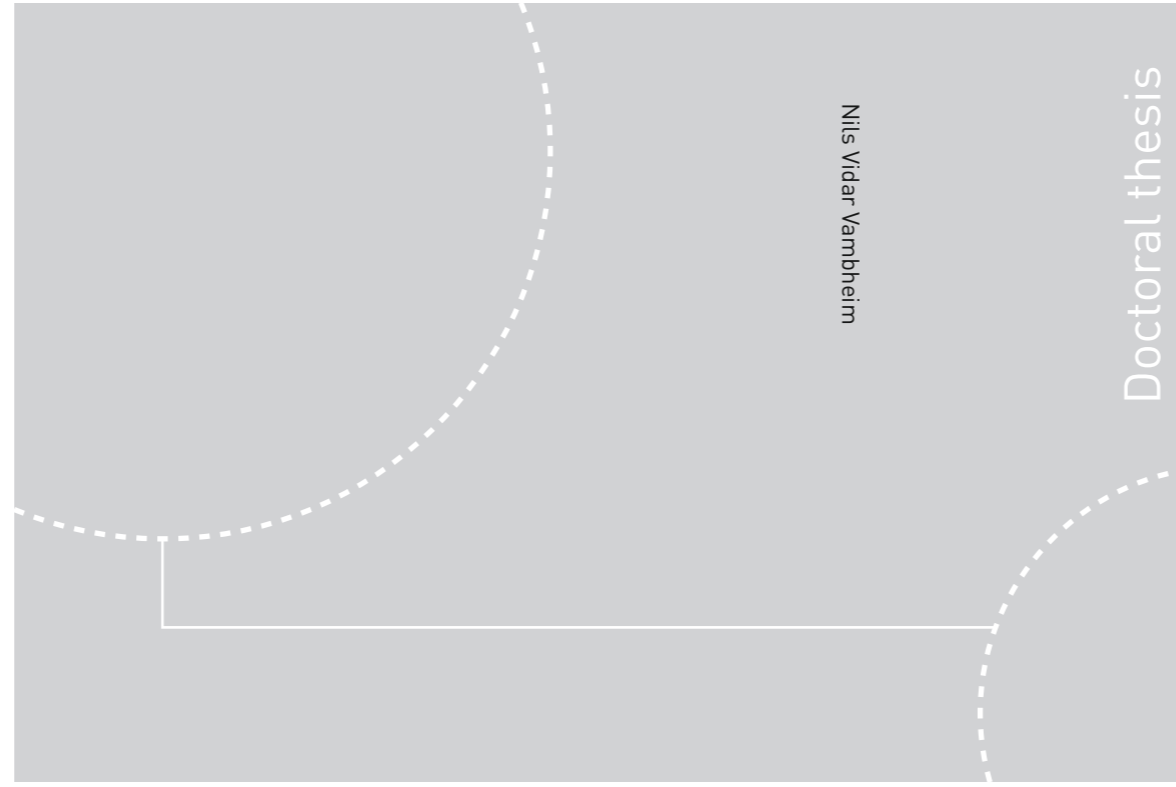


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Nils Vidar Vambheim

# Studies in Conflict, Violence and Peace

 **NTNU**  
Norwegian University of  
Science and Technology

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**NTNU**  
Norwegian University of  
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Thesis for the Degree of  
Philosophiae Doctor  
Faculty of Social Sciences and  
Technology Management  
Department of Education and Lifelong Learning

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Thesis for the Degree of Philosophiae Doctor

Trondheim, April 2016

Norwegian University of Science and Technology  
Faculty of Social Sciences and Technology Management  
Department of Education and Lifelong Learning

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## Summary

The theme of the thesis is the relation between violence and conflict. A theoretical framework is discussed in the introductory chapter, in which I introduce the problem in focus in this thesis, and provide a theoretical background for the four articles that constitute the main part of the thesis.

In chapter 2 and 3 (articles number 1 and 2) I discuss the problem of asymmetric violence in the context of school bullying. In chapter 2 I discuss *the concept* of bullying, with the aim of clarifying how we can identify a case of bullying, and differentiate it from conflicts that may be violent, but may not be characterized as bullying. I identify three criteria that can be used to assess a case - intentions, behavior and consequences – and discuss how the criteria can be applied to different forms and aspects of bullying.

In chapter 3 (article 2) I introduce the concept of *network bullying*, argue why it has an explaining power beyond the concepts of “bullying” and “mobbing”, and show how it can be applied to concrete cases of bullying and group conflict.

In chapter 4 (article 3) I discuss the problem of terrorism and counter-terrorism, with a focus on the problem of dialogue in the context of asymmetric conflict. I suggest that there is not much space for dialogue between belligerents with extremely unequal power, quite different logics and rationale regarding reasons and legitimization of war, and almost incommensurable parameters for “victory” and “peace”. However, peace movements on both sides can engage in dialogue with one another. If they can unite, they may be able to undermine the public support of belligerents on *both* sides of the dividing line. The article was published in *Security Dialogues* no 3, 2011.

The last article (chapter 5) analyses an educational experiment that aimed at testing out whether mindfulness training can contribute to reducing the level of stress and aggression, and increasing self-esteem and empathy, and thus to enhancing the capacity for *peace at the (intra- and inter-) personal level*. The outcomes of the experiment were mixed. The article discusses the findings, and suggests some adaptations of the learning environment to improve the results. The article is relevant for bullying intervention in schools, as well as for reduction of aggression for people that are in conflict, as well as for trauma healing post conflict. The article was written together with a former student

of mine, Ole Henning Sommerfelt, and published in the *Journal of Peace Education*,  
Vol. 5, Issue 1 March, 2008.

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If it were not for my supervisor, professor Haavelsrud, this work might have remained in the drawer. His continuous encouragement, guidance, patience and comments to drafts has helped me overcome a number of internal and external barriers on the way. When time and duties distracted me from this work, he was always there to help me restart it, prioritize it, connect empirical examples to social theory, expand my knowledge, *believe* that I could do this, and stretch myself to the limits of my abilities. According to Haavelsrud, guiding my work has been like “a long seminar”. I am very grateful that he had the patience to participate in that seminar to the end.

I am indebted to Johan Galtung, who introduced me to peace and conflict studies and peace theory, and showed me how to *connect* to the ideas of great masters of social thought. Galtung also showed me the importance of independent thinking, creativity and intellectual courage. The reader will judge whether I have understood that.

I thank my colleagues at the Department of Education and the Centre for Peace Studies at the University of Tromsø for believing in me. Your support and recognition have helped me gain confidence in myself and my work. In case you asked what I was doing when I was inaccessible, *this* is answer.

My wife, Tone Magelssen and my three daughters, Marit, Sara and Unn Valborg, have been bearing long periods when I was absent from home, and absent-minded when I was at home. Tone has been listening patiently to me reciting excerpts from this thesis, over and over again. The library, the internet, the office, travels, computer and books will always occupy my time, but from now on, the dining table at home will not be an office desk. That is a promise.



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## 1 Introduction

The central theme of this thesis is the relation between conflict and violence. The thesis consists of four articles and this introduction; all in all five chapters. Two of the articles are published in peer-reviewed journals. In this introduction I shall present the main concepts and theories that are discussed in the articles, relate these concepts and theories to one another, and connect them to the problem that is common for three of the four articles: *The problem of violence in the context of asymmetric conflict*.

I first discuss theories of *conflict, power and violence*, in order to prepare the ground for the main part of the thesis, which deals with two forms of asymmetric conflict: Bullying and terror(ism). While *symmetric* conflict can be described as a duel, match or power struggle over a *common goal* (also called “a bone of contention”), asymmetric conflict is characterized by one-sided violence, besides ambiguity or confusion as regards what *is* the “bone of contention.”

I first discuss the concept of *conflict*. Then I discuss three types of *violence* and their relation to power, aggression and coercion. I conclude by suggesting a concept – *network violence* – in order to connect the micro-level of action and inter-action to social structures, in which interaction is embedded. A network is a structure, but the concept of *network* points to a phenomenon that is less rigid and stable than the concept of social structure, at least compared to the way this concept is defined and used in classical, sociological theory: While the concept of *social structure* is often understood as *relatively permanent and inflexible*, so that relations between units are hard to change, the concept of *network* gives an image of human and social relations that are malleable and changeable.

In the four chapters that constitute the body of the thesis, *power* is not discussed explicitly. In the articles, power relations are rather taken for granted as a kind of background variable or infrastructure that just “is there” as a continuous, silent force. Conflict and violence are *triggered and regulated* by existing power relations, but conflict may also change power relations, and may trigger violence. Therefore, I will discuss the relation between power, conflict and violence in this introduction.

As regards ways out of asymmetric conflict, I present a rather pessimistic perspective on *rational* conflict resolution. This is because in asymmetric conflicts, there is often confusion and uncertainty as regards what the conflict is about. There is also disagreement regarding the question of justice, or what is a “fair solution.” If a conflict is aborted, existing power relations are frozen. The weak or subdued party may end in dependence, and the strong party may feel entitled to “more”. This is so in inter-personal and inter-group relations, but it also goes for conflicts at the macro-level.

Negative emotions can dominate individuals’, groups and nations’ lives *while* a conflict is in progress, but also *long after* the conflict is ended, interrupted, or “solved.” People can become addicted to negative emotions; to cognitions connected to the conflict, or to their “enemy” (Lindner, 2006). This binds energy, prolongs trauma, prevents a creative, future oriented orientation to life, and prolongs the life of the conflict itself.

In the final article of this thesis, written in cooperation with my former MA student Ole Henning Sommerfelt<sup>1</sup>, we discuss whether we can learn to disconnect from negative emotions, and connect to positive and life-giving ones, and how mental techniques such as mindfulness may contribute to that.

## 1.1 Conflict

The text below is built on Galtung (1996, 2013). According to Galtung, conflict is a triangular phenomenon consisting of *contradictions, attitudes and behavior*. At the *basis* of any conflict, there is a contradiction. A contradiction is defined as “incompatible goal-states in a goal-seeking system” (Galtung, 1996, p. 71). Human beings, groups and social organizations are goal-seeking systems, and if their goals are incompatible, a conflict may emerge.

Contradictions evoke or reinforce motive forces, attitudes and behaviors that aim at overcoming the contradictions, one way or another. Behaviors are manifest, evident, demonstrable aspects of a conflict. Attitudes/assumptions and contradictions are latent. Attitudes and behaviors may be violent or non-violent, but in conflicts, the attitudes will inevitably be negative; i.e. they will indicate discord, disharmony or imbalance.

Contradictions without observable conflict behavior are *a latent, or silent, conflict*: There is a “problem”, but not an *articulated* conflict. If there are no negative attitudes between conflict parties, people may still engage in a purely *ritualistic conflict*, in which they play roles as

antagonists. If there is neither a real disagreement (no demonstrable conflict *content*) and no overt conflict behavior, attitudes may nevertheless be negative, and *prepared* for conflict.

Example: Two old enemies or competitors, waiting for the next opportunity to pick a fight.

Also such conflicts may become a ritual.

If contradictions, attitudes and behaviors are present, there is a fully articulated conflict (Galtung, 1996, p. 71, cf. p.73).

Galtung differentiates between actor conflicts and structural conflicts. Actor conflicts can be divided into two archetypal forms: *Dispute and dilemma*. In disputes, two or more actors have incompatible goals, i.e. both/all actors cannot realize their goals at the same time, in the same field etc. (the goals collide, or are on a collision course). If one actor has two or more incompatible goals, he/she is in a dilemma. A dilemma is a cognitive or emotional conflict between incompatible alternatives. In most conflicts, disputes and dilemmas are present simultaneously: Disputes can create dilemmas; dilemmas can *create or enter* disputes; disputes can *contain or conceal* dilemmas.

Actors are involved in larger social structures that *transcend* them in time and space. In other words, conflict emerges in a historical and spatial *context*. In structural conflicts, conflict behavior is usually latent, or suppressed/subconscious: Power relations may then be invisible, considered legitimate, or taken for granted, like laws of nature (Bourdieu, 1977) (Bourdieu & Thompson, 1991). When structural aspects of a conflict remain outside the frame of reference, the conflicting parties try to solve their differences within the frames set by existing structures. This narrows down the conflict image: The conflict is framed by the structure, and the conflict parties may limit their perspectives on the conflict, so that structural aspects of the conflict remain invisible (Bernstein, 1975; 1990, pp. 16, 36-39).<sup>2</sup>

Social structures have a history. In the course of that history, rules, regulations and procedures have been established to prevent or regulate conflicts, or keep conflicts latent.<sup>3</sup> Rules and structures have been made in order to freeze existing conflicts, or put them to sleep: There are taboos, as well as themes and topics that or “should” or “must” not be mentioned: Let sleeping dogs lie. From this perspective, social structures, rules and regulations are *crystallized history*: Structures are historical experience integrated in social and cultural patterns, rules and regulations. In this state, structural conflicts can remain latent for decades, generations, even for centuries.

If structures, rules or regulations are shaken by external or internal forces, frozen conflicts will emerge; rise to the surface: If a structure is exposed to an external shock, the structure may crack. If internal contradictions grow intense, the structure may thaw or break up from the inside.<sup>4</sup> The task of conflict theory is, then, to identify latent contradictions and structural imbalances that may trigger conflict<sup>5</sup>, identify driving forces of conflict escalation and de-escalation, and look for non-violent ways to overcome or solve the contradictions (or root-causes) of conflicts.

In my analysis, I shall take interaction in micro, and actors rather than structures, as a starting point: Actors may be individuals or collectives, but *abstracts* such as nations, religions, communities, groups etc. are just a shortcut for *nationals, believers, community or group members*. That is, collective mentality may of course both overrule and permeate individual consciousnesses, but in the last resort, a collective mentality must be traced back to the mentality of the individuals who constitute a collective. This rationale can be expressed thus: Humans form groups and networks through *interaction*. Groups and networks may act as one, collective body, but they *consist of relations between individuals*. These relations sum up to a characteristic *group climate or group mentality*. A group mentality radiates what is on the minds of the group members: If they are hostile, the group is hostile. If they are cooperative and solidary, so is the group climate, etc. However, situational factors may create a group mentality that differs very much from the normal action tendencies and personalities of individual members who constitute the group. Put concretely, situational factors, roles and relations between roles may, through mechanisms of reinforcement, change mild and warm personalities to hostile ones, and vice versa (Zimbardo, 2007).

This way of reasoning is in agreement with network exchange theory, according to which dyadic exchanges occur in the context of larger networks of social exchanges (Ritzer, 2011, p. 441). According to Simmel, conflict unfolds in concrete interaction processes in *dyads, triads and networks of dyads and triads*. Conflict is, according to Simmel, a *web of interactions* that 1) separate individuals and groups from one another, 2) connect individuals to one another, so they form in-groups, 3) establish boundaries and create gaps *between* groups, so that members of one in-group are divided from members of the out-group, and 4) connect groups to one another via *their common affairs*. Process 1 creates intra-group division; process 2 generates intra-group solidarity; process 3 defines membership, in-group/out-group identities and intra-group solidarity; and process 4 confirms relationships and power relations *between* groups. Process 4 is here the most important one: Groups in conflict

are *connected* to one another. Actually, says Simmel, groups and individuals are interwoven and connected to one another *through conflict over common affairs*: The objects, objectives or relations about which they fight, link them to one another. In the process, conflict produces power relations within and between groups. Conflicts are tests of leadership and solidarity within groups, and in the process, they create boundaries and gaps *between* groups (Simmel, 1964).

This perspective is best fit to analysis of conflicts in micro, but it can also be used to analyze large-scale or global conflicts (Caplow, 1989; Caplow & Hicks, 1995).

In chapter 3, I apply this approach on bullying among children, i.e. to “low-intensity” conflicts at the micro-level of society. In chapter 4, I use a similar approach to high-level and high-intensity conflicts, in which massive physical violence is applied.

### 1.1.1 Sensitivity and specificity

Only one of the conflicts treated in this thesis (chapter 4 on terrorism/“counterterrorism”) would be recorded as “conflict” in most conflict databases. This is due to the fact that conflict databases tend to include only high-level, political conflicts, in which *massive, physical violence* is applied. Low-intensity conflicts, and conflicts in which violence is mainly symbolic, are not recorded as “conflicts” in such databases.

For example, The Uppsala Conflict Data Program includes only conflicts with 25 or more *fatalities* per conflict year in the database (Wallensteen & Themnér, 2012, Definitions). Other databases, such as the KOSIMO database, include only political conflicts of some magnitude, in which *the state* is directly involved as a conflict party.<sup>6</sup>

Ramsbotham *et al.* (2011) use Galtung’s definition of conflict as a point of departure. From that point, they add criteria pragmatically, in order to differentiate between different types of conflict. Their approach can be illustrated thus:

1. Conflict is the pursuit of incompatible goals by different groups.
2. “Deep-seated disputes” are complex, intractable conflicts: no solution in sight.
3. “Violent conflicts” are conflicts, in which *violence* is applied by one or both sides.
4. “Armed conflict”: both sides resort to *armed* force.



5. “Genocide”: one-sided violence aiming at exterminating a group of people, or sections thereof, etc.

Each criterion gives a specific focus, but comparison between different types of conflicts is still possible. Thus, Ramsbotham et al. keep intact sensitivity, open up for comparison and ranking of conflicts according to severity, when needed. In other words, they characterize conflicts according to the *type, form and degree of violence* applied in a conflict.<sup>7</sup>

Andrew Mack uses a similar strategy. Basing his argument on qualitative criteria, he differentiates between conflict and violence, between one-sided and reciprocal violence (asymmetric vs. symmetric conflict), and between *different forms* of asymmetric conflict. For example, massacre and genocide are two forms of one-sided violence, but for practical purposes, the two forms should be kept apart.<sup>8</sup> Further, he distinguishes between “politicide” and “genocide”. Both are massive category killing, but with different motives.<sup>9</sup> The concept of “conflict” is reserved for instances of reciprocal – and usually violent - action among conflicting parties (Mack, 2005).<sup>10</sup> I will come back to this in section 1.3.

### 1.1.2 Symmetric and asymmetric conflict

In a *symmetric* conflict, two or more parties are competing for control over the same goal. If two or more actors are trying to maximize their control over the same goal, the conflict may escalate and end in violence. The task of conflict analysis and conflict resolution efforts are then

1) to overcome the zero-sum *setup*, or zero-sum *mindset* of the parties, 2) to take conflict parties *beyond the impasse*, and 3) to arrive at a solution that makes incompatible goals compatible. In such conflicts, rational conflict resolution is possible and obtainable.

*Asymmetric* conflict offers resistance to rational conflict resolution. If there is grave inequality of power between the parties, *there is little doubt of who will win in case of a duel*. Hence, the strong party will seek confrontation, while the weak party will avoid direct confrontation, but retaliate in other ways, e.g. by using guerilla tactics or pinprick tactics. This implies that there is no clear frontline between the parties, and the outcome is often a war of attrition, in which both parties try to wear down the stamina and fighting spirit of their enemy. In other cases of asymmetric conflict, conflict parties have incommensurable goals, so it is very difficult to define a “bone of contention”. In structural conflict, as well as in some cases of bullying, one

party is virtually *powerless*, while the other party may seem omnipotent. Further, the oppressed may feel helpless, while the oppressor often feels *guiltless*. In such cases, it is difficult to define a clear topic of negotiation.

Hence, in asymmetric conflict, rational conflict resolution is difficult. In the case of bullying, *what* should the bully and the victim negotiate about? Their only common goal is the control of the body and mind of the victim. How can a mediator define a topic of mediation in this case? Bullying can hardly be defined as a dispute, since there is barely any reciprocity in action. In a dispute, there is a *clash* between two or more opponents. From this perspective, “bullying” and “conflict” are different phenomena; psychologically, morally, and practically.<sup>11</sup> Anatol Pikas has drawn attention to these points by showing that the characteristic feature of bullying – as opposed to conflicts, fights etc. - is *power asymmetry* (Anatol Pikas, 1998a, Endnote 24). I shall treat this question in detail in chapter 2 and 3.

In the case of *asymmetric warfare*, one party may define the bone of contention as terrorism, while the other party defines the problem as a 1000 years old oppression, hence a struggle between good vs. evil, justice vs. injustice, God vs. His enemies. Evidence shows very few examples of rational resolution to such conflicts.<sup>12</sup>

Galtung (1996) treats the problem of power asymmetry in the context of *structural* conflict and structural violence. In structural conflict, conflict complexity is “below zero” (Galtung, 1996, pp. 76-77). *Apparently*, there is no conflict, no actors and no goals<sup>13</sup>. In an established social structure, historical conflicts have been crystallized in that structure, and the structure tries to stabilize and perpetuate the power relations between conflict parties. Structures are, from this perspective, *frozen power relations*. However, in a “frozen” conflict there may be *suffering* (psychological, somatic or both), *tensions*, *problems*, *frustrations* etc., but tensions and frustrations are considered as “outside the frame”. In Galtung’s terminology, there is a *latent conflict*. A function of social structures is to *reduce the level of conflict inside the structure, and keep conflicts latent*.

Above, I have discussed the concept of asymmetric conflict, and how it limits the possibility of rational conflict resolution. Below, I shall discuss the concept of *violence*, and its relation to conflict.

## 1.2 Violence and its relatives

Violence is an ambiguous and contestable concept (Clarke, 1979):<sup>14</sup> A form of behavior that is recorded as an “argument” or “disagreement” from one perspective, may be recorded as “violence” or “humiliation” when seen from another perspective. Below, I shall discuss violence, and some concepts that are closely associated to violence. I shall start with a concept that is frequently associated with violence: aggression.

### 1.2.1 Aggression and violence

In most definitions, violence is closely associated with *aggression*. Aggression refers to a psychological inclination or intention to harm or hurt. If aggression fails (the target is not hurt or harmed), it is still aggression (Aronson, 2008). If aggression succeeds (the target *is* hurt or harmed), it is *violence*. The difference can be illustrated as follows: If A throws a brick at B, it is aggression. If the brick hits B, it is violence. However, if a brick falls from the ceiling and hits B, this is an *accident* or an *incident*. (That is: It is an accident unless somebody had arranged the “accident”). In other words, the term “violence” is frequently connected to an *aggressive intention* or plan. Therefore, the term aggression is frequently used as a short-cut for violence.

Apparently, what distinguishes the two concepts from one another, is the problem of *intention*: Aggression is intentional, violence may or may not be intentional. Although this is also contestable, the distinction can work for practical purposes: Unintended events, such as natural disasters or accidents can be violent (a *violent* storm, a *violent* car crash, *violent* bleeding etc.). If there is an aggressive intention behind, the event is not an “accident”. “Violence”, then, refers to a *dangerous force* that hurts and harms, while aggression refers to an intention or propensity to hurt and harm.<sup>15</sup> In other words, intended violence is a direct effect, unintended violence is a side-effect of *unplanned or unforeseen causes and circumstances*.

There is still much ambiguity as regards intention and aggression: The intentions of the sender of a message, and the interpretations of the receiver do not necessarily correspond to one another. The receiver may, e.g., misinterpret the signs issued by the sender, or exaggerate the

severity of the intentions of the sender. Hence, the receiver may *read* “threat” or “aggression” even though no threat was intended by the sender.

On the other hand, the sender may conceal his/her intentions, or *act ambiguously on purpose*, so that the receiver and/or bystanders are uncertain of the real content of the message. Even when concrete actions and signs are documented in detail, it may be difficult to demonstrate unambiguously the intentions of the sender. In such cases, we may have to *infer* the intention on the basis of circumstantial evidence and interpretation of signs. Circumstantial evidence is evidence that becomes meaningful when signs are *interpreted in context*. An important part of that context is the *power relation* between the involved actors. There is often a substantial degree of *uncertainty* in circumstantial evidence. For example, a *sign issued by A* is only a threat to B if A has *adequate power to harm B*, and *the circumstances permit A to do so*.

Finally, a threat may be *objectively* embedded in a situation: For example, if Sender and Receiver have very different *positions* in a power structure, so that the sender is safe, while the receiver is vulnerable, a factual information can conceal a threat (Austin, 1962; Salomon & Nevo, 2002). In this situation, a *reminder* of the objective power relation can function as a threat. The implications of the “reminder” may be perfectly clear to both sender and receiver, but it may pass unnoticed by third parties. Only those who see the power relations among the participants will be able to read the real content of such a message.

In bullying relations, all three aspects may be present: *Reference* to objective power relations can be used to *frame* a targeted person, so that he/she has to submit to the will of the Sender, even though no threats are issued. For example, a “neutral” piece of information may conceal a threat, but the sender can assert, with a good conscience, that he/she is merely *stating facts*. The information may actually have been meant as *good advice* to the receiver: If the receiver does not follow the advice, he/she may “harm him-/herself”. It should be noted that the “objective” power relations, to which the sender refers, may be *produced* by the sender or his/her associates. Ari Nadler calls this situation “safe harm” (Salomon & Nevo, 2002). The problem of *safe harm* is at the core of bullying relations (to be discussed in chapter 2 and 3). Safe harm is only possible if there is a *significant power difference* between Sender and Receiver.

### 1.2.2 Power and violence

Violence is one way of manifesting power. Two, apparently opposite, perspectives on power are 1) power as the ability or capacity to achieve one's goals, and 2) power as the ability or capacity to overcome resistance. The former perspective points to the ability or chance of *reaching certain goals*, alone or in cooperation with others. The latter perspective on power can be traced back to Weber, who defined power as "jede Chance, innerhalb einer sozialen Beziehung den eigenen Willen auch gegen Widerstreben durchzusetzen, gleichviel worauf diese Chance beruht." (Weber, 1976).

Rational choice theory tries to integrate the two perspectives. The presentation below is based on Hernes (1975) and Ritzer (2011, pp. 416-453).<sup>16</sup> In theories of rational choice, power is the sum or product of *interest and control*: An actor, A, has power over another actor, B, to the degree that A has *control* over what B wants or needs, and vice versa. If A and B are both interested in the object or goal **Y**, power is a direct effect of each actor's relative control (or *degree* of control) over **Y**.<sup>17</sup> If each of them controls goods that are of interest to the other, so that A controls **X** and B controls **Y**, the power relation between A and B can be summarized thus:

$$\text{Power A:B} = \left[ \begin{array}{l} \text{A's control over X} \\ \text{A's Interest in Y} \end{array} \right] : \left[ \begin{array}{l} \text{B's control over Y} \\ \text{B's interest in X} \end{array} \right]$$

If A wants a share in **Y**, and B wants an equivalent share in **X**, the power relation A:B is reasonably balanced. If B needs **X** more than A needs **Y**, there is power asymmetry. Unless B finds *alternatives to X*, A will have more power to decide the terms of the transaction than B. From this follows three basic assumptions: 1) The stronger B needs **X**, and the less A needs **Y**, the more significant is the power asymmetry between A and B, 2) The fewer adequate alternatives B has to **X**, the more *dependent* is B on A, and 3) the more dependent B is on A, the more steep is the power gradient A:B.

