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Strengthening Peace in the Balkans

Quest for Transformative Energy and Prospects for Change

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*“Imagine all the people
Living life in peace...
You may say I’m a dreamer
But I’m not the only one
I hope someday you’ll join us
And the world will be as one.”*
John Lennon

Abstract

This paper considers the potential for post-conflict societies to move forward and to achieve stable and long-standing peace in spite of psychological and structural obstacles. The author proposes that human energy and a vision for a better future could be the main engines in overcoming existing problems. Special attention is focused on initiating the development of appropriate visionary leaders, identifying leaders’ desirable characteristics, and aiding existing leaders. It concludes optimistically that positive transformation is possible. The paper is based on the data obtained in a recent study of the post-conflict region of the Balkans.

Key Words: future leaders, hope, peace strengthening, education, justice, Balkans, training

Introduction

It has been a decade since the end of the devastating violence in Bosnia and Herzegovina. Approximately the same amount of time has passed since the signing of the peace agreement that halted it, since the long conflict in Guatemala and since the end of the Rwandan genocide.

However, these events continue to negatively and intensely influence the lives of their victims. Great human suffering is irreversible and little compensation is possible beyond paying respect to the hundreds of thousands of victims of wars. In addition to this, there are remnants of war, which continue to negatively impact and problematize the lives of the millions who have suffered in these regions. Subjective psychological obstacles like distrust, feelings of disappointment, anger, helplessness and hopelessness greatly disable progress in all spheres: economic, political, legal, cultural and the sphere of security. This is the manner in which wars continue their destruction many years after the peace agreement has been signed.

As the preamble of the UNESCO constitution states, “[s]ince wars begin in the minds of men, it is in the minds of men that the defences of peace must be constructed.” For real and enduring peace, a mere signature on a peace agreement is not enough. Peace itself demands a culture of peace, defined by the General Assembly of UN as “values, attitudes and behaviors that reject violence and endeavour to prevent conflicts by addressing their root causes with a view to solving problems through dialogue and negotiation among individuals, groups and nations” (UN, 1999).

In order to achieve this admirable goal, it is necessary to go through the reconciliation process in its broadest sense. This is an interaction in which, contrary to war, one side does not defeat the other in order to achieve its own goals. Rather, a permanent and stable peace should be ensured where great suffering will not reoccur; where people on all sides can heal traumas and wounds caused by war and go on to live the most meaningful and fulfilling lives possible.

It could be said that today a kind of peace exists in Northern Ireland, in Bosnia, Rwanda or Guatemala. However, this type of peace is fragile and needs to be strengthened. It is for this reason that the word ‘strengthening’ rather than ‘building’ is used in the title of this paper. The latter’s scope is often restricted to the beginning of the peace process just after the worst violence has ended.

Many authors and experts in law, political science, social psychology, conflict resolution, criminology and diplomacy have analysed the problems in overcoming troublesome past legacies, especially within the last two decades. Some authors highlight the need for apologies from

perpetrators and forgiveness from victims. Others suggest that truth commissions be formed so as to air the truth about misdeeds from the past as the basis for overcoming the negative legacy. Numerous commissions were formed in post-conflict areas, mostly in Latin American (Chile, Argentina, Guatemala) and African countries (Uganda, Chad, Burundi) (Hayner, 2001). The most famous and the most effective commission of this kind is undoubtedly the South African Truth and Reconciliation Commission, which, by giving certain amnesties for persons telling the complete truth, enabled the transition from a period of racist segregation and apartheid to a period of relatively stable democracy.

Even though the chances for achieving retributive justice are very low, especially after conflicts in which there are no clear winners or losers, classic trials appear quite often (especially against the principal organisers of massive crimes). The instruments of this kind of justice include the International Criminal Court, ad-hoc International Criminal Tribunals for Rwanda and ad-hoc International Criminal Tribunals for the former Yugoslavia (ICTY), as well as official national courts and traditional people's tribunals like the *gacaca* in Rwanda. In these cases, it is also expected that the victims should be given some compensation for their suffering and losses.

In many cases, multiple methods of overcoming the past are combined in order to formulate the most appropriate action for justice and post-conflict stability.

Obstacles and resistance in overcoming the past

Despite this, the very fact that the subject of 'overcoming the past' has prompted extensive writings and discussions proves that the task is not a simple one. There is often resistance to these attempts: psychological resistance and resistance from war elites attempting to retain their powerful positions and privileges.

In his book *States of Denial*, Stenly Cohen has provided comprehensive answers to the problems of avoidance and evasion of an uncomfortable past (Cohen, 2003). The author argues that denying one's own awareness of past atrocities is a normal reaction. However, Cohen writes that this denial involves a fundamental paradox – in order to deny something it is necessary at some level to recognise its existence and its moral implications. It is, he says, a state of simultaneous "knowing

and not-knowing”. What is worse is the fact that such processes are not only characteristic of perpetrators but also of bystanders who, even during the worst atrocities, remain passive and feel no responsibility afterwards. As a case in point, according to Mitscherlich, an entire people in Germany have been made "unable to mourn" after the Second World War (Mitscherlich, 1975).

Still, there are obstacles which are far more direct than psychological mechanisms of defence. A characteristic common in almost all contemporary conflict resolutions is that former oppressors have not been totally defeated. Rather, their victims have come to a type of compromise with them. Striving for full truth and full justice is a noble human goal, and persons deeply devoted to that goal deserve admiration. Unfortunately, not all people share such devotion, especially those who are not ready to lose their privileges and accept responsibility for crimes. The principles of justice and truth are not supreme principles for both sides, but usually only for one, the weaker, victim's side. The main goal of the other side is to retain as much power and privilege as possible, and to pay the smallest price for what was done. Just as Bertrand Russell warned, “[t]he fundamental concept in social science is power, in the same sense in which energy is the fundamental concept in physics” (Russell, 1938). In such circumstances, as the president of Chile, Aylwin, stated in his inaugural speech, we should “strive for all truth and justice in so far as it [i]s possible.”

In such cases, priority steps should be taken. First and foremost, it is important to stop atrocities and brutalities, and then to stop any further degradation of victims. Next, it is important to ensure the stability of new, non-warlike conditions. The next step is a request for truth and justice. We should not deceive ourselves that this is an ideal world. Former oppressors often retain social power in post-conflict periods and they seek to defend their interests, or at the very least to avoid responsibility. They will make only as many concessions as they are forced to make. In these circumstances, it is necessary to promote the victims' side¹ or to expose them at least as moral victors while condemning their treatment in public discourse if it is not possible to condemn actual offenders, their politics, policies and value system.

¹ By sides, in this context, I do not mean two states or ethnic groups with their armies who were war adversaries. Those groups probably have different levels of responsibility for crimes committed. Rather, it is well known that almost always there are perpetrators and victims on both sides. For instance, ICTY accused perpetrators from different ethnic groups in the Balkan wars. At the same time, there are obvious victims (among innocent civilians) among each of those ethnic groups. As such, the line between the “sides” can be drawn within each ethnic group.

