.2. Feeling of safety during the 1990s

We also asked our interviewees about their feelings of safety during the conflict period of the 1990s in order to get more insight into their perceptions of their current safety compared with those from the past. As can be seen from the comments below and according to our expectations, the interviewees mostly felt much less safe during the 1990s, although there are some who think the difference is not significant. Also, when comparing feelings of safety during the 1990s with the feelings nowadays, they mostly reflected on the physical aspect of safety, i.e. on security.

In Bac, the retired Croat male interviewee said he felt much worse during the 1990s. The younger Serb male NGO activist from Backa Palanka said that the only time he felt unsafe was during the bombardment of Serbia. "Bombardment is not a pleasant experience", said our other young female interviewee from this town. "Now I feel safer", she added. A Serb female NGO activist said: "I was

afraid that I would lose my dad, that he would be mobilised or that a bomb would fall on our house." The older Serb male NGO activist argued: "I think the security level is the same now as it was then, but now it is more insidious and covert. In the 1990s I knew who thought what because people would publicly speak their mind, now I do not."

The 1990s in Medvedja were the worst times according to our Serb interviewees. "It was a period of uncertainty. The tradition of this folk (Albanians) is that they remember for a long time… Many Albanians left and it changed the demographic structure of the area", said the Serb male NGO activist. The Albanians agree that the times of the 1990s were less safe. For example the Albanian male student said "it was much worse back then."

In Prijepolje, perceptions are similar as in Medvedja. A Bosniak male economist said: "It was general uncertainty and people were divided. Communication was difficult. The Bosniaks were arrested because of the illegal weapons, some were kidnapped and killed, and at the same time Serbs acquired weapons. It was a policy of pressure on the Bosniaks. The system did not function." A Bosniak male doctor said he could not imagine that he would be hurt while studying, but when the 1990s started he was afraid that "an unpleasantness might happen to him." He also mentioned the burning of the mosque in Belgrade years later and he was in Belgrade then. He felt insecure at that moment if someone would find out he is a Muslim, but nothing happened. A Muslim female interviewee from this town said: "It is normal to feel unsafe, when you are bombed. Some of our neighbours did awful things, but I wasn't disappointed in my friends. It was an unsafe time for Muslims." Also the Serb female special pedagogue said: "I was afraid for myself and my family. The bombing and everything… But the most horrifying moment was the kidnapping in Strpce. The Bosniaks were gathering on the streets looking for answers. No one slept that night. It was tense. I was afraid a general conflict would start. That someone would come with a weapon knocking on our door." She said now she feels much safer. She added: "It was normal to be afraid when the war in Bosnia was just 30 km away and some soldiers shot at the mosque here. It was stressful. Later I wasn't afraid of the neighbours during the bombing in 1999, it was an irrational

fear. I felt that we are all in the same pot, all scared. Sometimes people stopped communicating with the other group for reasons of personal safety, but I kept my Muslim friends."

4.3.3. Feeling of safety before the 1990s

We asked our interviewees about their feelings of safety before the 1990s in order to see if these feelings have changed. We also wanted to incite more thinking about the subject of safety in general and to gain more knowledge about their feelings now, through comparison with how they felt earlier. In general, the interviews from all ethnic groups and from all three research-sites seem to agree that they felt much safer in every sense before the 1990s than today. It seems that the way the state functioned, i.e. how economy, ethnic differences and overall society was governed by the state, was observed as crucial for that kind of feeling, although a decreasing trend in the 1980s was also noticed.

In Bac, our Croat male interviewee said he felt safer before the 1990s than nowadays. A young Serb male NGO activist from Backa Palanka said: "I felt the safest then, I was little and my parents protected me." The older Serb male NGO activist argued: "There was no expression of hate. The Croats from Ilok in Croatia worked here, the relations were fine, we helped each other." A Serb female NGO activist said: "I had no fears then. I felt proud and powerful, brotherhood and unity was the motto of my generation."

In Prijepolje, the feelings were similar. A Muslim female interviewee said: "I felt secure in every way then. It was a time of prosperity and better economy. People never thought that there could be a war." A Bosniak economist said: "It was much safer then now. Religious and ethnic affiliation were not important. Living together, socialising, sharing the experience of true values were at the forefront." Serb interviewees from Prijepolje agreed with this view. A Serb female ethnologist said: "I felt safe. I believed in the motto of brotherhood and unity."

In Medvedja, the Serb male NGO activist talked about the times before the 1990s in terms that the system was different. "Everything functioned", he added.

The Albanian teacher also said he never had problems while living in Medvedja before the 1990s.

However, another Serb male interviewee indicated that the decrease of safety in Medvedja already started during communist time and this was the consequence of turbulent political situation in Kosovo in 1980's: *"It was an ideal time. But after the demonstrations in Kosovo in 1981 the number of tourists decreased, they were afraid to come here."*

4.3.4. Reasons for feeling (un)safe

We also wanted to know what contributed to the interviewees' feelings of safety. As can be seen from the examples below, interviewees mostly answered this question by pointing out what makes them feel safe, stressing this is the opposite to what made them unsafe before. In that way they also stressed what makes them feel unsafe. When answering this question, they had in mind physical and economic safety. Thus, as the reasons for current safety they identified: the absence of armed conflicts/war, having stable employment and family support, and the tradition of close relationships and safe environment ('feeling at home'). Apart from these elements, vulnerability of members of certain ethnic groups was stressed as the source of insecurity as well.

The young male Serb NGO activist from Backa Palanka mentioned the "absence of war" as a contributing factor for the feeling of safety. A Serb female NGO activist added that: "employment for me and my husband gives me safety. Also my family and friends give us support. We do not carry a burden from the war, no one in our family was on the battlefield. My conscience is clear and therefore I do not have a reason to feel unsafe." In Prijepolje, a Serb female special pedagogue said: "The people feel safe because there is no war, we won't fight each other." A Bosniak male doctor added: "There is no war, no bombardment. The relations are good, we try to co-exist in peace."

In Backa Palanka, the young Serb male NGO activist said: "This environment is making me feel safe. There were no larger incidents". Also, in Medvedja, a female Serb NGO activist attributed her feelings of safety to the

environment as well: “We do not lock our doors. I can knock on anyone’s door at any time of day or night. Here I feel like home, and I do not turn around scared at night.”

Only one Bosniak interviewee, the male economist, reflected on the situation in times of conflict and spoke about the reasons for the feelings of insecurity: *“Feelings of insecurity existed because Bosniaks were second grade citizens and no one could guarantee that they would live. The state was turned against us. The arrests for gun possession and the train kidnapping, all of these things were meant to decrease the security*.”

4.3.5. Opinions about the best ways to increase safety

In order to get even more understanding of people’s feelings of safety, we asked our interviewees what they thought should be done in order for them to feel more safe. Most of the answers stressed various aspects of proper state functioning, while some of them also pointed out broader changes on a societal level. The improvement of laws and their proper implementation was particularly emphasised, with some interviewees also mentioning punishments of perpetrators. In addition, a better economic situation and better education, as well as the development of values that can prevent conflicts were mentioned.

For example, the Croat male interviewee from Bac said: “Someone should control the authorities. The police have to do their job and be equal for all, to catch those who cause problems, to punish the perpetrators of violent acts…” A Serb female NGO activist from Backa Palanka said: “The state should be more efficient in implementing the laws and in suppression of corruption. True values should be the foundation of society, such as tolerance, respect, solidarity, harmony and love.”

The Albanian male teacher from Medvedja said: “The law is clear, the law has to be implemented, especially to prevent ethnic insults… those should be severely punished.” A Serb female ethnologist from Prijepolje stated: “Existing standards should be implemented.” A Bosniak male economist from the same town said: “The state should be functioning; we have good laws, we should just

implement them. The Bosniaks cannot have a good life here, if Serbs do not lead good lives and vice versa. If some values are respected, that are enforced by regulation of this state, the situation will be good."

The older Serb male interviewee from Backa Palanka, an NGO activist, said: "People should have jobs, when they have money they think less about other things." An Albanian male NGO activist from Medvedja stated: "The state should invest in this region and provide opportunities for both Albanians and Serbs to come back and work. People should be employed in accordance with their education not ethnicity." The Bosniak male doctor from Prijepolje thinks that, apart from less poverty, better education of people would lead to greater security.

Our interviewees also mentioned the importance of raising awareness in people in order to prevent them to be manipulated once again and involved in conflicts. The older male Serb NGO activist from Backa Palanka said: "The awareness of people has to be raised, now they are easily manipulated by politicians." Also, he said: "We must perceive the war once again, say the truth and admit our own mistakes... The whole state should be working towards this, the politicians, the media, everyone."

As the examples cited above show, the responsibility of the state as well as legal, political, economic and overall social safety are all needed *per se* and as the basis for people's feelings of physical safety/security.

4.3.6. Conclusion

Our qualitative analysis identified various aspects of safety, including physical safety/security, as well as legal, economic, social and political safety.

At the time of the research, one part of interviewees felt safe in a physical sense, while the other part felt rather unsafe. According to our findings, feeling unsafe in a physical sense is particularly pronounced among Albanian interviewees in Medvedja. On the other hand, Prijepolje seems to be very peaceful and all citizens feel mostly safe in a physical sense. The lack of legal, economic, political and overall social safety is common for all ethnic groups in all three research-sites. State (non-)functioning seems to be a crucial factor that

influences how safe our interviewees feel today. The findings further suggest that the interviewees' feelings of safety are connected to their ethnic and/or political belonging, rather than to specific daytime or location in their town.

Our analysis also shows that Albanian and Serbian interviewees in Medvedja feel completely different when it comes to physical safety. The Albanians feel unsafe even today, which can be attributed to the fact that they still do not trust Serbian police. Their feeling of insecurity is connected to their relationship with the Serbian state rather than to relationships with other citizens. On the other hand, all interviewed Serbs from Medvedja feel safe and it seems they are not disturbed by police presence and do not notice how it affects the safety feelings of their Albanian neighbours. Serbian interviewees also feel unsafe in relation to the state, but these feelings are not related to interethnic conflicts and physical safety, but rather to political and legal insecurity. What is common for both Albanian and Serbian interviewees is their lack of trust in the state and its ability to protect its citizens, as well as the feeling that the state is the primary source of insecurity.

The lack of economic safety seems to be a huge problem for all our interviewees regardless of ethnic origin. Some of our interviewees also experienced political or ethnic discrimination by state institutions, which made them doubt the efficacy of the state in implementing existing laws. Thus, we can conclude that bad state functioning is responsible not only for physical safety, but also for political and legal safety (the lack of rule of law) of its citizens.

The interviewees mostly felt much less safe during the 1990s, although there are some who think the difference is not that significant. On the other hand, the interviewees agree that they felt much safer in every sense before the 1990s than today. It seems that the way state functioned, i.e. how the economy, ethnic differences and overall society was governed by the state, was observed as crucial for inducing that kind of feeling.

The reasons identified for present safety feelings included: the absence of armed conflicts/war, having stable employment and family support, and the tradition of close relationships as well as the safe environment ("feeling at

home"). Vulnerability of members of certain ethnic groups was stressed as the source of insecurity.

When asked to give ideas about the ways safety could be increased, most interviewees stressed various aspects of proper state functioning. The improvement of laws and their proper implementation was particularly emphasised, with some of the interviewees also mentioning retributive measures such as the punishment of perpetrators of victimisation. In addition, a better economic situation and better education, as well as development of values in the society that may prevent conflicts were also mentioned as possible solutions. All of the findings mentioned point to our key observation that the efficiency of the state in solving problems (and not creating them) is the main factor contributing to safety feelings.

4.4. Perception of the victim and responsibility for conflicts

The interviewees were asked about their opinion regarding the persons responsible and the victims of interethnic conflicts of the 1990s in their own community. We wanted them to list all those they consider responsible and as victims. We also asked them if they consider themselves responsible and/or a victim and in what way. In every research-site the question raised was slightly different because of the context, for example in Backa Palanka the interviewees were asked about the conflict between Serbs and Croats, which is relevant to their locality.

When perception of responsibility for the conflicts is in question, the interviewees give similar answers regardless of their ethnicity. Those held accountable were the politicians, the state itself and the media. However some interviewees mention citizens as being partly responsible. The victims are all citizens, ordinary people of all ethnicities, but above all those who were directly victimised or who lost someone, their families and refugees. Some of our interviewees consider themselves as victims just for being witnesses of the conflicts in the 1990s and some had suffered or lost someone close to them.

An Albanian male teacher from Medvedja said: “Victims are victims, regardless of their numbers, I think everyone knows that. Those who lost their loved ones and then those who are connected with them.” A Serb male NGO activist from the same town said: “Victims of all these conflicts are just innocent citizens of all ethnicities.”

A Serb female ethnologist from Prijepolje said refugees are the greatest victims, but she also considers herself and all other citizens of Serbia as victims. In the same town the Serb female special pedagogue said: “When we analyse it, all of us are victims of time, a moment, of politics.” A female Muslim interviewee said: “Ordinary people of all ethnicities, those who shouldn't suffer at all. I was also a victim. People close to me left the country. We all lost something.”

The Croat male interviewee from Bac said: “The people, those who were honest and decent, those are the victims. I am also a victim. Fortunately I did not lose someone I love.” A young Serb male NGO activist from Backa Palanka does not consider himself as a victim, but thinks that “both Serbs and Croats were victims.” A Serb female NGO activist from this town considers the whole community a victim as well as nature (forests were mined during the conflict).

However, some interviewees emphasise one group as victims in particular. The Albanian male NGO activist from Medvedja said Albanians in Medvedja were the victims, but that other people also suffered. A Serb female special pedagogue from Prijepolje considers that the victims were those kidnapped in the Strpce station, but also their families. The Bosniak male doctor from Prijepolje expressed the same attitude. The Bosniak male economist from Prijepolje said: “The families of the kidnapped are the victims. They suffered the most. I was among them, since my brother was kidnapped.”

When it comes to responsibility for the conflicts, attitudes are similar. The Albanian male teacher from Medvedja said those responsible are the people who “lead the country at that time” and their punishment is that they are now in Hague. For the Albanian male student from the same town, the responsibility lies with the leaders of the state, but also with the individuals from the police: “If it wasn't planned they would punish the policeman who would do something wrong, but they got orders to do such things.” An Albanian male NGO activist

blames the political elite, the media and the nationalism cultivated in Serbia. A Serb male NGO activist from Medvedja also considers politicians responsible for the conflicts.

In Prijepolje the situation is the same. A Serbian female ethnologist said: "It is logical that the state is responsible." A Serb female special pedagogue agreed with her that the state is to blame, but also pointed out that the "direct perpetrators are important in the chain of responsibility." A Muslim female interviewee considered the politicians to be responsible for past conflicts, but also argued that now religious leaders have a bad influence. A Bosniak male economist blames the persons in power at that time, more than the direct perpetrators themselves. A Bosniak male doctor agrees with him and adds that he considers them to be war criminals.

In Bac/Backa Palanka attitudes do not differ much. In Bac, our Croat interviewee said that the authorities are to blame. A young Serb male NGO activist from Backa Palanka said: "We could have avoided the conflict if not for the politics and the strong media campaign." The older male Serb NGO activist from the same research-site emphasised the benefits for the politicians in times of conflict and also blames them. A Serb female NGO activist from this town said: "I think that it was a whole group of people who planned the conflict for a long time."

Only two interviewees consider that the citizens who elected the politicians are partly responsible. The Bosniak male doctor from Prijepolje asked himself the question: "What about the people who elected the elite?" The older Serb male NGO activist from Backa Palanka said citizens are to blame, because they allowed themselves to become manipulated.

We can see that the attitudes of the interviewees are mostly very similar in all three research-sites in relation to the perception of who was responsible for the conflicts as well as who the victims of the conflicts were. They consider as responsible both direct perpetrators as well as the politicians and the state as holders of power and as decision-makers. Also, they recognise both direct and indirect victims.

When it comes to perception of their own victimisation, most interviewees recognised themselves as either direct or indirect victims. They also perceived themselves as responsible. However, when they talked about their own responsibility they mentioned only indirect responsibility related to voting for certain politicians or not doing enough to prevent conflicts or to react on time.

There are a lot of similarities between research-sites in interviewees' perception of their own victimisation and responsibility. However, we also noticed differences of victim perception between Serbs and members of minority ethnic groups. As we can see from the quotations given below, Croat, Albanian and Bosniak interviewees recognised themselves as both direct and indirect victims, while Serbs primarily saw themselves as indirect victims.

In Bac and Backa Palanka almost all interviewees considered themselves victims in either a direct or an indirect way. Serb interviewees also considered themselves responsible in a way that they should have done more to prevent what happened.

The retired Croat male interviewee from Bac said he considers himself to be a victim since he himself had many bad experiences, although no one in his family died. Serb interviewees mentioned feeling as both direct and indirect victims. The older Serb male NGO activist from Backa Palanka said he thinks he is a victim because he lost much, like everyone else. The female Serb NGO activist said she felt she was a victim when she stood in line to get a visa. She was angry at the world because of the sanctions and her inability to travel and see her dying grandfather. The young female interviewee from the same town said she is a victim of the war in an economic sense. Only the young Serb male NGO activist from Backa Palanka said he does not see himself as a victim, nor does he feel responsible for the conflict in any way.

The older Serb male NGO activist from Backa Palanka said he indeed feels responsible because at the very beginning of the political crises that lead to war he was not prepared to react, he was 'asleep' and could not see what was coming. Only in 1991 did he realise there might be a war, although, as he said, objectively he should have predicted it before. The young female interviewee said that all should carry some responsibility for the conflict. The female Serb NGO activist

said that “personally all of us are responsible but not as a nation. If something happens in this town and I do not react ,I would feel responsible.”

In Medvedja, the Albanian interviewees consider themselves direct victims, while Serb interviewees did not see themselves as victims in a direct way, although some of them mentioned that they feel as an indirect victim. Interestingly, both Serb and Albanian interviewees consider themselves responsible in some indirect way for interethnic conflicts in their community during the 1990s.

For example, the Albanian male teacher said he was a victim when a policeman pointed a gun at him. The Albanian male student and the Albanian male NGO activist agree they were both victims because of all they went through. Only one Serb male interviewee from this town said he considers himself to be an ‘indirect’ victim. “I lived the most beautiful years of my life in fear, I couldn’t go to vacations, the economic situation was bad… I should have been thinking about having fun and the nice things in life.” On the other hand, the same Serb interviewee said he thinks that maybe he and all the others were responsible for the conflict. A female Serb NGO activist also said she felt responsible and this was the reason she turned to politics. Albanian interviewees also said they were responsible in some way. The Albanian male NGO activist said: “Perhaps I could have done more.” An Albanian male teacher said maybe he was responsible, but he could not influence the situation much. “I could have spoken more about tolerance in my classes”, he added.

Lastly, in Prijepolje the interviewees mostly recognised their own indirect victimisation and responsibility, while some did not recognise themselves as victims at all, obviously having in mind direct victimisation only. The only Bosniak interviewee who sees himself as a victim is the male economist who lost a brother in the Strpce kidnapping. A Serbian female ethnologist from the same town said she considers everyone a victim, including herself, because of the environment where economic crises prevent basic human needs being satisfied. The Bosniak male doctor said that people who voted for certain politicians were all responsible and that everyone was a victim.

The findings of the qualitative analysis thus show very similar patterns in all three research-sites in relation to the perception of responsibility for the conflicts as well as who are the victims of the conflicts. Both direct perpetrators as well as the politicians and the state as holders of power and decision-makers are identified as responsible. Also, our interviewees recognised both direct and indirect victims, including their own direct and indirect victimisation.

The findings of the qualitative analysis suggest that those perceived by the interviewees as accountable for the conflicts were the politicians, the state itself and the media. Some interviewees also mentioned the citizens as partly responsible. When it comes to the perception of victims, all of the citizens, ordinary people from all ethnic groups have been perceived as victims by our interviewees. In particular, those who were directly victimised, who experienced the loss of a person close to them, and members of their own ethnic group are recognised as victims.

It is interesting to note that in all three research-sites there were interviewees who considered themselves as partly responsible, but this was limited to indirect responsibility related to voting for certain politicians or not doing enough to prevent conflicts or reacting on time.

4.5. Conflict prevention and resolution

In relation to the conflicts that our interviewees and other people in their community experienced, we wanted to know their opinion on who should have done something in order to prevent the aforementioned incidents. We also asked them what would be the just solution (justice) in these situations, for example should the perpetrator be punished or would they like to have a face-to-face conversation with the perpetrator to find a solution for the conflict? In the end, we asked them if they remember a situation in which they or someone else they knew solved any similar problem as one they described, in such a way that it would bring satisfaction to all parties involved.

Regarding those responsible for preventing conflicts, the interviewees mentioned the government and state institutions such as the public education system or the police, laws, media, NGOs, mediators and citizens.

In Bac the male Croat interviewee said: "The government should be in control, the police should do their job, catch the people doing such things and punish them. Trust should be restored from above – the state level." An Albanian student from Medvedja also said: "The police should make the people feel safe and keep the peace."

One interviewee from Medvedja mentioned laws, public education, NGOs and the media. This Albanian male NGO activist said the solution lies in good laws and working with the youth. "The youth should be educated, through history classes (public education), through television (media), or NGO workshops that would teach them they could live together", he added. The younger Serbian male NGO activist from the same town said non-governmental organisations should be working with the goal to prevent conflicts. An Albanian male student from Medvedja said "a local mediator would also be helpful."

The importance of the individuals respected in the community for preventing and solving conflicts was also noted. The Serb male historian from Prijepolje gave an example of using this way of preventing conflicts in the local community. Namely, in one village where only Albanians live, together with his colleagues he was involved in a dispute with local Albanians about the name of the village. Suddenly, an old Albanian man came and stood in the circle and asked what happened. When he was told what the dispute had been about, he just said what the name of the village was and what it used to be in the past, and the dispute immediately stopped.

The older Serb male NGO activist from the town of Backa Palanka said: "The citizens are responsible for the prevention, but we lack true citizens unfortunately." The Albanian male teacher from Medvedja said the first step should be taken by the institutions to "pave the way for the citizens." In Prijepolje the interviewees did not say who should prevent such conflicts.

When asked about a just solution in cases of interethnic conflicts in which they were victimised, some interviewees suggested restorative approaches, while

others preferred retributive measures. Dialogue was a prominent restorative solution that was suggested and the interviewees mentioned various ways of talking openly and exchanging experiences that can bring people of different ethnicity closer together, such as: public debates, camps, media debates, talking with the perpetrator, etc. Compensation, apology and honouring the victims' opinions were mentioned as well.

A Serb male interviewee from Medvedja said: "The only solution is dialogue. There is no other way." In Backa Palanka a young male Serb NGO activist said camps should be organised so that people of different ethnicities would have a chance "to speak about their relations, exchange experiences and break prejudices." The female NGO activist from the same town said that talking about the problems would be a just solution. "There should be public debates or talks in the media", she added. The older male Serb NGO activist from Backa Palanka said justice would be achieved if the local media would condemn violence. He added: "talking to the perpetrator would also be helpful in order for him not to repeat his actions. Every retributive force causes a new one from the other side. It is action and reaction, and therefore I am more inclined to believe in the Gandhi methods." In Medvedja the Albanian male teacher said the just solution would be for the perpetrator to apologise. "We should also ask the victims what they think should be done", he added (respecting the victims' wishes).

Retributive solutions such as prosecution and punishment were also mentioned, alone or in combination with compensation. A young female interviewee from Backa Palanka said she does not condone violence and "state authorities would have to deal with it and to punish the perpetrators." In Prijepolje, while talking about the Strpce kidnapping, the Bosniak male economist said: "The just solution would be for the responsible to be prosecuted, for the bodies to be found and for these people to be declared as civil victims of the war, so that the families could ask for some compensation." The Bosniak male doctor agreed by saying that "there is no justice now, when the perpetrators are not all caught and sentenced." A Muslim female interviewee from the same town said state institutions should bring justice. A Serb female special pedagogue said

perpetrators of the Strpce crime should all be prosecuted. “I have no doubt about that. Not just the perpetrators, but all the people involved”, she added.

In the end, interviewees were asked about their personal experiences with restorative approaches. The question was: ‘Do you remember some situations in which you or someone else you know (close friend, politician, state representative, etc.) solved a similar problem in a way that satisfied both parties (for example, talking with the perpetrator to find a solution either alone or with a help of a third person respected by all), regardless of the type of the conflict?’

The interviewees mentioned apologies, a camp that promotes tolerance, a peace council[32], sport events and dialogue as restorative methods they used or encountered.

The Croat male interviewee from Bac said he got “an apology from a Serb that was speaking badly about Croats once and that was how the conflict got solved.” A Serb female NGO activist from Backa Palanka said the camp where the children learned how it is to be in another man’s shoes (from a different ethnic group) was very effective in changing these children, their prejudices and tolerance. A Serb male interviewee from Medvedja talked about the Peace council that existed since he was a child and which serves for conflict resolutions among residents. “When the neighbours fight, they can talk to the peace council which members come to mediate and reconcile the families. Unlike the courts this council’s purpose is to make neighbours who weren’t speaking to each other, to start speaking once again”, he added. A Serb female NGO activist from Medvedja said she managed to bring Serb and Albanian kids closer when she brought a team from another town to play against their school team. It was a restorative method to bring children from different ethnic groups closer through a sport

[32] Peace councils are bodies usually composed from several (mainly three) respectful members of the local community. The role of these councils is to develop good relations between citizens and to solve the conflicts and problems they might have. These councils exist in some local communities. The work of these bodies used to be regulated (in the former Yugoslavia) by the law on courts. Today, the Law on the organisation of the courts in Serbia stipulates that establishment and the work of peace councils is to be regulated by separate acts. This is done by the decisions of the authorised bodies in the municipalities (local self-government).

event. “For the first time they saw what playing together looks like and then I realised they can live together. My solution for conflict was always dialogue”, she added.

