

# Prevent Violent Extremism

**Why does it happens? What kind of futures we should build in order to prevent it? How do we prevent violent extremism?**



**OPEV Manual to prevent violent extremism**

**Work done by**



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# Introduction

## Why now?

Since the end of the 20th century, we are witnessing a period of great transformation. In the world of politics, we have gone from a world conditioned by two large powers to a more delocalized world where both political and non political actors are highly influential. In the social and economic worlds, some aspects of the quality of life on a global level have improved. There is a more solid connection between different civil societies around the world but the distribution of wealth has become more unequal and the gap between those who have more and those who have less has grown. From the ecological point of view, we are going through an unprecedented environmental crisis. We have reached the limits of maximum availability of resources which have enabled fast economic growth in various parts of the world. In the current context of global crisis, there are diverse ways of responding to events. Among them is the rise of extremist and violent movements and ideologies which exercise what we will call “violent extremism”.

## Who it is aimed at

This manual tries to address the prevention of extremist violence both in action and in transforming the target audience: civil society, social agents, political and social organizations on both sides of the Mediterranean Sea. This manual is aimed at people who wish to later delve into the topic and develop educational plans of action in the field of Preventing Violent Extremism (PVE). It is supplementary to the PVE educational manual.

## Theory of change in this manual

The theory behind this manual is that a society where all fundamental needs are satisfied is less prone to the appearance of VE and that in contexts of infra-satisfaction or dissatisfaction of those needs, socially united groups and communities which act together in solving those needs with the aim of building a more sustainable, just and democratic future are less permeable to VE.

Therefore, as we will define and explain in the next chapters, effective prevention implies changes in social and political structures which allow for greater social justice, a higher degree of satisfaction of people’s fundamental needs<sup>1</sup>, and changes in the way groups and communities are organized in order to make them more socially united.

## From macro to micro, from “why?” to “how?” through working on needs

The structure of this manual is based on this double logic (macro vision in order to understand and seek profound change and micro vision in order to understand communities and work within them), and on analysing several of these fundamental needs so as to understand why things happen and how we can work on those issues.

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<sup>1</sup> In chapter 1, we will see what these fundamental needs are, according to the category established by Max-Neef: subsistence, protection, identity, affection, understanding, participation, idleness, creation, and freedom.

Working on those needs in order to satisfy them in a positive way and with a positive future in mind allows us to strengthen social cohesion in communities and move forward in two goals; a) Preventing the penetration of violence B) Strengthening organizational and mutual support skills in order to fight injustice.

In chapters 1 and 2, we will provide a framework to help understand what VE is and why it happens in relation to the context where it occurs and the dissatisfaction of fundamental needs in such contexts.

In chapter 3, through that macro vision, we will start to focus on how we can work on prevention by building a more just, democratic and sustainable future ( that must always be the underlying vision in all prevention work).

In chapters 4 and 5 we get down to work on two fundamental needs which play an important role in how VE spreads and how it can be prevented and which are key in building social cohesion: protection/security and identity.

While the ideal context for prevention work is one in which levels of conflict are low (positive satisfaction of needs on a collective level), direct recipients of this manual will often have to work in contexts of medium (dissatisfied or poorly satisfied needs) and high (struggle in the way to satisfy needs, confrontation and opposing positions) levels of conflict with unorganised populations with low levels of influence on the structural and political spheres. That is why we will deal with a more micro dimension (on a community level, although always in connection to a more global level) in chapters 6, 7, 8, 9, and 10 where we will see how to tackle the needs that most help us in building community and in mobilising that community in order to transform and generate more social cohesion in contexts of conflict.

This way of organising this manual will prove useful both for the direct recipients and their work with civil society and for actors with greater influence and decision-making power in their design of structural transformation policies.



## How to read and use this manual

Throughout the manual, we will deal not only with the “why” (understanding why things happen) but also with the “hows” (how to favour satisfaction of these needs on a collective level both in heavily polarised and mildly polarised contexts). This manual supplements the Educational Manual on



PVE, where we can find an educational plan that includes teaching tips for PVE trainers for all 10 chapters of the manual.

## **The limits to this manual**

This manual, along with the supplementary educational material on PVE, only provides tools and a certain vision on work with PVE. The way this material has been designed focuses on facilitating personal and group change which may promote structural change. Any action taken on an isolated level which is not integrated in a larger strategy aimed at structural change will have little effect on PVE. When facing complex issues such as PVE, there is no chance of a simple intervention. The only chance of success is on a systemic level: involving the whole community in order to solve needs and develop a more just, democratic and sustainable future. If there is no focus on structural change (building a more just, democratic and sustainable reality) one runs the risk of turning PVE work into a social “pacifier” which will lead to frustration and disappointment (“Why am I doing this training if there is no foreseeable structural change or we do not mobilise in order to obtain that change?”).

# 1 What is violent extremism?

## Summary

How can we identify what violent extremism is? There are different forms of violence, all of them should be prevented, but the idea of a fundamental vision of the future (extremism), that is not inclusive (excludes certain groups, the Others-differents), supported by a group of equals, who are using violent methods (including structure and culture) to impose that vision, has some elements that are key to understanding the logics behind it and what causes VE.

## Introduction

Although definitions for violent extremism are becoming more similar, there is no universal characterisation as of yet. We frequently find the words “radical” and “extremist” being used as synonyms and the concepts of “violent extremism” and “terrorism” being used as one. Therefore, we must first clarify what “radical”, “extremism” and “violence” mean in order to later define what violent extremism is and, thus, be able to better understand the factors that feed it.

### 1.1 Radicalism or extremism?

We understand “radical” as the position people adopt when looking for profound transformation in the system they live in in order to reach a very different system<sup>2</sup>. Radicalism does not, as such, aim to transform systems at other’s cost and it is not inherently connected to violent methods.

Extremism refers to a political agenda or a way of being in the world which seeks deep transformation at the expense of other social groups’ freedom and which implies an imaginary where those groups are subdued. From this perspective, extremism focuses on violence (which we will define shortly) while radicalism does not. *“Extremists tend to be narrow minded supremacists while radicals normally favour open and egalitarian visions.”*<sup>3</sup>. Their vision of the future and the “other” (seen as a social group with a different identity) are vital in understanding how some radicalisms can sometimes be part of the solution and not the problem in PVE. We will return to this matter later on.

Socialism in the 1900’s was considered a radical movement by those in power and it did, on occasions, prove violent. Fighting socialism was not the way to eradicate violence or reach a more just, democratic and sustainable world.

Nowadays, in certain contexts, social movements such as feminism, anti-capitalism and environmentalism are seen as radical movements and there is some confusion regarding the concepts of “radical” and “extremist”. However, both their vision of the world and the “other” are very different to the extremist views of sexism or fascism.

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2 Matches the spirit of the definition by Dalgaard-Nielsen (Anja Dalgaard-Nielsen Director of the Institute for Strategy at the Royal Danish Defence College, one of the experts on Prevention of Extremist violence. (2010: 798)

3 Violent and nonviolent extremism, two sides of the same coin. Also refers to Manus I. Midlarsky, *Origins of Political Extremism: Mass Violence in the Twentieth Century and Beyond*, (Cambridge: University Press, 2011)

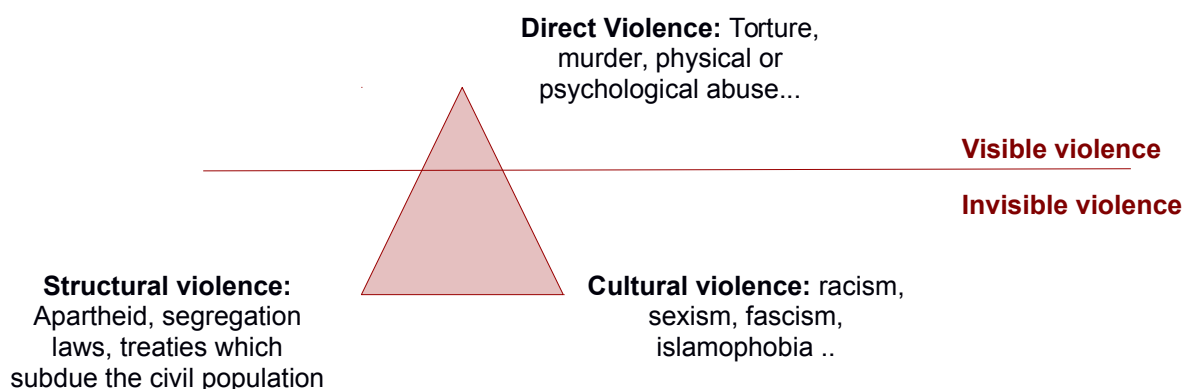
## 1.2 What is violence?

In order to define what we refer to as violence, we will use the definition Galtung gives when referring to social conflict: *“Violence appears when human beings are being influenced in such a way that the development of their physical and mental abilities is below its potential”*.

Violence, would, therefore, be the cause of difference between potential development and actual development, between what could be and what is. Violence is what prevents the gap between the two being narrower. Galtung then differentiates between three kinds of violence:

- **Direct violence.** Carried out by an intentional actor. This violence is visible, physical or psychological. It is what we normally understand as violence.
- **Structural violence.** This kind of violence is similar to social injustice and the structures that nurture that injustice. It is a more invisible violence formed by the structures that prevent satisfaction of fundamental needs.
- **Cultural or symbolic violence:** Aspects of a society’s culture that legitimise the use of the other two kinds. They show up in attitudes.

The three kinds of violence are interdependent, they feed off each other and action must be taken against all three if violence is to disappear. Both the focus on systemic intervention and the three levels of violence fit in perfectly in organising our work in PEV, which, in the end, stems from many years’ work in the field of *building peace and nonviolence as social transformation* in its effort to reach more just, democratic and sustainable societies.



## 1.3 What is violent extremism?

*We understand violent extremism as the ideologies that aspire to obtain political power by using violent methods instead of persuasion. Violent extremist ideologies are based on totalitarian,*

*fanatical, intolerant, patriarchal, anti democratic, and anti pluralist values, violent extremist groups, companies or states.*<sup>4</sup>

In order to delve deeper into this definition and using our definitions of violence and extremism, we present an equation which may help us in analysing what extremist violence is.

**Violent extremism = (Subduing *Other-different* + with direct violence) x (with *Others-equals*)**

There are two key elements in this equation. The idea of “*other*” and the idea of violence. On one hand, we have the *Other-different* whom someone seeks to submit (seen as an enemy, inferior or disposable obstacle) and on the other hand, the *Other-Equal* with whom someone identifies and with whom extremism is built.

- ***With Other-equal:*** Violent extremism is not an isolated expression of violence which is randomly exercised on an isolated individual. It is a kind of violence that responds to a shared identity, an ideology that identifies a common enemy and has a vision of the world it wants to reach. It is carried out by a group which wants to subdue the *other-different* in order to change the world. In the case of a solitary individual acting on his own in committing multiple murder, if his motivation is a common idea which he shares with other people or another group, then there is a “with others” even though the connection may simply exist through a shared identity as opposed to someone committing that same crime whose motivation is personal (revenge, hate, mental illness). Ideology is not the main reason for joining EV movements or groups but rather the perception of suffering the same injustice as those groups (shared victim identity). In many cases ideology comes afterwards.
- ***Subduing the Other-different in order to reach their vision of the world.*** This violence is exercised on an *Other-different* who is seen as an enemy, an accomplice or collateral damage in the struggle to reach their vision of the world. Groups who exercise EV often have a common enemy. The existence of the group is justified by the fight against that *Other-different*.
- ***Direct violence:*** Although, according to our definition of extremism, any form of extremism intrinsically implies cultural violence (since they are supremacist and excluding ideologies), we may add the fact that this extremism also exercises direct violence when they materialise their intention of imposing their vision of the world.

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<sup>4</sup> Definition established in the Plan de acción de la sociedad Euromediterránea para prevenir todas las formas de Extremismo violento, 2017, del Observatorio para la Prevención del Extremismo Violento (OPEV): <http://opev.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/05/EuroMed-PVE-Plan-de-Accion-ESP.pdf> (February 2019)

	<i>With Other-equal</i>	<b>Subduing Other-different</b>	<b>Direct violence</b>	<b>Extremist violence</b>
<b>Terrorism</b>	Organised by a group or state (state terrorism) with whom it shares a supremacist, non egalitarian future.	By definition, it implies domination through terror.	That terror is exercised through murder or other forms of direct violence such as torture of others (defined as direct enemies, accomplices or collateral damage)	It complies with all the elements of violent extremism. <sup>5</sup>
<b>Islamophobia</b>	It can be the core idea in a group's activity. It would be an extremist ideology.	Muslims (from a supremacist point of view, a known enemy)	Islamophobia already includes the element of cultural violence. There are various groups who have acted violently under this principle.	Islamophobia would be an extremist ideology which implies cultural violence. The line between extremist violence and extremist ideology may be the existence of a group that exercises direct violence.
<b>Apartheid</b>	It is an organised system of discrimination and submission of some groups over other groups.	In South Africa, the black population. In Israel, the Palestine population.	It exists in various forms (as a way of imposing its defining structural violence)	Apartheid has its own identity and its own international measures but it can be considered a totalitarian regime with violent extremism in its core.
<b>Fascism</b>	An ideology constructed around a group and which differentiates different groups.	Fascism is based on identifying an Other who must be subdued (a scapegoat or an enemy who gives the group its identity)	Cultural violence is present in any of its expressions and direct violence is one of the ways it imposes itself or maintains power.	It complies with all the elements of violent extremism.

5 The problem is assigning the category of "terrorism" to one group or the other. In order to differentiate it from legitimate armed struggle, checking if its vision of the future is egalitarian and on whom violence is exercised may be helpful.

	<i>With Other-equal</i>	<b>Subduing Other-different</b>	<b>Direct violence</b>	<b>Extremist violence</b>
<b>Ku-Klux-Klan</b>	It is a well-defined group.	The black population.	It is one of their strategies and tactics.	It complies with all the elements of violent extremism.
<b>Golden Dawn</b>	It is a well-defined group with a neonazi and fascist ideology.	It is a specific example of fascism. The Other who must be subdued is the immigrant population and other races.	Although they deny it, they promote violence, they have been taken to court on several occasions and some of its members have been arrested accused of various degrees of direct violence.	It complies with all the elements of violent extremism.
<b>Wars</b>	There is a group behind them (usually a state).	They are usually justified as defensive actions (preventive or reactive) and there is a common enemy.	It is based on direct violence.	Wars receive special treatment (both legally and intervention wise) and it is difficult to include them in violent extremism due to the definition of extremism in each case.
<b>Sexism</b>	It is an extremist ideology that creates a common identity although in many cases it is an unconscious identity.	The female population.	Abuse on women, murder, harassment...	Sexism is an extremist ideology which imbues all of society. Hence, it could be seen as extremism but not necessarily violent extremism. The moment a specific group uses it to subdue others by using violence, it becomes VE .

Submitting the definition to different practices and extremist ideologies shows that the line between what violent extremism is and what is not VE is often vague although the line is clearer between which ideologies are extremist and which are not. A key point is if there is a more defined group which wants to reach political power or subdue the Other in order to reach their vision of the world but analysis becomes complex when ideologies such as capitalism, islamophobia or sexism are widespread in various actors, actions and attitudes. This does not mean that we should not act on this violence or that there may be groups who, following those ideologies, exercise violent

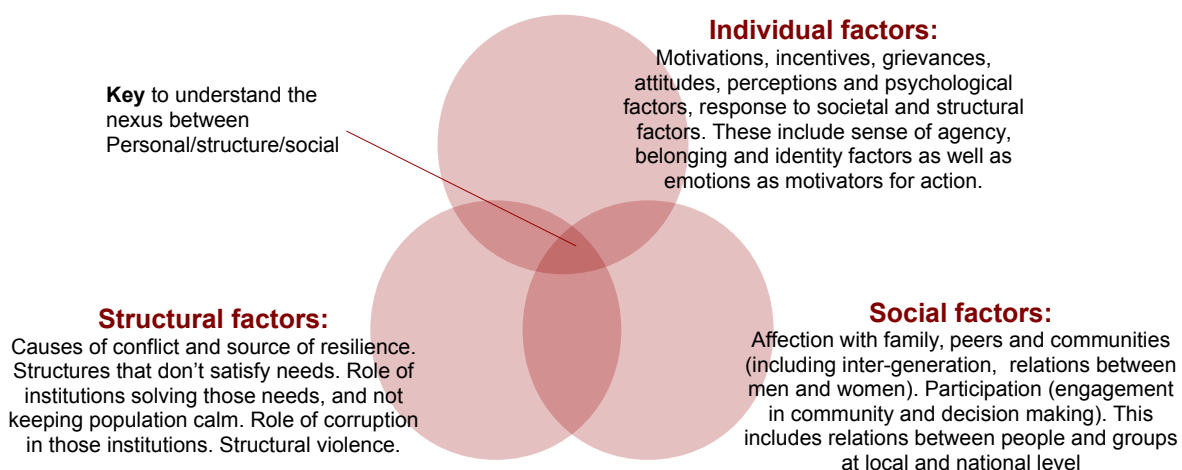
extremism. We are simply stating that classifying them as a whole as violent extremism becomes more complex.

The same thing happens with wars where we do have a better defined group, but the difficulty arises when we analyse the ideology behind the war and whether it is extremist or not (which may even be different in each of the sides). We come across the same problem when differentiating between terrorism and armed struggle. Some armed groups have been classified as terrorists or not depending on the historical moment (eg. The ANC in South Africa).

In any case, what we strive for is to prevent the emergence of extremist ideologies which exercise violence in defined groups (identity and common goals) in order to dominate (reach power through submission). In order to do so, the focus on prevention in this manual is aimed at satisfying needs in a collective and nonviolent way. This focus is valid both in clear cases of VE and in cases where VE is not so clear but where there is no doubt that violence does exist. We will now concentrate on what phenomena affects the emergence of VE.

## 1.4 What causes VE?

There are different ways of analysing the factors that may affect the appearance of violent extremism. Some are focused on analysing context (structural factors), others focus on the influence of social groups (social factors) and others concentrate on the evolution of individuals (individual factors). Some analysts focus on what pushes you to VE and what attracts you to VE (push and pull factors) while others analyse conditions of vulnerability and resilience. They all bare complementary elements. We will combine several of these points of view and our analysis will be based on the interdependence between structural, social and individual factors<sup>6</sup> so as to connect with a way of identifying risk factors that may cause EV.



The main thesis is that people who are exposed to violence (direct, structural, cultural) are more prone to responding with violence. We must not forget that we understand structural violence as a situation in which humans' fundamental needs are not satisfied or are negatively satisfied. If

<sup>6</sup> Graphic adapted from Holdaway, L. and Simpson, R. (2018): "[Improving the impact of preventing violent extremism programming. A tool kit for design, monitoring and evaluation](#)". International alert and UNDP.

people and their social environment are exposed to violence and this violence is exercised in a context of structural crisis, the chances of violent response increase.

In the following two chapters, we will focus on analysing the context of crisis which causes infra-satisfaction of needs and the possible futures which may channel the satisfying elements we choose (towards scenarios preventing VE or those that promote it).

	<b>Needs</b>	<b>Factors</b>
<b>Direct violence</b>		Political repression, violation of human rights <sup>7</sup>
<b>Structural violence</b>	Subsistence	Lack of economic opportunities and access to basic goods (housing, food, water...)
	Protection	Physical or psychological insecurity
	Affection	Social fracture, individualism, isolation
	Understanding	Lack of critical skills, little research, faulty communication, low educational level.
	Participation	Lack of democracy, hierarchical or authoritarian systems.
	Identity	Lack of self esteem, endangered customs, marginalised language.
	Freedom	Inability to dissent or give one's opinion, autocracy.
	Creation	Not open to new ideas, scarce curiosity for new things, limited expression
	Leisure	High stress levels, restlessness.
<b>Cultural violence</b>		Marginalization and discrimination, justification of violence.

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<sup>7</sup> The violation of human rights would appear in most categories depending on which human right was violated.



### 1.4.1 What do we understand as fundamental needs and satisfying such needs?

According to the Theory of Human Scale Development<sup>8</sup>, people have finite fundamental needs that are common to all human beings and to all times. What depends on context or time is the way we satisfy those needs. These fundamental needs are: **subsistence, protection, affection, participation, identity, freedom, creation and idleness**.

According to that concept, all the needs that we are discussing are common to anybody reading this manual. The key is the satisfiers one chooses depending on context.

There are two kinds of satisfiers:

- **Collective synergic satisfiers**: Those that satisfy a need while favouring the satisfaction of other needs and the needs of others. These factors are contrary to dominating logics of competition or coercion.
- **Negative satisfiers**<sup>9</sup>: The way of satisfying the need prevents the satisfaction of other needs in the mid and long term and may even prevent the satisfaction of the need it is trying to satisfy. These satisfiers also imply others not being able to satisfy their needs.

Both prevention of VE and its proliferation operate in a context of perception of insatisfaction of people's and social groups' fundamental needs and they both offer satisfiers for those same needs. The satisfiers chosen by groups who embrace VE act as attractors (*pull factors*) and both the insatisfaction of needs and negative satisfiers chosen through mistaken PVE will push towards VE (*push factors*). Positive or synergic satisfiers will, however, help us understand the resilience of each community and its ability to prevent and transform VE. We must highlight that negative satisfiers that occur in VE also act as causes for abandoning it (they generate insecurity, frustration, disappointment, loss of individual identity, lack of participation).

How many needs must be unsatisfied simultaneously or at what level in order for a group or individual to become involved in VE is unclear (this analysis must adapt to context) but there is no doubt that their interdependence (a high degree of insatisfaction of one of the needs will surely bring insatisfaction of other needs). For the time being, analysis of VE focuses on those concerning subsistence, security, freedom, participation and affection.

Needs	Collective synergic satisfier	Negative satisfier	Need that it prevents
Subsistence	Self-managed production	Food supply programmes	Subsistence (mid term), identity, participation

<sup>8</sup> MAX-NEEF, M (et. al) (1998): Desarrollo a escala humana, Barcelona: Icaria.

<sup>9</sup> Max-Neef refers to different types of negative satisfiers: Inhibiting (which over satisfy a need at the cost of another need), pseudo satisfiers (which apparently satisfy in the short term but in the mid and long term do not satisfy), destructive (which prevent the satisfaction of that same need in the mid term and destroys the satisfaction of other needs).

<b>Needs</b>	<b>Collective synergic satisfier</b>	<b>Negative satisfier</b>	<b>Need that it prevents</b>
<b>Protection/Security</b>	Creation of networks, mutual support, trust, preventive medicine	Building walls, gathering weapons, isolating those who make you feel insecure.	Subsistence, affection, participation, freedom, security (short and mid term)
<b>Affection</b>	Shared care within the community (support network in welfare)	Excluding bonds, affection through obedience, dependent relationships.	Identity (short and mid term), freedom
<b>Participation</b>	Participatory democracy (and some formats of representative sociocracy)	Actively taking part in a group that marginalises or excludes, taking part without knowing the people one participates with, giving opinion but opinion not altering the decision significantly.	Affection, freedom, security
<b>Identity</b>	Collectively built identity that harnesses diversity	Identity built based on a common enemy	Security, freedom
<b>Freedom</b>	Building respect, tolerance and mutual support	Create freedom spaces by "sending the different out of those spaces" (building walls, gathering weapons..)	Short and mid term: Security, freedom, affection

Seeing the insatisfaction of individual and collective needs as a possible scenario for the appearance of VE allows us to not assume that only more impoverished populations<sup>10</sup> are vulnerable. In fact, a lot of the people that join terrorist movements do not come from poor backgrounds. It also allows us to disconnect VE from an individual focus which sees joining VE as a process of personal change that must be shortcircuited. Using generalising patterns which are applied to all individuals is dangerous since not everybody responds the same way in the same situation. In any case, positive satisfaction of people's and communities' needs, when carried out with those people and communities will minimise the appearance of VE.

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<sup>10</sup> Marc Sageman, a forensic psychiatrist and former CIA Case Officer, has reviewed and collected information from media and open-source documents (e.g., courtroom testimony) on several hundred Al-Qaida-related cases. Thomas Hegghammer analyzed two hundred and forty biographies—including seventy "extensive" ones—of (post-2002) Saudi militants.

## 1.5 How to anticipate? Prevention is transformation: Nonviolence that transforms.

An intervention in prevention must be aimed at changing the situation of injustice that is causing it and not only at the people within that context. It must bare in mind the relation between levels of individual, group and structural transformation and take action in each one of them. This vocation of changing the context must be sincere and have a local and global dimension. It must satisfy current needs and, at the same time, change the structure that causes infrasatisfaction. If not, we would be generating a negative satisfier that would produce frustration in the mid term. In this sense, certain movements which are seen as radical may contribute to prevention strategies as long as they are nonviolent and favouring transformation (they seek to change an unfair system for a just one) (eg. the Arab Springs, environmentalist movements, feminist movements).

**Nonviolence that transforms = (Without violence + against violence)\*with Others**

**Nonviolence that transforms = Nonviolent resistance + Nonviolent construction**

- **Against violence:** be it direct, structural or cultural.
- **With Others:** Building with Others and not wishing to eliminate those who are different.
- **Resistance:** Protest, fight, claim rights in a nonviolent way.
- **Construction:** Satisfies needs in a synergic way, not just demands satisfiers.

In the context in which we are going to act (chapter 2) both on a local and a global level (strong tension and militaristic culture), the choice of Nonviolence that transforms is a key element. The logic of domination used by violent strategies is coherent in its means and ends and that makes it very powerful (End: domination, means: violence). In order for our work in transforming prevention to work, we need that same coherence: the means justify the ends (what we do must be aimed at the end we are seeking. The way of satisfying fundamental needs and our struggle must be part of that end: a just, democratic and sustainable society). Otherwise, it would be impossible to differentiate them clearly since ends would become means to other ends. The larger the distance between them, the easier it will be for objectives to become corrupt.

A strategy that uses transforming prevention (nonviolent) has more chances of success (changes in the situations of injustice) than those which confront VE with its same strategies (domination).

This higher percentage of success is due to several factors: i) Generally, nonviolent transforming prevention obtains more legitimacy on a state and international level. ii) It motivates higher levels of participation in its change process among civil society and increases isolation of groups which exercise violence. iii) For those who exercise violence, it is more difficult to demonize the enemy if the enemy is a peaceful group rather than a violent one. iv) Moral arguments are vital when there are confronting sides and nonviolence usually has higher moral legitimacy. v) It is easier to reach negotiations since the other side does not feel physically threatened and it does not have any casualties. vi) Nonviolence puts the battlefield on a completely different scenario, it disarms violent

strategies which expect a mimetic response. It is also capable of dispersing and having multiple objectives. vii) It solves people's fundamental needs and is, thus, coherent with the future it seeks.

However, nonviolent options also have their flaws. In order to be successful, they require more widespread participation, they find it harder to control strategic resources and the perception of them being efficient is weaker in contexts of violence (they are not seen as mechanisms of response to attacks although strategies that are aimed at transforming contexts of injustice through nonviolent means are more successful).

In that search for transformation that will prevent the appearance of VE, we are going to focus on understanding the fundamental needs of identity, participation, affection and understanding (focused on communication) and on how to satisfy them in a synergic way so as to move towards more just, democratic and sustainable futures.

We will concentrate on those needs because:

1. we believe that they are the best fitted in terms of the level of intervention that stems from this manual (Designed for short trainings for social actors engaged in social change in communities at different levels)
2. they are the most frequently cited in the field of VE and prevention
3. they help us build social cohesion in groups so we can empower them to fight and build a more just future.

We will talk about the need of subsistence in the second and third chapter related to the influence in the reasons why VE can happen. The infrasatisfaction of this need is very important in generating vulnerable contexts. Subsistence is a need that should be addressed in any PVE strategy but not alone. In this Manual we give some ideas of how to address the community work in order to satisfy this need, but a deeper understanding is out of the scope of this Manual and this training process. The satisfaction of this need is part of that community work and of strategies which are supplemental to this manual.

## 2 WHY DOES VE HAPPEN?

### Summary

We are going through a multidimensional Global Crisis: environmental, economic and social. One of its main consequences is increased dissatisfaction of fundamental needs which, in turn, leads to an increase in the factors that promote EV.

### Introduction

In chapter 1, we have given a general framework to help us understand what factors facilitate the emergence of VE. We will now specifically analyse the characteristic elements of the current crisis and how they contribute to VE.

### 2.1 Global Crisis

The current world is characterised by the intersection of different crises which are transforming the prevailing world order.

#### 2.1.1 Environmental Crisis

Available energy and raw materials set the limits of possible human organisations. Social order which requires more than is available is not feasible. This concept, which seems obvious, has been “forgotten” since the beginning of the fossil fuel era since there was widespread availability and its energy density has given access to huge and varied amounts of resources (minerals, biomass). The limits have been pushed to such an extent that societies have acted as if those limits did not exist and human beings were omnipotent but this situation is reaching its end due to the conjunction of different environmental crisis such as the energy crisis, material crisis, loss of biodiversity and climate change.

Our capacity to extract “good” oil (conventional petrol) is starting to decrease and shortly (if not already), we will start running out of oil in general. The same thing will happen to gas, coal and uranium in the coming years<sup>11</sup>.

Fossils are characterised (or in some cases were characterised) by: being available regardless of natural rhythms, being easy to store, being easily transported, having high energy density, being available in large quantities, being very versatile in use, being highly profitable energy-wise (with little energy invested we could obtain large quantities of energy) and being cheap. An alternative source of energy would have to comply with all those characteristics and have little environmental impact since our environment is already very deteriorated. Neither renewable energy, nor nuclear energy, nor agro fuel, nor the combination of all of these can replace fossils<sup>12</sup>.

We are also close to reaching the peak of maximum extraction of many basic elements such as copper and phosphorous. Soil and water are also endangered resources, especially in the MENA region and the North Mediterranean.

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11 Li, M (2018): “World Oil 2018-2050: World Energy Annual Report”, “World Gas 2018-2050: World Energy Annual Report”, “World Coal 2018-2050: World Energy Annual Report”. <http://peakoilbarrel.com>.

12 Ecologistas en Acción; La Transicionera (2017): *Caminar por el abismo de los límites*. Ecologistas en Acción. Madrid.  
Fernández Durán, R; González Reyes, L. (2018): *En la espiral de la energía*. Libros en Acción, Baladre. Madrid.  
Mills, M. P. (2019): *The “New Energy Economy”: An Exercise in Magical Thinking*. Manhattan Institute. New York.