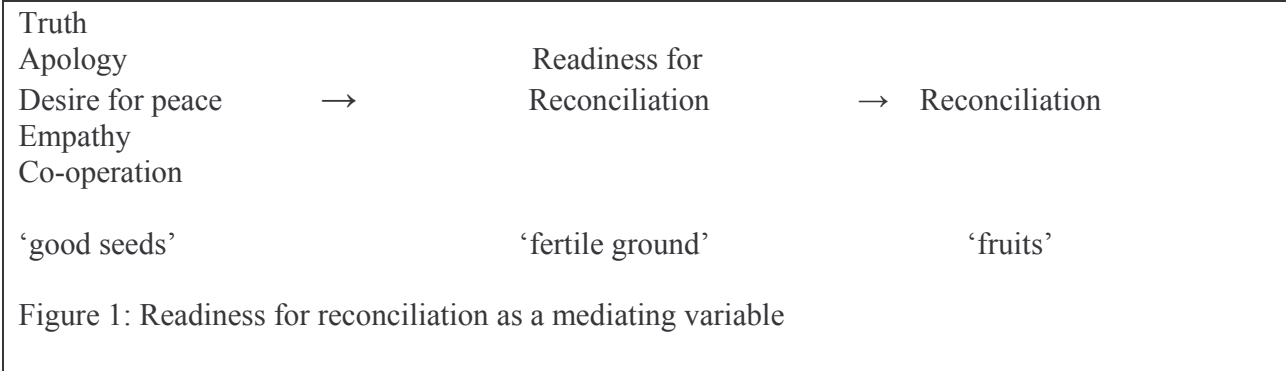
After a peace accord, which usually amounts to a ceasefire rather than real peace, some painful compromises are necessary. Deep questions arise, often transcending the normal moral imagination. A society and its members must choose between two bad, if not terrifying options. Sometimes it faces the most extreme forms of human existence. Let us imagine that Hitler offered peace after his forces had killed one fifth of all his victims (millions of people), but he asked for total amnesty and the option to stay in power in peaceful circumstances. It would be extremely difficult to accept this proposition but perhaps even more horrible to refuse it. What are we to do in such a situation? One does not dare propose an answer. But these types of situations have presented themselves after many contemporary conflicts. When *Good* completely defeats and crushes *Evil* everything is simple. Unfortunately, the situation is often not so clear and many difficult decisions must be made.

Oppressors may 'sacrifice' their main leader in order to preserve others as well as their value system. When Milosevic fell, the military and intelligence services accepted it, but when the new Serbian Prime Minister Djindjic started to encourage social change they saw it as a threat to their value system and their positions. Ultimately, they organised an assassination plot against him. Former oppressors often still retain power, which allows them to hinder investigations, to evade responsibility for misdeeds and even to keep their status and positions. This gives them the ability to continue to rule over their victims. If the victims are from their own (national or other referent) groups, they can politicise and misuse victims' organisations to justify their own goals and their own conflictive policies. Moreover, the oppressors usually consider that by already ceding some of their power, they have compromised enough, and they expect in return total amnesty (as in the case of Pinochet). It is therefore not surprising that militaries (for instance in Latin America) have put elected governments on notice that democracy exists at the military's pleasure. For instance, despite the report of the truth commission in El Salvador identifying top officers as the most culpable persons during the civil war, including the defence minister of the time, these officials served out their terms in the armed forces and retired with full honours and pensions. A more troublesome scenario occurred in Serbia recently. A general of the Bosnian Serb army, a citizen of Bosnia and Herzegovina condemned for genocide by the ICTY, was allotted an apartment five times bigger than average in Belgrade, Serbia.

The importance of psychological factors

While dealing with post-conflict problems, it is important not to regard psychological factors as insignificant. They are of crucial importance in explaining given phenomena. Since this text has primarily been written from a socio-psychological perspective, the main focus will be given to psychological factors. Furthermore, the main proposed solution will be in accordance with principles of positive psychology (Lederach, 2005; Snyder & Lopez, 2002).

Analysts propose many ways to reach the desired goal of reconciliation: through truth, apology, cooperation, empathy, and others. Nevertheless, often in international politics and international history, strong positive structural, political, economic, security and other factors fail to resolve conflicts. Wilmer noted that “[s]tructural factors may contribute to precipitating a conflict or to constructing a framework for stable peace; structural factors alone neither cause nor resolve protracted and violent conflict” (Wilmer, 1998). The Oslo Agreement of 1993, for example, did not bring peace to the Middle East. Similar problems can be faced in interpersonal relations as well. . . . As an old proverb says, “where there’s a will there’s a way.” Good will is central to enhancing a structural framework for peace. Let’s take as an example the report of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission in Guatemala (Tomuschat, 2001). The same conclusion which one group of people accepted and applauded was totally rejected by others. This is why a mediating variable is proposed - readiness for reconciliation (Petrović, 2005).



The elements in the left column in Figure 1 cannot directly cause reconciliation. They are refracted through personality or society like light through a prism, and very often the same conditions produce different consequences in different situations. Therefore, psychological changes are vital in establishing lasting peaceful relations (Bar-Tal and Bennink, 2002).

There are numerous analyses in the literature about what should be done in order to make the process of strengthening peace and reconciliation as fast as possible: truth should be announced, perpetrators should confess misdeeds, express true regret, and ask for the victims' forgiveness. It is desirable that reparations be provided, so that the victims get compensation for the losses, which can be restored (such as property). These and other actions are meant to provide the maximum possible accomplishment of justice. According to Lederach, justice in post-conflict societies involves "the pursuit of restoration, of rectifying wrongs, of creating right relationships based on equity and fairness. Pursuing justice involves advocacy for those harmed, for open acknowledgement of the wrongs committed, and for making things right. Mercy, on the other hand, involves compassion, forgiveness, and a new start. Mercy is oriented toward supporting persons who have committed injustices, encouraging them to change and move on" (Lederach, 1997). The challenge, according to Lederach, is "to pursue justice in ways that respect people, and [at the same time] to achieve restoration of relationships based on recognizing and amending injustices" (Lederach, 1995). New generations should be raised in the spirit of reconciliation or at least in mutual peaceful coexistence, especially minding these noble goals in their education and their subjects' curricula. Conflicting viewpoints and beliefs should be transformed through many channels of communication: from the actions and speeches of politicians and positive news, to the various forms of popular culture and art; through film messages, popular songs lyrics, theatre dramatisations and so on, in order to change them as soon as possible and as thoroughly as possible.

These activities are all desirable for the strengthening of peace. However, the greatest problem is that they are difficult to put in practice because of the forces of resistance, which have been analysed. Thus, the challenge that is faced is how to overcome existing obstacles and to do as much as possible for strengthening and stabilising peaceful relationships? This paper will focus above all on education. It must first be noted, however, that education cannot be effective when there is no tendency for compromise in the broader social surroundings, and when positive messages and acts of goodwill from leaders do not exist, but rather conflict rhetoric against the other side prevails. Furthermore, peace objectives often contain a direct challenge to a society, since they always promote a kind of transformation and change (Bar-Tal, 2002).