The Albanian male teacher from Medvedja said: “Fortunately, people in this town solve their problems with talking” and that there were cases “when Albanians made a deal with Serbs to solve the conflict through dialogue.” In Prijepolje the Bosniak male economist said: “Most of problems between people are solved through communication.” The female Muslim interviewee from the same town said: “Dialogue does the job for most people. I always use it. It is the best solution.” The older male Serb NGO activist from Backa Palanka also said: “What we are trying to create are the individual attempts to establish normal communication. There is no systematic support. The state must support this process and not just a handful of individuals.”

The qualitative analysis therefore suggests that the government, state institutions such as the public education system or the police, and the laws should be responsible for conflict prevention. In addition, our interviewees also recognised the media, NGOs, mediators as well as ordinary citizens as responsible for preventing the conflicts. Thus, we may argue that according to our interviewees the role of the state was once again emphasised as the main contributing factor to the prevention of conflicts, but the role of ordinary citizens was noticed as well.

The findings suggest that both restorative and retributive measures were recognised as solutions that may bring justice in cases of interethnic conflicts in which the interviewees were victimised. As to the restorative approaches, our interviewees showed they gave preference to different forms of encounter such as dialogue and communication in order to bring people of different ethnicity closer together. In addition, they saw restorative outcomes, such as compensation and apology, as well as the respect of the victim’s opinion as mechanisms that may bring justice as well. They experienced some of these restorative measures themselves such as apology, participation in a camp that promoted tolerance, talking to the peace council, sport events and dialogue. On the other hand, some interviewees also proposed retributive mechanisms, such as prosecution and

punishment, either alone or in combination with restorative measures, such as compensation for victims.

Thus, the findings of the qualitative analysis suggest that our interviewees from all three research-sites perceived there is a place for restorative approaches in conflict resolution within their local communities. Moreover, it seems they already had good experiences in using them for solving their conflicts.

5. The results of the quantitative survey on existing micro-level interethnic conflicts and ways of dealing with them

In this part we first give a description of the sample on which the survey was conducted, followed by an analysis of the survey findings, divided into four sections: victimisation, victim's agency and the use of restorative mechanisms; citizens' feeling of safety; mechanisms for the conflict resolution suitable to achieve justice and the potential for restorative justice; interethnic relations and the possible paths towards their improvement.

5.1. Who were our respondents?

The survey was conducted on a sample of 1,423 respondents. In Prijepolje 610 respondents (42.9%) completed the questionnaire, in Medvedja there were 382 (26.8%), and in Bac/Backa Palanka 431 respondents (30.3%).

5.1.1. Gender

There were slightly more female respondents in the sample: 743 (52.2%) compared to 680 male respondents (47.8%). The percentage ratio between males and females was different only in one research-site namely Medvedja, where the percentage of male respondents (58.5%) was higher than the percentage of female (41.5%).

5.1.2. Age

Viewed according to age, most of the respondents were in the age category of 31 to 60 years namely 740 (52%). The second most populous category of respondents by age was 18-30 years: 473 (33.2%). Finally, 210 respondents (14.8%) were older than 60 years. We can find a similar ratio between the age categories if we look at sub-samples (research-sites).

5.1.3. Marital status

More than half of the respondents, 753 (52.9%), were married at the time of the research, while more than a third (480 or 33.7%) answered they were single. In our sample there were 98 widows/widowers (6.9%), 51 respondents (3.6%) were divorced or separated from their spouse and 33 (2.3%) were cohabiting. Finally, 6 respondents (0.4%) answered they were engaged and for 2 respondents (0.1%) there was no data. 549 respondents (38.6%) do not have children. Slightly less than a third of respondents (449 or 31.6%) have two children, while almost the same number has one (173 or 12.2%) or three children (170 or 11.9%). 78 respondents have more than three children (5.5%). Medvedja had the lowest percentage of those without children (27.5%) and the highest percentage of those who have more than three children (16.2%).

5.1.4. Education

Most of respondents completed high school or gymnasium (448 or 31.5%) and a craft school lasting for two or three years (372 or 26.1%). They are followed by university graduates (217 or 15.2%) and vocational high school graduates (173 or 12.2%). 147 respondents (10.3%) finished only elementary school, 28 respondents (2%) had attended school but did not finish all eight grades, while 15 (1.1%) did not attend school at all. On the other hand, in our sample there were 14 respondents (1%) who have completed master studies and 3 (0.2%) with a PhD. There is no data for six respondents (0.4%). The ratios in the subsamples are similar.

5.1.5. Employment status

Most respondents were employed (638 or 44.8%). However, there was a significant percentage of the sample who were unemployed (308 or 21.6%). In addition, 201 respondents (14.1%) were retired, 161 respondents (11.3%) were students and 94 (6.6%) housewives/househusbands. In our sample there were 12

respondents (0.8%) on forced leave from work. The sample included 6 respondents (0.4%) who answered they were self-employed entrepreneurs. Percentages of employed and unemployed, as well as of other categories of work status were similar in the subsamples (research-sites).

5.1.6. Ethnicity

The majority of respondents were Serbs (893 or 62.8%). They are followed by Bosniaks (306 or 21.5%), Albanians (139 or 9.8%) and Croats (85 or 6%).

Viewed according to the research-sites, in Medvedja 243 respondents (63.6%) were Serbs and 139 respondents (36.4%) were Albanians. When it comes to Prijepolje, there is almost an equal number of Serb (49.8%) and Bosniak (50.2%) respondents in the subsample. Finally, in the Bac/Backa Palanka region there were 346 Serb respondents (80.3%) and 85 Croats (19.7%).

Asked whether any member of their families is of different ethnicities in comparison to them, 221 respondents (15.5%) gave an affirmative answer.

Statistically significant differences between the research-sites and an affirmative answer to the question of whether a family member is of a different ethnicity than the respondent were found. Most respondents gave a positive answer in Bac/Backa Palanka and the lowest percentage of those who answered affirmative was recorded in Medvedja.

Table 1. Research-sites and the member of the family

Research-site		Member of the family is from a different ethnic group		Total
		Yes	No	
Medvedja	Count	8	374	382
	%	2,1%	97,9%	100,0%
Prijepolje	Count	68	542	610
	%	11,1%	88,9%	100,0%
Bac/Backa Palanka	Count	145	286	431
	%	33,6%	66,4%	100,0%
Total	Count	221	1202	1423
	%	15,5%	84,5%	100,0%

Pearson Chi-Square=169.281, df = 2, p = 0,001

When it comes to ethnicity of the respondents who answered that they had a family member of different ethnicity to them, there were also statistically significant differences: Croats answered positively the most and Albanians the least.

Table 2. Ethnicity and the member of the family

Ethnicity		Member of the family is from a different ethnic group		Total
		Yes	No	
Serbs	Count	117	776	893
	%	13,1%	86,9%	100,0%
Croats	Count	60	25	85
	%	70,6%	29,4%	100,0%
Bosniaks	Count	41	265	306
	%	13,4%	86,6%	100,0%
Albanians	Count	3	136	139
	%	2,2%	97,8%	100,0%
Total	Count	221	1202	1423
	%	15,5%	84,5%	100,0%

Pearson Chi-Square=220,434, df = 3, p = 0,001

In terms of ethnicity, Croats who have a family member of different ethnicity to them answered he/she was a member of the Serbian (42), Hungarian (7) and Bosniak (4) ethnic group. As for the respondents of Serbian ethnicity, the majority of them had family members who are Croats (47), Hungarians (20), Bosniaks/Muslims (14) or Albanians (1). The largest number of Bosniaks who have family members of different ethnicities answered that it is someone who is a Serb (19), Croat (6) or Albanian (3). Finally, three ethnic Albanian respondents had a Bosniak family member, and one respondent answered it was a Serb, and one a Croat.

In response to the question of who is the member of the family of different ethnicity compared to them, in most cases it was the spouse (95 respondents or 43.9%), parents (64 or 29.6%) or daughter-in-law (21 or 9.7%). 13 respondents (6%) answered that it was a member of the extended family and 11 (5.1%) that it was their son-in-law. In 10 cases (4.6%) it was a grandparent and in 2 (0.9%) a half-sibling. In all three research-sites, in most cases respondents answered it

was a spouse or parent who was of different ethnicity to them. This suggests that despite disapprovals or distances towards mixed marriages as found within the qualitative research, the quantitative survey shows that in reality there is a high percentage of mixed marriages in the research-sites.

5.1.7. Length of stay in the current place of residence and war experience

The largest number of respondents has been living in their current place of residence for more than 20 years (1036 or 72.8%). They are followed by those who have been living in their towns between 15 and 20 years (161 or 11.3%) and those who have been living there between 6 and 15 years (159 or 11.2%). 67 respondents (4.7%) have been living there for less than 5 years.

Distribution within these categories was analysed in relation to the research-sites. Most of the respondents have been living in the current place of residence longer than 20 years and a minority of respondents have been living in these towns less than 5 years.

In our sample there were 82 respondents who answered that at one time they were refugees but now are not, 35 respondents were soldiers or police officers, 27 of the respondents are still refugees, 8 respondents have the status of internally displaced persons, while 7 respondents live in exile.

Most of those who answered that they had been refugees, but they are not refugees now, are from Medvedja (65). Out of 35 respondents who answered that they had been solders or police officers 9 were from Prijepolje. Finally, most of those who still have the status of refugees are from Bac/Backa Palanka (21).

5.2. Victimisation, victim's agency and the use of restorative mechanisms

5.2.1. Introduction

In this part we present the findings about prevalence, incidence and characteristics of victimisation experienced by citizens of the three research-sites included in our sample. These findings are supposed to give us an idea about the scope, structure and timing of victimisation and related interethnic conflicts within three multiethnic communities. Also, they provide us with information about victims and perpetrators, what influences the vulnerability of victims and what they did after victimisation in order to get help and resolve the conflict, as well as how aware our respondents are of victimisation of others. We also wanted to know if, or how often, our respondents used restorative mechanisms to solve the conflicts related to victimisation they endured.

5.2.2. Victimisation

Respondents were asked which form of victimisation they had experienced in the period from the 1990s until the time of the research. On the basis of the results of the qualitative analysis we offered them the following forms of victimisation as possible answers:

1. Insults
2. Threats
3. Violence
4. Attempted or planned murder
5. Forced to leave the place of residence
6. Damage of property
7. Pressure due to the political affiliation
8. House search, arrest
9. Suffering because a family member was killed, kidnapped or was missing
10. Inability to realise one's rights

11. Feeling embarrassed because of the ethnic belonging (e.g. due to the hate speech, hate graffiti, damage of the gravestones etc.)

In addition to these forms of victimisation, respondents had the possibility to add some other forms of victimisation they have faced, which was not among those enlisted. In the analysis, these forms of victimisation that were added by the respondents are classified as 'other'. We also asked the respondents who victimised them, when and how many times. Through these questions we intended to get to an idea about prevalence, incidence and timing of victimisation as well as about the scope and types of conflicts our respondents had been involved in.

5.2.2.1. Prevalence and incidence of victimisation

In total, 383 (26.9%) respondents or about one quarter of the whole sample had faced at least one form of victimisation.

Table 3. Prevalence of victimisation in the sample

Victimisation	Frequency	Percent
Yes	383	26.9
No	1039	73.1
Total	1423	100.0

The highest number of those answered to be victimised are from Medvedja (170 respondents or 44.4%), then from Bac/Backa Palanka (131 or 34.2%) and the least from Prijepolje (82 respondents or 21.4%).

Table 4. Victimisation in the research sites

Research site	Frequency	Percent
Medvedja	170	44.4
Bac/Backa Palanka	131	34.2
Prijepolje	82	21.4
Total	383	100.0

Respondents indicated they had faced one or more forms of victimisation in the period from 1990 until the time of the research. The data show that 119 (31.1%)

respondents experienced only one form of victimisation, while the majority, i.e. 264 (68.9%) faced more than one form.

Table 5. How many forms of victimisation did the respondents experience

How many forms of victimisation did the respondents experience	Frequency	Percent
Just one	119	31.1
More than one	264	68.9
Total	383	100,0

383 respondents that were victimised reported a total of 1,367 incidents. Nearly two-thirds of the incidents were reported by respondents from Medvedja (874 or)63.9%). Respondents in Bac/Backa Palanka reported 297 (21.7%) and those in Prijepolje a total of 196 (14.4%) incidents. In Medvedja, Albanians reported being victimised five times more often than Serbs (90.6% of Albanians vs. 18.1% of Serbs). In Prijepolje, Bosniaks answered being victimised almost three times as much as did Serbs (19.9% of Bosniaks vs. 6.9% of Serbs); while in Bac/Backa Palanka the percentage of Serbs and Croats was the same (30.0%).

Table 6. Total number of reported incidents by research site

Research site	Frequency	Percent
Medvedja	874	63.9
Bac/Backa Palanka	297	21.7
Prijepolje	196	14.4
Total	1367	100.0

Albanians (over a half) and Serbs (around one third) reported most victimising incidents.

Table 7. Total number of reported incidents and ethnicity

Ethnicity	Frequency	Percent
Serbs	434	31.7
Croats	59	4.3
Bosniaks	124	9.1
Albanians	750	54.9
Total	1367	100.0

Regarding the reported incidents, respondents reported insults as the most frequent (244 or 17.8%) of the total number of the reported incidents. The second most common response was threats (163 or 11.9%). Respondents reported 145 (10.7%) incidents when they were unable to realise their rights; 132 (9.7%) incidents involving feeling embarrassed because of the ethnic belonging (e.g. due to the hate speech, hate graffiti, damage of the gravestones, etc.); 127 (9.3%) incidents in which respondents were forced to leave their place of residence; 126 (9.2%) incidents related to pressures due to political affiliation; 117 (8.6%) incidents involving violence, 108 (7.9%) incidents in which property was damaged; 81 (5.9%) incidents in which they suffered because a family member had been killed, kidnapped or was missing; 75 (5.5%) incidents involving house searches or arrests, and 25 (1.9%) incidents that involved attempted or planned murder. In addition, respondents reported 24 (1.8%) incidents categorised as 'other'. Within this 'other' category, they reported victimising incidents in which they were faced with humiliation, provocations, harassment, robbery or they felt anxious because their neighbours from the same ethnic group had faced a form of violence.

Table 8. Forms of victimisation

Forms of victimisation	Frequency	Percent
Insults	244	17.8
Threats	163	11.9
Inability to realise one's rights	145	10.7
Feeling embarrassed because of the ethnic belonging (e.g. due to the hate speech, hate graffiti, damage of the gravestones etc.)	132	9.7
Forced to leave the place of residence	127	9.3
Pressures due to the political affiliation	126	9.2
Violence	117	8.6
Damage of property	108	7.9
Suffering because a family member was killed, kidnapped or is missing	81	5.9
House searches, arrest	75	5.5
Attempted or planned murder	25	1.9
Other	24	1.8
Total	1,367	100.0

The data illustrates differences between research-sites relating to the order of the most frequent incidents or forms of victimisation reported by victimised respondents. The order of the three most frequent forms of victimisation in Medvedja was as follows: 132 (15.1%) incidents involving insults, 108 (12.4%) incidents related to the threats and 100 (11.4%) incidents involving inability to realise one's rights. In Prijepolje respondents most often reported the following incidents: insults (41 cases or 20.9%), feeling embarrassed because of the ethnic belonging (e.g. due to the hate speech, hate graffiti, damage of the gravestones etc.) namely 40 cases (20.4%) and threats (28 cases or 14.3%). Finally, the order of the first three forms of victimisation by the frequency in Bac/Backa Palanka was as follows: insults (71 or 23.9%), inability to exercise one's rights (33 or 11.1%) and pressure related to political affiliation (31 or 10.4%).

Table 9. Forms of victimisation in the research-sites

Forms of victimisation in the research sites[33]	Medvedja		Prijepolje		Bac/Backa Palanka	
	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent
1	**132**	**15.1**	**41**	**20.9**	**71**	**23.9**
2	**108**	**12.4**	**28**	**14.3**	27	9.1
3	81	9.3	16	8.2	20	6.7
4	12	1.4	5	2.5	8	2.7
5	96	10.9	8	4.1	23	7.7
6	74	8.5	7	3.6	27	9.1
7	80	9.1	15	7.6	**31**	**10.4**
8	56	6.4	7	3.6	12	4.0
9	48	5.5	11	5.6	22	7.4
10	**100**	**11.4**	12	6.1	**33**	**11.1**
11	72	8.2	**40**	**20.4**	20	6.7
12	15	1.7	6	3.1	3	1.0
Total	874	100.0	196	100.0	297	100.0

[33] 1. Insults; 2. Threats; 3. Violence; 4. Attempted or planned murder; 5. Forced to leave the place of residence; 6. Damage of property; 7. Pressure due to the political affiliation; 8. House search, arrest; 9. Suffering because a family member was killed, kidnapped or is missing; 10. Inability to realise one's rights; 11. Feeling embarrassed because of the ethnic belonging (e.g. due to the hate speech, hate graffiti, damage of the grave stones etc.).

As already mentioned, for each form of victimisation respondents were exposed to in this time period, they were asked who was the perpetrator and how many times they have experienced this form of victimisation. Specifically, respondents were asked whether the perpetrators of victimisation were from the same ethnic group as them, members of another ethnic group or both. The data shows that, in all these forms of victimisation, for which there was a data about the ethnicity of the perpetrator, the perpetrators were mostly members of different ethnicities to the victimised respondent.

In Table 10 it can be seen that the number of perpetrators of different ethnicities was significantly greater than the number of perpetrators of the same ethnicity as the respondent. In percentage terms, in three-quarters or more of the cases, the perpetrators were members of different ethnic group than the respondent in the following forms of victimisation: forced to leave the place of residence (95.2%); attempted or planned murder (88.0%); house search, arrest (82.7%), damage of property (76.9%) and incidents connected with the suffering because a family member was killed, kidnapped or was missing (75.3%). The only form of victimisation in which the percentage ratio of the perpetrators from the same and from a different ethnic group was close, was the pressures due to the political affiliation: in 44.4% of cases the perpetrators were members of another ethnicity and in 27.8% of cases of the same ethnicity as the victimised respondent. When looking at the ratio of the perpetrators in terms of their ethnicity in relation to the research-sites, it can be noticed that there is a similar percentage ratio as in the whole sample of those victimised.

Table 10. Ethnicity of the perpetrator

Perpetrator	Forms of victimisation[34]										
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
Member of an other ethnic group	146	121	81	22	121	83	56	62	61	0	0
	59.8	**74.2**	**69.2**	**88.0**	**95.2**	**76.9**	**44.4**	**82.7**	**75.3**	**0.0**	**0.0**
Member of the same ethnic group	51	21	15	1	2	13	35	5	8	0	0
	20.9	**12.9**	**12.8**	**4.0**	**1.6**	**12.0**	**27.8**	**6.7**	**9.9**	**0.0**	**0.0**
Both	40	16	14	1	2	7	32	4	1	0	0
	16.4	**9.8**	**11.9**	**4.0**	**1.6**	**6.5**	**25.4**	**5.3**	**1.2**	**0.0**	**0.0**
Doesn't know/ Doesn't want to say/ No data	7	5	7	1	2	5	3	4	11	145	132
	2.9	**3.1**	**5.9**	**4.0**	**1.6**	**4.6**	**2.4**	**5.3**	**13.6**	**100.0**	**100.0**
Total	**244**	**163**	**117**	**25**	**127**	**108**	**126**	**75**	**81**	**145**	**132**
	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

For every reported form of victimisation, respondents were asked how many times something like that had happened. From Table 11 it can be seen that some forms were experienced mostly only once, while other forms were experienced more than once. Specifically, being forced to leave the place of residence (74%), violence (71.8%), suffering because a family member was killed, kidnapped or was missing (60.5%), damage of property (56.5%), house search, arrest (54.7%), and incidents related to the attempted or planned murder (48%) were mostly experienced only once.

[34] 1. Insults; 2. Threats; 3. Violence; 4. Attempted or planned murder; 5. Forced to leave the place of residence; 6. Damage of property; 7. Pressure due to the political affiliation; 8. House search, arrest; 9. Suffering because a family member was killed, kidnapped or is missing; 10. Inability to realise one's rights; 11. Feeling embarrassed because of the ethnic belonging (e.g. due to the hate speech, hate graffiti, damage of the grave stones etc.).

On the other hand, in 79.9% of the cases involving insults, the respondents faced them more than once. The same pattern was replicated with threats (in 23.9% of the cases threats were faced only once and in 69.9% of the cases more than once) and pressures due to the political affiliation (in 39.7% of the cases they were faced only once and in 53.9% of the cases more than once). Respondents faced with the inability to realise one's rights on one occasion in 13.1% of the cases and in 28.9% of the cases more than once. Likewise, feeling embarrassed because of the ethnic belonging (e.g. due to the hate speech, hate graffiti, damage of the gravestones etc.) 19.7% of respondents have encountered only once and in 39.5% of cases more than once.

Table 11. Number of incidents the respondent experienced

How many times	Forms of victimisation[35]										
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
Once	40	39	50	12	94	61	50	41	49	19	26
	16.4	**23.9**	**71.8**	**48.0**	**74.0**	**56.5**	**39.7**	**54.7**	**60.5**	**13.1**	**19.7**
Twice	45	51	23	3	15	22	19	19	11	6	5
	18.4	**31.3**	**14.1**	**12.0**	**11.8**	**20.3**	**15.1**	**25.3**	**13.6**	**4.1**	**3.8**
Three times	58	24	11	2	3	6	9	4	3	10	15
	23.8	**14.7**	**6.7**	**8.0**	**2.4**	**5.5**	**7.1**	**5.3**	**3.7**	**6.9**	**11.4**
Four times	20	11	4	0	2	1	2	1	1	1	0
	8.2	**6.7**	**2.4**	**0.0**	**1.6**	**0.9**	**1.6**	**1.3**	**1.2**	**0.7**	**0.0**
Five times	18	8	2	1	0	0	7	1	0	5	8
	7.4	**4.9**	**1.2**	**4.0**	**0.0**	**0.0**	**5.5**	**1.3**	**0.0**	**3.4**	**6.1**
More than 5 times	54	20	12	5	5	2	31	3	1	20	24
	22.1	**12.3**	**7.4**	**20.0**	**3.9**	**1.8**	**24.6**	**4.0**	**1.2**	**13.8**	**18.2**
No data	9	9	8	2	8	16	8	6	15	81	53
	3.7	**15.5**	**4.9**	**8.0**	**6.3**	**14.8**	**6.3**	**8.0**	**18.5**	**55.8**	**40.1**
Total	**244**	**163**	**117**	**25**	**127**	**108**	**126**	**75**	**81**	**145**	**132**
	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

The data showed that a similar trend can be noticed in the research sites, when looked upon separately.

[35] 1. Insults; 2. Threats; 3. Violence; 4. Attempted or planned murder; 5. Forced to leave the place of residence; 6. Damage of property; 7. Pressure due to the political affiliation; 8. House search, arrest; 9. Suffering because a family member was killed, kidnapped or is missing; 10. Inability to realise one's rights; 11. Feeling embarrassed because of the ethnic belonging (e.g. due to the hate speech, hate graffiti, damage of the grave stones etc.).

5.2.2.2. Time period in which the victimisation occurred

Respondents were also asked when the victimisation occurred. In relation to the research-sites, we can point out certain time periods. In Medvedja most cases of victimisation reported by the respondents occurred in the period 1998-1999, which coincides with the conflict in Kosovo. Likewise, in Bac/Backa Palanka and Prijepolje, respondents were most victimised in the period 1992-1995, which coincides with the war events in Croatia and Bosnia and Herzegovina. Among victimised respondents some had experienced some forms of victimisation in the period 2000-2010, but the total number of incidents was less than the number of incidents that occurred in the period 1990-2000.

The data also indicates that a portion of the respondents in all three research-sites had experienced some form of victimisation in the period 2010-2012. Unlike respondents whose victimisation occurred during the armed conflicts and was closely related to the conflicts, this newer victimisation was related to the current political situation in the research-sites (such as the inability to realise one's rights and pressures because of political affiliation).

5.2.2.3. Socio-demographic characteristics and the scope of victimisation

A statistically significant connection between the scope of victimisation and place of residence (research-sites), gender and ethnicity of the respondents was found. The data shows that the respondents from Medvedja answered to be victimised most often, compared to the respondents in Bac/Backa Palanka and Prijepolje.

Table 12. Research sites and victimisation

Research site		Victimisation		Total
		Yes	No	
Medvedja	Count	170	212	382
	%	44.5%	55.5%	100.0%
Prijepolje	Count	82	528	610
	%	13.4%	86.6%	100.0%
Bac/Backa Palanka	Count	131	300	431
	%	30.4%	69.6%	100.0%
Total	Count	383	1040	1423
	%	26.9%	73.1%	100.0%

Pearson Chi-Square=119.008, df = 2, p = 0,001

Male respondents were victimised in greater number in comparison to female respondents.

Table 13. Gender and victimisation

Gender		Victimisation		Total
		Yes	No	
Male	Count	213	467	680
	%	31.3%	68.7%	100.0%
Female	Count	170	573	743
	%	22.9%	77.1%	100.0%
Total	Count	383	1040	1423
	%	26.9%	73.1%	100.0%

Pearson Chi-Square=12.868, df = 1, p = 0,001

Respondents over 60 years of age had been victimised more often in comparison to the younger respondents. However, we should take into account that older respondents in the sample usually spoke about different forms of victimisation they had experienced while they were younger (during the 1990s).

Table 14. Age and victimisation

Age group		Victimisation		Total
		Yes	No	
18-30	Count	125	348	473
	%	26,4%	73,6%	100,0%
31-60	Count	187	553	740
	%	25,3%	74,7%	100,0%
Over 60	Count	71	139	210
	%	33,8%	66,2%	100,0%
Total	Count	383	1040	1423
	%	26,9%	73,1%	100,0%

Pearson Chi-Square=6,150, df = 2, p = 0,046

Also, regarding the ethnicity, we found that Albanian respondents answered to be victimised most often, compared to Serb and Bosniak respondents.