The third environmental limit is the loss of biodiversity. We are currently going through the sixth “en masse” extinction of species in the history of the planet. Through its ecosystemic functions (photosynthesis, adjustment of climate, purification of air and water, pollination, edaphogenesis, beauty), biodiversity is the main support for human existence and is irreplaceable. Therefore, the loss of these functions generates a situation of social stress that could trigger EV.

Finally, there is climate change. Due to its complexity, the climate system behaves in a non-linear way. This non linear behavior is based on positive feedback processes in which the effects amplify the causes once they reach a certain threshold<sup>13</sup>. These processes are about to be activated. If these processes become active, climate balance will change and so will the conditions of all ecosystems, regardless of what we humans may do.

Some of the consequences of global warming are: rising sea level, disappearance of coastland, increase in the frequency and intensity of extreme phenomena (droughts, hurricanes, torrential rain), acidification of water, and a decrease in the fertility of land in most of the planet. The MENA+Euro region es one of the worst hit areas. Climate change is already the main cause of migration worldwide.

In any case, there is not necessarily a relation between environmental crisis and an increase in EV. The environmental crisis increases social stress, but if this is not managed in a violent way (direct and structural violence) it does not necessarily imply an increase in EV.

### **The environmental crisis propelled the war in Syria**

The situation in Syria has many causes. The ultimate motives are sociopolitical but social organisations suffer tension if there are changes in their physical surroundings.

Between 2006 and 2011, Syria suffered one of the most severe droughts to have hit the region since the beginning of agriculture. These are the kinds of droughts that scientific models predict as a consequence of climate change. Meanwhile, the regime encouraged cotton and wheat irrigation farming which made underground aquifers and surface reservoirs dry up.

One of the consequences of the drought was that, in the Northeast of the country, around 75% of the peasantry lost their harvests and 85% of livestock died, thus affecting around 1.3 million people. The drought was, therefore, a key factor in people moving from the countryside into the cities where poor settlements multiplied. An estimated 800,000 people have taken part in this exodus since 2010.

Another factor was that, in 2012, Syria stopped exporting oil and began importing it since it had surpassed its oil peak. This also meant that consumption dropped dramatically, thus strengthening the crisis and weakening the country’s agricultural capacity which was largely dependent on petrol.

Impoverishment and uprooting along with lack of freedom became unbearable as the environmental crisis (which also affected the economic crisis) worsened.

This does not diminish the importance of the role of foreign powers in the conflict, but they are key factors that are added

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13 Wikipedia (2019): “Climate change feedback”. <https://en.wikipedia.org>.

### **Hydrological stress and ISIS emergency in Sahel**

Sahel is one of the worst-hit areas by climate change. It has suffered a dramatic decrease in rainfall. This is causing great difficulties in satisfying the need of subsistence in an environment marked by grave inequality. ISIS is using this situation of desperation to grow in the region.

## **2.1.2 Economic Crisis**

The crisis that started in 2007/2008 is not only one of the biggest economic crises in history, but also a structural crisis of capitalism. This causes large social layers to not be able to cover their needs, thus encouraging EV. In order to function correctly, our socio-economic system requires continuous increase in profit and this is now no longer possible in large quantities and in an ongoing way:

- The growth in productivity is gradually slowing down<sup>14</sup> since, among other things, we are reaching the physical limits of energy and materials, thus limiting viable investment in technology.
- In the last years, there has been a gradual degradation in working conditions which is specially plain in the MENA and Euro regions. This process can not continue indefinitely without compromising consumption and social reproduction.
- Financial economy has been able to encourage economic growth, but since the 1970s, the world's GDP has been growing at a slower pace than debt. This has caused the accumulation of unpayable debt.
- Maintaining the exploitation of nature (which is indispensable in order to grow) is no longer viable since we have already reached environmental limits
- There are no longer large regions outside the world market which may generate new profit by being incorporated into the market.
- On a worldwide level, but mainly in the Euro region, we satisfy most of our needs by resorting to the market and this has generated big profits but the commercialisation of life cannot grow for much longer. Although in other areas, such as the MENA region, there is still room for profit under strategies such as "inclusive capitalism", this is probably not enough to maintain a sustainable expansion in profit.

## **2.1.3 Social Crisis**

In the MENA and Euro regions, the environmental and economic crises are being managed in such a way that social crisis is increasing. That is to say that inequality and exclusion are increasing, thus eroding people's ability to take part on a political level and finally increasing dissatisfaction of basic needs. In the following sections we delve into this aspect.

### **Social crisis in Tunisia**

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<sup>14</sup>van Ark, B.; Erumban, A. (2015): *The Conference Board Productivity Brief 2015*. The Conference Board International.



The Ben Ali regime drove the neo-liberal restructuring of Tunisian economy and its dependent incorporation into global economy. As a result of these policies, there was a drop in spending power among salaried workers, higher unemployment rates (mainly among young people) and an increase in job insecurity which affected around 60% of employed workers. On top of that, the regime shut down political participation and exercised repression. All of these factors could have triggered massive EV, but it was generally channelled through the Tunisian Revolution which meant an improvement in some of the structural elements the population were suffering. Another resilience factor versus the social crisis has been the solidarity within the community, which has been mainly driven by the syndicalists (UGTT), the activists of the UDC (union des diplômés chômeurs) and of course women, which builds mutual support structures, thus mimizing structural violence.

## 2.2 Global Crisis and EV

As we described in chapter 1, there are two categories of factors that encourage the appearance of EV: “driving factors” (push) and “calling factors” (pull). Both appear in certain social contexts connected to direct, structural and cultural violence, which are the core base of EV.

	Context	Main type of related violence
Lack of socio-economic opportunities	Great social inequality.	Structural
	Part of the population living in poverty.	Structural
	Corruption and lack of governmental legitimacy.	Structural
	Lack of control over natural resources.	Structural
Marginalization and discrimination	Little social cohesion.	Structural
	Social competition over scarce resources.	Structural
	Political and economic marginalization of certain social sectors.	Structural
	Stigmatization of parts of society.	Cultural
Political repression, violation of human rights and of rule of law.	Lack of respect towards Human Rights and towards economic, social and cultural rights.	Structural Direct
	Repression.	Direct
Prolonged and	Numerous unresolved conflicts.	Direct



unresolved conflict.	Large number of refugees or migrants.	Structural Direct
Indoctrination in prison	Tough treatment of incarcerated population.	Direct

Table 2.1: Synthesis of the contexts that favour EV<sup>15</sup> and the relation with different types of violence.

We will now delve into each of these contexts and analyze their relations with the Global Crisis, which favours the conditions for growth that EV needs. However, the Global Crisis also offers new opportunities for solving the structural causes of EV.

### **Societies which are better prepared for the Global Crisis and less prone to EV**

- a) Lesser development of industrial metabolism or greater development of vital transitions: low energy consumption, energy mix with large presence of renewable energy, transport network that does not depend on petrol, diverse economic fabric, investment in simple technologies, lesser internationalization of economy, etc.
- b) Great social cohesion and interconnected diversity that allows high levels of collective security. Intercultural societies where collective values are predominant. Good public services.
- c) Flexible, strong and independent institutions (both state and non-state) that allow decentralized and democratic decision making.
- d) More resources used in transitions (if used for those purposes): great availability of capital, administration with healthy financial situation or considerable stock of varied resources.
- e) Lesser environmental degradation in its territory (e.g. more access to drinking water and to fertile soil).

## **2.3 Lack of socio-economic opportunities**

The MENA and Euro regions have high population density and strong inequality. Therefore, besides the attempts to tackle the economic crisis by increasing social inequality which we have already mentioned, there are other factors in the Global Crisis are putting more strain on the structure of society which specially affect the disadvantaged: economic crisis, shortage of energy, climate change, erosion, problems with access to drinking water, the demise of public health services or war. These factors entail a decrease in population and/or changes in population distribution (increasing migration from areas with less resources to areas with more resources).

A decrease in population can be the result of different processes. One such process could be famine and/or genocide. Another possible process is collectively organized population decrease (respectful systems of birth control). Between both extremes, we can find the case of Russia, Poland or Ukraine where, after the collapse of the Soviet Block, the population decreased due to, among other factors, people simply dying younger and migrating. The worst case scenarios in

<sup>15</sup> Novact, OPEV, CMODH (2017): *Plan of Action of the Euro-Mediterranean civil society to prevent all forms of violent extremism*. OPEV. Barcelona.

population decrease may generate high levels of both direct and structural violence, thus increasing the chances of growth of EV.

Impoverished populations are trying to get to richer areas on a massive scale (with high mortality rates and suffering on the way there). The extremely restrictive migration policies in the EU are encouraging the creation of mafias, which -on occasions- help finance EV, but mainly increasing inter-ethnic tensions that feed EV, as we will see in the following section.

Back to the topic of the economic crisis; a globalized and industrial economy is only sustainable through large consumption of fossil fuels. Therefore, the process of deglobalization which is already underway<sup>16</sup> can only pick up speed. As economy becomes more local, so will politics and culture. The combination of this process with the structural crisis of the capitalist system is making room for other economic formats. New social organisations are being built through either economies of solidarity, especially in the Euro zone, or domineering logics (locally based neocapitalisms or neofeudalisms). Depending on which model prevails, there will be an increase or decrease in structural violence.

## 2.4 Marginalisation and discrimination

The Global Crisis and the insatisfaction of needs that we have described is creating a situation of strong and highly complex conflict, especially when people begin to consider one group's needs being incompatible with another group's needs (even if they are not incompatible, the choice of negative satisfiers will lead to social conflict). Conflict is occurring between urban and rural sectors, between those who have resources and those who do not, between workers and rentiers, between the middle classes of the world who want to maintain their privilege, between different age groups who will suffer in different ways, between impoverished population, between genders, etc.

Interethnic conflict is one of the main areas of conflict although it is actually inter-penetrated by class conflict. In wealthy regions, there are clashes between the "autochthonous" population (with more means and rights) and migrant population or autochthonous population lacking "national pedigree" (young, impoverished, humiliated and with less rights). The native population in MENA countries is in the spotlight of conflict. This feeds EV both in wealthy and impoverished regions.

Furthermore, our societies need to continue being patriarchal in order to face the economic crisis. On one hand, they force women to take care of care tasks which are vital for social reproduction (feeding, hygiene, emotional support, etc) for free. On the other hand, they increasingly incorporate women into the salaried market (more in the Euro region than in the MENA) albeit in worse working conditions than the men. This exerts extra pressure on salaries and lowers them, thus allowing households to maintain their level of consumption by having two small salaries instead of one. On a deeper level, power relations in the macro are reproduced in the micro and their main expression is patriarchy. However, this is another struggle, as shown by the surge of feminism, especially in some countries of Europe.

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16 One indicator is the Baltic Dry Index, which has been dropping since 2008:  
[http://investmenttools.com/futures/bdi\\_baltic\\_dry\\_index.htm](http://investmenttools.com/futures/bdi_baltic_dry_index.htm)

## 2.5 Political repression, violation of human rights and rule of law

In the context of the Global Crisis, states as a form of social organisation are being weakened. In the case of strong states, the trend is for them to become weaker (as seen in EU or Ukraine). States which are already weak can only get weaker.

On one hand, states are becoming increasingly economically fragile. Their capacity to generate income is limited (difficulty in generating income through taxes due to increasing unemployment and lower salaries, greater difficulty in taxing companies, growth of underground economy), costs are growing (management of migration and natural disasters caused by climate change, wars for resources such as the wars in Libya or Iraq, bailout of bankrupt companies and banks), there are overheads which will be difficult to cut back on (maintenance of infrastructures, paying off debt) and financial capacity is decreasing at least in “less trustworthy” states (the calls PIGS and MENA).

On the other hand, the middle classes have been a key element in the development of states: their mass consumption has upheld growth and by voting for “center/liberal” parties or supporting the regimes in power they have ensured political stability. A reasonable degree of physical, psychological and financial security is a key feature of the middle classes but these elements are endangered due to the predominance of precarious employment and the reduction in social services.

Furthermore, states are gradually losing legitimacy, especially in the MENA region: i) The population experiences how while their spending power decreases, the state is less able to provide aid for social needs. The social state which was built on profits made by growing productivity thanks to an enormous flow of energy is no longer sustainable. ii) The dilution of the social state and the crisis is leading to greater social self-organization. This, in turn, leads to greater disaffection towards a state that is seen as useless; iii) States are less capable of maintaining social peace. iv) Corruption is increasing since as legal methods of obtaining profits become more difficult, more people turn to illegal methods.

In weaker states the monopolies that remain or that they share with large capitals are disappearing or becoming weaker: the monopoly of force, of elaborating and enforcing law, the monopoly of public services, of regulating money and of tax collection. As states fail to act as potential warrants of needs, other organisations offer solutions and fill the void left by states. That void is being filled by violence-dominated expressions (such as VE in the form of paramilitary groups or organized crime) or by nonviolent civil organisations.

In areas where states are stronger, there is more resistance to losing “power” and a bigger effort is being made in order to maintain social control. Inciting hate, fear and repression is a key method used to exert social control when it gets difficult to exert it through mechanisms of mild domination such as consumerism or the showbizz society. Fear of possible evolutions of the Global Crisis create high levels of anxiety, thus facilitating willingness to suffer great financial costs and limitations of freedom in order to obtain minimal reductions in insecurity. The perception of the Other-different as a threat is making applying repression easier and this repression is based on double standards: it is more severe and exemplary (so as to instill fear) on different groups (savages) and the areas they inhabit and milder and more selective in “civilised” areas. This violent logic is one of the keys extremists use in order to grow.

This also occurs in big cities through processes of urban degradation. The separation of “civilised” and “wild” areas is being applied to urban areas, especially in the MENA region, but also in places like Paris (e.g. the 2005 revolt in the `banlieues or impoverished neighbourhoods). This is making cities difficult to govern and making way for alternative forms of social organisation. However, an outburst of violence is not the only alternative: new, potentially anti violent social articulations are also taking place. For instance, food collectives, community allotments, neighborhood self-defense.

However, the fact that states are becoming weaker does not prevent the appearance of new fascisms and authoritarianisms<sup>17</sup>. In fact it eases their appearance. <sup>18</sup>. On one hand, the remaining “middle classes” will support them in order to keep their privilege and as a means to express their frustration and fear. They will also be pushed by the elites since they will probably be their best option in maintaining their privilege. Golden Dawn (Greece), Liga Norte (Italy), VOX (Spain), Jobbik (Hungary), Law and Justice (Poland), Alternative for Germany or Rassemblement National, formerly Front National (France) are just some examples. All this implies the dissatisfaction of the needs of participation and freedom.

## 2.6 Prolonged and unresolved conflict

Protectionism and war are the “simplest” ways of obtaining resources which are becoming scarce and strategically important such as petrol. In addition, the world is becoming more multi polar and more and more actors are challenging the USA and other powers (case of BRICS<sup>19</sup> countries). This produces a scenario of increasing wars for resources which entail an increase in direct and structural violence.

### **The wars for Lybian and Saharaui resources**

In 2011, popular revolt broke out in Lybia, mimicking similar outbursts which were taking place in all the surrounding regions. In the case of Lybia, the revolt produced a civil war and the direct intervention of the main powers. Currently, there are two main centers of power: the Government of National Accord (GNA) which is backed by the USA, the EU and NATO and the parallel government in Tobruk and Bayda which is backed by Russia. Furthermore, private companies from the main powers are defending their interests, often at the cost of human life and the local population. They are all trying to take control of the oil reserves of a country where hydrocarbon exports account for 70% of the country’s GDP.

Similarly, in order to understand the conflict in Western Sahara and its evolution, we must remember that this region hosts the largest reserves of phosphorus in the world.

However, these wars are not simple for the big powers. In the first place, because controlling the resources means controlling the territory, which can prove complicated. For instance, even the most powerful army on the planet -the US army- was unable to control Irak after its victory in the

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<sup>17</sup>Fascism is a mass movement based on violence, authority and reactionary values. In contrast, authoritarianism does not necessarily imply a social movement or reactionary values.

<sup>18</sup> Fascism is a mass movement based on violence, authority and reactionary values. In contrast, authoritarianism does not necessarily imply a social movement or reactionary values.

<sup>19</sup>Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa.

Second Gulf War. Furthermore, strong military expansion makes available energy drop quickly (more energy consumption, more terrain to control). In the end, although they will probably be the last to suffer this problem, the military will also run short on petrol.

However, although war is the most likely outcome in societies that suffer direct, structural and cultural violence, it is not the only possibility. Climate change or shortages in energy and materials tend to increase tension but war is not the only way societies can manage these situations.

### The Arab Revolts

The struggle against despotism was not the only factor behind the Arab Revolts. They took place in an environment with: i) a gradual increase in food prices in a region that imports half of what it consumes, ii) a small amount of fertile soil with water per inhabitant, iii) a large, young population, iv) very unequal societies, and v) an economic crisis. In this context, petrol has probably had a more important role than it may have seemed at first sight. Egypt, Syria and Yemen have a similar extraction and consumption pattern: in 2011, they balanced imports and exports. This also created a rise in food prices due to these countries' agricultural dependence on petrol.

This rebellion took place in a context with limited resource and it did not push for more authoritarianism. It pushed for quite the opposite, all within its own diversity.

## 2.7 Conclusion

The social contexts that incite EV in the MENA and Euro regions are increasing due to the Global Crisis (table 2.2) although, as we have pointed out, the crisis also offers new opportunities to break the spiral of violence.

Risk factors for the appearance of VE		MENA+Euro Region
Suffering direct violence		<p>More wars over resources.</p> <p>Widespread social conflict.</p> <p>Repression.</p> <p>Violation of Human Rights, often in connection to Antiterrorist laws.</p>
Suffering structural violence	Infrasatisfaction of subsistence	<p>Difficulties in feeding the whole population.</p> <p>Increasing in more impoverished population.</p> <p>Competition for access to increasingly scarce resources.</p>
	Infrasatisfaction of	Armed conflict.

	security	<p>Economic crisis.</p> <p>Lack of social networks. Individualism. Individualismo.</p> <p>Large numbers of refugees or migrants.</p> <p>Attacks due to one's religion, ideology or place of origin<sup>20</sup>.</p>
	Infrasatisfaction of identity	<p>Closed identities.</p> <p>Demonization processes of the Other-different.</p>
	Infrasatisfaction of participation	<p>Nonexistent or weak democracies. Growth of new fascisms and authoritarianisms.</p> <p>Lack of social networks. Individualism.</p> <p>Sectors of society with no political rights.</p>
	Infrasatisfaction of affection	<p>Migration (breaking social bonds).</p> <p>Wars and widespread social conflict.</p> <p>Competitive logics in problem solving.</p>
	Infrasatisfaction of understanding	<p>Closed and protectionist identities when facing difference. Competitive logics. Polarised discourse.</p> <p>Homogeneous and non-permeable visions of reality.</p>
	Infrasatisfaction of freedom	<p>Nonexistent or weak democracies. Growth of new fascisms and authoritarianisms.</p> <p>Lack of control over natural resources.</p> <p>Large number of refugees or migrants.</p>
Cultural violence		<p>Violence as a legitimate means in managing conflict.</p>

Table 2.2: Global Crisis and EV.

<sup>20</sup> The groups being attack can be very different depending on the region (MENA, Europe)

# 3 TRANSITIONS TO AN ECOSOCIAL FUTURE TO PREVENT VE

## Summary

In the context of the Global Crisis, minimizing the probability of EV implies building ecosocial societies.

## Introduction

In order to prevent direct, structural and cultural violence which feed VE, we need to build just, democratic, and sustainable societies which we call ecosocial societies. We will focus on some of the elements that characterise ecosocial order. We will later present some strategies we may use in reaching our objectives from a non violent perspective.

### 3.1 Guiding principles in building synergic satisfiers in a just, democratic and sustainable sociedades

Societies where direct, structural and cultural violence are reduced to a minimum will minimise the chances of VE occurring. In order to do so, the population must universally satisfy its needs. These societies will therefore be just, democratic and sustainable. In short, they will be ecosocial. Some characteristics of ecosocial societies are:

1. High level of diversity and interconnection. This is the main strategy in increasing security: diverse people living together and establishing strong networks of exchange. In this way, the chances of responding to problems are maximized. Creativity gets bigger as we listen to more diverse opinions and work collectively.
2. Caring for life. This is the focus of a fundamental part of the efforts of living things.
3. Collective action. We are not independent beings. We are profoundly dependent on each other and relations play a vital role in our lives. This dependency is both social and ecosystemic. Collective action means democratic management.
4. Sufficiency. In a context where the environment has been abused (chapter 2) this is expressed by reducing what is superfluous, ostentatious and ephemeral through sufficiency in the consumption of materials and energy and the minimisation of residues. In other words, a culture of fair austerity which favours a “good life” for all humans and other living beings.

When referring to limits, wealth becomes a key issue. In a planet with partially degraded and decreasing resources, the only possibility of justice is radical distribution of wealth within states and on an international level.

5. Closing cycles of materials. The only way to survive in times when resources are limited is to build circular economies.
6. Proximity. Transporting large quantities of information, people and goods over long distances in a short time not only implies huge impact, but will also become increasingly



difficult as fossil resources become harder to come by (chapter 2).. This means moving towards local self-sufficiency.

7. Solar energy. The energy system must focus on solar energy in its different forms (solar, mini hydro, biomass). Access to these kinds of energy is more universal than to fossil energy, thus helping in building more democratic societies.
8. “Speed of life” coupled to natural cycles. Coupled to circadian, seasonal, vital, ecosystemic and geological rhythms as opposed to current accelerated societies.

In order to show the way an ecosocial society minimises VE, grid 3.1 relates risk factors in the appearance of VE to the ecosocial principles that could be used to create synergic satisfiers.

<b>Factors that minimise VE</b>		<b>Ecosocial organization</b>
Avoiding direct violence		High degree of diversity and inter connection (increases security and avoids violence).
Avoiding structural violence	Satisfaction of subsistence	Sufficiency, closing cycles, proximity, solar energy, high degree of diversity and inter connection, care for life, “speed of life” coupled to natural cycles.
	Satisfaction of security	High degree of diversity and inter connection, care for life, collective action.
	Satisfaction of identity	Proximity, high degree of diversity and inter connection (dependent and collective identity), care for life and collective action.
	Satisfaction of affection	Care for life, proximity, collective action, “speed of life” coupled to life cycles.
	Satisfaction of understanding	High degree of diversity and inter connection, collective action.
	Satisfaction of participation	Proximity, collective action.
	Satisfaction of freedom	Sufficiency, high degree of diversity and inter connection, collective action, capability of transformation.
Avoiding cultural violence	Non violence as a paradigm	High degree of diversity and inter connection, collective action.

Table 3.1: Reduction of violence in ecosocial societies.

## 3.2 Strategies for non violent ecosocial transitions

In order to analyze ecosocial transitions we can differentiate two levels. The first one is a strategic level in which long-term lines of action are drawn. The second is a tactical level with more specific and down-to-earth programmes. We will start by discussing the first level.



### 3.2.1 Building a culture of non violence through the satisfaction of needs

In general, people and societies are motivated by satisfying their needs (chapter 1). Emotions, feelings and moods all originate from the way we manage needs: fear (lack of security), love (satisfaction of the need of affection) or curiosity (search for understanding) although all this is, obviously, far more complex and confirmation of feelings originates from the dynamic interaction of several needs.

One of the elements that determine which satisfiers we choose in solving our needs is our system of values. Both violence and non violence offer satisfiers which follow different systems of values. Personal choice of one set of values or the other is largely determined by the social satisfiers used. Societies with violent satisfiers tend to create violent systems of values since we normally adapt our system of values to our behaviour and not the other way round. For instance, in processes of conversion to VE, the first step is to identify with those who suffer the same as you, the second step is to identify with those doing something about it and finally, one tends to identify with the values of those doing something to solve the problem.

If we want prevention to be effective and if we are truly looking for a more ecosocial future, we must not only promote speeches. We must solve needs by creating synergic satisfiers, we must change practices in order to alter values and generate a non violent culture. If speeches do not go hand in hand with practical change, we will generate frustration and the end result will be the opposite (speeches can be insufficient or even negative satisfiers). Both violence and non violence can create frustration when they do not satisfy people's needs and drive people to abandon those principles.

#### **First Intifada**

During the first Intifada in Palestine, parallel education and health systems were set up to satisfy the needs of people. There was a culture of transformation which was non violent and very different to the previously prevailing culture. A sense of hope and a will to fight for change appeared. In the decade of the Oslo Agreements, there was no action to support the peace talks and the Second Intifada was far more violent than the first one.

In order to promote ecosocial order, civil society can build environments and favour practices which satisfy needs in a universal way, thus contributing to moods such as happiness. These environments and practices should also reward systems of values based on a non violent and collective idea. Civil society can also promote feelings of rage which call to action in order to change current order but this will have to, necessarily, lead to changing satisfiers and practices. The key will be finding "sense" and in the satisfaction of needs generating positive feelings that match systems of values. Only when one reaches this "sense", does one do things because one wants to and not because one must. What makes sense is what gets things going and keeps them going for longer periods of time.

#### **Social change and satisfaction of needs**

The MST in Brazil is the biggest and strongest social organisation in the world. Its main form of action is the collective occupation of land. That way, it satisfies several social needs whilst promoting a collective system of values.

Most extremist movements follow the same logic throughout the MENA and Euro regions (from fascism to religious extremism). They act in areas in great need and try to solve problems by giving aid in order to obtain followers.

### 3.2.2 Slowing down increasing unease

Our societies are already affected by infrasatisfaction of several needs. This causes unease. Unease may be a motivator in creating alternatives. It may, for instance, make institutions and societies feel that we are in an “emergency situation” as we face the Global Crisis. This “emergency situation” can be used to put the spotlight on the severity of the situation and on the connection between the environmental, the social and the economic crises. It may help bring to the stage environmental topics, the redistribution of wealth and power in order to eliminate structural violence and help focus on securing ecosocial futures.

#### **Conception of “emergency situation” in the USA and the UK**

During the Second World War, in the individualistic societies of the UK and the USA, there was a collective conception that they were going through an “emergency situation”. This allowed many “en masse” measures to be put in place in order to adapt to the new context (austerity in consumption, strengthening of social bonds, urban agriculture: measures aimed at self-sufficiency).

#### **Unification of social and environmental struggles in Algeria**

In Salah lies 1000 kms southeast of Algiers. Its population is greatly dependent on nomadic ranching. Since the beginning of the government plan for exploitation of hydrocarbon through hydraulic fracturing, there has been widespread non violent resistance which has unified social and environmental needs.

However, unease usually provokes desperation and this, in turn, leads to fear, which makes poor company for ecosocial change since it normally opens the doors to EV. In order to confront desperation, we will have to help the population maintain security. There are some elements which may help.

#### Understanding

We feel more secure if we understand what is going on, even if we cannot control it. We must, therefore, build holistic frameworks to explain the Global Crisis and VE. We must also analyse both its causes and consequences. For instance, we must understand that ideology is not the true

cause of VE<sup>21</sup>. Analysing what is happening is much more than an intellectual act, it is a security mechanism.

### Mobilising emotions

We need emotions to propell us over desperation. One of these emotions is hope. Hope was the driving power behind the success of slogans such as “Another world is possible” which freed people from the neoliberal idea of “there is no alternative”. Hope, however, requires reasons on which to grow. For example, crises bring pain but they also bring hope. They imply fast, personal and social catharsis. Processes which seemed distant and complex now make sense. Crises mean that old ways stop working and are no longer credible, giving way to new forms. Additionally, the social format towards which humankind is heading is smaller (chapter 2) and “smaller” means potentially more democratic. The same could be said of societies with less available energy that are based on renewable energies and of those where technology is simpler and more universally accesible.

Social imaginary plays a key role in creating hope. A key imaginary, for instance, is that violent management of Global Crisis is only a possibility, that non violent management is also feasible and that history bares many examples such as the Tunisian and Egyptian revolutions. Another powerful imaginary is that there are no intrinsically violent cultures.

### Dignified living conditions

Having ways to maintain dignified living conditions is what gives us the most solid feeling of security. Therefore, maintaining social services in states (in places where the state is responsible for these services) is key. In any case, especially in places where states and the market become increasingly unable to provide basic services, new institutions must be created in order to satisfy everybody’s needs.

## 3.2.3 Construction of viable, ecosocial institutions in the Global Crisis

In the construction of satisfiers, a basic debate is what can be expected from the state and the non-state institutions created by civil society in future scenarios. By “non-state institutions” we mean institutions in which there is no organ of government separate from society. The idea is that the role of state institutions is to facilitate, or at least “laissez faire” while the role of non-state institutions is to do. Let’s see why.

As we have explained, a change in practices is decisive in changing values. Therefore, without direct participation, social change is impossible. Profound change will not come from the top (through state policy) but must be created through social self organisation. This does not mean that states can not create new contexts (which they can) but that the personal and social changes thus produced are less profound. They also produce more cultural violence.

Furthermore, non-state institutions follow different logics to state institutions. Managing a state requires the creation of majorities and more or less homogeneous social bodies. As opposed to that, the creation of institutions does not have to be state-centered. They do not need to convince the majority of the social body, they do not have to build hegemonies. They simply have to work in an autonomous way (if strong enough) while co-existing with other ways of organising society. This also facilitates dialogues that include all agents, especially the most antagonistic ones. Autonomy, as opposed to hegemony, also mimimises direct and cultural violence. In any case, autonomy also

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21 Austin, B.; Giessmann, H. J. (eds) (2018): *Transformative Approaches to Violent Extremism*. Berghof Handbook. Dialogue Series No. 13. Berghof Foundation. Berlin.

has its limits in an environment where inequality of power has reached unknown heights and which is marked by global processes like climate change.

### **Zapatista y Rojava autonomy**

The basic strategy of zapatism (Mexican social movement) is the construction of economic, educational, political and sanitary autonomy whilst co existing with other non-zapatista communities. No other movement in the world has made so much progress in this direction.

Furthermore, in the transition to a non violent world, reducing the use of violence is an option. The Ejército Zapatista de Liberación Nacional have done so. In fact, they have only used weapons once and caused no casualties whilst being attacked by military and paramilitary groups. Consequently, violence in the Chiapas region has decreased significantly.

The Democratic Federation of Northern Syria has followed a similar strategy and, in the midst of the Syrian civil war and harassment from the Turkish army, it has been able to move towards intercultural, just, feminist and sustainable societies, whilst reaching high levels of autonomy.

One element which is vital in these experiences is its resilience. However, there may be resilient organisations that feed VE, so alternatives must be both resilient and just<sup>22</sup>.