A negative conflicting climate incites distrust and doubt, which is reflected in media, education and mutual interactions in everyday life. Such messages reinforce initial distrust and negative feelings

toward the other side. According to well-known Pavlovian laws of conditioning (Pavlov, 1927), in traumatic occurrences (like severe traumatic experiences from times of conflict) the phenomenon of negative emotional conditioning occurs. It characteristically forms quickly, spreads and generalises easily, and ceases with difficulty. This means that one traumatic occurrence is enough to form negative emotional conditioning where fear, hatred, anger and desire for revenge dominate. An even greater problem is the spreading of these reactions beyond the direct perpetrators to all persons of their ethnic or other referent group. An additional problem is that these conditioned reactions do not disappear easily. It is thus necessary to slowly, step by step, reach trust and reduce negative reactions. Unfortunately, even when great energy is invested and crucial progress is achieved, the smallest 'incident' can reverse all progress. All of this can form a vicious circle, which is difficult to escape. This is why periods of instability after intractable conflicts last very long. Sometimes, conflicts may recur.

Is there, then, any possibility of moving forward? Is there in post-conflict societies some capital, some resource, which can reliably lead to social transformation? The eighteenth century German philosopher Herder may point to the answer when he writes:

Nothing great and good would happen on this earth without inspiration... Those regarded as visionaries have provided the greatest of all services to mankind. Despite being ridiculed, persecuted and despised they forced their way forward. If they did not achieve their goal, then they tried again and again.²

Characteristics of peace-strengthening leaders

The indication is that inspirational people should be sought; people who are ready to incite their surroundings and their society to move forward in spite of obstacles. It is even more effective when these people are at the same time national leaders. In these fortunate circumstances, positive development is reachable, no matter how serious a conflict has been. The most prominent example has been the relatively recent, magnificent achievement of Nelson Mandela. Other noteworthy examples are Egyptian President Anwar al-Sadat and his historical departure for Jerusalem and the post-war leaders of France and Germany who buried the old animosities of their nations and built the foundations for a united Europe. Unfortunately, extraordinary personalities who will use their

² <http://www.dadalos.org/int/Vorbilder/Vorbilder/vorbilder.htm> (August 25, 2006)

positions to do great deeds for the future of their societies do not exist everywhere. When this is the case, future leaders must be sought somewhere else. The more prominent their place in society, the greater the chance for broader and more direct influence. Pop stars and movie stars messages would more easily find their way to numerous fans than those of ordinary people. However, Dylans and Geldofs are not always available.

Who, then, of the so-called ordinary people is most interested in change in the long run? The answer seems to lie in the young generation for the following reason. Even in situations where they have the same degree of experienced loss, the young have a less destroyed sense of life because they have greater opportunities to begin a new life, no matter how great their previous losses. Thus, their hope for the future is more profound and it can be developed earlier and faster. Older generations generally feel that 'their world has fallen apart' and everything they have lived for and what they invested in for decades has disappeared. This does not mean that there should be unequal care for people of different ages with war traumas. It only means that it is easier to find stronger bearers of positive transformation in the young and to use their potential to benefit everyone.

Lederach points to the importance of peace building on the level of the middle social range, as even grassroots leaders can have influence on a number of people (Lederach, 1997). These leaders must be aware that changing people and communities is a long process that evokes strong resistance from the opportunistic majority. This is why another necessary condition is for the leaders to have endurance, to be persistent and consistent. They should always commit to and demonstrate clear principles, and with such behaviour they should in time gain reputation and influence in their communities. Leaders should be 'critical yeast' in their communities (Lederach, 2005). They are necessary to successfully resolve what Heidi and Guy Burgess named the 'scale-up problem' which refers to the manner of moving from a small group of people who are transformed by a process to larger and larger groups of people, equally transformed, until the whole society can see the future in a new and hopefully brighter way (Dugan, 2003).

In each society, there are people who have the will to accept this sort of responsibility. Even though these dedicated people exist and have the desire to do as much as they can, they should also receive professional education (since they will have varying educational backgrounds not necessarily in the social sciences) and additional support, which will empower and prepare them to solve problems,

and also help them to increase their abilities for more efficient work. Without refusing anybody *a priori*, it seems that the most appropriate candidates should be young experts (with university education) who will soon have influence on their future students, clients, patients, readers, and constituents. First, it would be necessary to find those with the inclination to become leaders in strengthening peace, and then to contact and gather them. After they have gone through a specific programme of education, which would point the way rather than provide conclusive answers, their primary inclination would be further strengthened.

Before moving to educational goals however, we should dwell more upon the necessary features of the future leaders the development of which should be supported and encouraged. In order to be accepted by and to have influence on their surroundings, they must be of great moral integrity as they will be faced with numerous discouragements and temptations. They should not be conceited but rather should build and prove their good intentions and integrity. As Martin Luther King Jr. advised, they should “[g]et the weapon of nonviolence, the breastplate of righteousness, the armour of truth, and just keep marching” (King, 1963). Apart from honesty, the future leaders should possess eagerness to exchange views and discuss issues with others. They should be sensitive and empathetic, with a demonstrated need to understand their community and to be aware of and relate to easily offensive or upsetting issues. Empathy, above all, would allow them to put themselves in the place of others. Furthermore, the leaders should always take responsibility for their actions and be ready to explain them.

Visionary skills would be integral to the success of the future leaders. This refers to the ability of a person to see the community both as it is and as it should be. Reycher and Stellamans emphasize as a feature of peace building leadership the importance of envisioning a mutually attractive future for all (Reycher and Stellamans, 2005). Leaders, according to these authors, should identify and attain a full understanding of the challenges with which they are confronted even when they include brutal facts. They should focus both on weaknesses and problems and also on the actual and potential strengths. The past should not be forgotten, but at the same time it is necessary to establish hope and the expectation of a better future. In that sense, the following quote by Nelson Mandela is illustrative: “I would not mince words about the horrors of apartheid, but I said, over and over, that we should forget the past and concentrate on building a better future for all” (Mandela, 1995).

Even people with extraordinary human characteristics and values are usually not prone to believing that they can make great contributions to their communities. Many well-intentioned people fear such a challenge. Yet this future contribution would depend above all on long-term work and dedication to the welfare of the people who surround them. At the end of that path of commitment, compassion and courage, not all of them will be celebrated Gandhis. The accumulated activities of many anonymous dedicated people, however, will eventually allow goodwill to dominate all human communities and societies.

This path is similar to religious teachings that have inspired people for centuries and have brought them renewed strength and enthusiasm despite hardship. For this reason, this undertaking could be viewed as a task for religious dignitaries, many of whom have made prominent contributions to social transformation, for example Desmond Tutu and Martin Luther King Jr. But one should not forget that in turbulent regions like the Balkans, Caucasus and Northern Ireland, religion has a consistent negative relation to readiness for reconciliation (Petrović, 2005). In these instances, we see no explanation other than people declare themselves religious not because of the dogmas of their religion, but rather based on identity allegiances derived from the underlying religious differences between the groups. In studying them, one must resist the temptation to criticise religion itself (which could insult believers). Rather, it is important only to condemn its manipulative use, which is often contrary to basic doctrinal principles. Religious distinctions are the only obvious distinctions between these nations and groups and allow them to maintain the boundaries of their national identity, as has been explained in the theories on social identity and social categorisation by Tajfel (1978) and Turner et al. (1987). In terms of doctrine, such differentiation is contrary to what the verse from the New Testament conveys, for example, “[t]here is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus” (Gal. 3, 28).

