

HUMAN POTENTIAL FOR RECONCILIATION: AN ATTEMPT AT THE CONSTRUCTION OF THE APPROPRIATE SCALE IN THE BALKANS

Nebojša PETROVIĆ

University of Belgrade, Serbia

e-mail: npetrovi@f.bg.ac.rs

Abstract

The objective of this article is to attempt the construction of a scale that can measure the psychological potential of individuals for reconciliation based on existing theoretical considerations. Following the steps for the construction of the Likert-type scale and based on the responses of 1176 participants from the post-conflict region of the three Balkans countries of Serbia, Croatia and Bosnia and Herzegovina, the scale of Readiness for Reconciliation has been constructed. Applied exploratory factor analysis indicates the existence of four factors: trust, cooperation, forgiveness and rehumanisation. These factors are considered to be the main constituent elements of readiness for reconciliation. The obtained results show that scale has excellent psychometrics characteristics.

Keywords: reconciliation, readiness, scale, trust, forgiveness

Measurement of Readiness for Reconciliation: An Attempt at the Construction of the Appropriate Scale

Peace is not an absence of war; it is a virtue, a state of mind,
a disposition for benevolence, confidence, justice.

Baruch Spinoza, 1632–1677

Within the past two decades, social scientists have started dealing with the problems of normalising life after the end of armed conflict. Reconciliation between previously warring parties is the ultimate goal. What is the nature of this reconciliation? Is it possible to achieve such reconciliation? To what extent is it possible to answer to these questions from the standpoint of social and political psychologists?

Many researchers and theorists have explained reconciliation from a psychological standpoint. Kriesberg (1998, 2001, 2003) suggests that after destructive conflicts and while building the peace, it is necessary to create a situation of cohabitation of the former adversaries. The former adversaries have to “put aside feelings of hate, fear, and loathing, to discard views of the other as dangerous and subhuman, and to abandon the desire for revenge and retribution.” (Kriesberg, 1998, p. 184) Kriesberg has further emphasised that members of the former adversary groups need to reach a minimal agreement on at least four beliefs in order to achieve reconciliation. These beliefs are the acknowledgment, with honesty, of the terrible aspects of what happened; the acceptance, with compassion, of those who committed injurious conduct as well as the acknowledgment each other’s suffering; the belief that injustices are being redressed; and the anticipation of mutual security and well-being. (Kriesberg, 1998, p. 185)

Lederach (1997, 1998), from another point of view, considers Psalm 85 as he studies reconciliation. From this source, he proposes four elements: truth, which demands acknowledgment of wrong and the validation of painful loss; mercy, which articulates the need for acceptance and new beginning; justice, which demands social reconstruction and restitution; and peace which emphasis interdependence, well-being, and security. (Lederach, 1997, p.29) According to him, it is impossible to reach reconciliation by relying only on the highest official levels. Therefore, instead of a hierarchical approach (that includes only top position members of a society), he suggests an organic approach to the process of reconciliation in which people from all societal levels, from grassroots to top leadership, are involved.

In his extensive research on conflict resolution, Kelman (1999, 2008) wrote about positive peace in regard to the relations between nations or communities with a long history of conflict and war. Kelman viewed such peace through the following elements: resolving the conflict in the manner that satisfied the fundamental needs of both sides and maintained their national group dignity; mutual acceptance and respect of the welfare of others; development of the feeling of security and dignity for each party; building the prototypes for cooperation in different fields; and institutionalisation of mechanisms for resolving conflicts. (Kelman, 1999., page 197).

Nadler (2002) and Nadler and Shnabel (2008) have stated that, depending on whether the goal is social integration or separate cohabitation of the former adversaries, there are two different roads leading to reconciliation. The first one is socio-emotional and the other is instrumental. According to Nadler, instrumental reconciliation has been reached through many projects in which both sides cooperate on an equal level and learn that they need to live side-by-side and respect each other's integrity. In the case of the socio-emotional reconciliation, attention has been focused on the prevailing yearning for revenge or other negative emotions that block the path to social integration.