### **Criteria for just institutions**

<b>Organization</b>
The chance to influence strategic decisions is evenly shared.
The distribution of responsibilities is perceived as legitimate.
Tasks are evenly shared.
It is based on mutual support, cooperation and collaboration.
It discredits relations of oppression, exploitation, domination, exclusion and subordination.
It values difference as a source of collective wealth.
<b>Economy</b>
Access to generated goods and services is equitable.
Global ecosocial justice
Use of material and energy resources is not greater than the ecosystem's capacity of replacement, so it does not reduce the satisfaction of needs of other human communities, other species or future generations.
Draws attention to the social and environmental impact it causes.
Makes equitable decisions along with other organizations whenever necessary.

<sup>22</sup> Rivero, M.; Rubio, M.; González Reyes, L. (coord.); Berraquero, L.; Cembranos, F.; Gándara, M.; García-Torres, M.; Guillén, M.; Huertas, A.; Piñeiro, C. (2019): *Horizontes ecosociales. Indicadores para la resiliencia local y la justicia global*. Solidaridad Internacional Andalucía.

## Criteria for resilient institutions

<b>Organization</b>
It is understood by the people it may affect.
It is legitimised by the people it may affect.
Strategic decision making is widely decentralized.
Organizational structure is redundant in: a) decision making b) communication channels c) its members' skills.
It is based on mutual support, cooperation and collaboration.
It is self-organized and re organizes itself.
<b>Skills</b>
Understands the realities and contexts in which it is involved.
Detects changes in the system rapidly.
Adapts to changes in the system rapidly.
Learns and innovates.
Masters the knowledge and technology necessary in carrying out its functions.
Manages conflict adequately.
Possesses protection mechanisms.
Compensates possible undesired impacts that may occur as a consequence of changes made to improve the system.
Knows what resources it requires.
<b>Environmental autonomy</b>
Maintains low dependance on resources produced in other socioecosystems.
Does not need continuous economic growth.
Satisfies needs.
Relates to other institutions in : a) productive work, b) ludic spaces, c) decision making, d) learning y e) community reproductive work.
Depends on simple technology.
Availability of goods and services for satisfaction of needs is redundant.
<b>Sustainability</b>
Depends on proximate, renewable energies.
Its level of material consumption is not greater than the ecosystem's capacity of replacement.

Closes cycles or reintegrates into the system.
Improves ecosystemic functions: a) pollination b) climate stability c) purifying water d) fertilisation of soil.
<b>Social evaluation</b>
It is socially valued.

It this creation of new institutions, women play a key role since they are less steeped in the culture of violence and are important actors in their communities.

### Women and EV in Iraq

The Al-Ferdows Foundation works in demobilising and rehabilitating EV activists in Irak. It was founded by Fatima Al-Bahadely in 2015. Religious and cultural knowledge and its bonds with the community are vital in the way the foundation works. It offers youngsters religious literacy, work in promoting the ir positive contribution to the community and it schools the youngsters. A great deal of the institution´s success is due to Fatima Al-Bahadely´s legitimacy.

## 3.3 Tactics for non violent ecosocial transitions

Strategy must be supplemented by tactics which have been thoroughly developed by the OPEV<sup>23</sup>. The tactical level must put into operation specific measures that allow societies to move towards ecosocial order. This is present in goals such as striving for “education and resilience on a local level”, “protection of human rights”, “gender justice” or “democratic values”. But, at the same time, it must answer to circumstantial elements which are feeding EV (chapter 2). For that reason, OPEV proposals also include “monitoring the impact of all forms of violent extremism with special focus on hate discourse”, “reinforcing the responsibility of protecting victims”, “reinforcing the role of young people” or “generating alternative narratives”. Finally, tactics must avoid moving away from strategy. That is why tactics must not confront VE with military methods (disarticulating and isolating terrorist groups, equipping state security forces, carrying out counter propaganda encouraging cultural violence).

Table 3.2 refers to a selection of the main tactical measures.

Objective	Specific measure
Monitoring the impact of ALL forms of violent extremism with special focus on hate discourse in	Monitoring and launching a critical revision of all practices, strategies, policies, and national legislations whose goal it is to prevent and fight violent extremism, so as to determine whether they are respecting international humanitarian legislation, human

<sup>23</sup>Novact, OPEV, CMODH (2017): *Plan of Action of the Euro-Mediterranean Civil Society to prevent all forms of violent extremism*. OPEV. Barcelona.

traditional media and in the authorities	rights and rule of law.
	Developing control and follow-up systems to identify good practices and lessons learnt in prevention of violent extremism.
	Exploring and interceding in order to find opportunities to implement early warning and rapid response mechanisms in the prevention of violence as well as alternative mechanisms in the resolution of disputes and dialogue, negotiation, mediation, conciliation, refereeing or repairing justice, conflict resolution and obtaining lasting peace.
Reinforcing education and resilience on a local level	Designing and implementing awareness campaigns in order to give communities information about the different expressions of violent extremism and its negative impact.
	Reinforcing local abilities in the prevention of violent extremism and community resilience towards violent extremism.
	Designing and implementing awareness campaigns in order to give communities information about the different expressions of violent extremism and its negative impact.
	Promoting free and independent space for civil society who denounces repression of space for free expression and the fear of being tagged as a threat to security or as “extremist”.
	Promoting education in diversity and integrating shared values and common ground for social cohesion.
	Providing security forces, law agents and all the groups involved in the administration of justice as related to human rights with training in this area (human rights).
	Inviting individuals to abandon violent extremist groups by developing programmes which prioritize offering them economic and educational opportunities in line with the needs of civil population as a whole.
Reinforcing the responsibility of protecting	Promoting an integrated framework in order to face violent extremism with peaceful, nonviolent methods. Preventing all forms

victims	of violent extremism requires the resolution and prevention of conflict, inclusive development, respecting the standards set by human rights and democratic reform.
	Supporting and empowering the victims of violent extremism by supporting legal training and awareness campaigns about their rights.
	Supporting and integrating victims of hate crime and hate discourse 's message by promoting a message of tolerance and mutual understanding. Victims can be the main actors of change.
	Insuring programmes aimed at protecting those who protect as actors for the social change that is necessary in preventing violent extremism.
Insuring the protection of human rights in legislation	Monitoring and denouncing all policies aimed at fighting violent extremism and terrorism which limit human rights and individuals' civil freedom.
	Monitoring and supporting the accounting for of grave and systematic violation of international legislation of human rights and of international humanitarian law.
	Publically questioning laws that allow for massive and indiscriminate surveillance and gives security and intelligence services invasive powers.
	Protecting the defenders of human rights.
Promoting gender justice and exposing its specificities	Building women's and women's groups' abilities in getting involved in the prevention of extremist violence and in response measures.
	Promoting the inclusion of women in planning and decision-making spheres within institutional processes where policies to fight terrorism and violent extremism are defined.
	Supporting and strengthening organizations and networks of women in their peace making and reconciliation roles within formal institutions and mechanisms and on all levels of the decision making process.



	Strengthening the interaction with women's social organisations considering their impact after security-related actions and improving security in communities.
Strengthening the role of young people as actors for change	Promoting the inclusion of educational and youth organizations in the design, monitoring and control of prevention of violent extremism.
	Contributing towards young people's socio-economic development of young people, thus supporting a culture of entrepreneurship and facilitating job seeking and promulgating regulation.
	Exploring the means towards including civil and peaceful education in school syllabus, text books, teaching materials and teachers' training.
Protecting democratic values and space for civil society	Guaranteeing the whole population's access to justice (especially vulnerable communities).
	Supporting and monitoring the rendering of basic services in a way that is not discriminatory, ensuring transparency in delivery of those services and the extension of state services on a local level and creating an atmosphere where entrepreneurship may flourish and societies can become more peaceful, just and inclusive.
	Promoting political space for non-violent dialogue among all the essential actors in prevention of violent extremism. This dialogue should be based on respect for freedom of speech and freedom of assembly. It should also recognise and protect nonviolent groups in civil society as essential partners in the creation of plural and democratic societies.
	Taking up a local viewpoint in order to solve local issues in association with the population.
	Supporting the diversification of existing state funds used in the fight against terrorism and vouching for their allocation into pre-emptive measures against violent extremism.
	Improving cooperation between civil society and local authorities so as to create economic, cultural, political, and social opportunities in

	both rural and urban areas.
	Promoting the enjoyment of democratic values, cultural, economic and social rights, including initiatives based on human rights that help eliminate the conditions that drive people towards violent extremism.
	Promoting the establishment of transitional mechanisms of justice in order to face inherited consequences of the abuse of human rights and making sure victims receive restitution.
	Insuring social and economic participation of minority groups in their contexts in order to guarantee their political rights.
Generating alternative narratives in social and traditional media	Designing and implementing awareness campaigns informing about the negative impact of violent extremist ideologies. These campaigns should be aimed at the very same audience that is being targeted by hate discourse.
	Strategically supporting and getting involved in civil resistance and non violent movements and vouching for social transformation in the face of injustice, political violence and terror. Strengthening the legitimacy of non violent movements in violent conflict, seen as more effective strategy when fighting injustice, when trying to transform conflict and to reinforce community resilience.
	Promoting alternative narratives that deal with the driving factors of violent extremism, including current violations of human rights.
	Protecting the independence, freedom of opinion and speech, pluralism and diversity of the media within the legal framework of each country.
Promoting regional and local plans of action	Making sure that plans of action do not focus solely on violent extremism. They must also take into account the enormous variety of discourses and extremist behaviours. Currently, far right, ultranationalist or racist discourses also pose a threat and promote violent extremism.

Table 3.2: Objectives and tactical action in order to avoid EV.

## 4 WHEN “SECURITY” IS PART OF THE PROBLEM

### Summary

The aim of this chapter is to reflect on the centrality that the concept of security has acquired in recent times. This centrality has come about in a context of growing vulnerability and denial of fundamental needs, where the chances of violent response (EV) increase. This risk are used to justify the articulation of governments which turn security into its core technology.

We will analyze the different security strategies that public institutions and private sectors have put in place in the MENA and the Euro-Mediterranean regions. We will also analyze the way these measures have created new insecurities and inequalities. Far from obtaining a reduction in VE, securitization appears as a negative satisfier which, in fact, boosts VE. Lastly, we will look at alternative perspectives on security; perspectives that are far removed from this hegemonic model.

### 4.1 Context keys: violence, insecurity and security.

As we said in chapter 1, we believe that people who are exposed to violence (direct, structural, cultural) are more prone to responding with violence. In a context of Global Crisis (as described in chapter 2) in which structural violence becomes more intense, the chances of violent reactions by some social groups occuring increases, as does the appearance of VE.

We therefore find ourselves in scenario where:

4. According to statistics, objective insecurity proliferates; a person’s chances of being directly or indirectly affected by different types of direct violence are multiplying.
5. There is an increasing feeling of subjective insecurity, which is the feeling of insecurity citizens have in relation to their environment. This factor does not depend so much on objective figures. It depends more on the threat each person feels as to his personal situation, available information and media and political narrative.

Both forms of insecurity are inter-connected (the higher the levels of objective insecurity, the bigger the feeling of subjective insecurity gets), but at the same time, they may work independently creating situations where discourse about insecurity is not based on objective facts or data. In fact, the nature of these two types of insecurity is entirely different:

Type of insecurity	Factors that trigger it
Objective insecurity	Risk of being affected by terrorism, wars, police aggression, urban crime, sexist aggression, sexual violence, abuse...

Type of insecurity	Factors that trigger it
Subjective Insecurity	News, tales or rumours that are spread through territories, more or less precarious life situations, political discourse, stereotypes and prejudice...

In any case, both types (either separately or combined) are treated as the basis on which an extension of security measures (understood as a complex network of laws, norms, speeches, institutions, professionals, architectural installations, etc.) become justified. These measures have put security - as a way of government and as our main worry- in the center of our lives. We will now see how this mechanism is articulated and what effects it has.

## 4.2 Understanding the hegemonic security model

### 4.2.1 Securitising territory, policing and militarising conflict.

The terrorist attacks of September 11th on US territory were a point of inflection which made security the focus point in American foreign and inland, European and MENA region politics. The *pre-emptive war* justified substantial changes in the name of security that produced great profit for American based security industries and its allies (ICAN, 2017), despite persistently proving inefficient and provoking the intensification of radicalisation processes of certain groups (THE CIVIL SOCIETY NETWORK FOR HUMAN SECURITY, 2012). However, this process of securitisation is merely a more intense version of a process that stems from way back.

For several decades, security has been the *leitmotiv* for the implementation of punitive policies against forms of marginalization which, in fact, are a product of global capitalism all around the world. The definition of social problems in terms of “(in)security” as opposed to terms such as inequality, poverty or justice, allows for *securitarian* interventions instead of trying to implement social or redistribution measures and also justifies control of certain sectors of the population through repression both within and without a state’s borders.

**Insecurity is a snake that bites its own tail.** Various state devices (government, police, expert committees) carry out *securitising* strategies appealing to the objective insecurity in certain areas or times. However, *in the name of security*, this data is not usually shared publically with citizens and it is kept in the shadows within a circle of “experts”. We, therefore, say that insecurity is a snake that bites its own tail because it is the reason for implementing and justifying changes and asking citizens to have faith in the sources.

One fundamental tool in this strategy is state police. The police are called upon to solve conflict and social problems. Whenever there is normal, everyday conflict, the police appear in order to *establish order* and contain any leaks which may result from social conflict which is inherent to neoliberal societies such as inequality or structural poverty. There are, however, substantial differences between countries. While the police has a heavily militarized touch in the daily lives of

certain areas in El Cairo, Amman or Tunisia (Aliaga and Tricot, 2017), a “soft police” or “proximity police” (which is equally containing and regulating) is promoted in European countries as an extension of the neoliberal state.

Apart from containing social problems through the police and the Army, the securitization of territories also plays other important roles:

1. Insecurity is called upon in order to maintain certain populations on the fringes and to make poverty invisible through the construction of ghettos and hyper-ghettos (Wacquant 2009).
2. Insecurity also legitimises the construction of enclaves (Stavrides, 2015): areas which are specially limited from which certain people are ejected and which are later used to favour certain economic dynamics such as real estate speculation, company expansion, touristification, or gentrification of town centers. Many of these enclaves are consolidated through the use of securitising architecture (security officers in streets and businesses, fences, spikes, streetlamps to fight darkness, squares with irregular surfaces in order to avoid “unsafe” use, etc).

For instance, the constraint and apartheid exercised on the Palestine population in the name of *security* has served to promote real estate markets and to maintain some kind of symbolic disciplination over Arab populations.

3. The constant alert the events of 11-S created justified what has become known as “banal terrorism”, an analogue of the “global war against terrorism”. Banal terrorism consists of the use and spreading of fear of new attacks in order to legitimize increasing control over potentially disruptive populations (socially disadvantaged, radical and constructed as the “enemy”). This has allowed for greater militarization and police presence.
4. Another expression of security is the proliferation of borders both inside and outside countries. Borders take the shape of high walls, coast guards, detention centers, deportation as a way of tailoring movements of population to the needs of the global labour market regardless of lives being at stake. These borders also become more widespread in cities: police controls, raids, new detention centers, alien laws, fines etc. These borders distribute population in multiple and unequal social positions depending on the rights those borders regulate, thus multiplying forms of inequality within cities.
5. Finally, securitarian policies (anti terrorist, among others) have often caused a militarization in the way social problems are managed and intensified aggression in police methods with practices that go against Human Rights and end up feeding VE<sup>24</sup>.

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24 The direct relation between the final steps in extremist radicalization and traumatic contact with the state’s security forces is mentioned in the report “A Journey to Extremism in Africa” by UN’s Programme for Development (available at: <http://journey-to-extremism.undp.org/> p. 87). The UN’s Plan of Action to Prevent Violent Extremism states that strategies focused on “fighting terrorism” while ignoring “the conditions that favour terrorism” and that “everybody’s human rights are respected and rule of law maintained” in the fight against terrorism are strategies which must be revised and checked (available at: [https://www.un.org/en/ga/search/view\\_doc.asp?symbol=A/70/674&Lang=S](https://www.un.org/en/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=A/70/674&Lang=S) p.3)

<b>MAIN SIGNS OF SECURITIZATION IN THE TERRITORY</b>		
<b>Strategy</b>	<b>Objective</b>	<b>Violence it promotes</b>
Police corps	Containment of social conflict	Direct violence
Creation of ghettos	Making poverty invisible	Structural violence
Building of urban enclaves, securitarian architecture	Speculation and marketing of territory	Structural violence
Banal Terrorism	Control of social conflict, creation of enemies and constant terror	Cultural violence
Internal and external borders	Management of populations, creation of inequalities	Direct and structural violence

“Security” (as transmitted by neoliberal discourse) is not only not satisfying the need of security, but is also limiting satisfaction of another basic need: freedom, or at least many people’s freedom since we are dealing with differential security (security based on inequalities). Therefore, the aforementioned strategies share the concept of security as an individual right, as non relational and closely connected to the market (security as a consumer, individual security where nothing interferes in the privacy of one’s home, security as a warranty of election); a right which must be defended by certain populations (“legitimate” citizens with potential for consumption and able to vote) while security and control mechanisms prey on more disadvantaged populations. We are, therefore, talking about differential security which produces and reproduces the social inequalities of a given order. This is increasingly so as a result of the Global Crisis (chapter 2). In line with the main thesis in the current manual, securitization must be understood as a negative satisfier of fundamental needs.

### **4.3 Exceptionality, states of emergency and fear of the other as a securitarian strategy.**

One of the most recently popular securitarian mechanism and one of the most problematic ones in management of VE is exceptionalism. Exceptionalism is a mode of government which consists of

1. Adopting exceptional security measures (police operations, border control, intercepting communications, raids, arrests, detention, torture, etc.), some of which are clearly illegal, when facing a dangerous emergency or an imminent threat.
2. Encouraged by the media, who avidly look for spectacular news, the citizens’ fear of that threat provides breeding ground for emergency measures.

3. Turning the measures taken into a show helps create a scapegoat which, in turn, stigmatizes certain groups.
4. Maintaining the emergency measures once the threat has disappeared. This *permanent* insecurity explains why, generally, people accept securitization even if it means reducing freedom.
5. Securitarian overacting on behalf of the authorities, which restores the symbolic order that was altered during the attacks gives the impression of things being back to normal although the social groups affected by the violence of these security measures will suffer the excesses and interpret them as the opposite to quiet normality.

#### **Justifying securitarian efficiency**

After the terrorist attacks of the 11th of March 2004 in Madrid, the need of the state to make citizens feel that antiterrorist actions were being effective led to the arrest of 652 people between the date of the attacks and 2015. Only 216 finally went to court and only 144 were sentenced<sup>[1]</sup>. Most of the acquittals were due to lack of evidence while in most of the sentences the only proven crime was illegal association.

[1]Diagonal / La Directa, 30/12/2015, <https://www.elsaltodiario.com/hemeroteca-diagonal/las-cloacas-de-la-lucha-antiyihadista>

The indiscriminate use of these exceptional measures on a given social group makes them suspects of terrorism and crime, deepens their social segregation and produces new exclusions. The people who suffer this social harm tend to interpret the hegemonic order as being profoundly unjust, thus providing breeding ground for the justification of VE.

#### **The spiral of violence**

The radicalisation processes many minorised youngsters go through in the outskirts of European cities are an example of this process: these youngsters see problems pile up throughout their lives. These problems stem from unemployment, cutbacks in social policies, and structural racism both at school and at work. They have also suffered differential police control where racial identity checks and searches have intensified. A great part of the terrorists involved in attacks in Europe in recent years meet this profile. This inequality which reproduces security in a violent way becomes the seed from which radicalisation processes grow.



### 4.3.1 Non-state actors in the production of securitarian strategies.

Securitarian mechanisms are made up of diverse actores that go from a more global scale to a local scale. The most visible form in most cities is usually the state trying to establish its authority and social order through the army and the police. However, there are other agents we besides the state that we must take into account:

1. An increasingly relevant actor is the private market. Individuals, companies and public institutions are resorting to the private market in order to guarantee certain forms of security and order. This generates enormous profit in certain private companies and eases pressure on the state by doing its dirty work while the state maintains strategic management. An estimated 180,000 million dollars is circulating in the private security sector and in 2020, that figure could rise to 240,000 million dollars.

#### Shock Monitor

Although calculating the exact number and impact of “private wars” and of private military and security company personnel is extremely complex, human rights activists’ and organisations’ attempts to gather data are increasing significantly in recent times (see the initiative ‘Shock Monitor’: <http://shockmonitor.org/>)

2. Another important actor are citizens. In western countries, through the media creation of emergency states, the population very often asks the state for a heavy-handed approach by different forms of punitive populism. Wherever the Welfare states are weak or institutions explicitly corrupt, citizens will often take self-protection measures which may be more or less violent and excluding.

### 4.3.2 “Security” that produces insecurity?

We can safely say that hegemonic security measures do not create objective or subjective security, since they do not work on the structural causes of inequality. Moreover, we can state that they cause social disaffiliation among more criminalized subjects, who in certain contexts and circumstances may find that the only way out of their situation is through VE.

The militarisation and “policization” of society reinforces authoritarian notions of masculinity that consider men as both protectors and warriors and turning women’s bodies into war trophies and delving into gender injustice.

Once we have assumed the inefficiency of hegemonic security in reducing insecurity, we can only see security as a way of government, as an efficient mode of maintaining social order. This social order, perpetuates a situation of structural violence where the fundamental needs of the vast majority of the population are not being satisfied. Hegemonic security seen as a satisfier of security creates quite the opposite: it generates objective and subjective insecurity while (re)producing social inequality due to its differential management. It becomes a negative satisfier which generates insecurity.



## **4.4 Synergic satisfiers of security: Towards security based on rights and bonds.**

In the last decades some alternative responses to hegemonic models of “security” are being drawn up.

### **4.4.1 Human security**

The concept of human security (PNUD, 1994) has been the most successful and the most widespread alternative response in the last two decades. Human security refers to a new concept in security which focuses on the individual and is connected to human development (economic, nutritional, health, environmental, personal, community and political securities). Security is conceived as more comprehensive, considering aspects such as hunger, illness, repression, deterioration of the environment, unemployment, lack of basic income for housing or loss of community as security issues.

When applied to scenarios of armed conflict, it prioritizes the protection of people and their communities, not only against terrorism but also against collateral effects and the intentional violence of counter-terrorist measures which are applied from a hegemonic security point of view. The indicator of this approach in its analysis of the violation of human rights produced by anti-terrorist policies in the Euro-Mediterranean region is the protection of the population instead of the number of captured terrorists. (see the report 'No Security without Rights, NOVACT & OPEV, (2017)).

In contexts where armed conflict and terrorism are not so present, human security is also being applied as comprehensive approaches to citizen security, which deal with issues related to personal security (introducing new forms of policing such as community and proximity police), but also focusing on situations of insecurity caused by lack of housing and unhealthiness.

However, the use of the concept of human security alone does not guarantee an approach aimed at social justice. National and local governments' appropriation of this concept is changing the sense of human security as it is being used as a tool of control instead of seeking more equality. In fact, this enlargement of the idea of security into areas like poverty or coexistence is allowing security agents (police officers) deal with issues of a social nature instead of letting the communities or other social and educational intervention professionals take care of these matters. In so doing, these security agents, introduce the logic of police governance.

### **4.4.2 Anti-securitarian discourse**

The anti-security approaches (RIGAKOS, S. and NEOCLEOUS, 2011) constitute a combination of critical discourses which highlight the functions of control and of generation of inequality that are present in the notion of security (however “humanized” it may be). Whereas there is a set of discourses that see security as the natural response to a world of violence, there is another set of arguments that try to prove that that particular discourse wrong:

3. Some arguments try to show that security is a tsunami for rights and liberties which have been obtained in some national contexts in recent decades.
4. Others revolve around the inefficiency of securitarian measures (relation between cost and benefits).

5. Finally, other arguments try to work on the concept of security itself and the model of human security but giving the latter a whole different meaning by referring to a “different protection” based on social rights (housing, guaranteed wages, etc.) instead of referring to a “different police”.

#### **Thinking and speaking in an anti-securitarian way**

In 2016, some reactionary movements called for “more police”, “more security” and the setting up of “CCTV cameras” in some peripheral, working-class neighbourhoods in the city of Madrid. Their goal was to “expel” crime (including sexual workers and street vendors) from those areas. That discourse had an underlying feeling of general discontent towards institutional neglect and the havoc caused by the crisis which was expressed through hate towards migrants and urban poverty. In the Vallecas district, there was a counter-reaction which was called “ValleKas No Se Vende” (Vallecas is not on sale). This collective was formed by neighbours who were social activists and they appealed to the possible consequences of a securitarian increase in the area: the increase in police “razzias” against migrant population (35% in the neighbourhood) and real estate speculation stemming from a strategy of “cleaning up” the area. They also pointed out the inefficiency of the securitarian strategy in solving structural neglect and inequality in the area and the possible consequence of social problems being moved to other areas.

**Key:** Appealing to different arguments, paying special attention to the consequences of securitarian practice may be the key in stopping processes of hegemonic securitization.

### **4.4.3 De-securitizing our lives: community and feminism in building trust**

In critical studies on security, one of the big debates is about the possibilities, limits and challenges of de-securitization. De-securitizing means transforming a social object which has always been regarded in terms of security outside that framework.

#### **Community relations as the base for self-organized communities**

In 1995, the climate of intense state neglect and political violence put in place by the local elites (local politicians, narcos and caciques) in the Mexican state of Guerrero drove the rural population to organize. They created a justice system based on autonomous courts (CRAC) with its own police corps: the Community Police. This organization currently includes 150 towns, including urban areas and four different ethnic groups.

**Key:** Not without problems, the CRAC appeals to a different sense of justice (based on “use and custom”) and of security (based on rights, the re-education of prisoners and the will to end the inequality which has been going on for centuries in their territory). It is an example of the re-appropriation of security that goes beyond the limits of the state-nation and the hegemonic neoliberal model of security.

**Inspiration:** One of the keys to the success of this autonomous justice system was that the process involved a slow and constant creation of community networks, of trust and a sense of belonging that surpasses global neoliberalism.

Different social movements around the world are betting on approaching state, criminal and extremist violence from an autonomous and communal point of view. Native communities in Latin America and black community movements in the USA have been working on self-management of justice and on day-to-day protection by recuperating customary law institutions and by experimenting with mechanisms that provide a great level of autonomy whilst limiting dependency on state security (chapter 3).

### **The Arab revolutions as examples of community building**

The processes of struggle for social rights that took place on both sides of the Mediterranean since the beginning of the “Arab Spring” are a good example of the building of community bonds both in reciprocity and cooperation. These are relations which help generate feelings of social trust.

In that sense, the building of community bonds which brings issues that had been placed in the sphere of market and state back into the sphere of community issues, allows for a considerable reduction in subjective insecurity and gives those communities control over their own security (BLOKLAND, 2016). Furthermore, relations and institutions which regulate the use of violence through cultural references and leaderships that act as both models of engagement with the community and as independent (from state agents) figures in conflict mediation may be built from those community spheres.

### **Community care exercised by women.**

In many marginalized areas, gangs are a form of socialization for youngsters. Sometimes resorting to violence takes the form of outbursts. Police intervention is often presented as the only way to contain this phenomenon.

**Key:** When these outbursts take place, an invisible community fabric starts working. Several women, who have earned the community’s respect through years of social engagement, are able to convince a group of teenagers to put down their weapons, sit down and talk to rival factions, reduce tension, articulate a network to help youngsters leave gangs, etc.

**Inspiration:** Community care, that willingness to listen, to be present and approachable in dealing with others’ problems can be much more effective than defensive positions and resorting to police logics.

Feminist and de-colonial perspectives have usually proven to be great feeding ground for debate about securitization and a great clame for de-securitization. From the feminist paradigm, criticism towards hegemonic government security has circulated around three main lines:

1. A liberal feminist line which focuses its demands on the presence of women in the creation of public policy and in the studies about security so as to ensure that gender perspective be present in both areas. Another goal is to encourage the insertion of certain values which are normally materialised within the female population (Hansen, 2000).
2. A second standpoint consists of identifying, analysing and spreading the specific practices of women in promoting a culture of peace and less militarized societies. This perspective tries to not only make women more visible in strategic spaces, but to also highlight the differential experiences of women which help make an issue of the bases of male-centered security.
3. A third line makes an issue of the existence of one sole “authentic female experience and encourages the politicisation of discourse on security that is made “in the name of gender””. They aim to radically alter the biological criteria used in understanding sexual identity and social relations and to ask how gendered identities, when combined with various other variables of domination, mimic the structural hierarchy of insecurities or react against it.

#### Feminist point of view

In recent years, a feminist perspective has found its way into urbanism which states that territories should be planned to satisfy the needs of life reproduction (care of elder citizens and children) and not so much to satisfy economic production (commuting to work and centers of consumption).

**Key:** One of the fundamental forms of this feminist urbanism is the production of spaces that favor sociability, rest and the care of children and that allow neighbourhoods to monitor their own environment.

### SUMMARISING ALTERNATIVES TO THE HEGEMONIC SECURITARIAN MODEL

<b>1. Human security</b>	Security understood as human development.
<b>2. Anti-securitarian approaches</b>	<p>Criticism towards security as control and generation of inequalities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Loss of rights</li> <li>• Inefficiency of securitarian measures</li> <li>• Security as social protection</li> </ul>

<b>3. De-securitizing experiences</b>	Self-management of inequalities by communities. Avoiding frameworks on security in appealing to community welfare.
	Rebuilding community bonds in order to create social trust.
	Feminist paradigms.

In any case, in any of these alternatives, there is clear criticism towards hegemonic “security” since they see that security as upholding the paradigms of authoritarian, unjust and unsustainable societies which are criticised all through the manual. The creation of policies of trust in territories can help promote alternatives to this hegemonic government vision which is based on fear and conflict and also promote the use of the frameworks of security strategically based on the needs of the people and the territory.

# 5 IDENTITY

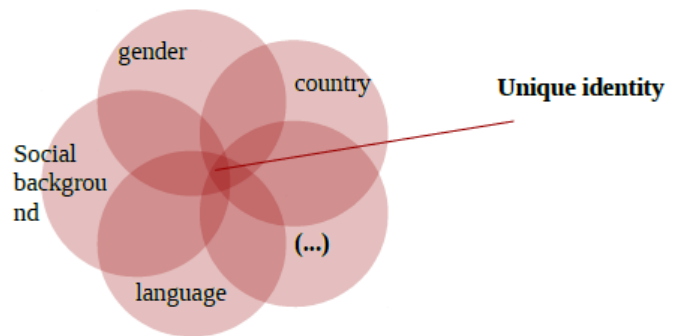
## Introduction: Why work on identity?