Table 15. Ethnicity and victimisation

Ethnicity		Victimisation		Total
		Yes	No	
Serbs	Count	170	723	893
	%	19.0%	81.0%	100.0%
Croats	Count	26	59	85
	%	30.6%	69.4%	100.0%
Bosniaks	Count	61	245	306
	%	19.9%	80.1%	100.0%
Albanians	Count	126	13	139
	%	90.6%	9.4%	100.0%
Total	Count	383	1040	1423
	%	26.9%	73.1%	100.0%

Pearson Chi-Square=323,359, df = 3, p = 0,001

5.2.2.4. Socio-demographic characteristics and forms of victimisation

The data showed a statistically significant relationship between the demographic characteristics of the respondents (gender, place of residence, age and ethnicity) and all the aforementioned forms of victimisation. Thus, the data showed statistically significant differences between males and females in the sample in terms of victimisation: men were increasingly more victimised when observed for each form of victimisation separately.

Significant differences were identified between respondents of different age and various forms of victimisation: older respondents were more victimised

than younger respondents, when each form of victimisation was viewed separately.

Furthermore, the data indicated the existence of a significant relationship between place of residence and ethnicity of the respondents and various forms of victimisation: respondents who were victimised were mostly Albanians from Medvedja.

5.2.3. Awareness of interethnic victimisation of others

The respondents were also asked whether they knew persons of their own or another ethnicity that had experienced some form of victimisation by a member of another ethnic group. With this question, we wanted to get additional information (in an indirect way) about the scope of interethnic victimisation in the three research-sites, as well as tried to come to data that can contribute to our better understanding of the issue of recognition and denial of injuries inflicted on members of one's own and different ethnic groups.

5.2.3.1. Awareness of interethnic victimisation of the members of own ethnic group

More than a third of the respondents (38.7%) knew someone from their ethnic group who had been victimised by a member of another ethnic group. More than a half of the respondents in the sample (833 or 58.5%) did not know, while 29 respondents (2%) knew but that they were afraid to talk about it.

Table 16. Awareness of the interethnic victimisation of the members of own ethnic group

I am aware of the victimisation of members of my ethnicity	Frequency	Percent
No	833	58.5
Yes	550	38.7
I am aware but I am afraid to talk about it	29	2.0
Other	6	0.4
No data	5	0.3
Total	1423	100.0

Statistically significant differences between the research-site and the awareness of respondents about the victimisation of a member of their ethnic group were found. The data showed that respondents in Medvedja were familiar with the victimisation of their compatriots most often compared to the respondents in Prijepolje and Bac/Backa Palanka. Also, in Medvedja they knew of cases of victimisation of a member of their ethnic group, but were afraid to talk about it was the most frequent.

Table 17. Research-sites and awareness of interethnic victimisation of the members of own ethnic group

Research-site		Awareness of the victimisation of other members of the respondent's ethnic group			Total
		Yes I am aware	I am aware but I am afraid to speak about it	Not familiar	
Medvedja	Count	183	14	185	382
	%	47.9%	3.7%	48.4%	100.0%
Prijepolje	Count	210	8	392	610
		34.4%	1.3%	64.3%	100.0%
Bac/Backa Palanka	Count	157	7	267	431
		36.4%	1.6%	61.9%	100.0%
Total	Count	550	29	844	1423
		38.7%	2.0%	59,3%	100.0%

Pearson Chi-Square=29.391, df = 4, p = 0,001

A significant relationship was also found between the awareness of the victimisation of members of their own ethnic group and ethnicity. Thus, the data showed that respondents of Albanian ethnicity were largely familiar with the victimisation of members of their ethnicity, and that Serb respondents were familiar with this in the smallest percent compared to the other ethnic groups. In

addition, Albanian respondents most often answered they were familiar with the victimisation of a member of their ethnicity but were afraid to talk about it.

Table 18. Ethnicity and awareness of interethnic victimisation of the members of own ethnic group

Ethnicity		Awareness of the victimisation of other members of the respondent's ethnic group			Total
		Yes I am aware	I am aware but I am afraid to speak about it	Not familiar	
Serbs	Count	262	16	615	893
	%	29.3%	1.8%	68.9%	100.0%
Croats	Count	36	0	49	85
	%	42.4%	0.0%	57.6%	100.0%
Bosniaks	Count	139	6	161	306
	%	45.4%	2.0%	52.6%	100.0%
Albanians	Count	113	7	19	139
	%	81.3%	5.0%	13.7%	100.0%
Total	Count	550	29	844	1423
	%	38.7%	2.0%	59.3%	100.0%

Pearson Chi-Square=162.433, df = 6, p = 0,001

5.2.3.2. Awareness of interethnic victimisation of members of other ethnic group

Less than a third of the respondents (26.4%) knew about interethnic victimisation of members of other ethnic groups by the member of their own ethnic group. 69.5% of the respondents did not know, while 45 respondents (3.2%) were aware of the victimisation of members of different ethnicities but were scared to talk about it.

Our findings suggest that respondents were aware of victimisation of members of other ethnic groups less than of members of their own. Also, more respondents were aware of victimisation of a member of other ethnic group but afraid to talk about it, in comparison with the awareness and fear to talk about victimisations of the members of own ethnic group. These findings may suggest that people have more knowledge about victimisation of members of one's own ethnic group but also that they tend to deny victimisation of people of other ethnicity more often. Furthermore, fear may play a role in people's unwillingness

to recognise victimisation of members of other groups, but also of their own ethnic groups, even when they are aware of it.

Table 19. Awareness of the interethnic victimisation of the member of other ethnic group

I am aware of the victimisation of members of another ethnicity	Frequency	Percent
No	989	69.5
Yes	376	26.4
I am aware but I am afraid to talk about it	45	3.2
Other	7	0.5
No data	6	0.4
Total	1423	100.0

Statistically significant differences among research-sites were found: respondents in Bac/BackaPalanka tended to be aware more often about the victimisation of members of different ethnic groups, compared to the respondents in Medvedja and Prijepolje. Compared to the respondents from Prijepolje and Bac/BackaPalanka the respondents in Medvedja most often knew about the victimisation of members of other ethnicities but were afraid to talk about it. Consequently, it seems that denial of victimisation of other ethnic group as well as the fear to talk about it even when people are aware, seems to be most widespread among respondents in Medvedja.

Table 20. Research-sites and awareness of interethnic victimisation of the members of a different ethnic group

Research-site		Awareness of the victimisation of members of a different ethnic group from that of the respondent			Total
		Yes I am aware	I am aware but I am afraid to speak about it	Not familiar	
Medvedja	Count	79	32	271	382
	%	20.7%	8.4%	70.9%	100.0%
Prijepolje	Count	149	8	453	610
	%	24.4%	1.3%	74.3%	100.0%
Bac/Backa Palanka	Count	148	5	278	431
	%	34.3%	1.2%	64.5%	100.0%
Total	Count	376	45	1002	1423
	%	26.4%	3.2%	70.4%	100.0%

Pearson Chi-Square=64.266, df = 4, p = 0,001

Finally, there were significant differences in the awareness of the victimisation of members of other ethnic groups among respondents of different ethnicities. Most aware of the victimisation of members of other ethnicities were Croat respondents, while Albanians were aware of it the least.

Table 21. Ethnicity and awareness of interethnic victimisation of the members of a different ethnic group

Ethnicity		Awareness of the victimisation of members of the different ethnic group from that of the respondent			Total
		Yes I am aware	I am aware but I am afraid to speak about it	Not familiar	
Serbs	Count	252	16	625	893
	%	28.2%	1.8%	70.0%	100.0%
Croats	Count	26	0	59	85
	%	30.6%	0.0%	69.4%	100.0%
Bosniaks	Count	83	5	218	306
	%	27.1%	1.6%	71.2%	100.0%
Albanians	Count	15	24	100	139
	%	10.8%	17.3%	71.9%	100.0%
Total	Count	376	45	1002	1423
	%	26.4%	3.2%	70.4%	100.0%

Pearson Chi-Square=112.358, df = 6, p = 0,001

Also, we found significant difference between the responses of Serbs and Albanians in Medvedja, while in other research-sites respondents from both ethnic groups gave similar answers. Findings from Medvedja suggest that Serbs were almost three times more aware than Albanians of victimisation of other ethnic group members. However, on the other hand, Albanians were aware but afraid to talk about it five times more often than Serbs. The majority of respondents from both ethnic groups answered in similar percentages they were not aware of victimisation of members of other ethnic groups.

It seems that denial as well as the fear to talk about victimisation of members of another ethnic group is the most widespread among Albanian respondents. This is not unexpected ,bearing in mind high pressure within the Albanian community towards loyalty based on ethnic belonging, which is traditionally much more emphasised than among members of other ethnic groups. This may also explain their low awareness of victimisation of others,

which may in fact be the consequence of their fear to recognise that they are aware of it even to the researchers, rather than of their real lack of awareness.

5.2.4. The analysis of one form of victimisation

The respondents who have experienced victimisation since the beginning of the 1990s were asked to choose one form of victimisation they had experienced. Victimised respondents singled out mostly insults as a form of victimisation which they have faced since 1990. A total of 116 respondents (30.3%) chose this form of victimisation. 39 respondents (10.2 %) chose violence, 36 respondents (9.4%) chose the pressure due to the political affiliation, and 34 respondents (8.9%) chose feeling embarrassed because of the ethnic belonging (e.g. due to the hate speech, hate graffiti, damage of gravestones etc.). Furthermore, 30 respondents (7.8%) chose threats as the most important form of victimisation, 28 respondents (7.3%) damage of property, while 27 respondents (7%) chose them being forced to leave the place of residence. 24 respondents (6.3%) chose the inability to realise one's rights; 19 respondents (5%) chose a suffering because a family member was killed, kidnapped or was missing; and 11 respondents (2.9%) selected events which were related to a search of their homes or an arrest. Finally, 4 respondents (1%) chose attempted or planned murder. In addition, 15 victimised respondents (3.9%) chose a couple of events that were not on the list.

5.2.4.1. The status of perpetrator

The question about the status of perpetrator was related to whether the perpetrator was an ordinary citizen, a police officer, a soldier or someone else. The data showed that in more than half of the cases the perpetrator was an ordinary citizen (217 respondents or 55.4%). Police officer and soldier victimised respondents less often, but still in a significant way 17.3% and 16.8% respectively. Members of paramilitary group were mentioned only in two cases. Respondents also rarely answered they were victimised by a politician or a member of a political party, a state official or employee, or the director.

Table 22. The status of the perpetrator

Perpetrator	Frequency	Percent
Ordinary citizen	217	55.4
Police officer	68	17.3
Soldier	66	16.8
Didn't want to say	14	3.6
Politician/member of a political party	11	2.8
State official or employee	10	2.5
Director	4	1.0
Member of a paramilitary group	2	0.5
Total	392	100,0

The data showed significant differences between respondents from different research-sites and victimisation by a police officer: respondents in Medvedja have to a greater extent answered that a police officer was the perpetrator in comparison to the respondents from the other two research-sites.

Table 23. Research-sites and police officer as a perpetrator

Research-site		Perpetrator was a police officer		Total
		Yes	No	
Medvedja	Count	43	127	170
	%	25.3%	74.7%	100.0%
Prijepolje	Count	16	66	82
	%	19.5%	80.5%	100.0%
Bac/Backa Palanka	Count	8	123	131
	%	6.1%	93.9%	100.0%
Total	Count	67	316	383
	%	17.5%	82.5%	100.0%

Pearson Chi-Square=19.166, df = 2, p = 0,001

Also, a significant relationship exists between the ethnicity of respondents and their experience with victimisation by police officers: the data showed that Albanian respondents most often identified police officers as perpetrators in comparison to Bosniak and Serb respondents. It is interesting that none of the Croat respondents mentioned a police officer as a perpetrator.

Table 24. Ethnicity and policemen as perpetrators

Ethnicity	Perpetrator was a police officer	Total

		Yes	No	
Serbs	Count	19	151	170
	%	11.2%	88.8%	100.0%
Croats	Count	0	26	26
	%	0.0%	100.0%	100.0%
Bosniaks	Count	12	49	61
	%	19.7%	80.3%	100.0%
Albanians	Count	36	90	126
	%	28.6%	71.4%	100.0%
Total	Count	67	316	383
	%	17.5%	82.5%	100.0%

Pearson Chi-Square=21.127, df = 3, p = 0,001

5.2.4.2. Ethnicity of the perpetrator

For the majority of the respondents the perpetrator was a member of another ethnic group (272 respondents or 71%). In 108 cases (28.2%) the offender was of the same ethnicity as the respondents, while in three cases (0.8%) there was no data.

Table 25. Ethnicity of the perpetrator

Perpetrator	Frequency	Percent
Member of another ethnicity	272	71.0
Member of my ethnicity	108	28.2
No data	3	0.8
Total	383	100,0

The data showed that there are significant differences between victimised respondents from different research-sites and the ethnicities of the perpetrators: perpetrators of different ethnicity were mostly found in Medvedja and perpetrators from the same ethnic group in Bac/Backa Palanka.

Table 26. Research-sites and ethnicity of the perpetrator

Research-site		Perpetrator		Total
		Member of my ethnicity	Member of another ethnicity	
Medvedja	Count	23	147	170
	%	13.5%	86.5%	100.0%
Prijepolje	Count	18	64	82
	%	22.0%	78.0%	100.0%
Bac/Backa Palanka	Count	67	64	131
	%	51.1%	48.9%	100.0%
Total	Count	108	275	383
	%	28.2%	71.8%	100.0%

Pearson Chi-Square=53.716, df = 2, p = 0,001

Perpetrators of different ethnicity mostly victimised Albanian respondents and perpetrators from the same ethnic group most often victimised Serb respondents.

Table 27. Ethnicity of the respondent and of the perpetrator

Ethnicity		Perpetrator		Total
		Member of my ethnicity	Member of another ethnicity	
Serbs	Count	96	74	170
	%	56.5%	43.5%	100.0%
Croats	Count	4	22	26
	%	15.4%	84.6%	100.0%
Bosniaks	Count	7	54	61
	%	11.5%	88.5%	100.0%
Albanians	Count	1	125	126
	%	0.8%	99.2%	100.0%
Total	Count	108	275	383
	%	28.2%	71.8%	100.0%

Pearson Chi-Square=124.358, df = 3, p = 0,001

5.2.4.3. Reasons for victimisation

Victimised respondents were asked why do they think they were victimised, i.e. do they think it was because of their ethnicity, political affiliation, both, or something else. More than half thought it was because of their ethnicity (244 respondents or 58.5%), while about one fourth thought the reason was politics

(25.9%). In addition, 65 respondents (15.6%) mentioned another reason for victimisation.

Table 28. Reasons for victimisation

Causes of victimisation	Frequency	Percent
Because of my ethnicity	244	58.5
Political reasons	108	25.9
Something else	65	15.6
Total	417	100,0

Respondents, who answered that there was another reason, stated that it was due to misunderstandings and disagreements with the perpetrator, because of jealousy or drunkenness. In addition, as other reasons respondents cited the bad economy or bad functioning of the state system, neighbourhood quarrels, problems at work, reasons related to the acquisition of material gain, insolence, or other personal reasons or characteristics of the perpetrator. The findings show that respondents from Medvedja and Prijepolje most often ethnicity as the reason for their victimisation, while the respondents from Bac/Backa Palanaka mentioned this as a reason less often.

Table 29. Research-sites and perception of victimisation causes

Research-site		Reason for victimisation- ethnicity		Total
		Yes	No	
Medvedja	Count	129	41	170
	%	75.9%	24.1%	100.0%
Prijepolje	Count	62	20	82
	%	75.6%	24.4%	100.0%
Bac/Backa Palanka	Count	53	78	131
	%	40.5%	59.5%	100.0%
Total	Count	244	139	383
	%	63.7%	36.3%	100.0%

Pearson Chi-Square=46.549, df = 2, p = 0,001

Albanian respondents perceived their ethnicity to a greater extent to be the reason behind their victimisation compared to the respondents from other ethnic groups, while Serb respondents mentioned ethnicity least often as the reason.

Table 30. Ethnicity and perception of victimisation causes

Ethnicity		Reason for victimisation- ethnicity		Total
		Yes	No	
Serbs	Count	70	100	170
	%	41.2%	58.8%	100.0%
Croats	Count	14	12	26
	%	53.8%	46.2%	100.0%
Bosniaks	Count	47	14	61
	%	77.0%	23.0%	100.0%
Albanians	Count	113	13	126
	%	89.7%	10.3%	100.0%
Total	Count	244	139	383
	%	63.7%	36.3%	100.0%

Pearson Chi-Square=79.884, df = 3, p = 0,001

5.2.4.4. Perceptions of those injured and victims

As illustrated by Table 31, the vast majority of victimised respondents consider themselves as injured in the victimising event. Namely, apart from 28.7% of those who answered that only they themselves were injured, 42% answered that also someone else was injured in that event. This means that in total 70.7% of victimised respondents considered that they themselves were injured or endangered. They also considered other people as being injured, either together with themselves (42%) or alone (21.4%). In total, they recognised 63.4% of people other than themselves as injured in the selected event.

Table 31. Who was injured?

Who was injured?	Frequency	Percent
Myself	110	28,7
Myself and others	161	42,0
Others	82	21,4
No one was hurt	30	7,8
Total	383	100,0

Tables 31 and 32 show there is not a big difference between the answers about who was recognised as injured and who as a victim in the selected victimising event. Slightly less respondents recognised themselves, as well as themselves and

others as victims, while they recognised more often others as victims than as those being injured.

Table 32. Who was a victim?

Who was a victim?	Frequency	Percent
Myself	108	28,2
Myself and others	149	38,9
Others	102	26,6
No one was victim	24	6,3
Total	383	100,0

Obviously, our findings suggest that respondents had in mind both directly and indirectly injured persons (themselves and others), and they relate victim identity to both of them. However, we can observe that a small percentage of respondents, although they had an experience of victimisation, did not recognise anyone as either injured or victim in a selected event. In order to understand better our findings, we explored in further detail the answers of our respondents, as well as the differences in relation to the research-sites.

First, we looked at possible connections between the type of victimising event and who was identified as an injured person, i.e. a victim. We found significant differences between victimising events. The findings suggest that our respondents most often recognised both directly and indirectly injured persons in a victimising event, but in some of them they did not recognise those indirectly injured.

Table 33. Forms of victimisation and a perception of injured person

Forms of victimisation		Who was injured				Total
		Myself	Myself and others	Others	No one was hurt	
Insults	Count	51	30	26	9	116
	%	44,0%	25,9%	22,4%	7,8%	100,0%
Threats	Count	7	14	7	2	30
	%	23,3%	46,7%	23,3%	6,7%	100,0%
Violence	Count	14	17	8	0	39
	%	35,9%	43,6%	20,5%	,0%	100,0%
Attempted or planned murder	Count	0	3	1	0	4
	%	,0%	75,0%	25,0%	,0%	100,0%
Forced to leave the place of residence	Count	2	13	11	1	27
	%	7,4%	48,1%	40,7%	3,7%	100,0%
Damage of property	Count	4	17	5	2	28
	%	14,3%	60,7%	17,9%	7,1%	100,0%
Pressures due to the political affiliation	Count	10	15	5	6	36
	%	27,8%	41,7%	13,9%	16,7%	100,0%
House search, arrest	Count	2	7	2	0	11
	%	18,2%	63,6%	18,2%	,0%	100,0%
Suffering because a family member was killed, kidnapped or is missing	Count	0	10	9	0	19
	%	,0%	52,6%	47,4%	,0%	100,0%
Inability to realise one's rights	Count	10	11	3	0	24
	%	41,7%	45,8%	12,5%	,0%	100,0%
Feeling embarrassed because of the ethnic belonging (e.g. due to the hate speech, hate graffiti, damage of the grave stones etc.)	Count	6	18	4	6	34
	%	17,6%	52,9%	11,8%	17,6%	100,0%
Total	Count	106	155	81	26	368
	%	28,8%	42,1%	22,0%	7,1%	100,0%

Pearson Chi-Square=71.624, df = 30, p = 0,001

For example, the answer that both respondent and others were injured was most often given in cases of attempted or planned murder, house search and arrest, damage of property, thus, in cases where several persons were directly as well as indirectly injured/endangered. Also, in cases where a family member was killed, kidnapped or missing, about half recognised both themselves and others as victims, while the other half related injury only to others. In the case of attempted or planned murder, compared to other victimising events, the highest percentage of answers recognising only injured others were given as well. It seems that some of our respondents did not recognise themselves as injured because the injury was not physical. Also, psychological consequences often were not recognised as injury in cases of feeling embarrassed because of ethnic belonging (e.g. due to hate speech, hate graffiti, damage of the gravestones, etc.), as well as in cases of

pressures due to the political affiliation, where most often the answers that nobody was injured were given. Answers about who was considered to be a victim are very similar but some differences in frequency of answers about those considered to be injured and victims were found.

Table 34. Forms of victimisation and a perception of victim

Forms of victimisation		Who was victim				Total
		Myself	Myself and others	Others	No one was victim	
Insults	Count	47	34	28	7	116
	%	40,5%	29,3%	24,1%	6,0%	100,0%
Threats	Count	6	12	12	0	30
	%	20,0%	40,0%	40,0%	,0%	100,0%
Violence	Count	14	17	5	3	39
	%	35,9%	43,6%	12,8%	7,7%	100,0%
Attempted or planned murder	Count	0	3	1	0	4
	%	,0%	75,0%	25,0%	,0%	100,0%
Forced to leave the place of residence	Count	3	10	13	1	27
	%	11,1%	37,0%	48,1%	3,7%	100,0%
Damage of property	Count	4	18	4	2	28
	%	14,3%	64,3%	14,3%	7,1%	100,0%
Pressures due to the political affiliation	Count	12	14	9	1	36
	%	33,3%	38,9%	25,0%	2,8%	100,0%
House search, arrest	Count	2	7	2	0	11
	%	18,2%	63,6%	18,2%	,0%	100,0%
Suffering because a family member was killed, kidnapped or is missing	Count	0	7	12	0	19
	%	,0%	36,8%	63,2%	,0%	100,0%
Inability to realise one's rights	Count	7	13	4	0	24
	%	29,2%	54,2%	16,7%	,0%	100,0%
Feeling embarrassed because of the ethnic belonging (e.g. due to the hate speech, hate graffiti, damage of the grave stones etc.)	Count	6	12	12	4	34
	%	17,6%	35,3%	35,3%	11,8%	100,0%
Total	Count	101	147	102	18	368
	%	27,4%	39,9%	27,7%	4,9%	100,0%

Pearson Chi-Square=64.656, df = 30, p = 0,001

The most important difference is found in answers about pressure due to the political affiliation, where respondents answered that nobody was a victim and much more that others were victims. Obviously, our respondents recognised indirect victimisation of other people by political pressures exercised on themselves, in spite of the fact that they did not consider part of victims of this event as injured/endangered in a physical sense. There were similar findings in

relation to victims of feeling embarrassed because of the ethnic belonging (e.g. due to the hate speech, hate graffiti, damage of the grave stones, etc.). These findings seem to suggest that our respondents recognised as victims both those who suffered physically and those who suffered psychologically. Also, they seem to recognise both direct and indirect impacts of victimisation on themselves and others.

When answering the question about those injured in a victimising event, our respondents enlisted 618 injured persons in 383 events they selected. A bit more than two fifth of those identified as injured were respondents themselves (43.8%), while the rest were other people. Most of other people whom they considered as injured were members of their families (30.3%) and their friends (16%). Less often they answered that their neighbours, as well as their colleagues, members of their ethnic group or religion (someone else) were injured.

Table 35. Injured persons in the incident

Who was injured	Frequency	Percent
Myself	271	43.8
My family	187	30.3
My friends	99	16.0
My neighbours	47	7.6
Someone else	14	2.2
Total	618	100,0

Similar to the above presented are findings about recognising oneself and others as victims. However, apart from themselves, family members and friends, 9.6% of respondents recognised as (indirect) victims all members of their ethnic group. A few respondents mentioned their colleagues at work, the whole population of the town or members of their religion as victims in these cases (someone else).

Table 36. Who was the victim

Who was the victim	Frequency	Percent
Myself	257	41.1
My family	169	27.0
My friends	88	14.0
All members of my ethnic group	60	9.6
My neighbours	41	6.5
Someone else	10	1.6

Who was the victim	Frequency	Percent
Myself	257	41.1
My family	169	27.0
My friends	88	14.0
All members of my ethnic group	60	9.6
My neighbours	41	6.5
Someone else	10	1.6
Total	625	100,0

When we compare findings presented in Tables 36 and 37 we can see that a few more persons (625) were enlisted as victims than as injured (618). When we compare individual categories, we can notice a slightly smaller percentage of each category as well as a considerable percentage of those who related victimhood to the entire ethnic group, regardless of any injury they suffered, which obviously contributed to this difference. Also, we can notice that answers about the victimhood of the whole population of the town or members of the religion appeared. These findings seem to confirm that our respondents connect victim identity to both directly and indirectly injured, including primary, secondary and tertiary victims. Thus, the victim identity is not reduced only to those directly victimised.

Findings about the research-sites show that Albanian respondents from Medvedja recognised themselves as being both injured and victims more often than others. Friends and neighbours were seen as being injured to a greater extent by Bosniak respondents from Prijepolje than respondents of other nationalities. Also, Bosniak respondents recognised their friends as victims to a greater extent than those from the other three ethnic groups. They also considered all members of their ethnic group as victims to a greater extent than Serb, Croat and Albanian respondents.

There were no significant statistical differences in perception of family members as injured or victims among respondents from the three research-sites and in relation to their ethnicity.