Bar-Tal (2000b) has argued that the basis of the psychological reconciliation is to change the conflictive ethos that was formed during intractable conflict and was at the time functional in order to cope with the difficult situation. The conflictive ethos, according to the author, consists of eight themes: societal beliefs about justness of one's own goals, security, positive self-image, one's own victimization, de-legitimation of the opponent, patriotism, unity and peace (Bar-Tal, 1998, 2000a, 2000b; Bar-Tal & Bennink, 2002). This group of beliefs, however, complicates or even obstructs the establishment of normal relations after the signing of the peace accord. Therefore, reconciliation requires changing these beliefs, especially those concerning the justice of one's own goals. (Bar-Tal, 2000b)

Staub (1999, 2000, 2008) and Staub, Pearlman, Gubin, and Hagengimana (2005) assumed that work on healing and reconciliation should be undertaken in order to break out of the vicious circle of continuing violence. Healing the victimised group decreases the odds of revenge. In order for that to happen, members of such groups have to look into their experience and once again pass through the pain, suffering and loss but this time, in the safety of the new secure surroundings. They should receive empathy, support and affirmation from one another, and ideally from people outside their group as well. Reconciliation, according to Staub (2000) and Staub and Pearlman (2001), is more than mere cohabitation, it demands forgiveness, asks for

acceptance of the members of both groups, and needs the development of mutual trust. Healing, reconciliation and forgiveness, in Staub's (2000) opinion, enhance each other separately and together, and enable the satisfaction of basic human needs.

Volkan (1988, 2002) explained the reduction of ethnic tensions between large divisive groups in psychoanalytical processes and that terminology. Among others, he developed *the tree model* to illustrate that the growth and branching of the tree corresponds to the picture of the process of reconciliation. Another author of the psychoanalytic orientation, Moses (1991), stressed the dehumanisation and demonization of the enemy and the ideology that creates polarities as the cause of animosity and harm. Therefore, the cessation of these negative processes and development of a new balanced view of the adversary ultimately lead to reconciliation.

Long and Brecke (2003), in their forgiveness model, have drawn attention to the behavioural process of forgiveness, which contains at least four elements that have frequently led to changes and are functional for survival during the evolution. These are: acknowledgement of the harm or truth telling, redefining of social identities, partial justice and the offering of a renewed community in the future culminating in a reconciliation event, after which reconciliation follows logically and successfully.

Many other authors offered their perspectives on the elements and processes necessary reaching reconciliation. One of them, Shriver (1995, 1999., p. 208) identified four elements in this regard: "moral judgment, abstaining from revenge, empathy for the humane side of the adversary and the intention to create the fellow citizen relationship that could eventually be called reconciliation". In his view, these elements were interdependent and interwoven and in interaction empower one another.

However, the purpose of this review is not to be exhaustive, neither to defer to a particular view or to give a synthesis, but to point out the existence of different perspectives on reaching reconciliation that are dominated by the psychological dimension of the problem. These mainly speculative analyses by different authors are not identical, but shed light on this issue from different angles. Certain elements are common to all or most authors (for example, many of them wrote about necessity of truth-telling); other elements are very similar but have different names; and some elements are specific to each author. The weight or the importance given to each element is different as well, and so are the dynamics of their interaction. Based on different authors' approaches, it is not possible to determine directly at which point the reconciliation process occurs after a certain conflict, and what the future

prospects for the continuance of that process are. In short, one empirical component is still missing.

In the Balkan region, important series of studies have been done, and although relevant to the problem of reconciliation, they stressed some specific topics, and do not completely coincide with the main objective of this paper. These studies include one connected with intercommunity relations after conflict (Corokalo et al., 2005), another with social reconstruction of communities (Ajdukovic, 2006), and even one dealing with trust after betrayal in communities (Ajdukovic & Corokalo, 2004). A second avenue of research includes studies on guilt and responsibility (Brown, & Cehajic, 2008; Cehajic et al, 2009; Cehajic, S. & Brown, 2010). There were also many important studies that stressed traumatic experience (Biro & Milin, 2005), and interventions after trauma (Ajdukovic & Ajdukovic, 2003).

Measurement of reconciliation – mission possible?

There are different ways to determine the progress in the process of reconciliation after the end of the armed conflict. These include: determining the number of refugees who have returned to their homes; the level of the establishment of diplomatic relations or mutual governing apparatus (in cases of inter-state conflicts) between former adversaries; and the level of cooperation in industry, culture, sport, etc. These and other structural elements such as telling the truth, punishing the guilty individuals, and apologising, definitely support reconciliation but will not necessarily lead to it. They are refracted through a personality disposition like light through a prism and very often, the same situation produces different consequences in different people. Let us take as an example the thorough and comprehensive report of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission in Guatemala (Tomuschat, 2001). In response to the same report, some people (mainly victims, members of human right organisations, and a part of general public) rejoiced and applauded, while others (people connected with the former government and their allies, and a different part of general public) responded with complete rejection. This indicates that only structural/external measures cannot have direct impact on reconciliation, without subjective acceptance of people.