Understanding what shapes identity and some of the keys about how it is built will help us put ourselves in contexts where the need of identity is not satisfied (why is it at risk, why is there an identity crisis). VE and PVE offer ways of satisfying the need of identity. We will explore some of the keys in creating identity so as to facilitate constructive identities as opposed to violent identities.

## 5.1 Concept of Identity

### 5.1.1 What is identity and what components does it have?

We could define “identity” as a combination of socio-cultural features which we share with some individuals (they draw us closer) and which differentiate us from other individuals. A person’s identity is built on a variety of infinite elements with which that person identifies. These elements may be of different types: language or linguistic groups, religious belief, country of birth or of residence, cultural identity, ethnic group, skin tone, gender, sexual preference, political ideology, profession, socio-economic status, age, etc. Identifying with these elements makes us share something with a lot of people although each person is probably the only one to share all those elements at the same time<sup>25</sup>. This is what gives us our unique identity (which we experience as a whole).



Identity is built and transformed through time. We vary the “belongings” or main elements we identify with. The elements that most define our identity are not always the same; they may vary in time or place.

Even the elements which are more constant or seem more unchangeable do not shape experiences the same way for different people. If we take skin tone as an example, the way this element shapes experience depending on place and historical time. For somebody born in Nigeria, the most important element in their identity is not whether they are black or white but whether they are *yoruba* or *hausa*, for example. However, in the times of Apartheid in South Africa, the colour of a person’s skin was vital in understanding their identity<sup>26</sup>.

This gives us an idea of how elements of identity which we think are “absolute” may prove relative depending on place and time. A person’s identity is a contextual experience (it depends on context) and a located experience (depending on the specific situation the person is going through). Therefore, different contexts and situations make the elements of identification vary.

<sup>25</sup>MAALOUF, A. Identidades Asesinas. Madrid. Alianza Editorial

<sup>26</sup>Ibidem

Tools/keys	
<b>Seeing ourselves as diverse subjects</b>	If we see our identity as being integrated by multiple belongings, we can have a different relationship with the rest, with “us” and with “them”. Sometimes, we may feel closer to “them” in some aspects and we may feel that there are people in the “us” who we do not share so many things with.
<b>Creating spaces for nonviolent identification</b>	We need to belong and identify with people or groups and we can choose who with but it is necessary to have spaces for identification with nonviolent values that may make them attractive.

### 5.1.2 How is identity built? Priority identities

*Identity is “a process of building meaning based on a cultural attribute which is prioritized over other sources of meaning”<sup>27</sup>.*

The people near us and our context influence our belongings, in whether we identify with a certain human group or another. Although there are multiple elements that build our identity, one of these belongings often appears as vital in our perception<sup>28</sup>. Which belongings may appear as priorities? There are different points of view about this: those connected to more constant elements such as language (although this does not guarantee a feeling of union among speakers of the same language), religion (especially if the believer submits all his actions to this central category), and sometimes the most important things in our identity are accidents or one-off elements instead of millenary legacy.

For our manual, we are interested in identification with a priority belonging as the result of a threat to one of its elements or as a way of overcoming an identity crisis.

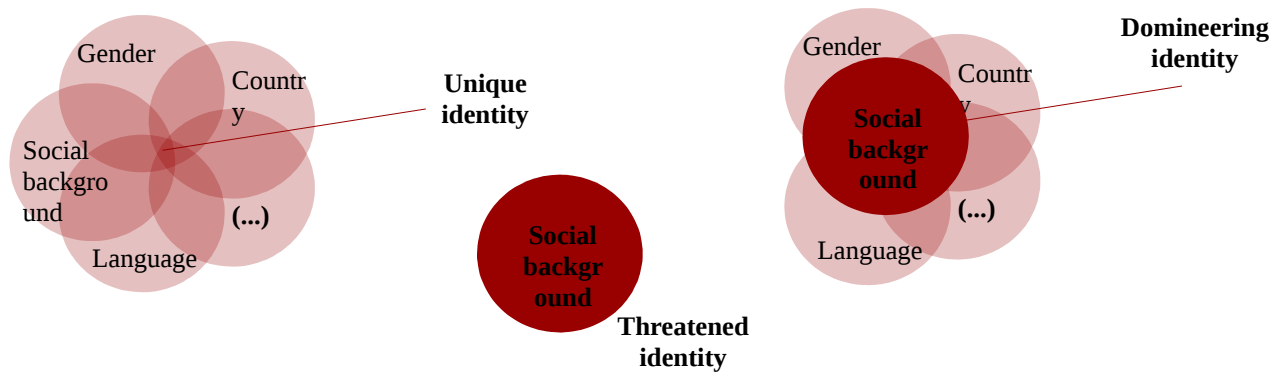
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<sup>27</sup>Rothenberger y M. Kotarac (2015)

<sup>28</sup>Although there is not a single belonging which can impose itself over the whole system of identification -which we have seen, is complex-, what may impose itself is our self-perception, the way we see ourselves. There is often an abyss between what we are and what we think we are.

### 5.1.2.1 The threat in our identity

When we feel one of the elements in our identity is threatened, we tend to summarise all our identity in that single aspect. We recognize ourselves in that belonging which we feel is under attack and asserting it can be an act of liberation.



Feeling that our identity is under threat can lead to fear or insecurity. The bigger the threat we perceive<sup>29</sup>, the bigger the chances of taking a strong stance, of becoming polarized and of extremist positions emerging. We tend to create imaginary frontiers of belonging with those we think are a threat to us (we see them as a homogeneous whole). The bigger the polarization gets, the larger the distance between “us” (Others-equals) and “others” (Others-different) becomes. We sometimes even build our identity in opposition to what “the rival” represents; we see ourselves as “what the rival is not”.

At the heart of every community which has felt threatened, there is a need to respond to that threat. From the logic of VE, in order to satisfy that need of reinforcing community identity, people or groups who fly the flag of that community’s identity while using extreme expressions may “heal the wounds” of the people in that group. They help “quench” the thirst for revenge and promote the idea that “they deserve it”<sup>30</sup>.

29 We refer to perceived threat, not only to real threat but to how the person perceives the threat.

30 MAALOUF, A (1998). *Identidades Asesinas*. Madrid. Alianza Editorial.



### Priority of what is under threat: The example of religion as a priority factor

In the MENA region, globalization is seen as a threat, among other things, to muslim identity. As a result, many adopt an increasingly religious behaviour as a sign of resistance<sup>31</sup>. Other milestones which are clear examples of this process of prioritizing one identity over another could be: the revolution in Iran (where a great part of the Muslim population was unhappy with M. Reza Shah Pahlavi's government which was seen as a puppet of the West), the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan or the American invasion of Iraq<sup>32</sup>. In these cases, religious identity appears as a powerful tool of identification<sup>33</sup> of the *Others-equals* (Muslims) and the *Others different* (foreign, western influence).

Tools/Keys	
<b>Creating spaces in which to channel pain and work on the threat</b>	Creating spaces that allow people to build new tales of unease is important in order to channel the pain into expressions that do not amplify hate and feelings of vengeance. These spaces must help us understand what we are in a different way. It is vital that we work on that perception of threat and not only with the reaction it generates.
<b>Understanding threatened identities</b>	The world is full of wounded communities that suffer persecution or remember having been persecuted and dream of revenge. We must not justify violence or be lenient with violence, but we must be sensitive and understand the pain.
<b>Threatened identities that do not threaten</b>	Threatened identities may defend themselves by reinforcing their identity as opposed to the "Other-different" and wishing to prevail over that "Other-different" or they may base their new construction on their own values without opposing that other.

### 5.1.2.2 Identity crisis

In situations of identity crisis, finding a dominating element to identify with produces relief and the feeling that the crisis is solved. This crisis can be caused by different elements:

31 LEEN, A. (et. al) (2017). Social Identity and Radicalisation: A Review of Key Concepts. Aman, Jordan. West Asia-North Africa Institute. Editor: Dr Erica Harper.

32 KOSÁROVÁ, D. & UŠIAK, J. (2018). The role of identity in the contemporary global terrorist movement. In Politické vedy. [online].

33Ibidem

<b>A feeling of relative deprivation of rights</b>	Belonging to a marginalised social class: poor, immigrant, minority ethnic group, etc. and not being able to do certain jobs for which they are sufficiently qualified <sup>34</sup> . They feel a lack of opportunities and difficulties in improving their social <i>status</i> . This feeds a feeling of frustration, discrimination and of rejection of the society they live in.
<b>Division between two identities</b>	They feel that they do not belong to either of the strongest identities in their context and look for places where they feel they belong, and new identities in order to answer: who are we?, what are we doing?, who are the others? <sup>35</sup> ( <i>Frequent situation among marginalized youngsters (see chapter on security)</i> )
<b>Perception of lack of respect or discrimination</b>	Towards customs or identity features. More usual among identity elements which are not counter-cultural in the dominating social context. For example, discrimination of languages, customs, festivities...

These people need to satisfy their need of identity and are more vulnerable to extremist ideas which give them a feeling of acknowledgement and a perception of superior *status*<sup>36</sup>.

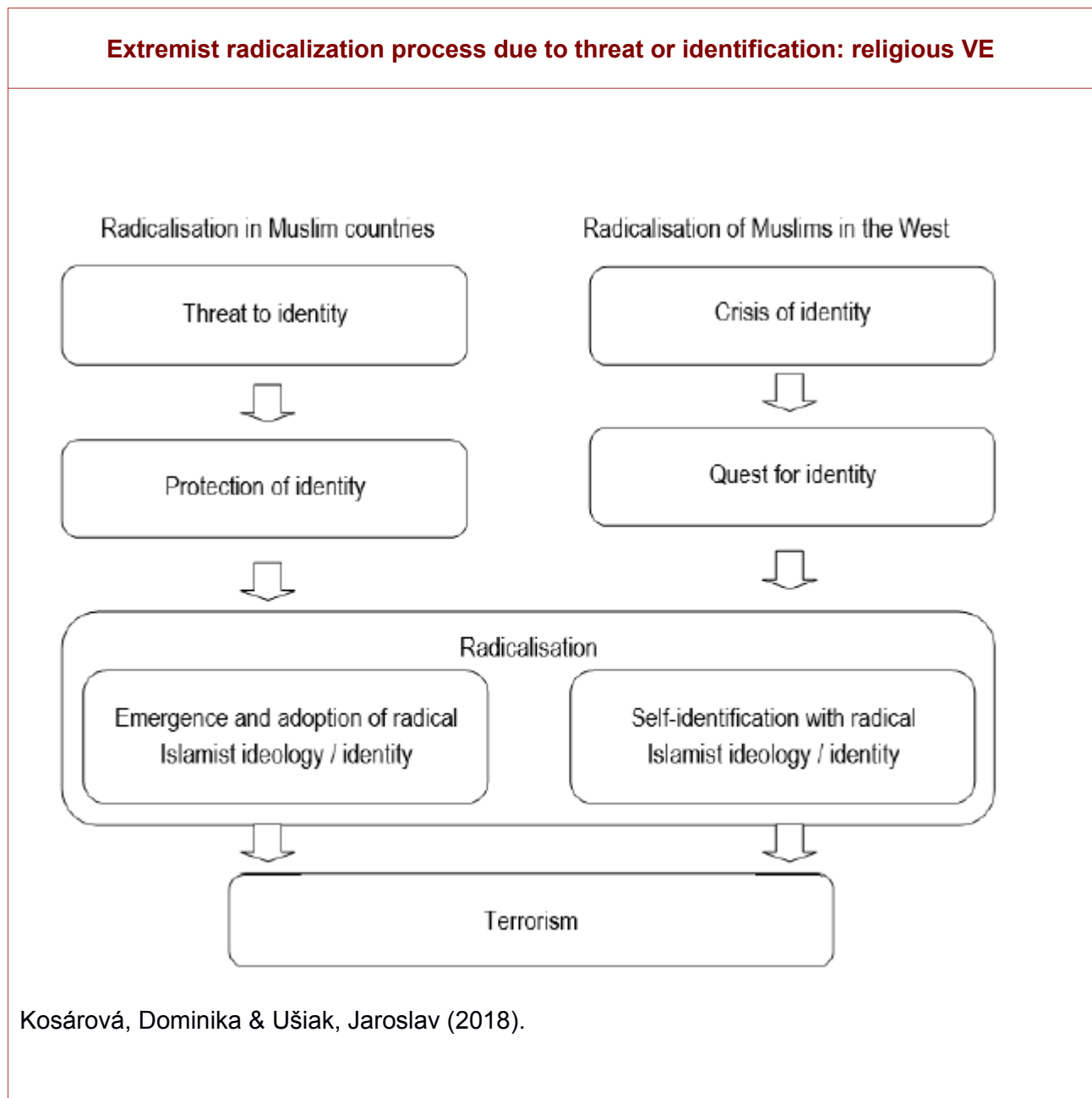
34 Example of the second and third generation of Muslims in Europe. RABASA, A. & BENARD, C. 2015. Eurojihad. Patterns of Islamist Radicalisation and Terrorism in Europe. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2015. 229

35 Example of how it works with religious identity as a driver for VE. ROTHENBERGER, L. & KOTARAC, M. (2015). The Discursive Construction of a Religious Terrorist Group Identity. In *Культура/Culture*. No. 11/2015, ISSN 1857-7725, pp. 91-102

36 KOSÁROVÁ, D. & UŠIAK, J. (2018). The role of identity in the contemporary global terrorist movement. In *Politické vedy*. [online].

### 5.1.3 From threatened identity or identity crisis to VE

By using the example of religious identity, the following chart shows us how a radicalization process ending in VE may act when an identity is in crisis or threatened. We could replace religion with national identity, or ideological identity but the logic would be similar.



#### Identification with VE

Different authors have described the phases in processes of conversion to VE (*NYPD Model of Jihadization*, *Precht's Model*) and point out that an important initial phase of self-identification in which individuals move away from their original identities and become more vulnerable to extremist ideology. Firstly, there is a “perception of being a victim” which is where identification

takes place. After that, the individual assumes the ideology.

#### 5.1.4 What threatens our identity? Threat factors and drivers

There are a series of contextual factors related to psychosocial dynamics (of construction of identity) that create a feeling of threat and increase vulnerability to violent options. Some of the main factors are: illegitimacy, instability and uncertainty<sup>37</sup>. The consequences of these factors act as mobilizers that push; push factors (contexts of dissatisfaction of needs seen in chapters 1 and 2) and the logic of VE attract; pull factors, using the keys described.

Factor	Description	Logic of VE	Keys
<b>Illegitimacy</b>	When a group considers existing relations between groups to be illegitimate, that other external groups have illegitimate power, it tries to improve its inferior status and develop alternative identities which may help establish a new context of power.	The more intense the perception of illegitimacy and the more totalitarian external power is, the easier it is for violent logics who want to take power to appear. These logics give the group a feeling of power.	Building power and legitimacy.
<b>Instability</b>	Different groups seeking a situation of superior power and following dynamics of conflict.	Confrontation in order to prove supremacy over the rest. Stability based on the homogeneity of equals and supremacy over Others-different.	Identification with equals. Stability in and with the group of others.

<sup>37</sup>LEEN, A. (et. al) (2017). Social Identity and Radicalisation: A Review of Key Concepts. Aman, Jordan. West Asia-North Africa Institute. Editor: Dr Erica Harper

<b>Factor</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Logic of VE</b>	<b>Keys</b>
<b>Uncertainty</b>	Complex narratives, confusing context, uncertain social and economic future..	Extremist groups often succeed in simplifying reality through simple and clear slogans based on self-assertion and on their supremacy over others which provide the sensation of certainty in listeners. They present a clearly articulated and unique identity, and a rigid system of beliefs and strong behaviour requirements. They are usually more attractive because they promise solutions to what seems uncertain.	<p>Clear and simple messages.</p> <p>Strong organization and values.</p> <p>Guidelines for action.</p>

Both VE and PVE deal with the same contexts and the keys on which identities are articulated are often similar, but objectives and values are very different.

<b>Factor</b>	<b>Keys</b>	<b>PVE Logics</b>
<b>Illegitimacy</b>	Building power and legitimacy.	Positive experiences of transformation and moral legitimacy of non violence.
<b>Instability</b>	<p>Identifying with equals.</p> <p>Stability of and in the group of equals.</p>	Construction of non discriminatory identities. Focusing on what unites equals and understanding difference as diversity instead of as opposition.
<b>Uncertainty</b>	<p>Clear and simple messages (not complicated).</p> <p>Strong organization and and values.</p> <p>Guidelines for action.</p>	<p>Adapting language, building clear messages in/with uncertain groups and realities.</p> <p>Radical beliefs and values of non violent transformation.</p>

In these contexts, groups that offer satisfiers in order to reduce those factors play a major role. Being a member of those groups reduces the sensation of insecurity. Belonging to certain groups guarantees relief when in difficulties since its members share perceptions, values, behaviours or attitudes with other members. They give sense and clarity on how to act. This is part of the social identity as a form of satisfying that need.

## 5.2 Satisfaction of the need of identity: Social identity

Social Identity is the feeling of identity which stems from belonging to a group. It provides a “shared/collective representation” of who they are and of how members of the group should behave<sup>38</sup>. This belonging gives us a social value or significance which makes us feel proud and increases our self-esteem. This is specially attractive for people who feel their chances of personal development have been limited, who feel they are going through personal difficulties or in contexts in which there is a perception of inferiority in the face of certain external powers.

As people evaluate their self-esteem based on belonging to the group, this facilitates the person’s behaviour serving the group even if it means personal sacrifice<sup>39</sup>. This is valid for both processes of violent transformation of reality (VE) and non violent processes of transformation (PVE). In both processes, the individual may undergo personal sacrifice. *Social Identity* determines the way more vulnerable individuals behave and it may become more important than the personal dimension of a person’s identity (the group’s influence conditions)<sup>40</sup>.

Keys provided by social identity	VE Logics	PVE Logics
The group offers a vision of the world	They offer a clear and closed vision of the world by simplifying events (usually dichotomic visions).	They offer more systemic visions. They need clear messages although they are based on more complex visions.
Power	Belonging to these extremist groups provides a feeling of superior <i>status</i> to its members (Power over others-different).	Identities built on <i>power with</i> other-equals but not over others-different.

38 ABRAMS, D. & HOGG, M. (2006). *Social Identifications: A Social Psychology of Intergroup Relations and Group Processes*. Florence, US. Routledge Ed

39 LEEN, A. (et. al) (2017). *Social Identity and Radicalisation: A Review of Key Concepts*. Aman, Jordan. West Asia-North Africa Institute. Editor: Dr Erica Harper

40 This is a key mechanism in a person turning into a violent extremist or terrorist. () Sageman, 2017; Barrelle, 2010; Baray, Postmes y Jetten, 2009 en *The We in Me. Considering Terrorist Desistance from a Social Identity Perspective*. Sigrid Raets. *Journal for Deradicalization*. Nr 13 Winter 2017/2018.

Keys provided by social identity	VE Logics	PVE Logics
Group cohesion (collective identity)	VE seeks to maintain its self-perception of superior status through increasing prejudice and negative stereotypes about other groups ("we are the good guys", "we own the the truth", "they want to annihilate what we are", "they are coming for us"...). Belonging becomes more solid when the limits between groups become impermeable ("you are either with us or with them", "with me or against me"). At that point, the "other" is demonized.	Cohesion through positive experiences of collective satisfaction of needs.  The only dichotomy is the cohesion in non violence when faced with violence (justice versus injustice, sustainability versus unsustainability).
Guidelines for action that transform behaviour	Membership is valued and the person behaves according to the collective norms and the group's system of values. Hence, people get involved in extremist violence as a result of these collective norms that bind members of the group together against external groups <sup>41</sup> . On their own, violent ideas do not necessarily produce violent behaviour. It is this collective identification which allows for collective violent action <sup>42</sup> .	Identity based on mutual support without excludint the Other-different. This leads to transforming realities into ecosocial contexts. Non violent norms and systems of values.

*Social Identity* establishes relations with other external groups. These relations have been generally classified as: relations of differentiation, of competition or of antagonism. These relations may tend towards hostility when there is the perception that there are illegitimate relations of power between the different groups in society. *Social Identity* gives guidelines for relations with external groups where the logic of VE's acts are based on competition and antagonism and the reaction to conflict is violence. PVE logic builds on difference being understood as diversity. When there is conflict, it seeks understanding or negotiation based on inter-dependence.

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<sup>41</sup> ibidem

<sup>42</sup> SAGEMAN, M. (2017). *Turning to Political Violence: The Emergence of Terrorism*. Philadelphia. University of Pennsylvania Press.

### **Identities of resistance, identities of transformation**

One of the keys in VE groups is that they have created identities of resistance vis-a-vis the powers they confront (and vis-a-vis the present they want to change radically).

One of the keys in prevention work in vulnerable contexts is building non violent identities of resistance within logics of radical, non violent transformation towards just, democratic and sustainable futures. It is necessary to react to context (chapter 3).

The first Intifada in Palestine or the Via Campesina (with increasing presence on both sides of the Mediterranean) are examples of the creation of non violent identities of resistance (in chapter 1 we saw that non violence that transforms= non violent resistance + non violent construction).



# 6 CONFLICT AND POLARISATION

## Summary

This chapter focuses conflict and polarisation. It proposes ways to develop fluidity when being in conflict and explains the dynamics of escalation and de-escalation, and how these are connected to polarisation. Many of the logics here presented are based on interpersonal conflicts (conflicts between two persons or two groups). But they can be used at greater scale conflicts. Situations with high vulnerability to VE often happen at a lower scale and have to be deal between persons or groups, but they are totally interdependent with the greater scale and the global context. At the end we are talking about social conflicts happening at different levels at the same time (personal, interpersonal and estructural level).

## Introduction

As we have seen in Chapters 1-3, the action of PVE is developed above all in contexts of dissatisfaction with fundamental needs, in which violence and nonviolence play a key role in offering satisfactors. These contexts are usually characterized by conflicts with greater or lesser polarization. This chapter is not intended as a complete presentation of conflict resolution skill building. Rather, it points out elements of conflict that are important in understanding polarisation.

Knowing these elements can help us to manage better in these conflicting contexts in order to better address the other needs presented in this manual and the construction of synergistic satisfiers associated with them.

## 6.1 Dealing with conflict

*Not everything that is faced can be changed, but nothing can be changed until it is faced —*  
James Baldwin<sup>43</sup>

### 6.1.1 Conflict stages

Conflict is an unavoidable aspect of human relations. They express a struggle between opposing forces, positions, beliefs or needs. One useful definition of conflict is: “*conflict is an expressed struggle between at least two independent parties who perceive incompatible goals, scarce resources, and interference from others in achieving their goals.*”<sup>44</sup> Differences are the building blocks of conflicts. These may be differences in beliefs, values, goals, or they may be differences in the needs of the conflicting sides.

The appearance of a conflict implies that a *relationship* is present, meaning there is an *interdependence* between two or more sides. This interdependence is a basic characteristic of any group (family, community, work environment) but it also applies at a more global level (states). People do not operate independently of each other. The actions of one person, group or states affects others. In this context of interdependence, conflicts appear and may be not only interpersonal, but expressions of a social conflict as well.

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43 Baldwin, J., Randal, K. (2010). *The Cross of Redemption: Uncollected Writings*. New York: Pantheon Books.

44 Wilmot, W., Hocker, J. (2011). *Interpersonal Conflict* (8<sup>th</sup> Ed.) New York: McGraw Hill.

**Important note:** In order to attempt conflict resolution there needs to be a minimum interest in the relationship. When this interest in the relationship is not present, we cannot expect the two sides to be able to resolve the conflict on their own or with support from a facilitator, or a mediator.

### Nonviolent social transformation

When the conditions to attempt a conflict resolution are not met, there is an open confrontation, and there is a great situation of power imbalance between the parties (one party wants the other to disappear, like in some of the VE examples we have in chapter 1), there is still a Nonviolent way to deal with that conflict. In order to satisfy their needs, and reach social change, most Nonviolent movements had to struggle in a nonviolent way until the conditions to solve the situation were met. Vulnerable contexts to the appearance of VE are usually contexts where people and groups are struggling to solve those needs. Many organizations are promoting Nonviolent social transformation ([NOVACT, Nonviolence and social transformation](#))

Conflicts do not appear out of the blue. They start off as small instances where *differences* can create *tension* (in chapter 2 we can see an example of how tensions increase as a consequence of Global crisis, especially for structural conflicts with connection with the interpersonal and the personal level). If this tension is left unnoticed, then it may lead to a *dispute*. Disputes are moments of intense interaction where two sides have an argument about something. If this is not solved, if left unattended, not cared for, then this may lead to a *conflict*. If the conflict is not addressed, then this may escalate to the point where the *violence threshold* is crossed and the two sides go to *war*. In interpersonal relationships this may look like people refusing to relate or actively damaging each other. In social situations this may take the form of direct, cultural or structural violence.

Difference		Tension		Dispute		Conflict		War
							violence threshold	

Our fear of violence discourages us from dealing with tensions as they appear and arise. Or, we think that focusing on an earlier sign of tension might be too tiresome, or not worth the trouble it might create.

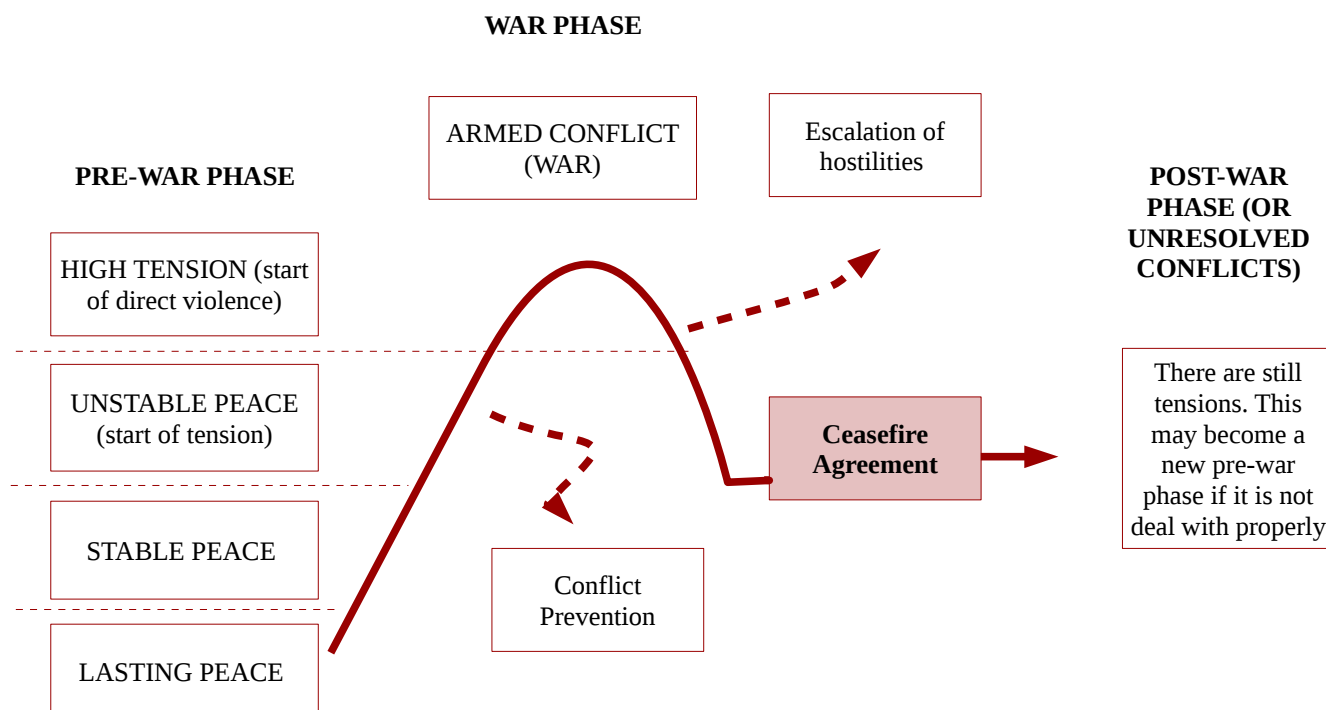


Figure Taken from “Alert 2009! Report on conflicts, human rights and peacebuilding” Escola de Pau

*In the early years of the crisis in Greece, Agios Panteleimonas, a low-income neighborhood in downtown Athens, saw the influx of many immigrants and refugees, who rented apartments in the area. The locals were gradually feeling unease, facing a multi-cultural environment that they were not used to up to then. Fear and tensions started rising. Individual incidents of theft were over-exaggerated, rumors of danger were spreading, Small disputes started happening between neighbors. At the same time, NGOs and self-organized groups were providing services to the refugees and migrants living in the area. This created even more tension as many of the Greek residents started asking “who is taking care of us?”. The Golden Dawn (an VE group, a neo-nazi political party) took on the role of the “protector” of the Greek residents (offered a “satisfactor”). No one was addressing these tensions and the climate was becoming increasingly polarised. The Golden Dawn on the one side, claiming they were there to protect the Greeks from the “foreign criminals”, the left wing NGOs and groups on the other protecting the foreigners from the Golden Dawn. In 2011, a man who was taking his wife to the maternity hospital to give birth was stabbed and killed on the street by a foreign national that wanted to steal the video camera he had in his hands. This escalated things, the violence threshold had been crossed. Each side perceived the other as dangerous and criminal. Opinions became rigid and measures extreme. Organized groups took the streets, from both sides, chasing people and trying to scare them away from the neighborhood. This is a typical example of escalation that was left unaddressed and led to a war on the streets, between two opposing groups. No one intervened in the early stages to ease the tensions, to create bridges of communication between the various people and nationalities living in the area, to resolve conflicts before they become too polarised.*

In the above sequence of escalation (from differences that create tension, to dispute, to conflict, to war), it is interesting to notice two things:

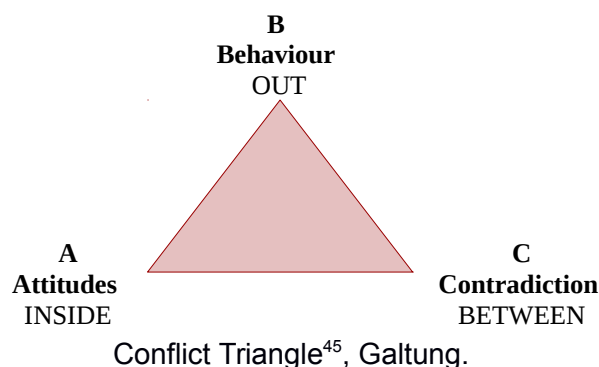
- As the tension becomes more intense, each side becomes more polarised in their opinions, views and emotions. This is crucial to understanding *polarisation*. Even if the conflict is around a simple issue, as tension builds up, both sides start to become rigid in their views and positions. In the beginning of the process they may have expressed a position, while at the same time acknowledging that this may not be the whole picture. At the end, they become cemented in their views, experiencing themselves as holding the absolute *truth*.
- The avoidance of dealing with each of the stages is actually what leads to crossing the *violence threshold*. So, our tendency to avoid dealing with tensions as they arise and lead to conflict, hoping that it will go away on its own, often supports escalation and leads to crossing the violence threshold!