Prerequisites for strengthening peace

In each post conflict society, as in all others, there are many interactions between society members. At the very least, probability suggests that a small percentage of these interactions will be positive, while others will be negative. It often happens that in a post conflict region, in the wake of the previous violence the media produces more news on negative relations. Such news, usually involves members of ‘their’ group having mistreated members of ‘our’ group. Conflicting

information and positive relations in general are not as ‘interesting’. With such a selection of information, a conflict system of beliefs and emotions is preserved. Such a state does not bring improved relations among former adversaries. Readiness for reconciliation is connected to the selection of information available, what we wish or do not wish to accept and the manner in which we interpret objective events (Petrović, 2005). This affects confidence in the other side’s capacity for cooperation, one’s own readiness for giving and receiving forgiveness and for seeing a former enemy as a human being. This readiness is projected on outward occurrences, which people will interpret as they like. Newly interpreted events then influence both the course of future events and the overall readiness for reconciliation, as physical violence and its dissemination by the media start a negative spiral of hatred and crime at a moment of social crisis and a change of social values. It would be more desirable for readiness for reconciliation or goodwill to be used as the basis for starting positive feedback and providing energy for spreading positive ideas and actions. Leaders’ and other public opinion creators’ messages are important for this reason. The future leaders’ task is to incite that which is positive and by doing this to help positive examples become desired models of behaviour, which will in turn contribute to a strengthening of peace. Positive occurrences are much more frequent than negative. Even in the most difficult conflicts there are always courageous people ready to help unfairly persecuted ones, endangering even their own lives. Desmond Tutu highlights that “for every act of evil there are a dozen acts of goodness in our world that go unnoticed... It is only because we believe that people *should* be good that we despair when they are not” (Tutu, 2005). If people were aware of the existing positive energy and if it were put in the foreground, positive feedback could be created. This in turn might have a healing impact on society. It would certainly positively influence the necessary change of a society in transition: rather than being a society characterised by dominating conflict it must become a normal democratic society. In the following paragraphs, the future leaders’ role in changing society and its members will be explored, with special attention to how these leaders may use the power of the media.

Processes of social change and the role of leaders

In the middle of the 20th century, psychologist Kurt Lewin identified three stages of change processes in individuals and societies: unfreezing, transition and refreezing (Lewin, 1947). These are still the basis of various approaches today. Unfreezing is the first step towards change and usually refers to developing openness to new ideas and new solutions. In order to achieve unfreezing various methods can be used, such as exposing or creating a crisis (known as a burning

platform), inspiring people to achieve remarkable things (challenge), exposing them to indisputable data which is difficult to ignore (evidence), or simply teaching them to change (education). Many people in post-conflict regions, especially the young, are already clearly aware of the problems they face in everyday situations. We can presume that their beliefs are already unfrozen; they are anomic rather than devoted to a conflictive system of values (Mihailović, 2004), therefore this phase should be easily realised. The next step involves movement, i.e. some action that changes or moves the social system to a new level. This transition requires time. Leadership is important in the process when whole communities change, which is why our previously mentioned future leaders would be critical to this phase. They would inspire people in their communities to challenge themselves and to achieve remarkable things by highlighting both the importance of change and how embracing it can be a more effective life strategy than resisting it. Communities would benefit greatly from coaching, counselling and other psychological support techniques. Generally, it might be useful to break the work into distinct packages and approach each separately in order for this change to be accepted more easily and more naturally. The final phase, refreezing, must be completed to ensure that new beliefs and behaviours became relatively permanent among the members of the community. Final success of this phase also depends on the strengthening of social institutions.

Beckhard and Harris suggested a similar model of managing changes, and this model can be represented as follows: current state → transition state → desired future state (Beckhard and Harris, 2003). It is interesting that these authors suggest beginning with the end, i.e. with envisioning the desired future state. This enables beginning the process of unfreezing and establishing future goals. Especially important for this work, and as will be discussed later in this text, it has been found that starting with what people desire in the future generates energy, enthusiasm, motivation, and commitment to the plan and its implementation (Lindaman and Lippitt, 1979). Even here, it seems that there is room for the contribution of the future leaders. After completing this future vision, it is necessary to go back and assess the current state (capabilities) of the group in question. The subsequent step then demands the creation of a transition state, which should balance its own needs for stability and for change.

The influence of media is central to this process; however there are serious constraints to the media's role, examined in research by Lazarsfeld et al. (1944). Their work suggests that the flow of mass communication is less direct than previously supposed. People tend to be much more affected

in their decision making process by face to face encounters with influential peers than by the mass media (Lazarsfeld, Menzel, 1963). This reveals an avenue of influence for opinion leaders.. Their role is especially important when media sources are not trustworthy. In these situations, the opinion leaders act as mediators between the public and the media, personalising and making authoritative the information the media provides. Thus "...the person-to-person influence reaches the ones who are more susceptible to change and serves as a bridge over which formal media of communications extend their influence" (Lazarsfeld et al, 1944). It would be very useful to train future leaders for this role as they can prioritize and emphasize positive messages to their communities. Apart from this, it is important to mention that the media's role in stimulating particular activities should be followed by a complementary organised social agenda in order to achieve the desired results. It is necessary to provide programmes, joint projects and opportunities to practice change, as well as to mobilise people with media campaigns. For example if it is necessary to stimulate children to become more active, a media campaign should be followed by the opening of a greater number of sport clubs, the building of playgrounds and the employment of a greater number of coaches. In addition, in the field of strengthening peace, a positive media message should be followed by the appropriate behaviour of leaders, the promulgation of the relevant laws and the building of democratic institutions.

Proposed programme for future leaders

One of the proposed ways of overcoming obstacles in strengthening peace (on a subjective level) is by nurturing future leaders through additional professional training, during which they will gain the necessary knowledge and skills to surmount impediments in their communities. The desired outcome of such training is not only to expand knowledge and skills but also to stimulate and increase dedication for work. It will be illustrated by discussion of a course syllabus prepared for these purposes (Petrović, 2006). In order to become successful and respected future leaders, course attendees should have core theoretical knowledge of post-conflict phenomena and knowledge about problems they could face during their work. The skills to arouse these positive qualities in others, together with the dedication to this work, are also important features. Usually organisations in this field arrange workshops with motivated people where modern techniques are applied without much theoretical background relevant to the facts that are discussed. It seems that in such circumstances, the result is not as good as is desired; hence all the aforementioned elements must be included. In

conveying knowledge, in addition to the classical methods, it is very important to apply both experimental learning and experimental understanding (Staub, 2003; Marsik & Sauquet, 2003).