5.2.4.5. Perception of responsible person

The large majority of victimised respondents found someone else (excluding themselves) to be responsible for the event in which they were victimised. However, it is interesting that several respondents also recognised their own responsibility, considering either themselves alone or themselves and somebody else to be responsible.

Table 37. Who is responsible

Who is responsible?	Frequency	Percent
Myself	2	,5
Myself and others	4	1,4
Others	347	90,6
No one was responsible	30	7,8
Total	383	100,0

In addition, 7.8% of victimised respondents did not recognise anyone as responsible for what had happened in the event in which they felt victimised.

Table 38. Who is responsible for victimisation

Who is responsible for victimisation	Frequency	Percent
Direct perpetrator	245	52.0
State	182	38.6
Someone else	38	8.1
Myself	6	1.3
Total	471	100,0

383 respondents listed 471 responsible persons/bodies as responsible for the victimisation they experienced. Around half of the answers, as expected, recognised the direct perpetrator as responsible. Also, a high percentage of answers recognised indirect responsibility of the state (38.6%).

Respondents had the option to add someone else on the list whom they thought was responsible for the victimising event which they were talking about. 38 respondents (8.1%) enlisted the general political situation, local state employees or the society as a whole as responsible. In addition, some of them recognised the states that bombed Serbia as responsible. Finally, 6 (1.3%)

respondents answered they themselves were responsible. In total, it is obvious that our respondents recognised both direct and indirect responsibility.

There were no significant differences between respondents from different research-sites in relation to the perception of the direct perpetrator as responsible for the victimisation they faced. In all three research-sites a similar percentage (over 60%) found the direct perpetrator to be responsible.

Statistically significant differences were not found between respondents of different ethnicities in terms of identifying the direct perpetrator as responsible for the victimisation. However, percentage wise, it can be noted that Croat respondents named the direct perpetrator as responsible for the victimisation to a greater extent.

Respondents from Prijepolje identified the state responsible for their victimisation more often than those in Medvedja and Bac/Backa Palanka. Also, Bosniaks tend to see the state as responsible more often than Serbs, Croats and Albanians individually, and this is in accordance with the above-mentioned findings about Prijepolje.

As we already mentioned, only a small number of respondents recognised themselves as responsible for victimising event. The same number (2) of respondents in all three research-sites considered themselves to be responsible. Three of those respondents were Serbs, while others were one Croat, one Albanian and one Bosniak.

5.2.4.6. Victims' activity after victimisation

In order to get the data about victims' activity after victimisation, we asked the respondents what personally did after the victimising event. The question was followed by a list of answers, including the following: asking help from a relative, friend or another close person (informal support); I talked to a person who hurt me (dialogue with a perpetrator); I approached organisation that provides support to persons with similar problems (victim support); I approached the peace council; I approached state institutions, such as the police, centre for social work, court, prosecutor's office, health institution (institutional mechanisms).

Besides, the respondents could write down other steps taken after the victimising event that were not enlisted in the questionnaire. They were allowed to give multiple answers. In addition to this, we asked respondents if they had been satisfied with the results of each step undertaken by them in the aftermath of the victimising event. Out of the total number of victimised respondents, two thirds (66.5%) have sought support from someone in relation to the victimisation they experienced within the period between 1990 and the time of the research, while one third (33.5%) did not take any steps after the victimising event.

Table 39. Taking certain steps after victimising event by a victim

Did you overtake anything after the victimising event in order to get help?	Frequency	Percent
Yes	255	66.5
No	128	33.5
Total	383	100,0

Statistically significant differences between respondents from different research-sites in terms of approaching an individual/organisation/institution related to the victimisation were found. Respondents in Medvedja have sought support to a greater extent than respondents from the other two towns.

Table 40. Research-sites and asking for help

Research-site		Did you ask for help		Total
		Yes	No	
Medvedja	Count	129	41	170
	%	75,9%	24,1%	100,0%
Prijepolje	Count	48	34	82
	%	58,5%	41,5%	100,0%
Bac/Backa Palanka	Count	78	53	131
	%	59,5%	40,5%	100,0%
Total	Count	255	128	383
	%	66,6%	33,4%	100,0%

Pearson Chi-Square=11.912, df = 2, p = 0,03

Albanians have to a greater extent sought help than Serb, Croat and Bosniak respondents. It is interesting that among the Croats there were more who did not approach anyone (53.8%) than who did (46.2%).

Table 41. Ethnicity and asking for help

Ethnicity		Have asked for help		Total
		Yes	No	
Serbs	Count	112	58	170
	%	65,9%	34,1%	100,0%
Croats	Count	12	14	26
	%	46,2%	53,8%	100,0%
Bosniaks	Count	32	29	61
	%	52,5%	47,5%	100,0%
Albanians	Count	99	27	126
	%	78,6%	21,4%	100,0%
Total	Count	255	128	383
	%	66,6%	33,4%	100,0%

Pearson Chi-Square=18.521, df = 3, p = 0,00

There were no statistically significant differences between males and females, or between respondents of different ages in terms of approaching someone in relation to the victimisation they experienced.

Victimised respondents approached someone 458 times. As the data in the table below shows, most often (129 or 28.2%) they used some form of informal support in terms of asking help from their relatives, friends or other close persons. In 11.4% of cases they turned to the victim support organisation. In almost 20% of cases, victimised respondents tried to talk about the victimising event and its consequences with the person who hurt him/her, showing readiness to communicate with a perpetrator and establish a dialogue. In around 13% of cases, respondents called the police, while in less than 10% of the cases they approached the court, went to a health institution, turned to the public prosecutor's office or to the centre for social work. Finally, there were only 10 (2.2%) cases of approaching the peace council after the victimising event.

In 23 cases (5.0%) of looking for assistance and support, victimised respondents did something else, such as they tried to solve the issue by protests together with other people victimised in a similar fashion, or they asked for help from the Office for youth, international organisations, directors of schools and firms, the Ombudsman or political organisations, etc.

Table 42. Personal activity of the respondents after the victimisation

What did you personally do in this case?	Frequency	Percent	Were you satisfied with the results?	
			Yes	No
I talked with my relatives, friends or other close persons	129	28.2	70.5%	29.5%
I spoke to the person who hurt me	89	19.4	30.3%	69.7%
I approached the police	58	12.7	41.4%	58.6%
I approached an organisation that I thought provides support to persons with similar problems as mine (victim support organisation)	52	11.4	36.5%	63.5%
I approached the court	33	7.2	39.4%	60.6%
I went to a healthcare institution	26	5.7	69.3%	30.7%
I did something else	23	5.0	43.5%	56.5%
I approached the public prosecutor's office	20	4.4	35.0%	65.0%
I approached the centre for social work	18	3.9	50%	50.0%
I approached the peace council	10	2.2	40.0%	60.0%
Total	458	100.0		

The data in the table above suggests that informal support was rather important for the victimised respondents in the aftermath of the victimising event, particularly if we keep in mind that the majority of those who asked for help from some close persons expressed their satisfaction with the outcome. The number of those who tried to establish a dialogue with a person who hurt them is not that

small, as well as the number of those satisfied with the outcomes of the dialogue, which suggests there is a potential for the use of restorative approaches.

Victimised respondents asked help from victim support organisations to a lesser extent, which can be interpreted by the lack of their knowledge about these services or the lack of the existence of such services in the research-sites. These findings speak in favour of the need for raising awareness of the citizens about the existence of these services, as well as to work on the establishment of such services in these local communities.

On the other hand, the experience of the victimised respondents has shown that they used formal, i.e. institutional mechanisms of assistance less. In addition, the level of their dissatisfaction with the institutional mechanisms of assistance and support after victimisation, particularly in terms of the results of their approaching to the police, judiciary and centre for social work, was rather high.

Statistically significant differences between respondents from different research-sites in terms of approaching someone after the victimising event were identified only in situations related to involvement with the police. Respondents in Medvedja have more often contacted the police than those in Prijepolje and Bac/Backa Palanka.

Table 43. Research-sites and approaching the police

Research-site		I approached the police		Total
		Yes	No	
Medvedja	Count	36	134	170
	%	21,2%	78,8%	100,0%
Prijepolje	Count	12	70	82
	%	14,6%	85,4%	100,0%
Bac/Backa Palanka	Count	10	121	131
	%	7,6%	92,4%	100,0%
Total	Count	58	325	383
	%	15,1%	84,9%	100,0%

Pearson Chi-Square=10.581, df = 2, p = 0,05

When it comes to the impact of the respondents' gender on approaching individuals, organisations or institutions, significant differences were found

related to approaching the centre for social work: female respondents have to a greater extent approached this institution.

Table 44. Gender and approaching the centre for social work

Gender		I approached the centre for social work		Total
		Yes	No	
Male	Count	6	207	213
	%	2,8%	97,2%	100,0%
Female	Count	12	158	170
	%	7,1%	92,9%	100,0%
Total	Count	18	365	383
	%	4,7%	95,3%	100,0%

Pearson Chi-Square=3.798, df = 1, p = 0,44

Significant differences among respondents of different ethnicities and their readiness to approach their relatives, friends or other close persons regarding their victimisation were found: Serb respondents have to a greater extent talked to their close ones.

Table 45. Ethnicity and talking with close persons

Ethnicity		I talked with my relatives, friends or other close persons		Total
		Yes	No	
Serbs	Count	72	98	170
	%	42,4%	57,6%	100,0%
Croats	Count	3	23	26
	%	11,5%	88,5%	100,0%
Bosniaks	Count	16	45	61
	%	26,2%	73,8%	100,0%
Albanians	Count	38	88	126
	%	30,2%	69,8%	100,0%
Total	Count	129	254	383
	%	33,7%	66,3%	100,0%

Pearson Chi-Square=13.646, df = 3, p = 0,03

Finally, significant differences were found between respondents from different ethnic groups and their willingness to approach a victim support organisation after victimisation: Serb respondents have approached victim support organisations to a greater extent than Croats, Albanians and Bosniaks.

Table 46. Ethnicity and approaching victim support organisation

Ethnicity		I approached a victim support organisation		Total
		Yes	No	
Serbs	Count	31	139	170
	%	18,2%	81,8%	100,0%
Croats	Count	0	26	26
	%	,0%	100,0%	100,0%
Bosniaks	Count	9	52	61
	%	14,8%	85,2%	100,0%
Albanians	Count	12	114	126
	%	9,5%	90,5%	100,0%
Total	Count	52	331	383
	%	13,6%	86,4%	100,0%

Pearson Chi-Square=9.065, df = 3, p = 0,28

In relation to approaching other individuals and institutions, no significant differences were found among the respondents of different ethnicities.

5.2.5. Conclusion

Findings about victimisation, victim's agency and the use of restorative mechanisms give a lot of information that is important for understanding the scope, nature and characteristics of conflicts in our research-sites, as well as the attitudes and position of victims in them and in looking for their resolution.

Our findings show that about a quarter of respondents from our survey sample endured some form of victimisation in the period from 1990 until the time of the survey. 383 respondents reported a total of 1,367 victimisation incidents. Around two third suffered from repeat victimisation, while around one third was victimised only once. Similar to victimisation surveys carried out in other countries not affected by armed conflicts, our findings suggest that the small number of people is affected by the most of victimisation incidents (Doerner and Lab 2002; Croall 2007).

The forms of victimisation which were reported most often are insults, then threats, inability to realise one's rights, feeling embarrassed because of the ethnic belonging (e.g. due to the hate speech, hate graffiti, damage of the grave stones etc.), forced to leave the place of residence, pressures due to the political

affiliation, violence and damage of property. Suffering because a family member was killed, kidnapped or was missing, as well as house searches, arrest, attempted or planned murder etc., are reported less often (less then 100 victimisation events). The forms of victimisation which affected physical integrity of our respondents and their families the most were most often experienced only once, while forms of repeat victimisations were mostly those with predominantly psychological consequences.

In all forms of victimisation, the perpetrators were most often members of other ethnicities in comparison to the ethnic belonging of victim. Thus, most of victimisations were interethnic. This was particularly striking in cases of the most serious forms of victimisation such as forced leave of the place of residence, attempted or planned murder, house search and arrest, damage of property and suffering because a family member was killed, kidnapped or was missing. The only form of victimisation in which the percentage of the perpetrators from the same and from a different ethnic group was similar, was pressures due to political affiliation. In addition, the finding that about a third of the respondents knew someone from their own as well as from the other ethnic group, who was victimised by a member of another ethnic group, suggests that interethnic victimisation is much more widespread in society than shown by answers about victimisation experienced by our respondents.

The greatest proportion of victimisations occurred during the 1990s, while much less occurred after 2000, which was expected and confirms the findings of the qualitative analyses. In all research-sites the timing of victimisations experienced during the 1990s coincides with armed conflicts in Croatia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, and Kosovo. After 2000, the bulk of victimisations was related to the armed conflicts, suggesting a continuity of the conflicts from the war to the post-war period. Beside this continuity of the conflicts from the wartime, new conflicts emerged as well. These new conflicts, particularly those occurring in the period 2010-2012, were related more to the actual political situation in the research-sites and political transition in Serbia in general (such as the inability to exercise rights and pressures because of political affiliation).

The results show the significant differences in victimisation prevalence between men and women, as well as between different age categories, research-sites and ethnic groups. Also there are significant differences in incidence between research-sites and ethnic groups: men answered more often than women that they have been victimised, and older respondents more than the younger ones. Older respondents in the sample usually spoke about different forms of victimisation they experienced while they were younger (during the 1990s). Almost half of those who have been victimised are from Medvedja: they reported nearly two-thirds of all victimisation incidents. Albanians seem to be victimised the most since they reported over half of all victimisations.

Survey findings show that our respondents are less aware of interethnic victimisation of members of other ethnic group than of members of their own. In addition, more respondents were aware but afraid to talk about victimisation of a member of another ethnic group, than about victimisations of the member of own ethnic group. People most probably have more knowledge about victimisation of members of their own ethnic group, but we can also assume that they tend to deny victimisation of people of other ethnicity more than the victimisation of their compatriots. As is noticed in other contexts, this denial is rarely factual (Cohen 2001). Our findings suggest that fear may play a role in people's unwillingness to recognise victimisation of members of other, but also of their own ethnic groups, even when they are aware of it.

The Croat respondents from Bac/BackaPalanka tend to be ready to recognise victimisation of members of different ethnic groups the most, while the denial of victimisation of another ethnic group as well as the fear to talk about it even when people are aware of that, seems to be most widespread among Albanian respondents in Medvedja. In addition, significant differences in awareness about victimisation of members of other ethnic groups are found between Serbs and Albanians in Medvedja. Although quantitative data showed a different picture comparing to the qualitative analysis (which suggests high level of denial of victimisation of Albanians by Serbs, but not the denial of Albanian interviewees of victimisation of Serbs), both findings seem to suggest the existence of different, i.e. opposing, truths about what happened to other ethnic

group. It is obvious that a constructive dialogue about the past should be opened and these opposed truths and reasons for their existence discussed in order to restore relationships between two ethnic groups. This should be discussed bearing also in mind findings about the fear of talking about the victimisation of other ethnic group which seems to be much more widespread among Albanian than among Serb respondents.

In the case of victimisations that respondents selected to give more details about, they most often (about a half) recognised as the perpetrator an ordinary citizen, but a significant part of them (more than third) also recognised a police officer or a soldier as a perpetrator. Unlike qualitative data, these findings suggest that victimisation by and conflicts among ordinary citizens are not so rare. Similar to our qualitative analysis, survey findings also show that Albanian respondents from Medvedja have to a significantly greater extent identified a police officer as the offender, than respondents from other research-sites and other ethnicities. The majority of victimised respondents recognised a member of a different ethnic group as a perpetrator, while about a third also recognised as a perpetrator the member of their own ethnic group. Respondents from Medvedja and Albanians were those who most often recognised the member of a different ethnic group as a perpetrator, while Serbs and those from Bac/Backa Palanka most often recognised member of their own ethnic group as a perpetrator.

Similarly as the qualitative data, survey findings show that most often ethnicity is perceived as the reason for victimisation, while political reasons are also given a prominent place. Respondents from Medvedja and Prijepolje have in significantly greater numbers seen the reason for their victimisation in their ethnicity. Similarly as the qualitative analysis, these findings seem to suggest that ethnicity and political affiliation are strong factors that influence victimisation and conflicts on our research-sites, as well as the safety of our citizens. However, they also suggest that ethnicity is not perceived as the only reason of victimisation. Thus, not all victimisations, i.e. conflicts between members of different ethnic groups, are perceived as intercultural.

The general conclusion which we can draw from both quantitative and qualitative findings about the way our victimised respondents perceive victims

and responsible persons, is that they recognise both direct and indirect victims and perpetrators/responsibility. Consequently, the notion of victim and perpetrator is broader, including both those directly and indirectly injured and responsible for the interethnic conflict. Moreover, their understanding of victimisation includes physical, material, psychological, emotional and social impact of it on a victim (Dignan 2005, 24; Vanfraechem 2012, 35), including primary, secondary and tertiary victims (members of ethnic group or religion) (Letschert and Staiger 2010; Spalek 2006, 12; Vanfraechem 2012, 35). Apart from the direct perpetrator, the state has a prominent place among those identified as responsible for a victimising event. Some of the victimised respondents were able to recognise their own responsibility for what happened to them. Findings suggest some differences between research-sites and members of different ethnic groups: Bosniaks from Prijepolje more often than other victimised respondents recognised their friends and all members of their ethnic group as injured persons to whom they relate victim identity, while Albanians from Medvedja most often recognised themselves as injured to whom they relate victimhood. Also, Bosniaks from Prijepolje considered the state responsible for the victimising event more often than others.

The survey findings show that the majority of the victimised respondents expressed their activity in the aftermath of the victimising event in terms of looking for assistance and support and trying to solve the consequences of the victimisation, which speaks in favour of victims' agency. Respondents from Medvedja expressed their agency significantly more than respondents in the other two research-sites. In addition, the findings suggest that Albanian respondents were taking steps to seek help after the victimising event the most. Around one third of those who looked for assistance and support used some form of informal support (support from the close persons) or approached victim support organisations. These findings suggest the relevance and importance of support and empowerment of victims in order to overcome the consequences of the victimisation. On the other hand, the number of those who tried to establish dialogue with the perpetrator and also those who were satisfied with the outcome of the encounter and dialogue should not be neglected. This proves the victims'

need to be actively involved in conflict solving (active participation), which is also tightly connected with their empowerment (Vanfraechem 2012, 16). Thus, these finings suggest there is not only a potential, but also a need for broader use of restorative approaches.

Rather small number of victimised respondents approached the police or other state agencies looking for the institutional assistance and support, while the percentage of those who were not satisfied with what had been done by the state agencies, primarily by the police, court and public prosecutor's office was high. Victimised respondents in Medvedja were approaching the police more than the respondents from other two research-sites. On the other hand, Serb respondents were more in favour of informal support and approaching victim support organisations in comparison to respondents from other ethnic groups. In addition, only a few respondents approached peace councils, which can be attributed to either the lack of their existence or the lack of knowledge about their existence. Nevertheless, experiences of those who approached peaces councils could be valuable for further work on developing models for conflict transformation based on restorative justice principles.

5.3. Citizens' feelings of safety

In this part we focus on feelings of safety of our respondents. We wanted to know their current feelings (at the time of the research), but also their feelings of safety before and during the 1990s. If they felt insecure at one point, we also wanted to find out why. In the end, we analysed their opinions about the ways safety in their communities could be increased.

5.3.1. Citizens' feelings of safety at the time of the research

The respondents were asked whether they feel safe in the place they are living in at the time the research was conducted. As it can be seen from Table 47, most of our respondents were feeling very safe (47.3%) and safe (41.2%). A minority of respondents felt unsafe (9.4%) or very unsafe (1.8%).

Table 47. Feelings of personal safety in the total sample

Current feelings of personal safety	Frequency	Percent
Feeling very safe	673	47.3%
Feeling safe	586	41.2%
Feeling unsafe	134	9.4%
Feeling very unsafe	26	1.8%
No data	4	0.3%
Total	1423	100%

In Table 48 we can see the feelings of personal safety in the three different research-sites. The highest percentage of those feeling very safe is in Prijepolje and the highest percentage of those feeling very unsafe in Medvedja.

Table 48. Feelings of personal safety in the research-sites

Research site	Feeling very safe		Feeling safe		Feeling unsafe		Feeling very unsafe		No data	Total
Prijepolje	301	49.3%	256	42.0%	44	7.2%	8	1.3%	3	610
Medvedja	185	48.4%	145	38.0%	39	10.2%	10	2.6%	1	382
Bac/Backa Palanka	187	43.4%	185	42.9%	51	11.8%	8	1.9%	0	431

We wanted to see if there is a statistical significance in the differences between the feelings of personal safety of the respondents from these three research-sites. In order to do that, we reduced the categories into two – feeling safe and unsafe. Also we did not include the missing cases in the analysis. The results show that there are indeed significant differences in the feelings of our respondents: respondents from Prijepolje feel safer than those in the other two research-sites. The highest percentage of those feeling unsafe come from Bac/Backa Palanka ($\chi 2=8.105$; df=2; $p < 0.05$), with the percentage of those feeling unsafe in Medvedja being only slightly smaller than that. From Table 49 we can also confirm that the majority of respondents of the entire sample are feeling safe (88.7%).

Table 49. Differences in feelings of personal safety in research-sites

Research-site	Feeling safe		Feeling unsafe		Total	
Prijepolje	557	91.5%	52	8.5%	609	100%
Medvedja	330	87.1%	49	12.9%	379	100%
Bac/Backa Palanka	372	86.3%	59	13.7%	431	100%
Total	1259	88.7%	160	11.3%		

Besides the relation with the research-sites, we wanted to know if any other factors influenced the feelings of personal safety. There are no significant gender or age differences in feelings of personal safety of the interviewed citizens. However a significant relation was found between the experience of victimisation and feelings of safety: results show that respondents who were victimised, more often answered they feel unsafe ($\chi 2=26.224$; df=1; $p < 0.01$).

Table 50. Differences in current feelings of personal safety in relation to victimisation

Victimisation experience	Feeling safe		Feeling unsafe		Total	
Yes	311	81.6%	70	18.4%	381	100%
No	948	91.3%	90	8.7%	1038	100%
Total	1259	88.7%	160	11.3%		

The results show there are no significant ethnic differences in feelings of personal safety, but a higher percentage of Croat respondents answered they feel safe than any other ethnic group (see Table 51). Serb respondents, as well as Bosniaks have to a greater extent answered they feel unsafe, as we can see from the percentage ratio. In order to be sure there are no significant differences, we repeated this analysis for each of the research-sites independently.

Table 51. Differences in feelings of personal safety in relation to ethnicity

Ethnicity	Feeling safe		Feeling unsafe		Total	
Serbs	785	87.9%	108	12.1%	893	100%
Croats	82	96.5%	3	3.5%	85	100%
Bosniaks	269	88.2%	36	11.8%	305	100%
Albanians	123	90.4%	13	9.6%	136	100%
Total	1259	88.7%	160	11.3%		

When we analysed each of the research-sites independently, we discovered there are no significant differences in feelings of personal safety in Medvedja between Serbs and Albanians. Gender and age were also found to be of no influence on the feelings of safety in this subsample. However victimisation did have an effect: those who have not experienced victimisation in this town tend to feel safer than those who have experienced it ($\chi 2=8.419$; df=1; $p < 0.01$).

The results from Prijepolje show that a greater percentage of Serb respondents answered feeling safe in comparison with the Bosniak ($\chi 2=8.339$; df=1; $p < 0.01$). Gender and victimization were also found to influence this feeling in Prijepolje. Women have reported feeling more safe than men in this town ($\chi 2=4.630$; df=1; $p < 0.05$). Similar to Medvedja those who have not experienced victimisation in Prijepolje are feeling safer now than those who have experienced it ($\chi 2=8.419$; df=1; $p < 0.01$).

In Bac/Backa Palanka we discovered that Croat respondents feel safer than Serbs ($\chi 2=9.250$; df=1; $p < 0.01$). Gender, age and victimisation did not have an effect on the feelings of safety of respondents in Bac/Backa Palanka.

5.3.2. Feelings of safety today and during the 1990s compared

The respondents were also asked: 'In comparison to the time period 1990-2000 do you now feel safer in the place you live in?' Thus we wanted to examine the changes in the feelings of safety. It had been recorded in the qualitative part of the research that this question incites more thinking about the subject of safety and we could get more useful answers if the respondents are reminded of that time period. From Table 52 we can see, as was expected, that most of our

respondents feel safer today (52.4%) than during the 1990s. However, 5.6% of them feel less safe, while the feelings of personal safety did not change for 34.2%.

Table 52. Feelings of personal safety in the 1990s and today

Feelings of personal safety in the 1990s and today	Frequency	Percent
I feel more safe today	746	52.4%
I feel less safe today	80	5.6%
I feel the same	486	34.2%
I cannot respond either because: I can't remember because I was too young or I wasn't even born or I wasn't living in Serbia	104	7.3%
Something else	2	0.1%
No data	5	0.4%
Total	1423	100%

In order to see if there are factors influencing these changes in feelings, we examined more closely the first two categories of answers. No significant gender differences were found, but as it can be seen in Table 53, the locality is an important factor: respondents from Prijepolje feel safer today than in the 1990s in a much greater percentage compared to the two other research-sites. On the other hand, in Bac/Backa Palanka we recorded the highest percentage of those who are feeling less safe today compared to the period of the 1990s ($\chi 2=40.803$; df=2; $p < 0.01$). The respondents from Medvedja are somewhere in the middle.