For this reason, we propose a mediating variable - readiness for reconciliation. Readiness for reconciliation is not the same as reconciliation. It is subjective readiness to accept ideas and actions that lead to reconciliation and the ability to resist those leading in the opposite direction. In the case of that readiness being absent or at a very low level, many structural measures would be wasted. On the other hand, if this readiness or susceptibility exists,

every opportunity to progress will be constructive. A negative example of this idea is presented in the susceptibility for fascistic propaganda in the study "The Authoritarian Personality" (Adorno, Frenkel-Brunswick, Levinson & Sanford, 1950).

Meaning and importance of readiness for reconciliation

The readiness for reconciliation does not have the same meaning for people with different war experiences; for people from different places; for some who have heard about the war only by watching about it on television and others who have encountered unfamiliar refugees; for some who have had a relative or an acquaintance in the armed forces; for others who have had to change the place of residence; and some who fought in the war or had a family member or a beloved person killed in the war. To certain individuals, readiness for reconciliation presents only a dilemma as to whether to go to a concert of a music star from a former adversarial state, while for others it can be closely related to a series of serious existential questions that they face every day. All these different people have, more or less, a subjective potential independent of the situation, some basic readiness to react affirmatively or negatively in any given situation however different. Those who have a higher potential will interpret reality differently from those who have a lower potential. Therefore, readiness of reconciliation could be understood as a personal disposition or latent variable that affects many aspects of people's decisions and behaviour in different situations (manifest variables). For instance, in the polarised post-conflict atmosphere, and in the weak peace condition in the Balkan countries that is the subject of this research, it seems that we can not exclude the possibility of new cases of violent incidents between people of different nationalities. These incidents could be of very wide range and relevance, from ordinary gossip to murder. People with a low level of readiness for reconciliation will certainly interpret such incidents as another confirmation they, the adversaries, are not to be dealt with anymore, whereas those with a higher level of the readiness for reconciliation would interpret them as an accident or perhaps an attack by a lone extremist. Examples can be found frequently at sports matches between clubs from these countries, especially in basketball. The fans shout terrible obscenities at the guests during these matches. The interpretations of these shouts will once again depend on the readiness for reconciliation. The importance of the readiness for reconciliation is also reflected in particular political actions that try to propel this very process. This is demonstrated in the opposing reactions to the mutual apology issued after the meeting of the then Croatian president, Mesić, and then president of the former state of Serbia and Montenegro,

Marović, in the autumn of 2003. After both presidents had expressed regret on the shameful misdeeds on behalf of their fellow citizens, there emerged on both sides those who welcomed such gestures and those with opposing views calling them acts of treason. This example supports the view that any political action regarding the establishment of mutual trust and cooperation is destined to succeed only if supported by the majority in the public of both nations. There are, definitely, wide spread of anomia among people and many of them refuse to deal with any political issues (for instance only one half of voters, vote on elections), therefore many people who are neither interested in promoting nor obstructing the reconciliation process. Yet, both the large number and social power of two mentioned opposing groups (with variation of political power and influence in time, for instance during the crisis opponents rise) of people will determine the speed of reconciliation process and the level to which reconciliation will be reached.

The readiness of reconciliation is further related to the selectivity of the information that people do or do not want to accept and the way people interpret objective events. The subjective readiness is projected outside and colours objective events. Thus, the newly interpreted events further influence the line of future events and the future level of readiness.

As it is well known that violence, experienced both physically and through the media, can initiate a vicious circle of hatred and crime as well as social crisis and negative changes of social values. It can also be true that readiness or goodwill, as an opposite to violence, should be the basis of initiating positive feedback and should give energy to spread positive ideas and actions. The message of political leaders is also important, as is the message from other makers of public opinion. The fact that the influence from above shall have an effect on the members of the society only if it reaches fertile soil or a readiness towards the proposed information and values by most members of society is also very important. Reconciliation could be viewed in mathematical terms as a final product of ideas and actions from above and of readiness of all society members to accept all these impulses from above. These two elements are doubtlessly interconnected and mutually influential.