For this reason, the course consists of comprehensive content which covers the following areas: situating the problem of strengthening peace in a broader context which includes exploration of the philosophical roots of the contemporary form of reconciliation; a basic introduction to the primary western and eastern religious traditions regarding forgiveness and reconciliation; explanation of the influence of situational and dispositional factors and their interaction in all kinds of human behaviour, and especially their contribution to the genesis of a conflict; and finally the introduction of the concept of reconciliation and its forms, aspects and elements, from the point of view of different authors. The next problems that the attendees should be informed about are the various types of actors and problems included in these processes. At this stage, the attendees will be introduced to various characteristic types of victims, which should help them create adequate victims' programmes. Further, they will be introduced to the psychological and situational factors that lead individuals and groups to perpetrate mass atrocities; to factors which lead some people to stay passive and others to help people in need regardless of the potential negative consequences; and to the ways in which all of them try to preserve personal integrity and return to normal functioning. The next block should overview the main techniques, which can be useful during the reconciliation process. The attendees, depending on their interests, should be informed of examples of objective scientific research on the reconciliation problem, and above all, the most direct preparation for their work should be a review of up-to-date contributions in the domain of future perspectives. The latter should certainly include an overview of the importance, principles and constitutional elements of peace education. It should also stimulate them to think about the culture of peace - a comprehensive system of values, which can motivate people in post-conflict societies to see peace as a premium ideal. This review is related to theoretical study above all, which is necessary but has been inadequate in terms of the education of future leaders. In other words, it is the basis of the education that will shape future visionaries.

In order for the course to create experiential understanding, which Staub defines as "a joining and integration of facts and ideas with life experiences, thus creating a deep, 'organismic' understanding that reaches beyond thought to feelings," (Staub, 2003), a strong connection of the theory with attendees' life experiences is vital. Some of the course attendees certainly may have had a traumatic

war experience. Some others may not. Thus it is not possible to imply that attendees will be able to recognise in their own experience everything they learn about and everything that will await them in their future community work. For the group of future leaders, those who have never had any direct war experiences should not be excluded. On the other hand, people should not be manipulated in such a way that they are intentionally put in traumatic situations. Moreover, it is unlikely that there would be sufficient prospective leaders who have had various unpleasant experiences. Experiential learning, which encounters knowledge and brings profound understanding and a tendency for positive change, will be understood somewhat differently in this text. Apart from theoretical study, the attendees participate in discussion sessions during which, with the help of the moderator, they would have the opportunity to discuss facts they learned with others. In these interactions, which will be applied to the appropriate real world problem such as discussions about gacaca tribunals, about the victims' status in the South Africa, or searching for similarities and differences in the conflicts in the Balkans and in Kashmir, they should explain their views and understand the shortcomings in their own and the others' standpoints. Furthermore, they should defend their own positions in such a way as to comprehend the problem more profoundly.

Still, the most important part of the program needs to be further explained. The syllabus includes viewing and discussing inspiring films with themes about conflicts and overcoming their consequences (Petrović, 2006). Reading and listening to inspiring and stimulating speeches connected with the appropriate topic should also be included. Among these should be included the Nobel Peace Prize laureates' lectures, speeches of Martin Luther King Jr, Desmond Tutu, Mahatma Gandhi and similar others. They should be followed by interactive discussions among the attendees. Such material can complement the text and lectures, and enrich discussions by providing a concrete way to present important information.

It is said that a picture says a thousand words. 'Moving pictures' are even more vivid, full of details, and allow people to be more involved with the medium. It would be a good idea to start with films that follow the stories of victims in their time of suffering (like the film *Hotel Rwanda*) and then to initiate discussion about the presented situation, the victims, perpetrators, bystanders, and so on. Following this, films, which present ways of overcoming post-conflict obstacles, should be shown. Such films should include themes that address the difficult moral question of truth telling sessions (for example *Country of My Skull*) or problems with war crime trials, as in the film

Nuremberg. Carefully selected, powerful, artistic films with an ensuing discussion can be exceptionally stimulating for some of the most complex issues of human existence and relations among people and groups. It would be especially favourable to compare scenes and actors with occurrences and people from communities to which the viewers and participants of the discussion sessions belong. Attention should be paid to similarities and general problems (like justification of perpetrators), which would hopefully help the recognition of an evil that is universal and that may appear in degree or form anywhere, just as good can. The expression of profound emotion in participants should not be avoided, but on the contrary should be permitted and even encouraged. This part of the programme should help to strengthen the desire in them to act towards justice, truth and the highest principles.

These proposed films work toward fulfilling one of the main goals of this course: to inspire enthusiasm in participants for indefatigable work toward peace, and to make them real leaders in the reconciliation process who will further transmit their affection to the people with whom they will work and who they will influence.

In the beginning, the course should be attended by the people whose motivation ensures that they will resist all temptations, criticisms and pressure from their surroundings. The attendees will be moral people, will serve as an example to others, will exhibit high personal integrity and will withstand attacks from all sides. The attacks should be expected, as they occur often when one works for justice and challenges the beliefs of all sides, since all sides believe themselves innocent. The members of the *Truth and Reconciliation Commission* in South Africa heroically endured all the criticisms and did a wonderful job (Krog, 1999; Verwoerd, 2003). However, as the situation gradually improves, more people will be able to join these activities. Eventually there will come a moment when society changes and comes out of the vicious circle of hatred and distrust. In the end, this should become a school subject that will assure maintenance of civil society and its values in the future, and watch over the existing dangers from undemocratic practices, as is the case in Germany today. Taking into consideration the importance of keeping the positive values of civil society that were not easily reached, the *Council of Europe* started *Democratic Education Project*, one of the central objectives of which is to make citizens aware of various threats to democracy such as extremist movements, violence, racism, xenophobia, and social exclusion.

Positive future orientation

The main effect that the young leaders should create is a positive vision of the future. A lot of time has passed since the end of the conflicts mentioned earlier, and it is time to take a long-term post-conflict perspective into consideration. The most important element in that sense is hope. As Martin Luther King Jr. said in his famous speech “[i]f you lose hope, somehow you lose the vitality that keeps life moving, you lose that courage to be, that quality that helps you go on in spite of it all. And so today I still have a dream” (King, 1963). Coleman & Deutch (2000) similarly pointed to imagining a desirable future as a way to overcome a conflict situation. They use various terms – ‘envisioning the desired future state’, ‘social imaging’, ‘future search’ – to characterise the process by which individuals, groups or organisations are encouraged to free themselves from the constraints of current reality to develop an image of a better future. In practice this method has been useful in helping people develop awareness of new possibilities and new directions. Our empirical research on reconciliation in the Balkans confirms the previous views (Petrović, 2005). The readiness for reconciliation has an expected negative relation with attachments to different in-groups (above all – nation) and distance from almost all out-groups than with (often extremely negative) emotions like anger or rage towards other nations. On the other hand, positive emotions like hope, optimism and faith in a better future are elements that show we are on the right path towards reconciliation among nations. In figure 2, it is clearly shown that scores of hope are higher in groups that are more ready for reconciliation among members of all three examined national groups.