### 6.1.2 Content of conflict

In every conflict there is two kinds of content: the issue and the feelings around the issue. The issue may involve facts, procedures, events, goals or values, or the dissatisfaction or infrasisfatisfaction of needs (chapter 1 and 2). In a conflict each side has different information or varies in its interpretation of the information available (is what Galtung calls “*the Contradiction*”). In the early stages of a conflict, it is easier to share the information and experience of each side. And once information is shared and clarified, it is easier to reach a common agreement. If things become polarised, it takes more effort on both sides to listen to each other and this sharing is not always possible. In chapter 8 we give some ideas of how to listen when it’s difficult to listen.

Conflicts always have an emotional aspect to them. Conflict is an emotional process that can give birth to intense emotions to all sides. Despite the common view that conflict brings out mostly anger and aggression, most people experience also feelings of upsetness, sadness, anxiety, abandonment, or hopelessness. These feelings affect how parties see their own goals and the conflict itself, the feelings will have a great influence in our *attitudes* regarding the conflict.

In addition to the issue and the feelings, then we have the parties behaviour as another component of the conflict (how parties will act regarding the conflict, in a cooperative way, looking for satisfaing all needs, or in a competitive way fighting to satisfy their own needs even it is at the expense of the needs of the Other).



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45 Galtung, Johan (2003) Paz por medios pacíficos. Paz y conflicto, desarrollo y civilización, Bilbao, Gernika Gogoratu

Behaviour, issue and feelings are totally connected, and one can not be addressed without the other. As we said, parties often differ in their perception of the issue, or the issue is not easy to address, since the parties and the actors of the conflict on both sides (including politicians and media when there is a conflict of a greater scale) prefer to focus on feelings (attitudes) and behavior, both their own (which is generally self-conceived as positive) and that of the other (which is usually described as negative).

The ABC triangle may be useful to analyze the conflict (knowing that the three vertices are interdependent).

<b>Articulation process (Top-Bottom)</b>	A	B	C	STATE OF CONFLICT
	-	-	-	Absence of conflict (dead)
	*	-	-	Willing attitudes
	-	*	-	Willing behaviours
	*	*		Willing attitudes and behaviours
	-	-	*	Contradiction
	*	-	*	Subconscious level is fully willing
<b>Disarticulation process (Bottom - top)</b>	-	*	*	Conflict behaviour (as normal)
	*	*	*	Conflict fully articulated

### 6.1.3 Conflict operates on three levels

As we say in chapter one, using the three levels dimension: Personal (inner conflict), inter-personal level (relationship) and social level (social conflict) is also useful to understand how conflict works.

Level	Person X (calm, organised, logic)	Person Y (creative, spontaneous, emotional)
Intra-personal level (Inner conflict)	<p>Y represents an inner part of X, that is more unknown to them and that they may be in an inner-conflict with.</p> <p>X: <i>"for us to move forward I need discussions to happen in a calm atmosphere, with linear arguments"</i></p>	<p>X represents an inner part of Y, that is more unknown to them and that they may be in an inner-conflict with.</p> <p>Y: <i>"when we are working together I want to be free to express my thoughts and feelings as they arise, I don't want to censor myself! You are stifling me!"</i></p>
	The inner conflict may be the effort of the person to create space inside of themselves, both for linear, logical, calm discussion, while at the same time allowing for spontaneous reactions, emotional expression and a bit of chaos.	
Inter-personal level (relationship conflict)	X as an individual, with their life experience, identity, in conflict with Y.	Y as an individual, with their life experience, identity, in conflict with X.
	Both sides had a life experience where their ways of doing and being one with each other came to a conflict.	
Social level (social conflict)	X represents a social role that is in conflict with another social role or norm.	Y represents a social role that is in conflict with another social role or norm.
	One of the roles (order, logic... or spontaneous, emotional) might have more social value, and then is not just a conflict between the two persons, but between social value of these roles.	

### 6.1.4 Awareness and Fluidity in Conflict

In every conflict you can recognize three possible sides. If X and Y (people or groups) are in conflict, the three roles/sides/positions are:

- Position of Side X (Role X).
- Position of Side Y (Role Y).
- Position of a Neutral Observer.

When in a conflict, we often experience ourselves as being stuck and may not realize we are stuck in a particular position. *This increases polarisation.* A key to working with conflict is to develop awareness and fluid ability to step in and out of the various roles/sides/positions involved in the conflict. This is often present in the way we speak, but we do not realize it as it is happening.

It is helpful to **become aware of what side you are on**: your own side, the other person's side, or outside the conflict – in a more neutral position. Surprisingly enough, when in conflict with someone, before it escalates, we often express a little bit of both sides of the conflict.

Once you have that awareness, **stand in that position congruently** until you feel you have **expressed yourself fully**, including your **deepest feelings, needs and experiences** in that position. If the position you begin with is your position in the conflict, express it fully. If the position you begin with is the other's position, do the same.

For example, in an interpersonal conflict you can start off by saying, *“if I were in your position, I think I would feel.... and I would say...”*.

Once you have done so, you might **notice a role switch happening** and find yourself feeling for the other side, or feeling for both sides – being in a more outside/neutral position from which you can care for the whole. This outside/neural position often contains within it a sense of wholeness and our own deep wisdom and eldership.

**Stepping into those positions also and fully expressing their viewpoints** can help deepen the interaction and resolve a conflict.

This awareness procedure is based on the belief in every person's wholeness and potential ability to understand all sides. It makes use of the observation that nearly everyone changes roles in conflict, even if this happens in seconds, and then they return to their original position. This change often appears in double signals in communication.

## 6.2 Escalation and De-escalation

**Escalation is an increase in the intensity or seriousness of something; an intensification of a conflict.** Escalation happens when one or both sides of a conflict makes stronger and stronger accusations of the other side or when their non-verbal signals suggest mounting aggression. When conflicts escalate, each side holds their position in increasingly rigid ways, and this can mount to polarisation.

**De-escalation is the reduction of the intensity of a conflict** or a potentially violent situation. De-escalation happens when one or both sides of a conflict verbally or non-verbally send signals that lower the intensity of a conflict.

## 6.2.1 What escalates a conflict?

We all know the experience of escalating a conflict, either as the ones responsible for escalating it or as the recipient of the escalation. This escalation can happen with intent or in an unintended way. We are not always aware of what or how we communicate and how this contributes to escalation.

The following are some of the ways that we or others escalate conflict:

<b>Ways that conflict escalates</b>	
<b>Use of 3rd parties or coalitions</b>	By using 3rd parties and unconscious coalitions in our communication. For example, <i>I am saying this to you because Carlos is also irritated with you!</i> In this example, bringing in a third person intensifies your position, but creates a confusion in the other person. They are now not only communicating with you, they are having a parallel interaction with “Carlos”, who is not present.
<b>Unconscious communication</b>	By being unconscious of our double signals in communication. For example, saying <i>I am fine...</i> , but with an angry tone of voice. The other person has to respond to two conflicting messages, one in the content, the other in the way the message is transmitted.
<b>Denying accusations</b>	By denying accusations. Accusations are often statements about an aspect of ourselves that we do not usually identify with. These aspects of ourselves manifest in double signals in our communication. We are being accused regarding a part our self, a part of our wholeness. It can be useful to own it and bring it into the momentary interaction. Trying to find and pick up responsibility for even a tiny part of the accusation that may be true, can be helpful. Even If it's not true in the moment, where or when could it be true?
<b>Stereotyping</b>	Stereotyping is something that always escalates conflict. Blanket statements and prejudiced generalizations add fuel to the fire. For example, <i>all men act this way!</i> or <i>what do yo expect, women are over-sensitive!</i> Stereotyping is often an expression of a projection of a marginalized part of ourselves. Some aspect of our personality that we marginalize and are not free to express, so we project it in a negative or positive way onto others.
<b>Not reacting when hurt</b>	Another way in which we unconsciously escalate conflict is by not reacting when we are hurt. We try to be strong or cool and don't show the pain. Not showing that we are hurt, indirectly supports the attacker, who keeps attacking because they have no feedback on their behavior, no immediate signal that makes them aware of the effect they are having. Showing hurt, when it happens, may actually de-escalate the conflict.
<b>Being closed to feedback</b>	Escalation also happens when we are not open to feedback. For example, continuing to attack even after the person has congruently apologized can be inflammatory.
<b>Feeling Unheard or not understood</b>	When people feel unheard or not understood, they can become indirectly hurtful and vengeful. Snickering when someone is hurt, using sarcasm, irony, being aloof, gossiping and making coalitions can escalate conflict.



Ways that conflict escalates	
<b>One-sidedly actions</b>	Also, however well intended, acting one-sidedly like a helper, therapist/healer, social activist, someone above conflict, escalates it. As also being patronizing and/or condescending towards other person in the interaction.
<b>Abuse of rank</b>	Being unconscious of rank escalates the conflict. For example, saying <i>Just stand for yourself!</i> to a person who has low self-esteem due to social marginalization, while not acknowledging the rank that you have belonging to the mainstream of the culture.
<b>Rigid sides for long periods</b>	Staying rigidly on one side of an issue – not willing to switch roles or see the “other” – over a long period of time will escalate the conflict. Seeing the other side does not mean necessarily agreeing with the other side. Seeing the other side means understanding the point of view of the other person, the experiences that shape this point of view in the interaction.

Noticing escalation and commenting on it may be crucial in avoiding physical violence and injury.

#### Escalation at an interpersonal level and estructural level

The key elements given to notice escalation are valid for conflicts at an interpersonal and estructural level (conflict where parties can be two persons, two groups or two states). The given examples are interpersonal examples to make it easier to understand.

## 6.2.2 What de-escalates conflict

When a conflict interaction escalates, it is easy to get caught up in the intensity of emotions. Perception then becomes limited and de-escalation signals missed. These de-escalation signals can happen momentarily, appear and disappear within seconds. If we do not catch these signals, we miss the opportunity to slow things down and try to gain a deeper understanding of both sides.

### De-escalation signals in communication

De-escalation signals are hard to notice because they are often either verbal, but missed in a sea of verbal messages, or non-verbal, thus less easily noticed. Some common non-verbal de-escalation signals occur when:

Interpersonal <sup>46</sup>	Estructural (Macro level)
Voices become lower.	The amount and tone of offensive messages is reduced

<sup>46</sup> The type of signals described here (interpersonal or estructural) are just examples. You can find structural signals with a logic similar to interpersonal and vice versa.

<b>Interpersonal</b>	<b>Estructural (Macro level)</b>
One or both people in the interaction look down or away.	Do not criticize at times where criticism of the other would be easy
A momentary smile or giggle.	Approach gestures given by second figures (not by spokespersons or more visible people in the conflict)
A moment of quiet.	Coincidence in opinion on a peripheral issue
A moment when fear becomes apparent. (it can be used to de-escalate by recognising and creating some sort of empathy or to escalate using fear to “dominate” the Other)	
A moment of understanding that occurs.	

### **Tips for de-escalating conflicts**

<b>Tips for de-escalating conflicts that occur in relationship interactions</b>	
<b>notice and name de-escalation signals</b>	Noticing de-escalation signals in the first and most important skill when facilitating a situation where tensions are rising. It is very important to <b>notice and name de-escalation signals</b> , or else they will be lost and the conflict will cycle over and over again and escalate.
<b>Help the person/group to find the meaning of their signals.</b>	This may help two people/groups move a step forward towards resolving a conflict or even leave a conflict which they have not noticed is already over. De-escalation signals often appear in non-verbal signals, that appear as double signals. Recognizing and supporting the unfolding of double-signals furthers the de-escalation.
<b>Supporting both sides of a conflict to express their feelings involved in the conflict,</b>	And not only their positions, also supports de-escalation. When people feel listened to and acknowledged in their experience, it becomes easier to de-escalate.

<b>Tips for de-escalating conflicts that occur in relationship interactions</b>	
<b>Slowing things down</b>	<p>Interactions that happen quickly in moments of tension may create hurt that adds fuel to the fire. Slowing things down, naming hurtful interactions, giving space for people to express themselves, these are all things that de-escalate.</p>
<b>Encouraging power awareness helps de-escalation.</b>	<p>Reminding people of their power and how it appears in various forms, encouraging everyone to use it for the benefit of all, not only for their personal interest, supports de-escalation.</p>

## **What a facilitator can do to De--escalate in moments when the tension can lead to violence**

These techniques are meant to defuse the conflict enough so that the threat of violence is stopped. They are not meant as conflict resolution techniques. Think of these tips as “crisis intervention”, as steps to defusing the situation enough so that at a later point you can intervene for conflict to be resolved. They are meant as interventions that can make discussion at a later point possible.<sup>47</sup>

### **A. The facilitator's way**

1. Try to remain calm, centered and self--assured even though you don't feel it totally. Anxiety can make the agitated person feel anxious and unsafe which can escalate aggression.
2. Use a low monotonous tone of voice. Our normal tendency is to have a high pitched, tight voice when scared.
3. Do not be defensive. Even if the comments or insults are directed at you, remember that in that moment of agitation they are not about you. Do not try to defend yourself or anyone else from insults, curses or misconceptions about their roles.
4. Be aware of any resources available to you for back up. Keep in mind that you can always leave, or seek additional support, should de--escalation not be effective.
5. Be respectful, even when firmly setting limits or calling for support. The agitated individual is very sensitive to feeling shamed and disrespected.

### **B. The facilitator's physical stance**

1. Never turn your back to the agitated person, for any reason.
2. Always be at the same eye level with the other person. Encourage the other person to be seated, but if he/she needs to stand, you stand up also.
3. Allow extra physical space between you, more than your usual distance. Anger and agitation need some extra space between you.
4. Do not maintain constant eye contact. Allow the agitated person to break his/her gaze and look away.
5. Do not point or shake your finger.
6. Do not touch – even if some touching is generally culturally appropriate and usual in your setting. A person who is agitated can easily misinterpret physical contact as hostile or threatening.

### **C. The de--escalation discussion**

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<sup>47</sup> Adapted from Verbal De-Escalation Techniques for Defusing or Talking Down an Explosive Situation; prepared by National Association of Social Worker's Committee for the Study and Prevention of Violence Against Social Workers.

1. Remember that this is not a moment to focus on content. You are only trying to calmly bring the level of arousal down to a safer place.
2. Do not get loud or try to yell over a screaming person. Wait until he/she takes a breath, then talk. Speak calmly at an average volume.
3. Answer only informational questions no matter how rudely asked, i.e. *why do I have to follow these stupid rules anyway?*. This question is seeking for information, try to answer it. Do not answer abusive questions, i.e. *why are all you people here so stupid?* This is a question that does not need to be responded to.
4. Explain limits and rules in an authoritative, firm, but always respectful tone. Give choices where possible in which both alternatives are safe ones (i.e. *would you like to discuss this now or would you prefer to stop now and we'll discuss this when things can be more relaxed?*).
5. Empathize with the feelings of the person, but not with the behavior (i.e., *I understand that you have every right to feel angry, but it is not ok for you to threaten me or others here*).
6. Do not argue or try to convince.
7. Wherever possible, try to tap into the other person's cognitive mode. Do not ask *"Tell me how you are feeling"*. Instead, ask, *"Help me to understand what you are saying to me"*. People usually will not continue attacking you while explaining what they want you to know.
8. Give the consequences of inappropriate behavior without threats or anger (i.e., if we don't find a way to calm things down, I will have to ask you to leave the space).

## 6.3 Polarisation

*"I imagine one of the reasons people cling to their hates so stubbornly is because they sense, once hate is gone, they will be forced to deal with pain".* James Baldwin<sup>48</sup>

### 6.3.1 From flow on a continuum to polarisation

Polarisation happens when people or groups concentrate on opposing extremes of views or positions, that formerly ranged on a continuum. So, what was a continuum, becomes a division between two opposites. Polarisation can be dangerous for relationships and groups, because it operates on an 'us' and 'them' basis, with clear dividing lines and almost no focus on the commonality between the two. This creates an atmosphere of tension, limited awareness of the process happening in the relationship and an easily escalated situation. It can lead to a breakdown of the relationship and even violent extremism.

It is important to understand that polarisation is a thought construct, based on assumptions. Perception plays a big role in one's ability to experience relationship as a flow on a continuum of exploration and understanding, or a set position that is distant and opposite to the other side: *"Polarisation can be seen as a thought construct, based on assumptions of 'us' and 'them' identities. In a process of polarisation, the dominant and active narrative is about the perceived (and often exaggerated) differences and simplistic narratives about the others. There is a neglect of what the 'us' and 'them' might have in common. Polarisation therefore shows itself in negative*

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<sup>48</sup> Baldwin, J. (1955): *Notes of a Native Son*.

*thoughts and attitudes towards other groups, which could result in growing hostility and segregation<sup>49</sup>.*

### 6.3.2 Polarisation as a communication process

When things get polarised, it is important to remember that this polarisation is a communication process. When things get polarised, communication is breaking down. When a conflict escalates, communication becomes even more difficult. Emotions such as disappointment, hopelessness, pain, anger, may take over. This can easily lead someone use their power in a damaging way, hurting the other.

Polarisation occurs when one or both sides feel not listened to, not understood, negated or ignored. A possible intervention is focusing on the communication happening in the moment, supporting both sides to speak not only their positions, but also their deeper feelings, experiences and needs that inform these positions. Creating a context where dialogue can slow down (polarisation makes things go really fast!), where power and rank can be noticed, felt and used for the good of the whole, not only for one side of the conflict.

Polarisation is an escalation process in human interactions, where each side of a conflict becomes increasingly attached to their point of view and unable to listen or integrate the other side's view or experience. This can easily lead to even stronger emotions, it can create an atmosphere where hate takes over. How can we prevent this escalation, how can we enrich our communication, not only with our beliefs and ideas, but also with our emotions about these beliefs, the experiences that have led us to them?

**One of the key components in prevention of polarisation is the ability to create sustainable dialogue.** Where listening is an active experience. Where we do not listen only to facts and positions, but we are open to reconsider assumptions, to break down stereotypes, to promote diversity as wealth, not only as challenge (chapter 8, how to listen when is difficult to listen)

### 6.3.3 De-escalation of conflicts between polarised groups

When faced with an intensely polarised situation between groups of people and the violence threshold has been crossed, it is very difficult to intervene. However, there are some things that one can do to attempt de-escalation.

If you are dealing with a situation where polarization has led to extreme violence and the two sides (people or groups) are not interested in relating with each other,

#### Steps for de-escalation

Set the rules that stop the violence.

Seek out members of each group that are not satisfied with the intensity of the conflict and who are willing and needing to find a different way to resolve it (even if they are align with the needs of their own side)

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<sup>49</sup>[https://ec.europa.eu/home-affairs/sites/homeaffairs/files/what-we-do/networks/radicalisation\\_awareness\\_network/ran-papers/docs/ran\\_polarisation\\_management\\_manual\\_amsterdam\\_06072017\\_en.pdf](https://ec.europa.eu/home-affairs/sites/homeaffairs/files/what-we-do/networks/radicalisation_awareness_network/ran-papers/docs/ran_polarisation_management_manual_amsterdam_06072017_en.pdf)

### Steps for de-escalation

Build a minimum relationship between the two sides.

Identify people in each group that may have some kind of relationship with a member of the opposing group. Meaning, two people or more, from each group that even though they are caught up in the conflict, they still have a minimum interest in maintaining a relationship with the person from the other side.

Once you have identified these people you can use conflict resolution skills to facilitate their communication and understanding of each other.

This may help in diffusing the situation and moving a step forward towards further de-escalation

### 6.3.4 Tips for preventing polarisation

Polarisation is dangerous because it creates situations that are difficult to deal with and that have a big cost for those involved (emotional, physical and social). Preventing polarisation is all about practicing conflict resolution in its early stages. This may seem that it takes more work (and it does!) but the long term benefits are obvious. Conflict is like a wound. If you do not take care of it in its early stages, it becomes infected and demands radical measures for it to heal.

#### Tips for preventing polarisation

Notice escalation in its early stages.

Use power for the benefit of all. This is easily said and more difficult to do in situations that have become increasingly escalated. But power used for the benefit of only one side of a conflict is in danger of becoming an abusive power

Practice communication skills, listen with curiosity, search for the emotions behind the arguments, explore the experiences that give birth to the emotions.

Practice a *willingness to be disturbed* (reconsider assumptions, breakdown stereotypes, promote diversity as wealth-not only as a challenge).

Promote inner and outer dialogue.

### **How a facilitator can use his/her power**

As a facilitator, you can use your power to say “no” to violence (psychological, physical), while at the same time saying “yes” to the person. (For example, *I like your power, I want to support it, you are strong! I won't let you use it though to hurt others, I want you to use it in a way that you feel good about yourself, but also no one is hurt*).



## 7 A LOOK AT THE EMOTIONAL TERRITORY

*“It is better to turn a light on than to curse the darkness “ (Arab proverb)*

### Summary of the chapter

In contexts which are prone to the appearance of VE, where dissatisfaction of needs is frequent, feelings play a vital role in three aspects: as indicators of the degree of dissatisfaction of needs, in mobilizing in order to satisfy those needs and in getting to know oneself and detecting the internal difficulties in maintaining that move towards satisfying needs.

Conscious management of emotions allows us to build synergic affection (positive) and is one of the keys in preventing violent extremism.

### Introduction

*“One of the essential functions of emotions is triggering movement inside people” (Mauge Cañada)*

What are emotions? It is currently impossible to define them in a conclusive way. This question deals with the complex field of each person's internal reality, of relational, group and social space and with the dominating culture each person or group lives in.

In this territory there are several terms which coexist and which often merge: emotions, feelings and moods. This diversity shows a bit of the wealth that enriches the scenery. Each term refers to an aspect we may call qualitative; emotions as a system of physical signs which tell us what impacts us from the world around us; feelings as emotions measured in terms of beliefs and the culture in which one lives; moods as patterns or emotional disposition anchored within us, more persistent but less intense connected to the way experiences and their echoes bond.

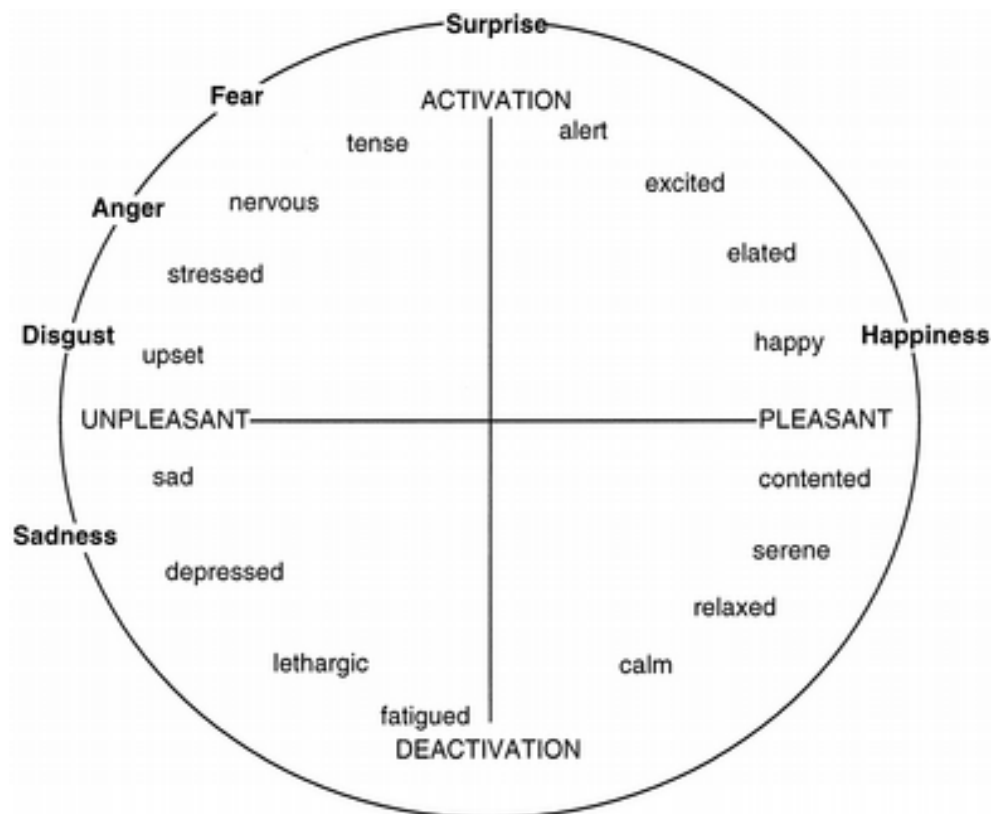
There is an intimate relation between emotions and human needs. Needs are at the very core of each person's emotional activation: the satisfaction or dissatisfaction of needs creates emotions (chapter 3) and emotions, in turn, may act as the driving force that mobilizes people towards satisfying what they feel, understand or believe they need. Needs are part of every human being's life path and they require both the development of internal tools and the collaboration of the community, social group, or institutions that person belongs to in order to satisfy those needs.

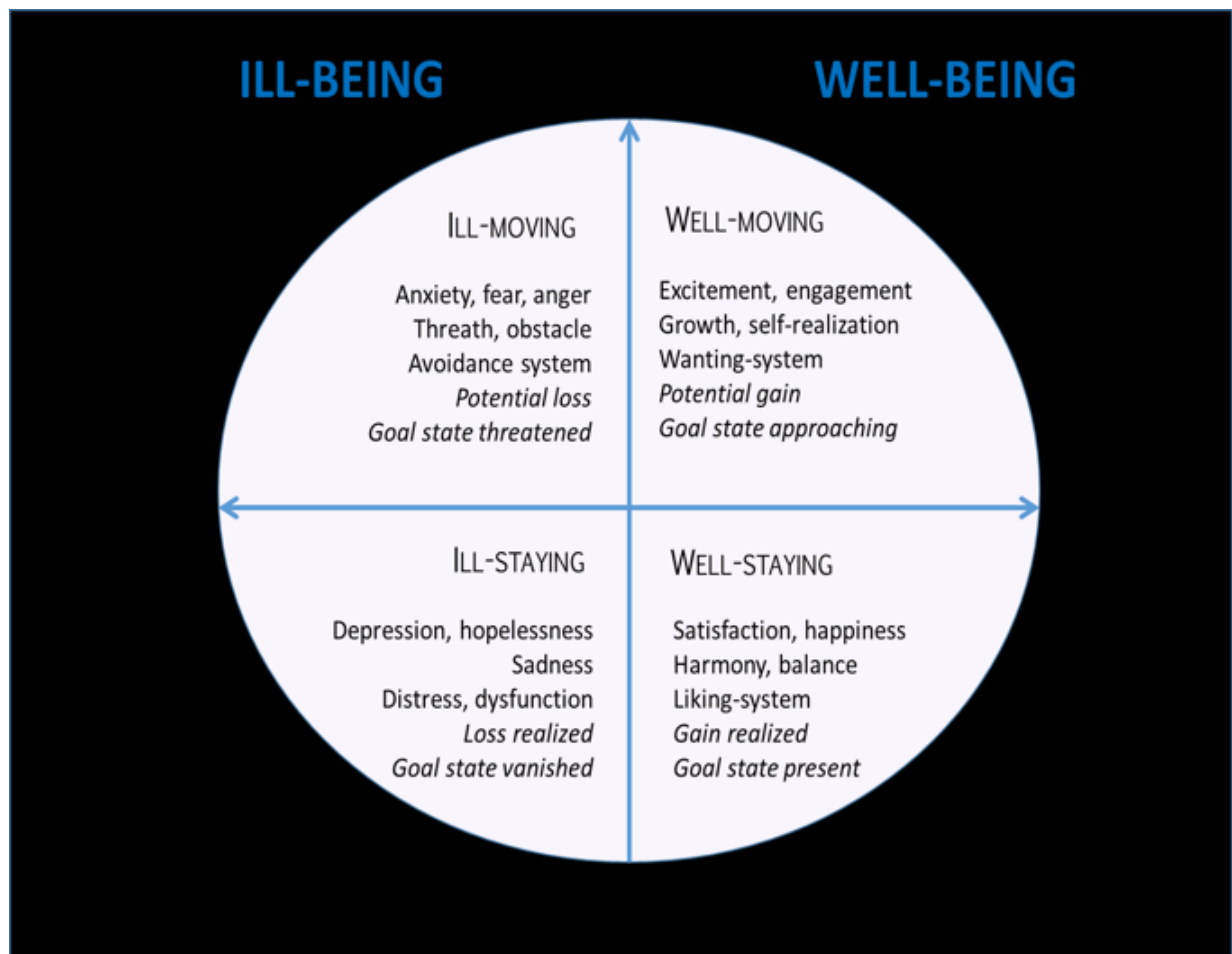
Being at the core of emotional activation, needs -whether consciously identified or not- are also the space where the “I” becomes stronger. The “I” may position itself “opposite” or even “against” the rest or the group; when it feels its needs are not being catered for, listened to or satisfied.

We can split emotions in two axes:

1. As pleasant or unpleasant “sensors” (pain-pleasure) that indicate to what degree we feel or believe our needs have been satisfied. Unpleasant emotions are indicators of dissatisfaction and therefore motivate us to mobilize towards other possibilities. Pleasant emotions confirm that perceived needs are being satisfied; there is a balance and we can experience moments of greater stability (what is perceived as a state of “happiness”).
2. In its potential for activation: excitement, relaxation. There are emotions which imply great doses of energy: happiness, anger. Other emotions imply lower doses: calm, apathy.

**(Russell's circular model)**





(Røysamb & Nes, 2016) Well/III-Staying/Moving (WISM).

## 7.1 Emotions and social context

Social context is the setting in which external aspects which impact on people's day-to-day lives converge. Depending on this context, people will have enough resources and freedom to live their lives with dignity or quite the opposite. This has an effect on all levels of existence. Emotions and feelings may be managed in such a way that people can use that energy in a positive way, looking for and creating better conditions in life (resilience), but they need the resources to transform and improve their context as a necessary condition for creating real possibilities and restoring trust in life and the world.

Whenever there is a social context which hinders access to the resources needed in the creation of synergic satisfiers on a personal and collective level, the scene is set for the search of other types of satisfiers (negative, inhibiting). This may create a personal or collective reactive narrative with which to release helplessness and frustration.