In order to gauge the fundamental potential for reconciliation, as a personal disposition, independent of any situation, the different people from three post-war Balkans countries, Serbia, Croatia and Bosnia and Herzegovina, were investigated. In such a heterogeneous sample, it was possible to discern elements that were crucial for reconciliation, or more precisely for the psychological potential or readiness for reconciliation.

Method

During the development of the scale, we decided not to operationalise the indicators of readiness for reconciliation of only one of the authors mentioned in the introduction. This research, rather, was a semi-inductive empirical search for an adequate model and operationalisation of the readiness for reconciliation, similar to tendencies in studying other socio-psychological phenomena such as authoritarianism (Altemeyer, 1981; Lederer, 1981). This model has not been developed in a completely theoretical vacuum. The indicators for the preliminary version of the scale (list of all potential items) has been deduced from existing theoretical explanations. Those indicators include the cessation of dehumanisation of the adversary; a balanced view of in-group and out-group goals; openness to different kinds of relations with the former adversary; empathy for its losses. It further includes peoples' attributions of past and expectations of the future, perception of injustices and victimizations of in-group and out-group, justness of owns goals, views to the questions of responsibility, acknowledgement of owns faults and morality.

The prime objective was to empirically determine which of the numerous possible indicators from different theorists (some of the indicators overlap partially and sometimes completely) were crucial, substantial building elements of the readiness for reconciliation, and which were mere correlates. In this manner, a definition of the basic constituting elements of readiness for reconciliation would be reached as well.

This work builds on similar research in social and political psychology. In one such study, Altemeyer (1981) has shown that the right-wing authoritarianism is a combination of three attitudinal clusters in a person, and that the other six elements from the Berkeley group model (Adorno's et al., 1950) were mere correlates. Lederer (1981) has, by means of combining the items from different scales (F scale, Rokeach D scale, scale of traditional family ideology, etc.) and administering them to different groups, established the New General Authoritarian Scale.

Pilot Phase

The list of indicators for the preliminary scale, as mentioned above, was deduced from the presented theoretical standpoints. However, verbalisation of the items that operationalises the indicators has been taken from the interviews with ordinary people and with experts of the conflicts in the Balkans. The pilot phase consisted of semi-structured questionnaires for ordinary people in small numbers (20 to 60 per country). The sample was

relatively heterogeneous (in gender: there were 25 females; as to place of residence, they were from 34 different places; as to war experience: there were former soldiers, people who lived in war-affected areas, but also people who only indirectly experienced war; as to ideological inclinations there were supporters of different political parties, and those who are not interested in politics at all); the interviewees were also different in age (students to retired people, aged from 24 to 65) and from different professions (from hairdressers to professors). Their nationalities are different too; there were Serbs, Bosniaks, Croats and several of the respondents were from mixed marriages. The fundamental aim was to collect the authentically verbalised opinions, beliefs and testimonies of various persons on the topics related to inter-ethnic relations between Serbs, Croats and Bosnians, their conflict, the possibility for reconciliation and the perspective for future relations. The interviewers were trained psychologists and their assignment was to find and interview various respondents, as different as possible in political opinions and ideologies, and on other criteria. The interviews lasted, on average, an hour. The interview consisted of fourteen groups of questions on the following topics: personal experience with people of different nationalities in the same state in the period just before, during and after the war; views on the causes of the conflict; the nature of the conflict; justifiability of the goals; losses or possible gains from the conflict; questions on responsibility, guilt, punishment, truth and justice and, most importantly, the possibility and conditions for reconciliation.

The aim of this phase was to obtain the materials that would be used in the operationalisation of as large a number as possible of authentic verbal statements that would then be put in the preliminary version of the scale of the Readiness for Reconciliation. For instance, the indicators were suspicion and mistrust towards the other side and one of the statements stated repeatedly in different interviews was "They have always stabbed us in the back".

A large number of newspaper interviews with various politicians, writers, scientists, artists, social activists from the region, Predrag Matvejević, Vojin Dimitrijević, Adil Zulfikarpašić, as well as those outside the region, Misha Glenny, Michael Ignatieff, Alex Boraine and many others were analysed as well, for the same purpose. Some items from the scale used by Staub, Pearlman, Gubin and Hagengimana in Rwanda (2005) were also added to the preliminary list of items. In this manner, the preliminary list of 159 items was constituted and the main prerequisite for the constructing of the scale was fulfilled.