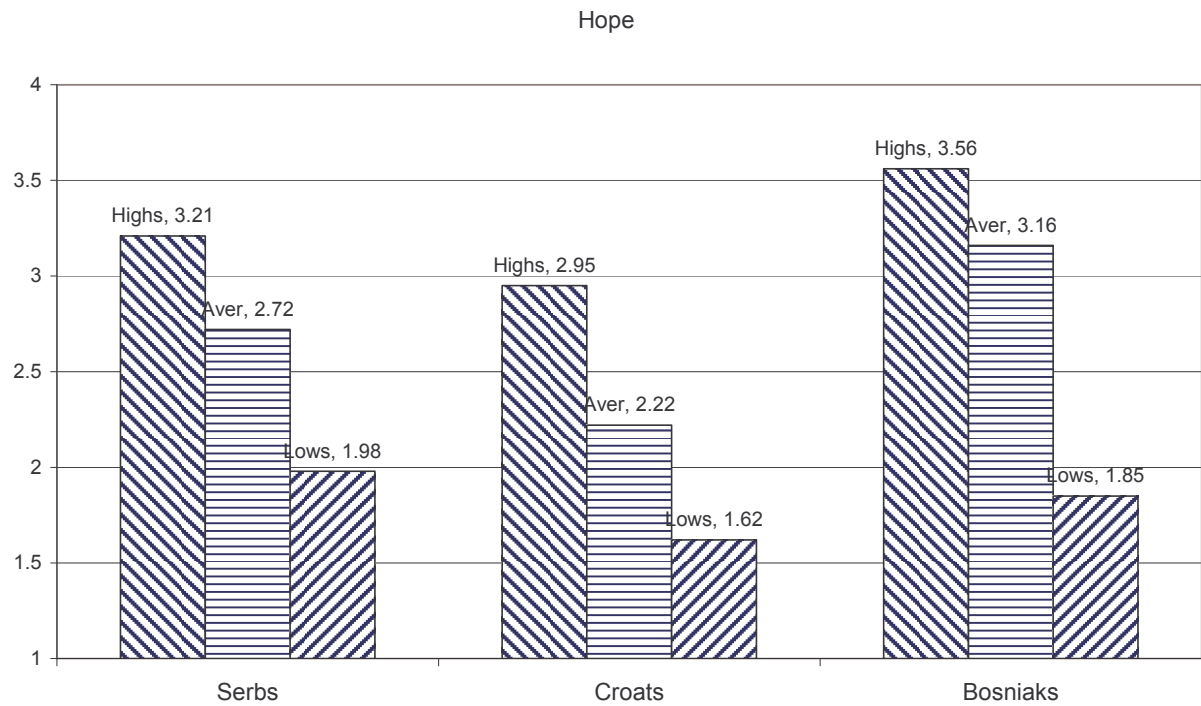


Figure 2. Degree of hope in different sub samples

The readiness for reconciliation has a further negative relation with different aspects of anomie, hopelessness and negative expectations from the future, and a lack of trust in social norms and democratic institutions. In figure 3 we can see that subjects who had higher scores on readiness for reconciliation expected fewer problems in future relations with members of other examined national groups.

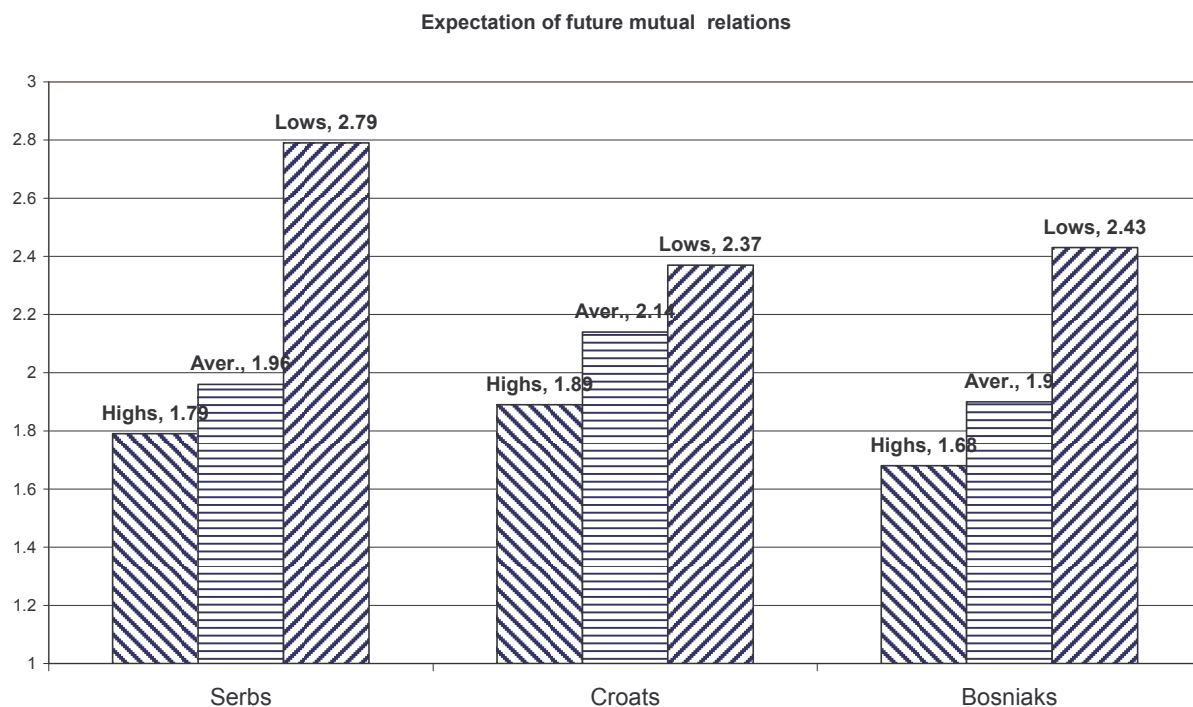


Figure 3. Future expectation (higher score means expectation of more problems, range 1-5)

When all correlations have been considered, some deep, even philosophical bases come to light. All correlations are either directly or indirectly connected with hope, with optimism, with the attribution of sense to life, and with the belief in the possibility of realising all human and social potentials. On the other hand, negative correlations can be explained in terms such as fear, helplessness, powerlessness and anomie (Petrović, 2005).

Many authors including Viktor Frankl, Erik Erikson, Erich Fromm and Daniel Bar-Tal have emphasized the importance of hope. Hope is also one of three main virtues in the New Testament. Frankl, who himself was a detainee of the Nazi death camps, explains that the disappearance of hope in the camps effectively meant the loss of life (Frankl, 1977). For Erikson hope is the expectation that good things will happen in the future (Erikson, 1950). Hope is both the earliest and the most indispensable virtue inherent in the state of being alive. It enables the person to move forward into the world and take up new challenges. In his book *Revolution of Hope*, Fromm emphasized that hope required conviction about the not-yet-proven courage to resist temptation, to compromise vision and to transform present reality in the direction of greater aliveness (Fromm, 1968). But Bar-

Tal warns that hope, especially in war-torn societies, is often impeded by fear (Bar-Tal, 2001). The reason for this is that fear is an automatic emotion, which can cause freezing, conservatism and pre-emptive aggression, while hope needs cognitive activity and the search for new creative ideas. Therefore there is a need to initiate the activities and ideas of hope that new leaders can fill.