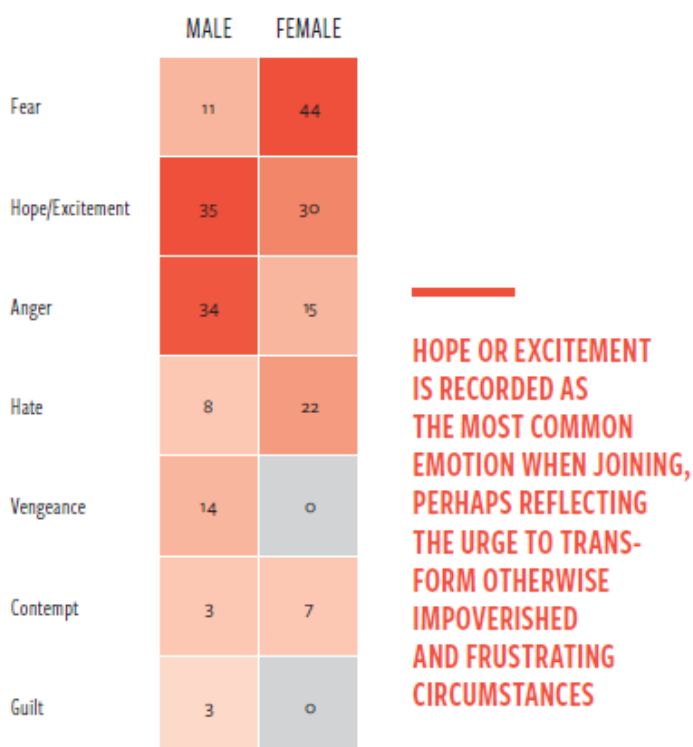
The development of VE processes feeds on emotional reactions to<sup>50</sup>:

<sup>50</sup> The causes of some of these emotional reactions are discussed in the OPEV plan of action, page 17, points 45 and 47: <http://opev.org/wp-content/>

- Difficult living conditions: lack of resources, lack of employment, of educational options, of future prospects, violation of human rights, abuse of institutional power, violence, defencelessness, exclusion.
- The impact of direct or indirect traumatic experiences: abuse of power, arrests, murder, rape suffered by the person or relatives and friends.
- Difficulty in finding “positive” ways of facing these situations: lack of community support, lack of resources, lack of opportunities, inadequate patterns and beliefs (e.g. based on values of domination and not of cooperation).

A context of conflict, violence, inequality, vulnerability and social exclusion creates grave psychosocial and emotional problems in people and communities. In the emotional sphere, this emerges as fear, anxiety, feelings of failure, stress, low self-esteem, guilt, shame, frustration, sadness or depression. These are feelings and emotions which paralyze, block, demotivate and result in emotional unbalance, deterioration of relational environments and health problems when there is a lack of internal and external resources with which people can face them efficiently. Other emotions may also appear such as anger, rage or a desire for revenge which are all emotions that activate and mobilize the search for “reparation”. All of these emotions can cause “inadequate” responses or behaviours so that social and family relations may turn tense, aggressive and even violent.

Multiple-answer question.  
Shows individuals (percent of category) who selected the emotion.



Traumatic experiences, experienced as abuse of any kind, are part of the construction of VE. In the study “Journey to extremism in Africa” carried out by the UNPD, 71% of interviewees said they had began getting involved with extremist organisations after the assassination or arrest of relatives or friends. In chapter 5, which deals with security, we see how repression and securitarian measures used to satisfy security needs act as “push factors” of VE. The emotions that unfold after suffering these experiences can mobilize towards VE.

In contexts of conflict such as the ones described, people do not always renounce the search for positive change in their lives as.

As we can see in picture 1:

Hope and anger are the emotions that arise more powerfully in men. The essential argument is rejecting current living conditions and the will to improve them.

Picture 1: Image- UNDP 2017-Journey to extremism in Africa

In this case, getting involved in VE might be felt as a synergic satisfier since one satisfies various needs through one sole action: the individual is taken in as a friend, he/she is given a job, and believes they can change things, etc.

Rage and vengeance are powerful activators, they mobilize in order to “give back blow by blow” received or perceived. This facilitates participation in organisations which promise to carry out these kinds of actions.

Gender is an element that must be taken into account since life experiences are different for men and women even if living in the same social context. Fear is the most frequent emotion in women who join VE, as a result of family or group pressure and sometimes through imposed experiences (kidnapping). Women look for the security offered by the submission or belonging to a group that is considered powerful and strong. Thus, they find a “negative” satisfier to their needs.

## 7.2 The content of emotions

(based on Lazarus&Lazarus, “Pasión y Razón”)

In general, emotions and feelings are part of our complex system of interaction with “internal-external” resources.

Internal	External
Life journey, acquired beliefs, the echoes of past experiences, their adaptation to each person and their needs: All of that materialized in their social skills and personal growth.	Needs and their satisfiers. Relationships with other people, family, group one belongs to. One’s environment: living conditions, institutions, the world.

Love, which brings people together and seeks relationships and bonds with other people; fear, which makes us react (paralizing or mobilizing) if we feel threatened; rage, which dictates that we feel or believe there is an attack against us or “one of our own”; sadness produced by loss; the embarrassment we feel when we feel inadequate; envy, which tells us we do not have what we want; jealousy, which tells us we do not feel secure in our relationship with another person; guilt, which indicates we have hurt someone or broken an important social rule in the culture we live in. All these emotions tell us what is going on in the internal space in relation to the external space and guide us as to what we should do in connection to the events.

	Emotions and feelings tell us
<b>Movement from the inside to the outside</b>	What need is expressing itself and, therefore, how we can manage the situation (for oneself): understanding what movement we need to carry out and in what direction we should move in order to satisfy those needs.

	<b>Emotions and feelings tell us</b>
<b>Movement from the outside to the inside</b>	Question the way we face life situations, navigating the process toward change in the way we perceive reality and its associated beliefs in building perception.

## 7.3 Bonds and separation, love and hate

*“In order to strengthen the heart, there is no better exercise than bending down to help the fallen get up”. Arab proverb.*

### 7.3.1 LOVE, affection, appreciation, tenderness, attachment, devotion, friendship, fondness, fervor, passion, delight, pleasure

It is hard to define love as a feeling or emotion. No doubt, love is both but it goes further than that. It can be an intense and temporary emotion when, at a given time, there is communion with the loved person or object. Erotic love is an example of this. It is also a feeling that is connected to relationships with loved ones. In this case, although it may be less intense, it is also more persistent. It may express itself in various relational forms (see “The Art of Loving” by Erich Fromm).

What different ways of loving may have in common is the bond. Love connects, it makes us create bonds with other people and creates a network of relationships in which we exchange affection, and which, ideally, establishes a pattern of giving and receiving. The need for individual affection is at the root of this emotion. However, the effects of love span out into the community we live in creating a whole network of affective relationships. Through these relationships, not only do we exchange affection; we also satisfy needs such as protection, identity, idleness, creativity and understanding. Thus, love becomes a synergic satisfier which connects us to an intimate and collective network, which, besides the tension and conflict, is the natural place we seek to live in.

The content and object of love is to create this framework of relational, social life and and maintain the balance between giving and receiving.

### 7.3.2 HATE, hostility, aggressiveness, the emotional roots of violence

Although the emotion or feeling of hate can be very similar to anger and rage, hate is directly affected by bonds and relationships. Hate appears when there is a lack of love or affection, especially when this lack is instrumentalised and a specific person or entity is made responsible (that “Other-different” is guilty of the damage suffered or perceived).

Hate is, potentially, a very toxic emotion for the individual and for the group. It may stem from experiences of rejection and violence. People who are deprived of bonds suffer intense pain. The worst punishment, besides taking someone’s life, is isolation, involuntary solitude. Hate can also stem from scarcity when people are deprived of the minimum resources needed to satisfy their needs. This is another form of rejection and exclusion.

Socially, the beliefs that support hate are related to the “other-different”, the enemy, person, group or country which is potentially harmful. The “other-different” is the person who cannot be included

in “us”. They are left out and are seen as a threat. When excluding, the emotion or feeling may not be actively felt but from a structural point of view, the excluded individual is subtly annihilated: reduction in rights and resources, hostility and even violence.

When hate becomes an everyday feeling, people seek to reestablish bonds but the base is not love, but hostility and violence (what may be called vengeance). It is still a relational dynamic that seeks to reestablish a balance of giving and receiving; I have received offense, now it is my turn to offend.

Naturally, violence can be complex and diverse. In this manual, we analyse the emotional roots of reactive violence but not all kinds. For instance, institutional violence is not related to hate but with the power “over” and its privileges.

The content and object of hate is separation, annihilation of the enemy.

## 7.4 Most frequent emotions in vulnerable contexts

The following emotions may appear with increasing frequency in contexts of dissatisfaction or infra satisfaction of needs vulnerable to the appearance of VE (depending on culture, previous life experience, the group or context, and there may be other mobilizing emotions which are more frequent or usual in logics of PVE, such as the ones we saw in connection to love).

<b>Emotion, feeling or mood</b>	<b>Logic of emotions (content)</b>	<b>Potential causes</b>	<b>Usefulness</b>	<b>Possible management</b>
<b>Rage, anger, hate</b>	Perception of oneself or “my people” being attacked. It may be an attack on self-esteem, principles, culture, beliefs, property, etc.	Unfavourable situations where “intention” is established.  Actions that harm.  Adversity.	Protecting the “I” and “us” and real or symbolic territory.  Developing self-esteem and self-confidence.  Trust/confidence in the community or group.	It requires an initial phase of containment or controlled expression. Then, a re-formulation of the situation.  It may be necessary to develop a specific petition for whom is considered as the “attacker”.
<b>Fear, anxiety</b>	Perception of specific risk to our physical health. Threat.	Sudden events that pose a real threat.  Unorganized social environment with permanent ambiguous threats.	Need for a safe environment where potential risk may be managed.	Facing the threat by trying to prepare for what may come or trying to build new meanings to reduce the threat.  Bravery and courage.

<b>Emotion, feeling or mood</b>	<b>Logic of emotions (content)</b>	<b>Potential causes</b>	<b>Usefulness</b>	<b>Possible management</b>
<b>Embarrassment</b>	<p>Personal failure, perception of not being adequate for an ideal or norm.</p> <p>Loss of dignity.</p>	<p>Situations which the person or group feels are humiliating.</p>	<p>Need for approval and acceptance.</p> <p>Flexible and diverse environment.</p> <p>Accepting mistakes.</p>	<p>Questioning if the ideal is reachable or desirable.</p> <p>Understanding errors as a vital part of the learning process of life.</p> <p>Drawing up a diverse society.</p> <p>Humour as a quality.</p>
<b>Guilt</b>	<p>Breaking a moral norm, a fundamental principle or a relevant social norm.</p>	<p>Surviving traumatic events.</p> <p>Causing harm to other living beings or humans voluntarily or unvoluntarily or thinking it is OK to do so.</p>	<p>Guilt makes us face the consequences of our actions.</p> <p>It teaches responsibility.</p> <p>The “other”’s forgiveness is necessary.</p>	<p>Socially, there is punishment.</p> <p>Personally, there is regret. In the relation between both, we find forgiveness.</p> <p>Managing guilt requires acknowledging the “other”’s pain (the person ofended or hurt) and trying to repair the damage.</p>



<b>Emotion, feeling or mood</b>	<b>Logic of emotions (content)</b>	<b>Potential causes</b>	<b>Usefulness</b>	<b>Possible management</b>
<b>Helplessness</b>	There are no resources and no way out of the unfavourable or violent situations a person is subject to. It paralyzes and inhibits.	Situations of lack of rights, random arrests, violence, torture, rape. Lack of family, group or social support.	Satisfaction of several or all fundamental needs is beyond the person's skills and will either temporarily or permanently. The person is challenged to connect with his or her deep core.	They are extremely difficult situations. Survival strategies are the most relevant. Resilience, the ability to adapt to extreme situations is the best strategy in order to overcome adversity and become stronger. Building a narrative of reality that dignifies the position of the victim.
<b>Sadness</b>	Managing loss. Loss adds value to what one still has.	Loss of loved ones and relationships. Loss of dreams, hopes and principles. Loss of home or territory.	Re-organising the need of affection helps acknowledge and value bonds.	Sadness needs time for crying and expressing pain and mourning. Accepting loss means trusting the bonds that still exist.
<b>Apathy Depression</b>	Loss of the meaning of life. Loss of connection between what is happening and the "I".	When defencelessness is long-term, when adverse situations become chronic.	Need for participation, for freedom. Existential crisis, reconnecting with the deep meaning of being alive.	Renavigating the meaning of one's life, researching about values, the person's point of view on life. Looking to and from a positive future.

<b>Emotion, feeling or mood</b>	<b>Logic of emotions (content)</b>	<b>Potential causes</b>	<b>Usefulness</b>	<b>Possible management</b>
<b>Frustration</b>	The person hopes or believes they deserve something they are not getting. They may even get the opposite of what they hope for.	Fruitless attempts to try to satisfy desires or needs.	In connection to various needs, we learn to postpone and relativize.	Learning to manage frustration is key in finding positive ways out of negative emotions. It teaches us to appreciate what has been satisfied (as little as it may seem) and to channel energy. We can learn patience and determination.

Managing emotions, feelings and moods all go in the same direction: mobilizing people in the search for satisfiers.

<b>Processes for mobilizing people in the search for satisfiers</b>
Being able to reformulate the internal and external narratives in unfavourable situations.
Looking for safe, trustworthy spaces of action.
Connecting with the deep meaning of the person's life in that moment and the skills he or she could develop.

When these processes are successfully put in place, we recover the pleasant emotions that uphold life and which we all seek: happiness, compassion, self-esteem, gratitude, calm, etc.

These emotions are necessary in PVE in order to develop nonviolent strategies that satisfy needs in a synergic and cooperative way and help build an ecosocial future (chapter 3).

### **Managing repression and injustice**

A person who has been unfairly arrested will be angry, frustrated, and/or defenceless in different moments of the process. This adds even more pain to his daily life. Reformulating means building a story that makes sense. Although that person is the victim of an unfair situation and institutions will not protect him or her, that person can still decide to hold on to his identity. He or she can focus on creating a space of solidarity inside the prison and look for the means and support needed to raise awareness about his/her innocence as much as possible (without

putting his/her integrity further at risk). This internal coherence will let him connect with emotions that will make him more resilient to the situation he is going through: hope, affection, pride, self-esteem. In this process, he will develop the skills and abilities he needs: empathy, communication, composure, integrity, authenticity, etc. This does not avoid sorrow or pain but it helps keep them in balance.

## 7.5 Management and emotional intelligence. Personal sovereignty

*“Someone who cannot understand a look will not understand a long explanation either.” Arab Proverb*

Within a holistic strategy of prevention of VE, managing emotions is a tool one can use to relearn to take the reins of one’s own life. People in risk of VE are vulnerable for various reasons, but among those reasons is the difficulty in emotionally facing unpleasant events in their lives. Understanding our capability to choose and the different options available in satisfying own needs, and family or group needs by means different to VE is a key element. In order to do so, we must work on and train skills connected to emotional intelligence: knowledge of oneself, self-regulation, empathy, motivation, social skills, etc.

In order to prove useful, a model of management of emotions requires work on different levels:

<b>Keys/Tools for work on emotional intelligence</b>		
<b>Key</b>	<b>Tools</b>	<b>Emotional intelligence skills</b>
<b>Conscience</b> Identifying the feeling or emotion.	Understanding the scenario and embracing the pain. Communication is the essential tool. Communicating experiences, creating groups in order to share different ways of understanding experiences helps widen personal points of view. The Forum (Zegg) is a very appropriate technique in order to reach this goal.	Knowledge of one self and empathy
<b>Listening</b> Embracing the experience, listening to what is happening to one’s body.	Techniques which favour connection with the body; dancing, games, yoga, mindfulness, meditation (and others). The objective is to connect with body signals, consciously experiencing the changes in emotions and feelings through our bodies. A person who is sad can transform that emotion through dance. By expressing sorrow and letting movement evolve, that person may find tranquility or other sensations.	Self-regulation and social skills.

<b>Keys/Tools for work on emotional intelligence</b>		
<b>Learning to name and communicate feelings and emotions</b>	Finding a language that favours verbal expression. Metaphors, different narratives that help to share emotions, drawing, tales or less rational tools of expression. This helps understand one's own and other people's emotions through other channels.	Self-regulation and empathy.
<b>Connecting with the underlying need.</b>	Understanding what the emotion or feeling wants to express. What is needed that we do not have. Using tools such as the charts on needs by Max-Neef (chapter 1), or by the CNV (chapter about communication). The question is: how should things have happened in order for the situation to be different?	Knowledge of one self. Social skills. Empathy..
<b>Resonance</b> Detecting whether the dynamic is repeating.	The territory of emotions is peculiar in that it does not organize itself according to time; the internal narrative is not structured chronologically. This means that past pain and wounds may still be present if we connect with a similar dynamic to the one that produced the wound. This is called "trauma-wound" and it may have different intensities. This factor makes identifying and understanding what we feel in the present more difficult. It is important to understand this emotional timelessness when working on PEV because in the world of emotions, past pain may be present in the present and appear with intensity when trying to work in groups (altered states). We are not trying to carry out therapy (at least in this context). We must try to accompany towards understanding this aspect of the emotional territory without trying to "solve" it.	Knowledge of one self, self-regulation.
<b>Evaluating and deciding</b> Evaluate the information gathered and decide what you want to do.	Emotion implies a "tendency to (re)action". However, people are much more than their emotion; they have principles, patterns of behaviour, norms of conduct in their communities, etc (chapter 3). An act is something that emerges from inside the person and, therefore, has an impact on the person's environment. Merely following the tendency of an emotion to "(re)act" is acting on impulse. Adequate management of emotions leads us to being conscious and choosing the action by including everything we are and everything the action implies.	Self-regulation and motivation.
<b>Transformation</b>	Adequate management of emotions implies processes of personal growth. As such, we refer to the potential to transform emotional energy as motivation in the development of skills associated to the needs in question. Knowing those strengths and developing our own agenda of development of skills is the way forward.	Motivation and social skills.

Keys/Tools for work on emotional intelligence		
<b>Empowerment</b> personal empowerment in order to transform the emotion	The nine basic needs described by Max Neef in the existential category of “Being” refer to the qualitative development of the individual. Through group games and role play, the person may experience how he feels when choosing a particular position. This allows individuals to develop their skills.	Motivation and social skills.

The final goal is the integrity of being, feeling and doing for the “I”, for “us” and for all living beings.

## 8 UNDERSTANDING EACH OTHER

From the perspective of a logic of violence, the need for understanding is satisfied through understanding with *Other-equals* and by considering the *Other-different* as someone whom they do not have to understand but dominate. If there is a desire to understand the *Other-different*, it is only in order to exploit their weaknesses and dominate them. Understanding includes everything related to learning and communication. In this chapter we address this need from its communicative dimension (not from learning), by the value of understanding each other, communicating effectively, for cooperative synergistic satisfaction of almost all fundamental needs (we are social beings interdependent with others). Being able to establish synergistic satisfiers of the fundamental needs in different contexts, to prevent the appearance of EV is the final objective of this manual.

The need for communication satisfied by VE seeks to convince, coerce and impose through one sole narrative. This narrative is no longer sincere dialogue and has become a monologue of imposition. From other perspectives, the need for understanding is satisfied by “thinking together” and going beyond what each part initially thought.

### Introduction

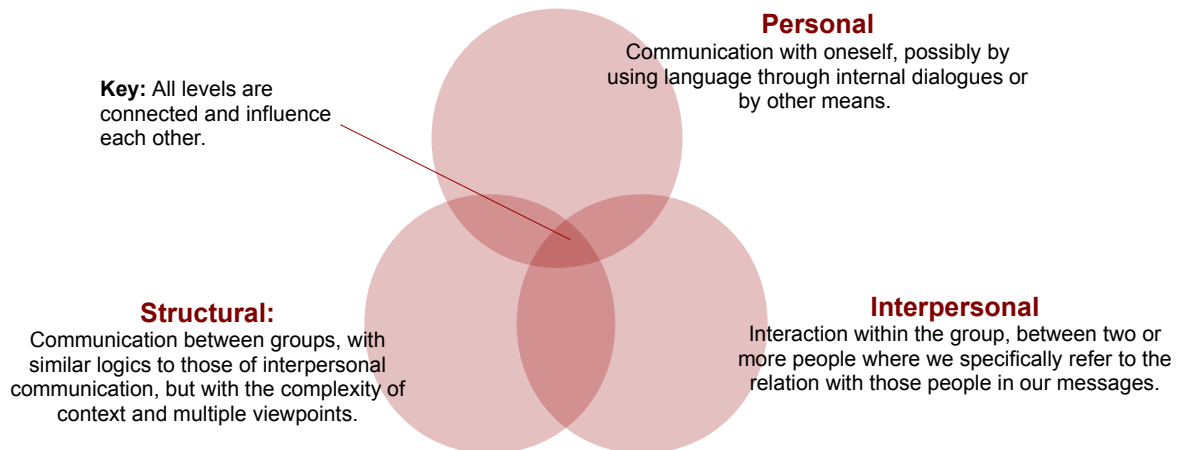
Communication is one of the relational human processes which is vital in having a good life in any context, especially in PVE. There are many practical forms and theoretical viewpoints on how to approach communication. In this manual, we understand communication mainly as a means of satisfying a fundamental human need: understanding. Our main focus is on how to satisfy that need in different contexts (from lesser to greater polarization or escalation of conflict), and on collaborating in satisfying other needs connected to human relations (mainly participation, identity, creation and affection). The ultimate goal of this manual is to be able to establish synergic satisfiers for fundamental needs in different contexts, thus preventing the appearance of VE.

### 8.1 Effective communication as a synergic satisfier of understanding

We refer to effective communication as a way of communicating which has the ability of increasing satisfaction of goals set by the interacting parts. It must also maintain or improve the relationship between the people who are interacting and maintain or improve people’s self-esteem (based on the definition of social ability in communication by Van der Hofstadt, 2005). In PVE, some authors refer to the importance of strengthening bonds, of building bridges in the relations between people and multiple actors. Whenever necessary, this may be aided by the figure of facilitation in communicating and developing a common understanding of problems (Waldek y Droogan, 2015).

### 8.2 The three levels of communication

In chapter 1, we saw that in order to understand the factors that lead to VE, one must analyze three levels (personal, interpersonal, structural) and that the intersection of the three was vital. In order to work on communication as a means of satisfying understanding, we must look at tools and determinants on those same three levels: structural (which includes communication between groups), interpersonal (relations within groups), and personal (with oneself, which may occur by using language through internal dialogues or by other means).



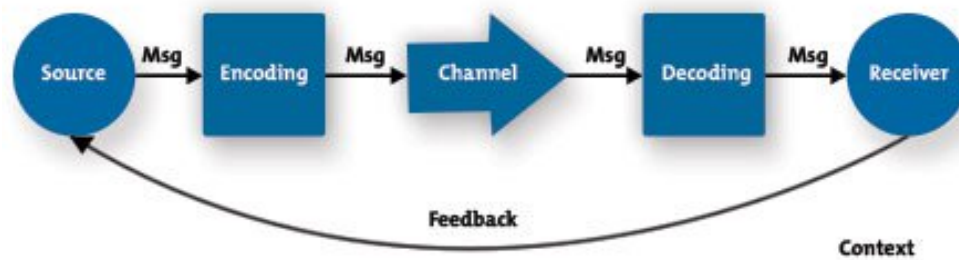
In this chapter, we will focus on the interpersonal and group level when providing tools although all three levels are connected. In other words, in a conversation between people in a group, there may be internal dialogues taking place at the same time, moments of interpersonal interaction among some members of the group and connections to a larger ecosystem where social dialogue between different social actors is taking place.

#### **Tool/Tip: Being aware of the levels**

Being aware of all the levels at the same time is, in itself, a tool that favours communication since we often speak within a group as a response to other social actors who are not in the room and being aware of this helps facilitate interaction and deeper dialogue: How can we talk to people who are not in the room? Who can hold this point of view for a moment so we can interact with it? Assuming that role, which we may call “ghost” because at that stage no one is identifying with that point of view or experience, allows us to delve deeper into the dialogue and understand different people and groups.

## **8.3 Communication as interaction between people**

Different theories have some basic elements in common when referring to communication as a process of interaction between people: sender (the person who starts the process), receiver (to whom the message is sent), message (main idea transmitted), code (codes, images, norms, etc that help transmit the message), channel (means of transmitting the message), context (the specific situation in which interaction takes place), noise (alterations of sound and of other kinds), filters (mental barriers of sender and receiver which are based on previous experience, beliefs, values, prejudice, expectations, etc.), feedback (the information the receiver sends back to the sender). As this is a live process, the roles of sender and receiver keep changing among the people involved (Van der Hofstadt, 2005:10-12).



In this basic description of the process, we can already see some of the aspects we will use in trying to understand the complexity of communication such as communication being intentional or not, or having intentional and unintentional aspects. A lot of misunderstandings or difficulties in communication have to do with our response to the message we receive, which may not be identified as the intentional message and we may not even know what we are responding to. There are also some clues about elements that may favour understanding such as context, codes (to what extent they are shared or not) and filters (stereotypes, prejudice suppositions, projections, perceptive bias, etc).

<b>Basic axioms of communication (Watzlawick et al (1985))</b>	
<b>One cannot not communicate</b>	All behaviour is communication (including silence or refusal to communicate).
<b>Digital and analogical communication</b>	Human communication implies two parts: digital and analogical. The information we receive as a whole is analogical (how we say what we say) and is less intentional. What we say is the digital part (sentences and words) and is more intentional.
<b>Content and relationship</b>	There is always a relationship side to communication apart from the information we want to transmit in the message (content). This relationship side is more about how the sender wants fo be understood, how he or she sees the relationship with the receiver and viceversa. We often answer to the content side of the message but not to the relationship side and that may make communication more difficult (we may have different points of view about the relationship).



### Basic axioms of communication (Watzlawick et al (1985))

<b>Interaction in communication</b>	Communication may be symmetrical or complimentary. Symmetrical communication is egalitarian ( the people or groups treat each other as equals, whether because they have relationships of friendship or affinity or because they criticise each other. Complimentary communication occurs when roles differ and one part exercises authority and the other assumes that authority (e.g. domination).
<b>The influence of the process in the relationship</b>	The relationship depends on what the process or the communication sequence is like. It is important to pay attention to the answer we get and not only to the answer we expected and what we expected the other person to understand.

## 8.4 Inter personal and group communication

We see inter personal communication as the interaction between two or more people where we refer specifically to the relationship between those people in our messages. This kind of communication may take place within or outside a group. Group communication takes place in group spaces such as more or less formal meetings where decisions are made, emotions are explored, debate takes place, etc.

In order to facilitate effective communication, we must analyse four aspects: intention (which parts of communication are intentional and which are not, what relates to what and to what extent is communication coherent), identity (to what extent we identify with what we are expressing), agent (who is capable of taking action on what we are expressing) and conscience (where our attention is) (Smith & Black, 2013). These four elements are present in the following tools.

### 8.4.1 Intentional and non intentional: beyond words

When discussing communication between people, we must explore the forms of communication that go beyond words. We must, therefore, differentiate between verbal, paraverbal, and non verbal:

Types of communication <sup>51</sup>		Importance
<b>Verbal</b>	Content of what is expressed, words, questions, answers to questions, etc.	7-20%
<b>Paraverbal</b>	What surrounds speech: tone and loudness of voice, pitch, tempo (pauses, rhythm), fluency, dynamics (the way loudness	38-40%

<sup>51</sup> Percentages established by the pioneering work by Mehrabian and other studies compiled by Van der Hofstadt Román, C. (2005) El libro de las habilidades de la comunicación. 2ª edición. Ediciones Díaz de Santos.

	changes), etc.	
<b>Non verbal</b>	Facial expressions, posture, distance, gestures, movements, the way interacting bodies are facing, etc.	40-55%

The percentages of importance can be applied to emotional conversations and the conditions must be similar to those in the research studies. Although they are not universal, they show the importance of communication as a whole and of coherence (or lack of coherence) in the message in order to reach understanding.

Normally, the intentional part of communication has more to do with verbal communication while paraverbal and non verbal communication is often non intentional. In other words, we do not control those kinds of communications, we are not aware of what we are transmitting through those types of communication. We refer to coherent communication when all the communication (verbal, paraverbal and non verbal) transmits similar information. Lack of coherence in our messages, the receiver's interpretation of the non intentional part of our message are elements which may prevent effective communication.

The level of consciousness in our messages (intentional and non intentional) will vary depending on context, time, and the people involved. Each relationship and each group has its own communication culture and each person has their own style of communication. We can differentiate passive, aggressive and assertive styles<sup>52</sup>. Apart from types, we think it is interesting to bear in mind the different cultures and styles of communication as aspects that may favour or hinder understanding when they are not shared. We must also bear in mind possible hierarchies or dynamics of power between different styles and cultures of communication.

## Signs in our communication

We show our intentional and non intentional communication through different channels and it is useful to identify them and to be able to facilitate the way different people and groups share the information which is present in their signs. Learning to see the signs takes time (both in order to know one's own signs as the group's). This is specially so with non intentional signs. We can transmit different messages in the same or in different channels (double messages).

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<sup>52</sup> [https://skat.ihmc.us/rid=1213210571968\\_1615082955\\_11998/habilidades%20para%20%20%20%20la%20%20resolucion%20%20d%20%20conflictos.pdf](https://skat.ihmc.us/rid=1213210571968_1615082955_11998/habilidades%20para%20%20%20%20la%20%20resolucion%20%20d%20%20conflictos.pdf)

<b>Channels/Signs according to Work on processes</b>	<b>Examples<sup>53</sup></b>
<b>Propioceptive</b> signs related with internal sensations	Changes in skin (due to heat, cold or sweating, for instance), speeding up of heartbeat, internal sensation of heaviness, lightness, knot in one's stomach or other expressions that show internal experiences of temperature, weight, pressure or sensations.
<b>Kinesthetic</b> signs related with movement	Gestures, repetitive movements (nervous tic), stirring in the room or changes in the way space is used, changes in a person's position in the room, positioning of bodies.
<b>Visual</b> signs related with images	Experiences transmitted via images, scenes or fantasies. Eye movements connected to internal visual experiences (usually looking up and blinking rapidly) and superficial breathing, staring at a point for a while. Words to do with the visual world (dream, look, see, etc.)
<b>Auditory</b> signs related with what we hear	Includes the content of what is heard and everything paraverbal (raising or lowering voice tones, silence, pauses, noises, etc.)