The main phase

Sample. In this main phase the survey was administered exclusively to university students. For this reason, it is not possible, based on these results, to determine the level of the readiness for reconciliation in either at a national level. The main reason for students' sample is that research done on more diverse sample is considerably more expensive. Nonetheless, the existing data are adequate for the main purpose of this research, a scale construction.

Although all the respondents were students, they were on all other criteria very different from one another. These differences included gender, nationality, academic faculty, ideology, social background, incomes, university centre of study, and permanent place of residence. The respondents were from universities in Rijeka, Zagreb, Banja Luka, Sarajevo, Niš, Novi Sad and Belgrade. The sample consisted of 1116 participants (43% females) from over 100 places in Serbia, Croatia and Bosnia and Herzegovina. The majority of the participants were from the faculties of social sciences (law, economics, psychology) - 41%, engineering, 17%, medical sciences, 12%, sciences (physics, chemistry), 8%, and others were from the arts and other faculties (agriculture, forestry...). Forty eight percent of participants were Serbs. while Bosniak and Croat each accounted for 24% of the participants. Anonymity was guaranteed to participants and they were free to withdraw at any time. There were less than a 5% rejection rate.

Questionnaires and their administration. The questionnaire consisted of the collection of 159 statements that would enable the construction of the scale of readiness for reconciliation. Participants expressed their degree of agreement or disagreement with each statement on five-point Likert scale. Because the scale was given to people of different nationalities, the names of nations in its items were substituted by the pronouns such as they, them etc. In this way, an approximate generalised scale was obtained. The instructions for each group clearly stated on which nationality the reference was being made, whether it referred to Serbs, Croats or Bosniaks. Croatian and Bosniak participants were questioned on readiness for reconciliation with Serbs, while one half of Serbian participants were questioned on readiness for reconciliation with Croats and the other half on readiness for reconciliation with Bosniaks. Beyond these claims and other socio-demographic variables (gender, age, field of studies, family background and nationality), the questionnaire contained queries on the subjective estimation of certain emotions of the respondents related to the former adversary: hatred, restraint, trust, fear, hope, suspicion and respect. More importantly, the respondents were questioned on three possible situations that could be regarded as the trial validation criteria. The respondents were asked to explain how they would

react to an insult while visiting the capital of the former adversary, to incidents or insults addressed to the whole nation during a football match, and on finding out that their partner was from the adversary nation. For each of the situations, three possible answers were offered: one was reconciliatory e.g. the outbursts of the football fans are something to be expected, or, they continued the relationship with their partner; the second was neutral answer and the third conflictive one. The respondents filled in the questionnaires mainly in their student resident halls, and about 20% did it at the faculty classrooms in between lectures.

Results

The primary statistical analysis applied was exploratory factor analysis with an oblique rotation. The Cattell scree criterion (Cattell, 1966) suggested the relevancy of the first four factors. There were two potential breakpoints, after the first and fourth factor. As such, we have decided to choose a four-factor solution. These four factors were very closely related and gave one relatively homogenous factor the readiness for reconciliation in second order factor analysis. However, we decided to separately analyse these factors and form subsequent sub-scales in order to create a more precise picture of the constituting elements of the readiness for reconciliation. As loadings on many items were very high (greater than 0.60), it would be a loss to discard them. Moreover, a greater number of items allow for more leeway in shortening the scale without losing reliability. This could be useful when implementing the scale in different samples and in some other region. Thus, we have decided to select ten items with the highest loadings from each factor. The items selected for the final version underwent three additional checks. Firstly, items distribution was checked in order to prevent a non-discriminatory item from being selected. The second check was related to the correlation of the items with the three situational criteria, and the third regarded the correlation with the six mentioned emotions. Those analyses showed the high positive correlations of the selected items with the peaceful interpretations of the given situations and with hope, respect, and, trust, and high negative correlations with hate, restraint, fear and suspicion regarding the former adversary side.

First factor – trust

The items with the highest loadings on the first factor are given in Table 1.