Assumptions no. 2 and 3 are relevant to asymmetric forms of conflict and violence, including bullying. The problem can be defined thus: B can increase his/her power by *increasing A's* interest in **Y**, or by finding *alternatives to X*. A can respond by *reducing or blocking B's*

control over *Y*, or by reducing *B*'s alternatives to *X*. If *A* succeeds in reducing *B*'s alternatives to *X* down to zero (so that *B* has no alternatives to *X*), *B* is in a situation of *constraint or coercion*. *B* has received "an offer he couldn't refuse" (Coppola, 1972).<sup>18</sup>

The tendency to take complete control of what the other needs, aiming at *reducing B's options* - if possible to zero - is a characteristic feature of the phenomenon of all kinds of *coercion, including the phenomenon of bullying*. The logic of rational choice is more-or-less intact as long as this kind of violence is instrumental: E.g., extortion and siege are rational as long as the extortionist or besieger wants to profit from the threats he or she issues, and will give up the siege once his/her demands (e.g. ransom) are fulfilled. However, if the besieged has nothing to yield, rational choice theory loses its explaining power: Power for the sake of power is beyond the inherent logic of rational choice and rational power theory.

If it continues over time, bullying is like a siege that is being intensified when (or *because*) the beleaguered hoists the white flag. A more suitable term for such action might be "irrational choice" or "irrational power".<sup>19</sup> In an attempt to save the theory, one might argue that the "need for" dominance may be explained as an outcome of choice, *if the actors seek a "rush" or "kick" from the experience of dominating others*. If the experience is repeated, there is also a *habituation effect*: Habituation increases the need for repeated, frequent and even more intense experiences, in order to maintain the effect. Then dominance and humiliation of others can turn into an addiction. Subsequent withdrawal symptoms will trigger repeated, more frequent and intense bullying for no other reason than experiencing the "kick" once more. Lindner has shown how addiction to humiliation can develop in both perpetrator and victim in a relation characterized by dominance and submission, and how this (irrational) motive force *reproduces* unhealthy relations for both sides (Lindner, 2006, 2010).

So it is *possible*, but far-fetched to explain the reproduction of such patterns of human interaction as an outcome of rational choice.<sup>20</sup> An alternative may be to explain bullying as an outcome of individual psychological disorders, or personality features (Olweus, 1978a, 1978b), but the evidence for this assertion is ambiguous, and only applies to a small minority of those who participate in bullying activities (Easterbrook; Leymann, Undated; Matthiesen & Einarsen, 2001).

However, studies of a wide range of social settings indicate that circumstantial and structural factors can trigger a "Lucifer effect" that can make ordinary, non-aggressive persons aggressive and violent, especially if people are involved in *roles as dominator and dominated*,

and the behavior of the former is not circumscribed by social norms *or* control mechanisms that limit their action potential (Zimbardo, 2007).

Bullying can be an efficient means to exclude persons from formal as well as informal groups (Leymann, 1987b). For example in power struggles or competition for positions in a hierarchy, bullying may give rewards for bullies as well as for more peripheral members of a network. Rational choice theories can help explain what triggers such conflicts, why conflicts can escalate into violence, and why some conflicts develop into bullying. However, it does not explain bullying vis-à-vis a powerless victim who has nothing to hand over, and it does not help explain cases when bullying tends to *continue* when the victim has nothing to submit, except submission.

In chapter 3, I analyze how situational factors can trigger relational aggression, how such aggression can develop into violence, scapegoating, and bullying, and how bullying can become an *autotelic activity* (i.e., its own goal).

### 1.2.3 Bullying as a hidden form of violence

Since bullying and harassment are usually considered illegitimate, it will be exposed to negative sanctions. Hence, bullies will try to hide their activities in order to *avoid* public attention, as well as interference from authorities. For this purpose, indirect and symbolic forms of bullying may be more efficient than direct and physical forms.

The effects on the victim of indirect forms of bullying can be measured. The victim may become neurotic, and sometimes reveal signs of psychological disorders, such as post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) (Einarsen, Matthiesen, & Mikkelsen, 1999; Matthiesen & Einarsen, 2001, 2004).<sup>21</sup> However, bullying is only one among a number of possible causes of PTSD. Those, whose task it is to prevent bullying or its consequences, are usually *outsiders* to the bullying relation, hence ignorant of it, or uncertain of whether bullying is the cause of the symptoms. Outsiders<sup>22</sup> can only discover the causes through indirect methods: An interview with the victim may increase the outsider's certainty of "what is going on", but if the suspected bullies reject the accusations, conclusions must rely on circumstantial evidence. Even when it can be proved *that* a person is being bullied, the relation between bullying and the

symptoms can be contested (e.g. by the suspected bullies). Hence, PTSD is not *in itself* grounds for concluding that a person has been bullied.<sup>23</sup>

This has implications for intervention efforts. For example, whistleblowing is a threat to the bullies, so “tattletales” will often be exposed to threats or punishment. Therefore, intervention “from above” to stop bullying may reinforce the bullying once the authority looks in a different direction. If evidence of bullying is uncertain or ambiguous, the victim may be very vulnerable to further attacks. This risk deters many victims from telling in the first place. Therefore, the victim may need strong guarantees of protection in order to tell, and real protection while the investigation is ongoing. This problem is well known to teachers and school leaders. Therefore, they are often reluctant to start a “public” examination, with interviews of witnesses and alleged bullies, unless they feel certain that very serious bullying is going on, and they have a fairly good idea of who commit the bullying.

The victim’s fear may be caused by the direct power of the bullies. However, it may also emanate from relational power of the bullies. Relational power is based on the ability to manipulate or take advantage of social relations in the peer group, i.e., relations that *transcend* the bully/victim dyad (Bernstein, 1996)<sup>24</sup>. More precisely, network power consists of the ability to manipulate and/or take advantage of relational conflicts in a *chain* or *hierarchy of relations* that are linked to one another (Caplow, 1968). Conflicts in a network may change power relations, so that in the course of a conflict, some actors or dyads may advance to more central power positions, at the expense of others. Therefore, hopes or expectations of social advancement, combined with fear of social degradation, is a powerful *driving force* in intra-group conflict, conflict escalation and bullying.

Abuse of power tends to unfold backstage, where the rules and regulations that govern the public “face” of institutions and social groups do not apply (Goffman, 1971). It can also unfold with the tacit acceptance or consent of formal leaders (Leymann, 1987b; Zimbardo, 2007). If the playing fields of schools are training grounds for power games *in adult society*, revealing those games among children can help us predict how power games may unfold among adults in the coming generation.<sup>25</sup> Whether we expect future power games to be violent or not, depends on how we understand the concept of *violence*.



### 1.3 Violence

In political rhetoric, as well as in public debate and a substantial part of the cultural and creative industries (EU, 2014)<sup>26</sup>, “violence” is frequently synonymous for *direct* violence, alternatively for aggression. The word “violence” tends to indicate that an action

- 1) is aggressive
- 2) involves threats
- 3) is committed by one or more identified actors, who
- 4) intentionally inflict pain, damage, harm or trauma, or fear thereof
- 5) in another identified other

If the concept of violence is to satisfy all five criteria, an act is violent if, and only if, an *identified* actor *intentionally* targets another living being or his/her property<sup>27</sup>, and inflicts harm or trauma in that ‘other’, or threatens to do so. Violence is, then, *a specific method or means* that an actor applies in order to achieve certain goals or ends that are external to the violent act itself. The goals or ends may vary almost infinitely, but they are always related to a specific situation and power relation between a subject who commits violence and his/her target.

As I have shown above, this perspective disregards the possibility that threats, as well as realization of threats, may be or become an *autotelic* activity. If violence is morally condemned, or met with attempts to stop it, which is often the case, the actors who commit violent acts will try to hide their acts, divert public attention, or interpret/explain their actions as legitimate.

For example, if the target of a threat calls the act “a threat” or “aggression”, the actor who issues the threat may reformulate it (e.g. call it a “warning”), or claim that “it” was not unintended as a threat. He/she may also claim that the receiver is “hypersensitive”, “exaggerates”, that no *actual* harm has been done, that it was a “just response” or retribution for some previous act, or it was “a disagreement”, “a trifle”. Actors who act so may also claim that sanctions will be an infringement on free speech, e.g. in the context of threats on the internet or via mobile phones.

## 1.4 Types of violence

### 1.4.1 Direct and indirect/structural violence

Galtung distinguishes between direct, structural and cultural violence.<sup>28</sup> (Galtung, 1996:196-197; 2013). He operationalizes the three concepts thus:

- 1) *Violence* is “avoidable insults to basic human needs”.
- 2) Basic human needs are the needs of *survival, well-being, identity and freedom*.<sup>29</sup>
- 3) Basic human needs may be insulted directly or indirectly, hence there are two basic types of violence: Direct and indirect (or *structural*) violence.
- 4) Examples of *direct* violence are homicide, maiming, sanctions (insults to physical needs), de-socialisation, re-socialisation, secondary citizen status (insults to identity needs), repression, detention, expulsion (insults to freedom needs).
- 5) Examples of *indirect/structural* violence are exploitation, penetration, segmentation, marginalization and fragmentation.

Galtung introduces the concept of *cultural violence* for *symbolic* forms of violence that legitimize direct or structural violence. Cultural violence will be discussed in section 1.4.2.

Direct violence is an action concept, involving *goal-directed* action. The acts are directly observable and usually intentional, although not always defined as violence by the involved actors. Structural violence is *indirect*: It happens in complex patterns, and – like structural conflict – it is not an easy task to identify specific perpetrators, even when the victims are identified.

Structural violence involves many individuals, roles or groups. All may contribute to the traumatic consequences for the victim, but the contribution of each individual actor may be insignificant or ambiguous. Consequently, it is difficult to demonstrate that a specific actor or group are “*the cause*” in cases of structural violence. For the same reasons, most participants in a violent structure will have little or no consciousness of the negative consequences, to which his/her individual actions contribute. Hence, each actor will often have a *clear conscience*. Thus, the concept of structural violence *transcends* the discussion of intention and guilt. The focus is on the consequences (*harm, trauma, suffering etc.*). The path that connects consequences to causes goes via *responsibility*:

We may be responsible for acting to prevent or remove negative consequences for which we *feel no personal guilt* (in the sense of “having caused those consequences”).

Hence, the concept of structural violence moves the focus of analysis *from intentions to outcomes*, and *from guilt/blame to responsibility*: When certain events or social conditions cause negative or traumatic consequences, we must act to prevent or repair the harmful consequences, irrespective of who committed the acts, and *their* intentions. We can, for example, *assign responsibility* to actors who are in charge of the social environment, organization, instruction, conditions, measures, rules, regulations etc. that cause or trigger the harmful consequences. The principle of *precaution and prevention*, and responsibility to prevent and forestall harmful consequences, applies irrespective of *who* exactly are “to blame”.

According to Imbush, violence is a “protean” concept. Its meaning varies according to historical, political, social and cultural contexts. Due to the expansion of the state and the rule of law, the concept of “violence” has gradually been delimited to acts of *physical* violence committed by *non-state actors*, or to *illegitimate* forms of violence committed by authorities/state agencies (Imbush, 2003, pp. 30-31). Thus defined, “violence” is understood as forms of force that are not authorized by law and regulations.<sup>30</sup>

In Western discourse, where human rights are integrated in the legal systems, symbolic violence (Bourdieu & Thompson, 1991) and structural violence (Galtung, 1996, 2013) are usually not called violence. Instead, concepts like *authority, power, force or threats* are used to describe events and conditions. In other words, structural forms of violence will often be described in terms that *do not evoke associations to violence*. Actually, the adverb “violent” will often be *added* when we want to describe illegitimate forms of force. Hence, structural forms of force or coercion, such as police actions or sentences by courts of justice, are called “justice”, while rule-governed violence in e.g. psychiatric hospitals or prisons is given names like “commitment”, “punitive action” etc.<sup>31</sup> An alternative concept for the same might be “structural violence”.

Structural violence is not necessarily aggressive or hostile. The goal may even be peace, in the sense of an “absence of direct violence”. However, structures, rules and regulations can efficiently prevent humans from satisfying their basic needs. If there are few or no alternatives to living under inhumane conditions, the situation may be *as traumatic* as the situation of people who are exposed to direct violence, or even worse.

The *outcomes* of structural forms of violence are observable and measurable, although violence *in the process* may be invisible. Three examples:

- 1) Indirect forms of violence - such as social exclusion or marginalization - are traumatic for the target, but often unobserved by outsiders. Insults, ridicule, harassment, denigration, or symbolic forms of humiliation may be visible to insiders, but invisible to outsiders.
- 2) Although the process of economic exploitation can be invisible to outsiders, hazardous or dangerous work environments can be observed and recorded *directly* by field reports and case studies. The outcomes can be measured by data on mortality, morbidity and relative or absolute poverty, and thus be made visible.
- 3) The process of social exclusion may be even more invisible. Nevertheless, its outcomes and side-effects can be recorded by research on stress, social status, prestige, morbidity, mortality etc. If socially excluded or disparaged persons or groups score high on these variables, compared to members of middle- or high-status groups, this may be caused by social exclusion or denigration. In the last resort, social exclusion may deprive persons and groups of opportunities to satisfy their basic needs.

#### 1.4.2 Bullying

Bullying can be defined as an act or process, in which a person or a group harass, humiliate, oppress or exclude an individual or group who are not in a position to defend themselves. Apparently, bullying implies *aggression and coercion*: The *intention* is to harm and hurt, the *goal* is to hurt and harm, and the *tools and methods* are – even when they are ambiguous and subtle – *violent*.<sup>32</sup> However, even acts that are performed by subtle, indirect, or invisible means can be called bullying, if the acts are directed at persons who are unable to resist or stand up for themselves, and the acts can be characterized as harassment or persecution. A person or group who are exposed to negative actions frequently or over time by a stronger person or group, will be *disempowered* in the process: They cannot defend themselves even if they try, and sooner or later they will give up.

Bullying may lead to social exclusion. Social exclusion and consequences such as stigma and human rights abuses, may be intended or unintended, latent or manifest, legally sanctioned, or informally legitimized. In most cases, social exclusion is informal: It works through social or cultural norms that trigger prejudice and social bias. In other words, social exclusion tends to be *latent*: It may be known – even accepted – by cultural insiders, but officially denied, and unknown to outsiders. Alternatively, insiders are blind to it, outsiders can see it. In both cases, lack of communication between those who see it and those who do not, is an obstacle to preventive work.

In chapters 2 and 3 I discuss these questions. In chapter 3, I apply network theory to explain how conflicts among school children sometimes develop into bullying relations that may result in social exclusion. I also show that *insulation* and lack of communication between insiders and outsiders to the bullying relation is a major obstacle to efficient intervention, and that attempts to break the barriers between insiders and outsiders may be *blocked* by the bullies.

A child may be bullied for a number of reasons. It may also, it seems, be bullied *for no reason*. In any case, both bullies and their victims learn how conflict can be used to change or maintain existing power relations and patterns of domination, and how the patterns can be made invisible by manipulating perceptions, so that intervention is impeded. The lessons learned from bullying experiences in childhood may last a lifetime: Bullies learn how to dominate others *and* conceal their domination to outsiders; bystanders learn what may happen *to them* if they challenge an established social power, and victims learn the lessons of humiliation and social exclusion.<sup>33</sup> Thus, violent patterns of social interaction are produced and reproduced in concrete processes of socialization, often in spite of public rules and regulations that underline social harmony and pro-social behavior. This leads to the topic of *cultural violence*.

### 1.4.3 Cultural violence

“By cultural violence, we mean those aspects of culture, the symbolic sphere of our existence – exemplified by religion and ideology, language and art, empirical science and formal science (logics, mathematics) – that can be used to legitimize direct or structural violence.” (Galtung, 1996, p. 196).

Violent social structures can create simmering discontent, frustration, despair, defeatism, resentment, fear, jealousy, envy, hatred, rage, fury and a host of other negative emotions and motives. Culture provides explanatory models, motive and legitimacy to act on those emotions. Culture may also be a *script generator* for “how to act” in order to cope with, survive in, or come out on top of a social structure. Violence can be *coded* in cultural scripts.

Cultural violence comes in a number of forms. I shall concentrate on two forms:

1) Violence expressed in symbolic forms, e.g. in religion, literature, art, news media, science etc. It can also be expressed in verbal phrases, in gestures or in subtle, even tacit forms of harassment, humiliation and or social exclusion. Chapters 3 and 4 deal with this kind of violence.

2) Physical violence with symbolic content. By this I mean direct violence that is put on stage to “send a message” to an antagonist or an audience. Symbolic actions may target property, symbols, rituals or social events that are of symbolic significance to the receivers of the message, especially those who identify with the targets, with authorities that govern them, or with those who support the authorities.<sup>34</sup> In chapter 5, I discuss this in the context of terrorism.

Galtung (1996) introduces the concept of *deep culture* for the most deep-seated ideas, doctrines, myths, mores and symbols of a culture or civilization. Deep culture contains images and latent *motives for action* (Galtung, 1996, pp. 201-207). Images can combine to *myth-symbol complexes* (Kaufman, 2001) that are stored in the collective subconscious of a population, hibernating until a situation or movement *evokes* them and *transforms them* to motives for action. The images may be hiding in caches of the mind of individuals, of social groups, or of nations: In stereotypes of self and other, in religious beliefs and doctrines, in ideology, art, literature, science, legends, songs, proverbs, jokes, social norms and customs, collective symbols (flags, icons etc.), statues, paintings, elements of science, and a host of other cultural expressions that can be used as legitimization of violence.

*Myth-symbol complexes, as well as simple images and myths, can reproduce themselves in a culture for centuries.* They can also proliferate across a vast geographical, social and cultural space, and take deep roots in the cultural codes of a society as *a cache, or*

*reservoir*, of cultural norms and customs. Dawkins introduces the term *memes* (analogous to *genes*) to characterize such cultural codes. Memes are *cultural replicators* that – just like genes - are characterized by *copying fidelity, fecundity and longevity* (Dawkins, 1989, chapter 11). Thus, memes survive, reproduce and proliferate in a *meme pool*.

Memos, and clusters of memos linked to one another, contain codes and building blocks of a *deep culture* or *cosmology* (Galtung, 1996, pp. 210-211). The scientific work to document and analyze the relation between deep culture and violence is still in its embryo stage.<sup>35</sup>

Some memos dispose for, or legitimize, violence. Examples are militant, aggressive or violent customs and norms of action, connected to patriarchy and honor codes (Lindner, 2000, 2006, 2010). Such memos may be called *warrior memos or violence memos*.<sup>36</sup> Such memos are deeply rooted images, ideas, beliefs, norms and customs that *prepare* people for aggression, or *legitimize* aggression. Some of these ideas, beliefs etc. are explicit and visible, others become visible only via analysis. Examples of such memos in this thesis are, inter alia, *scapegoating, bullying, terrorism and “anti-terrorist”* campaigns (terrorism against terrorism). In the chapters on bullying and terrorism, I analyze some structural and functional aspects of these phenomena. I deal with this in chapter two and five.

## 1.5 Critique of the concept of structural violence

It can be argued that the concept of structural violence is too comprehensive, and not well enough defined and demarcated from other *social evils* that are, strictly speaking, not examples of *violence*. For example, Galtung has defined violence as a condition in which “people are influenced in such a way that their current somatic and mental fulfilment is less than their potential fulfilment” (Imbush, 2003, p. 24). Even though Galtung later specified that by the term “violence”, he means “*avoidable* insults to *basic* human needs” (Galtung, 1996, p. 197, italics mine), critical arguments against the concept can be raised. Below, I shall discuss three critical arguments against the concept of structural violence. The arguments relate to *human needs, social injustice, and social structure*.

### 1) Needs deficit and violence:

If “avoidable insults to basic human needs” is violence, a person or group is a victim of violence if

- one or more of his/their basic needs are not satisfied, and
- the social order (read: social injustice) is to blame for their needs deficit.

Humans, and especially humans who are in a situation of conflict, often experience a conflict between basic needs. That is, we are in a situation of choice and trade-off: If we, for example, want to maximize our welfare or identity needs, we often have to accept suboptimal satisfaction of freedom needs. *Vice versa*, the need for freedom or identity can sometimes only be achieved at the expense of welfare needs, or even at the risk of being killed. Most human beings will at times feel that their needs fulfilment *is below their potential fulfilment*, or that one or more of their basic needs are being unsatisfied. Social structures frequently force us to choose which basic needs we want to satisfy, and the alternative – to be an *outsider* – hardly seems more promising when it comes to needs fulfilment.<sup>37</sup> Hence, needs satisfaction will, in such situations, often be below its potential in one field or another. This may be painful, but identifying it as “violence” may easily end in a form of *victim mentality*. Victim mentality contradicts some preconditions for peace and conflict transformation. Among such preconditions are personal peace (peace with oneself), self-control, frustration tolerance, empathy for others in situations of conflict, solidarity, reliable social structures (security as a *peace infrastructure*), and social integration.<sup>38</sup>

### 2) Social justice and violence

Equating “violence” to “social injustice” opens up a can of theoretical problems connected with our understanding of social (in)justice. A comprehensive treatment of this question would overstretch the limits of this introduction. However, one problem will be treated briefly: To consider social injustice and violence as the same thing, opens an arena for victimhood claims. This may stand in the way of peaceful conflict transformation. There is, for example, a deep-rooted ambiguity as regards *peace and justice* in Western and Middle Eastern cosmology, and probably in most of the “great” civilizations.<sup>39</sup> Put briefly, most civilisations teach *that justice without peace is possible*, and that violence may be



*required* in order to achieve justice.<sup>40</sup> Hence, there is a cultural reservoir for violence, and also for the claim that violence is the mother of justice in most “great” civilisations.

### 3) Social structure and violence

Traditionally, the concept of social structure denotes “the enduring, orderly and patterned relationships between elements of a society” (Abercombie, Hill, & Turner, 1984, p. 228), while the concept of violence associates to direct *action*.<sup>41</sup> Actors *act*; structures *regulate* human action. Social structures relate to *rights, duties, responsibilities, expectations and relatively stable relations between roles, actors or agents*.<sup>42</sup> Roles are associated with certain positions in the structure, and structures can be compared by how roles in one structure correspond to roles in other structures. Social structures may determine rights and legitimacy of actors, groups and institutions involved in the structure (“*who is authorized to do what, when*”), and there are *sanctions* against violation of the norms and regulations that constitute the structures. Contrary to this, *action* originates in human intentions and decisions. Action is based on free will, structures try to reign in and regulate that will. Hence, action and structure are dialectical opposites. Intentional actors can challenge social structures, while structures channel, regulate, frame or limit the freedom of actors.

Despite these objections, I shall argue that the concept of structural violence fills a conceptual and moral space that would otherwise be empty, especially in peace studies.

## 1.6 Defence of the concept of structural violence

If violence is defined as “avoidable insults to basic needs”, *insults* and *basic needs* are the two parameters that connect structure and action. Although most social structures are not designed to insult basic human needs, they may nevertheless do so in their consequences. If *trauma* or harm is at the core of the concept of violence, social structures that *unintentionally* deprive people of access to basic needs satisfaction, are violent.

Some structures produce consequences that are violent in their effects, even though the intention was not to produce such consequences. For example, some actors or networks of people want to secure their own affluence or security by means of social structures (e.g.

property rights, gates or border control systems etc.). If they do so at the expense of less powerful actors' need for security and welfare, the term "structural violence" is appropriate.

Social structures may be designed or developed in order to achieve allegedly positive or "high" goals, e.g. economic growth, social modernization, industrialization or social integration. Such structures can produce devastating consequences for parts of the population, e.g. for subalterns and others at the "receiving end" of such structures. Whether the subalterns are forced or not, directly or indirectly, intentionally or not, is of secondary importance for those who suffer under the consequences of such structures. Actually, social structures can force some people(s), classes or groups to live under the conditions Hobbes described as "the state of nature"<sup>43 44</sup>, while those who are on top of the same structures, or are in control of them, can escape that state. In other words, structures can force parts of the population to live in continuous violence or fear, while social elites live in peace and security due to the same structures.<sup>45 46</sup>

Some social structures may be *planned and designed* to use force or coercion. Armies, police, justice systems, certain mental institutions etc. can be found in most societies on earth. Other structures, such as apartheid, slavery, caste systems, penal institutions, concentration camps etc., are intentionally constructed to prevent some sections of the population from satisfying their basic needs. These structures are inherently violent. In addition, they also legitimize direct violence of strong against weak, and they often trigger violent reactions among those who are exposed to that violence.

There is a deep-seated psychological and moral difference between intentional violence and unintentional violence. The former is obviously violence, while the latter is *not obviously so*: Social structures that hurt or harm *non-targeted individuals or groups*, are usually not considered "guilty" for the suffering of those groups *in the same sense* as intentional actors are. This is because the misery of people who suffer may be due to a number of factors, and the structure in focus of our analysis is only one of them.

Discussions of guilt and responsibility tend to refer to *actions*; i.e. to direct or triggering causes. Structures are background factors (sometimes called *root causes*), almost like natural forces. Hence, our moral reactions to structural phenomena are – or tend to be - less intense than our reactions to face-to-face situations. Direct violence is of the latter kind, while structural violence is of the former kind.

According to Levinas, face to face encounters put us in a *presence – or proximity* - of The Other. This “orders and ordains” us in ways that social structures or institutions do not (Marcus, 2010, p. 16). Therefore, *the presence of The Other creates an ethical climate of concern and responsibility that is different from that created by social structures*. The latter concern is, as it were, less authentically human than the former, because it is more abstract. This social fact can be observed in all spheres of social life, from family and neighborhoods, via peer groups to work environments and courts of justice: The fundamental (or primary) source of morality is the concern for the Other, and authentic concern increases with degree of proximity; hence of our sensual (audible, visible, tactile) *access* to the plight of the other.

This was a main point in Milgram’s findings, as well as in Bauman’s thesis on the moral and sociological lessons we can draw from the Holocaust (Bauman, 1989).<sup>47</sup> Moral aversion to violence is based on experience with *face-to-face encounters*, or with *proximity* to the other, alternatively on imagined encounters with such situations, e.g. in movies, literature, art and stories in mass media that bring us close to the *personal* experiences and lives of others.

Contrary to this, social structures are often too abstract to evoke genuine empathy or antipathy to people who live far away from us. Baumann finds the hope for change in our *senses*, and especially in the most sensitive of our sense organs: Our eyes and ears. When we see or hear others suffer, we are less prone to use violence than when we hear or read *about* their suffering: *Proximity matters*, and the idea of a social network brings us closer to *action* in micro, and to suffering as a direct consequence of action, than the idea of “social structures”. Thus, social network analysis can reveal violence that is *inherent* in social structures, rather than violence as a *secondary* consequence or side-effect of such structures.

## 1.7 Network Violence

Networks are patterned relationships, and the relationships may be enduring and structured. From this perspective, networks *are* social structures. However, the concept of network attracts attention to *dyadic and triadic relations* and dynamics *in micro*.<sup>48</sup> Network theory focuses more on relations than on what motivates the actors. As Ritzer puts it: “(...) network theory has a strong model of structure (networks of relations) but a vague model of what the relations consist of, whereas exchange theory has a strong model of the relations between actors (exchanges), but a weak model of the social structures within which they operate”

(Ritzer, 2011, p. 441). *Network exchange theory* seeks to combine the strengths of both: The *motives* of actors are accounted for by describing the dynamics of dyadic relationships, and the structural aspects of human action are accounted for by describing how dyadic relationships are influenced by *other* relations, so that the latter has a retroactive effect on the former. If, for example, A and B are friends or partners, B is a friend of C, and C is an enemy of D, the relation A:B is affected not only by the relations B:C, but also by the relation C:D. Hence, the relation C:D may change the relation A:B, even though A and B are not directly involved in the relation C:D. The influence of external relations is greater the more directly they are connected to the core dyad. Caplow has shown how this simple structural plot, in which dyads and triads are connected to one another, can be used to analyze *both the content and the dynamics* of a wide spectrum of human affairs, from interpersonal relations, via organizations, to international alliances in war and peace (Caplow, 1968, 1989; Caplow & Hicks, 1995).