### 8.4.2 Identification with the narratives

Communication is closely connected with the need of identity. The more coherent our messages are, the more identified we feel with the message. The narratives we build are important in identifying with our messages and VE logics usually build narratives based on the comparison of us/them, *Others-equals* vs *Others-different*. As seen in chapters 3, narratives feed and feed off our perceptions of unsatisfied needs, which give coherence to the satisfiers we choose, thus helping to create a common identity with those who help us satisfy those needs.

#### **Leaving “Others-equals vs Others-different” behind in the construction of narratives**

Reinforcing conscience, understanding and strong communicational bonds between people in the PVE contexts can prevent a sequence of reactive messages (we react to the Other). This allows us to develop more textured messages (less dichotomic) which seek to maximize impact since they focus on “what is” and “what may be” (consequences of the incident for the whole community). **Switching the emphasis from the simplification of a dichotomy based on identities (and their differences) to common points and causes** will probably help in reducing social fear, lack of trust and individual's and communities' defensive positions, thus maximizing constructive

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<sup>53</sup> This sign chart is built on the concept of simple channels in processes work, enhanced by learning experiences at the Escuela de Trabajo de Procesos y Democracia profunda (Barcelona).

narratives in PVE contexts (Waldek and Droogan, 2015; see chapters 7 affection and 4 security). The challenge for narratives in a PVE context is to strengthen common points and embrace diversity by using constructions which go beyond the aforementioned dichotomy (us vs them or us vs the others).

#### **Tools/ tips: Four principles for identifying with narratives**

**Slachmuis (2017)**

Amplifying the narratives that reinforce the power of emotions and of human connection (reason helps, but emotion mobilises and connects)

Paying attention to how narratives are constructed and shared and not only to their content.

Choosing credible messengers who the receiver will listen to.

Engaging and working with professional media and communicators so as to provide the narratives with journalistic skills based on common points and agreements (and not so much on differences).

#### **The connection with the structural level in the construction of narratives: The importance of spreading messages.**

The role of the media in the construction of narratives is very important. There are contrasted examples of the importance of how to build and disseminate messages (such as radio programs, peacebuilding programs, etc.), which include not only interpersonal communication but also its relationship with the local media (to which also the social media is added). These media can help generate positive narratives that dignify marginalized populations and foster networks of mutual support. An example of effective radio programs with an inter-ethnic, cooperative and non-violent dimension are those carried out in Rwanda after the genocide. These programs sought to build bridges between Tutsis and Hutu.

### **8.4.3 Person responsible or receiver: Giving and receiving criticism.**

Giving and receiving criticism is a form of feedback within dialogue. It is an answer given to the other or to the group based on a given interaction. Criticism usually creates defensive attitudes. It is also used as “attacks” in disguise. In order to give or receive constructive criticism, we must bear in mind the following tips.

#### **Tools/ tips: Giving criticism**

##### **Looking for the appropriate time**

The receiver of criticism is not always ready or willing to receive it. We must be careful in choosing the correct context (see tools for facilitating dialogue)

<b>Check my attitude</b>	What motivates my criticism? What do I want to improve, propose or build? How do I feel towards the people my criticism is aimed at? In the case of attitudes such as revenge, I must previously work on understanding what lies behind that attitude and bring that information forward (seeing when communicating is difficult)
<b>Non Violent Communication (NVC)</b>	When giving criticism, it is useful to follow the order put forward by NVC (Rosenberg), and differentiating between: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. What we see: The expression of what we see (trying to reflect actions)</li> <li>2. How we feel: The expression of how we feel or of what makes us feel (in connection to whether a need is satisfied or not)</li> <li>3. What we need: Identification and expression of needs (satisfied or not)</li> <li>4. What we ask for: Formulating a petition or building a strategy to satisfy needs.</li> </ol>
<b>Gratitude</b>	Close by thanking: e.g. thanking for listening, for time spent, for attention.

<b>Tools/ tips: Receiving criticism</b>	
<b>Taking notice of the impact of criticism</b>	How do I feel? Can I listen? Do I feel so upset that I cannot understand what is being said?
<b>Clarifying and empathy</b>	Check that you have understood correctly and show understanding with the sender's feelings or need.
<b>Taking my side if necessary</b>	Clarifying, going beyond my position (understanding when communication is difficult), bringing information which may help the other person/party understand me.
<b>What can I learn from the other party?</b>	Check what we can take from what is being said (sincerely and however strange it may seem) and use that information in order to analyse what we are and are not responsible for more clearly.

#### 8.4.4 Metacommunication and conscience of communication

Metacommunication is necessary when we want to move forward in situations where understanding seems difficult. It is one of the skills which helps in defusing tense conversations, in order to be able to listen to people with different points of view in conversations with great emotional intensity.

- What relationship is implicit in the interaction?

- Which levels of communication are affected by the specific interaction I am witnessing?
- What impact is what I am saying having?
- What happens to me internally in connection to loudness or tone of voice?

## 8.5 Facilitating inter personal and group communication: Facilitating difficult dialogue

When referring to group and inter personal communication, we immediately think of dialogue. We have already studied some elements of communication that take place in dialogues between people and groups and some keys in making dialogues productive (dialogues that allow for new communicational patterns and ways of connecting that create synergic satisfiers to people's and groups' needs). We will now focus on context and on some specific skills that will help facilitate dialogue. These skills may be developed by the people involved in the dialogue or by specific figures who may take up the role of facilitating dialogue (some are easier to use when in this role). Situations in which tension and polarization have grown normally make communication more difficult: they are situations of conflict. In the chapter about conflict, we have discussed several tools that may help us decrease tension and get back into a context in which dialogue can, once again, take place. We will now see some supplementary tips.

### The role of facilitator

The role of facilitator as a tool to facilitate dialogue (specially in contexts in risk of polarization) is gaining visibility and recognition around the world and more specifically in the MENA region. There is a network in the IAF (International Association of Facilitation) which includes Europe and the Middle East which has committees and groups for specific territories. Such is the case of Iran and the **IAF Iran Chapter**<sup>54</sup> or the **IAF Jordan Chapter**<sup>55</sup>, or the presence of social organisations which promote this role, such as **GEN-Africa**<sup>56</sup>, projects like **SwitchMed CSO**<sup>57</sup> which promotes sustainable consumption and production via processes that include facilitation, and the development of small consulting companies such **Sycamore consulting** (Egypt)<sup>58</sup> which specialises in facilitation.

### Tools/ tips: Skills to facilitate dialogue

#### Framing

It implies gathering information of what has happened and giving it to the group as if setting the scene in a choral play. This may help see what is going on (what the atmosphere is like, if there was silence, if a lot of people wanted to speak at the same time, if something that

54 <https://www.iaf-world.org/site/chapters/iran> <https://facilitators.persianblog.ir/>

55 <https://www.facebook.com/JordanIAFchapter> <https://www.iaf-world.org/site/chapters/jordan>

56 <https://ecovillage.org/region/gen-africa/>

57 <https://www.switchmed.eu/en/corners/civil-society>

58 <https://www.sycamore-consulting.com/>

<b>Tools/ tips: Skills to facilitate dialogue</b>	
	has been said has had great impact and checking reactions).
<b>Paraphrasing</b>	Saying exactly what you have just heard (it shows the other person that you are listening and understanding)
<b>Reformulating</b>	Saying what you have just heard in your own words (it shows the other person that you are listening and understanding. Be careful to not make them think they are expressing themselves incorrectly)
<b>Open questions and not judging answers</b>	These questions do not require an adequate answer (or a yes/no answer). It is also important to not judge the answers with different values (some good, some bad).
<b>Inviting to delve deeper</b>	Asking in a way which allows going further in an aspect (this facilitates understanding of what has just been said)
<b>Synthesising</b>	Summarising the content and/or the process that includes all the parts (re locating and organising dialogue)
<b>Using double signs<sup>59</sup></b>	Encouraging people to consciously transmit the messages they transmit through double signs and using that information to facilitate dialogue. Double signs are when we are sending different signs through different channels and they are not necessary sending the same message (ex: calm voice, nervous movements of the body).

### 8.5.1 Contexts for dialogue

When referring to context, we may think about physical spaces in which dialogues take place. In order to facilitate dialogue, we look for comfortable spaces which are diverse in the way we understand comfort (beautiful, quiet so as to favour listening, a place where everyone feels invited to take part in the dialogue, etc).

Context is, clearly, very relevant when discussing dialogue. Beyond physical space, we refer to time and territory, to social, political, economic, historical, environmental contexts, etc. In this manual, we discuss the difficulty in applying some tools depending on the degree of polarization or division between social actors, experiences or points of view in a specific social situation. In the following grid, all the skills for non polarized contexts are also necessary in polarized contexts.

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<sup>59</sup> Apart from double signs, there is the concept of double bonds. This occurs in situations of intense relationships between people who interact through messages which are very hard to manage since the receiver has the impression of not being able to answer adequately. To find out more about these situations, please refer to the Theory of Human Communication (Watzlawick et al).



	<b>NECESSARY CONDITIONS</b>	<b>NECESSARY SKILLS</b>
<b>NON POLARIZED CONTEXTS</b>	<p>Having adequate knowledge of the context.</p> <p>Beginning with all the parts in the context who want to take part.</p> <p>Analysing how different sides read me (I am more similar to one of the parties in my communication style, my background, etc).</p>	<p>Curiosity and interest regarding the experience of each party involved.</p> <p>Managing attacks on facilitation by using tools for receiving criticism.</p> <p>Identifying ghost roles when they appear and facilitating their appearance.</p>
<b>POLARIZED CONTEXTS</b>	<p>Thorough knowledge of the context, including previous facilitation processes and where they were successful and where they failed.</p> <p>At least one of the parts in the context wants to take part Begin with each party until they show interest in communicating with the other party.</p> <p>Analysing how different sides read me (I am more similar to one of the parties in my communication style, my background, etc) and build teams with other people whenever possible.</p>	<p>Ability to put ourselves in each party 's shoes and imagining what what needs there may be when preparing the space for dialogue. Later on, each party will express their needs but by anticipating, we are working on our possible previous polarization.</p> <p>Ability to feel the atmosphere and perceive subtle changes.</p> <p>Noticing, at once, my own polarization and recovering my ability to listen to all parties by recovering my connection with all my prep work.</p>

### Dialogue through processwork<sup>60</sup>

CFOR is implementing a programme along with Innocent Musore of GER Global Initiatives for the Environment and Reconciliation in Rwanda, and in cooperation with the NURC, National Unity and Reconciliation Commission. The programme supports the ongoing work of reconciliation, violence prevention and community recovery, in the aftermath of the 1994 genocide. Facilitated dialogue using methods of 'worldwork' will explore current community issues, history and pathways forward. A three-year programme includes facilitated community dialogue, facilitation training and mentoring of facilitators involved with further forums and community projects throughout the country. More information: <http://www.cfor.info/rwanda/>

<sup>60</sup> For more articles: [Contribution of worldwork methodology for violence prevention and community recovery after mass violence: An example from Rwanda](#)



## 8.5.2 Reaching an understanding with whom there is no understanding yet

It is necessary to understand the reasons there may be for not wanting to reach an understanding. All through the manual, we have dealt with the idea that those who do not want to reach an understanding are the ones who see Others-different as people who must be dominated because there is a confrontation in the strategies to satisfy their fundamental needs (satisfiers). In each chapter, we have given keys to understand needs and ways to satisfy them. Understanding the needs of Others-different and the logics of satisfiers they apply helps us know how to communicate with the Other-different.

When there is a high degree of polarization and this can not be done in an autonomous way, the figure of a facilitator may prove useful (seeking the participation of that figure indicates a will to reach understanding). The figure of mediation may be equivalent to what Watzlawick (1985) mentions as the figure who is capable of providing the system of communication that the system is proving incapable of providing: a change in the rules of the game<sup>61</sup>.

Tools/ tip: Mediation
Choosing the person or people both parties must legitimize
Calling parties separately (not always necessary) so that both parties can express their viewpoint and possible solutions and see the price of not reaching an agreement.
Reaching agreements on solutions together

## 8.5.3 Listening when listening is difficult

*We may still be in time to make ourselves heard and say who we are*

*Wassyla Tamzali*

The importance of listening is one of the keys to satisfying needs which are at risk in PVE; the need of understanding, connection, belonging, identity, etc. This simple sentence by Algerian writer Wassyla Tamzali refers to this idea. We have already discussed how to create a space for group and inter personal listening, but we want to pay special attention to contexts where listening is difficult.

The experience of feeling that nobody is listening is painful. Those feelings are related to PVE. As the grid shows, it is important to notice the difference between listening to initial positions only (their strategies in trying to satisfy needs or their arguments concerning the strategies used) and listening to their needs, fears and ambitions. By delving into dialogue, in the experiences of each initial position, we can see which interests different parts of dialogue or the situation have in common, which are supplementary and which are opposites. We can often make an initial

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<sup>61</sup> Although Watzlawick refers to therapeutic contexts, the way he defines the figure is very similar to a systemic perspective on communication and thus, fits our idea of mediation.

assessment of opposing positions and opposing interests. Then, by adding information our point of view becomes more complex and we can see a wider range of possibilities. Some PVE strategies do not work because they focus on satisfiers or strategies (e.g. creation of counter narratives or counter rhetoric) but do not listen to anything beyond those points.

We also want to understand: what is behind not listening? It may be a way of satisfying the need of protection, a way of exerting power, a lack of knowledge about what is going on on the other side.... It is important to not interpret those causes, but to facilitate interaction between the party that feels they are not being listened to and the party that finds it hard to listen.

<b>Tools/ tips: Listening when listening is difficult</b>
Using facilitation
Taking your time
Using space as a way of communicating
Paying attention to double signs
Looking beyond people, at what roles are being used (systemic viewpoint where voices are part of the system and they are not identified with specific people, various people may bring a certain voice and one person can bring different voices).
Paying attention to altered states (moments of high emotional intensity)
Communicational metaskills are the attitudes, intentions and values with which we apply or develop communication skills <sup>62</sup> : The attitude of learning, listening or empathy.

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<sup>62</sup> The concept of metaskills was conceived by Amy Mindell.

# 9 Mobilizing and participating in order to transform

## Introduction

Participation and communication are not only fundamental needs that must be satisfied. In PEV logics, they also play a vital role in building socially united communities capable of moving towards ecosocial futures. In contexts of crisis, communities must mobilize in order to satisfy their needs. PEV logic states this mobilization should be collective so as to create synergic, collective satisfiers. A community that mobilizes “en masse” will allow synergic satisfaction of many other needs.

VE logic also offers satisfiers for participation. The idea we are defending is that VE logics satisfy that need among “Others-equal” at the expense of “Others-different” who they think should be subdued or eliminated. They usually offer more hierarchical forms of participation and domination towards the outside normally reverts to the inside as well. The motivation of the dream they seek is rarely integrating (they do not usually dream of a just, sustainable and democratic future for everybody).

## Summary

When we speak of participation and more specifically of community participation, we must define what we understand as community and participation and add some keys for two usual issues in processes of participation: diversity and power. Not all forms of participation are equally coherent with the futures we want to build, the image of those futures. Our dreams are a powerful source of mobilization which should be treated with care. This chapter and chapter 10 (Social cohesion) complement each other in dealing with these issues and describing processes of community building.

## 9.1 Community and participation

### 9.1.1 Ecosocial communities (just, democratic and sustainable)

We think that community and participation go hand in hand since participation is related to feeling part of a community, with belonging to one or various communities.

¿What is a sustainable community<sup>63</sup>? It is a place you want to belong to, that you cannot wait to become a part of. It is not only about having a good time. It is about all of us, with different colours, beliefs and behaviour having the same chance of being appreciated. It is a community in which the vision (the future we dreamt of, chapter 3) is just as important as work, where thinking of others is as important as fulfilling our dreams, where love is not separated from strength. It is a community where leaders are important but not fundamental. It is a community full of facilitators who are capable of exploring dreams while being realistic at the same time. (Mindell, XX)

In PVE, united communities (chapter 10) are those which have a local perspective, which build

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<sup>63</sup> Mindel refers to sustainable communities in the same way we, in this manual, refer to ecosocial communities: as just, democratic and sustainable communities. We will continue to refer to ecosocial communities or just, democratic and sustainable communities.

positive, shared futures, which tend to needs and crate a collective feeling. Although there are many ways of classifying types of communities, we will use the following, since it connects with the ideas we have been working on to this point (in their relation with the needs of security, identity and participation which we will deal with in this and the following chapter) (Gerard Delanty, 2003):

- **Communities based on location:** where population is united since they share the same territory. This territory could be: a neighbourhood, a village, a city, a region, a state or even the whole planet. (satisfying the need of security is usually very relevant in these communities, especially on a local or national level).
- **Communities based on identities:** where population is united since they share the same identity. This can occur through elements: morals, interests/common beliefs, or ethnic questions.
- **Communities based on organisation:** we refer to communities which are informally organized around groups of relatives or friends and to more formal associations such as structures of political decision-making, companies or professional associations, etc. (The way this organisation solves participation will result in one type of community or another).

Although reality is more complex, and some communities are inside other communities, this first division is useful in understanding that when we work in promoting social cohesion we must take into account these different types of communities. This will help us understand who is represented in that community and who is not.

Processes of radicalisation that lead to VE also seek to build community, but they use different forms of participation and they aim at different futures. In the logic of PVE, we try to promote that communities with different identities can create processes of collaboration in the same territory or location. We even encourage them to promote shared organizational structures so as to satisfy needs in a synergic and collective way. This process offers a feeling of belonging different to the one extremist groups usually have to offer. It tries to transcend conflict based on identity and the protection of territory in order to build social resilience. It tries to build ecosocial communities (just, democratic and sustainable).

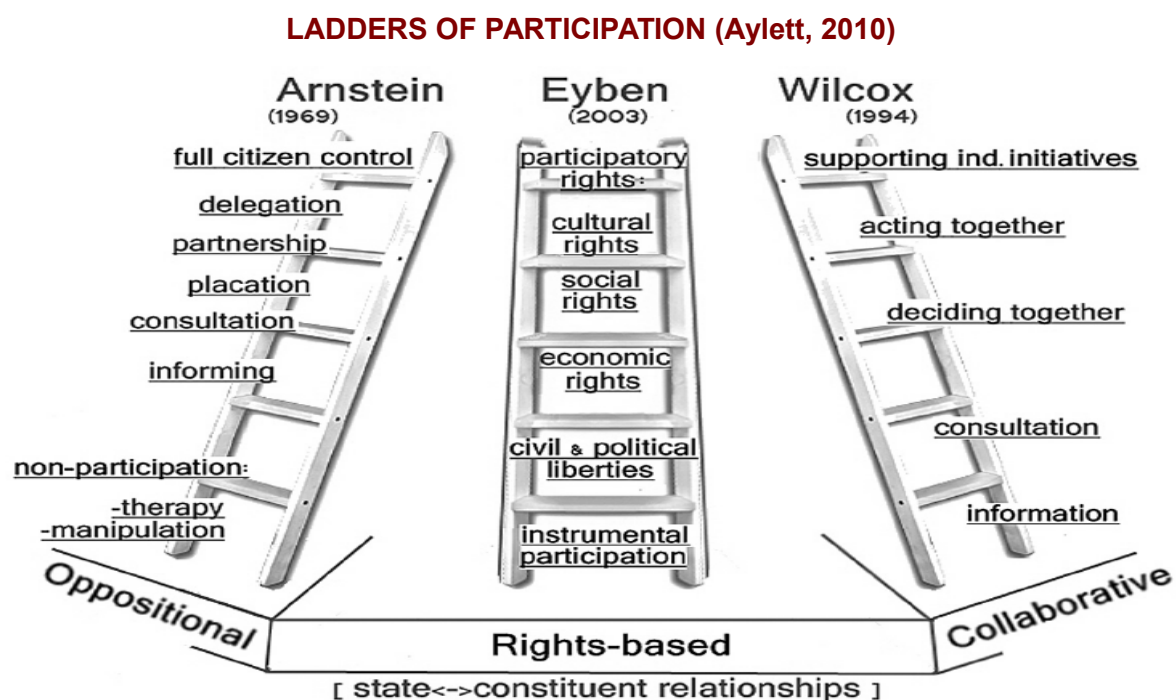
**Tool/tip: Avoiding miniaturisation of people when identifying them with communities**

People are usually complex beings who belong to several communities at the same time (family, religion, sports, work, territorial...) with different degrees of identification with each one of them. Interacting with someone by simplifying this complexity and miniaturising the person to only one community makes the relationship poorer and conditions the relationship (this may burn the bridges we used to understand each other if we stop feeling that there are communities we share and on which we build a positive relationship)

## 9.1.2 Participation

Participation has also been defined in many ways but the most popular definition is the ladder metaphor as a way of showing the different degrees of participation. The best known ladder of participation is Arnstein's (1969) which has suffered variations and seen new versions as we can see in the image. In all the different models, the highest level or what we could understand as the most complete satisfaction of the need of participation (the last step) is the stage where full and inclusive participation is possible for everybody. All the models put the lowest levels of participation at the bottom of the ladder (the most manipulative or paternalistic).

Arnstein's model shows different levels of participation from a context of Opposition/manipulation ("Others" dictate what must be done depending on their interests) to a context of full satisfaction, Ebey's model and part of Wilcox's models are based on more manipulative/paternalistic levels (those who organize know what the group needs look over the rest and -at most-consult the rest). In all three cases, the lower levels of the ladder usually create insatisfaction or negative satisfaction of participation.



As we have seen in chapters 1 and 2, violent logics usually imply forms of participation which correspond with the lowest levels in the ladders.

**Tool/Tip: Clarifying in what type of participation we are in order to avoid frustration or negative satisfaction of participation**

There may be difficulties in processes of participation or community mobilization in connection to a lack of clarity about what type of participation is implied in a specific process. This may create different expectations which can end up causing frustration and lack of motivation when they are not fulfilled. This also applies to processes of public participation led by CSOs/NGOs or by public

administrations. Therefore, it is key to ask ourselves; What do I really expect of the people or organisations I am inviting to participate (in case of us being leaders) or with whom I am mobilizing with (in case of being co-leaders or part of collective drive)?

### **How do we know if we are on the right path in satisfying the need of participation in a way which generates united communities towards that ecosocial future?**

We have five indicators of results that are relevant for most initiatives of prevention<sup>64</sup> which should appear since they help in community work and social cohesion:

- Even the most complex diversity is catered for: excluded groups participate in the community on equal terms.
- Intelligence when managing power and leadership: youngsters show leadership through non-violent means, and adults see them as partners in prevention.
- Real or perceived claims about disatisfied needs are dealt with through non-violent channels (on a macro level , this would include demonstration, non-violent resistance, building other realities... as we saw in chapter 1. On a more micro or interpersonal level, effective communication is used as seen in chapter 7).
- New relationships are built through dialogue about objectives, problems and solutions to needs and not through elements of identity. Therefore, these relationships discredit stereotypes.
- The practices that those communities create are coherent with the just, democratic and sustainable futures they seek (in chapter 3 we saw some keys to help make this happen).

In the rest of the manual, we have provided tips and tools about how to work on several of these indicators. We will now focus on diversity, inclusion, exclusion and power. In chapter 10 we will study different phases in processes of creation of participation, social cohesion and the role different actors (youngsters, women, institutions) play in these processes.

#### **Community participation in order to solve a fundamental need that helps build an ecosocial future**

The Torba Collective -Friends of Pierre Rabhi in Algeria,,is a collective of citizens dedicated to bringing organic agriculture to cities through an AMAP, a community-supported agriculture scheme, as well as urban farming following permaculture principles. These initiatives connect city-dwellers of the capital of Algiers to their food while also providing them with access to healthy food. [https://www.switchmed.eu/en/documents/civil-society-corner/handbook\\_social-ecoinnovation\\_en.pdf](https://www.switchmed.eu/en/documents/civil-society-corner/handbook_social-ecoinnovation_en.pdf)

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<sup>64</sup> Based on a sum of the indicators in Transforming Violent Extremism: a Peacebuilder's Guide. Search for Comon Ground. Online. 2017

### 9.1.3 Diversity in the building of communities

It seems diversity and community are opposite words, but we believe diversity is one of the keys toward building ecosocial communities.

*An ecosocial community knows, values and manages its diversity while knowing, valuing and managing what is common. Common does not mean uniform or homogeneous; its meaning is closer to shared.*

Diversity is a source of wealth and resilience for the group. The same way that a forest is richer and more resilient when it is more bio-diverse, the same happens to a community or group. But, why do we sometimes like diversity while it sometimes challenges us? What makes the experience or vision of diversity so different? There are many possible answers. One of them is related to the perception of diversity as a threat. We may feel that diversity is a threat to our values, our way of seeing the world, our identity (chapter 5: Identity) or our ability to satisfy needs and this makes us see diversity as troublesome (the Other-diverse becomes the Other-different, who we later see as the Other-enemy). This perception could be based on multiple factors: stereotypes and cultural norms in our context, social narratives and messages from the media which treat diversity as a threat, related personal experiences, etc.

#### **Tools: Managing diversity in PEV and being able to support different experiences in the same context**

Understanding the needs and feelings involved in both shared experiences and experiences that are not shared.

Looking for synergic satisfiers that respond to needs while respecting diversity.

Synergic satisfiers that undo misunderstandings.

Questioning prejudice and stereotypes.

Detecting labels that limit one self and the other-different.

Facilitating interaction between different experiences beyond tolerance and acceptance, so that effective communication can take place (chapter 7).

Avoiding homogenisation as a community (opening spaces for diversity).

**Go Deep and Go Beyond Diversity** is the name of a campaign and an exhibition of photographs and stories in which community experiences and reflection about those experiences are the starting point for stories that make us think about how to overcome:



confrontation, time, first impressions, choice, space, tension, lack of trust and expectations, loneliness, silence, language, reflection, correction, acceptance and immobility. All these aspects are part of experiences of diversity in communities and they refer to the complexity of diversity, to the challenge of managing within diversity while being part of it, to rejecting diversity. To find out more, watch the following video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CceAB3L6dEg> and the campaign: <https://godeepproject.org/godeepandgobeyond/>

#### 9.1.4 Power and belonging, dynamics of inclusion and exclusion

When we speak about community and participation, we also think about those not taking part, those who we do not invite to participate and/or feel they have not been invited. We activate the game of rank or power and dynamics of inclusion and exclusion because when we define a community or discuss community mobilization we might think that there are different degrees of belonging, of feeling comfortable in that group or social process and that there may be people who are left out. This is specially relevant in contexts of high polarization where PEV must constantly ask itself who is left out.

Mindell defines rank as a conscious or unconscious feeling of power that people have in relation to their social state or their ability to remain psychologically and spiritually focused. Most people who possess a high rank are not aware of having that rank. We discover our rank when others are afraid of talking to us or when they suffer the consequences of our unconscious behaviour. Race, religion, nationality, sexual preference, economy, etc trigger great powers (power relations). The world can not change without individuals knowing more about their power and rank. Everybody has some kind of rank, even people from the lowest social conditions can yield great power.

##### **Tool/tip: Conscience of the dynamics of power in relation or rank**

Being conscious of the rank (power) one has, building more collective power and using it to benefit society (to create collective synergic satisfiers) helps create positive mobilization and participation. The main problem with rank is when people abuse it for their own profit or for the benefit of ones over others. <http://www.briega.org/es/entrevistas/entrevista-con-arnold-mindell-trabajando-conflicto>

Besides the power in people, we think the power of the community is also key. Thus, working on participation and mobilization in communities or territories beyond its own organisation is vital for social organisations promoting PEV when applied towards that just, democratic and sustainable future.

##### **Tool: *Power with* instead of *Power over* Building power instead of competing for power**

**Power with:** Power built with other people. It is not a comparative power (your power versus mine), but a “summing” power (the power to transform things involving all parts).

**Power over:** Power one has over others. If we follow logics of domination, it becomes a



competitive power (your power versus mine) and produces power struggles or abuse of power.

### **The role of Civil society organizations (CSOs)**

Civil society organizations (CSOs) provide a space for constructive engagement between the state and its citizens. They can channel dissent and diverse opinions in a non-violent way and ensure that governments have an effective feedback mechanism to understand the impact of their policies. Without this visible public channel, exclusion can foster anger, and dissent can go underground where radicalization that leads to violence can occur below the surface in communities<sup>65</sup>.

## **9.2 Mobilizing communities: important and necessary**

### **9.2.1 Mobilizing, but in which direction?**

When talking about movement, one of the questions is if there is direction to that movement and who decides in which direction to move. In the case of PEV, we think it is necessary for communities to mobilize towards ideal and sustainable futures as described in chapter 3. This is one of the keys that distinguishes satisfaction of the need of participation and mobilization of a community towards nonviolent logics (of PVE) from satisfying that same need using VE logics.

We put forward a very flexible direction. Each community will have to decide and specify their path and direction for each context based on their own wisdom.

### **Manual for non-violent transformation**

NOVACT, an organisation whose aim is to promote non-violent social transformation towards more just, democratic and sustainable futures, published a manual for the design of strategies for mobilization and transformation based on their experience in the MENA and Euro-Mediterranean regions.

### **9.2.2 Mobilize, but how?: The role of dream(s) in a community**

*For a moment there was no-one else - just me observing and you drawing.  
The future was there in your small image and yet it was vast, like a square full of people  
and colour, as large as the Plaza de Los Pinazos, in which much of my now long life has  
been lived.*

*I thought..“can we truly grow without the spaces to dream?”  
Go Deep and Go Beyond Campaign*

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<sup>65</sup> See also “10 reasons why Civil Society is an ally and not an adversary in the struggle against Violent Extremism: Global Solutions Exchange (GSX), Sept 2017. Last visit May 2019. <http://www.icanpeacework.org/2017/09/19/10-reasons-civil-society-ally-not-adversary-struggle-violent-extremism/>

One of the driving forces or mechanisms that mobilize communities is dreams, which are a source of intrinsic motivation for people and groups. We move in order to fulfill collective and personal dreams, aspirations which connect with the foundations of this manual, with the synergic and collective satisfaction of needs. A common aspiration in many parts of the world is having a good life. From a historical, ecological, social, economic, etc point of view, it is important to point out that this means a good life within the biophysical limits of the planet.

### **Asking about dreams**

In certain situations, asking about dreams can be a challenge. On more than one occasion, people answer that they “don’t have dreams anymore” or that they “can’t allow themselves to dream”. Being able to dream is, in a way, a privilege. In our experience, despite these first reactions, if we give them time and act respectfully, dreams finally appear. They must be treated with care because not talking about them is a strategy to keep something precious hidden. This strategy helps avoid criticism and being ridiculed in contexts in which dreams are not seen as tools for change. But it is precisely in those dreams that we can find the nutrients needed to grow them, just like seeds have the matter they need to germinate inside them.