It could be useful to look at the strategies of peace strengthening in the light of positive psychology, which has the objective of catalysing a change in psychology from a simple preoccupation with repairing the worst things in life to ambition for building the best qualities in life (Seligman, 2002). Seligman explains that positive psychology at the group level is about civic virtues and the institutions that move individuals toward better citizenship: responsibility, nurturing, altruism, civility, moderation, tolerance, and work ethic. It originated from the model for overcoming disease in which it was discovered that there are human strengths which guard against illness and other negative states. They include courage, future-mindedness, optimism, interpersonal skills, faith, hope, honesty, perseverance, the capacity for flow and insight.

Fortunately, the notion of the future is naturally very important to young people. Our empirical results confirm this assumption (Kuzmanović & Petrović, 2005). Subjects of this study of connotative meaning of relevant political and social terms were 18 year-old students from Serbia. Among others, we obtained semantic profiles of words that denote time determinants: past, present and future. Our subjects started to attend primary school in 1994, one year before the Dayton agreement and the end of the war in Bosnia- Herzegovina. So the past, in their case, need not be exclusively connected with the war, maybe even not connected at all. They had to circle an appropriate answer on the semantic differential scale from -3 to 3, which we transformed to 1 to 7, such that 4 is a neutral point (neither worthy nor worthless, neither stable nor unstable). Results, shown on figure 4, clearly indicate that the broken-line “future” is significantly (by 1- 2 points) above the “past” and “present” lines. Therefore it is important to take advantage of this normal youth tendency to expect much from the future. It is also very important to provide them new and better alternatives to ensure escape from violence, which is, as Bruno Bettelheim has commented, the response of a person who can imagine no other alternative.

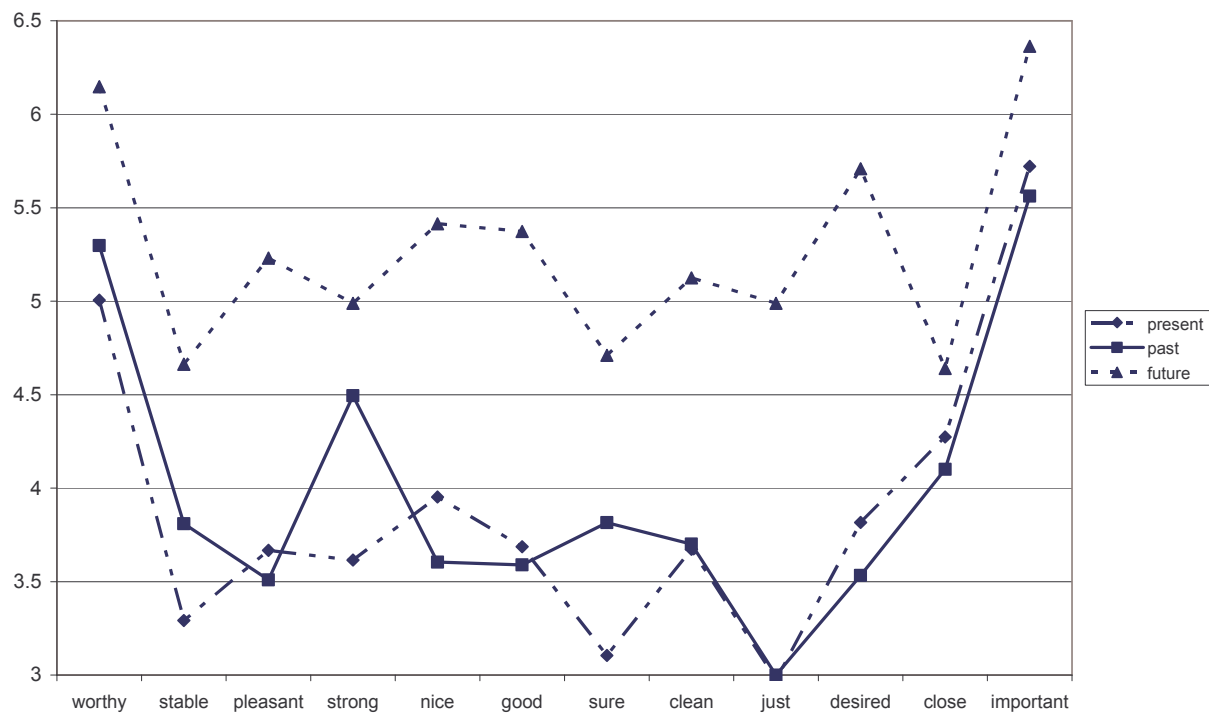


Figure 4. Connotative meaning of past, present and future

The impact of globalisation and the importance of justice in overcoming negative legacies

Not so long ago, parents and other family members were the exclusive agents of socialisation for their children. Those who attended school accepted additional influences from their teachers. But there were generally not many variations in the single source of social norms and rules, and only weak interconnectedness between societies. As a result new generations became very similar to the generations of their parents and grandparents. However, the appearance of mass media and changes in lifestyle that do not allow significant time for child-parent relations brought about possibilities for different socialisation outcomes. Cases in which children acquired characteristics antithetical to their parents' intentions became more frequent.

On a societal level, in post-conflict societies government-controlled media constantly repeat messages, which are saturated with a conflictive worldview. Therefore they preserve tension and impede reconciliation in relationships between former adversaries. Kaldor pointed out that states manipulate the fear of external threat to ensure political debate takes place within the narrow confines of the status quo (Kaldor, 2003). Nowadays, with spreading globalisation, it is possible to

marginalise such negative influence. As Giddens noted: “ideological and cultural control... could not survive in an era of global media.” Moreover, “as the changes gather weight, they are creating something that has never existed before, a global cosmopolitan society” (Giddens, 1999). But global civil society has grown ‘from below’ also, by fomenting new forms of autonomous political action outside any governance mechanism of formalised rights and international law (Chandler, 2004). We have proposed one such new form with its actors – young devoted leaders who would help the transition from war-torn to democratic societies. Yet in any post-conflict society this actor can be considered a “small island in a sea of apathy” (Kaldor, 2003). Grenier discusses different terms which could be used to label those leaders, such as ‘civil society leader’, ‘social activist’, ‘radical’, and ‘social entrepreneur’. However, as shown in her text, the most appropriate term in the case of our leaders is ‘pioneer’ which she defined as “one who goes before to prepare or open up the way for others to follow; one who begins, or takes part in beginning, some enterprise, course of action.” They “are leading the way for others to follow at the same time as serving society in general, by testing different routes and determining the best ones” (Grenier, 2004).

Newly arisen global society however, aside from exploring new opportunities also takes on new responsibilities. Therefore strict caution is necessary because decisions and actions in one region, understood as principles, could be of great influence in other parts of the world. This is why the principle of justice must become a superior one. Justice and morality principles must be highlighted on every level and on every occasion, and they are not to be adduced only when it is convenient (when one is on the weaker side) with ‘the right of the strong’ prevailing when one belongs to the stronger side.