Access to and membership in networks can be open or closed, transparent or hidden, formal or informal. A network of people can exclude some identities, and deny non-members access to resources that are necessary for their needs satisfaction, even for their survival. Whether social exclusion is intentional or not, it is violent in its consequences. More important: In a network of people, some actors can *intentionally* trigger conflict, but the ensuing violence – e.g. social exclusion of certain identities – is so evenly spread among the actors that the *responsibility* for the outcome is diluted. In a network of people, there may be spontaneous role differentiation: There is a leader; there are assistants, intensifiers, supporters and bystanders. Participants can take turns, or change roles, so that their victim never feels safe – and never knows who is friend or foe. Individual members in the network can act violently, while others are bystanders. The next day the roles may be reversed. Alternatively, in one situation, *some* network members are active, while others are passive or absent. Next time, the roles may have changed. Each “insignificant” incident reinforces the impact of former incidents, so that the *total impact* of a number of apparently insignificant contributions becomes massive.

Many of these actors may contribute just a little to the total result. Nevertheless, numerous weak impulses can reinforce one another, and the multiplier effect greatly exceeds simple sum of actions. It may also vastly exceed the *intentions* of each of the actors.

From this perspective, network violence *is* structural violence, although it refers to a structure with less fixed roles and responsibilities than the traditional concept of social structure. Network action is, to borrow Bourdieu’s explanation, “collectively orchestrated, without being the product of the orchestrating action of a conductor” (Bourdieu, 1977, p. 72).

Hence, there is a serious discrepancy – hence also disagreement – between bullies and their victim regarding the *perception* of bullying events: Actors cooperating in a network can think of their actions as “a game” or “fun”, while their target feels a serious threat to their safety, welfare, dignity, or life.

The paradox is, then, that what looks like one *collective assault* from the perspective of the targeted person, may look like an insignificant incident from the perspective of the aggressors.

### 1.8 A typology of violence

I shall categorize violence according to three criteria<sup>49</sup>: Intention, expression, and consequences/outcomes. Table 1 gives an overview:

**Table 1: Types, forms/expressions and intentions of violence**

		Forms of violence		
		Direct	Network (Relational)	Structural (Indirect)
<b>Form/ Expression</b>	Physical	I	V	III
	Symbolic (Cultural) <sup>50</sup>	II	VI	IV
<b>Negative intentions<sup>51</sup></b>		+	+/-	-

*Firstly*, I distinguish between physical and symbolic *expressions* of violence, secondly between direct and indirect *forms* of violence. Direct forms of physical violence are evident, and can be unambiguously recorded as violent behavior. Structural (indirect) forms of physical violence are characterized by material injury, *or* insults to a person’s body, health or property<sup>52</sup>. Both physical and symbolic expressions of violence may be *intentional or unintentional*. In the case of structural violence, violence is usually

unintended: Work accidents, harmful working conditions, economic exploitation, poor sanitation, housing or healthcare etc. Such conditions *can* be created on purpose, but usually they are not.

Symbolic violence is, per definition, violence with *symbolic means*. Direct forms of symbolic violence are verbal or gestural attacks, threats, reprimands, humiliation etc. However, especially symbolic acts are always assessed by the receiver, based on *the power relation* between sender and receiver: A verbal or gestural threat from a superior authority or strong bully has a much stronger potential to hurt, harm or injure than an equivalent threat from a weaker person. A *threat* is only violent if it is *credible and feasible*.

When it comes to indirect forms of symbolic violence, there is invariably, almost by definition, a *social* (or *third-person-*) aspect involved: Slating, denigration, defamation, libel, slander, derision, humiliation etc. would have no effect unless

- a) the sender and receiver have a shared reference frame, or
- b) a third party understands the reference in mainly the same way as sender, so that the denigration has a *social impact* on the receiver.

This point can be clarified thus: *What is the threat of libel, defamation or slander?*

What is a “private libel”, or a “private slander”? Both expressions are contradictions in terms. The same goes for marginalization, exclusion or secondary citizen status: Also these expressions are meaningless without reference to the effects of *group sentiments* and/or network power. It is the rumor that destroys, and without group sentiments, rumors are powerless. Only groups can exclude, marginalize or degrade an individual *socially*.<sup>53</sup>

The effects of group sentiments can also explain why the effects of psychological trauma can continue to work long after the *direct effects* of a trauma have been healed. Symbolic forms of violence are essentially psychological, and their continuous work can hardly be explained without referring to their internalized effects: Group sentiments alone can only have effects over time, if they are internalized as “me” (Mead & Morris, 1967).

Finally, I distinguish between intended and unintended violence. In principle (although not by definition), direct violence is intended, while structural violence is a side-effect of intentions or goals that are external to the violent outcome.<sup>54</sup>

*Network violence* has elements of direct as well as structural violence: Networks can *intend* to harm or hurt, and they can do so by physical or symbolic means. The contribution of individual participants to the violent outcome will vary, and so will their consciousness of the violent outcome. When networks act, the responsibility of each participant is diluted, and this fact may be the heart of the matter: To participate in network action does not take a strong will or intention. You can just “go with the flow.”

As regards intention, we can use the standard distinction in (Western) jurisprudence: An action can be premeditated, willful or negligent. Therefore, the concept of network violence may open up for social and political analysis in ways that the concepts of *direct and structural violence* do not: If, for example, social structures are actively *used* for specific purposes or goals, this is the intended outcome of *individuals in cooperation*. In other words, there is a network of “willing” participants. If their goals are violent, there is intentional violence at work. Example apartheid: Apartheid is a premeditated structure, designed for social exclusion, legitimized by laws and regulations that separate and rank social identities, that denies some identities access to common goods. The same cannot be said of social structures that result from choices that were not intended to hurt and harm, but nevertheless do so in their consequences.

The mechanisms of network violence are concretized in the analysis of *bullying* (chapters 2 and 3): Bullying by networks is *neither* a purely individual *nor* a purely structural act. It is rather an interactive phenomenon: I.e., people interact, cooperate or reinforce one another in common action, but their common action is not necessarily the result of a plan. Participants may take roles such as ‘bully’, ‘assistant’, ‘cheerleader’, ‘defender’ (of the victim), or ‘bystander’ (Salmivalli, Huttunen, & Lagerspetz, 1997). Participants in different roles may reinforce one another. Due to the accumulated impact of collective action, the effects of network actions may far exceed those of individual actors.

## 1.9 Summary

Violence may be physical, symbolic, or a combination of both. The common denominator of physical and symbolic violence is that *both are vehement, inject fear, pain and trauma in the targeted persons and/or their communities*. The psychological consequences of violence – such as traumatic memories, fear, resentment, hatred, vindictiveness, neuroticism, paranoia etc. - may be long-lasting, devastating and far-reaching. They may proliferate in communities and societies, *metastasize, and survive in caches of body, psyche and culture*. Thus, the consequences may continue to work long after an evident, manifest trauma has been healed.

On a more general level, the social mechanisms of network actions are much like the ones Bourdieu calls *social action*: They are, as mentioned above, “collectively orchestrated without being the product of the orchestrating action of a conductor” (Bourdieu 1977:72). Bourdieu’s theory is developed to show how habitus works in social action.<sup>55</sup> My focus is not primarily on habitus, but rather the *social relations, interaction and process* that characterize social exclusion and inclusion. Therefore, I use the theorizing of Georg Simmel and Theodore Caplow, who provide a theory for the mechanisms and relations between *elements* in concrete structures on the micro level of social life (Caplow, 1968; Simmel, 1964). I also refer to the theory of Galtung, who connects the micro level to macro via the concept of *structural violence*. Finally, I refer to Lindner, who provides numerous examples, historical developments and extensive analysis of the problem of humiliation, showing *pathways to the psychological content and motivation of asymmetric violence*. Her concepts of humiliation, humbling and human dignity are especially salient, and so is her analysis of the relation between emotions and conflict (Lindner, 2000, 2006, 2009, 2010). *Bullying* is an exemplary case of one-sided humiliation; terrorism and counter-terrorism are exemplary cases of mutual humiliation.

Violence can *transform* from physical to symbolic, and vice versa. The attack on the Twin Towers was physical, but tearing down two of the most potent symbols of US/Western power is first and foremost a symbolic *demonstration* of resentment, contempt and power (it was a “reminder”, in Osama bin Laden’s words, of the interference of the USA in the Islamic world, as well as a “reminder” of the vulnerability of the worlds’ only superpower).



Hate speech, as well as derogatory and denigrating rhetoric are examples of *direct, symbolic violence*. An apparently neutral piece of “information” can carry a symbolic threat (Austin, 1962), which may inject fear in the targeted persons or groups of people, result in stress, somatic pain, reduced quality of life, illness, and (in extreme cases) an elevated risk of suicide. Informational aspects of violence – what Bourdieu called *symbolic violence* - is treated in the chapters on bullying, as well as in the chapter on terror/-ism.

### 1.10 The chapters of the thesis.

As noted so far, the articles of the thesis analyze cases of conflict, aggression, direct and symbolic violence, spanning from the intrapersonal to the transnational level. The various chapters also discuss means and ways of reducing the risk of violent conflict, by targeting structural imbalances that produce latent conflict and trigger manifest conflict (articles 1 and 2; chapters 2 and 3), or prolong ongoing, violent conflicts (article 3; chapter 4).

The first two articles - on bullying - focus on relational violence and aggression on the micro level of everyday interaction. In the context of peace studies, this form of violence may seem undramatic. It is about “culture talking to itself” (Imbush, 2003). However, the cultural and political impacts of bullying are probably very dramatic, even in international politics (Rigby, 2007).

The third article (chapter 4) treats political, transnational violence in the “global village”. All three articles focus on asymmetric conflicts that are not, or barely, regulated by rules and regulations.

The fourth and last article (chapter 5) focuses on *intrapersonal peace*. The relevance of this article to the overall theme of the thesis is: The thesis leaves a rather cheerless prospect for rational conflict resolution in cases of asymmetric conflict. Given that premise, we must assume that many people will have to live for the rest of their lives with a feeling of resentment, or at least with trauma that does not heal entirely, and that is *easily reopened*.<sup>56</sup> The question is then: How can we learn to a) live with and b) transcend (i.e. “get beyond”) conflicts that are unresolved, stored in (unconscious)

memories, and reactivated exactly when the carrier of the trauma needs *not* to be reminded of them (typically in situations of conflict)? An answer to this question is: This is what religions and professional psychology are for. Professional psychology is overloaded, and partly detached from people's everyday lives. Religion can have a tranquillizing, appeasing effect on people's minds, and this may be a reason why religious belief tends to flare up again in a secularized/secularizing world. I shall not contest that, but I shall also draw attention to the facts that

- 1) organized religion is in the process of losing its "sedative effects" (to the degree that it used to have such effects),
- 2) where it is still going strong, *religion is a "tranquillizer" with serious side-effects*. One such side-effect is the risk of conflict escalation, because religion can also create fanaticism in moral issues, and because religion may promise eternal glory and peace for believers, and the opposite for non-believers (Brekke, 2011),
- 3) therefore, it is a challenge for peace studies, as well as an educational challenge, to develop mental techniques and methods that can help people work with unresolved conflict material in their minds, and detach thoughts from negative emotions.

There is a shortage of such techniques that can be communicated cross-culturally. Cross-cultural communication is possible if our ideas and methods are not too tightly embedded in culturally specific moral or religious content, but has an ability to help people reduce intra-personal and inter-personal tensions, anxiety and spiritual "disorders" in their daily lives. In other words, we need techniques that can tilt the locus of control from the outer (normative, religious) sphere to the personal ("mental") sphere of our lives. The article on *mindfulness training* is a minor contribution to that effort. The results are ambiguous and "fuzzy", as research results often are in an emerging, new field of research. At the end of the article, I suggest some steps to develop more reliable research results.

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## Notes

- <sup>1</sup> See enclosed “Medforfattererklæring” (Declaration of co-authorship) by Ole Henning Sommerfelt. The declaration also contains a description of my contributions to the article, including which parts of the article are written by me.
- <sup>2</sup> Bernstein (1975, 1990) introduces the concept of *framing* to describe how control of mental frames is used to regulate thinking and behavior in educational contexts. Framing is a mental process as well as a technique to manipulate which aspects of reality are allowed to enter the communication, and which are excluded. Bernstein did not apply the concept specifically to *conflict theory*, although his theory of education is clearly also a *theory of conflict in education*.
- <sup>3</sup> “Latency” here means “pattern maintenance”, like the “L” variable in Parsons’ AGIL paradigm on what is needed in order to *keep a social system stable*: Agency, Goal Attainment, Integration, Latency (Ritzer, 2011, p. 242).
- <sup>4</sup> This is a classical dilemma for rulers, especially (but not exclusively) in rigid or authoritarian regimes. If they allow more freedom to their subjects, the structure may thaw, grow soft, even vaporize. If freedom is suppressed, the structure may crack due to internal or external pressure.
- <sup>5</sup> See Galtung (1977, pp. 151-154) on second order contradictions and structural imbalance.

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<sup>6</sup> Pfetsch and Rohloff's definition: Conflict is "the clashing of overlapping interests (positional differences) around national values and issues (independence, self-determination, borders and territory, access to or distribution of domestic or international power); the conflict has to be of some duration and magnitude between at least two parties (states, groups of states, organizations or organized groups) that are determined to pursue their interests and win their case. At least one party is the organized state. Possible instruments used in the course of a conflict are negotiations, authoritative decisions, threat, pressure, passive or active withdrawals, or the use of physical violence and war." (Pfetsch & Rohloff, 2000, p. 27)

<sup>7</sup> The approaches of Ramsbotham et al. (2011) and Mack (2005) are different from that of Galtung on a crucial point: Galtung defines *universal* characteristics of conflict and violence, and subsumes specific forms of conflict and violence under inclusive, general concepts. For example, genocide and politicide are for Galtung two instances of *massive category killing* (mck). The concept of mck includes eradication of species in the human world as well as in nature, as well as eradication of social structures (structurocide), eradication of cultures (culturocide), besides the different forms of genocide. Mack goes in the opposite direction, by *differentiating between* phenomena that are similar-but-different. For example, he differentiates between "genocide", i.e. mass murder on an ethnic group (case Rwanda), and "politicide", i.e. mass murder on a political or social group or class (case Cambodia).

<sup>8</sup> Such "practical purposes" are, inter alia, political and legal purposes. For example, genocide is, from a legal and political point of view, *similar but not identical* to other forms of one-sided violence, such as mass-killings on the battle-field, collateral damage as a consequence of clashes on the battle-field, or massacres on disarmed soldiers. The last-mentioned is a war-crime, but it is not by definition a *genocide*.

<sup>9</sup> Politicide is genocidal in its consequences, but the motives are different from *ethnically motivated* mass murder.

<sup>10</sup> The *last-mentioned* point is inferred from their text. Mack & Nielsen do not discuss it.

<sup>11</sup> From a practical point of view "conflict" has to be treated differently from "bullying"; from a psychological point of view, conflict and bullying involve different motive structures and consequences; from a moral point of view, bullying is illegitimate and widely condemned, while conflict is a natural phenomenon that can be understood and solved in a dialogical way.

<sup>12</sup> South Africa and Northern Ireland may be exceptions to this rule. The latter will be discussed in the chapter on terrorism. In both these cases, parties are fighting *over control of the same goals*, but with incommensurable means and methods. So, perhaps the first step to conflict resolution is to ask the parties to *define their goals*, and then to *rank* and prioritize their goals, in order to increase the prospects for settlement.

<sup>13</sup> Galtung's argument goes like this: If there are *m* actors competing for *n* goals, conflict complexity can be described by the formula  $(m \times n) - 1$ . In simple conflicts (2 actors, 1 goal), the conflict complexity is  $(2 \times 1) - 1$ . In cases of frustration (1 actor, 1 blocked goal) complexity is 0. In structural conflicts, there are apparently "neither actors nor goals" (Galtung 1996, p.76-77). Hence, complexity is  $(0 \times 0) - 1$ .

<sup>14</sup> Clarke distinguishes between a "contested" and a "contestable" concept. A concept which has not been unambiguously defined, is *contested*. A concept that *cannot* be unambiguously defined, is *contestable*.

<sup>15</sup> Content check: The sentence "the tiger intends to attack" makes sense, while the sentence "the landslide intends to attack" makes no sense. The difference is due to the properties *we* attribute to animals, but not to dead matter or plants.

<sup>16</sup> Both authors refer to Coleman. Ritzer also refers to Homans, Blau, and Emerson.

<sup>17</sup> The relation between needs, wants, wishes and interests is a topic for another thesis. For my purposes, suffice it to state that *an interest* may express objective needs/wants (bodily needs), a wish or desire, *or a combination*. An interest will, *ceteris paribus*, be stronger the stronger the needs-deficit is; and the fewer alternative sources of needs-satisfaction are available. The question of *basic needs* will be treated under *conflict*.

<sup>18</sup> Coppola (1972): *The Godfather*. In the context of this movie, don Vito Corleone (the Godfather) offers a band-leader \$10.000 if he releases the Godfather's protégé (the singer Johnny Fontane) from his contract. If he does not release him, the bandleader will be shot dead on the spot. Don Vito Corleone's statement turns rational power theory upside-down. The words lose their meaning, and the

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sentence becomes nonsensical. Nevertheless, the sentence is highly charged with meaning. What the sentence actually says, is: “This offer is *not* an offer, because you *cannot* choose. If you refuse, I will get what I want for free, and you will lose everything.” Hence, the *context* – which is here one of coercion and extortion – makes a mockery of the word “offer”. By reducing the bandleader’s alternatives to zero, his power is reduced to zero, and a threat can be called “an offer.”

<sup>19</sup> There are some notable exceptions to this. For example bullying or threats of torture can be used as a *bargaining chip*, e.g. as a means to *extortion*. The logic of extortion is: A promises to *abstain from violence* if B gives up his/her control over what A wants (example: ransom for a hostage). Extortion obeys the logic of rational choice as long as the target of extortion can surrender something of interest to the blackmailer. If not, rational choice fails to explain continued harassment of the victim. In cases of sadism or persecution for the sake of power, the logic of rational choice theory – which is about using rational means to achieve one’s ends - fails. However, the logic of *value rationality* can explain *reactive* bullying, i.e. bullying that aims at restoring one’s respect or honor (H Fandrem, 2009).

<sup>20</sup> There is scientific evidence in support of the assumption that status/position in a hierarchy has strong effects on objective health indicators, such as stress and stress induced diseases, depression, obesity, cardiovascular diseases, life expectancy, and drug abuse (Wilkinson & Pickett, 2010), and that *relational factors, such as dominance and submission* can cause such health effects. Controlled experiments with Macaque apes show that, when given the chance self-administer cocaine, low-status apes take more cocaine than high-status apes, as if they wanted to compensate for low levels of dopamine activity (Wilkinson & Pickett, 2010, ch. 13). In other words, power is closely related to somatic processes: Power rewards the winner and punishes the loser. These effects can be accommodated within rational choice theory, if we assume that actors intentionally try to create such long-term effects on health and life-expectancy. However, that assumption is a bit far-fetched.

<sup>21</sup> Einarsen and Matthiesen (1999) find significantly elevated risk of high scores among adults on the Hopkin’s Checklist, even when they compare the results to other traumatic experiences, such as dismissal from work, divorce, arriving at the scene of a bus accident with serious casualties etc. Symptoms list and classification, see Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders V (DSM IV).

<sup>22</sup> The use of force may be highly *visible to insiders*, but they remain *invisible to outsiders* who cannot *decode* the messages. For the record: Teachers are usually outsiders to bullying among school children.

<sup>23</sup> There are at least three possible explanations: 1) The personality of the victim (the favourite explanation of bullies and/or their assistants), 2) external causes (e.g. problems in the family or neighborhood of the victim), 3) that bullying is the “tip of the iceberg”: The person is, e.g. hypersensitive and has paranoid tendencies. For a discussion of personality factor, see Einarsen et al. (2001).

<sup>24</sup> Bernstein differentiates between visible and invisible pedagogy (Bernstein, 1975). The distinction is based on the difference between positional and relational power, in the sense that visible pedagogy is based on positional power, and “invisible” pedagogy is based on the power to manipulate the context.

<sup>25</sup> Heinz Leyman has revealed 45 techniques of bullying among adults in workplaces. Such bullying usually aims at social degradation or exclusion of the victim. Interestingly, the techniques he discovered are all *symbolic* (“soft”), they invariably involve a *network* of people who participate in different roles, and the bullying is considered more or less *legitimate* by the participants. In workplaces, direct physical attacks are very rare. Colleagues will report to the leadership, and the attacker would face dismissal from work, criminal charges or both. In other words, people are generally protected from direct, physical attacks in workplaces. However, in the case of whistle blowing, the whistle blower will often be bullied and socially excluded by the colleagues, or powerful networks among them. This shows the deep-seated *social character* of bullying: Genuine bullying – what Leymann calls “mobbing” – presupposes a group of supporters, as well as *passive bystanders* who accept or find the bullying legitimate.

<sup>26</sup> I here use the term “cultural and creative industries” in the same sense as the EU (2014) and UNESCO. The term covers cultural and creative products, such as movies, video and internet games, reality shows etc., but it also covers more traditional text based products, such as novels and drama. The content of the EU/UNESCO term is less political and less critical to cultural industries than the

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term “Cultural Industry” (German: Kulturindustrie), the way as this term was used by Horkheimer et al. (1972).

<sup>27</sup> Damage to property or material structures can also be called violence according to this definition. However, in the context of this discussion, material destruction is interesting primarily because it indirectly harms human beings or their moral sentiments. Violence against animals (sentient non-human creatures) is another example: Killing animals for food is normally not called violence, while cruelty to (domestic) animals *is*. The difference can only be explained by the fact that humans react to the suffering of other creatures: Hence, cruelty offends our sentiments, while killing does not. Interestingly, we are frequently more willing to accept the suffering of humans than that of animals. The explanation for this may be that we think of humans as responsible, *moral* creatures with the ability to speak up, and with the ability to make conscious choices. Hence, humans can and must take responsibility for their own fate.

<sup>28</sup> Galtung uses the term “forms of violence”. I use the word “types”, in order to distinguish it from expressions (manifestations) of violence (symbolic and physical), which I shall call *forms*.

<sup>29</sup> Galtung’s theory of human needs is influenced by Maslow. However, unlike Maslow, Galtung does not rank human needs in a hierarchy. For example, he rejects Maslow’s assertion that material needs (survival, well-being, security) are necessarily more basic than spiritual needs (freedom and identity). He sees needs as a question of balance and trade-off: Under normal circumstances, people will try to balance their needs and hedge their bets. However, in critical situations, when people are exposed to what Foucault called “limit experiences” (Ritzer, 2011, p. 613), people may have to buy their freedom or identity at the expense of welfare, even survival. Such moments of existential choice come to both individuals, groups and nations, and these are the situations which change people’s lives. It is possible that Maslow’s theory does not apply to such situations.

<sup>30</sup> State actors with a legitimate right to use force, e.g. the police or psychiatric institutions, will not be accused of “violence” unless they use excessive force, or violate laws and regulations meant to limit the use of force. E.g., in the code for use of force by the Norwegian police is that it must be “defensible”, “proportionate”, and “necessary”, given the situation. (Justisdepartement, 1990 § 3-2). If it is not, the use of force by the police can be appealed. In other words, police violence is, per definition, *illegitimate* use of force. Hence, *legitimate* use of force by the police is – per definition – not “violence”.

<sup>31</sup> Linguistic creativity is especially great when it comes to economic forms of coercion: Enforcement measures, forced sale, legal enforcement etc.

<sup>32</sup> In chapter 3, I discuss different forms of bullying, including symbolic forms. In symbolic forms of bullying, there are subtle mechanisms at work, and they come in many versions: Understatements, jokes, gestures (facial, body postures, tone of voice) etc., silence, double communication, apparent “information” that disguises a threat, etc. (Austin, 1962). Austin et al. showed how the context can transform an apparently neutral piece of ‘information’ to a *threat*, and even to a form of *social control*, by manipulating the context. Basil Bernstein shows how controlling the context (framing) is a *significant social control mechanism* in modern society, e.g. in educational institutions and educational settings (Bernstein, 1975, 1990).

<sup>33</sup> “Established power” is here not identical to the term Establishment. The term “establishment” has strong connotations to “national elites”, while established power relations in a peer group of children is local. This power *may* (or may not) be related to local or national power elites.

<sup>34</sup> The same applies to humiliation of a defeated party in war, invasion or genocide. Rapes in the civil war in Bosnia and the genocide in Rwanda, the symbolic debasement of Saddam Hussein immediately after the invasion of Bagdad, and the attack on the Twin Towers are three examples (Lindner, 2000, 2006).

<sup>35</sup> Galtung’s work on civilization and violence provides an “impressionistic” approach to the problem (Galtung, 1996, pp. 197-274). Richard Koenigsberg (2009, 2013) approaches the problem of *war* and “ideologies of evil” by applying a psychoanalytic approach to the problem of belligerence, war and terrorism. Alice Miller has revealed how direct and indirect violence in childhood may be an important, latent factor underlying adult violence in the adult social world, as well as massive projection of evil mental content onto others, leading to atrocities like mass-murder in war (Miller, 2002 2006).

<sup>36</sup> The concept “warrior memes” is my own (VV); it is an amalgamation of Galtung’s concept of *bellogenes* and Dawkins concept of *memes*. Galtung introduces the concepts *bellogenes* and *paxogens*, to denote mechanisms that produce violence and non-violence respectively (Galtung 2009, p.14 ff;



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Galtung 2013). Dawkins calls *memes cultural replicators* (Dawkins 1989:189 ff.). The replication and propagation of *memes* is analogous to that of genes: Ideas, behaviors, fashions, tunes, ideologies, scientific theories, technologies, etc. spread when somebody plants a copy of his meme in other people's minds. The process by which memes propagate is no more mysterious than the spread of genes. In Dawkins words: "When you plant a fertile meme in my mind you literally parasitize my brain, turning it into a vehicle for propagation in just the way a virus may parasitize the genetic mechanism of a host cell." (Dawkins 1989:192). In the context of conflict behavior, *cultural scripts*, e.g. how to react to provocations, defend your honor, retaliate for insults etc., are *memes*. Bullying may be a meme, or a set of various memes linked to group life, and especially to the problem of teaching individuals how to accept the *superiority* of a group, as well as the *internal power structure* of a group. Memes proliferate in the course of human history, and constitute a cultural "meme-pool" - analogous to how genes proliferate in the gene pool (Dawkins 1989: 192 ff): They reproduce and spread thanks to *copying fidelity, fecundity, longevity, and by linking to other memes*, so that they become evolutionary stable (Dawkins 1989: 192-195). The process of meme-replication is concrete and observable: It can be observed in every family, in every community and in every cultural institution every day, all over the world.

<sup>37</sup> The classical choice for a person who opposes or speaks up against an authority or a social order, is that between *belonging* (an identity need) and *freedom*, or between freedom and a *pleasant life* (welfare needs).