Table 53. Changes of feelings of personal safety in the research-sites (1990s and now)

Research-site	Feeling more safe		Feeling less safe		Total	
Prijepolje	343	97.7%	8	2.3%	351	100%
Medvedja	224	86.8%	34	13.2%	258	100%
Bac/Backa Palanka	179	82.5%	38	17.5%	217	100%
Total	746	90.3%	80	9.7%		

Table 54 shows the differences in changes of feelings of personal safety in relation to ethnicity: feelings of the Bosniaks and Albanians have changed to the positive more than those of Croats and Serbs. Now Serbs are in greater numbers feeling less safe ($\chi 2=42.499$; df=3; $p < 0.01$) compared to other ethnic groups. During the 1990s Serbs as the majority had an objectively better position than the

minorities. However, after the wars, the minority ethnic groups were starting to feel less threatened and gained more rights. Serbs were rather faced with economic problems and tended to link safety feelings to economic insecurity. Some Serbs even feel threatened by the requests of ethnic minorities for more rights, as we have seen from the qualitative analysis. Bosniaks feel most safe probably because they feel as equal in numbers compared to Serbs in Prijepolje. In the qualitative research, one Serb interviewee from this town mentioned that "security increased when the Bosniaks entered the institutions of power."

Table 54. Changes of feelings of personal safety in relation to ethnicity (1990s and now)

Ethnicity	Feeling more safe		Feeling less safe		Total	
Serbs	362	84.2%	68	15.8%	430	100%
Croats	39	88.6%	5	11.4%	44	100%
Bosniaks	228	98.3%	4	1.7%	232	100%
Albanians	117	97.5%	3	2.5%	120	100%
Total	746	90.3%	80	9.7%		

As can be seen from Table 55, age is also an important factor: those in the youngest age group (18-30) feel safer today. On the contrary, the highest percentage of those feeling less safe today is in the oldest age group over 60 ($\chi 2=6.094$; df=2; $p < 0.05$). The middle-aged group (31-60) finds itself in the middle. These changes could be attributed to economic factors, since the oldest category of respondents are usually retired and generally tend to be more pessimistic and fearful of the future. The youngest group on the other hand only had the direct experience of the NATO bombing and everything compared to that probably seems more secure. Like one of our younger interviewees (from the qualitative part of the research) from Backa Palanka stated: "The absence of war is making me feel more safe."

Table 55. Changes of feelings of personal safety in relation to age (1990s and now)

Age group	Feeling more safe		Feeling less safe		Total	
18-30	207	93.7%	14	6.3%	221	100%
31-60	425	90.0%	47	10.0%	472	100%
Over 60	114	85.7%	19	14.3%	133	100%
Total	746	90.3%	80	9.7%		

Lastly, we examined the role of the previous experience of victimisation on the changes of feelings of security. The results showed no significant differences.

5.3.3. Feelings of safety today and before 1990s compared

The period before the 1990s was also of importance for our research, not only because it would incite more answers and thinking about safety, but also because the qualitative analysis showed that interviewees tended to emphasis this time period as the safest. From Table 56 we can see what the respondents answered to the question: 'In comparison with the period before the 1990s do you now feel safer in the place you live in?': 32.7% of the respondents felt the same, 26.6% feels more safe today and 20.9% less safe, thus the perceptions are not uniform. It seems that for a fifth of respondents the period before the 1990s was safer, while for about a fourth of them it was less safe. Adding another time period in the equation proved useful, since we gathered more information about the perceptions of our respondents and the factors influencing them.

Table 56. Feelings of personal safety before the 1990s and today compared

Feelings of personal safety before the 1990s and today	Frequency	Percent
I feel more safe today	379	26.6%
I feel less safe today	297	20.9%
I feel the same	466	32.7%
I cannot respond either because: I can't remember because I was too young or I wasn't even born or I wasn't living in Serbia	273	19.2%
Something else	3	0.2%
No data	5	0.4%
Total	1423	100%

Once again we wanted to see if different factors are related to the changes of feelings of personal safety between the period before the 1990s and at the time of the research. The results in Table 57 show that most of respondents from Medvedja answered feeling safer today, most of those from Bac/Backa Palanka answered feeling the same, and a similar part of those from Prijepolje answered feeling more and less safe nowadays ($\chi 2=45.567$; df=2; $p < 0.01$).

Table 57. Changes of feelings of personal safety in the research-sites (before 1990s and now)

Research site	Feeling more safe		Feeling less safe		Total	
Prijepolje	117	43.8%	150	56.2%	235	100%
Medvedja	172	73.2%	63	26.8%	267	100%
Bac/Backa Palanka	90	51.7%	84	48.3%	174	100%
Total	379	56.1%	297	43.9%		

In relation to ethnicity, it seems that in comparison to other ethnic groups, Albanian respondents most often answered feeling safer today. ($\chi 2=97.474$; df=3; $p < 0.01$). Bosniaks on the other hand, answered in this way the least often. Therefore we assume that safety was a problem for Albanians already before the 1990s; and at the same time Bosniaks lost that feeling of safety during the 1990s and are now feeling less safe than before the conflicts. Serbs and Croats are divided in opinions, about half of respondents from these ethnic groups feeling safer at the time of the research and half feeling less safe (see table 58).

Table 58. Changes of feelings of personal safety in relation to ethnicity (before 1990s and now)

Ethnicity	Feeling more safe		Feeling less safe		Total	
Serbs	189	54.6%	157	45.4%	346	100%
Croats	15	50.0%	15	50.0%	30	100%
Bosniaks	65	35.7%	117	64.3%	182	100%
Albanians	110	93.2%	8	6.8%	118	100%
Total	379	56.1%	297	43.9%		

Gender proved an unimportant factor again, but significant age differences were found. As seen in Table 59, differences were found in the youngest age group (18-30). Those who can remember this time period, but were very young then more often say they feel safer. In two other age groups there is almost an equal percentage of those who feel safer and those who feel less safe. So, those who can remember this period well, have different feelings ($\chi 2=41.091$; df=2; $p < 0.01$).

Table 59. Changes of feelings of personal safety in relation to age (before 1990s and now)

Age group	Feeling more safe		Feeling less safe		Total	
18-30	112	80.0%	28	20.0%	140	100%
31-60	208	50.0%	208	50.0%	416	100%
Over 60	59	49.2%	61	50.8%	120	100%
Total	379	56.1%	297	43.9%		

Those who had experiences of victimisation tend to feel safer nowadays, as seen in table 60. ($\chi 2=25.837$; df=1; $p < 0.01$). This difference was not found in comparison with the period of the 1990s, when the largest number of victimised respondents experienced victimisation (see page 106). A possible explanation may be due to the fact that the sources of insecurity related to their victimisation from the 1990s still exist and influence their feelings, which are not much different comparing to 1990s. On the other hand, for some, like Albanians, insecurity existed already before the 1990s with their safety being increased comparing to this period.

Table 60. Changes of feelings of personal safety in relation to victimisation (before 1990s and now)

Victimisation experience	Feeling more safe		Feeling less safe		Total	
Yes	173	68.7%	79	31.3%	424	100%
No	206	48.6%	218	51.4%	252	100%
Total	379	56.1%	297	43.9%		

5.3.4. Reasons for feeling unsafe

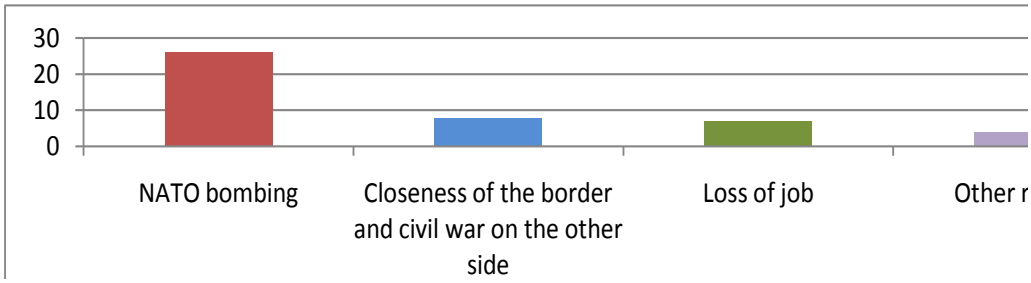
The question related to feeling unsafe was: 'If you felt unsafe or less safe at any time, please mark in what measure you agree with the following reasons for this feeling.' The respondents gave their opinion on the 4-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (I disagree completely) to 4 (I agree completely) for every of the offered reasons for their feelings of insecurity. In this way we could measure and compare the effects of various factors on the feelings of insecurity.

Table 61. Reasons for feelings of insecurity

Reasons for feelings of insecurity	Mean
Inefficiency of the state in solving problems	3.22
Economics reasons	3.04
Presence of police forces	2.54
The behaviour of the police forces	2.46
My ethnicity	2.44
The relationship with close persons of different ethnicity	2.28
The relationship with members of the same ethnic group	2.20
My political affiliation	2.20
Total respondents 299	**Range: 1 - 4**

Results from Table 61 show that inefficiency of the state in solving problems (M = 3.22) and economic factors (M = 3.04) are seen as the greatest contributors to personal feelings of insecurity, followed by the presence of police forces and their behaviour, as well as by ethnicity of the respondent. Relationship with close persons of different ethnicity was less of a reason for the feelings of insecurity than those mentioned before (M = 2.28) and is followed by the relationship with members of the same ethnic group and the political affiliation of the respondents (M = 2.20), which the respondents perceived as the least influential reasons that contributed to their feelings of insecurity. 47 of 299 respondents who felt less secure wrote additional reasons and in graph 1 we can see the predominant other reasons for feelings of insecurity.

Graph 1. Other reasons for feelings of insecurity



Most of these respondents (26) argued that NATO bombing caused their feelings of insecurity. Eight respondents answered it was because of the closeness of the border and the civil war on the other side, and seven mentioned the loss of job as a reason. Another four respondents gave various answers such as: higher crime rates, communist propaganda, more police controls or loneliness without family members.

5.3.5. Citizens' opinions about the measures that can increase safety

In the end, we asked the respondents about their opinions about the things that should be done in order to increase their safety feeling.[36] As it can be seen from Table 62, creating job opportunities for citizens is seen as the best way to increase safety feelings (M = 3.85). It is also what respondents proposed as an idea for better interethnic relations (see page 205). This idea is followed by more conversations about the existing problems between people (M = 3.69), more severe punishments for those who endanger the safety of the citizens (M = 3.65) and more efficient police in solving problems (M = 3.64). An equal amount of support gained the ideas of creating more organisations and institutions that people can turn for help and more organised socialising for people (M = 3.51). The idea that had the least support was the introduction of more policemen on the streets (M = 2.68).

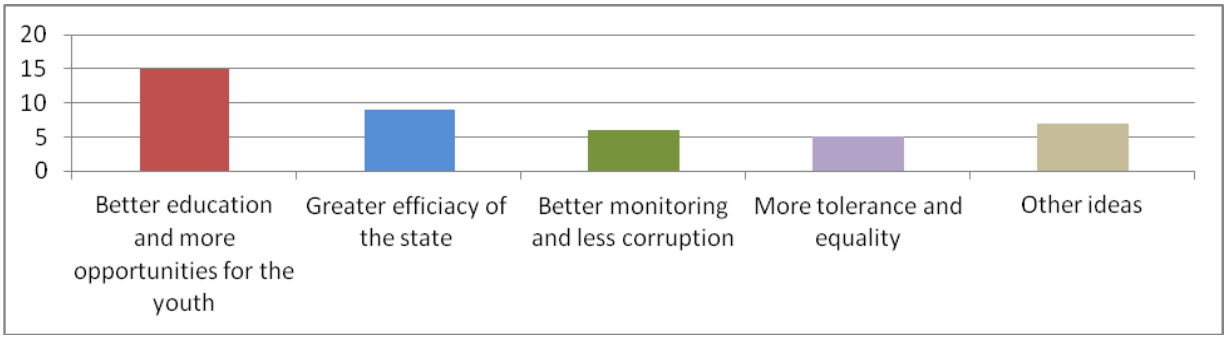
[36] The respondents gave their opinion on the 4-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (I disagree completely) to 4 (I agree completely) for every idea we proposed.

Table 62. Opinions about the measures that would increase safety

Opinions about the measures that would increase safety	Mean
People should have jobs (salary)	3.85
People should talk more about the problems they are having	3.69
Introduce more severe punishments for those who endanger the safety of the citizens	3.65
Police should be more efficient in solving problems	3.64
There should be more organisations and institutions that people can turn to for help and information	3.51
There should be more organised socializing of people	3.51
There should be more policemen on the streets	2.68
Total respondents 1423	**Range: 1 - 4**

In Graph 2 we can see predominant other ideas for measures that could increase safety. A total of 42 respondents proposed another idea not on the list.

Graph 2. Other ideas for measures that could increase safety



Most of the respondents who gave an additional idea supported better education and more opportunities for youth (15). Nine respondents proposed greater efficiency of the state; six better monitoring and less corruption; and five more tolerance and equality in the community. Seven respondents gave some other ideas such as the death penalty (2), EU membership for Serbia, multiethnic municipality celebrations, etc.

Table 63. Influence of research-site on the opinions about the ways of increasing safety

Research site	People should have jobs (salary)	People should talk more about the problems they are having	Introduce more severe punishments for those who endanger the	Police should be more efficient in solving problems	There should be more organisations and institutions	There should be more organised socializing of people	There should be more policemen on the streets

					safety of the citizens				that people can turn to for help and information					
	F	Sig	F	Sig	F	Sig	F	Sig	F	Sig	F	Sig	F	Sig
	42.84	.000	18.36	.000	20.18	.000	25.38	.000	26.05	.000	40.61	.000	208.1	.000
	Mean													
Prijepolje	3.91		3.79		3.59		3.54		3.58		3.67		2.69	
Medvedja	3.68		3.69		3.58		3.60		3.30		3.26		1.93	
Bac/Backa Palanka	3.93		3.56		3.82		3.81		3.60		3.51		3.33	

In Table 63 we see there are significant differences in opinions for every proposed measure. Respondents from Medvedja support the idea about more policemen on the streets the least compared to respondents from other research-sites. Also, respondents from Prijepolje tend to support the idea that people should talk more about the problems they are having and also the idea for more organised socialising the most. They also less often tend to think that an increase in police efficiency in solving problems is a good way to increase safety than respondents from the two other research-sites. In the end, the respondents from Bac/Backa Palanka support the idea that people should have jobs, the idea of more severe punishments for those who endanger the safety of the citizens, more efficient police in solving problems, more organisations and institutions people can turn to for help and information, as well as more policemen on the streets in a greater manner than other two groups. They also least often support the idea that people should talk more about the problems they are having.

Thus, it seems that respondents from Prijepolje tend to support informal ways and more interaction between people the most, while formal ways of increasing safety are emphasised the most by respondents from Bac/Backa Palanka.

Table 64. The impact of ethnic group on the opinions about the ways of increasing safety

Ethnicity	People should have jobs (salary)	People should talk more about the problems	Introduce more severe punishments for those	Police should be more efficient in solving	There should be more organisations and	There should be more organised socializing of	There should be more policemen on the streets

			they are having		who endanger the safety of the citizens		problems		institutions that people can turn to for help and information		people			
	F	Sig	F	Sig	F	Sig	F	Sig	F	Sig	F	Sig	F	Sig
	45.49	**.000**	4.57	**.003**	2.36	.069	**4.97**	**.002**	9.55	**.000**	7.93	**.000**	46.27	**.000**
	Mean													
Serbs	3.89		3.67		3.66		3.61		3.53		3.51		2.78	
Croats	3.89		3.54		3.81		3.74		3.54		3.42		3.32	
Bosniaks	3.93		3.77		3.64		3.62		3.56		3.64		2.63	
Albanians	3.45		3.76		3.58		3.81		3.22		3.30		1.78	

Table 64 shows there are significant differences in opinions of the respondents from different ethnic origins, except when it comes to more severe punishments for those who endanger the safety of the citizens. Bosniaks tend to support economic measures and more informal interaction between people the most (that people should have jobs, that people should talk more about the problems they are having, that there should be more organisation and institutions that people can turn to for help and information and also more organised socialising).

Croats and Albanians support the formal ways of increasing safety more often than Bosniaks. Croats support the idea of more policemen on the streets more than others, while Albanians give priority to the efficiency of the police in solving problems. The Albanians support the idea of more policemen on the streets the least, as well as the idea that people should have jobs, the idea of more organisations and institutions that provide help and information to people and the idea of more organised socialising. This result is in concordance with our findings from the qualitative research where Albanian interviewees connected the presence of policemen with feelings of insecurity. It seems that Albanians want less policemen, but a more efficient police. Serbs are somewhere in the middle in relation to all the ideas, but they support the idea of more policemen on the streets the least compared to other ideas, and the economic measures, i.e. more jobs, the most.

We also wanted to examine the influence of other factors on these attitudes of the respondents as well. The results show that gender does influence these opinions: women support the idea of more organisations and institutions

that people can turn to for help and information (F=9.225; df=1; p <0.01) and more policeman on the streets in a greater manner than men (F=20.352; df=1; p <0.01).

Age is an important factor too: respondents from the middle age group (30-60) are the biggest supporters of the idea of more organised socializing (F=4.096; df=2; p <0.05) and the idea that people should have jobs (F=7.033; df=2; p <0.01). Organised socialising is supported least by those older than 60. Respondents from the youngest age group (18-30) support the idea of organisations and institutions that people can turn to for help and information (F=8.896; df=2; p <0.01) and more policemen on the streets (F=4.935; df=2; p <0.01) in a greater manner than other two groups. The idea of organisations and institutions that provide help and information to people is once again least supported by the oldest age group.

Table 65. Influence of victimisation on the opinions about the ways of increasing safety

Victimization experience	People should have jobs (salary)		People should talk more about the problems they are having		Introduce more severe punishments for those who endanger the safety of the citizens		Police should be more efficient in solving problems		There should be more organisations and institutions that people can turn to for help and information		There should be more organised socializing of people		There should be more policemen on the streets	
	F	Sig	F	Sig	F	Sig	F	Sig	F	Sig	F	Sig	F	Sig
	32.08	**.000**	0.03	.957	3.64	.056	30.6	**.000**	8.41	**.004**	12.48	**.000**	13.86	**.000**
	Mean													
Yes	3.74		3.69		3.71		3.79		3.42		3.40		2.50	
No	3.90		3.69		3.64		3.58		3.54		3.55		2.75	

In relation to victimisation we notice significant differences between those who have been victimised and those who have not, in opinions about the measures that could increase safety (except when it comes to ideas of more talking about problems people are having and the idea that more severe punishments for those who endanger the safety of the citizens should be introduced): those with an experience of victimisation support the idea of more efficient police in solving

problems to a greater extent than those who have not been victimised. This finding is in accordance with the expectation that all victims have from the police, and obviously it is more important for feeling of safety of those with experience of victimisation than of those without this experience.

The ideas that people should have jobs, more organisations and institutions that people can turn to for help and information, more organised socialising and more policemen on the streets, are supported less often by victims than by those who do not have such an experience (see Table 65.). It seems unusual that victims supported the idea of having more organisations and institutions that people can turn to for help and information less often than non-victims. It may be the consequence of the fact that victims are not aware enough of the existence of these organisations and how these can help them.

5.3.6. Conclusion

Findings of our survey show that a large majority of our respondents felt safe living in their communities at the time of the research. Among them, respondents from Prijepolje reported feeling safer than the respondents from the other two research-sites. No significant differences between research-sites are found in percentage of those who answered filling unsafe, but the highest percentage of those feeling unsafe come from Bac/Backa Palanka.

Most of our respondents feel safer today than during the 1990s, while a third feels the same. Respondents from Prijepolje feel much safer today in comparison with the two other research-sites. On the other hand, in Bac/Backa Palanka we found the highest percentage of those who are feeling less safe today compared to the period of the 1990s. Feelings of Bosniaks and Albanians have changed to the positive more than those of Croats and Serbs. Moreover, our findings show that Serbs are now in greater numbers feeling less safe than in 1990s. Around 10% of the respondents reported feeling less safe at the time of the research and these are mostly Serbs from Medvedja and Bac/Backa Palanka. In Prijepolje, Serbs feel safer than the Bosniaks, and women feel safer than men (only in Prijepolje have we found gender to be influencing these feelings). In

Bac/Backa Palanka, however, the situation is a little different, as Serbs feel less safe than Croats. In Medvedja, contrary to qualitative analyses findings, there are no statistically significant differences in safety feelings nowadays between Serbs and Albanians. Age was not a significant factor influencing the feelings of nowadays safety in any of the subsamples. In the sample as a whole, victimised respondents reported feeling unsafe nowadays more often than those that did not have such experiences. Moreover, victimised respondents tend to answer feeling less safe during the 1990s than nowadays. The connection between previous negative experiences of victimisation and the current safety feelings was confirmed at the level of all three research-sites. Older respondents tend to feel less safe today than in the 1990s compared to younger ones.

For a fifth of respondents the period before the 1990s was safer, while for about a fourth of them it was less safe. Albanians from Medvedja more often than respondents from other ethnic groups and research-sites answered they feel safer today than before the 1990s. Most of those from Bac/Backa Palanka feel the same and about half of the respondents from Prijepolje feel safer nowadays. Bosniak respondents mostly answered feeling less safe today in comparison with the period before the 1990s. Serbs and Croats are divided in opinions, since about half feel safer at the time of the research and half feel less safe. These findings are different from the qualitative analysis results, where all interviewees agreed that they felt much safer before the 1990s.

The answers suggest that all aspects of safety that appeared in the qualitative analysis were also found in results of the quantitative survey, such as physical, economic, legal, political and social safety/unsafety. The answers indicating the inefficiency of the state in solving problems and economic factors, similarly as in the qualitative analysis, appeared as the greatest contributors to respondents' personal feelings of insecurity. Like in the qualitative analysis, presence and behaviour of the police was a prominent source of insecurity. Ethnicity and political affiliation as well as relationships with members of different and the same ethnic group seem to have smaller, but still important impact. The closeness of border and civil war on the other side, as well as NATO bombing were also recognised as a factors contributing to feelings of insecurity.

The findings about the attitudes of respondents towards the best measures for an increase of safety are in accordance with findings about the sources of insecurity, suggesting what should be done in order to eliminate the problems that lead to insecurity. The respondents mostly opted for economic measures (more jobs), more communication between people about problems and various ways of increasing state efficiency. More severe punishments for those who endanger the safety of citizens and more efficient police in solving problems were supported the most among the measures for increasing state efficiency. However, interestingly, more conversations about existing problems between people as a restorative measure, ranked better than retributive mechanisms. Finally, more policemen on the streets got the least support, confirming, thus, the findings of the qualitative research. Thus, our findings seem to suggest that our respondents give more importance to restorative and social rather than to retributive measures as possible ways of increasing the safety of citizens.

In relation to the research-sites and ethnicity, findings show that respondents from Prijepolje are in favour of informal restorative measures the most, while formal and retributive ways of increasing safety are emphasised the most by respondents from Bac/Backa Palanka. Bosniaks tend to support economic measures and more informal interaction between people the most. Croats and Albanians support the formal ways of increasing safety more often than Bosniaks, while the Albanians support the idea of more policemen on the streets the least but want a more efficient police. This result confirms the findings of the qualitative research where Albanian interviewees connected the presence of policemen with feelings of insecurity. Our Serb respondents, who are somewhere in the middle with the strength of their attitudes regarding all the ideas, support the idea of more policemen on the streets the least compared to other ideas, and the idea that people should have jobs, the most.

The results show that those with an experience of victimisation support the idea of more efficient police in solving problems to a greater extent than those who have not been victimised. On the other hand, victims supported the idea of having more organisations and institutions that people can turn to for help and information less often than non-victims, which may be a consequence of the fact

that victims are not aware enough of the existence of these organisations and how these can help them. Finally, our findings suggest that those who were victimised do not support severe punishments for those who endanger the safety of the citizens significantly more that those who were not, which confirm the findings of some other surveys which suggest that victims have less punitive attitudes than non-victims (Kühnrich and Kania 2005).

5.4. Mechanisms for conflict resolution suitable to achieve justice

One aim of the quantitative research was to find out what, in the opinion of the respondents in Bac/Backa Palanka, Medvedja, and Prijepolje the mechanisms are for conflict resolution suitable to achieve justice, and what the potential is for restorative justice. The data on these issues was collected in three ways: 1. by asking respondents who had the experience of victimisation in the observed period what in their opinion would be the solution in the concrete case of victimisation they experienced suitable to achieve justice; 2. by asking all the respondents about their experience so far in solving different problems in their lives by using certain forms of conflict resolution based on the restorative justice principles; and 3. by asking all the respondents what the solution would be suitable to achieve justice in the case, which was given as an example in the questionnaire (the given scenario). Thus, the opinion of the respondents on the mechanisms for conflict resolution suitable to achieve justice is based on both their personal experience, either with victimisation or other problems they have faced in their lives, and on the hypothetical case given in the questionnaire, for which the scenario was written on the basis of the results of the qualitative research.

We analyse the data on the respondents' opinion about the mechanisms for conflict resolution suitable to achieve justice based on both their personal experience and the given scenario. In addition, we present the findings in regard to the present-day relationships between respondents who were victimised and the perpetrator(s), as well as respondents' willingness to meet with the

perpetrator(s). In the conclusion we will try to point out to the potential restorative justice has for conflict transformation in the research-sites.

5.4.1. Respondents' opinion on the mechanisms for the resolution of the concrete case of victimisation suitable to achieve justice

Respondents who reported to be victimised in the period 1990 up to the moment of the research were asked what would be the solution suitable to achieve justice in the concrete case of victimisation, which they described. The question was followed by a list of the possible solutions, including the following: 1. To be able to tell a person who hurt me what he/she did (dialogue); 2. To know why that what happened to me have happened; 3. A person who hurt me to apologise (apology); 4. Compensation for the material and/or non-material damage; 5. Property to be returned or repaired; 6. Person who hurt me to do a work for the benefit of myself or a community (community service); 7. Punishment. Respondents could choose one or more of the given answers, as well as to add some other forms of reaction in the concrete case of victimisation that could bring the justice.