Table 1. First subscale and its items loadings on the four factors

Factors ⇒	I	II	III	IV
I blame only <i>Them</i> for what happened.	.777	.552	.479	.538
We have always turned out to be naïve and used because of being open to <i>Them</i> .	.769	.495	.368	.380
I feel bitterness whenever someone mentions <i>Them</i> .	.774	.649	.372	.503
<i>They</i> should never be trusted again, even if good official relations were established.	.821	.652	.421	.428
I will never be able to trust <i>Them</i> again.	.783	.592	.394	.406
<i>They</i> are in their nature dishonest, evil and not well-meaning.	.765	.588	.401	.571
<i>They</i> have always had plans against our nation throughout history.	.762	.486	.366	.399
<i>They</i> will never be able to compensate us for what they had done to us.	.750	.508	.449	.370
We fought because we had to, and they did it because it is in their nature.	.781	.484	.438	.514
When I hear that someone is one of <i>Them</i> I am suspicious and careful.	.760	.590	.362	.444

After completing a content analysis of 10 items from the first factor, it seemed appropriate to interpret this factor as mistrust and blame of the other side. The blame itself, could be understood just as a manifestation of mistrust. The items are inverse, i.e. agreement with them means lack of readiness for reconciliation. Thus, they were recoded. That is why we called this factor and consequently the subscale simply - trust. The Kaiser –Mayer –Olkin measure of representativity of the first subscale is 0.99, while the Cronbach’s Alpha coefficient of reliability is 0.938.

Second factor – cooperation

Table 2. Second subscale and its items loadings on the four factors

Factors ⇒	I	II	III	IV
Working together, two nations can help our children to heal the wounds and have a better life.	.654	.794	.479	.555
I would accept to be personally involved in the activities leading to faster establishment of trust and cooperation.	.568	.758	.431	.460
There would be less suffering and uncertainty if the appropriate level of trust and cooperation among nations is achieved.	.555	.736	.431	.512
I am interested in the successful development of good relations and full cooperation with <i>Them</i> .	.686	.842	.507	.575
I am in favour of free and open trade with <i>Them</i> .	.542	.716	.340	.524
I am in favour of any method of cooperation leading to peace strengthening.	.496	.714	.372	.524
Improvement of mutual relations can be of some use for both sides.	.551	.765	.410	.643
Conditions for full cooperation with <i>Them</i> should be provided as soon as possible.	.582	.741	.514	.486
We should strive for the establishment of all kinds of connections with <i>Them</i> .	.684	.771	.560	.485
I think that cooperation with <i>Them</i> is necessary and of mutual benefit.	.575	.760	.465	.544

Based on its content, the second factor has been interpreted as readiness for cooperation. The Kaiser - Mayer - Olkin measure of representativity of the second subscale is 0.99, while the Cronbach's Alpha coefficient of reliability is 0.938.

Third factor – forgiveness

Table 3. Third subscale and its items loadings on the four factors

Factors ⇒	I	II	III	IV
I am personally ready to forgive everyone.	.615	.629	.651	.415
I think that every nation should apologize to other nations.	.467	.565	.657	.431
I think that our nation should ask <i>Them</i> for forgiveness.	.480	.426	.663	.314
I can forgive those among them who admit guilt for the evil they inflicted.	.401	.474	.652	.384
It is necessary to forgive each other for the sake of a better future.	.567	.641	.750	.564
There is no progress without forgiving, but only an endless cycle of conflict and violence.	.493	.600	.673	.517
If we don't achieve reconciliation, we will remain the hostages of the past.	.557	.579	.713	.484
I think we should also apologise for possible mistakes on our behalf.	.570	.575	.657	.483
I understand that forgiving would help heal the wounds	.540	.604	.671	.457
We will all wallow in the past without forgiveness and reconciliation.	.538	.617	.681	.442

The content of this subscale includes statements which consider offering and accepting forgiveness. If a 5-factor model had been chosen, the offer and the acceptance would have been different factors, but this fifth factor would be almost completely covered within an already existing factor. Thus, this is the united factor of forgiveness. The Kaiser–Mayer–Olkin measure of representativity of the third subscale is 0.97, while the Cronbach's Alpha coefficient of reliability is 0.897.