<sup>38</sup> I do not want to underestimate the problem of needs deficit: Unfulfilled needs may be a serious social problem, *especially* if people feel they have been *influenced, conditioned or forced* by circumstances to make choices that seriously reduce their welfare, freedom or identity. Further, human needs deprivation – also in its relative form - may no doubt trigger direct violence, even among affluent members of society. However, the issue here is not whether we can have all our basic needs completely satisfied simultaneously. It is rather whether *any kind* of basic needs dissatisfaction is, *per definition*, violence.

<sup>39</sup> Violence as a means to conflict resolution is an integral part of Western and Middle-Eastern civilization. E.g., the Old Testament/Torah/Koran provide both *legitimation* of violence, and *scripts* for how to treat your enemies in times of conflict. However, this is hardly limited to the Abrahamic religions. It can be argued that all "great" civilizations, such as the Sinic, Nipponic, Hinduic and Buddhist civilizations, have similar scripts. Violence as a means to establish and maintain "social peace" by overpowering subjects, establish rules and punishing those who violate the established rules, is widespread in most religions (Brekke, 2011; Juergensmeyer, 2002; Stern, 2003). Empirically, the level of violence related to maintaining peace and social *control*, e.g. cast-, class- and ethnic power, has been, *and is still*, sky-high in South Asia, South-East Asia, East Asia and the Pacific. A brief list of examples: Caste violence in India, ethno-religious violence in Sri Lanka and Central Asia, political violence by the central authorities (tyrants) in Japan, China and Mongolia, the Islamic subjugation of Northern Africa and South-East Europe, the Mongol invasions and mass-murders in central Asia and Eastern Europe, the Aztec subjugation of *their* neighbours, the mass-murders in Indonesia in the 1960ies.

<sup>40</sup> The mirror image of this proposition – that peace without justice is also possible – is often used as a *description* of a state or condition that must be changed by violent means.

<sup>41</sup> Giddens overcomes this dilemma by introducing the term *structuration*. Hence it is easy to accept that the act of structuration can be performed in violent ways.

<sup>42</sup> The concept of agent: An *agent* represents or acts on behalf of a social organization. Hence, the actions of an *agent* are even more regular and regulated than that of an *actor* who plays a role.

<sup>43</sup> That is, "diffidence" (timidity), hopes for glory, and continuous fear of being attacked, invaded or overpowered by others (Hobbes, 2007, ch. XIII).

<sup>44</sup> Steven Pinker provides evidence in support of this argument (Pinker, 2011, ch. 2,3,8), although he might not accept the conceptual link that I am making here: That some people's welfare can be bought at the expense of other people's misery.

<sup>45</sup> Historically, *the city walls* and the citadel were such structures: Established in order to secure a pleasant life for the *citizens* and keep out the "savages". The purpose was hardly to deny the outsiders basic needs satisfaction – only to "keep them out". The equivalent to the citadel in our times are the walls of rules, regulations and border controls designed to deny immigrants from poor countries access to the rich world.

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<sup>46</sup> Steven Pinker provides evidence in support of this argument (Pinker, 2011, ch. 2,3,8), although he might not accept the conceptual link that I am making here: That some people's welfare and security can be bought at the expense of other people's welfare and security, even their chances of *survival*.

<sup>47</sup> Baumann argues that the Milgram experiment, as well as the reactions among German citizens to the *Kristallnacht*, reveals that the source of morality is *not* state institutions, but our community with fellow human beings who live close to us, and whom we do not want to suffer.

<sup>48</sup> In sociological literature, the concept of social structure usually refers to *relatively enduring* relations between social units, positions or roles. For example, concepts like class structure, institutional structure, economic structure or political structure associate to relatively stable (power) relations between positions and roles.

<sup>49</sup> The basis of my categorizing is Galtung (1996), Bourdieu (1991) and Imbush (Imbush, 2003, p. 26). The definitions of the three authors have been presented and discussed above.

<sup>50</sup> For the purpose of this text, Bourdieu's term *symbolic violence* and Galtung's term *cultural violence* are interchangeable. A comparison: Galtung explains *cultural violence* as "those aspects of culture, the symbolic sphere of our existence (...) that can be used to justify or legitimize direct or structural violence" (Galtung, 1996, p. 196). Bourdieu explains his notion of *symbolic violence* as "gentle, invisible violence, unrecognized as such, chosen as much as undergone, that of trust, obligation, personal loyalty, hospitality, gifts, debts, piety, in a word, all the virtues honoured by the ethic of honour" (Bourdieu, 1991, p. 24). Bourdieu clearly understands symbolic violence as a *form of cultural violence*, and Galtung understands cultural violence as *symbolic forms* of violence.

Bourdieu developed the notion of symbolic violence when analyzing gift exchanges in Kabyle society (see explanation below). \* Galtung developed the notion of cultural violence when analyzing *indirect* violence in modern society. There is a slight difference between the two concepts, but it is hardly essential: Galtung refers to institutionalized forms of *symbolic* violence, while Bourdieu refers to embodied forms of *cultural* violence. Both forms are apparently "soft", invisible, and radiating from a center of power that may claim your services "any time". The costs of disobeying are so high that most people *will* obey.

\* Thompson explains the effects of a gift in Kabyle society thus: "By giving a gift – especially a generous one that cannot be met by a counter-gift of comparable quality – the giver creates a lasting obligation and binds the recipient in a relation of personal indebtedness. This is what Bourdieu describes as 'symbolic violence', in contrast to the overt violence of the usurer or the ruthless master" (ibid.). The effect on the receiver is a *creeping, invisible, insidious threat* that keeps him/her on his/her toes, always watching his/her step, always listening carefully to the messages that emanate from the center of power. Symbolic forms of bullying, especially those that radiate from a network without a visible center, have this effect. (The messages emanating from modern institutions may have a similar effect).

<sup>51</sup> There are *2x2x3 theoretical possibilities* in this table: Violence may be intentional or unintentional, physical or symbolic, and be perpetrated 1) directly, 2) via networks, or 3) via structures. Here I only discuss the types that apply to the articles in my thesis. The (theoretically possible) instance of *intentional structural violence* – e.g. apartheid or marginalization of minorities - is here covered by the term *network/relational violence*. Especially two forms of violence are not treated here, since they barely apply to this thesis: *Unintended, indirect physical* violence, and *unintended, indirect symbolic* violence. The first-mentioned form of violence is characterized by unintended injury to material or people by social structures (from workplace accidents, traffic accidents, or damages due to e.g. lack of precautions, infrastructure, neglect etc.). The latter form is characterized by *symbolic* action that is not intended to hurt and harm, but nevertheless does so. Example: A group of people may realize *their own cultural code unconsciously*, but in doing so, they may violate deep-rooted cultural norms or codes in another culture. The Western insistence on freedom of expression (including free flow of images in the public space) may be an example of such violence. Such violence – when committed unconsciously - is almost unavoidable in the multicultural, global village, and I see no easy way out of the problem. The advice that first comes to mind is *moral education with emphasis on classical civilizational virtues*: Discretion, consideration, maintenance of boundaries between the private and the public sphere, calm dialogues for mutual understanding and respect of each others' mental frames and boundaries.

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<sup>52</sup> Read: material structures on which the person's life or well-being rely.

<sup>53</sup> In court cases concerning libel, this point is usually taken into consideration: During (or before) the proceedings, the court has to decide whether the defendant has *the power* to libel or defame the aggrieved: If the defendant is not in a position to *influence* the perceptions or sentiments of others vis-à-vis the aggrieved, slander or derogative words have little or no effect on the reputation of the aggrieved.

<sup>54</sup> Work accidents and traffic accidents are rarely intended, although they kill thousands of people every year.

<sup>55</sup> Bourdieu used this expression about *social action* as it unfolds on a daily level of interaction between habituses, e.g. when class fractions, organizations etc. compete for power on the macro-level of society. It seems that his analysis also covers what I call network action. However, I do not discuss the generation of habitus, nor macro-level outcomes of the concrete cases that I analyze. Therefore, I use Bourdieu's concepts in my frame of reference, but not in concrete analysis.

<sup>56</sup> Edmund Edvardson refers to this as "a blister" or wound that is easily reopened (Edvardson, 1997).

## 2 School bullying. Conceptual and theoretical issues

Vidar Vambheim .

### Abstract

The article discusses the concept of bullying, with a focus on how to differentiate between bullying and related, but different concepts, such as ‘aggression’, ‘violence’, ‘fighting’, and ‘conflict’. Bullying can be described as ‘violence’, ‘aggression’ or ‘conflict’, but these concepts do not define bullying. Bullying is rather characterized by abuse of power, humiliation, and severe negative consequences of abuse of power. If these aspects are not taken into consideration, reciprocal violence may be recorded as “bullying”, while unilateral but *indirect*, alias *structural* forms of violence may pass unregistered.

Social exclusion can be considered as a form of bullying, as victims of social exclusion are deprived of freedom of association, access to social resources, and dignity.

The article relates Bourdieu’s concept of ‘symbolic violence’ and ‘habitus’ to structural forms of violence. Indirect/structural forms of violence may be perceived as bullying by persons who are sensitive to such forms of violence, while others may ignore it, or at least not be seriously affected by such forms of bullying. Therefore, we have to take into consideration the context as well as habitus of the persons involved, since the consequences for persons that are exposed to indirect, negative actions may vary according to context and habitus.

### 2.1 Introduction

In this article I will discuss how we can 1) identify an action or a pattern of action as *bullying*; 2) what criteria we can use to *identify* a case of *bullying* as a specific expression of more general phenomena, such as aggression, violence, and conflict.

*Bullying* may be defined as a form of *aggression*, alternatively as a form of *violence*.

Aggression can be defined as “intentional action aiming at doing harm or causing pain” by physical or verbal means. If aggression fails, it is still aggression. (Aronson, 2008, pp. 255-255). If aggression succeeds, so that the target is hurt or harmed, *violence* is a more appropriate term. Lexical definitions of *violence* usually use terms such as “The deliberate exercise of physical force against a person, property, etc.; physically violent behavior or treatment” or “the unlawful exercise of physical force, intimidation by the exhibition of such force.”<sup>1</sup>, or “forcibly interfering with personal freedom.”<sup>2</sup>

Threats and the use of force can also be exercised by verbal or other symbolic means, and the trauma inflicted by *physical* violence is not necessarily more severe than trauma inflicted by *psychological or symbolic* means. Therefore, the word “physical” can safely be removed from the definition, as has been done in this definition of violence: “physical or psychological harassment in order to enforce one’s will, or as an outlet of aggression” (Aschehoug Encyclopedia online).<sup>3</sup>

The meaning of the concept of “bullying” may look straightforward: Bullying is a form of aggression or violence, used in order to put down, control or dominate another person. However, once we step outside the area of *direct, visible aggression*, the concept of “bullying” is far from straightforward.

The first encompassing, empirical investigations into (school) bullying was done by Dan Olweus (Olweus, 1973). In the course of his work, Olweus developed the following definition of bullying: “A student is being bullied or victimized when he or she is exposed, repeatedly and over time, to negative actions on the part of one or more other students” (Olweus, 1993, p. 9). An action is *negative* “if an individual inflicts, or tries to inflict, harm or discomfort upon another individual” (Olweus, 1992, my translation).<sup>4</sup>

Olweus’ definition is, with minor changes or clarifications, today a *close-to standard definition* in Scandinavian research into bullying. It is also widely used internationally. The definition contains six criteria; some necessary, others optional: 1) Negative action<sup>5</sup>, 2) repetition/ ritualization, 3) persistence/duration over time, 4) negative intention or goal, 5) harm/ discomfort (negative consequences), 6) power asymmetry (Olweus, Limber, & Mihalic, 2000).<sup>6</sup>

Criteria 1,2 and 3 are integral parts of empirical surveys of bullying. However, it can be discussed to what degree criteria no. 4, 5 and 6 are adequately *accounted for* in research based on Olweus’ definition. If these criteria, or one of them, are considered decisive for a case to be called “bullying”, the validity of the measures used in such research on bullying, can be disputed. This problem will be discussed further down.

Heinemann (1973), who was preoccupied with “mobbing” *as a phenomenon*, considered bullying (“mobbing”)<sup>7</sup> as a *collective/group phenomenon*, and more specifically, as group mechanisms-gone-wrong. Heinemann observed *gangs (‘the mob’)* in action when attacking or ganging up on an individual, or on a weaker group. Heinemann focused especially on *three*

*aspects combined*: 1) Difference in numbers; 2) difference in power (i.e., many against one, and strong against weak); 3) The problem that individuals that constitute a mob, seem to *act in concert* with one another, as if they were one organism. Heinemann did not include the criteria of repetition/frequency and duration in his analysis: One incidence would be enough to call an act “mobbing”, if the target was attacked by a group, was overpowered and exposed to violence by a group of people who apparently *cooperated* in the attack. For him, vehemence, differences in number (“many-against-one”), coordination among members of the attacking group – and by implication *power difference* - were characteristics of the phenomenon of “mobbing”.<sup>8</sup> In other words, a “one-off” event is enough to establish a case of bullying, and the phenomenon can be observed from the outside.

Anatol Pikas (1998b) developed Heineman’s phenomenological approach into a stricter definition. Pikas classified different kinds of negative action according to three criteria:

- 1) whether the sender of negative actions is a *group or an individual*, and the target is an individual or a group.
- 2) whether the sender is *more powerful* than the receiver/target, and
- 3) how intense, harmful or serious the negative actions are.

Only serious, negative actions by a group towards an individual, *or* towards a clearly weaker group, would be considered bullying according to Pikas. Other kinds of negative action should be given other names, such as “duel”, “fight”, “ordinary conflict”, “match”, “row”, “harassment”, etc. Harassment should only be termed bullying if it is repeated and continuous, and based on a difference in power or numbers between the actors and their target (Pikas 1998, Endnote 17, my translation).

## 2.2 The power dimension

Some authors consider *power asymmetry* (criterion 6 above) as a decisive criterion, when it comes to identifying an instance of “negative action” as “bullying”. For example, Frey and Hoppe-Graff define bullying thus: “*Bullying* or dominance aggression occurs when an unprovoked child taunts, intimidates, coerces, makes fun of or assaults another child without a clear external goal for this behavior. The aggressive act is *instrumental* if the child attempts to reach a specific goal through aversive means, and it is said to be *reactive* if it is carried out in response to threatening or aversive actions of another child.” (Frey & Hoppe-Graff, 1994, p.

250). This definition, focusing on dominant, proactive aggression, is close to Olweus' (1978a) original approach to the problem.

The difference between dominance aggression and instrumental aggression is morally relevant, but hardly decisive when it comes to characterizing an act or pattern of action or behavior as *bullying*: Whether the goal of aggression is *inherent* in the act (dominance), or *external* to the act itself (e.g. extortion) does not say much about the character of the act or action *per se*. Both dominance aggression and instrumental aggression may be examples of *proactive aggression* (unprovoked attacks), as opposed to *reactive aggression* (reactions to *provocations*). The distinction between proactive and reactive aggression focuses on a) who starts, and b) the motive underlying the aggression. These criteria may be used to *apportion blame* in cases of conflict, since reactive aggression can be considered more understandable, and therefore more “pardonable” than proactive aggression. However, the criterion can hardly be used to decide whether a *form* of behavior, or a *pattern* of behavior should be termed “bullying” or not: Neither proactive nor reactive aggression are *per se* bullying. Both may *result* in bullying.<sup>9</sup> The defining moment is when one of the parties is clearly stronger than the other, and the latter party signalizes peace. If we can identify that moment, it may be counterproductive to search for the “original act” that started the conflict.

The last-mentioned argument is of some importance, since it puts “proactive aggression” on a par with “reactive aggression.” It is often difficult to distinguish between proactive and reactive aggression, unless we have first-hand information of the relation and relational history of the parties, the context of the interaction, and their motives.<sup>10</sup> This will be discussed in more depth under *motives* (below).

Frey and Hoppe-Graf also differentiate between bullying and *playful aggression*. This distinction is clearly relevant when it comes to identifying an instance of bullying: Playful aggression may be mistaken for “bullying”, because *the visible, external behavior* in playful aggression may look like an act of bullying. However, motives, goals, and *consequences* of playful aggression are basically different from “real” aggression, and consequently also from “real” bullying. Playful aggression can even be ironic – i.e. expressing friendship and friendliness in an *apparently* negative way.<sup>11 12</sup>

Three criteria can be used to be differentiate between “serious” and “playful” (or ironic) aggression: 1) Motives/goals; 2) Consequences; 3) Context. Motives, goals and consequences

reveal the spirit and goal inherent in a certain action. Therefore, we need intimate *contextual knowledge*, knowledge of the power relation between actors, sometimes also *the history of their relation*, and the motives of each side in the conflict, in order to decide whether an action should be termed “bullying” or not. Without such knowledge, playful aggression may be mistaken for bullying on the basis of external, behavioral *similarities* between two fundamentally different phenomena.

*Farrington* (Farrington, 1993, p. 385)<sup>13</sup> warns against the risk of category mistake in discussions on bullying. Farrington considered bullying as a *specific kind* of negative behavior, characterized by *violence of strong against weak*. According to Farrington, a bully is a person who acts *proactively* with the intent to dominate or abuse others. That is, bullying is a combination of *malicious intent + sustained capacity* (i.e., will and power) to terrorize or humiliate others. The goals or motives for doing so are unimportant: The goal may be heterotelic (e.g. extortion), or autotelic (e.g. dominance or sadistic pleasure). Whether the actor is an individual or a group, is equally unimportant.

Smith and Sharp identified *a common denominator* in different forms of bullying as “the systematic abuse of power” in social relationships (Smith & Sharp, 1994, p. 2).<sup>14</sup> This brief definition can accommodate *a variety of forms of bullying*: physical and psychological; verbal and non-verbal (e.g. gestures, silence/ex-communication); collective and individual; direct and indirect; collective and individual. The definition can also accommodate a variety of goals and intentions. In all cases, the phenomenon of “systematic abuse of power” is related to, but not identical to phenomena such as “aggression”, “violence” etc. Aggression and violence may well be an ingredient in bullying, but they do not *define* the phenomenon. What defines bullying as a phenomenon is, according to Smith and Sharp (op. cit.):

- 1) taking advantage of an asymmetric power relation, and
- 2) exploiting that advantage in a systematic way.

In other words, the core of the problem is *abuse of power*, alternatively transgression of morally and culturally accepted limits to the use of power. Smith and Sharp’s definition satisfies *Olweus’ six criteria* (listed above), without pulling out the moral content and negative connotations of the concept.<sup>15</sup>



It is difficult to translate Smith and Sharp's definition into unambiguous behavioral terms. However, that problem also applies to Olweus' concept of "negative action", since the term "action" presupposes intention. Unless we know the intentions of the involved actors, we cannot know for certain what the character of an action *is*. *This ambiguity cannot be defined away*: Without contextual knowledge, we cannot say whether an act, *or a pattern of action*, should be characterized as "bullying" or not.<sup>16</sup>

The ambiguities related to power, context and intention are basic for a number of theoretical and practical problems involved in research on bullying. The problem can be illustrated thusly: If two persons are in conflict with one another, there may be repeated negative actions from both sides, and *both* may be in a situation where they feel "unable to defend themselves" – one at a time, or both simultaneously. Therefore it is uncertain what information we can get from quantitative, questionnaire-based research on bullying. For example, Norwegian national surveys, based on questionnaires, report that 3,9% of the pupils aged 6-16, i.e. 24.000 pupils<sup>17</sup>, were being bullied at least twice a month in 2014.

3,9% is the lowest number recorded in the period 2007-2014, i.e. the period during which we have directly comparable data (Wendelborg, 2015, p. 6, table 2.2).<sup>18</sup> The numbers are uncertain, because the surveys do not record *the relations between the respondents*.<sup>19</sup> Therefore, two or more students who are in conflict with one another, may both feel bullied, one at a time, or both simultaneously. This may inflate the number of victims in the statistics. It may also under-report the number of people who bully others, or both errors may occur at the same time. The records may also fluctuate according to public attention to the problem, e.g. due to social desirability bias, due to increased awareness of the problem, or due to a Hawthorne effect.<sup>20</sup>

There exists no overview of bullying cases reported by the schools themselves. Consequently, data triangulation is very difficult, if at all possible.<sup>21</sup> Although we cannot control the numbers of the mentioned surveys by comparing them to other, comparable data, *we can identify a cause of the uncertainty*: The records are built on self-reports by individuals who reply, anonymously and separated from one another, how often he or she *has felt being exposed to negative actions by others, in a situation when he/she was not able to defend him-/herself*. The questionnaires do not ask *what kind of relations there are between those who feel being bullied, and those who bully them*. The questionnaires do not ask whether those who report *being bullied* are involved in conflicts with specific others, or whether there is

reciprocity or turn-taking between them. In that case, both/all conflict parties may take turns of bullying/being bullied, and the “bullying records” may be a proxy for the level of conflict, or of the general psychosocial climate in the schools, rather than the level of bullying: When students tick off on a questionnaire that they are *frequently* in a situation where they cannot defend themselves, the questionnaire-based surveys reflect how widespread, and how frequent *the feeling of insecurity* is among students. If many students in a school feel insecure, there is of course a problem in the psycho-social climate in that school. If that is so, perhaps the discussion on bullying should focus on the conflict level and the feeling of fear and insecurity in schools, and analyze the causes of that insecurity in each case. Whether the insecurity is to be attributed to bullying or not, can only be established as a consequence of such analysis.<sup>22</sup>

### 2.3 Motives/Goals of bullying

Goals and motives of bullying vary. The goals may vary from “having fun”, via show of power, *exclusion of certain identities* from the in-group (“those, with whom we do not want to associate”), extortion, suppression of resistance, to “teaching” somebody “a lesson”.<sup>23</sup>

Persons may also bully others, or participate in bullying, for apparently *prosocial* reasons: A person who wants membership, protection, status, identity or recognition from a group, may use bullying of out-group members as *an entrance ticket or membership card* to the in-group (Hildegunn Fandrem, Ertesvåg, Strohmeier, & Roland, 2010; Hildegunn Fandrem, Strohmeier, & Roland, 2009).

Fandrem et al. (2009)<sup>24</sup> studied three motives of participating in bullying among indigenous Norwegian youth, and the motives of immigrant youth<sup>25</sup> in Norway. Fandrem differentiated between three basic motives of bullying others:

- 1) Proactive, power-/dominance related aggressiveness (“cold”; instrumental, provocative).
- 2) Reactive aggressiveness (“hot”; reactive, anger-driven), and
- 3) Affiliation related aggressiveness (provocative, collective).

The difference between *power-related* and *affiliation-related* aggressiveness may be traced back to individualistic vs. collectivistic cultural orientations, norms and ways of legitimating aggression.<sup>26</sup> Affiliation-related bullying can therefore be expected to be more prevalent among some immigrant groups (coming from collectivist cultures), while power/dominance-

related bullying is more prevalent among Norwegians.<sup>27</sup> Fandrem et al. found support for these hypotheses as regards both Norwegian and immigrant *boys*. However, among girls they found no significant relation between these motives and bullying.

Regarding girls, Fandrem et al. found 1) significantly lower numbers of self-reported bullying among girls compared to boys, and 2) a significant *difference between Norwegian girls and immigrant girls*: The latter were hardly participating in bullying at all (Hildegunn Fandrem et al., 2009).

It may be argued that a study of *self-reported motives*, based on questionnaires, taps differences in cultural values and *legitimization* of bullying (retrospectively), rather than motives that are active in the moment of action.<sup>28</sup> However, no alternative explanations for these differences have been provided so far.

Summing up the discussion so far, *boy bullying* is a well-established field of knowledge and research, while *girl bullying* is by and large unexplored. Regarding participation in bullying, the gender difference is statistically significant, but the difference is unexplained, if not taken-for granted. One reason for this may be that both research and public debate on bullying has had a strong focus on *personalities, and on the moral dimensions of direct, visible aggression*. This may have overshadowed the collective aspects of bullying; the phenomenon that Leyman, Heinemann and Pikas have called “mobbing”, a phenomenon they consider as distinctly different from “bullying” (Heinemann, 1973; Leymann, 2014; Anatol Pikas, 1998b; Westhues, Undated).

#### **2.4 Collective vs. individual action. Can an individual “mob” a person, or are “bullying” and “mobbing” two distinctly different phenomena?**

The distinction between *collective and individual aggression* is often played down in discussions on bullying. It is taken for granted that “bullying” and “mobbing” are two words for the same phenomenon, or reflect linguistic differences between the Germanic and Anglo-Saxon languages. However, linguistic difference is not the only reason for the ambiguity. The word “mobbing” (from “mob”) refers to group dynamics and collective aspects of negative action, while the word “bullying” (from “bull”) associates to power dynamics, especially power asymmetry between big/strong and small/weak.<sup>29</sup> Understanding *group dynamics* may be important for understanding the phenomenon of bullying in human society.

In situations of bullying, there is often a role play between the involved actors. Salmivalli et al. (1997; 1996) showed that participants may take at least 5 roles in situations of bullying: Victim, bully, reinforcer of the bully, assistant of the bully, defender of the victim, and outsider:<sup>30</sup> One or a few individuals often *initiate* the events. Once started, others join in as *assistants* (e.g. hold down the victim) or *reinforcers* (“cheerleaders”, “supporters”), while others may try to *defend* the victim. Finally, there are the rest - bystanders and outsiders. These are in most cases a *silent majority*.

Bystanders are not active participants. They are spectators, who may be indifferent, or numb, or regard themselves as outsiders who do not want to get involved in “other people’s conflict”. The apparent *indifference* of bystanders, so often perceived by victims of bullying, has been a puzzle to social scientists and psychologists from Le Bon, via Durkheim to Aaronson (Aronson & Aronson, 2007; Le Bon & Merton, 1960). One answer to the puzzle is that when people act in groups or crowds, they enter a state of mind that may be called a *collective sentiment, or group thinking*. Our self-awareness, empathy and *personal responsibility* may then decrease, or be absorbed by the group. Our individual self is suppressed or *assimilated* by the group. We “become” group beings.<sup>31</sup> Just like the weight of a burden is divided and lighter to carry when we *share* it, responsibility may be felt as divided, hence diluted, when we are part of a crowd. There are various explanations for this effect. However, the effect is in all likelihood due to the *presence* of others and the way others influence our frames of mind, consciousness and perceptions of our individual power and responsibility for what happens in the relevant situation (Aronson, 2008, p. 50).<sup>32</sup>

According to Anatol Pikas (Pikas, 2002), as well as Rigby (Rigby, 2005), the force of the group, combined with the fear of being “the next target”, is an important reason why many persons stay aloof, or even join in the activity, when they observe ongoing bullying. They also consider assistants and reinforcers as subordinate group members, who join in due to group pressure. This observation is relevant for understanding *the phenomenon* of bullying, as well as why groups tend to *reinforce rather than stop or curb* ongoing bullying. It also has important implications for *statistics* on how many persons *report* having participated in bullying, and how we assess their moral and practical responsibility. These questions are at the core of what teachers/responsible leaders have to find out of when confronted with a potential case of bullying: Are, e.g., *bystanders* responsible for intervening – or liable for *not intervening* - when they observe ongoing bullying? Are they less liable than supporters (assistants or reinforcers), who actively help or motivate the active bullies to “go on”? From a

*descriptive* (or “objective”) point of view, bystanders are *not participants* in bullying, and bystanders themselves usually also see it this way: They do not consider themselves as participants. However, the victim may see this very differently. Victims may, and will often, interpret passivity among bystanders as a sign of *support of the bullies*. That is: practically and morally bystanders are *not neutral*. I shall illustrate this with reference to the concept of structural violence, and how this concept relates to bullying.