As far as the respondents could choose more answers to this question, it would be interesting to look into the mechanisms stated by the respondents as suitable to bring justice in the concrete case of victimisation and their ration in the total number of stated mechanisms. In doing so we may group all the mechanisms given in Table 66 into two main categories: mechanisms of retributive justice (punishment) and mechanisms of restorative justice or restorative approaches, including restorative processes (dialogue, to know why what happened have happened, which also requires some form of an encounter and communication) and restorative outcomes (apology, compensation, return or repair of property, community service).

Table 66. Mechanisms suitable to achieve justice in the concrete case of victimisation

Mechanisms suitable to achieve	Frequency	Percent

justice in the concrete case of victimisation		
Punishment	182	25.3
To know why that what happened to me had happened	153	21.3
Apology	111	15.4
Compensation	100	13.9
Dialogue	79	11.0
Property to be returned/repaired	44	6.1
Community service	28	3.9
Something else[37]	22	3.1
Total	719	100

Table 66shows that punishment composes 25.3% of all mechanisms suitable to achieve justice in the concrete case of victimisation. Contrary to this, mechanisms of restorative justice or restorative approaches compose more than two thirds (71.6%) of all the mechanisms suitable to achieve justice according to the respondents.

On the other hand, it would be interesting to see how many respondents with the experience of victimisation opted for punishment only and how many considered restorative mechanisms to be suitable to achieve justice either alone or in combination with the punishment. The obtained data suggest that 53 (13.8%) respondents with the experience of victimisation have chosen only a punishment as a mechanism suitable to bring justice in the victimising event they described; 129 (33.7%) respondents opted for both punishment and one or more restorative approaches as complement mechanisms suitable to achieve justice; while 179 (46.8%) respondents opted for restorative approaches only. Out of 179 respondents who considered only restorative approaches to be suitable for achieving justice, 104 (58.1%) opted for one and another 75 (41.9%) respondents chose more than one restorative approach. Finally, 22 (5.7%) respondents opted for some other mechanisms that could bring justice in the concrete case in their

[37] Respect and realisation of one's rights (e.g., the right on a pension, the war allowances to be paid etc.), improvement of the interethnic relations, apology of the state for what happened, to forgive but not to forget, to forget, and to make the perpetrators aware of the consequences of their behaviour.

opinion. These data suggests that for the great majority of the respondents (80.5%) justice in the concrete case of victimisation is attributed to the restoration (restorative justice), either alone (46.8%) or in combination with the punishment, i.e. retribution (33.7%).

Thus, based on these data we may argue that respondents are quite open towards restorative approaches, either as the mechanisms that are complement with the punishment or as those suitable to achieve justice without punishing perpetrators. On the basis of these findings we may conclude that potential for using restorative approaches exists, which opens the space for its broader use.

We now look into each of the given mechanisms separately in order to find out for what kind of victimisation each mechanism could be suitable for to achieve justice, as well as to try to notice differences by the place of residence of the respondents (research-site), and to find out if other factors impact their opinion about these mechanisms in the concrete cases of victimisation, such as gender, age and ethnicity.

5.4.1.1. Punishment

Almost half of the respondents who experienced some form of victimisation in the observed period (182 or 47.5%) considered punishment as a mechanism suitable to achieve justice in the concrete case of victimisation. As already pointed out, of those 53 (29.1%) respondents were of the opinion that only punishment may bring them justice, while 129 (70.9%) thought that justice could be achieved both through the punishment and one or more restorative approaches.

For six out of eleven forms of victimisation that were described by the respondents, punishment was perceived as a solution suitable to achieve justice by the highest percentage of the respondents exposed to each of these different forms of victimisation, including: attempted or planned murder, a family member was killed or kidnapped or was missing, violence, insults, feeling embarrassed because of the ethnicity, and the impossibility to realise one's rights.

For three out of four respondents who faced attempted or planned murder, punishment was the most suitable way of achieving justice. The majority of those whose family member was killed or kidnapped or was missing (63.2%), who were forced to leave place of residence (59.3%) and who was exposed to violence (51.3%) considered punishment to be a mechanism that may bring justice. The same opinion was shared by half of the respondents who had faced threats and impossibility to realise their rights. A little bit less than 50% of the respondents who had faced pressures due to political affiliation (47.2%) also considered punishment to be suitable to achieve justice, while more than 40% of respondents of each other form of victimisation shared the same opinion. Thus, these data suggests that punishment is still very much seen by the victimised respondents as an important mechanism for reacting in the aftermath of different forms of victimisation and achieving justice in that way.

The research-site significantly impacts on the respondents' opinion of punishment: while the majority of victimised respondents in Medvedja were in favour of punishment, significantly lower number of respondents from Bac/Backa Palanka supported this mechanism.

Table 67. The research-site and punishment

Research-site		Punishment		Total
		Yes	No	
Medvedja	Count	94	76	170
	%	55,3%	44,7%	100,0%
Prijepolje	Count	41	41	82
	%	50,0%	50,0%	100,0%
Bac/Backa	Count	47	84	131

Palanka	%	35,9%	64,1%	100,0%
Total	Count	182	201	383
	%	47,5%	52,5%	100,0%

Pearson Chi-Square=11,442, df = 2, p = 0,003

There were no significant gender differences in the perception of punishment as a solution suitable to achieve justice. Half of the male respondents with a victimisation experience considered that justice could be achieved through punishment (50.2%), while a little smaller number of women shared that opinion (44.1%).

If we look into each research-site separately, gender does not impact significantly respondents' opinion on the punishment. However, it is interesting to highlight that in Medvedja a higher percentage of men (59.8%) than women (47.6%) considered punishment as a solution suitable to achieve justice. On the contrary, in Prijepolje, women (56.8%) supported this repressive mechanism in their concrete victimisation more than men did (44.4%). Finally, in Bac/Backa Palanka, the percentage of male (37.7%) and female respondents (34.3%) who opted for this solution was almost the same.

Similarly to gender, age does not significantly influence respondents' opinion on punishment. The highest percentage of those who think punishment is a solution suitable to achieve justice belong to the oldest age group (over 60, 54.9%), while the lowest percentage of the respondents who shared that opinion belong to the youngest age group (18 to 30, 44.8%). The same is visible in both Prijepolje and Bac/Backa Palanka, while in Medvedja the highest percentage of those who saw punishment as a solution belong to the youngest age group (64.1%), followed by those over 60 (54.7%) and those between 31 and 60 (51.7%).

Finally, if we look into ethnicity ethnicity does not impact significantly the respondents' opinion on the punishment as a solution suitable to achieve justice in the concrete case. However, the data on the impact of ethnicity on the respondents' opinion on the punishment in each research-site suggests there are some differences, which are even significant in some places: in Medvedja, ethnicity is a significantly important factor that impacts on the respondents'

opinion on punishment: Serbs with the experience of victimisation supported punishment in a significantly greater number than Albanians.

Table 68. Ethnicity and punishment in Medvedja

Ethnicity		Punishment		Total
		Yes	No	
Serbs	Count	36	8	44
	%	81,8%	18,2%	100,0%
Albanians	Count	58	68	126
	%	46,0%	54,0%	100,0%
Total	Count	94	76	170
	%	55,3%	44,7%	100,0%

Pearson Chi-Square=16,895, df = 1, p = 0,001

On the contrary, in Prijepolje and Bac/Backa Palanka ethnicity does not have a significant impact on the respondents' opinion about punishment. In Prijepolje, fewer Serbs (42.9%) in comparison to Bosniaks (52.5%) considered punishment as a solution suitable to achieve justice; while in Bac and Backa Palanka smaller percentage of Croats (26.9%) was of the same opinion than Serbs (38.1%).

5.4.1.2. The right to know why what happened has happened

The second mechanism that could be suitable to achieve justice is the right to know the rationale of the committed act or other unpleasant behaviour. Around 40% of the victimised respondents (153 or 39.9%) thought justice could be achieved if they got the answers to the question often asked by victims: why has this happened to me? This mechanism was considered to be suitable to achieve justice by the majority of the respondents who had faced house search or arrest (54.5%), threats (53.3%) and those whose family member had been killed or kidnapped or was missing (52.5%). However, the obtained data suggests that knowing why what happened had happened is an important mechanism for achieving justice for the respondents exposed to all other forms of victimisation as well. It is interesting to note that only in case of pressures due to political affiliation, less than 30% of the respondents considered this mechanism to be suitable to bring them justice.

As can be seen from Table 69, the research-site significantly impacts respondents' opinion about this solution: while more respondents with the experience of victimisation in Medvedja were in favour of this mechanism, in both Prijepolje and Bac/Backa Palanka significantly fewer respondents supported this mechanism.

Table 69. The research-site and the right to know why what happened have happened

Research-site		To know why what happened have happened		Total
		Yes	No	
Medvedja	Count	89	81	170
	%	52,4%	47,6%	100,0%
Prijepolje	Count	23	59	82
	%	28,0%	72,0%	100,0%
Bac/Backa Palanka	Count	41	90	131
	%	31,3%	68,7%	100,0%
Total	Count	153	230	383
	%	39,9%	60,1%	100,0%

Pearson Chi-Square=19,831, df = 2, p = 0,001

Gender does not significantly impact on the opinion about this mechanism of conflict solving: a similar percentage of men (39.9%) and women (40.0%) who were victimised in the observed period considered knowing what happened as a solution suitable to achieve justice. But, if we look into each research-site separately, we notice some differences. In Medvedja, almost the same percentage of men (51.4%) and women (54.0%) are in favour of this mechanism. However, in Prijepolje the gender significantly impacts on the respondents' perception about this mechanism ($\chi 2$ =5.213, df=1, p=0.022): significantly more women (40.5%) than men (17.8%) supported this mechanism for conflict solving. Finally, in Bac/Backa Palanka a higher percentage of men (36.1%) than women (27.1%) considered this mechanism to be suitable to achieve justice.

Age has a significant impact on the perception of the respondents about knowing why what happened had happened as a solution suitable to achieve justice ($\chi 2$ =9.372, df=2, p<0.01). The older the respondents are, the higher is

their openness towards this mechanism. If we look into the research-sites separately, we notice that although the impact of age is not significant, in Medvedja and Bac/Backa Palanka the data actually reflects what was found out on the level of the total subsample. Contrary to this, in Prijepolje the highest percentage of those who consider this mechanism to be suitable to achieve justice are of middle age (31-60, 31.8%), followed by the oldest age group (25.0%) and the youngest (23.3%).

As the data in Table 70 shows, there is a significant correlation between ethnicity and the respondents' perception about knowing what happened as a solution suitable to achieve justice: significantly more Albanians were of this opinion compared to other ethnic groups.

Table 70. Ethnicity and the right to know why what happened have happened

Ethnicity		To know why what happened have happened		Total
		Yes	No	
Serbs	Count	49	121	170
	%	28,8%	71,2%	100,0%
Croats	Count	8	18	26
	%	30,8%	69,2%	100,0%
Bosniaks	Count	16	45	61
	%	26,2%	73,8%	100,0%
Albanians	Count	80	46	126
	%	63,5%	36,5%	100,0%
Total	Count	153	230	383
	%	39,9%	60,1%	100,0%

Pearson Chi-Square=43,583, df = 3, p = 0,001

If we look into the impact of ethnicity on the respondents' perception about this mechanism for conflict solving in each research site separately, we notice that only in Medvedja it significantly impacts respondents' perception ($\chi 2 = 24.215$, df=1, $p<0.01$): Albanians (63.5%) considered this mechanism to be suitable to achieve justice almost three times as much as did the Serbs (20.5%). In Prijepolje, around one third of victimised Serbs (33.3%) considered this mechanism as a solution that may bring justice, while this perception was shared

by a little less percentage of Bosniaks (26.2%). Finally, almost the same percentage of Serbs (31.4%) and Croats (30.8%) in Bac/Backa Palanka were in favour of this mechanism.

5.4.1.3. Apology

Apology was considered to be a solution suitable to achieve justice by one third of the respondents with a victimisation experience (111 or 29.0%). It was seen as a mechanism suitable to achieve justice by the respondents who faced pressures due to a political affiliation the most (47.2%), followed by the respondents who faced insults (37.9%), threats (36.7%), violence (33.3%) and who felt embarrassed because of ethnicity (32.4%). It is interesting that none of the respondents whose family member was killed or kidnapped or was missing considered apology to be suitable to bring them justice. Hence, we may argue that apology is seen as a mechanism suitable to achieve justice mainly in the cases of interpersonal acts.

The highest percentage of those who considered this mechanism suitable to achieve justice was from Prijepolje (35.4%); around one third of the respondents in Bac/Backa Palanka (31.3%) shared the same opinion; while the lowest percentage of those in favour of apology were from Medvedja (24.1%). However, there is no significant correlation between apology as a mechanism suitable to achieve justice and the research-site.

Gender has not a significant impact either. Men (29.1%) and women (28.8%) considered apology to be suitable to achieve justice in almost the same percentage. Although there are no significant differences, in Medvedja more men (27.1%) considered apology to be a solution suitable to achieve justice than women did (19.0%), while the situation was opposite in Prijepolje, where women (40.5%) were more in favour of this mechanism than men (31.1%). Finally, the percentage of men (31.1%) and women (31.4%) who considered apology to be suitable to achieve justice in Bac/Backa Palanka was the same.

Although the age does not significantly impact the opinion on apology, it is interesting to point out that the respondents from the youngest age group

supported this mechanism the most (36.0%), while those over 60 considered apology to be suitable to achieve justice the least (22.5%). The same is visible in all three research-sites, meaning that respondents who belong to the age group between 18 and 30 considered apology to be a suitable solution to achieve justice more in comparison to the other two age groups. On the other hand, while in Medvedja and Bac/Backa Palanka the oldest age group is the one that shared this opinion the least, in Prijepolje this was the case with those of middle age.

Ethnicity significantly impacts on the respondents' perception about apology as a solution suitable to achieve justice. Significantly less Albanians supported apology as a mechanism in the concrete case of victimisation in comparison to Serbs, Bosniaks and Croats.

Table 71. Ethnicity and apology

Ethnicity		Apology		Total
		Yes	No	
Serbs	Count	56	114	170
	%	32,9%	67,1%	100,0%
Croats	Count	10	16	26
	%	38,5%	61,5%	100,0%
Bosniaks	Count	22	39	61
	%	36,1%	63,9%	100,0%
Albanians	Count	23	103	126
	%	18,3%	81,7%	100,0%
Total	Count	111	272	383
	%	29,0%	71,0%	100,0%

Pearson Chi-Square=10,963, df = 3, p = 0,012

In Medvedja, Serbs were in favour of apology twice as much as Albanians ($\chi 2$ =9.146, df=1, p<0.01). In Prijepolje, there were no significant differences between Serbs (33.3%) and Bosniaks (36.1%); while in Bac/Backa Palanka, although the percentage of Croats who shared this opinion (38.5%) was higher than the percentage of Serbs (29.5%), there were no significant differences in perceiving apology based on ethnic belonging.

5.4.1.4. Compensation

Compensation of material and/or non-material damage, as one of the possible restorative outcomes, would be a solution suitable to achieve justice according to 100 (26.1%) respondents who experienced some form of victimisation in the observed period.

It was quite expected that the majority of the respondents who had been forced to leave the place of residence (66.7%) and whose property had been damaged or destroyed (53.6%) considered compensation as a suitable solution. This opinion was also shared by 41.7% of the respondents who had not been able to realise their rights, as well as by 36.4% of those who had faced a house search or arrest and one third (30.8%) of the respondents who had been exposed to violence. On the other hand, fewer respondents who had faced insults considered this mechanism to be suitable (9.5%).

The highest percentage of respondents who considered compensation to be a suitable solution came from Medvedja (31.2%), while the percentage of respondents who shared this opinion was almost the same in Prijepolje (23.2%) and Bac/Backa Palanka (21.4%).

There are no significant gender differences, but it can be noticed that a slightly higher percentage of women (28.8%) than men (23.9%) was favourable towards compensation. The situation is the same in Medvedja and Prijepolje, where a greater number of women than men considered this mechanism to be suitable to achieve justice. Although the difference is not significant, in Prijepolje women (32.4%) twice as much as men (15.6%) shared this opinion. On the contrary, in Bac/Backa Palanka men (23.0%) opted for this mechanism slightly more than women (20.0%).

Age does not significantly impact the respondents' opinion about compensation, although we may argue that those of middle age (28.3%) and over 60 (29.6%) were a little bit more open towards this mechanism, while the respondents of the youngest age group were least favourable towards compensation (20.8%).

In Medvedja the highest percentage of respondents who considered compensation as a suitable solution belong to the oldest age group (36.4%); they were followed by those of middle age (31.0%), while the youngest age group

shared this opinion in the lowest percentage (25.6%). Contrary to this, in Prijepolje the highest percentage of those who opted for compensation belong to the age group between 31 and 60 (25.0%), followed by the youngest age group (23.3%), while the lowest percentage was noticed among the oldest respondents, i.e. those over 60 (12.5%). Finally, in Bac/Backa Palanka, a little more than a quarter of the respondents who belong to a middle age group (26.8%) considered compensation as a solution suitable to achieve justice, which was shared by every fifth respondent over 60 (21.1%) and less than 20% of the respondents between 18 and 30 years (16.1%).

Ethnicity does not impact the respondents' opinion about compensation significantly. The percentage of Albanians (27.8%) and Serbs (26.7%) who considered compensation to be a suitable solution is almost the same. Every fifth Bosniak respondent with a victimisation experience shared this opinion (21.3%), while the lowest percentage of the respondents who opted for compensation belong to the Croat ethnic group (19.2%).

If we look into each research-site separately, we notice that despite the fact that there are no significant differences, in all three sites the percentage of Serbs in favour of compensation was higher than the percentage of respondents belonging to other ethnic groups. Thus, in Medvedja, 40.9% of Serbs were in favour of compensation in comparison to 27.8% of Albanians. In Prijepolje, almost every third Serb with a victimisation experience (28.6%) was in favour of compensation; while the percentage of Bosniaks was a little bit lower (21.3%). In Bac/Backa Palanka, a slightly higher percentage of Serbs (21.9%) than of Croats (19.2%) considered compensation to be a suitable solution.

5.4.1.5. Dialogue

Every fifth respondent (79 or 20.6%) with a victimisation experience would opt for a dialogue with a person who hurt him/her in order to be able to tell him/her what he/she did and how that behaviour impacted respondent's life.

Dialogue could bring justice for 27.3% of the respondents who faced house search or arrest, for 23.3% of those who were insulted and threatened, for 22.2% of those who were exposed to pressures due to a political affiliation, 21.4% of

those whose property was destroyed or damaged, and 20.6% of those who felt embarrassed because of their ethnic belonging. On the other hand, respondents who were not able to realise their rights opted for the dialogue the least (8.3%).

The research-site significantly impacts respondents' perception of using dialogue for solving a concrete case of victimisation. As the data in Table 72 shows, respondents in Medvedja considered dialogue as a solution suitable to achieve justice three times as much as did the respondents in Prijepolje and Bac/Backa Palanka.

Table 72. The research-site and dialogue

Research-site		Dialogue		Total
		Yes	No	
Medvedja	Count	56	114	170
	%	32,9%	67,1%	100,0%
Prijepolje	Count	9	73	82
	%	11,0%	89,0%	100,0%
Bac i Backa Palanka	Count	14	117	131
	%	10,7%	89,3%	100,0%
Total	Count	79	304	383
	%	20,6%	79,4%	100,0%

Pearson Chi-Square=28.317, df = 2, p = 0,001

There is also significant difference between men and women in considering dialogue as a solution suitable to achieve justice: men were more open towards the dialogue than women.

Table 73. Gender and dialogue

Gender		Dialogue		Total
		Yes	No	
Male	Count	52	161	213
	%	24,4%	75,6%	100,0%
Female	Count	27	143	170
	%	15,9%	84,1%	100,0%
Total	Count	79	304	383
	%	20,6%	79,4%	100,0%

Pearson Chi-Square=4.202, df = 1, p = 0,040

In Medvedja, a slightly higher percentage of men (34.6%) than women (30.2%) saw dialogue as a suitable solution in the concrete case, but there were no significant differences. In Prijepolje the number of men who were in favour of dialogue (7) was higher than the number of women (2), but the absolute numbers are too low to enable general conclusions. The situation is the same in Bac/Backa Palanka: 8 men and 6 women saw dialogue as a solution suitable to achieve justice.

Although the age does not impact the respondents' opinion on using dialogue for solving the concrete case of victimisation and achieve justice, it is interesting to point out that on the level of the subsample of those who were victimised in the observed period, the percentage of the respondents from the oldest age group (those over 60, 26.8%) who were in favour of dialogue was higher than the percentage of the respondents who belong to the middle age group (between 31 and 60, 19.8%) and the youngest age group (between 18 and 30, 18.4%). However, if we look into each research-site separately, we see that in Medvedja 40.9% of those over 60 shared this opinion, followed by a similar percentage of respondents from the youngest (30.8%) and middle age groups (29.9%). In Prijepolje, out of 9 respondents who considered dialogue to be a solution suitable to achieve justice, five belong to the age group from 18 to 30 and four to the age group between 31 and 60. In Bac/Backa Palanka, out of 14 respondents who thought dialogue would bring justice, 7 were of middle age, 6 belonged to the youngest age group and only one respondent was over 60.

Ethnicity is an important factor that impacts on the respondents' opinion on the dialogue as a mechanism for solving conflicts that may bring justice. The Albanians supported dialogue in a much greater percentage compared to other ethnic groups.

Table 74. Ethnicity and dialogue

Ethnicity		Dialogue		Total
		Yes	No	
Serbs	Count	19	151	170
	%	11,2%	88,8%	100,0%

Croats	Count	2	24	26
	%	7,7%	92,3%	100,0%
Bosniaks	Count	5	56	61
	%	8,2%	91,8%	100,0%
Albanians	Count	53	73	126
	%	42,1%	57,9%	100,0%
Total	Count	79	304	383
	%	20,6%	79,4%	100,0%

Pearson Chi-Square=53.053, df = 3, p = 0,001

If we look into each research-site separately, we see that in Medvedja Albanian respondents considered dialogue to be a mechanism suitable to achieve justice seven times as much as did Serbs ($\chi 2$ =18.339, df=1, p<0.01); in Prijepolje out of 9 respondents who shared this opinion, five were Serbs and four were Bosniaks; finally, in Bac/Backa Palanka out of 14 respondents who considered dialogue to be a solution suitable to achieve justice 12 were Serbs and 2 were Croats.

5.4.1.6. Return or repair of the property

A minority of respondents with a victimisation experience considered the return of property or its repair (44 or 11.5%) to be a solution suitable to achieve justice. It was quite expected that the highest percentage of the respondents who opted for this mechanism were those who had been forced to leave their place of residence (the house, village, town) (44.4%), followed by those whose property had been damaged or destroyed (25.0%).

The highest percentage of the respondents who considered this mechanism to be suitable to achieve justice came from Medvedja (12.9%); while the same opinion was shared by 10.7% of the respondents from Bac/Backa Palanka, and 9.8% of the respondents from Prijepolje. Around 11% of both men and women who were victimised in the observed period considered this mechanism to be a solution suitable to achieve justice.

Age is not found to be an important factor that impacts the opinion of the respondents about return and repair of the property. The highest percentage of those who supported this mechanism belongs to the age group between 31 and 60 (13.9%), while less than 10% of those younger and older shared the same opinion.

Serb respondents (14.7%) were most in favour of this mechanism as a solution that may bring justice in the concrete case of victimisation, followed by Albanian (11.1%) and Bosniak (8.2%) respondents. It is interesting that none of the respondents who belong to the Croat ethnic group shared this opinion.

5.4.1.7. Community service

Less than 10% of the respondents who were victimised in the observed period perceived community service (28 or 7.3%) as a solution suitable to achieve justice. This mechanism was considered to be suitable to achieve justice by those who felt embarrassed due to their ethnic belonging, because of the acts that were humiliating for their ethnic group (e.g. hate graffiti, humiliations of the ethnic group, destroying churches, graveyards, etc.) the most (23.5%). It seems quite expected that in such cases those victimised would prefer the perpetrators to do some work and repair what has been done (e.g. repairing the graveyards, painting the walls with hate graffiti, etc.). They were followed by those who had faced house search or arrest (18.2%) and those who were exposed to pressures due to the political affiliation (13.9%). As the data in Table 75 shows, respondents from Prijepolje were more supportive towards community service than respondents from the other two research-sites.

Table 75. The research-site and community service

Research-site		Community service		Total
		Yes	No	
Medvedja	Count	10	160	170
	%	5,9%	94,1%	100,0%
Prijepolje	Count	12	70	82
	%	14,6%	85,4%	100,0%
Bac/Backa Palanka	Count	6	125	131
	%	4,6%	95,4%	100,0%
Total	Count	28	355	383
	%	7,3%	92,7%	100,0%

Pearson Chi-Square=8.443, df = 2, p = 0,015

Out of 28 respondents who considered community service to be suitable to achieve justice in the concrete case of victimisation, 20 (9.4%) were male and 8 (4.7%) female. Around 7% of the respondents from each age group considered community service to be an appropriate mechanism for achieving justice. As to the ethnicity, it was noticed that almost every fifth Bosniak respondent with the experience of victimisation considered community service as a solution suitable to achieve justice.

Table 76. Ethnicity and community service

Ethnicity		Community service		Total
		Yes	No	
Serbs	Count	9	161	170
	%	5,3%	94,7%	100,0%
Croats	Count	1	25	26
	%	3,8%	96,2%	100,0%
Bosniaks	Count	11	50	61
	%	18,0%	82,0%	100,0%
Albanians	Count	7	119	126
	%	5,6%	94,4%	100,0%
Total	Count	28	355	383
	%	7,3%	92,7%	100,0%

Pearson Chi-Square=12.403, df = 3, p = 0,006

On the other hand, less than 6% of the respondents from each of the other ethnic groups were of the same opinion.