### **Tool/tip: Identifying the signs of dreams**

In a dialogue between several people or in a group, can we identify signs of dreams that feed our day to day? What are they like? For instance, they describe a better past or a future hope, inspiring images or examples from other territories or communities, etc. When do these signs appear? We know they appear when there is a dissatisfied need of participation (and of feeling part of something), when there is a lack of common vision (in what direction we want to go together), when the dream acts as a refuge, survival or resistance to dissatisfaction of other needs, etc.

#### **9.2.2.1 The dialogue between high dreams and low dreams in maintaining participation and alerting about extremism**

We can differentiate two kinds of dreams. A high dream is the potential of the community, what we wish for and what, at specific moments, think we can achieve together. This is the kind of dream that mobilizes the most.

Similarly, there are difficult, challenging moments when it seems we have distanced ourselves from that potential. Those moments are low dreams. Both kinds of dreams are important in understanding ourselves as a community and mobilising towards that desired future (more tangible in high dreams) without dogmatisms or excluding purisms. La comunidad, que necesita de la sabiduría presente en ese anhelo o aspiración, en ese potencial que tenemos juntas las personas en un contexto concreto, y al mismo tiempo precisa gestionar sus dificultades como parte de ese mismo sueño.

A community is an open system that receives feedback from the world, which is also vital in the way it works. This increases that community’s resilience since it has tools in order to adapt to

change and manage difficulties and it also prevents the idealisation of communities and the risk of pure dreams like utopia.

### **Critical Education as an example to prevent “purity” as the dream behind extremism**

What is clear is that the twin drivers of extremism are absolutism (single truths, simple dualisms, black and white certainties, either enemy or friend) and the search for perfection, utopia or purity. Both absolutism and perfectionism may be promoted by education rather than challenged. The current obsession with excellence and standards may actually be conducive to extremism. This does not teach people to be at comfort with ambiguity or with the notion of a school or pupil being “good enough”. Critical education is founded on the principle of accepting multiple realities, feeling comfortable with ambiguity and searching for multiple truths, not one truth (Davies, xxx)

Many methodologies of community participation, dynamization or mobilization have dreams as their core element. Such is the case of methodologies such as the Oasis (Brasil) and the Dragon Dreaming (Australia) methodologies, but also of other approaches in which the desired future is used as the core element, as is the case in the Futures Workshops. In polarised contexts VE narratives also use dreams as a driver.

## **9.3 Examples of techniques, methods and community focus**

There are some methods or approaches that have mobilizing a community as their goal. These methods may respond to different moments and contexts and result in the incorporation of tools for participation in existing community spaces or in the community creating new spaces. One option does not exclude the other. In the framework of PEV, we need to bear in mind the degree of polarization between social actors, experiences or points of view as part of the context.

### **9.3.1 Oasis<sup>66</sup>:**

The Oasis methodology consists in mobilizing the whole community in a specific area, during a specific period of time in order to make a specific change. This methodology is not applied to large transformations but it is very useful as a complement to long-term community development and the mobilizing keys it follows can be applied to more long-lasting processes. An Oasis process is divided in 7 stages (in chapter 10 we will see that the description of the stages involved in creating social cohesion have a lot in common with these seven steps):

1. THE APPRECIATIVE LOOK: Focusing on beauty and life. Paying attention to what makes us move, even in degraded environments, so we can make it expand.
2. AFFECTION: Emotional bonds and relationships of trust are the starting point in establishing sustainable and cooperative relationships. Talking to people, looking for the person behind each beauty.
3. DREAMS: Both individual and collective dreams are the main drivers in transforming reality. We build images of the transformation we seek.

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<sup>66</sup> The Oasis game was created by the Elos Foundation and has been used in more than 50 countries.  
<https://www.elosfoundation.org/>, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NdJBaFr4PjE>

4. CARE: We walk or move together, looking after ourselves, each other and our common dream all at the same time. Preparing, organizing, looking for the resources we have and sharing them.
5. ACTION: Working together as a means to relive the enjoyment and power of cooperative action: Neighbours, friends...
6. CELEBRATION: Allowing for mutual acknowledgement of achievements. This is where collective conquests make even more sense. Celebrating success with all the community.
7. REEVOLUTION: After transforming, there is eagerness to continue. Momentum for a new cycle, we dream of new challenges.

<b>Keys in attitude</b>	
<b>Beauty</b>	Ability to perceive and create spaces and relationships that are pleasant and satisfying.
<b>Empathy</b>	Connecting with others.
<b>Common Ethics</b>	Focusing on common good.
<b>Determination</b>	Achieving goals.
<b>Responsibility</b>	Towards things that affect us, our choices and their consequences.
<b>Balance in chaos</b>	Organising creativity, maintaining focus.
<b>Excellence</b>	Ability to always give our best.

<b>Other examples of community participation and mobilization techniques</b>	
<b>General tools in group facilitation</b>	Tools used to make decisions, organise assemblies, solve conflict. An interesting example in this area is the F-NET: Nonviolent Facilitation for Ecosocial Transitions, carried out by NOVACT
<b>Tools in the Art of Hosting</b>	Techniques which make the connection between perspectives possible. The main thing is to talk about what is important for people, thus connecting with their motivation. For more information: <a href="http://www.artofhosting.org">http://www.artofhosting.org</a>
<b>Open forums</b>	Deep Democracy Open Forums are facilitated discussion forums. Very

	useful in addressing issues of public concern that create polarisation. More information <a href="http://worldwork.org/about/open-forums/">http://worldwork.org/about/open-forums/</a>
<b>Go Deep</b>	Go Deep is useful for any <b>group that is interested in the future of a community, to think and start small transformations in that community</b> . Based on Oasis methodology: <a href="https://godeepproject.org/">https://godeepproject.org/</a>

Some of the keys to these methods can be summarised in a table, as a source of inspiration for other processes that have their own methods and points of view.

<b>Keys to mobilization that connect with motivation</b>
<b>Doing together</b> , participation must not just be about talking (affection mobilizes)
<b>Connecting with emotions</b> that build (chapter 7)
<b>Obtaining small victories</b> : The usefulness of what we do must show in specific changes (in the satisfaction of needs). Organizing mobilization so it obtains small transformations which, in turn, will mobilize.
<b>Having fun/ enjoying/ celebrating</b>
<b>Valuing own resources</b> already existing in people and communities
<b>Connecting with emerging or long-lasting existing processes</b>
<b>Knowing how to include new incorporations</b> : Open participation at any stage in the process, without reprimanding those who arrive once the process is underway. Each person participates within their possibilities, whenever they can, etc.
<b>Providing different ways of interacting</b> : Community work can be organized by combining individual moments, couples, small groups, large groups. When working between groups we can apply the same logic.
<b>High collective expectations with operational realism</b> : High dreams built collectively in combination with low dreams.

**Short actions that help far-reaching processes**

In the game of Go Deep in Athens, thanks to street actions, some children from an Iraqi family got involved and convinced their parents to take part the following day. They had been living in the neighbourhood in a house provided by the UNCHR for several months but they did not know the Action Aid center which was just around the corner. This connection allowed them to start taking part in the center's activities. It also allowed people who only saw each other in the streets, to have something in common and to start to participate together.

**Tool/tip: Gender perspective, intersectionality and participation**

It is important to understand the different privileges that exist within the group when participating so that we can balance them.

- Schedules that allow some people participate more than others
- Intergenerational spaces that are not compatible with the presence of children (when their presence is important) or of other people who need to be taken care of (this is normally carried out by women)
- Spaces with gender diversity where cultural codes condition their participation
- People who find it easier to speak, to move around the space, to express feelings
- People with better skills in artistic tasks, in reading, writing etc.

All of this gives us clues as to how we can facilitate inclusive spaces, bearing specially in mind gender perspective and intersectionality (combination of oppressions through different discriminations such as gender, religion, race, ethnic group, social class, etc).

**Example:** Jinwar, a women's village in Syria, is an example of collective construction by women of different religions and backgrounds. <http://www.hawarnews.com/es/haber/pueblo-femenino-de-jinwar-smbolo-de-la-eliminacin-de-la-mentalidad-masculina-h4937.html>

# 10 Building social cohesion

## Summary

Socially united groups and communities which act together in solving their needs with the aim of building a more sustainable, just and democratic future are less permeable to VE

## 10.1 Why promote social cohesion?

### 10.1.1 Social cohesion and satisfaction of needs

Social cohesion refers to positive social relationships and interactions (in number and type) that occur in a given territory. A united society:

- Promotes the well-being of its members
- Creates a sense of belonging
- Promotes relationships of cooperation and collaboration among people/groups
- Promotes trust
- Works on managing differences through dialogue
- Fights exclusion
- Promotes equal opportunities for the development of its members

In order for social cohesion to exist, members do not have to be equals in their elements of identity, values or interests. The diversity of its members can provide social value. However, it can sometimes prove to be a challenge that we need to work on (specially in processes of rapid growth and in communities of refugees, where prejudice and stereotypes may arise in both senses: in the people that were already living in the area and in the people or groups that have arrived recently).

Therefore, we can see **social cohesion as the “glue” that unites people and groups**. A united society which, in turn, moves towards the futures described in chapter three (just, democratic and sustainable) is less prone to VE processes since its members are more capable and have more channels with which they can manage their differences and unease in nonviolent ways. They will fight to eradicate situations of exclusion, marginalization or poverty by offering collective synergic satisfiers, thus carrying out effective work in PVE. **Social cohesion promotes long-term relationships based on trust.**

As we have seen in previous chapters, one of the foundations of radicalization processes that lead to VE is the lack satisfaction of fundamental needs on a social level. We are not only referring to the more material needs such as subsistence or shelter, but also to needs such as protection/security, affection, participation, identity, freedom, creation and idleness. The challenge is to find collective synergic satisfiers (chapter 1) that satisfy more than one need at a time and that satisfy a need without preventing the satisfaction of other needs. **Social cohesion is a type of synergic satisfier** for many of these needs:

- By creating and promoting social cohesion, many of these needs may be satisfied (and therefore contribute to PVE).

- By satisfying a certain social need through collective satisfiers, this creates social cohesion which, in turn, helps satisfy other needs without preventing other people satisfying their needs (and thus contributing to PVE).

Need	Relation to social cohesion
<b>Subsistence</b>	Fights poverty and promotes the well-being of its members
<b>Protection/security</b>	Community bonds generate a feeling of protection
<b>Identity</b>	Builds new collective identities through practices based on logics of collaboration. Allows for multiple identities; the diversity in each person and in each community.
<b>Affection</b>	Creates relationships of citizen collaboration and support which help generate bonds of affection among the population Promotes the sense of belonging through involvement in collective projects
<b>Understanding</b>	Strengthens (and feeds off) effective communication and helps generate collective learning.
<b>Participation</b>	Creates channels and ways in which to work on proposals about social worries or challenges
<b>Freedom</b>	Creates opportunities for freedom of expression and self-affirmation without having to impose on others.
<b>Creation and idleness</b>	Often creates cultural and artistic opportunities

Therefore, social cohesion **takes us from vulnerability to resilience**. How can we promote the satisfaction of needs through collective practices that strengthen social cohesion? We will work on this point throughout this chapter.

### 10.1.2 Social cohesion and PVE initiatives



Although social cohesion boosts PVE, there may be societies or groups with certain social cohesion involved in VE. What characteristics does social cohesion need in order to really promote PVE?:

- Social cohesion must be based on collective synergic satisfaction of human needs. Therefore, it cannot favour some needs while going against other needs.
- Social cohesion does not only focus on creating unity among people with common identities (*Others-equal*). It promotes the building in common of futures with people and groups with diverse identities (the *Others-diverse* or *Others-different*) where what is shared is not identity but a shared future.
- Social cohesion must promote egalitarian, democratic, just, sustainable futures based on non violence (chapter 3).
- Social cohesion must try to eradicate exclusion by using mechanisms of collaboration and not of imposition.
- Social cohesion must favour social mobility: enabling the socio-economic development of the most impoverished sectors.
- Promotion of social cohesion must adapt to each context.

This perspective brings us closer to effective PVE, which focuses not only on the people most likely to be attracted to VE, but also on society as a whole; a more comprehensive and integrating perspective. We do, however, use this perspective to help the people with higher risk of joining VE to find security, dignity and respect in their communities (as we have seen, these are some of the elements people look for when joining VE groups).

Effective PVE is impossible without getting communities involved<sup>67</sup>. Promoting social cohesion makes communities and social groups get involved in the search for solutions to real problems and it favours their mobilization towards satisfying needs in a collective way.

Although we must reach commitments on a national and international level, research on PVE shows that there is not one unique solution for all circumstances and contexts. Therefore, in order to develop social cohesion strategies, it is vital to focus on the local sphere and context. This adaptation to local contexts will help us understand the factors that favour VE and promote effective PVE.

Focusing on context:

- Makes local analysis and vision pass on information to decision making
- Strengthens strategies that begin by getting the local agents involved.

Programmes which have been designed by local agents, albeit with help from international agents, is more likely to connect with the community (focusing on the inter-personal and inter-group dimensions and a more structural dimension, as seen in chapter 1).

Therefore, in order to strengthen the creation of collective practices that satisfy human needs, we need contextualisation and adaptation.

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<sup>67</sup> RADICALISATION AWARENESS NETWORK YF&C (2017). Strengthening community resilience to polarization and radicalization. London. On line. RAN Centre of Excellence.

## 10.2 Keys for social cohesion and community resilience

Although there is no unique strategy which may work in all contexts, there are a series of keys that help when working on social cohesion and community resilience in connection to radicalization processes that lead to VE. We will now list **14 ideas and a provocation**.<sup>68</sup>

1. **Creating spaces for the affirmation of positive local cultural identities.** Spaces that promote what one is, but not by generating closed identities, but identities that are open to what is new or what comes from outside. Working on status and empowerment using cohesion and community as our starting points. Working and improving the sense of belonging and pride in civil structures (set apart from the military).
2. **Creating physical community spaces:** spaces for sports, culture, etc. Spaces which do not represent one side of the conflict (specially in polarized places or where VE is present). These spaces act as social mobilizers and as unifying agents. They improve the feeling of belonging.
3. **Creating agreements or rules on how to cooperate:** it is important to agree on how information will be managed, on how to involve the media, etc especially when dealing with sensitive topics.
4. **Recognising the issues which are important to the community** and creating spaces for dialogue and understanding.
5. **Identifying and expressing the roots and causes of conflict in combination with the communities.** In turn, promoting dialogue about the shared construction of desired futures.
6. Promoting the **diversity of agents** when developing community processes, collaborative projects and social cohesion: schools, local authorities, CSO's, cultural centers, sports groups, religious centers, social workers, cultural and artistic spaces, old people's centers, youth centers, etc. We may ask ourselves about voids: who is missing? There are different ways of getting in touch<sup>69</sup> with certain social groups like gender groups or different age groups.
7. **Creating effective collaboration between state and non-state agents** by:
  1. Identifying, respecting and discussing each agent's needs. Making them feel they each have the same conditions.
  2. Gradually building trust among the groups.
  3. Getting a wide range of actors involved.
  4. Visibility and publicity must be well measured in each situation so as to avoid putting the groups at risk.
  5. Paying attention to the financial issue. There are community initiatives which dislike projects that are funded by the government.

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<sup>68</sup> These keys complement those seen in other chapters. They act as a summary of those more related to creating social cohesion. Creating safe spaces, inclusive collective identities, effective communication, taking care of relationships, and promoting participation and mobilization with tools for dealing with conflict (chapters 4,5,6,7 and 8) help promote social cohesion.

<sup>69</sup> In chapter 6 (Conflict) we have some keys on how to work in polarized environments.

8. **Detecting community and local communication channels**, and if they do not exist, helping to create them. These channels strengthen the feeling of cohesion.
  1. Looking for communicators who are influential and have the skill to get messages across.
  2. Amplifying the voices of the people who deal with similar issues or needs with non-violent means.
9. **Art and creativity are our allies**. They are tools that support the culture of dialogue and expression, that mobilize emotions and help work in a constructive way. Furthermore, art and creativity may help create new solutions to difficult situations. They promote changes in collective imagination.
10. When working on social cohesion, we must **balance collective satisfaction with the satisfaction of individual needs and wishes**. We must maintain focus on the individual: groups are combinations of people who have fears, frustrations, values, complaints, etc. It is vital to tackle the individual needs of the members of the community in order to build community resilience.
11. From a community point of view on PVE, it is important not only to try to understand the factors and reasons for people joining VE movements but to also know **the causes and motivations of individuals and communities at risk** (chapters 1 and 2) **in deciding to not join VE**. This helps strengthen the appreciative perspective on groups and communities, and to learn from the strengths, agency skills and live power of these people and groups.
12. **Looking for social connectors**. It is vital to understand not only the aspects that divide but also the connectors in society: the spaces and people capable of bringing groups or people together. “Border identities” which share identity elements with different social groups can be great allies in processes of social cohesion. In different contexts, elder women have been identified as respected, credible and trustworthy by different agents.
13. **Seeking long-term relationships** rather than relationships based on developing a specific project. Although developing collaborative projects is very interesting, our goal must be to create relationships that transcend that particular project. This leads to bearing in mind that while working on community initiatives we must pay attention to results, processes and people.
14. **Generating useful, meaningful movement that satisfies needs**. Celebrating small victories (one of the keys in chapter 9), uniting in the face of adversity (unsatisfied needs) in order to overcome it generates social cohesion; moments when people see each other as valuable for one another.

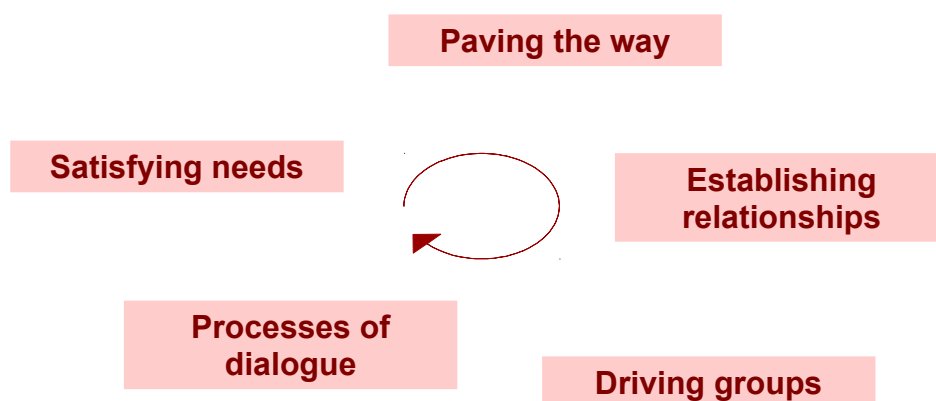
#### **PROVOCATION:**

**Seeing ourselves** (the people involved in PVE) **not only as promoters of PVE and Non violence but also as researchers/apprentices**. We need to update our current knowledge and put it in context, so any community initiative that tries to prevent VE may contribute to improving our know-how and information in this area.

For that reason, it is important to think about these 13 keys, adapt them and create new keys for specific contexts of intervention and we must share what we have learned.

### 10.3 Designing processes to promote social cohesion and community resilience<sup>70</sup>:

We will now explore a series of stages that may help in designing programmes and actions for the promotion of community resilience. These stages must adjust to each context. Their duration and specific methodologies will depend on the characteristics of each territory. Although they are presented in a lineal fashion, as if they started from scratch and paying special attention to polarized contexts, they do not have to follow that order, they do not always start from scratch, they could take place simultaneously and there are elements which might be less necessary in less polarized contexts.



On some occasions, the factor that triggers the process is, in fact, satisfying a need and creating a project that solves the problem (here it is shown as the last stage). Establishing relationships, processes of dialogue or paving the way often occur simultaneously

**Tool: Global vision, external point of view even though one is an internal agent**

<sup>70</sup> Stages based on the model described by RAN YF&C (2018) in: *Engaging with communities. Collaboration between local authorities and communities in PVE*. They supplement the stages described in some of the techniques for social mobilization and promotion of participation described in chapter 9.

All the stages we will now describe are expressed as though the process started from scratch. When working on prevention, we often do not start from scratch and the people working are not new to the community (external agents). This work is often carried out by the affected groups although sometimes using less systematized processes. The stages described are easily adapted to these situations and they simply point out what we should bear in mind in each step. Having this “external” point of view, albeit from the inside, helps maintain a global vision of work on social cohesion within PVE.

### 10.3.1 Paving the way

Before beginning processes or initiatives that promote social cohesion and community resilience, it is vital to set the foundations: getting to know the context and being aware of the situation in the territory where we are going to act:

- Mapping the community and evaluating its demographic diversity through:
  - The use of existing networks of relevant government and non-government organizations that may provide information and contact information about the communities (in case of there being no previous contact).
  - The search for online communities (social networks, websites, etc.).
  - Identifying places in the city where the different communities can meet or communicate: libraries, supermarkets, youth centers, places of worship, sports clubs...
- Discovering possible problems that may cause conflict either now or in the future. Considering if there are tensions that could harm social cohesion.
- Understanding the characteristics of the people who live and work in the area and if those characteristics could change in the future.
- Assessing whether there are high polarization processes and who is involved.
- Getting to know the history, events and important moments in the area.
- Learning from previous experiences (in that particular context and others) and being open to necessary adaptation in order to satisfy specific needs.

Civil Society Organisations are key in analysing local contexts since they help better understand what is going on.

In turn, promoters of community resilience processes must ask themselves:

- What effects and results do we want to obtain through involvement and community participation?
- Can we establish short and long-term goals which are easily measurable and easy to communicate? Are there any small victories/satisfied needs we can achieve? We may alter these goals during the process.
- What resources do we have? (human, economic, etc.)

### 10.3.2 Establishing relationships

Collaboration between different agents, institutions and communities in the creation of community resilience is based on trust. This step is, therefore, very important. Harm done at the beginning of a collaboration takes time and effort to heal. In creating trust we need to:

- Share relevant information in an open way.
- Have a transparent attitude (without hidden agendas).
- Specify objectives and visions and be open to shared revision of both.
- Maintain confidentiality whenever it is important.
- Listen and acknowledge the needs and interests of the community and show genuine interest.
- Show our commitment with the process.
- Build a shared agenda that does not stigmatize any group and which is interesting for all the different stakeholders.
- Gradually build the relationship. We must be careful with forcing the processes on the community or trying to make them evolve faster than possible.
- Not only focus on problematic elements, difficulties or conflict. We must acknowledge and work with the community's potentials, strengths and opportunities.

In the creation of relationships and depending on the community or the kind of agents we can: attend own events (parties, celebrations, open-door days), create shared spaces/meetings where needs can be discussed, etc.

Communities are diverse. Therefore, it is important to approach them through different key people. We can use different means and types of messages aimed at creating social cohesion. It is vital to approach communities and organizations with an egalitarian approach, thus avoiding condescendence. Gender perspective is a fundamental lens to look through in order to understand social situations. Understanding gender dynamics in the contexts where we want to develop social cohesion is vital in creating strategies of intervention.

### 10.3.3 Creating driving teams

Driving teams are needed in order to facilitate and dynamize processes and initiatives. They must be a reference, give momentum and invite new agents, groups or people to participate, thus working as multipliers. These teams can be created once the different agents have become familiar with each other. For those involved it is important to:

- Try to understand what people or groups could help build social cohesion now and in the future.
- Have teamwork skills, be able to listen and negotiate.

- Explore people in different sectors (unions, associations, neighbourhood organizations, community organisations, environmental organisations, etc).
- Have different types participations or contributions in the process. Speak openly about those types so as to clarify each person's role: drivers, consultants, people for specific tasks, etc.
- Create work relationships of collaboration that respond to the problems the community is worried about.
- Bear in mind that, although there may be short-term objectives, in order to promote social cohesion they must think in long-term relationships.
- Have an inclusive attitude.
- Identify existing or potential areas for development and make the best of current strengths.
- Use already-existing networks.
- Bear in mind the different work logics: certain formal or government organisations need bureaucratic processes which may be frustrating to members of communities. Patience and transparency are key.
- In case they need information, it is vital to ensure confidentiality and to have clear rules and agreements so they can build a real process of trust among different agents.

### **10.3.3.1 The role of young people:**

Youngsters are key in social cohesion. They are the people who will experience future changes the most and in many cases they are more vulnerable to VE. They very often feel the need to promote social changes. They can, therefore, channel the impulse of change into building just, democratic and sustainable societies. Setting up spaces for their participation is very important (they often cannot participate). In order to get youngsters involved, we can:

- Use already-existing youth programmes.
- Go to formal (schools) and non-formal places<sup>71</sup> where they spend their time.
- Use types of language (both in content and form) that are appropriate to their interests.
- On many occasions, we must collaborate with social workers, educators and volunteers who work with young people. This is vital in long-term transformation work.
- Consider the possibility of creating peer groups or groups of equals when getting work started (for example, youngsters who enter a space dominated by adults or viceversa).
- Acknowledge youngsters' needs with respect and dignity and try not to see them as mere victims of VE.
- Embrace diversity of opinions.
- Include their families whenever possible.

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<sup>71</sup> These informal spaces depend greatly on context. They are the places where they meet or get together. If they are spaces with strong identities (places in the streets where only they go) it is a good idea to approach the space with someone who acts as a connector (someone who accompanies and is recognised by the group).



### **10.3.3.2 The role of women:**

The inclusion of women in decision-making processes and in processes of promotion of social cohesion and PVE is vital. Since they live in predominant androcentric and sexist societies, it is important to pay attention to creating specific channels for the inclusion of women in these initiatives. We must bear in mind that:

- Many women have played a crucial role in community resilience and within families. Acknowledging this role is important but initiatives which work with women must focus on avoiding stereotypes and not reducing their role to mere carers.
- It is vital to have an approach that includes a feminist perspective based on the empowerment of women.
- Work can start with the women who are already organised or with the community leaders. In this case we must help develop their strengths and talents. We can also start work with already-existing women's organisations and networks.
- It is vital to build trust and care and design strategies in that sense.
- A utilitarian approach is not to be encouraged: working with women is not only a means towards PVE. The well-being of women and their empowerment is an end in itself.
- We must acknowledge the empowerment they already have: paternalistic relationships must be avoided. They must be recognised as equals in the work to satisfy needs and generate social cohesion.

### **10.3.3.3 The role of local leaders:**

Getting local leaders involved is very important since they are highly influential among other actors and have great skills in spreading messages. It is important to find the best role for leaders (that role may be different depending on context, previous relationships between institutions and organisations). When we think of leaders, we refer to:

- Formal local leaders (high ranks in organisations or public institutions)
- Religious leaders: especially in contexts where people involved in VE have spread religious messages. It is important to build dialogue between these leaders and politicians.
- Emotional leaders: people who are loved by the community.
- Community leaders: people who are influential or have a wide vision of the community.

## **10.3.4 Processes of dialogue**

On occasions, before starting the development of shared projects or initiatives to satisfy certain needs, it is necessary to create spaces for dialogue. This is specially so in polarized contexts or in contexts of pain. Firstly, it is important to be able to talk about it in a way that embraces all voices



and that encourages collaboration and listening. All the different parts should benefit and commit to the process.

These spaces are important because they show that there are alternatives to violence when working on conflict or differences. They also help reach agreements since they eliminate the idea of “the other as an enemy” and stimulate strategic thought about how to co-exist with other points of view. All of this helps build long-term relationships and bonds.

When creating dialogue processes about important issues we must pay attention to four important dimensions:

<b>What is discussed and when</b>	Establishing shared agendas known by all parts.
<b>Where dialogue takes place</b>	A safe space for dialogue must be developed.
<b>Who speaks</b>	Their previous experience, histories and relationship among them.
<b>How dialogue takes place</b>	Norms, attitudes and guidelines that help moderate the dialogue.

Keys for facilitating dialogue are given in chapters 5 and 7.

### **10.3.5 Creating joint projects/actions to satisfy needs and desires**

In this stage, we are ready to implement actions and projects of collaboration between different agents. In communities or territories where VE has not caused polarization or harm, or where the specific groups or communities we are working with have not been badly affected, this phase may start earlier.

We now begin to develop or promote ideas that satisfy the needs, desires or problems of the territory. We need projects or ideas that can be collectively implemented and seek a positive impact on the territory. We now focus not on analysing causes or problems (which we already did in previous stages) but rather on the projection of a common and desired future. We promote satisfying needs through collective initiatives that may satisfy needs in a synergic way:

### Synergic satisfaction of needs

A vegetable garden can satisfy the need of subsistence by providing quality food at low cost but it can also satisfy the needs of participation, creation, idleness and even affection... Therefore, a process which was meant as a way to improve a family's subsistence can also improve the family's interactions and relationships with the neighbours (thus promoting social cohesion).

There are many types of initiatives or projects that strengthen social cohesion depending on needs and context:

Collective participation in restoring and transforming public spaces.	<a href="#">Oasis Santa Catarina</a>
Cooperative creation of economic income.	Micro-credits (e.g. <a href="#">Gramen Bank</a> )
Generation of alternative resources to money	<a href="#">Time Banks</a> , Social coinage.
Consumption	<a href="#">Agriculture supported by the community</a>
Social or cultural centers	<a href="#">Casa Tomada (Salvador)</a>

In this stage, we must bear in mind the following points:

- Build community abilities, create spaces which appeal to the community and attract them towards taking part in planning and carrying out activities. Driving groups are important in getting more people involved.
- Once the main needs and desires of the community are clear, look for ideas that can be put in place in a collective form that encourages collaboration and creates excitement and motivation. Start with the ideas that are more widely shared.
- Focus on the solution and on collective construction of solutions to challenges or needs and not so much on past analysis.
- Look for inspiring images of that future or project the community wants to build. Images can potentially mobilize imagination and the desire of people to get involved.
- Create creative spaces in order to look for solutions. In moments of creativity, every idea is acceptable. Later on, those ideas can be evaluated through a series of criteria so as to choose the most satisfactory actions or ideas.
- Once the best ideas have been selected (those that best satisfy the needs or objectives, those that create social cohesion, etc.), build a prototype, test it and improve it (if possible).

- Have the ability to adapt to things that come up which were not planned.
- Create spaces where group learning can be gathered. We gather learning by defining follow-up and assessment spaces for our initiatives.
- Design tasks for different agents and people, so that different people can participate and feel that they are part of the process.

Do not forget an important thing! Enjoy the process and make people also to enjoy it! Social cohesion helps to make our lives stronger, easier and happier.

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