## 2.5 Bullying and structural violence

The concept of *structural violence* complicates the epistemological discussion on bullying. Galtung (1996, p. 197) introduced this concept to differentiate between *direct violence* (often called “*aggression*”) and indirect (alias *structural*) violence. Examples of structural violence are exploitation, penetration, segmentation, marginalization, fragmentation, secondary citizen status and misery (Galtung, 1996, p. 197). Often, actors involved in violent social structures do not intentionally *commit* violence. Structural violence is rather an outcome of how the structures work.

Bullying is an *action term*, while the term “social structure” is not so per definition. Therefore, the term “structural bullying” contains an inner contradiction: Actors act, structures constrain or regulate action; action is dynamic, while social structures are not so per definition: The concept of “action” is about attempts to change or set in motion social relations; the concept of “structure” is about stabilizing mechanisms, or it denotes relatively *continuous* relations between social units.

This contradiction also contains a moral issue: An aggressive *actor* (read: *intentional* actor) can be held directly morally responsible and/or legally accountable for the consequences of his/her direct action; participants in social structures that harm and hurt others cannot be held accountable in the same way, since there is often a chain of interactions between the individual act and the consequences at the receiving end: Only the actors directly in contact with the victim can be held directly morally responsible. Therefore, claiming that a structure *as such* “bullies” somebody, is linguistically and logically problematic.

In an attempt to overcome the structure-actor dualism in social sciences, Giddens has introduced the term *structuration*. According to Giddens, social structures work in a dialectical way: Structures both *constrain* action and *enable* action. Structures are not

*permanent*. They are rather *a recursive pattern of (inter)action*. That is, structures are not *external* to human actors. Structures are also inside us. Structures are, then, recursive patterns of action, reproduced through interaction, giving mutual reinforcement of dispositions and motives *located inside the actors themselves*. Therefore, action and structure are two sides of a whole, brought together by *structuration*. Structuration is “the dialectical relationship between structure and agency (...) neither can exist without the other” (Ritzer, 2011, p. 524).

Bourdieu has a similar approach to the problem of agency and structure. In Bourdieu’s terminology, structure translates into *field*, and mental dispositions translates to *habitus*. *Field* is “a network of relations among objective positions”, and *habitus* is “an internalized mental, or cognitive, structure” that connects agents<sup>33</sup> to one another *via* the field that is common to them (Ritzer, 2011, p. 225). In other words: There are tensions and power relations among objective positions and agents, but the dynamic element, the element that sets structures and agents in motion, is *habitus*. *Habitus* is *a mental structure*; a disposition to act and think in certain ways. It is also certain ways of *relating to other habituses* as well as positions in the field. From this perspective, “structural bullying” would be another word for *dominance relations* in a given field, or rather *the encounter between dominant and dominated agents*, where the former continuously harass or intimidate the latter. Whether the agents think of this as *intimidation or not*, or whether they perceive the power relation as *legitimate or not*, is of secondary importance: As long as certain dominance relations are considered “natural” or legitimate, agents may well *bully others* unconsciously, while others may *be bullied* without recognizing that they are being bullied, as long as the symbolic violence in which both are engaged is considered legitimate or “natural” by both/all involved parties (Bourdieu & Passeron, 1990).<sup>34</sup>

Relating this way of reasoning to *practice and action*, an actor/agent can choose whether (s)he wants to reinforce or curb, support or counteract, reproduce or change power relations *within* the structures, in which they are embedded. However, the ability to do so is limited by the *consciousness* of the actor; i.e. by his/her *knowledge* of the mechanisms and processes that (re)produce the structure, as well as the power relations *in*, and outcomes *of* the structure. Individual actors can rarely decide the outcome of a given social structure, but actors can decide *how to relate to a structure*, and whether or not (s)he wants to make a difference on how the structure works.

Related to bullying, this implies

- That social structures may produce harmful consequences, irrespective of the intentions of (most) actors involved in the structure.
- The concept of “structural violence”, alias “indirect violence”, can be regarded as *an action term*: Structures act by inflicting consequences on persons, groups and actors.
- Structural violence is *per definition* recursive and continuous: That is, structural violence exposes humans to negative consequences *repeatedly and over time* (and *if not*, it is not structural).
- If persons or groups that are exposed to structural violence *cannot escape the consequences* inflicted on them, those persons/groups are exposed to forms of violence that we might call “structural bullying”.
- Structural violence is per definition asymmetric: The power asymmetry between the structure and the person(s) on the receiving end makes it difficult for the receiver to escape the negative consequences.

In other words, structural violence meets five of Olweus’ criteria for calling an action “bullying”: Violent structures “behave” in ways that inflict *negative consequences* on persons or groups that are not free to *escape* those consequences, and they do so *repeatedly and over time*.

The sixth criterion, the criterion of negative *intention*, remains ambiguous: As opposed to direct violence, structural violence is not by definition intended. *However*: if a social structure or network is established in order to harm, oppress, or force a group of people into obedience, the term “bullying” describes what such structures or networks do. Boycott, siege and sanctions, as well as *social exclusion or ex-communication* of certain actors are evident examples. Further examples are apartheid and caste systems, i.e. systems that divide the population into primary and secondary citizens (or non-citizens), with unequal rights and duties. *Such* structures intentionally commit violence by structural means: A group of people, nations etc. *act collectively* with the goal of forcing another group, nation etc. into submission, or to deny them access to common goods or equal status. If the perpetrators of such action are not met by negative sanctions, the action will be considered legitimate on the social/normative level, even when there are no laws that *support* such actions. That is, a legal

vacuum may well be an opportunity for bullying by/among social groups *in the absence* of regulation by the state or “apex” of society.

Minorities are often exposed to such *semi-legitimized* forms of indirect violence. However, the problem of intention and motive is still ambiguous: Those who commit such forms of indirect violence may just want to express or confirm their own identity as a member or associate member of an “in-group”, by distancing themselves from “the out-group”. Nevertheless, such forms of negative action meet the criterion of “bullying” due to *the power difference* between actors who ridicule, harass or slander others, and the victims of such action. *The targets are victimized for the very reason that they are not in a position to defend themselves*, due to their low status in society, while *the former* can safely harass or denigrate others. Attempts at retribution from victims are not likely to reach the dominant senders, and also not the unconscious/thoughtless, passive supporters of their negative actions. The senders’ social reputation and status in the peer group will often remain unstained, *or even be improved* by their actions.

As shown above, focus on behaviors alone, or intentions alone, is not enough. We must also look at the consequences.

## 2.6 Consequences of bullying

If *bullying* is identified as *a form of behavior*, without looking at the consequences for the targeted persons or groups, discussions on the concept of “bullying” can easily become devoid of serious social and moral implications: Bullying without victims is just a play on words, leading to a confusion and equalization of, on the one hand *playful, innocent* and *ironic* forms of “bullying”, and *serious cases of bullying* on the other hand. The whole discussion would then lose its meaning, and we would be back in the 1960ies, before bullying research was “invented”.

Below, I will discuss the immediate and long-term consequences of bullying, as these consequences have been recorded by social and psychological research.<sup>35</sup> In the process, I will also discuss how consequences relate to *different forms* (viz. direct vs. indirect forms) of bullying; *power relations* between bullies and victim; the victim’s *opportunity to escape* from the situation, and the *duration* of the bullying.



### 2.6.1 Signs and symptoms

The consequences of *physical* forms of violence/bullying are *immediately evident* (visible/audible), and so are the consequences for the victim: Bruises, torn clothes, damage to property, etc. are documentable, and *not easy to redefine* by the perpetrators, e.g. via “creative” explanations. Hence, unambiguous evidence can be established.<sup>36</sup> Indirect and symbolic forms of violence do not leave such evidence. Evidence that such forms of violence is *bullying*, can only be established through *interpretation* of communication, signs/signals and power relations between the involved actors. Signs of negative communication disappear immediately, and can easily be manipulated and *reinterpreted* after the fact. Hence, evidence is ambiguous, difficult to record, and easy to reject: If allegations of such forms of bullying are not supported by solid background information, context information and/or (neutral) witnesses, the evidence tends to evaporate and disappear. Therefore teachers/leaders and other outsiders, who have to rely on second-hand information, will find it difficult to assess or verify information on symbolic and/or indirect forms of bullying. *Even a spectator* to such forms of violence may find it difficult to determine what exactly “is going on.”

Two words – “just kidding” – may change an event from “bullying” to an “innocent game”. This is because the intention, history and power relation between actor(s) and target(s) *decide the character* of the actions: If there is power balance or a friendly relation between a sender (potential perpetrator) and the recipient (potential victim), *apparently* negative symbolic actions may be an expression of “*playful bullying*”, appreciated by both parties. This phenomenon is *obvious* to all insiders in, e.g., joking relations, in which persons with a certain relation to one another – e.g. friends or relatives - *expect* to be challenged by comments or practical jokes. Even recruits to prestigious social groups or organizations, as well as newcomers in workplaces, schools or military units, are often exposed to practical jokes, testing, or being “pushed around”. This can be interpreted as *playful aggression*, and so it is if the aim is to help the newcomer “tune in” with the group, accept the mentality, humor and manner of the group, and find out whether he/she fits in or not.<sup>37</sup>

The actions described above fit Bourdieu’s definition of symbolic violence, which he defines as “the imposition of a cultural arbitrary imposed by an arbitrary power” (Bourdieu 1992, p. 5). It also fits, although not so obviously, his definition of *symbolic domination*, which he explains as an act of unconscious or pre-conscious intimidation: “a symbolic violence which

is not aware of what it is (to the extent that it implies *no act of intimidation*).” (Bourdieu, 1991, p. 51).

*If, e.g., the goal of a ritual is to help a newcomer to acclimatize to the culture of the group, and both the group and their newcomer agree that integration of the newcomer is wanted, the use of symbolic force may be an act of inclusion rather than exclusion. This phenomenon can also be observed in youth groups, among whom e.g. nicknames and friendly ‘name-calling’ or ‘mock-bullying’ signifies friendship and social affiliation, i.e. the opposite of bullying (in the negative sense of the word used hitherto in this essay).*<sup>38</sup>

Sometimes, there is a fine line between playful aggression that *simulates* “bullying”, and serious bullying. In the process, playful aggression may cross that line, as can be seen in a number of social contexts, such as initiation of “freshmen” in the military as well as colleges, or those of “rookies” at sea, at the shopfloor of industrial plants, etc. Such initiation rituals often have the specific goal of *imprinting the identity of the group on the mind (sometimes even the body) of the initiate*, so the initiate always “remembers” – even belongs to - the group. The physical and symbolic violence in such processes may be harmful, and in some cases even life-threatening (Kuosmanen, 2013). Therefore, there will be cultural/moral attempts to regulate such practices. Morally concerned actors sometimes try to ban such “games” entirely, usually without much success.<sup>39</sup>

In the examples discussed above, the newcomers are exposed to a *cultural arbitrary* by an *arbitrary power*. However, *the character* of the actions, to which that the newcomers are exposed, is closely connected to *the intentions and consequences* of the actions, rather than the behaviors or *external forms* of action.

This implies that a given pattern of behavior can carry two opposite messages, depending on 1) the power relation between the sender and the receiver of the message, 2) intentions, and 3) the goals of both sender and receiver. In concrete terms, *the same words or gestures may mean “You are a celebrated group member”, “You are an untouchable”, or “You are our servant/slave”.*

### 2.6.2 Long-term consequences of bullying

Over the two last decades, an increasing amount of research indicates that victims of bullying<sup>40</sup> suffer an enhanced risk of developing post-traumatic stress symptoms/disorders (PTSS/PTSD)<sup>41</sup>. PTSS may be called a syndrome; i.e. a bundle of associated symptoms or signs that *may* be traced back to a common cause (here: bullying), but it may also be due to other traumas. PTSS may be light or serious, temporary or long-lasting. If persons who report being bullied over time have an elevated score on a list of PTS symptoms, compared to control groups, we can hypothesize that bullying is a major cause of their symptoms. If the scores correlate highly with the severity and/or duration of the bullying, this hypothesis is strengthened. If correlational data are also supported by life history data of bullied persons, we can say that the relation between PTSS and bullying is verified beyond reasonable doubt.

The empirical evidence from research on the relation between bullying and PTSS questions can be summarized thusly: The immediate symptoms of being exposed to bullying – defined as intentional, repeated or severe negative action *or* forced social exclusion – are *shock, fear and anxiety*. More long-term consequences vary from a feeling of powerlessness, irritability, feebleness/fatigue, various pains and aches (stomach-/neck-/head-), to depression, hypersensitivity, and/or a feeling of being *victimized*. Three out of four victims of bullying also report intrusive memories, flashbacks, nightmares, appetite disturbances, depression, and social isolation. Victims of bullying also report – significantly more frequently than control groups – melancholy, apathy, concentration problems, sleeping problems, loss of self-esteem, social phobia, suicidal thoughts, as well as aggression<sup>42</sup> (Bjorkqvist, Ostermann, & Hjelt Back, 1994; Einarsen et al., 1999; Leymann, 1990; Matthiesen & Einarsen, 2001, 2004, 2007; O'Moore, Seigne, McGuire, & Smith, 1998).

The severity of *symptoms* is also clearly correlated with the severity, frequency and duration of *exposure* to bullying (Einarsen et al., 1999; Matthiesen & Einarsen, 2004). Some victims of bullying also develop symptoms of paranoia (Matthiesen & Einarsen, 2001). In one study, Einarsen et al. compared victims of bullying at work to control groups of persons who had been exposed to various other forms of traumatic stress. Among the latter were health workers who had recently been working in a disaster area; medical students who had just observed their first autopsy; persons who had just arrived at the scene of a violent traffic accident, and workers who had been dismissed from work as a result of company restructuring. Victims of bullying displayed *significantly more intense and frequent PTS symptoms than all the control*

groups (Einarsen et al., 1999, pp. 16-22). In a later study, Matthiesen and Einarsen also found that the symptoms were “especially pronounced if the perpetrator is in a position of power or the situation is an unavoidable or inescapable one” (Matthiesen & Einarsen, 2004, p. 336).

Studies on *somatic* consequences of bullying have recently shown that sustained bullying in childhood may result in elevated low-grade inflammation in adulthood (Copeland et al., 2014). In other words, psychological stress associated with bullying in childhood may also result in somatic health consequences that can be observed decades after the experience.<sup>43</sup>

The findings I have referred to above, except for in the preceding paragraph, refer to victims of bullying *at work, in Norway*. Victims of workplace bullying in Norway are rarely *physically* threatened. Nevertheless, they often display stronger symptoms of PTSD than persons who have been exposed to physical danger or shock. Einarsen et al. (1999) explain this (counter-intuitive) finding thusly: Persons in the control groups had been exposed to dangers that appeared *accidental and impersonal* (natural forces, accidents, etc.), while victims of bullying were being *personally* targeted or persecuted. As opposed to the control groups, victims of bullying experienced a breakdown in basic assumptions about other humans and the social world, such as the principles of *reciprocity, mutual respect and equal dignity*. Social exclusion and double standards may lead to a feeling of being persecuted *by people one used to trust, or on whose good will one depends*. The situation is reminiscent of what Bateson (Bateson, 1972) called *double bind*. Double bind is a form of communication that appears to give the victim a choice, but the options are framed so that the choices cancel out one another: If the target tries to *adapt* to the situation, (s)he may be exposed to increasing harassment or ridicule. If (s)he *withdraws* from the situation, (s)he experiences further social isolation, labelling, gossip or slander. Whatever the victims does, it is “wrong”, and the result is confusion, frustration and a feeling of helplessness.

Being subject to such conditions over time may result in a deep feeling of insecurity, serious stress, and of distrust in oneself and others. It may also lead to a form of *learned helplessness* (Peterson, Maier, & Seligman, 1993; M. E. Seligman & Maier, 1967; M. E. P. Seligman, 2008). Learned helplessness is a form of paralysis that results from a pain (or punishment), from which one cannot escape. The person who is in this situation may first try to avoid the pain, but upon learning that this is impossible, (s)he gives up trying. Even though the paralysis *does not reduce the pain*, (s)he concludes that there is no way out of the painful

situation.<sup>44</sup> The elevated PTS symptoms of victims of bullying are a predictable result of being in such a situation, especially if it lasts over time.

## 2.7 Intervention, and how it relates to definitions

If bullying is associated with – or defined as - aggression and/or direct violence, programs designed to reduce *the general level of aggression* in schools ought to reduce bullying as well. Whole-school anti-bullying programs, such as the Olweus' program (Olweus et al., 2000) and the Zero program (Mithassel & Roland, 2011) have proved effective in reducing *the general level of aggression* in schools; hence aggressive forms of bullying are reduced in the process (Olweus et al., 2000; Ttofi & Farrington, 2009). According to Olweus, the effects of his program are sustainable for at least four years after the program period ends.<sup>45</sup> However, the focus of such programs on preventing “aggression” and “anti-social behavior” may also lead to 1) that more subtle forms of bullying replace the more obvious, visible forms, and/or 2) a social desirability bias *in records*, so that the prevalence of *recorded* forms of aggression are being reduced, while more *subtle forms* of bullying may continue unnoticed, or even be reinforced, because they pass “under the radar”.

By “subtle forms” of bullying, I refer to forms of bullying that are not perceived as bullying. Clever social manipulation and/or symbolic forms of dominance can serve as examples: In Western culture, there is a deep-seated *ambivalence* vis a vis symbolic forms of harassment, denigration, etc. For example, publication of ridicule, caricatures or other offensive or denigrating material (e.g. pictures), is considered an almost unalienable right in Western societies - deeply rooted in the *freedom of expression, freedom of association/dissociation, and freedom of art*. This implies, inter alia, that ridicule of political opponents or cultural “deviants”, religious icons or other objects is considered an integrated part of the freedom of expression. It also implies that freedom of organization (both association/affiliation *and* dissociation/ disconnection) is considered an inalienable human right. By the same token, inter-personal relations and inter-group relations (inclusion in, and exclusion from groups) are supposed to be regulated on the social level, without control or intervention from “above”.<sup>46</sup>

When this is the case, as it is in most Western societies, the cultural program implies that citizens must learn to handle these freedoms without interference from authorities. Since this is an *ingrained program in our culture*, we may disregard how difficult self-regulation on this

point may be, for children as well as for adults, especially in a multicultural society. We may also, due to our specific form of socialization, have a *trained capacity to disregard transgressions* in inter-personal and inter-group relations when the transgression is symbolic and indirect, rather than physical and direct.

## 2.8 Summary

Bullying can be defined as action aiming at hurting, harming or humiliating an identified person or group who is/are not able to defend themselves in the situation or context, in which they are embedded. It is a form of violence that abuses power asymmetry, and disregards the norms of justice, fairness and reciprocity. Bullying cannot be defined by referring solely to behavior, without referring to the intentions underlying the behavior, the power relations, as well as the consequences. The latter is important, since negative *action* does not *per definition* imply negative consequences for the target of such actions.

Bullying can be a “one-off event”, if the violence involved is severe and traumatic for the target. However, *repeated negative actions* against one individual or group may have very serious consequences for the target, *even though each individual act has a limited impact*.

This makes the problem of bullying difficult, since apparently insignificant events may be part of a pattern. Each event may not be called bullying, but *the pattern is*. The pattern may be very difficult to detect, and even more difficult to *prove*, since bullying may involve a network of participants in different roles, and most of them may only participate in small degree. In such cases, collection and interpretation of evidence – if it can be obtained at all – may require an understanding of the relational aspects and power relations inherent in such acts. Symbolic forms of bullying, especially if perpetrated by a group of people, can only be detected through a study of *interactions among a number of participants*, and usually the study has to be carried out over time.<sup>47</sup> Hence, incidents of such indirect forms of bullying may pass under the radar, while fights (often called “violence”) are recorded – perhaps too often – as incidents of bullying.

Analysis of intra-group relations may be a way of circumventing this problem. When groups bully, the feeling of responsibility and guilt by individual participants is often diluted. Hence, participants may “shrug off” or deny feelings of guilt and responsibility. (Motto: “what everybody does, cannot be *that* wrong”).

As mentioned above, broad-spectrum, whole-school prevention programs that focus on “anti-social behavior” ought to reduce the *general level* of aggression in schools, and in the process *bullying* would also be reduced. According to evaluation studies, as well as meta-studies that compare a variety of approaches to intervention, such programs do reduce the prevalence of bullying in schools significantly, provided they are well designed, have clear, measurable goals, and continue for at least 8 months (Olweus et al., 2000; Olweus & Limber, 2010; Ttofi & Farrington, 2009). However, it remains uncertain how long the impact of such programs last, i.e. how deeply they change the social and cultural patterns that *produce* aggression in schools.

According to Pikas (1998b; 2002), children who participate in bullying may be driven by fear of being bullied themselves, or of being excluded from the group (which protects them). If we want to remove the underlying causes of bullying, not just suppress negative behavior, we need to change the group climate so that we *take away the fear*. In other words, we need to know how the relations are between the actors in the triangle of bullies – victims – intermediaries, as well as in their relations to bystanders and outsiders. Intermediaries or bystanders may be concerned with *coping* and *watching their own back*, if necessary *at the expense of the victim*. Therefore, bystanders may participate in bullying from time to time, in order to avoid being bullied themselves. Outsiders may be unconcerned or ignorant of what goes on.

On the local level, where bullying takes place, there may be a lack of instruments to register, analyze and treat cases of bullying by networks of people. Consequently, this kind of bullying is often treated as a “problem” or “a conflict”, rather than bullying.

In bullying by symbolic means, the choices of the targeted person or group are seriously limited. Nevertheless, the freedom to manoeuvre may vary according to the personality or habitus of the targeted person or group: Persons who are predisposed to react to symbolic violence may be disempowered, while those who are not may have more freedom to act. E.g., *physical retaliation* or verbal retribution may vary according to gender roles, or class specific habitus, or the degree to which cultural expectations are internalized in a person. When symbolic forms of bullying are considered “normal”, the term “symbolic domination” (Bourdieu, 1991, p. 50) fits.

The effects of bullying is often a form of *subordination stress* (Barash, 2005). The effects of such stress may be *introverted aggression*, in the form of shame or self-reproach.<sup>48</sup> The stress

may be increased if bullies think or say they *meant no harm*: It was “just fun”, “just kidding”, etc. This kind of stress is well known to minorities and indigenous peoples, who often have to swallow ridicule and derogatory remarks about their natural ways of being and behaving (their body, hexis, accent, “manners”, hygiene, etc.). They often have to “take an insult while lying down”, because they are in a situation in which *aggression as well as self-debasement* may be “wrong”, or out of place.

Because symbolic means of bullying are considered more legitimate, humiliation and coercion – two main characteristics of bullying – by such means can be committed more efficiently by symbolic means than by physical means. The harm inflicted on the mind and well-being may be also as great, or even greater for a person exposed to bullying by symbolic means, compared to a person bullied by physical means.

## 2.9 Conclusion

In this essay, I have discussed the concept of bullying, aiming at finding criteria and means of identifying cases of bullying. The discussion has highlighted four aspects: Intentions, behaviors, consequences and power relations. I have argued that it is not adequate to look for intention or behavior alone: We may want to harm others, without acting out those intentions. We can also commit harm without intending to do so. Regarding behavior, *apparently aggressive* behavior may be playful or ironic, and committed in a spirit of friendliness and social inclusion. If so, apparently negative actions are harmless, or even pro-social. Regarding consequences, it is often difficult to relate negative consequences for the victim *directly* to bullying events, except in cases of *evident brutality and open threats*. However, the consequences of being bullied over time are so well-established that we may have to act preventively and proactively, even though a direct relation between cause and effect cannot be established in each individual case.

A recurring question concerning school bullying is: Why don't schools intervene more often to stop ongoing bullying among children? The answer may be: Most schools and most teachers *do react* to bullying when they are certain of what is going on. However, in many cases they 1) do not see what is going on, or 2) they do not see “it” as bullying, or 3) they cannot verify what “it” is, due to insufficient evidence.



In the first instance, they do not have good tools for registration of bullying cases. In the second instance, they see “conflict”, and conflict is considered as “normal”. Hence, they do not intervene. This is due to an inadequate understanding of *the problem*, as well as criteria, by which to single out cases of bullying from related phenomena, such as aggression, conflict violence, etc.

Alternatively, schools may intervene in bullying cases with means designed for symmetric conflict. In this case, teachers and school leadership may be aware that a student is in trouble, but they are uncertain of what the problem is, and what causes the problem. Hence, they are uncertain of what kind of intervention is legitimate and effective. This will, in all likelihood, increase the number of hidden and disregarded cases of bullying in schools, especially cases of bullying by symbolic means.

Broad spectrum school-wide programs that aim at reducing *the general level of aggression* in schools, may reduce the number of bullying cases in schools. In meta-study of over 600 reports on the effects of bullying-intervention programs, Ttofi and Farrington found that school-wide programs may have a significant effect in reducing school bullying, compared to more limited or case-based programs, provided all relevant actors are involved in the program, thorough training of staff and administration, all components of the programs are implemented consistently, and the program lasts for some time (Ttofi & Farrington, 2009). They especially mention the Olweus Bullying Prevention Program (OBPP) as a very effective program. According to Olweus and Limber, OBPP has significant effects, provided they use all crucial elements of the program, comprise all relevant actors (teachers, other staff, parents, pupils, youth leaders outside-of school etc.), and lasts for at least 8 months (Olweus et al., 2000; Olweus & Limber, 2010). They show that the effects of their program may be sustainable for at least 5 years after the program ends, and that their findings can hardly be attributed to time trends or external factors, such as media attention and governmental anti-bullying campaigns to (Olweus & Limber, 2010).<sup>49</sup> That is, the program seems to produce *sustainable change in the school culture*.<sup>50</sup>

The preventive effects of case-based intervention (i.e. intervention in concrete bullying cases one-by one) are contested and uncertain. However, the effects of case-based intervention may be improved if we can develop better tools to *identify* cases of bullying, including indirect forms of bullying, and differentiate real bullying from phenomena such as conflict, aggression and “playful bullying”. This essay has been an attempt to do so.

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## Notes

<sup>1</sup> Oxford Dictionary online: <http://www.oed.com/view/Entry/223638?rskey=SUI4dh&result=1#eid>

Downloaded 04.10.2015. According to the same article, violence was “formerly” also understood as “the abuse of power or authority to persecute or oppress.”

<sup>2</sup> *Oxford English Dictionary* (op. cit.)

<sup>3</sup> The text in Norwegian reads: «Vold, fysisk eller psykisk overgrep for å tvinge gjennom sin vilje, eller for å få utløp for aggresjon». Downloaded from Aschehoug Encyclopedia -- <https://snl.no/vold> - - 04.10.2015, translated to English by me.

<sup>4</sup> Olweus is mainly concerned with bullying in schools. Most of this article will discuss literature on school bullying, but I shall use the term “bullying” in a general sense. This is because bullying may happen on nearly any arena, in all age groups, among both/all genders. I will add determiners, such as “school”, “student”, “boys”, “girls” etc. when needed for the sake of clarity.

<sup>5</sup> The concept of “action” may be distinguished from the concept of “behavior” by referring to action as *intentional and/or goal-directed*, while the concept of “behavior” does not presuppose specific intentions or goals. Given this specification, the concept of “negative action” implies *negative intention* (e.g. the intention to hurt or harm), while negative “behavior” *may or may not* imply goal-directed, negative intentions.