5.4.2. Present-day relationships with a person who victimised the respondents

In addition to the question on the mechanisms that could be suitable to achieve justice in the concrete case of victimisation, in order to see what the possibilities are for implementing restorative approaches, we also asked respondents who had a victimisation experience to tell us if they have a relationship today with the person(s) who hurt them or made them suffer in another way and what kind of relationship. Besides, they were asked if they would like to meet the person(s) who hurt them or made them suffer in another way.

5.4.2.1. Present-day relations with the perpetrator(s)

As the data in Table 77 suggests, the greatest number of the respondents who experienced some form of victimisation in the observed period today do not have any contacts with a person or persons who hurt them or made them suffer in another way (47.3%). On the contrary, a smaller number of respondents (24 or 6.3%) has reconciled with a person who hurt them and have normal contacts and communication today.

Table 77. Present-day relationships with the perpetrator(s)

Present-day relationship with the perpetrator(s)	Frequency	Percent
We have reconciled and we normally talk to each other	24	6.3
We only salute each other en passant	34	8.9
We do not have any contacts	181	47.3
The person who hurt me does not live here anymore	41	10.7
I do not know a person who hurt me	75	19.6
I was not hurt, but rather other person close to me was hurt	12	3.1
Other	12	3.1
No data	4	1.0
Total	383	100

The obtained data suggests that the research-site, gender, age and ethnicity are important factors that impact present-day relationships of the respondents with those who victimised them.[38]

More respondents from Bac/Backa Palanka have reconciled and normalised their relationships with the perpetrator(s) (14.6%) or they salute each other en passant (16.3%) in comparison to the respondents from Prijepolje and Medvedja. On the other hand, most respondents from Prijepolje (55.8%) do not have any contacts with the perpetrator(s), while this is the case with almost the same percentage of the respondents from the other two research-sites. Significantly more respondents from Medvedja answered that person(s) who hurt them do not live in the same place anymore compared to those from the other two research-sites. The highest percentage of those who do not know the person(s) who hurt them comes from Prijepolje (24.7%), and the lowest from Bac/Backa Palanka (14.6%), which can be explained by the type of victimising events our respondents spoke about.

Table 78. Present-day relationships with the perpetrator(s) and research-site

Research-site		Present-day relationship with the perpetrator(s)						Total
		We have reconciled and we normally talk to each other	We only salute each other en passant	We do not have any contacts	The person who hurt me does not live here anymore	I do not know a person who hurt me	I was not hurt, but rather other person close to me was hurt	
Medvedja	Count	3	8	80	35	38	3	167
	%	1,8%	4,8%	47,9%	21,0%	22,8%	1,8%	100,0%
Prijepolje	Count	3	6	43	4	19	2	77
	%	3,9%	7,8%	55,8%	5,2%	24,7%	2,6%	100,0%
Bac/Backa Palanka	Count	18	20	58	2	18	7	123
	%	14,6%	16,3%	47,2%	1,6%	14,6%	5,7%	100,0%
Total	Count	24	34	181	41	75	12	367
	%	6,5%	9,3%	49,3%	11,2%	20,4%	3,3%	100,0%

Pearson Chi-Square=63.402, df = 10, p = 0,001

[38] Due to a small number of cases we excluded from this analysis respondents who gave some other answer to this question as well as those for whom the data was missing in order to get a valid Pearson chi square.

There are also gender differences in regard the present-day relationships: more men than women do not have any contacts with the perpetrator(s). But, when it comes to reconciliation and normalisation of the relationships, we note that the percentage of both men and women who answered in this way is almost the same.

Table 79. Present-day relationships with the perpetrator(s) and gender

Gender		Present-day relationship with the perpetrator(s)						Total
		We have reconciled and we normally talk to each other	We only salute each other en passant	We do not have any contacts	The person who hurt me does not live here anymore	I do not know a person who hurt me	I was not hurt, but rather other person close to me was hurt	
Male	Count	13	18	110	28	31	5	205
	%	6,3%	8,8%	53,7%	13,7%	15,1%	2,4%	100,0%
Female	Count	11	16	71	13	44	7	162
	%	6,8%	9,9%	43,8%	8,0%	27,2%	4,3%	100,0%
Total	Count	24	34	181	41	75	12	367
	%	6,5%	9,3%	49,3%	11,2%	20,4%	3,3%	100,0%

Pearson Chi-Square=11.887, df = 5, p = 0,036

The youngest age group is more open towards reconciliation and normal contacts and communication with the perpetrator(s) in comparison to those of middle and the oldest age group. Together with the oldest age group they also salute en passant the person(s) who hurt them, while those of middle age do the same less. On the other hand, respondents of middle age do not have any contacts with their victimiser(s) more that do the respondents who belong to the oldest and the youngest age group.

Table 80. Present-day relationships with the perpetrator(s) and age

Age group		Present-day relationship with the perpetrator(s)						Total
		We have reconciled and we normally talk to each other	We only salute each other en passant	We do not have any contacts	The person who hurt me does not live here anymore	I do not know a person who hurt me	I was not hurt, but rather other person close to me was hurt	
18-30	Count	15	13	54	4	29	7	122
	%	12,3%	10,7%	44,3%	3,3%	23,8%	5,7%	100,0%
31-60	Count	8	14	97	25	31	4	179
	%	4,5%	7,8%	54,2%	14,0%	17,3%	2,2%	100,0%
preko 60	Count	1	7	30	12	15	1	66
	%	1,5%	10,6%	45,5%	18,2%	22,7%	1,5%	100,0%
Total	Count	24	34	181	41	75	12	367
	%	6,5%	9,3%	49,3%	11,2%	20,4%	3,3%	100,0%

Pearson Chi-Square=28.503, df = 10, p = 0,001

Ethnicity is an important factor that impacts the present-day relationships between the respondents who were victimised and those who victimised them, too. However, we have to be careful when interpreting these data due to a small number of respondents who gave certain answers. As the data in Table 81 suggests, Serbs who were victimised most often do not have any contacts with the perpetrator(s) and Albanians the least. Croat respondents reconcile with the perpetrator(s) or salute each other en passant the most, and Albanians the least. Bosniaks are not familiar with the person(s) who victimised them the most and Croats the least; while Albanians stated that the person(s) who hurt them do not live in the same place as they do anymore the most.

Table 81. Present-day relationships with the perpetrator(s) and ethnicity

Ethnicity		Present-day relationship with the perpetrator(s)						Total
		We have reconciled and we normally talk to each other	We only salute each other en passant	We do not have any contacts	The person who hurt me does not live here anymore	I do not know a person who hurt me	I was not hurt, but rather other person close to me was hurt	
Serbs	Count	15	20	98	3	22	6	164
	%	9,1%	12,2%	59,8%	1,8%	13,4%	3,7%	100,0%
Croats	Count	5	4	10	0	3	2	24
	%	20,8%	16,7%	41,7%	,0%	12,5%	8,3%	100,0%
Bosniaks	Count	2	4	29	4	16	1	56
	%	3,6%	7,1%	51,8%	7,1%	28,6%	1,8%	100,0%
Albanians	Count	2	6	44	34	34	3	123
	%	1,6%	4,9%	35,8%	27,6%	27,6%	2,4%	100,0%
Total	Count	24	34	181	41	75	12	367
	%	6,5%	9,3%	49,3%	11,2%	20,4%	3,3%	100,0%

Pearson Chi-Square=87.223, df = 15, p = 0,001

5.4.2.2. Willingness to meet the perpetrator(s)

Apart from asking respondents about their present-day relationships with those who victimised them, we wanted to know if they would like to meet the person(s) who hurt them or made them suffer in another way.

The data has shown that only 49 (12.8%) respondents would like to meet a person who hurt him/her, which is rather low. On the other hand, almost two thirds of the respondents (263 or 68.7%) gave a negative answer, while 71 (18.5%) answered they do not know if they would like to meet the perpetrator(s), which gives an optimism for opening some space for the mechanisms based on encounter and dialogue.

The desire to meet with the person(s) who hurt them was explicitly expressed by 19 (14.5%) respondents from Bac/Backa Palanka, 11 (13.4%) from Prijepolje and 19 (11.2%) from Medvedja. However, it was also found that, for example, almost one quarter of the respondents from Prijepolje (24.4%), as well as 17.1% of respondents from Medvedja and 16.8% of respondents from Bac/Backa Palanka were not explicitly against meeting with the perpetrator(s)

stating that they do not know yet if they would accept to do just that. These findings suggest there is space for further work on developing mechanisms for solving existing problems or remaining consequences of the victimisation through practicing encounter and dialogue.

There are no important gender differences either: 30 (14.1%) male and 12 (11.2%) female respondents expressed their willingness to meet with the person(s) who hurt them. As to the age, proportionally, the highest percentage of those who would like to meet with the person(s) who victimised them were older than 60 (11 or 15.5%), followed by the respondents from the youngest age group (16 or 12.8%) and of middle age (22 or 11.8%).

Finally, if we look into ethnicity, this does not significantly impact respondents' willingness to meet the perpetrator(s). However, as the obtained data suggests, a greater number of Croat respondents (26.9%) was open towards meeting the person(s) who hurt them than the number of respondents from other ethnic groups (Bosniaks 14.8%, Albanians 12.7% and Serbs 10.0%). However, it is interesting to notice that, for example, one quarter of Bosniaks (26.2%) and one fifth of Serbs (20.0%) were not explicitly against meeting with the perpetrator(s), which opens the floor for working on encounters and solving the remaining problems and consequences of the victimisation through dialogue.

5.4.3. Respondents' opinion on the mechanisms for conflict resolution suitable to achieve justice based on their experience with solving different problems in their lives

In order to get additional data on the conflict resolution mechanisms suitable to achieve justice and the potential for restorative justice, we asked all respondents to try and think about situations in their lives when they tried to solve any problem, regardless of its nature, in one of the given ways, which are, generally speaking, based on restorative justice. They included: dialogue with a person who hurt the respondent, mediation (formal or informal), approaching the peace council or another institution/organisation that provides mediation or using another peaceful method for solving the problem. Besides, we intended to get the

data about respondents' satisfaction with certain forms of problem resolution in order to see what is the real potential of such mechanisms in practice.

The majority of the respondents (897 or 63.0%) experienced solving any problem in their lives through a dialogue with a person who hurt him/her, trying to come together to a solution appropriate for both parties. One third of the respondents (428 or 30.1%) turned to a person who was respected by other members of the community in order to mediate and to assist in solving the concrete problem (informal mediation). Less than 5% of the respondents (69 or 4.8%) approached peace councils or another institution/organisation that provides mediation. Finally, 37 respondents mentioned some other forms of solving problems in a peaceful way, such as: asking help from the family members; being silent and ignorant towards the problem; asking help from different state institutions or individuals, such as the attorney at law, court, centre for social work, municipality, doctor, psychologist etc.; and changing one's own behaviour.

Table 82. Mechanisms of solving problems in everyday life

Mechanisms of solving problems in everyday life	Frequency	Percent
Dialogue with a person who hurt the respondent	897	63.0
Informal mediation (approaching a respectful person to mediate and assist in problem solving)	428	30.1
Approaching the peace council or another institution/organisation that provides mediation	69	4.8
Using another peaceful mechanisms	37	2.6
Total		100

The great majority of those who used dialogue to solve certain problem(s) in their lives (785 or 87.5%) and those who had an experience of using some kind of informal mediation (349 or 81.5%) expressed their satisfaction with this way of problem solving. More that two thirds of the respondents who used the services of the peace councils or other institution/organisation that provides mediation (50 or 72.5%) were satisfied with the results of the procedures within these bodies as well. These data suggests there is a potential for using restorative justice mechanisms based on encounter and dialogue in practice. However,

people should be more aware of these mechanisms and the fact that they actually use them in everyday life. Thus, we may argue there is a need for further building citizens' capacities to use these mechanisms for solving different problems and conflicts, including those which are ethnically motivated.

5.4.3.1. Dialogue

The obtained data suggests there is a significant difference in using dialogue for solving any kind of problem by respondents from different research sites, as well as of different gender, age and ethnicity. Respondents from Bac/Backa Palanka tend to use dialogue in solving any kind of problem significantly more than respondents from Prijepolje and Medvedja.

Table 83. The research-site and using dialogue for solving any kind of problems

Research-site		Dialogue		Total
		Yes	No	
Medvedja	Count	203	178	381
	%	53,3%	46,7%	100,0%
Prijepolje	Count	392	214	606
	%	64,7%	35,3%	100,0%
Bac/Backa Palanka	Count	301	130	431
	%	69,8%	30,2%	100,0%
Total	Count	896	522	1418
	%	63,2%	36,8%	100,0%

Pearson Chi-Square=24.855, df = 2, p = 0,001

Women used dialogue for solving problems in their everyday life more than men.

Table 84. Gender and using dialogue for solving any kind of problems

Gender		Dialogue		Total
		Yes	No	
Male	Count	400	278	678
	%	59,0%	41,0%	100,0%
Female	Count	496	244	740
	%	67,0%	33,0%	100,0%
Total	Count	896	522	1418
	%	63,2%	36,8%	100,0%

Pearson Chi-Square=9.808, df = 1, p = 0,002

Older respondents were less open for using dialogue in solving problems compared to those of younger and middle age groups.

Table 85. Age and using dialogue for solving any kind of problems

Age group		Dialogue		Total
		Yes	No	
18-30	Count	307	166	473
	%	64,9%	35,1%	100,0%
31-60	Count	474	263	737
	%	64,3%	35,7%	100,0%
Over 60	Count	115	93	208
	%	55,3%	44,7%	100,0%
Total	Count	896	522	1418
	%	63,2%	36,8%	100,0%

Pearson Chi-Square=6.582, df = 2, p = 0,037

Finally, Croats used dialogue for solving problems the most; then by Serbs and Bosniak, while significantly less Albanian respondents used this mechanism.

Table 86. Ethnicity and using dialogue for solving any kind of problems

Ethnicity		Dialogue		Total
		Yes	No	
Serbs	Count	589	300	889
	%	66,3%	33,7%	100,0%
Croats	Count	61	24	85
	%	71,8%	28,2%	100,0%
Bosniaks	Count	192	113	305
	%	63,0%	37,0%	100,0%
Albanians	Count	54	85	139
	%	38,8%	61,2%	100,0%
Total	Count	896	522	1418
	%	63,2%	36,8%	100,0%

Pearson Chi-Square=41.688, df = 3, p = 0,001

5.4.3.2. (Informal) mediation

Different forms of informal mediation (in terms of approaching a person respected by everyone) were used by approximately the same percentage of respondents from all three research-sites: Bac/Backa Palanka (29.7%), Prijepolje (29.0%) and Medvedja (32.0%); thus, significant differences were not found. A slightly higher percentage of women (31.9%) used informal mediation in solving problems in their lives than men (28.0%), but there are no significant differences. However, age is an important factor that impacts the use of informal mediation: the older the respondent was the more informal mediation had been used.

Table 87. Age and the use of informal mediation in solving any kind of problems

Age group		Informal mediation		Total
		Yes	No	
18-30	Count	128	345	473
	%	27,1%	72,9%	100,0%
31-60	Count	222	515	737
	%	30,1%	69,9%	100,0%
Over 60	Count	76	132	208
	%	36,5%	63,5%	100,0%
Total	Count	426	992	1418
	%	30,0%	70,0%	100,0%

Pearson Chi-Square=6.179, df = 2, p = 0,046

Finally, informal mediation was used most by Serb respondents (31.9%), followed by Albanian (30.2%) and Croat (25.9%) respondents, while it was used the least by Bosniak respondents (25.6%).

5.4.3.3. Approaching a peace council or another institution/organisation that provide mediation

Significantly more respondents from Medvedja approached a peace council or another institution/organisation that provides mediation compared to respondents from Prijepolje and Bac/Backa Palanka.

Table 88. The research-site and approaching a peace council or another institution/organisation that provides mediation for solving any kind of problems

Research-site		Approaching a peace council or another institution/organisation that provides mediation		Total
		Yes	No	
Medvedja	Count	42	339	381
	%	11,0%	89,0%	100,0%
Prijepolje	Count	18	588	606
	%	3,0%	97,0%	100,0%
Bac/Backa Palanka	Count	9	422	431
	%	2,1%	97,9%	100,0%
Total	Count	69	1349	1418
	%	4,9%	95,1%	100,0%

Pearson Chi-Square=43.095, df = 2, p = 0,001

Gender is not found to be an important factor that impacts the respondents' use of this form of solving problems: 5.5% of men and a little bit less percentage of women (4.3%) used it. Contrary to gender, age is a factor that significantly impacts the respondents' approaching the peace council or another institution/organisation that provides mediation: respondents over 60 twice as much as those from middle and younger age group used this way of solving problems they faced in everyday life.

Table 89. Age and approaching a peace council or another institution/organisation that provides mediation for solving any kind of problems

Age group		Approaching a peace council or another institution/organisation that provides mediation		Total
		Yes	No	
18-30	Count	20	453	473
	%	4,2%	95,8%	100,0%
31-60	Count	30	707	737
	%	4,1%	95,9%	100,0%
Over 60	Count	19	189	208
	%	9,1%	90,9%	100,0%
Total	Count	69	1349	1418
	%	4,9%	95,1%	100,0%

Pearson Chi-Square=9.610, df = 2, p = 0,008

Finally, ethnicity also impacts the use of this mechanism.

Table 90. Ethnicity and approaching a peace council or another institution/organisation that provides mediation for solving any kind of problems

Ethnicity		Approaching a peace council or another institution/organisation that provides mediation		Total
		Yes	No	
Serbs	Count	36	853	889
	%	4,0%	96,0%	100,0%
Croats	Count	3	82	85
	%	3,5%	96,5%	100,0%
Bosniaks	Count	8	297	305
	%	2,6%	97,4%	100,0%
Albanians	Count	22	117	139
	%	15,8%	84,2%	100,0%
Total	Count	69	1349	1418
	%	4,9%	95,1%	100,0%

Pearson Chi-Square=41.000, df = 3, p = 0,001

As the data in Table 90 shows respondents who belong to the Albanian ethnic group experienced the use of apeace council or another institution/organisation that provides mediation significantly more than the respondents who belong to other ethnic groups.

5.4.4. Respondents' opinion on the mechanisms for conflict resolution suitable to achieve justice based on the given scenario

The third way of getting to know what mechanisms are suitable to achieve justice and what the potential is of restorative justice was asking all the respondents what would be the solution suitable to achieve justice in the case, which was given as an example in the questionnaire. The scenario of the case was based on the results of the qualitative research:

> One day a police officer in uniform, who works at the local police station, approaches a young man and asks for his ID. On the basis of the young man's name and surname the police officer concludes he was a person of

different ethnicity than his. After a short questioning, the police officer starts to insult a young man on the basis of his ethnic belonging, to swear, to shout at him and humiliate him. The young man was frightened.

The case was followed by a list of possible solutions, including the following: 1. A young man and a police officer should talk to each other and solve the problem (dialogue); 2. A young man and a police officer should talk to each other in the presence of a third person (e.g. a neighbour, a relative or other person who is respected by both parties) and try to find a solution (mediation); 3. To organise a dialogue on a level of the broader community and to include persons from the local community in solving the case (e.g. to include people from the same street, from the neighbourhood, local community etc.) (community meeting/conference); 4. A police officer should apologise (apology); 5. Both parties should approach an organisation that provides support, assistance and information to the citizens regardless of their ethnicity and which is respected by the citizens (victim support); 6. Both parities should approach the peace council; 7. A young man should be compensated (compensation); 8. A police officer should be punished (punishment).

For each of the given mechanisms of solving the case the respondents could opt for one of three possible answers: 1. the solution is bad; 2. the solution is good, and 3. the solution is excellent. In addition to this, respondents could also add some other solution that was not enlisted, which they consider to be good or excellent in solving the given case.

Table 91. Mechanisms suitable to achieve justice in the given scenario

Mechanisms suitable to achieve justice in the given scenario	The solution is bad (1)		The solution is good (2)		The solution is excellent (3)	
	No.	**%**	**No.**	**%**	**No.**	**%**
Dialogue	549	38.6	615	43.2	259	18.2
Mediation	431	30.3	786	55.2	206	14.5
Community meeting/conference	594	41.7	611	42.9	218	15.3
Apology	227	16.0	552	38.8	644	45.3
Approaching victim support service	445	31.3	698	49.1	280	19.7
Approaching peace council	663	46.6	577	40.5	183	12.9
Compensation	214	15.0	566	39.8	643	45.2
Punishment	152	10.7	431	30.3	840	59.0

As the table above shows, the majority of the respondents considered punishment an excellent solution in the given case. If we add to that another 30.3% of those who considered punishment to be a good solution, we may conclude that punishment is seen as an important way of achieving justice.

Apology and compensation were considered to be excellent solutions for this case by the same percentage of respondents (around 45%). If we add to that the percentage of those who considered these mechanisms to be good, we may argue that for the majority of the respondents achieving justice is also tightly connected with these restorative outcomes. In addition, we could see that a small majority of the respondents (55.2%) saw mediation as a good solution for the given case, while 14.5% considered it to be an excellent mechanism, similarly for dialogue. Nevertheless, although around one third of the respondents did not share this opinion on mediation and even more (38.6%) on dialogue, we may still argue that according to our respondents there is a space for a broader use of restorative processes in cases as the one described.

Almost half of the respondents saw the assistance of the victim support services as a good solution in the given case (49.1%). If we add the percentage of those who considered this solution to be excellent, we may argue that the respondents appreciated providing assistance to both parties in the conflict. However, one third of the respondents saw this mechanism as a bad one, which

might argue in favour of the need of raising awareness of citizens in the research-sites about the existence and importance of such services.

Although a little more than half of the respondents considered organising a meeting on the level of the community to be good (42.9%) or excellent (15.3%) solution of the case, a percentage of those who saw this mechanism as bad (41.7%) is still rather high.

Finally, almost half of the respondents saw approaching the peace councils as a bad solution. This can be interpreted by the lack of knowledge about these bodies, but also the lack of their existence today, even in some sites such as Medvedja, where they used to exist. However, if we keep in mind the fact that more that half of the respondents were of the opinion that this mechanism can be good or excellent for solving this type of conflicts, we may argue $there is a need for reviving peace councils in the local communities as mechanisms for conflict transformation.

In addition, 132 respondents added some other solutions that in their opinion would be good or excellent for solving the given case. Most of the solutions went in the direction of additional repression towards the police officer, in terms that he should be suspended, fired, warned, moved to another working place, his wage to be reduced or to be sanctioned in another way. This was followed by the opinion that police officer should work in accordance with a law, to be fair and act professionally. The third solution by its frequency refers to the need of education of the police officers, in particular on the issues related to discrimination, tolerance and respect of minorities. Some other solutions stated by the respondents include: better control of the work of the police and of the procedure of hiring new police officers; initiating a court procedure against the police officer; approaching the police officer's chief; organising a multiethnic police units; and organising a commission to examine the behaviour of the police officer.

The research-site significantly impacts respondents' opinion on the use of dialogue, mediation, apology and the victim support service in solving the given case. Thus, as the data in the table below suggests, respondents from Prijepolje were in favour of dialogue and the use of victim support services in the given case

more than respondents from the other two sites, suggesting the need for active participation of the victim and the empowerment of both victim and perpetrator in the process of solving the conflict and overcoming its consequences. On the other hand, when it comes to apology and mediation, data suggests that respondents in Bac/Backa Palanka opted for these mechanisms the most. Respondents from Medvedja supported each of these four mechanisms the least.

Table 92. The research-site and mechanisms suitable to achieve justice in the given case

Research site	Dialogue		Mediation		Community meeting/ conference		Apology		Victim support		Approaching peace council		Compensation		Punishment	
	F	Sig	F	Sig	F	Sig	F	Sig	F	Sig	F	Sig	F	Sig	F	Sig
	6,758	**,001**	4,555	**,011**	,223	,800	50,42	**,000**	4,129	**,016**	,464	,629	1,347	,260	2,382	,093
	Mean															
Medvedja	1,68		1,77		1,75		2,04		1,81		1,63		2,34		2,46	
Prijepolje	**1,85**		1,84		1,72		2,28		**1,94**		1,67		2,27		2,45	
Bac/Backa Palanka	1,81		**1,91**		1,75		**2,54**		1,87		1,68		2,32		2,54	

Gender significantly impacts respondents' opinion on the use of only two of the given mechanisms that could be suitable to bring justice in the given case: dialogue and apology. The findings suggest that women were more open towards using these restorative approaches in the given case than men.

Table 93. Gender and mechanisms suitable to achieve justice in the given case

Gender	Dialogue		Mediation		Community meeting/ conference		Apology		Victim support		Approaching peace council		Compensation		Punishment	
	F	Sig	F	Sig	F	Sig	F	Sig	F	Sig	F	Sig	F	Sig	F	Sig
	5,295	**,022**	2,797	,095	2,894	,089	23,86	**,000**	2,541	,111	1,430	,232	,269	,604	1,601	,206
	Mean															
Male	1,75		1,81		1,77		2,20		1,85		1,64		2,31		2,51	
Female	**1,84**		1,87		1,71		**2,38**		1,91		1,68		2,29		2,46	

As the data in the table below shows, age significantly impacts respondents' opinion about the use of most of the given mechanisms as those suitable to achieve justice in the given case. The older the respondent was, the more open they were towards dialogue. Contrary to this, respondents from the youngest age group opted for a community meeting/conference, apology, approaching a peace council and the use of victim support services more than those from older age groups. But, it is interesting to note that the younger respondent was, the higher the support for the punishment.