For our discussion, it is important to mention Russell's and Rawls' proposals for cementing justice as a dominant principle. Bertrand Russell pointed out the need to change the names of different countries when reading events described in newspapers. In this way, we can verify whether our reaction to the event is a consequence of moral assessment of an action or our own prejudices about a certain country. In order to confirm whether we act according to moral principles, an event occurring between Serbia and Croatia could be given imagined substitutes like the USA and Iran, or India and Pakistan. Russell named this principle ‘the rotation of nouns’ (Russell, 1950). This mental substitution ensures that moral claims are based only on concrete events and not on our preferences and prejudices about different nations and other groups.

John Rawls used another term, 'veil of ignorance,' as a prerequisite for just social relations (Rawls, 1971). The veil of ignorance in Rawls's theory of justice requires that we temporarily ignore our physical, psychological and moral attributes. When this happens, we can decide our future social arrangements without knowing which position we hold in the social context. Because of this we are not able to guide our decisions by selfish interests, but only by what we have – a capacity for justice. So we can consider all possibilities without bias.

When people watch a film or read a novel in which good and evil conflict, no one (except perhaps the psychopath) does not take the side of good or does not support the victory of justice. This proves that it is one of the strongest prime-movers. Another piece of evidence that proves the existence of the justice motive is the fact that people endure the greatest hardships more easily if they find themselves in collective positions, for example if people face as a group a natural disaster like an earthquake, tsunami or a hurricane. Consequently, the most important task is to ensure that people judge based on principle in all situations, in other words that the principle of justice overpowers the automatic principle of judgment according to social belongingness.

To illustrate this point we will make a digression to history, which can also be the source of many models. Instead of inciting conflict or emphasizing victimisation, it is possible to find positive examples. Many authors condemn the manipulative use of Serbian historical tradition and mythology (probably justifiably) as the main source of problems in the former Yugoslavia. However, in the same Serbian tradition, more precisely in the national epic poetry, ethical imperatives older than Kant's could be found, which could have created completely opposite consequences if they were promoted and emphasized as the authentic people's thought. In one epic poem, national hero Marko was invited to arbitrate the succession of the throne after the death of the greatest Serbian middle-age ruler - the Tsar Dušan. Apart from the Tsar's son, who would inherit the throne by descent, the pretenders to the throne were the father and uncles of the invoked arbitrator (Marko). Before the arbitration, Marko's mother, Princess Jevrosima, implored her son not to be unjustly prone to his father and uncles, but to arbitrate by God's will (i.e. by the principle of justice). With this, she warned him, transgression would be worse than death.

This epic conveys that one need not comply with the wishes of the in-group if they are not in accordance with justice (which is a basic concept of constructive patriotism, a form different from blind patriotism or nationalism). This could be a good basis for education and socialisation generally. It is especially important because the rule originates from the in-group. At the same time, it allows criticism of the in-group itself (when it is not in the right) with no fear that the critic could be pronounced a traitor. For the purpose of educating youth, it would be useful to take advantage of this and similar legends, which have been part of the tradition for ages.

Kohlberg emphasises that morally mature persons are guided by one principle of justice and not by a range of them, which can cause contradiction. They deduce from the justice principle all other rules and norms and apply them to concrete situations. Kohlberg explains that Martin Luther King Jr. was a moral leader not because of his advocacy for the welfare of African-Americans, “but because he was a drum major for justice. His words and deeds were primarily designed to induce America to respond to racial problems in terms of a sense of justice, and any particular action he took had value for this reason and not just because of the concrete political end it might achieve” (Kohlberg, 1970: 68). In the spirit of this ideal, our future leaders should be educated about the principles that are supposed to guide them and by which they would judge each concrete situation (Kohlberg, 1970). They should not be taught to denounce bad Serbs, Germans, American, or Moslems, but to condemn the misdeeds of the perpetrators from these and other groups and to resist all injustices.

Prospects for change

To end this text, we raise a question about prospects for the positive transformation of post-conflict societies. Is it at all possible to dramatically change whole societies in a relatively short period of time? Has there been any such example in history? The answer is positive and probably the best example of such a change is the post-war Federal Republic of Germany. Although it seemed that the German character (and therefore any other national character) could not be altered, ensuing radical changes proved the possibility for relatively fast and broad transformations even at the level of such large social groups as nations.

In her discussion on changes in authoritarianism in post-war Germany, Lederer writes that just after the war, Schaffner, and Dahrendorf two decades after, agreed on the very close relationship between Nazism and the traditional values of German society (Lederer, 1993). Therefore, they were unsure

of the possibility of fundamental change. However, just ten years later, as Lederer reported, several independent studies and meta-studies on a large number of previous research reports showed a totally different picture (International Association for the Evaluation of Educational Achievement on civic education, 1975; Merelman and Foster on writings on political culture in FR Germany, 1980; classical Almond and Verba's *The Civic Culture*, revised edition from 1980). The data on German adolescents started to show fundamental changes in the direction of acceptance of civic and democratic society values. Moreover, Lederer found that by the late 1970s, by all measures Germany became a model of democratic political stability, in some measures even more distinctly so than Britain or the United States.

Other western societies have also changed. Social revolution in the whole western world occurred in 1968. Central Europe, in terms of value preferences and social norms, is absolutely different today than it was only 20 years ago. We are witnesses of great economic changes in China. Globalisation fosters change in all domains of life. Thus, changes are inevitable. But there is still a responsibility to ensure that these changes are in a positive direction.

The approach we have offered is undoubtedly oriented to the future. However, this does not mean that we support forgetting the past on the principle of letting 'bygones be bygones'. In post-conflict situations, people are caught in a stalemate position. They can neither face the problems of the past, because of the obstacles described, nor can they move forward towards the future. Nevertheless, the articulated vision of a bright future will be the strongest engine that can move people forward, that will not let them shy away from problems, and that will allow them positive thoughts during the inevitable hurdles on the road to reconciliation. This is human nature. When people have a clear idea of their future goal, when they have hope, they will exert all their efforts - they will work hard, they will be responsible, and they will take care of others. When the future is gloomy and people are helpless and in despair, when they don't see any possibility for improvement, they will take care neither of themselves nor of those around them.

Infusions of expressed hope, optimism, faith that life will be better and positive perception of the future all decrease hopelessness, feelings of personal helplessness and the closing into in-groups as their antipode. In addition, hope and optimism are most directly connected with readiness for reconciliation, as proven by empirical results (Petrović, 2005). This means that increasing the traits

that orient us toward the future (hope, positive vision, etc.) also increases the degree of readiness for reconciliation. Consequently, there results a desire for and tendency towards resolving, as soon as possible, the entire negative legacy of the past. People will accept more easily the duty of participating in confessions, and expressing understanding or regret for acting or not acting when it was necessary. They will more readily perform difficult acts like forgiving when they know that a meaningful and fulfilled life awaits them afterwards. In this manner, paradoxically, the future will help solve and overcome the problems of the past.

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