<sup>6</sup> The criterion of power asymmetry came late in Olweus’ work. During the two first decades of his work (ca 1975-1995), the criterion of power asymmetry was an implicit, but not an explicit part of his definition.

<sup>7</sup> The Nordic term for the phenomenon is «mobbing». The term “mobbing” was introduced by Lorenz (Lorenz & Huxley, 1966), who used it to designate collective aggression among gregarious animals. However, I shall use the word “bullying”, since this is the standard term in international, English literature on the subject.

<sup>8</sup> For the record, this is *my reading* of Heinemann. Heinemann never set up specific criteria, or a list of criteria. His investigations were phenomenological, holistic, and based on an anthropological approach to the problem.

<sup>9</sup> This problem causes uncertainty about reports on the prevalence of bullying: Numbers may be inflated, depressed or both, because the criterion of “negative actions” is a necessary, but inadequate condition in order to establish a case of bullying as defined here. If all negative actions are defined as bullying, then ‘bullying’ and ‘anti-social behavior’ are almost identical phenomena. Further, the same may be the case with ‘bullying’ and ‘fighting’, probably also with ‘bullying’ and ‘ongoing conflict’: All these concepts involve (frequent) *negative actions*. Reciprocity, which is due to relative power *symmetry between parties*, may increase the number of incidents, i.e. of both “victims” and “perpetrators” who are recorded in the statistics.

<sup>10</sup> Practical importance: If we make “proactive” vs. “reactive” aggression the decisive criterion – as do Frey and Hoppe Graf – we cannot intervene unless we know “who started”, and/or “for what reasons”.

<sup>11</sup> Children as well as adults will often tempt, challenge, provoke or “test” each other, e.g. through practical jokes, and learning to cope with these situations without losing one’s temper.

<sup>12</sup> A vulgar example, from Northern Norwegian deep culture: In Northern Norway, the expression “horsedick” may be used colloquially (and *consciously vulgarly*) about a person, in the meaning “a terrible person”. However, among friends you can hear expressions like “you are an all right horsedick”. In this case the irony is double: “Horsedick” is used ironically (i.e. the meaning is negated in the very moment the word is spoken). Further, the speaker is also *self-ironic*, as if he were saying: “Sometimes you annoy me - my friend - *but that is my problem, not yours*”.

<sup>13</sup> “The bully is someone who is responsible for premeditated, continuous, malicious, and belittling tyranny.” (Farrington, 1993, p. 385). Farrington illustrates his argument thus: “Nobody likes children who steal money or sweets from others, but (...) bullies tend to extort money from a weak victim, or victims, systematically and repeatedly (...) The mindless and degrading violence of strong against weak may be bullying, but fighting by definition, is not.” (ibid.)

<sup>14</sup> “What is bullying? Bullying can be described as the systematic abuse of power. *There will always be power relationships in social groups, by virtue of strength or size or ability, force of personality, sheer numbers or recognised hierarchy*. Power can be abused; the exact definition of what constitutes abuse will depend on the social and cultural context, but this is inescapable in examining human

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behaviour. If the abuse is systematic—repeated and deliberate—bullying seems a good name to describe it.” (Smith & Sharp, 1994, p. 2, my italics).

<sup>15</sup> A good definition must be able to *strike the balance between denotations and connotations*: The more denotations, the less connotations (Galtung, 1996). Denotations is often introduced for the sake of “precision” – emptying the concept of connotations. However, another way of saying the same is: The more denotations, the less room for interpretation; and the less interpretation, the less *meaningful* is the concept.

<sup>16</sup> I here disregard ironic and metaphorical uses of the concept.

<sup>17</sup> The total number of students in primary and lower secondary school in 2014 (age 6-16 years) 2014, was approximately 618.000 (Education, 2015). 3,9% then amounts to 24.000 students.

<sup>18</sup> The numbers for the period 2007-2014 are comparable, since in this period, the method of investigation, definition, questions and selection of students have been virtually the same. Before 2007, neither selection of participants, nor the questions or methods were standardized. Therefore, the numbers before 2007 are not directly comparable to the numbers for the period 2007-2014. However, there are uncertainties also in the latter time series: In 2013 there was a change in both time of the data gathering, and in the order of questions, so that a) *the timing* of the data gathering period was shifted from spring to fall, b) *the order* of some questions were changed, so that the respondents may tick off less frequently that they are being bullied, c) the data processing of some data was changed, so that respondents who claimed they were *being bullied by everybody all of the time*, were considered “unserious”, and therefore excluded from the records (Wendelborg, 2015, p. 7).

<sup>19</sup> The questionnaires also record bullying as seen by *sender* (perpetrator) of such actions, but the association between the two numbers is purely correlational. We do not know whether the cases reported by bullies and victims refer to *the same* or *different* incidents. Hence, the validity can be disputed, as we do not know whether there is intersubjective agreement between bullies and victims about which cases are bullying, and which are not.

<sup>20</sup> Hawthorne effect: The effect of being observed, which can make people change their behavior or perceptions.

<sup>21</sup> There are local records, but no national records in Norway, on how many bullying cases schools report: Each schools’ headmasters report individual cases of bullying, if the cases have been so severe that the headmaster makes a formal sanction or punishment of one or more bullies. These are recorded by municipal school authorities, but no national statistics are made. On the county level, formal complaints from parents of students who have felt being bullied without getting help from the school, are recorded at the office of the County Governor. In 2014, the total number of such complaints was 126 (Mikkelsen, Åsebø, & Møller, 2014).

<sup>22</sup> This is not a criticism of the research done on bullying until now. A positive effect of research on school bullying, is that awareness/consciousness of the psycho-social health and security of children is being raised; that laws and regulations have been passed; that campaigns have been launched to improve the psycho-social environment in schools; and that schools and authorities have been made more responsible for the pupils’ psycho-social health. Unfortunately, there is a long way to go before the school authorities take their responsibility as seriously as one might hope for: Despite the high number of recorded bullying cases, there have been only a few lawsuits against Norwegian school owners (i.e., the municipalities) for neglect of their duty to make schools a safe place, and *in all but one case*, the school authorities were acquitted due to *insufficient evidence*.

<sup>23</sup> The purely aesthetic aspect of “being on the powerful side” of an equation should never be underestimated. That aspect will be left aside here, but will be discussed in some detail in the next chapter/next article.

<sup>24</sup> The study comprised a sample of 3.127 Norwegian and immigrant boys and girls in lower secondary schools.

<sup>25</sup> Definition of “immigrant youth”: First generation immigrants below 18, plus sons and daughters of first-generation immigrants, same age.

<sup>26</sup> Concerning the difference between *aggressiveness* and *aggression*: Aggressiveness is here understood as a psychological disposition to hurt and harm, while aggression designates acts or action aiming at hurting or harming others.

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<sup>27</sup> A majority of the boys or their parents in the *sample of Fandrem et al.* were children of parents coming from collectivist cultures, compared to Norwegian culture (which is considered a relatively individualist culture); 94 of 189 boys were born or had parents from the Middle East, Central/South Asia, Russia or East Asia.

<sup>28</sup> The study investigated differences in self-reported *participation in bullying*, besides motives for participating.

<sup>29</sup> The word “mobbing” was originally coined by the ethologist Konrad Lorenz. Lorenz used the word “mobbing” *exclusively* about instinctual, collective behaviour among gregarious animals. The practical importance of this detail can be shown by two examples. Example 1: A predator (“big bully”) attacks the nest of a seagull (relatively smaller). Conclusion: *Eagle bullies seagull*. If the seagull shouts alarm, and so calls the other seagulls to chase away the predator from their habitat, *the seagulls mob the big bully*. Example 2: A flock of crows attack an individual crow among the flock. The members of the flock take turns, and peck the poor victim to death. Example 2 is also case of “mobbing”, but in this case, “mobbing” and “bullying” carry the same *implicit meaning*, namely *use of overwhelming power to hurt or harm an individual that can neither flee, nor get away from the situation*.

<sup>30</sup> Below, I shall argue for dividing the category of “outsider” into two different roles: Bystander and outsider.

<sup>31</sup> I here refer to *the process of being in a group*, not to group *membership* as such.

<sup>32</sup> For example, people are often more slow to offer help to a person in distress when they are in a group, compared to when they act as individuals.

<sup>33</sup> The concept of “agent” denotes that an actor acts as a representative of a social system, institution or structure, or in interest of that system, institution or structure. An actor does not per definition do so (although an actor *may* do so. The conceptual difference between “agent” and “actor” is not decisive in a discussion on bullying, except for cases where participants in a field (fr: “champ”; eng.: “arena”) actually *act on behalf of – or in the interest of –* specific social structures or vested interests.

<sup>34</sup> Bourdieu and Passeron do not use the word “bullying” about this phenomenon, nor do they discuss the concept of bullying. They use the concepts of “symbolic violence” and “symbolic domination” alternately about a *phenomenon that I, here, relate to “bullying”*.

<sup>35</sup> I will not discuss consequences for bullies, since that discussion is of little relevance to the question of definitions.

<sup>36</sup> The reader may ask: Aren’t these signs just indicators of violence, not of bullying? The answer is “yes” if both parties are bruised. If only one party have bruises, it is a sign that asymmetric power has been used.

<sup>37</sup> This is fairly universal among humans, known under names such as “assimilation” or “incorporation”. This process may be voluntary or forced, and the forms and codes vary among cultures and social groups. Often such games include *tempting, trying or testing out limits of provocation*. In some parts of working class culture practical jokes are a part of an informal “initiation program” for novices into the codes and forms of communication at the workplace (Willis, 1977). Some forms of “kidding” among children may be an imitation of, or preparation for entry into such adult culture/cultural habits. A similar form of “bullying” happens between supporters of *opposite teams* in a competition: Typically, supporters of one team “bully” the supporters or players on the opposite team, and especially the *best/most-feared players* on the other team. The goal of such forms of “bullying” may be to make the target lose their motivation, or their temper or composure. Such cultural expressions can be called “bullying” only in a metaphorical/ *theatrical* sense.

The human tendency to participate in such games is probably universal. However, innocent forms of “playful bullying” are not without risks. One transgression, and such games can develop into *real bullying*. If the exposed person or group gives a symmetric response, there is a *conflict*, rather than bullying. This is the case when a victim gathers a superior force (e.g. many children, or older/stronger children) against his/her real bullies. This may be called “counter-bullying” or “reactive aggression”. Whether these are appropriate terms or not, depends on the context: If “counter-bullying” stops ongoing bullying, some sort of power balance is achieved. However, if the “counter-bullying” continues, the word “counter” becomes misleading. This is an important reason why one should look for more peaceful strategies for children who want to help bully-victims. A more peaceful strategy to achieve the same effect might, for example, be to form a *protective ring* of people around the victim.

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<sup>38</sup> Examples of such *positive forms of assimilation* are numerous: They comprise a wide spectrum of forms as well as social groups and settings, from initiation into shop floor culture (Willis, 1977) to initiation into high-status groups, such as the Freemasons, or prestigious students unions. The “entrance examination” to some of the *most prestigious students unions* in Norway – situated at the Norwegian University of Science and Technology (NTNU) – would under other circumstances be characterized as violent crime: The initiation procedures may comprise such activities as crawling through a pipe full of fish entrails, being exposed to mock humiliation, and rituals that for an outsider look like “a brutal execution ritual” (Universitetsavisa, 2014), or being forced to eat raw intestines of animals, or drinking tobacco snuff dissolved in water (Engström, 2011). Looking at the *behavior* alone – without taking relations and context into consideration - this is bullying. However, if we take into consideration *the intention and consequences*, it is not: Participation is wanted by the participant, the pain is transitory, and the intention and consequences of the actions signify social *inclusion* of the targeted person into a prestigious social group. Further, the targeted person wants to participate, and “failure” at these entrance “exams” is unknown. Hence, it is all happening in a spirit of social inclusion and social promotion of the initiate.

<sup>39</sup> However, such attempts may lead to *transformation* of dangerous, violent rituals. When that happens, the *forms* change so that the consequences grow less violent and less serious for the newcomer. Many *ritual* forms of “violence” – e.g. least in sports, games and drama - are remnants of violent past customs, now *transformed to play* and fun.

<sup>40</sup> I shall refer mainly to research on adult victims here. Effects on children are less well established than effects on victims of adult bullying. I will not speculate on possible differences between adults and children when it comes to tolerance and psychological flexibility/resilience to bullying.

<sup>41</sup> Henceforth, I shall not use the term PTSD (D for Disorder), since this is a diagnosis based on psychological expertise, which I do not have. The reports I refer to, frequently use the term PTSD where I refer only to elevated symptoms of PTS.

<sup>42</sup> These tendencies are statistical, and reflect *elevated tendencies* to have these symptoms in the group of victims of bullying as a whole. Only a minor group among them develop symptoms of paranoia; suicidal thoughts and aggression are elevated in the group, but not *universal* among victims, etc.

<sup>43</sup> This finding is correlational, and. It does not trace the symptoms back to a specific cause.

<sup>44</sup> This makes serious forms of bullying different from other disasters that may hit a person, such as natural disasters, traffic accidents, unemployment, or work accidents. It also makes bullying different from *conflict* over an issue or a desired object.

<sup>45</sup> Thus, Olweus counters the argument that such programs may *suppress* negative behavior while they are ongoing, but bullying will “bounce back” once the program is over.

<sup>46</sup> This goes for civil society. However, many inter-group and inter-personal relations *are* regulated by law in Western societies, such as the relations between employers and employees, subordinates and superiors, gender relations, relations between parents and children, between the state and minorities, between the state and the unemployed, etc. This is probably because the regulations are considered important for society to work well. This means that relations that are *not* regulated, are considered a minor problem, or a problem that should be left to the citizens to regulate themselves.

<sup>47</sup> Socio-metric methods that measure social popularity, centrality and isolation are well-developed, and may be helpful, but methods of observation and recording actual *incidents* are not.

<sup>48</sup> Barash’ term is “redirected aggression”. Redirected aggression may be extroverted or introverted. If extroverted, it may spread in any direction, horizontally or vertically. However, it is *redirected* for a specific reason: Direct aggression against the source of the stress is being blocked.

<sup>49</sup> Olweus and Limber (ibid.): “A five-year follow-up study in Oslo. For 14 of the 24 Oslo schools from the first cohort, we have data for five assessments, from October 2001 to October 2006. The starting level for being bullied was 14.0%, which decreased to 9.8% the following year. The reduced level was retained and even further slightly reduced in the following years, reaching 8.4% in 2006. This change represents a 40% relative reduction from the starting value.”

<sup>50</sup> Olweus and Limber (op. cit.): “These results are important, since it has been shown (e.g., Beehman, Pfingstein, & Lösel, 1994) that many program effects are short-lived and are found to be considerably



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reduced when longer-term effects have been assessed (even after only two months after the end of the program phase).”

### 3 On network bullying and symbolic forms of bullying

Vidar Vambheim

#### Abstract

Some forms of bullying can be explained as the outcome of relational aggression (Flack, 2005). This article highlights the structural aspects of relational aggression. From a structural perspective, relational aggression can be explained as the outcome of competition for position within the peer group. The article argues that some groups among children can be analyzed as a complex network of dyads and triads, and that conflicts arise over *positions in triads*. However, each triad is related to a web of other triads, and the sum of these triadic relations constitute a network.

Relational conflicts can lead to bullying, and the concept *network bullying* can help explain the dynamics of bullying among school girls. When bullying is performed by or via a network of people, it is very difficult to find a *source or centre*, from which the bullying activities radiate. Hence, it is also difficult to determine the liability and responsibility of each participant in the process of bullying.

In girl groups, bullying is mainly committed by soft and indirect means, i.e. by gestures and manipulation of social relations. Such forms of bullying do not match a conventional view of a “bullying relation”, and if the means are symbolic, the actions can also be considered not as bullying, but as legitimate behavior. Hence, symbolic action may be a very *efficient* way of bullying, due to the fact that it can easily evade public attention and intervention.

The age and gender group in focus in this essay are girls in pre-adolescence and early adolescence. However, their forms of bullying are so advanced that they carry more resemblance to adult bullying in white collar workplaces, than to the standard notions of bullying in literature on school bullying.

### 3.1 Introduction

In her PhD thesis, Zelma Fors (1993) analyses five cases of school bullying among pre-adolescent and adolescent children in Sweden. In one of the cases<sup>1</sup>, a conflict between two girls, Lisa and Lena, develops into bullying. Lisa and Lena are classmates and friends, but they are *also* competitors for leadership in the class. Time and again, the two girls have been in conflict with one another. In direct, interpersonal conflicts, Lisa is confrontational, while Lena tends to avoid direct confrontation. In grade 4, Lisa and Lena take ballet lessons in the same studio. One day Lisa takes Lena's special place at the ballet bar. Lena yields, but takes indirect revenge afterwards: First, she secretly snatches a note written by Lisa to a friend. The note reveals that Lisa plans to spy on the teacher, and "reveal" that he is "duplicious". Lena shows the note to the teacher. Lisa understands this, and confronts Lena directly, accusing her of being a tattletale. A little later, Lena is in charge of "students' hour".<sup>2</sup> On this occasion, she organizes a competition, and – being in charge – she decides that Lisa and Lisa's best friend are to be in opposing teams. This looks like an innocent, isolated incident, hardly worth noticing. However, the event triggers a vehement reaction from Lisa, and overnight, Lena receives hostility and social exclusion from all her class mates except for two of her best friends, Lotta and Lea. However, Lotta and Lea are then met with the same kind of hostility. The hostility is silent, but efficient: They meet a "glass wall" of hostile glances, negative body language, and verbal threats. Now, a leader among the boys in the class also starts harassing Lena. Lena's two remaining friends – Lotta and Lea – are put under continuous pressure to abandon Lena, and finally they fail to stand up for her. Lena is now alone; excluded and very vulnerable to new attacks. Teachers see that there is a "conflict", but they are reluctant to call "it" *bullying*. Attempts from Lena's parents to intervene are neutralized by Lisa's fellow students, who argue that parents are biased. Hence, both teachers and parents are being neutralized.

From now on Lena is exposed to ever more frequent incidents of verbal and symbolic harassment. She develops symptoms of anxiety, strain and stomachache, and starts to shirk school. As a consequence her parents, who are very worried about her, start to report sick from work, and stay home in order to help Lena get through her days. The parents contact the form teacher and the other parents in the class, in an attempt to resolve "the conflict". Lisa's parents respond negatively: They argue that children ought to solve their own conflicts,

*without interference from adults*. Lena is now cornered; she has nowhere to go, and cannot find security anywhere at school.

Then two older students (one of them is Lotta's sister) undertake to *correct Lisa*. This creates a *secondary conflict* - between Lisa's parents and Lena's parents. Gradually, the other parents become divided, and nobody is able to intervene in the conflict until Zelma Fors - acting as an external expert - is able to gather most of the parents to a parents' meeting, chaired by Fors. The meeting is characterized by a "strange atmosphere" among the parents. Nevertheless, they decide to arrange a *joint party* for the whole class, focusing on reconciliation. The party closes the conflict, leading to a kind of reconciliation among the girls.

I shall now use this case to highlight three questions: 1) What triggers such conflicts, 2) why do they escalate, and 3) how can an apparently *innocent conflict* develop into bullying? In order to answer these questions, I shall first highlight two different perspectives on such conflicts:

- 1) a *dyadic perspective* (Olweus, 1978a et al.; Veenstra et al., 2007),
- 2) a *network perspective* (Salmivalli et al., 1996)

According to the dyadic perspective, bullying is a relation between two personality types: An aggressive or dominant personality seeks out a yielding, submissive person, whom he/she can dominate (Farrington, 1993; Olweus, 1978a, 1978b). The latter tries to avoid confrontations, yields to pressure, and "offer a high probability of letting themselves be dominated" (Veenstra et al., 2007, p. 1845). In our case, the weaker personality (Lena) first yields to pressure. *Then* she takes indirect revenge, by trying to "tell on" Lisa to an authority (here: the teacher). When that attempt is thwarted, she seeks to control or regulate Lisa's behavior by indirect, social means of control. However, when this also fails, Lena is very vulnerable. Lisa realizes this, intensifies her aggression, and the conflict is virtually *bound to* result in bullying: Lisa can now mobilize the peer group against Lena, and is highly motivated to do so. Lena - who used to be a popular girl with good self-esteem - is soon reduced to an isolated, scared and *cornered* child - exactly where Lisa wants her to be.

An alternative to the dyadic perspective is to regard bullying as *conflict on the wrong path*, or *failed conflict handling*: Conflict over power, position, leadership and popularity in the peer group is normal and predictable. Especially in this age group, it just "happens". Such conflicts frequently release *relational aggression*, at least among girls (Flack, 2005; K. M. J.

Lagerspetz & Bjorkqvist, 1988). In our case, Lisa feels threatened; hence she takes proactive steps to avoid the threat; Lena gives an asymmetric response (tries to subdue Lisa by appealing to an authority (*a teacher*) with formal and structural power); Lisa retaliates by mobilizing an alternative structure - the peer group –to counteract pressure from the formal structure; this puts Lena under serious *psycho-social stress*; and finally – when Lena is stripped of all her powers, she is victimized. Victimization here means that Lena feels a hostile sentiment from the whole group of peers. She feels vulnerable to attacks; she *appeals* to authorities for intervention; and Lisa *thwarts* intervention from authorities by mobilizing a network of students that counteracts and prevents intervention from authorities (teachers and parents). Lena is now deeply frustrated; grows anxious, develops somatic symptoms, and starts to play truant.<sup>3</sup>

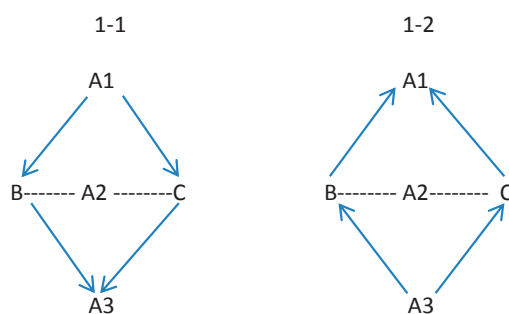
Below, I shall discuss the case of Lena and Lisa in the light of *network exchange theory*, using Caplow's, Simmel's and Galtung's theories of conflict in triads and coalitions in triads as a theoretical framework. I shall first show how a focus on dyads and triads can reveal power relations in micro. I shall also propose that *hierarchical models*, i.e. models that portray structural relations as a pyramid with an apex, give a one-dimensional image of power relations in groups. Therefore, I suggest a model that takes into consideration the power of *centrality* in a network.

### 3.2 Coalitions and conflict in triads

The smallest social unit is a *dyad* (Simmel, 1964; Spykman, 1965). A dyad is a constellation of two people associating for whatever reason or cause. If the relation lasts for some time, there will be tensions, disagreement or conflict between the two, but the tensions will remain *private* (or sub-social if “social” is considered the opposite of a “private” relation). The entrance of a third element causes a considerable change in relations and interaction patterns: Somebody is *observing* the two, or *interacting* with them, and interaction between the two must now take the third party into consideration. Further, a dyad will dissolve if one element withdraws or disappears from the dyad. Not so with triads: Triadic structures can remain intact, even when one or all elements are replaced by other elements (Spykman, 1965).<sup>4</sup>

A third party is also a *third force*. This force can manifest itself in a wide variety of roles and relations.<sup>5</sup> Possible relations between a dyad (B-C) and a third member (A) are illustrated in figure 1.

**Figure 1:** Relations between a dyad and a third party who enters a relationship with the dyad.



**Explanation to Figure 1:**

Both figures illustrate the relation between dyad B-C, and a third party, A. A can take three different roles or positions: A1, A2 and A3. The horizontal line indicates a reciprocal relationship (B-C), into which A enters as a mediator or messenger (*position A2*). Arrows indicate power relationships. Arrows pointing downwards indicate dominance, arrows pointing upwards indicate attraction or desire for friendship or identity.

**Figure 1-1 shows relations of dominance (top-down):** A may be an oppressor of both B and C, keeping them apart by force (position A1); an *intermediary* between them (A2); or a humble subject under both (A3).

**Figure 1-2 shows relations of attraction (bottom-up):** B and C may both be attracted to A, or invite A into their relationship as the wanted third party, or A may be attracted to the dyad B-C, seeking a relationship with them (position A3).

The three roles of A in the figure correspond to Simmel's theory of dyads and triads. According to Simmel, the third party in a triad can be 1) mediator, 2) *tertius gaudens*, or 3) ruler (Caplow, 1968, p. 20). The role as mediator is indicated by the position of A2 in both figures. A1 in figure 1-1 is the role of *dominator* or ruler. A1 in fig. 1-2 is in the role of *tertius gaudens*, the enjoying third.<sup>6</sup> A1 exploits this position for his/her own benefit, *but A and B may accept it, even want it*, because he/she is also useful for them. A3 in fig. 1-2 is a

*wannabe*; longing to get into the sphere of A and B. If this is the case, there is only a short jump to *position A3 in figure 1-1*: The dominated servant under a ruling dyad.

Which dyadic coalitions can be expected in a triad? The answer depends on *the power relations within the triad*. I shall look at three different power conditions:

**Condition 1:** A is stronger than B; B is stronger than C; (B+C) are stronger than A.

Possible outcome: (B+C) form a coalition against A; A is in position A3.

However, since A+C combined are stronger than B, and B is a competitor to A's position, *A will prefer C to B*. C will also prefer a coalition with A, because this coalition will lift C one step up. Hence, B will most probably end in position 3. That is: Actor A can divide & rule.<sup>7</sup>

The structure is stable.

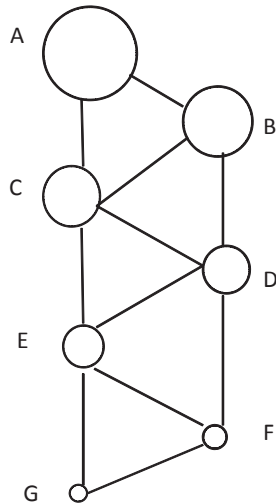
**Condition 2:** A, B and C are equally strong: Any coalition can occur; each coalition is equally probable; none of them will be stable.

**Condition 3:** A is stronger than B; B and C are equally strong; (B+C) are stronger than A.

First outcome: Coalition of (B+C) against A. However, since A is stronger than each of them, the coalition will be unstable. Hence, the probable outcome is a coalition of (A+B) against C, *or* (A+C) against B. The two coalitions are equally probable (Caplow, 1968, pp. 1-4). The stability of this coalition depends on A's preferences.

In groups, triads are linked together vertically or horizontally.<sup>8</sup> A vertically organized chain of triads may look like Figure 2.

**Figure 2:** A network of triads (Caplow, 1968, p. 60).



**Explanation:** The size of the circles indicates power, and *hierarchical position* in the structure is the outcome of power differences. Lines represent bonds between units. Each triad is a triad of *type 5* in Caplow's classification of triads: A is stronger than B; B is stronger than C; a coalition (C+B) is *stronger than A* (Caplow, 1968, p. 6, fig. 1-4). This can be abbreviated to  $A > B > C$ ;  $A < (B+C)$ .