Fourth factor – rehumanisation

Table 4. Fourth subscale and its items loadings on the four factors

Factors ⇒		I	II	V
They are human beings, just like everyone else	542	627	407	736
The opinion that all of <i>Them</i> took part in the crime cannot be accepted	482	505	325	661
The acts of those who committed crimes do not make all of <i>Them</i> mean people.	540	590	395	691
The violence led to great losses for everyone.	372	487	268	650
The life of one of us is not worth more than the life of some of <i>Them</i> .	480	557	305	666
The fact that some people committed a crime doesn't make the whole nation guilty.	483	544	383	636
I am aware of the fact that <i>We</i> were responsible for our own particular faults and committed negative acts during the conflict.	490	447	415	674
There are a lot of honest and sincere people among <i>Them</i> .	579	595	435	628
I feel sorry for the misfortunes that happened notwithstanding the nation	428	536	341	644
I believe that a lot of <i>Their</i> people suffered because of the conflict, as well.	488	476	376	646

Content analysis of these items indicated a need to see members of the former adversary group as real human beings with human traits and to

recognise and acknowledge their suffering. Therefore, this factor and subscale has been interpreted as rehumanisation.

The Kaiser – Mayer - Olkin measure of representativity of the first subscale is 0.98, while the Cronbach's Alpha coefficient of reliability is 0.890.

Total scale

Items from one subscale were mixed with those from other subscales. In the final version of the scale, items from the first subscale are on positions 1, 5, 9 and so forth (each fourth place); from the second on 2, 6, 10, etc.; from the third 3, 7, 11, etc., and items from the fourth subscale are on positions 4, 8, 12 and so forth. The first subscale items have been inversed. Therefore, this is a partly balanced scale.

The Kaiser – Mayer - Olkin measure of representativity of the Readiness for Reconciliation Scale is 0.99, while the Cronbach's Alpha coefficient of reliability is 0.967.

These four factors explain 57% of total variance. The first factor explains 41%, and the other three factors explain an additional 7%, 5%, and 4% of variance, respectively.

Discussion on limits and possibilities of the obtained scale

The presented results are from the whole sample, that is, from answers of respondents from different countries with different official narratives of the wars from 1990s and from respondents with different levels of involvement in events and issues connected with the wars. Therefore, it is possible to question the real existence of the obtained structure and wonder whether it is an artificial, "average" structure that does not exist in any of the countries solely.

However, results from three additional factor analyses, in sub-samples from Serbia, Bosnia and Croatia separately, are practically identical to the factor structure obtained in the total sample. All the coefficients of congruency of two sets of factors, one consisted of factors from the whole sample, and the other consisted of factors from the Serbian (or Croatian, or Bosnian) sub-sample are higher than 0.90. Moreover, there is an almost complete correspondence between two Serbian sub-samples, one that has Croats as the referent group and the other that has the Bosniaks as the referent

group. All these indicate that the proposed four factor model is a very solid and fundamental one.

Some preliminary validation studies (Petrović, 2010) have also shown expected correlations: The newly obtained scale of Readiness for Reconciliation has the highest negative correlations with nationalism and similar concepts (blind patriotism, social distance to other nations). The scale also has an expected negative correlation with negative emotions towards other nations, like rage and anger. On the other hand, positive emotional reactions and feelings such as hope, optimism and faith in the better future as elements that show the right path towards reconciliation among nations, are positively connected with the scale. The Readiness for Reconciliation scale has further negative correlation with different aspects of anomie, the evaluation of hopelessness and negative expectations from the future, as well as from the lack of trust to social norms and democratic institutions. All these preliminary results confirm the potential usefulness of the obtained scale to measure subjective willingness of members in a post-conflict society to accept and support ideas and actions that are often very arduous but eventually lead to safer and better living conditions.

In summary, according to the results of the research based on the empirical data from the Balkans region and not on theoretical speculations alone, readiness for reconciliation consists of four elements: trust (or more accurately, lack of distrust), cooperation, forgiveness (readiness to offer and to accept apologies) and rehumanisation of the former adversary. These elements are very closely interrelated and could be considered as only one, as was confirmed by the second-order factor analysis. However, we decided it would be better to separate the four factors since some specific correlation of different factors with some other variables might be found in forthcoming empirical studies and that could shed further light on the explanation of nature of reconciliation. All other factors, except those four, could be considered only as correlates of the new operationalised concept.

This model has been obtained in a particular world region, the Balkans, from Serb, Croat and Bosniak participants. When applied the residents of this region, it has shown to be very good indicator of specific characteristics that can be a part of the reconciliation process. Further empirical verification will confirm or deny its value and usefulness in other post-conflict regions to estimate the psychological potential for reconciliation with former adversaries.

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