Table 94. Age and mechanisms suitable to achieve justice in the given case

Age group	Dialogue		Mediation		Community meeting/ conference		Apology		Victim support		Approaching peace council		Compensation		Punishment	
	F	Sig	F	Sig	F	Sig	F	Sig	F	Sig	F	Sig	F	Sig	F	Sig
	4,627	**,010**	,546	,579	6,952	**,001**	5,455	**,004**	5,703	**,003**	12,38	**,000**	1,457	,233	3,744	**,024**
	Mean															
18-30	1,72		1,85		**1,81**		**2,37**		**1,97**		**1,79**		2,34		**2,55**	
31-60	1,81		1,83		1,67		2,27		1,84		1,59		2,27		2,46	
Over 60	**1,90**		1,88		1,80		2,19		1,86		1,64		2,31		2,41	

Ethnicity proved to be an important factor that impacts the respondents' opinion on the use of almost all mechanisms that could bring justice in the given case (except for community meeting/conference and approaching a peace council). The data suggests that Serb respondents were in favour of mediation more than respondents from other ethnic groups; Croats tended to support dialogue and apology in a greater manner than respondents from other ethnic groups; Bosniaks considered approaching victim support services as a solution suitable to achieve justice more than Serb, Croat and Albanian respondents; while Albanian respondents considered compensation to be suitable to bring justice in a significantly greater manner that respondents from other ethnic groups. When it comes to punishment, we could see that Bosniak and Albanian respondents considered this mechanism to be suitable to bring justice more than Serbs and Croats.

Table 95. Ethnicity and mechanisms suitable to achieve justice in the given case

Ethnicity	Dialogue		Mediation		Community meeting/ conference		Apology		Victim support		Approaching peace council		Compensation		Punishment	
	F	Sig	F	Sig	F	Sig	F	Sig	F	Sig	F	Sig	F	Sig	F	Sig
	14,49	**,000**	3,120	**,025**	1,441	,229	34,27	**,000**	2,849	**,036**	,714	,544	11,13	**,000**	7,781	**,000**
	Mean															
Serbs	1,86		**1,88**		1,71		2,37		1,86		1,65		2,25		2,42	
Croats	**1,88**		1,86		1,69		**2,41**		1,91		1,69		2,20		2,46	
Bosniaks	1,73		1,78		1,80		2,28		**1,98**		1,71		2,35		**2,61**	
Albanians	1,45		1,73		1,76		1,73		1,79		1,62		**2,60**		**2,61**	

Finally, if we compare two groups of respondents based on the experience of victimisation (those who reported to be victimised in the observed period and those who did not have such an experience), we could see that this experience significantly impacts the respondents' opinion on the use of some of the mechanisms. Namely, respondents who had a victimisation experience considered community meeting/conference and compensation to be solutions

suitable to bring justice more that those who did not have such an experience. The same goes for punishment. On the other hand, respondents who did not have a victimisation experience tended to be more open towards the use of dialogue and apology in comparison to those who faced such an experience. It is interesting that there were no differences between these two groups when it comes to mediation, approaching a peace councils or the use of victim support services.

Table 96. Experience with victimisation and mechanisms suitable to achieve justice in the given case

Being exposed to victimisation	Dialogue		Mediation		Community meeting/ conference		Apology		Victim support		Approaching peace council		Compensation		Punishment	
	F	Sig	F	Sig	F	Sig	F	Sig	F	Sig	F	Sig	F	Sig	F	Sig
	48,22	**,000**	3,198	,074	10,47	**,001**	20,22	**,000**	0,531	,466	0,108	,743	6,112	**,014**	14,26	**,000**
	Mean															
No	**1,88**		1,86		1,70		**2,35**		1,89		1,67		2,27		2,44	
Yes	1,58		1,79		**1,84**		2,15		1,86		1,65		**2,38**		**2,60**	

5.4.5. Conclusion

The findings of the survey related to the respondents' opinion about mechanisms that could be suitable to achieve justice in the concrete cases of victimisation they had experienced suggest that punishment is still very much seen as an important form of reaction in the aftermath of different forms of victimisation. In this respect, respondents from Medvedja supported punishment to a greater extent than respondents in Prijepolje and Bac/Backa Palanka. In addition, Serb respondents from Medvedja were significantly more in favour of punishment in comparison to Albanian respondents in this research-site.

Nevertheless, even those respondents who saw punishment as a mechanism suitable to achieve justice did not always consider it as the only

mechanism that may bring justice, but rather recognised restorative approaches as those that could complement the punishment. Hence, for the great majority of the victimised respondents, justice is equated with restorative processes and/or restorative outcomes (restorative justice), either alone or in combination with retribution, i.e. punishment (retributive or legal justice). Thus, from the answers of the respondents who were victimised in the observed period, we may conclude that restorative approaches could be seen as an added value to retributive justice, but also as mechanisms that could bring justice without punishing the perpetrators.

It is important to point out that knowing why what happened had happened, which requires some form of encounter and communication, together with a dialogue are seen as important mechanisms that may bring justice in concrete victimisation cases. This suggests the need of those victimised to actively participate in the process of conflict transformation and not to be left on the margins of the social reaction. Traditional court procedures (criminal procedures) are designed in a way that they do not allow for interactive communication and dialogue, i.e. 'interaction between dissimilar voices', which is in the essence of the 'dialogical/restorative justice' (Foss et al. 2012, 47). Keeping this in mind and based on the answers of our respondents we may argue that restorative approaches, based on active participation, dialogue, respect, inclusion, empowerment, restoration, etc. (Vanfraechem 2012, 14) could be mechanisms that are suitable for achieving justice in concrete victimisation cases. This is particularly visible in Medvedja, primarily among Albanian respondents who were victimised in the observed period. Namely, Albanian respondents were significantly more in favour of these mechanisms for solving concrete cases of victimisation in comparison to respondents of the three other ethnic groups.

On the other hand, if we look into restorative outcomes, the survey findings suggest that Albanian respondents with a victimisation experience supported apology significantly less than Serb, Croat and Bosniak respondents. For the respondents in Medvedja, compensation seems rather important, although there are no significant differences in comparison to the other two research-sites. Finally, for the respondents in Prijepolje in general and Bosniaks

in particular, community service is an important mechanism that may bring justice when it comes to the concrete victimisation. Thus, the obtained data suggests that the potential for using restorative approaches in concrete cases exists.

Nevertheless, when it comes to a more concrete question of the willingness of the victimised respondents to meet those who hurt them or made them suffer in another way, it seems they are not yet ready to meet them and talk to them directly. Namely, only a very small number of victimised respondents expressed their willingness to meet the person(s) who hurt them or made them suffer in another way. This brings us to the conclusion there is a need to work on raising the awareness of those victimised about the importance and benefits of encounters and dialogue with those who hurt them or made them suffer in another way. This seems particularly important if we keep in mind the fact that in all three research-sites there is still a high percentage of those victimised who do not have any contacts with those who hurt them, although they live in the same places. Thus, we may argue that in all research-sites those victimised and those who have victimised them still live one next to each other and not together, which may be seen as a source of potential tension and future conflicts.

Although the percentage of those who have reconciled with those who hurt them and normalised their relationships is very low in all research-sites it is significantly higher in Bac/Backa Palanka than in the other two research-sites. Thus, we may argue that the experience of the respondents from Bac/Backa Palanka can be useful in developing mechanisms for reconciliation, communication and normalisation of the relationships between conflicting parties.

The survey findings on the respondents' opinion on mechanisms for conflict resolution suitable to achieve justice based on their experience with solving different problems in their lives, suggest that respondents use different restorative approaches for solving everyday problems, particularly dialogue and informal mediation. Hence, there is a potential for using restorative approaches based on encounter and dialogue in practice. However, people should be more aware of these mechanisms and their suitability for using them in cases of

victimisation, too, either alone or together with punishment. In developing models for solving problems, including conflicts, based on different forms of encounter, dialogue and mediation, the experience of respondents from Bac/Backa Palanka, as well as the experience of female and older respondents in general could be valuable. In addition, experience of respondents from Medvedja, particularly Albanian respondents and those older in approaching peace councils could be valuable, too. Apart from personal experience, we may assume they also have more knowledge about peace councils and they remember their work, so, that can be further used in discussing the possibilities of reviving these bodies on the level of the local communities for solving different problems, including conflicts.

Finally, the data suggests that punishment is seen as an important mechanism suitable to achieve justice in the given scenario on the conflict between the police officer and a young man, particularly by those who had a victimisation experience. Nevertheless, respondents' answers prove to open the space for a broader use of mechanisms of restorative justice, including restorative processes (dialogue, mediation or community meeting/conference) and restorative outcomes (apology and compensation). This is particularly visible in Prijepolje and Bac/Backa Palanka. These findings speak in favour active participation of all the parties involved in a conflict in its resolution, which is also important for their empowerment (Vanfraechem 2012, 16). In addition to this, respondents from Prijepolje, particularly those of Bosniak ethnicity, supported approaching victim support services significantly more than respondents from other research-sites. When it comes to dialogue and apology, the experience of women and older respondents and their openness towards the use of these mechanisms are valuable for the development of models applicable in the research-sites for solving existing and preventing future conflicts.

The findings about the mechanisms suitable to bring justice in the given scenario seem even more important if we keep in mind the fact that even though in the given case a power unbalance between the conflicting parties was present, respondents allowed for the use of restorative approaches. These findings seem to be rather important in the context of the still present inadequate functioning of

the state and its (non)readiness and (in)ability to protect citizens and solve the problems, including conflicts, and the still present distrust of citizens in the state and its agencies, particularly in the police, which, as the research findings show, is rather seen as a source of unsafety than of safety. Finally, these data can be also seen as important for deconstructing the police in terms that police officers are not only representatives of the state, but citizens of these research-sites (respondents' relatives, neighbours, friends) as well and they also have to live together with other citizens and not one beside each other.

5.5. Interethnic relations and the possible paths towards their improvement

We wanted to know what the current status of interethnic relations is in the three communities we examined. For that reason we asked the respondents if they talked to anyone about these relations in their town during the last year and what they talked about. We also asked them how frequently they visit people from a different ethnic group and on what occasions. In the end we asked the respondents what, in their opinion, should be done in order to improve relations between people of different ethnicities in their community, so that they become closer and life itself in their town better.

5.5.1. Talking about interethnic relations

We asked the respondents if they have talked to someone about the interethnic relations in their community during the last year. Somewhat less than 20% of respondents gave a positive answer (274 respondents or 19.3%), while 1,149 (80.7%) did not talk to anyone about interethnic relations.

Statistically significant differences between respondents from the three research-sites have been found: respondents in Bac/Backa Palanka have to a greater extent talked to someone about these relations than respondents in Medvedja and Prijepolje. This may suggest that in Bac/Backa Palanka this issue

is nowadays most problematic, but it may also mean that people there are more ready to talk about it than in the other two sites.

Table 97. Conversation about interethnic relations in the research-sites

Research-site		Conversation about interethnic relations		Total
		Yes	No	
Medvedja	Count	77	305	382
	%	20,2%	79,8%	100,0%
Prijepolje	Count	92	518	610
	%	15,1%	84,9%	100,0%
Bac/Backa Palanka	Count	105	326	431
	%	24,4%	75,6%	100,0%
Total	Count	274	1149	1423
	%	19,3%	80,7%	100,0%

Pearson Chi-Square=14.262, df = 2, p = 0,001

There was no significant relationship between gender, age or ethnicity of respondents with the fact that they have (not) engaged with someone in a conversation about this topic. Respondents who talked with someone about interethnic relations were asked what was actually discussed. The largest number of respondents spoke about improving interethnic relations (76 respondents or 27.7 %) and about tolerance and coexistence in a mixed or multiethnic and multicultural environment (58 respondents or 21.2%).

Furthermore, 36 respondents (13.1%) had talked to someone about the rights and obligations of ethnic minorities in Serbia, 24 (8.8%) spoke about the impact of the economic and political situation on interethnic relations, 20 (7.3%) about religious, ethnic and cultural differences and their impact on interethnic relations, 18 (6.6%) about the 1990s and the impact of this period on interethnic relations and 16 (5.8%) on discrimination of ethnic minorities.

In addition, 8 respondents (2.9%) discussed the time before the 1990s and its impact on subsequent interethnic relations and 7 (2.6%) discussed ways to resolve and overcome interethnic conflicts. Finally, 11 respondents (4%) did not say what they talked about.

Table 98. Topic of discussion

What they talked about	Frequency	Percent
On improving interethnic relations	76	27.7
About tolerance and coexistence	58	21.2
Rights and obligations of the ethnic minorities	36	13.1
About the impact of the economic and political situation on the relations	24	8.8
About religious, ethnic and cultural differences	20	7.3
About the 1990s and the impact of this period on relations	18	6.6
On discrimination of ethnic minorities	16	5.8
About the time before the 1990s and its impact on relations	8	2.9
About ways to resolve and overcome interethnic conflicts	7	2.6
No data	11	4.0
Total	274	100.0

Topics handled in their conversations are covering different issues relevant for interethnic relations. Although the percentage of those who talked at all about interethnic relations during the last year is small, it is encouraging that more than half of them discussed it in a constructive and positive way: how to improve them, about tolerance and coexistence and about ways to resolve and overcome interethnic conflicts (in total 51,1%).

5.5.2. Interactions with people of different ethnicity

Respondents were also asked how often they visit people of a different ethnicity. A large majority of the respondents do visit people of a different ethnicity. Only 126 respondents (8.9%) never do. Moreover, more than half of respondents do it every day (894 respondents or 62.8%). 157 respondents (11%) visit people from a different ethnic group once a week, 115 (8.1%) do it once a month, 55 (3.9%) once in 6 months, while 37 (2.6%) visit them once a year.

669 respondents (47%) meet these people to socialise with them. 158 respondents (11.1%) visit people from a different ethnic group on occasions such as birthday celebrations, religious holidays, weddings, funerals, etc. 391 respondents (27.5%) visits them for both aforementioned reasons and 74 (5.5%) in other occasions.

Table 99. Frequency of visits

How often do you visit people from a different ethnic group?	Frequency	Percent
Never	126	8,9
Every day	894	62,8
Once a week	157	11,0
Once a month	115	8,1
Once in 6 months	55	3,9
Once a year	37	2,6
Total	1423	100,0

The findings suggest a very high level and frequency of interaction of our respondents with people from different ethnic groups. They also show significant differences between respondents from different research-sites in terms of the frequency of visits. Specifically, respondents in Medvedja to a greater extent never visit people from a different ethnic group, in comparison to respondents from the other two research-sites. On the other hand, the respondents in Prijepolje visit people from different ethnic groups on a daily basis to a greater extent, than those in the other two towns.

Table 100. Research-sites and frequency of visits

Research-site		Visits					Total
		Never	Every day	Once a week	Once a month	Once in 6 months	
Medvedja	Count	111	118	54	45	28	356
	%	31.2%	33.1%	15.2%	12.6%	7.9%	100.0%
Prijepolje	Count	11	469	58	35	10	583
	%	1.9%	80.4%	9.9%	6.0%	1.7%	100.0%
Bac/Backa Palanka	Count	4	307	45	35	17	408
	%	1.0%	75.2%	11.0%	8.6%	4.2%	100.0%
Total	Count	126	894	157	115	55	1347
	%	9.4%	66.4%	11.7%	8.5%	4.1%	100.0%

Pearson Chi-Square=365.338, df = 8, p = 0,001

Our findings show that interactions between people of different ethnicity are the biggest in Prijepolje and the least in Medvedja. Significant differences in the frequency of visiting were also noted between respondents from different ethnic groups. Serb respondents to a greater extent do not make such visits in comparison to respondents from other ethnic groups. They are followed by Albanian respondents. On the other hand, Croat respondents visit people from different ethnic groups every day to a greater extent than respondents of any other ethnicity. None of the Croat respondents never visit people from different ethnic groups. Bosniaks also very often visit people from different ethnic group every day and very rarely never did. Thus, we can conclude that Croats and Bosniaks seem to have the most frequent contacts with people of different ethnic

Table 101. Ethnicity and frequency of visits

Ethnicity		Visits					Total
		Never	Every day	Once a week	Once a month	Once in 6 months	
Serbs	Count	110	520	88	77	44	839
	%	13.1%	62.0%	10.5%	9.2%	5.2%	100.0%
Croats	Count	0	78	5	2	0	85
	%	.0%	91.8%	5.9%	2.4%	.0%	100.0%
Bosniaks	Count	5	237	24	22	4	292
	%	1.7%	81.2%	8.2%	7.5%	1.4%	100.0%
Albanians	Count	11	59	40	14	7	131
	%	8.4%	45.0%	30.5%	10.7%	5.3%	100.0%
Total	Count	126	894	157	115	55	1347
	%	9.4%	66.4%	11.7%	8.5%	4.1%	100.0%

Pearson Chi-Square=131.982, df = 12, p = 0,001

There was no significant relationship between gender and age of respondents and the frequency of visits to members of different ethnic groups.

5.5.3. How to improve relations between people of different ethnicities?

Finally, respondents were asked what, in their opinion, should be done in order to improve relations between people of different ethnicities in their community, so that they become closer and life in these communities better. This was an open-ended question and a total of 364 respondents in our sample gave their opinions on the subject. One quarter of respondents answered there is a need for more interethnic socializing and friendships (92 respondents or 25.3 %). 51 respondents (14 %) answered that a better standard of living or better economic conditions would improve these relations.

Respondents also suggested the following: efforts to increase the level of tolerance (38 respondents or 10.4%), greater employment of people (33 respondents or 9.1%), better education (26 respondents or 7.1%) more conversations on interethnic relations (25 or 6.8 %), reduction of the influence of politics (23 or 6.3 %), efforts towards the prevention of discrimination (19 or 5.2%), respect for diversity and learning about other religions, ethnicities and cultures (16 respondents or 4.4 %), compliance with the law (14 or 3.8%) and severe punishments (9 respondents or 2.5 %). There were also 18 respondents (4.9 %) who said nothing should be done because the interethnic relations in the communities where they live are excellent.

Table 102. What should be done in order to improve the relations

Suggestions of respondents	Frequency	Percent
More socializing and friendships	92	25.3
Better standard of living (economic situation)	51	14.0
More tolerance	38	10.4
Employment for people	33	9.1
Better education	26	7.1
More conversations about relations	25	6.8
Reduction of political influence on relations	23	6.3
Work on the prevention of discrimination	19	5.2
Nothing should be done because the relations are excellent	18	4.9
Respect for diversity and learning about other religions, ethnicities and cultures	16	4.4
Compliance with the laws	14	3.8
More severe punishments	9	2.5
Total	364	100.0

We can conclude that most of proposals relate to various ways of improvement of interethnic relations and social measures for prevention of conflicts, while only a very small part is connected to retributive measures, i.e. punishment.

5.5.4. Conclusion

The survey findings showed that around one fifth of the respondents talked to someone about interethnic relations in their community during the year that preceded the research. Among them, respondents from Bac/Backa Palanka reported to speak about interethnic relations significantly more than respondents in the other two research-sites. This may suggest that in this research site the issue of interethnic relations is most problematic, but it may also speak in favour of the readiness and openness of people to talk about it. The key topics related to the interethnic relations our respondents have spoken about with other people in their local communities were: improving interethnic relations, tolerance and coexistence in a mixed or multiethnic and multicultural environment. In addition, they discussed rights and obligations of national minorities in Serbia, but also the impact of different factors on interethnic relations, such as the

economic and political situation, religious, ethnic and cultural differences, the impact of the period before 1990s and the period of 1990s on the nowadays interethnic relations. Keeping these findings in mind, we may argue that although the percentage of those who talked about interethnic relations during the year prior to the survey is rather small, it seems encouraging that more than half of them discussed this issue in a constructive and positive way in terms of how to improve interethnic relations and what would be possible ways to resolve and overcome interethnic conflicts. This is an important starting-point for further work on developing models for solving existing and preventing future conflicts, improving interethnic relations and enabling coexistence of different ethnic groups in multiethnic communities.

Almost two thirds of the respondents had regular, everyday contacts with persons who belong to other ethnic groups, primarily in terms of socialising. A little more than a quarter of the respondents socialise and visit people from a different ethnic group on occasions such as birthday celebrations, religious holidays, weddings, funerals, etc. Thus, the survey findings suggest a very high level and frequency of interaction of our respondents with people of a different ethnic group. However, some differences have been found between research-sites and among respondents of different ethnicity. Respondents from Medvedja have to a greater extent never visited people from a different ethnic group, which may suggest there is a lack of communication between people in this research-site. On the other hand, interaction of people from different ethnic groups is the biggest in Prijepolje. The survey findings also suggest that ethnicity significantly impacts the frequency of visiting people from other ethnic groups: Croat and Bosniak respondents seem to have the most frequent contacts with people of different ethnic groups; they are followed by Albanians, while the frequency of visiting people from other ethnic groups is the least among Serb respondents.

Around a quarter of respondents suggested best ways to improve interethnic relations in their communities, giving very diverse answers. However, if we look into their answers we may argue that the proposals our respondents gave primarily relate to various ways of improving interethnic relations (including more interethnic socialising and friendship, increasing the level of

tolerance, more conversation on interethnic relations, respect for diversity) and overtaking social measures for prevention of conflicts (including the improvement of the standard of living and economic situation, decrease of the influence of politics, prevention of discrimination, better education). A very small part of proposals for the improvement of interethnic relations was connected to retributive measures, i.e. punishment. Thus, we may argue that retributive measures are not largely viewed or supported as the best way to improve interethnic relations.

6. Conclusion

The findings of our empirical research suggest that different levels of conflicts existed or still exist in all three multiethnic communities in which the empirical research was conducted. Three types of conflicts could be noticed in regard to who the parties of the conflict are: conflicts between citizens, conflicts between citizens and the state (i.e. state institutions), and conflicts between citizens and representatives of the state, particularly police officers, who are at the same time citizens of the multiethnic communities encompassed by the research. As the research findings suggest, conflicts with the state (i.e. with state institutions and with state representatives) have a prominent place, which is tightly connected to the non-functioning or inadequate functioning of the state and the lack of rule of law. Thus, the state is not seen as a guarantor of security, but is rather perceived by the respondents as one of the main sources of insecurity. This is also confirmed by the finding that perception of security goes much beyond physical safety of people (in terms of freedom from crime, war or violence); it also refers to social, economic, legal and political safety. The research findings confirm the results of other research (Rohne, Arsovska and Aertsen 2008), including our previous theoretical research done in the first year of the project implementation (Nikolic-Ristanovic and Copic 2013). Thus, our research suggests that ”post-conflict societies often lack mechanisms and institutions for upholding the rule of law” and dealing with conflicts, being a ‘vacuum’ in which “the eruption of lawlessness, corruption and crime” is visible (Rohne, Arsovska and Aertsen 2008, 12-13). This “decreases the feeling of security and has particularly negative consequences on victims from ethnic minorities, whose chances to get protection and support are put in question” (Nikolic-Ristanovic and Copic 2013, 15).

Our research findings also suggest that our respondents accept the broader notion of the concepts of the victim and the perpetrator/responsible person (Vanfraechem 2012, 35), recognising the conflicts between direct and indirect victims and direct and indirect perpetrators. They recognised both psychological and physical victimisation, as well as primary, secondary and tertiary victims. In addition, they recognised both their own victimisation and

responsibility and the victimisation and responsibility of others. Thus, a feeling of general victimisation opens the space for an inclusive approach in dealing with conflicts. It enables recognition of all those who feel victimised, avoidance of binarism and allowing overlaps of victims and perpetrators/responsible (Fattah 1993, according to Vanfraechem 2012).

Although most conflicts experienced by respondents were interethnic, the research findings also suggest that not all conflicts between members of different ethnic groups are intercultural. Otherwise, naming them as intercultural may lead to the construction of conflicts or "maintenance and escalation of conflicts" (Foss *et al.* 2012, 23-24). Thus, the research results confirm the need to use the broader concept, i.e. to speak about "conflicts in intercultural settings" rather than of intercultural conflicts, which was a starting point in the project ALTERNATIVE (Foss *et al.* 2012, 24; Vanfraechem 2012, 36).

The empirical research has confirmed the findings of our theoretical research, suggesting that "in Serbia security of citizens requires dealing both with past and present interethnic conflicts as well as with their very complex interconnectedness" (Nikolic-Ristanovic and Copic 2013, 67). Namely, the research findings suggest that conflicts were present in the multiethnic communities during and after the armed conflicts in the 1990s, and they are still present. When speaking about conflicts after the formal end of the wars, we may argue that there are two groups of conflicts: conflicts that present a repercussion of the war (continuity of the conflicts from the war-time) and the new conflicts, which are tightly connected to the political situation in the multiethnic communities encompassed by the research and the political and economic transition in the country in general.

Tightly connected to the notion of the state's non-functioning or inadequate functioning as a source of insecurity is the vision of the respondents in the three multiethnic communities that the security of citizens would be increased if the state would have been more efficient. However, together with emphasising the role of the state in increasing the feeling of security, our respondents and interviewees have shown that they give relevance not only to state measures, but also to both formal and informal restorative approaches. It is

particularly important to emphasise that people with a experience victimisation were less punitive than non-victims, showing their openness towards restorative justice.

Consequently, we may argue there is a potential for restorative justice, but there is still a lack of awareness about its importance, as well as a lack of institutional support for its broader use in practice. Hence, there is a need to work on raising awareness of citizens about the possibilities of restorative approaches and their applicability for both dealing with a broad range of conflicts in intercultural settings and the increase of security. On the other hand, there is a need to work on capacity building of representatives of local communities (representatives of local civil society organisations and state institutions at the local level) for a broader use of restorative approaches, which could be used on different levels, i.e. for solving conflicts both between citizens and between citizens and state representatives. Since the change of the state policy towards dealing with conflicts in intercultural settings is a long-term task, working on developing restorative approaches on the community level seems to be more realistic and may give better results (bottom-up approach). However, it would be better if works in synergy with the state mechanisms for which some basis has already been established.

Within our action research in the third year of the project implementation the process of working on raising awareness and capacity building in the three research-sites by bringing back our findings to the local communities will start. The research results will serve as a basis for coming, together with people from the local communities, to the ideas about restorative models suitable for dealing with conflicts on micro, meso and macro levels. This process will bring together citizens, representatives of civil society organisations, and representatives of state institutions on the local level (inclusive process) into a democratic intercultural dialogue (Council of Europe, 2008) and who will also test the applicability of different restorative approaches in dealing with conflicts.

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