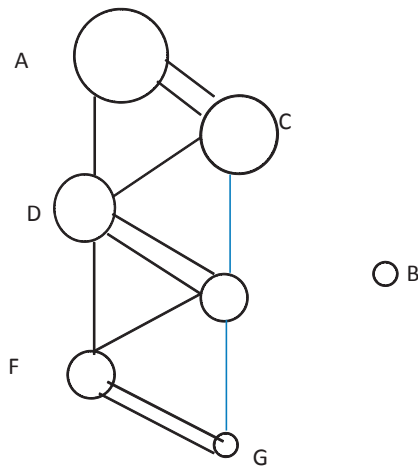
The structure above will tend towards a *dynamic equilibrium*, for the following reasons: A coalition (B+C) against A is always *possible*, but A will try to prevent it, and B and C will jealously watch each other, in order to avoid a coalition between A and *the other*. Therefore, A can choose whom to coalesce with, and therefore a "revolutionary" alliance (B+C) against A is improbable.<sup>9</sup> This pattern reproduces itself in the triangle B-C-D: B can choose whether to coalesce with C or D; C will prefer a coalition with B, in order to prevent a coalition B-D against C, and B will prefer a coalition with A to ward off a coalition C-A. B will also prefer a coalition with D to ward off a coalition (C+D), etc. Thus, the structure is apparently cemented down the line (Caplow, 1968, pp. 59-61, fig 5.9-5.11). However, the structure is still *dynamic*: For example, C can mobilize *both A and D against B*. If that happens, B is pushed down the steps. Therefore, mediocre positions like D (*even E*), can be in possession of more power than what immediately emerges from their position in the hierarchy: D has a short way to both B and F, and E has a short way to C and G.



I shall call this the power of centrality.

The social logic of the exercise above is: If C and A form a coalition against B, B will be forced to act, in order not to be degraded. If B acts, C can still form a coalition with A against B, and A may prefer that, since B (but not C) is a threat to A's position. Further, D can increase C's leverage in a contest with B for position no. 2 in the structure. This will also help D climb one step up the ladder. A can profit on a coalition with C-D as much as one with B, or even more. Once this operation is completed, both C and D will have a strong interest in keeping B out or down. Hence, *C-D may form a strong coalition to keep B excluded* (and for A, this is no problem). These power games will repeat themselves down the line to the triads D-E-F and E-F-G. The chain of triads may then stabilize in the following structure:

**Figure 3: A "balanced" structure of triads and solid dyads, forming a network which excludes one element ("the odd girl out").** <sup>i</sup>



This figure is based on Caplow (1968), but adapted to my analysis.

*Explanation, figure 3:* Double lines indicate strong bonds/interaction in a dyad, single lines weaker bonds/less intensive interaction in a dyad. The figure may be explained as the outcome of a process where two, for example A and C, form a coalition against a third, for example B; the whole structure of triads follows suit, and stabilizes in a *firm structure* where B is excluded.

B is now isolated, forming *a monad* roaming on the outside of the structure. If B tries to put the foot in the door, she will have a hard time: There is no interest in inviting her back, because she is a risk to the position of all members in the structure: The structure is now balanced and strongly disposed to reject intrusion and change. *It has hardened through the exclusion of B, and there is "peace" and stability as long as B can be kept out.* This gives the members a collective interest in keeping B out of the equation in order to "keep the peace." However, it is also clear that the "peace" *inside* the group is constructed at the expense of B, who is exposed to *structural violence*. If the participants are *conscious* about this, and B is exposed to negative actions, then this may be considered *network bullying*.

### 3.3 Centrality. A second source of intra-group power

In research into children's groups, male groups are often considered as hierarchical (therefore stable), while female groups are considered more horizontal (therefore more unstable). These assumptions may underestimate power struggles in the latter kind of group. If we consider a group as a network of triads and coalitions in triads (Caplow, 1968), we can take into account *two* sources of power in a group: *Vertical position* (rank, status) and *centrality*. Rank can be measured 'objectively' (by rights, resources, or patterns of domination), or subjectively (popularity, status, attraction/rejection etc.<sup>10</sup>). *Centrality* can be measured by the number of connections a person has to others, or by the number of checkpoints any individual unit in a structure has to pass in order to reach the utmost *peripheries* (high **or** low) of the structure (Galtung, 1977, p. 177). A person in a central position has many connections (ties) and a low number of gates or checkpoints to reach *both peripheries* of a structure.<sup>11</sup> In qualitative terms, ties + distance to peripheries translates to *potential power to move the rest of the network* – or a substantial part of it. An even shorter formula may be: *Centrality = latent mobilizing power*.

In formal structures, such as organizations, institutions and organized work groups, positions are clearly defined by the *tasks and authority* attributed to a certain position. However, *below the surface*, the power relations may be anything but obvious.<sup>12</sup> The same applies, even more so, to informal or "natural" groups, such as friendship groups or other informal networks. A person positioned on the periphery of a structure may compensate for her/ his relatively marginal position by connecting to the centre, *or* to the top. However, exercising pressure on a powerful hub in a network or a peak in a hierarchy, is energy-consuming: It takes a high

interactive capacity, and much energy, to *bypass* the check points, *especially* checkpoints close to the apex of a structure.

In informal networks, centrality can be measured as the number of friends or relationships. Another measure is *popularity* or attractiveness (being the “first choice” of others), which translates to status in the group (Salmivalli et al., 1996) . The two forces are usually considered as two sides of a coin. However, number of friends and popularity can also be treated as two independent sources of power: Centrality means a high number of friends in different places in the structure. That gives few checkpoints between the self and the peripheries of the network. Popularity, on the other hand, means *high status* in an informal status system. *Both* are sources of power, but in different ways and for different reasons.

If a person can combine *both sources* of power - status *and* centrality - we can suppose that this person is more powerful than a person who is *high* on one dimension; *low* on the other dimension. We must also take into consideration that the *tertius gaudens* (the enjoying third) can rise to a *domina*, by exploiting conflicts between others in the network (a *jump* from position A3 to A1 in fig. 1-1).

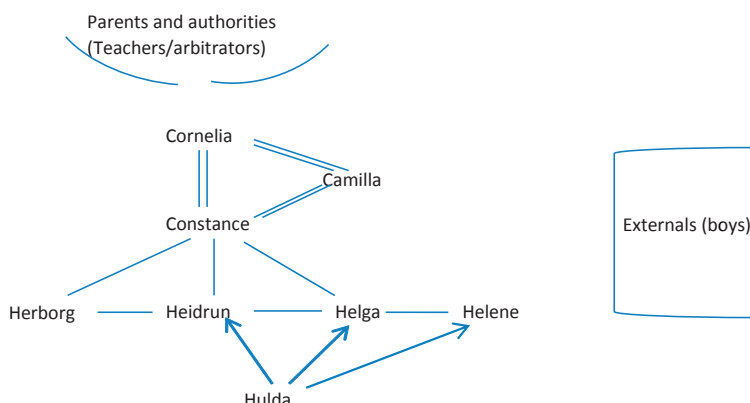
In Fors’ case study, Lena’s situation is first structurally similar to the situation of **B** in figure 2: A high-ranking, popular student. Then she undergoes a process of social degradation and exclusion from the peer group, and ends in a situation similar to that of **B** in figure 3: An outcast. Figures 2 and 3 are highly *stylized* images of the complex processes and dynamics that lead to this outcome. Figure 4 below shows a more complex picture that *approaches real-life processes*. The figure is based on a different case, but the process of Camilla below is quite similar to that of Lena above.

### 3.4 Illustration <sup>13</sup>

Camilla, Cornelia and Constance (age 10) have been classmates since they started school (at age 7). They constitute a leading triad among the girls in class. During previous years, coalitions among two against a third have - now and again - put strain on the relations between them, but conflicts and animosity have been limited and short-lived. Further, friendship between the three could vary according to arena and interests, so that two could be together in one activity, two others in other activities. However, that has not been a source of conflict.

When the girls reach pre-/early adolescence (10-13 years old), Camilla and Cornelia connect more closely to one another personally, while Camilla and Constance are workmates in work groups at school. The structure of the group is illustrated in figure 4.

Figure 4: A Network of girls



**Explanation:** Dyads, triads and a monad in a social network. Lines indicate mutual/two-way relations; arrows indicate one-way attraction (or desired friendships). Double lines indicate strong bonds/intense interaction, single lines weaker bonds/less intense interaction. Most of the individuals (read: *knots in the net*) are a member of one or more triads. Camilla and Herborg are members of only one triad each. Constance is a member of three triads, and so is Heidrun, if she wants. Hulda is an outsider, and tries to connect to the group. Heidrun and Helga can potentially exploit their position in case of power struggle in the group.

The network in Fig. 4 has 3 status layers: High-Medium-Low. The letters in figure 2 (above) are here replaced by names, and the structure is *less hierarchical* than they are in Caplow's flow-charts. The model should be capable of accommodating a variety of empirical cases, including the case of Lena and Lisa. The model is inspired by Galtung's analogy between social structures and chemical structures (Galtung, 1977, pp. 169-181, see esp. p. 173)<sup>14</sup>, but adapted to informal groups and group processes.

The pattern of triads and dyads in figure 4 follows the logic established in figures 2 and 3. However, the model is revised and adapted to the idea that centrality is a separate source of power. The figure shows an informal group of school girls, in which

- The group consists of a network of triads and dyads
- The group structure is *dynamic*: Coalitions in triads is a dynamic property that changes power conditions in a network. The position of each individual can change, but the main

structure – a 3-layer system of triads and dyads - tends to remain intact. The stratification triggers competition and conflict *within* triads, but not necessarily *between* triads. Competition for friendship and popularity are dynamic motive forces that create tensions and latent conflict among individuals in the structure.

- There are three main status layers in the group: high-medium-low. (For a discussion, see below).

- A person's sum of lines indicates *interactive capacity*, i.e. the capacity to relate to and "bind" others in the network of bilateral and trilateral relations, in which a girl is embedded. The vertical distance between the top and the lower strata of the group is short, compared to the structures in Figures 2 and 3. This is to indicate that hierarchy is *ambiguous*, that there may be competing criteria for power, and that competing criteria can create unpredictable structural dynamics.

A brief comment to the *3-layer status configuration*: In some research on status in children's groups, high status means "popular" and low status means "rejected" or "neglected" (Salmivalli et al., 1996).<sup>15</sup> Popularity translates to a *high number of potential friends/connections*. However, potential friends does not automatically translate to a *power to move others*. A girl can, e.g., be connected to the top-triad, but have few friends outside that triad. A girl may have many friends outside the top triad. Centrality is therefore a *latent power* that can be mobilized in triadic conflicts over position and status.

Coalition building in informal triads and groups is not very rule-governed, but I shall count on three regularities:

1) Each member "seeks a position of advantage with respect to each distribution of reward. A larger share of reward is preferable to a smaller share, but any share is preferred to none." (Caplow, 1968, pp. 6-7). This tendency is general, but creates strong motive forces in groups and situations where power relations are ambiguous and dynamic.<sup>16</sup>

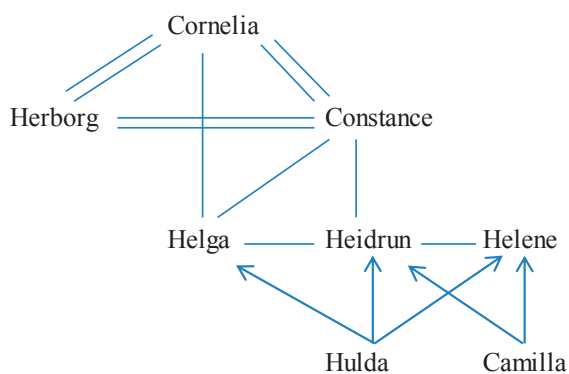
2) Coalitions between two can change power and dominance relations in triads, and the outcome of coalition building is often replacement, degradation or exclusion of one element.

3) The probability of specific coalitions depends on the relation of the triad to other triads and dyads in the network. In the last resort, it is affected by the whole *network of triads* that constitute a group.

One day Cornelia asks Camilla to transfer to Cornelia’s work group, since the two of them are “best friends.” She does so, and the teacher accepts the request. Two days after, in the first break between lessons at school, Cornelia looks straight through Camilla, and goes to Constance. Camilla immediately understands that something is seriously wrong. She tries to approach the two other girls, but is rejected by facial expressions, refusal to communicate and negative gazes.

A couple of days later, Constance seeks out Camilla, and demands “the picture.” “The picture” is a picture of the two girls *cheek-to-cheek*, taken during a class outing. Camilla produces “the picture”, but when she hands it over to Constance, the latter says: “Tear it in two pieces – you and me - and give me to me.” This incident is the starting point for a series of assaults and harassment that soon isolate Camilla socially, deprive her of most of her friends, and blocks *access to friendship* with other girls in the peer group. In the course of less than a month she is totally isolated, and the bullying continues for two years. The network of relations among the girls can now be depicted as in figure 5:

**Fig. 5: Network structure after the conflict (same network as figure 4)**



**Explanation:** Double and single lines and arrows have the same meaning as in Figure 4. There are three layers in the structure: Popular girls (top triad), average (middle line), and rejected (excluded).

Both Camilla and Hulda are now roaming outside the main structure: two excluded *monads*, like *B* in figure 3. The structure has hardened and stabilized in the course of the conflict.

Hence, Camilla may represent a potential threat to the stability of the social network. In this situation, she may even represent a threat to Hulda: Both are roaming outside the structure, and both are competitors for friendship relations with members of the network. The best both can hope for, is:

a) Friendship with one of the insiders. This would be based on *compassion* rather than reciprocal attraction, *or*

b) Friendship with one another (“*two outsiders seek company*”). However, this can (only) happen if they are able to identify with one another, e.g. by creating some sort of *outsider identity* or *controversial identities*. This can happen if they are able to change their preferences, so that they disregard the network. A bullying *network* would not let that happen. Hence, both will probably try to reconnect to the network via one or several knots in the net, most probably Helga, Heidrun or Helene.

What happened to Camilla? Of course, Camilla may be a yielding personality, spotted by one or more dominant “bully personalities”. If so, the latter have found out that Camilla is vulnerable, exposed her to “antisocial” games, bullied her and subdued her by means of others (who are used as puppets), and continued the game until Camilla is an outcast. If so, Cornelia and Constance are candidates for the title “bullying personalities”, while Camilla would be a vulnerable, yielding/submissive person, acting so that she will easily be subdued by dominant personalities (Matthiesen & Einarsen, 2007; Veenstra et al., 2007). However, this is hardly the most typical pattern in girl groups. On the contrary, *in girl groups*, such bully-victim dyads are rare (Salmivalli et al., 1997; Salmivalli et al., 1996).

An alternative to the dyadic perspective on bullying, is that of *the mob*. According to Leymann, “mobbing” is a better word than “bullying” if we want to describe and analyze harassment, humiliation and social exclusion committed by social groups. Leymann, who analyses harassment of adults *in workplaces*, argues that bullying in workplaces is rarely committed by one, single individual *alone*. It is frequently accepted, and also often *supported* by several or many colleagues. I.e., the group of people, to which the victim *thinks* he/she belongs or *wants* to belong, participate in the bullying (Heineman, 1993; Leymann, 1987b, 2014; A Pikas, 1998; Pikas, 2002). However, the kind of bullying cited above also differs from “mob” activities *in one respect*: The mob encircles and attacks a target, and “mobbing” can be recorded as *one or more unique, dramatic incidents*, where a crowd of people gather

physically to humiliate a target. This is rarely the case in workplaces, and the same goes for informal girl groups/peer groups in school.

An alternative would be to call the phenomenon we are treating here, *network bullying*: Network members take turns to pick on a targeted person (or group). Hylland Eriksen has called this phenomenon “the inverted refrigerator”: It produces warmth inside, coldness vis-a-vis outsiders. Outsiders will immediately feel that they are “not welcome”. When this develops into systematic excommunication and barring of a person’s or group’s access to social connections in the network, this may be called bullying, *but it is not the work of a “a mob” or “gang”*. This form of action is rather “collectively orchestrated without being the product of the orchestrating action of a conductor” (Bourdieu, 1977, p. 72) . It can also be defined as *reactive*, hence as a less malicious (and more excusable) form of negative action than intentional, proactive bullying. For the excluded person, however, the difference may be hard to see, since outcomes *for her/him* are more or less the same.

Looking back at figure 4, Camilla was apparently in the group of leaders. However, both Constance, Heidrun and Helga were much better integrated in the network than Camilla. Therefore, they have a higher interactive capacity in the network. The three girls have *spread* their interaction on several knots in the network. Therefore, they are capable of mobilizing network resources. This kind of *latent power* may easily be underestimated by hierarchical models of power. Table 1 illustrates the point.



**Table 1: Visible and latent power in figure 4 and 5.**

	Figure 4			Figure 5		
	Visible Power	Spread	Latent Power (ICxS)	Visible Power	Spread	Latent Power (ICxS)
Constance	7	4	28	6	4	24
Cornelia	5	3	15	5	3	15
Heidrun	4	4	16	3	3	9
Helga	4	4	16	3	3	9
Herborg	2	2	4	4	2	8
Camilla	4	2	8	0	2	0
Helene	1	1	1	1	1	1
Hulda	0	4	0	0	3	0
Mean	3.37	3	11.4	2.75	2.63	8.5

**Explanation:** IC = Interaction Capacity; S= Spread of IC (number of persons on whom one's interaction capacity is distributed). Latent power= Interaction Capacity x Spread of that capacity.

*The table can be summarized thus:* Constance has the highest power rating, and her power is stably the highest throughout the conflict. Cornelia has the second highest power rating overall, if we take into consideration that her power is virtually unaffected by the conflict. Even before the conflict, Heidrun and Helga have the same interaction capacity as Camilla, but significantly more *latent power* than Camilla - despite Camilla's direct connection to the apex. This fact *emerges* when the conflict emerges. After the conflict, it is manifest. The reason for this is the high centrality of Heidrun and Helga, i.e. short distance to both peripheries in the network. This indicates *a difference between popularity (status on sociometric popularity measures) and latent power*. Latent power is the *potential* power of an actor, when we take into account his/her *network resources*. This power is not so visible in Caplow's models (figures 2 and 3 above), because the figures only take into account *position on the vertical dimension*. Table 1 also shows latent power inherent in *spread of ties* (i.e. of maintaining a *high number of friends/connections*). In the course of the conflict, Herborg doubles her power, and directly takes over Camilla's position in the network. However she is now as vulnerable as Camilla used to be. We can therefore expect her to be among the most aggressive defenders of the *new* status quo.

Figure 4 shows the number of gates or checkpoints an actor must pass in order to reach the utmost peripheries of the structure. That is, an actor's power will be limited if he/she cannot connect directly to the top or bottom of the structure, but has to go via others. Camilla's and Cornelia's high position in figure 4 are undermined by their lack of connections further down the line. For the same reason, Constance and Helga are more powerful than we can see immediately, e.g. by looking only at the figure. This implies that actors who concentrate their capacity on one or a few intimate/inward relations are vulnerable, *and vice versa*: Those who *spread* their interaction capacity on several knots/members in the net, will have an advantage when it comes to conflict over power and positions in the group as a whole.

The spread of interaction capacity (D) is equivalent to *risk diversification*. In other words, Camilla and Cornelia may be vulnerable due to their concentration on one another, since this creates a disconnection from the rest of the network. Concentration inwards in a dyad may make them blind to the risks involved from movements outside the dyad. Constance, Heidrun and Helga, who spread their capacity on more "knots" in this network, have reserves for the reason that if one dyad/triad changes, *the rest of the network will be moved*. This is because the network consists of mutually related triads and dyads. Hence, a focus on individual or dyadic perspectives fails to see how power is inherent not only in triadic relations, but in the network of relations that constitute the whole group. A person's interaction capacity poses limits to the power potential of that person. However, interaction capacity is *not an entirely personal capacity*: It is partly a structural capacity, dependent on a person's position in the structure. Therefore, IC can increase or decrease (within limits) when the person's position in the structure changes. Actually, struggles over position and power in a structure may be struggles over access to network resources, and the limits to a person's IC can be transcended by connecting to the center of the structure.

Herborg's and Camilla's positions before the conflict (fig. 4) and after (fig.5) show this clearly. However, how can we explain Herborg's leap from a rather vulnerable, relatively peripheral position in the network (fig.4), to an active member of the top triad (fig. 5)? The answer is: By observing the hidden imbalances in the top triad. In figure 2, Herborg would be **D**: She is connected to the top triad, but in an outsider position. This gives her a chance to fill the open slot (C) once Camilla is excluded. This is a reminder that being connected to high places may give an advantage in power struggles, but *staying there* is demanding. A serious imbalance in the structure is always an opportunity to climb; keeping that position requires connections to the centre.

Summarized, the combination of connections in “high places” *and* centrality seems to be a winner position with respect to power. The power potential in centrality is objective, in the sense that a central position facilitates communication with all other group members. However, to generate real power out of a central position takes more than motive and agency. It also takes *legitimacy*: There must be at least passive approval and complicity in the act by at least *some* other knots/persons in the network.<sup>17</sup>

Hence, mobilizing a network in bullying takes intention in *some parts of the structure*, but not in all parts. Thus, it differs from the work of a single bully, as well as from the collective “frenzy” of a classical lynch mob. What characterizes network bullying is that different actions can be carried out by different parts of the network, without involving the whole network: Network bullying only presupposes that enough people have *agreed on a definition* of the problem (e.g., they agree on a stigma, or a general common goal for the group as a whole). Once a general, common goal is there, actions can be taken by *parts of the network*. Different people in a network *may take turns* in “picking on” or humiliating an already stigmatized person or group from time to time. This will *keep the order intact*, and preserve the identity of the group: The *aesthetic* experience of participating in such acts (e.g. ridiculing the outsider = a feeling of belonging to the in-group) can keep a network of people together. Actions that reproduce the feeling of collective *strength* [we-ness + power] or *prestige* [attractiveness + power] tend to be reproduced and legitimized by rationalization after the fact.<sup>18</sup>

In the course of a week at school or work, there are numerous occasions to exercise such bullying games, and many of them are not registered by responsible authorities. That is, the *incidents* may be registered, but it is very difficult to record such acts unambiguously as *harassment or bullying*. It is, for example, possible to exercise symbolic forms of violence by means of virtually invisible communicative signs that activate certain *illocutionary/implicit aspects* of the communicated content (Austin, 1962).<sup>19</sup> The illocutionary aspects of signs can usually be read by the insiders, but not necessarily by outsiders: A tone of voice or a coded reference to previous events on a different arena, a rumor, a slip of the tongue, leakage of confidential information, attacks on identity, signifying that the victim is “contagious” or “untouchable”.<sup>20</sup>

The coded message may be *well known by the insiders, unknown to others*; clear enough to subdue a person; obscure enough to avoid interference from an authority. Such methods are

indirect, and often communicatively advanced and intricate, analogous to the power of the media or that of gossips in local communities. Among children, symbolic forms of violence can be exercised in situations when adults/responsible authorities are absent, distracted, inattentive or indifferent. As shown, a *common definition* may be adequate to trigger network bullying, once a “difficult person” is defined as “the problem” (Leymann, 1987a; Westhues, 2004).<sup>21</sup>

The combined effects of personal interests, a common definition (e.g. a stigma), turn-taking *and* post-facto rationalization, makes it *easy to legitimize socially excluding acts*. Rationalization after the fact can also *convince* participants in network bullying that their actions are justified, because each individual action is “not so bad”, even “innocent”, and this may be a reason why such forms of bullying are so difficult to detect, diagnose and counteract.

### 3.5 Conclusion

The purpose of this paper has been to highlight how unbalanced power relations (among children) may trigger conflict over positions, power and social status in a group of peers. Such conflicts may trigger aggression; aggression may degenerate to bullying; and bullying may be an effective way of degrading and socially excluding a child. In the process of social exclusion, the identity (or “*we-ness*”) of in-group members is being reinforced at the expense of children who can be sacrificed and excluded in the process. Were it not for this collective aspect, social exclusion would not be possible.<sup>22</sup> In the process of bullying, not only one, but several members of the in-group can improve their positions in the network of triads and dyads that constitute a group. Therefore, it may be difficult to change a structure that has been fixated through bullying: All or most insiders may have a stake in keeping “the peace” – a peace that is gained at the expense of those who are marginalized in the process.

I have also called attention to the fact that there may be at least *two* different sources of power in the peer group: Status and centrality. Status can be (and *is* frequently) translated to “popularity” on sociometric scales that vary from “popular” to “rejected”. Centrality, on the other hand, is characterized by “connections” and “willing assistants”. Centrality may be based on *threat capacity*, and threat capacity is inherent in a position based on *other* sources of power than popularity - *alias* status in the peer group (Salmivalli et al., 1996). While status (thus defined) is based on opinions and attraction, threat capacity is closer to *power realities*

“on the ground.” Power on the ground may be based on a number of sources, inter alia the structural or economic importance of the child’s family in a community. From this perspective, popularity and centrality are two competing sources of power, like social capital (“connections in high places”) and cultural capital (education or other culturally desirable status markers) are in greater society. Hence, a “popular” child is not automatically a powerful child. If a person is high on one aspect (e.g. popularity), but low on the other (e.g. centrality), the two sources of power will compete with one another. If a person is high on both aspects, the two sources of power reinforce one another. The latter person will be more powerful than the former, *ceteris paribus*. A person’s degree of *powerlessness* will vary according to the same parameters: Low\*Low means high degree of powerlessness. High\*Low means *less powerlessness*, since one source of power can be used to compensate for a low score on the other dimension.<sup>23</sup>

So how does bullying relate to the two dimensions of power? First, the popularity dimension: Measures of popularity (often translated to status in the peer group) are usually based on two sets of questions on a questionnaire: 1) Nominate the N girls/boys you like most (in your class, school etc.), and 2) nominate the M boys/girls you like *least* (Salmivalli et al, 1996, p. 5). Hence the popularity/status scale rates *liking and/or attraction*. Salmivalli et al. (1996) investigated the popularity of students who tended to participate in one of six different roles in bullying incidents: The role of Bully, Victim, Assistant to the bully, Reinforcer of the bullying, Defender of the victim, or Outsider. They found – in agreement with previous research in the field - that victims of bullying were the least popular children, irrespective of gender, while *defenders of the victim were the most popular*, irrespective of gender. However, when it comes to bullies, there was a gender division: Girl bullies were among the most popular girls in the peer group, only second to defenders of the victim. This differs significantly from the rating of boy bullies. The latter are below average on popularity in the peer group, because they are often *controversial*, and therefore frequently rejected by many among their peers (Salmivalli et al., 1996, pp. 8-11).<sup>24</sup>

The fact that girl bullies are almost as popular as those who defend victims, while boy bullies are not, raises two interrelated questions:

*Question 1:* Is status/popularity of Defenders a *consequence* of defending victims, or is it a (pre)condition for it?

The question can be rephrased thus: Does defending victims increase the status among peers, or are popular kids the only ones who dare – or effectively *can* - defend victims? If the first interpretation were true, defending the victim would be an effective way of becoming more popular/gaining friends. This may be the case: Defending a victim is a pro-social behavior, and children who behave in pro-social and non-aggressive ways are in high esteem among children (as well as among adults), while aggressive kids and bullies are disliked and unpopular. The fact that up to 30% of the girls, according to Salmivalli et al. (ibid.), take the position as *defenders* of the victim, supports this interpretation. However, the fact that only 4,5% of *the boys* take (the *popular*) role as defenders, while boy bullies are almost as unpopular as the victims, supports the alternative explanation: Defending the victim is risky. Therefore, only high status/ popular kids dare do it. Perhaps only popular/high status kids *can* go against the group without being victimized themselves.<sup>25</sup> This has several consequences for how intervention to stop bullying can be designed, planned and implemented.

*Question 2:* How can we explain the high status/popularity of girls who bully others?

This question can be rephrased thus: How can we explain *the difference* between the popularity rating of girls who bully others, and boys who bully others? A possible answer to this is the difference in ways girls and boys bully. Boys bully in direct and physical ways, while girls more often in indirect and symbolic ways. As a consequence, many incidents of girl's aggression may not be perceived as aggression, hence also not as bullying. There seems to be a *double discrepancy* when it comes to gender and bullying:

- 1) Indirect forms of aggression are underestimated or under-recorded on questionnaires, compared to direct aggression (which is more typical for boys),
- 2) Girls tend to underestimate *their own* aggressive behavior.

Lagerspetz and Bjorkqvist explain this phenomenon thus: “the perpetrator may not want to admit to (or is perhaps even not herself aware of) her own aggressive behavior. (...) It is obviously easier to admit being overtly aggressive than to see oneself as intriguing and scheming, as a person is obliged to say if she or he admits to indirect aggression. Furthermore, indirect aggression is easier to “explain away” to both oneself and others.” (K. M. J. Lagerspetz & Bjorkqvist, 1988, pp. 146-147, cf. p.144).<sup>26</sup>

According to Pikas (2002), the only way to discover the real situation on the ground, is to do detailed observation and cases studies that record *actual* behavior. The bullying

questionnaires used in Nordic schools record perceptions. They are therefore subject to several sources of error, such as variation in sensitivity among respondents, as well as timing: Focus in media and public debate fluctuate, and sensitivity to bullying may fluctuate accordingly. Pikas' criticism of the bully questionnaires may be somewhat exaggerated, but he is probably pointing at an important problem in the way bullying is being recorded: Indirect aggression, of which network bullying is no doubt a manifestation, is a "smart" and advanced form of bullying. In other words, indirect forms of bullying – such as scheming and social exclusion - are a more mature and *adult* form of bullying. As the children grow older, they tend to replace direct aggression with more indirect and subtle forms of bullying. Apparently, boys develop such "invisible" forms of bullying at a later age than girls (K. M. Lagerspetz, Björkqvist, & Peltonen, 1988). This may reflect differences between the genders in age of maturation, especially in late childhood/early adolescence. If that is so, the girls are practicing *adult forms of aggression* at a much earlier age, and much longer, than boys. They are, as it were, playing *adult power games* while the boys are still playing childish games. If that is so, studies of "female" forms of bullying, and forms of bullying among/by girls, can be a missing link not only in studies of school bullying, but elsewhere as well.

It can also be a road to understanding how bullying and power games by manipulation of social relations are first practiced in schools, then executed in workplaces and other adult spheres of life, and even in politics.

It has been said that the battle for peace can be won if male aggression and patriarchy were replaced by female forms of power. If indirect aggression and network bullying is a way of gaining and keeping power, also in politics and work-life, we must be able to understand its causal mechanisms, recognize its expressions, and prevent its consequences. The work to do so has only just begun. The first step, from a peace studies perspective, would be to analyze mechanisms that trigger such forms of aggression. This paper is an attempt to do so.

The next step would be to find methods of intervention that might dampen conflicts before they grow into bullying and social marginalization. A third step would be to find ways to counterbalance intricate and manipulative ways of exercising power, aggression, and violence. That step is beyond the scope of this paper.

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## Notes

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<sup>1</sup> See Fors, 1993, pp. 144-161.

<sup>2</sup> “Students’ hour”, or “class hour”, is a school hour organized by students (usually weekly), laid down in the timetable in Norwegian schools. A part of these are leisure hours for extracurricular activities organized by the students themselves. The students take turns to organize games and fun activities.

<sup>3</sup> According to a social cognitive perspective, people often experience *tension* between expectations/hopes and outcomes. If that tension exceeds certain limits, it will create frustration, and a feeling of helplessness and powerlessness (Bandura, 1986; M. E. P. Seligman, 2008). People will try to regain control of the situation (regain inner locus of control), but if that fails, most people will sooner or later give up. This may result in loss of self-confidence (or self-efficacy), but it may also result in aggression, in a desperate attempt to restore balance. For Lena, decline in social status and power is a deep disappointment that triggers frustrated expectations and hopes for recovering her former status. This creates tensions, perhaps also a feeling of resentment. In such a situation, a person may easily *feel* victimized.

<sup>4</sup> Galtung (1977) maps possible imbalances in triadic cycles, and criteria that must be met in order to regain balance.

<sup>5</sup> Some examples: Master, ruler, judge, non-partisan arbitrator, partisan arbitrator, mediator, communication link, *tertius gaudens*, or a humble servant under a ruling dyad.

<sup>6</sup> The power of the enjoying third is based on attraction or acceptance by A and B. In connection with conflict, the *tertius gaudens* can be a mediator, accepted by both A and B. However, the position of *tertius gaudens* appears in most social relations, especially if there is *a need for a third party*: For example, a “wanted child” in a childless family is a *tertius gaudens*, and so is the “family friend” for a lonely old couple. The *tertius gaudens* can exploit this position for his/her own benefit, *but both A and B will voluntarily accept this*. Note, however, that the *tertius gaudens* can also exploit his/her position to *dominate both A and B* (if this is the case, jump to figure I).

<sup>7</sup> A can *choose* partner, while B and C will prefer A, *ceteris paribus*. Therefore, a coalition of (B+C) over A will not last.

<sup>8</sup> By *vertical*, I mean a structure of *ranked positions*, where each unit (*the knots in the net*) is positioned in a *hierarchy, rank- or status system*. That is, the positions can be ranked as “high-medium-low” in the structure.

<sup>9</sup> The situation is slightly different if B and C are equally strong, so that A is stronger than B; B and C are *equally strong*; and (B+C) combined are stronger than A. However, the outcomes are, for most practical purposes, the same: A “revolutionary” coalition (B+C) against A is possible, but *not probable*. This is because both B and C will have to relate to a party (A) that is stronger than each of them, and each of the two wants to optimize his/her position. Given this premise, each member in a triad seeks a position of advantage in the structure, the opportunity structure does not favor revolutionary coalitions, such as (B + C) against A. Therefore, a coalition B+C will be inherently unstable, and will probably break down (Caplow, 1968, pp. 6-7). I will clarify this point further down.

<sup>10</sup> Salmivalli et al. (1996).

<sup>11</sup> I shall use the word “periphery” for all positions that are at a distance from the centre. Thus, a high-ranking position may be peripheral, if that person is disconnected from the rest of the structure. The point of this conceptual operation is explained in this and the following paragraphs.

<sup>12</sup> Some positions in an organization may be *central*, although they are ranked medium or low in the formal organizational hierarchy: For example accountants, front desk staff, lower civil servants, advisors etc. Formally, these positions are low-ranking “servants of the system”. In reality, their central position can bring them in contact with strata of the system that both higher and lower elements of the system do not reach. Hence, the power of the clerk or the middle-range civil servant can often be underestimated.

<sup>13</sup> This subchapter is based on an empirical case. The case is described in Vambheim (2015). *Bullying in a Girl's world*. Munin: University of Tromsø. Due to privacy rules, the paper study is kept from public access. The paper will be made accessible to the doctoral committee upon request. In the present chapter the empirical case is abstracted, and used to illustrate theoretical problems involved in analysing network bullying.

<sup>14</sup> Galtung (1977, pp. 160-189) argues for a systematic analogy between chemical models and social models, for the purpose of finding isomorphy between the two. The term “interaction capacity”

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corresponds in Galtung's model to the chemical term "valence" (Galtung, 1977, pp. 169-182). A translation of Galtung's model might read: Carbon (valence 4) has 4 times higher "interaction capacity" than Hydrogene (valence 1).

Galtung (ibid.) applies this to formal structures such as work hierarchies/work groups, but his argument applies to human groups generally, as long as it is possible to establish isomorphy – i.e. corresponding relations, relating corresponding elements in two different spheres of life. The enclosed article applies Galtung's reasoning to a small, natural group of girls.

<sup>15</sup> Salmivalli & al. divide intra-group status into 5 categories: popular, rejected, neglected, controversial, and average. Structurally, the categories "neglected" and "controversial" can be included in one of the two categories "average" or "low".

<sup>16</sup> Caplow differentiates between three different conditions for coalition building: *Continuous relations* (i.e. stable structures), terminal (unwilling or forced relationships, such as the balance of power and power-balance games among nations), and *episodic relations*, where actors change and exchange positions in the structure. Each condition constitutes a frame or set of rules that affect the outcomes of power games in triads. The cases in this study do not fit any of these conditions perfectly, but the conflicts have elements of both the terminal and the episodic conditions.

<sup>17</sup> I do not presuppose complicity *before* the act. That amounts to conspiracy. However, I presuppose complicity after the act, when each participant has a personal interest in denying or covering up the violent character of "the incident".

<sup>18</sup> In the words of Westhues (2007), "Mobbers spend a lot of time rationalizing their behavior to themselves, in effect fooling themselves, in order to justify what the outside observer can see is an affront to the civilization they belong to."

<sup>19</sup> Austin (1962) introduced the terms illocutionary and perlocutionary aspects of communication. Both concepts refer to implicit aspects of a communicated message. The implicit message can only be read if we see the communication *in context*. For example, a neutral piece of information can contain a warning (red light) or an authorization to act (green light). The illocutionary aspect of a speech act can be called a "hint", the perlocutionary aspect is the control aspect, i.e., whether the hint has been understood or not. Both aspects are silent, in the sense that they are implied in the situation.

<sup>20</sup> A brief list of examples: Comments to a person's clothing, style, accent, hexis, smell, voice, behavior, body characteristics, exclusion from team work, etc. Leymann has given a list of 45 such acts of "*mobbing*" (which is the term that Leymann prefers). (Leymann, Undated).

<sup>21</sup> This also indicates the limitations inherent in hierarchical and/or purely formal power in schools as well as work organizations, if the power of a formal leader is not rooted in the knowledge and communicative codes of the "mass" who constitute the bulk of the organization.

<sup>22</sup> Actually, it would be a contradiction in terms.

<sup>23</sup> Example: Popularity may counteract lack of centrality in a power structure, *and vice versa*.

<sup>24</sup> Salmivalli et al. (ibid.) divided bullies – i.e. persons who were "bullying others" – into three groups according to how they were assessed among their peers: Popular, controversial, and rejected. Boy bullies especially scored higher on the item "rejected" than girl bullies, while girl bullies were substantially more often "popular" among their peers.

<sup>25</sup> This is a main point in Anatol Pikas' analysis of bullying as *a group-phenomenon*, and why (most) children who participate in bullying, for example as reinforcers or assistants in bullying, are not "demons" (Pikas, 2002). They are, rather, *humans*: in need of belonging; hoping for status; scared to be victimized; calculating risks versus gains; hence sometimes falling short when others are in need.

<sup>26</sup> Lagerspetz and Bjorkqvist base their findings on an empirical study of a sample of 326 girls and 278 boys aged 8,11,15 and 18 years. The study is based on a questionnaire that taps direct and indirect aggression, combined with in-depth interviews with 14 boys and 15 girls to get in-depth information and control of information on the questionnaire (K. M. J. Lagerspetz & Bjorkqvist, 1988, pp. 136-137). The interviews confirmed the tendency to underrating – or being unaware of – indirect forms of aggression in boys as well as girls. However, the tendency to underrate their *own aggression*, compared to how peers rated them, was stronger among girls than among boys. This might be due to gender-bias in expectations, or a puzzling form of social desirability bias: Since aggression is "as expected" in boys but not in girls, it may also be easier to explain scheming and scheming against others as "social games", rather than aggression. The fact that girls exceed boys in negotiation,

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withdrawal and other forms of peaceful conflict behavior, supports this assumption (K. M. J. Lagerspetz & Bjorkqvist, 1988, p. 147).

## 4. War on terror(ism) – or dialogue?

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### Abstract

This article discusses dialogue as an alternative to the “war on terror”, and asks which *kind of dialogue* is useful in the context of asymmetric conflict, such as the “war on terrorism” that is currently dominating the global scene. From the standpoint that the “war on terror” is no great success, two models of communication are presented: 1) Dialogue or negotiations between high-ranking political and military officers; 2) Open meetings and symmetric dialogues between all stakeholders in a conflict, including extremists. The effects of these two models are discussed in elucidation of three empirical examples of asymmetric conflict: Northern Ireland, Iraq after the US invasion in 2003 and the US/West vs. Taliban/Al-Qaeda in Afghanistan/Pakistan. The article argues that in the two former cases, mediation and negotiations probably preceded the change of attitude among the belligerents, especially

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<sup>1</sup> This article is a slightly edited version of the text published in *Security Dialogues* no. 3, 2011. The content of this text is the same as the one published, but I have here corrected some printer’s errors in the published article. In the published article there were two flaws: 1) My surname name was misspelled as “Vabheim” instead of “Vambheim”; 2) In figure 3 of the published article, some of the arrows were displaced, so that the figure is difficult to read. For questions and verification of this fact, please contact professor Vankovska at the editorial board - [biljanav@fzf.ukim.edu.mk](mailto:biljanav@fzf.ukim.edu.mk). Professor Vankovska was the person who received my article in October 2011. Contact addresses to the editorial board, see <http://sd.fzf.ukim.edu.mk/eb>

<sup>2</sup> An internet version of the article is published here: <http://sd.fzf.ukim.edu.mk/no3>. In the internet version, the figures have disappeared. Therefore, it is necessary to read the printed version, alternatively *this text*, in order to get the full meaning of the article.



those of the rebel groups using terror tactics. However, in the third case, there is hardly any indication that religious Jihadists will participate in a genuine dialogue. Consequently, a revised or third model of dialogue has to take the following question into consideration: Can genuine dialogue take place between people who are widely different not only in terms of power and relation to the conflict, but also in attitude towards dialogue itself? The paper presents a third model for dialogue that embeds symmetric dialogues in a wider structure of dispute and dialogue.

## Background

### The 'War on Terror(ism)'. Not a success story.

After 1990 the frequency, intensity and mortality of violent conflicts has been declining worldwide. There is one exception to this: *Terrorism, with the Middle East, North Africa and Central/South Asia as the hot-spots*. If we define terrorism as “the use of organized violence against civilians to create fear or terror for political or ideological goals” (Mack (ed.) 2010b: 36), or “the use of armed force by the government of a state, or by a formally organized group, against civilians” (Mack, 2007:2)<sup>1</sup>, and use the number of attacks and casualties as main indicators, the number of terrorist *attacks* and campaigns of one-sided violence tripled in the period 2000-2006 (Mack, 2006: fig 2.1, cf.fig.1.4)<sup>2 3</sup>, and the number of fatalities from terrorism were substantially higher in 2006 than in 1998 (Mack, 2007: fig 1.1).<sup>4</sup>

The surge in terrorist attacks and fatalities reached apex during 2007, as the tide of terrorism in Iraq culminated (Mack, 2007: fig1.2-1.3, p.14), but development since has been very uneven, it has partly moved to new hotspots in Afghanistan, Pakistan, Yemen, Somalia and Mindanao, and there is no reliable reduction on the horizon.<sup>5 6</sup> The risks now appear to be related to the strength, motivation, and reach of international Jihadist Salafis (Kepel, 2006) such as Al-Qaeda & affiliates, as well as local and regional terrorist groups (Mack, 2007:14; Jones and Libicki, 2008). Al-Qaeda affiliated national jihadist groups like the Taliban appear to be energized in

Afghanistan, Pakistan, Somalia, and possibly Nigeria, while Al-Qaeda claims to be stronger than ever in several places, as distinct from secular movements that apply terrorism as a guerrilla tactic (Jones and Libicki, 2008, Mack, 2007).

In a study on terrorism covering the period 1982-2007, Jones and Libicki conclude that the “war on terror”, which was initiated *to wipe out Al Qaida and their allied networks*, had so far “not significantly undermined its capabilities”. Al Qaida has been involved in “a wider geographical area” post 9/11 2001 than before, and “its organizational structure has also evolved” (Jones & Libicki, 2008: 139). This is alarming, since the main argument *for* a “war on terror” was that terrorist groups would interpret invitations to negotiations as a sign of weakness, which would encourage them to intensify their attacks. Only blood-letting and suffering would pull out their sting, and destroy their capacity and motivation to commit terror actions.

Therefore organizations like Al-Qaeda would proliferate and grow until they were tracked down, uprooted, their leaders imprisoned or killed, and their organizations closed down. After 2008 this strategy has been intensified, but so far there is little evidence that it has been successful.

### Dialogue as an alternative to terrorism and ‘counter-terrorism’

The alternatives to war and violent suppression of terrorism (such as war, counter-insurgency, ‘counter-terrorism’, targeted assassinations etc.) are some form of mediation or negotiation based on dialogue. Below, I shall present two models of communication, and test their applicability on cases of asymmetric conflict. The two models are 1) an asymmetric, *top-down*, power-oriented model, and 2) a *symmetric, dialogue-oriented model*. Having discussed their applicability, and identified weaknesses in each of these models in the kind of asymmetric conflict we are currently observing in the Middle East and Central/South Asia, I shall present an alternative model, and investigate whether that model may be useful for the purpose of reducing or ending the waste of lives connected with the “war on terror”.

Two alternative models for structuring communication in peace mediation are 1) dialogues and/or mediation with *two* or a few political or military leaders involved in secret or open talks<sup>7</sup>. 2) A model that brings all parties, interests, goals and stakeholders into symmetric, empathic dialogues, and where wing parties, ('extremists', *potential spoilers*) have a place more-or-less on a par with others. I shall refer to that model as the Galtung Model.

## Two models of dialogue

Model 1: Political communication: Two kinds of actors (Alpha and beta actors)

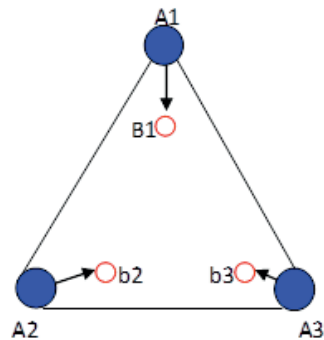


Fig 1: The Alpha/beta model.

The term Alpha here signifies major / dominant actors, beta signify minor /dominated actors. Alphas talk, betas listen/ watch. In this model there are dialogues between Alphas, either two by two or many by many, as in international summit conferences. There is little or no communication among *betas*, and the best betas can hope for, is the role as *spectator*, e.g. when media are let into the summit to broadcast dialogues between Alphas.

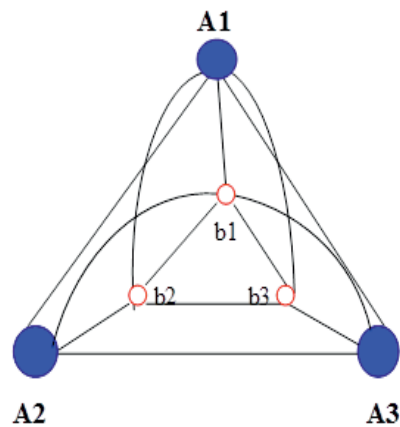
Usually, betas will not see or hear the dialogue as it goes on; they will see a TV broadcast, a well-rigged “conversation” on a rigged stage with arranged scenes: Two or more Alphas, sitting in armchairs positioned so that the figures can talk, but not sitting opposite to each other (chairs are turned towards each other in an angle of 45 – 60°). Alternatively there are two speakers’ platforms with microphones, so that the two Alphas can make their announcements to the world. The two Alphas shake hands and disappear from the screen until the next political performance. A more engaging form of meeting between Alphas, from the betas' point of view, would be the broadcasting of a real dialogue, discussion, debate (or *dispute*) between them. However, in international politics, this virtually never happens.

Critics of this model argue that the model excludes most stakeholders and creates distrust in the very process, and consequently they often discard the outcomes in advance. Therefore, openness, and an atmosphere of *confidence* among all parties is a precondition for creativity and willingness to try out new solutions, on which all problem-solving depends, and on which sustainable peace depends: Achieving sustainable peace is *problem solving with high complexity*. Good and reliable outcomes depend on new approaches and solutions to known problems, in order to untie Gordian knots and get past impasses. That cannot succeed in an atmosphere of distrust, fear, covert goals or suspicion thereof.

Talks between powerbrokers alone, and especially secret talks, also create distrust in the process, as well as in the motives of those who participate in the process, among those who are excluded from the talks. The latter are usually / always 1) most of the people, who are reduced to spectators; 2) those on the political wings who are most willing to *restart* or continue a conflict, and apply violence to achieve their goals. The latter especially may decide to make their voice heard anyway, and one terror attack may be sufficient to sidetrack a peace process and bring violence back on stage. Therefore, it is essential that the phase of problem solving is characterized by trust, a relaxed atmosphere, and participation of all parties who have a direct interest in the outcome.

### **Dialogue version 2: Symmetric dialogues among all stakeholders**

According to Johan Galtung, dialogue presupposes a minimum of *equality and symmetry among the involved parties*, and conflicts always have more than two parties. Therefore dialogues must be among all stake-holders in the conflict. They must also be characterized by settings which facilitate dialogues among many (or all), and especially so that actors at different levels can communicate across conflict lines/ borders. This can be illustrated thus:



**Figure 2:** Multilateral, open, symmetric dialogues (symmetry among all participants). The numbers 1, 2 and 3 represent three (or in principle n) sides in, or perspectives on, a conflict. Alpha and beta represent major/dominant and minor/less powerful actors on each / both side of the conflict.

The motto for this kind of dialogue is: *Talks must be open, transparent and characterized by trust.* Only in such an atmosphere can thoughts flow freely, creativity blossom, and many suggestions be voiced and heard, so that a surplus of proposals/ solutions are available. Motto: Violence, not conflicts, is the problem; many options are always better than few, and all who have a stake in the conflict must be invited to the dialogues. The more suggestions, the more options, and the more options available, the better possibility that one of them can be cultivated and adapted, so that it can fit all. A true Darwinian world of ideas, with mutations of ideas, surplus of ideas and survival of the fittest idea(s).

The goal of creativity is to discover or invent solutions nobody has thought of, or dared to voice before. The mediator/facilitator *especially* must have a great amount of, and a large space for, empathy: Often solutions have to be *invented, worked out and voiced* by the mediator, since the participants' positions and opinions are more or less pre-defined and fixed by their group and group loyalties. They are agents of

larger collectives, and therefore have a narrow/ restricted role-repertoire, and a tendency of self-censoring.<sup>8</sup> But even when the people in the negotiation room are agents of collective bodies, audacious ideas and suggestions can more easily be expressed in informal and relaxed circumstances than in formal negotiations. In informal conversations, representatives of collective bodies need not necessarily meet in the capacity of representatives (or agents) of certain interests, programs, goals or values. If they meet informally, and not as representatives or agents of collective bodies, solutions can be expressed informally, as outlines / ideas to be explored. Groups with 'extreme' viewpoints should be invited to informal dialogues, because they will make their voice heard anyway, e.g. in the form of violent actions when agreements between those who participate in the negotiations are in the process of being finalized. Informal dialogues may also be a solution when some actors for various reasons cannot meet one another in public, which is usually the case with states and terrorist organizations.

Groups that have a stake in the conflict, but are excluded from negotiations, will often act as spoilers, acting in ways that are violent, destructive and demoralizing for all involved parties. Informal dialogues may also be a solution when some actors for various reasons cannot meet one another in public, which is the case with states and terrorist organizations.

### **Does the multilateral, symmetric model work?**

There is a weighty argument against model no. 2: This kind of dialogue is only practicable, or sustainable, among friends and not among adversaries, even less

among adversaries who deeply distrust each other, and certainly not among hard-boiled warriors who have been involved in violent conflict, even terrorism and counter-terrorism, for decades. I shall discuss this objection below in the light of two empirical examples, before I present a revised model.

### Two examples

#### *Example 1: Iraq 2007.*

The *surge* of soldiers in Iraq in 2007, supported by improved military intelligence, is widely recognized as the decisive step that turned the tide of violence in Iraq in autumn 2007. However, before this surge, numerous diplomats and mediators during spring and summer 2007 worked intensively with dialogue among different homegrown Iraqi groups, which were involved in the civil-war-like situation that developed from 2005 onwards.

For example, throughout the summer of 2007, John McCormack Graduate School of Policy Studies (Massachusetts, USA), assisted by Martti Ahtisaari's Conflict Management Initiative (CMI) and experienced negotiators from the peace settlement in Northern Ireland and South Africa, brought together a broad spectrum of fighting groups from the internal divisions in Iraq, including active participants in the inter-group violence that had developed after the US invasion, in dialogue processes that lasted all summer. On September 3 2007, representatives of 16 groups published a joint agreement to work towards a robust framework for a lasting settlement and a set of recommendations to start negotiations with the aim of reaching national reconciliation.<sup>9</sup>

The participants stated the following "urgent concerns" and principles:

1. *Inclusivity*, power-sharing, abstaining from violence as a means of resolving political differences.
2. *Commitment* to the agreement by all parties:



All parties must *strictly observe* all principles in the agreement, briefly summarized in point 1 above.<sup>10</sup> This commits all parties, including US forces and Iraqi authorities, in their relation to the signatories to the agreement.

The implicit rule of game laid down in principle #2 is that “if one defects, all may defect.” This is a highly realistic approach, and there is little doubt that these talks contributed to de-legitimizing and isolating Al Qaeda in Iraq and facilitated their defeat and partial expulsion / ex-filtration from Iraq. General Petraeus’ new tactics, decentralizing both power and responsibility for security to local groups like the Sunni “awakening councils”, may have been decisive in bringing down the number of terrorist attacks and casualties, but the political work which *prepared the ground for this tactics*, was done by mediators *before* the “surge”, and before the change in military tactics. There was a change in mood already early in 2007, characterized by war fatigue and a longing for “normalcy” among Iraqis. This change was reinforced by the above-mentioned mediation during the summer of 2007.<sup>11</sup> This fact indicates that even in counter-insurgency tactics, mediation may be a *precondition* for success, and may have to precede devolution or hand-over of military powers to local groups. This point has been almost entirely disregarded in public discussion and scientific reports on Iraq and other places where terrorism suddenly started to wane.<sup>12</sup>

*Example 2: Northern Ireland.*

The peace process in Northern Ireland, leading to the Good Friday agreement and subsequent actions to ensure its implementation, was characterized by *a long list of measures* that were agreed on by all involved parties. The *process* that led to peace in Northern Ireland was a drawn-out one that lasted for at least 2 decades<sup>13</sup>: It started with secret talks between Gary Adams and John Hume in the mid-1980s, and lasted for almost a decade before the signing of the joint Declaration on Peace (Major-Reynolds, 1993). It was then another five years before the Good Friday Agreement, and then another seven years before the IRA declaration in 2005, which formally ended IRA’s armed campaign, and committed the organization to

democratic politics from then on. Since then, there was no recourse to the violence of the past, although some fringe groups still carry on.<sup>14</sup>

The issues focused on during these talks were a broad range of political problems requiring a solution: The constituencies of MPs, devolution of powers, police reform, how to deal with historical and actual/contemporary grievances of both communities, and how to rebuild trust among former adversaries.<sup>15</sup> A precondition for dealing seriously with the real stuff of the conflict was *trust*: First trust at the personal level between Adams and Hume, then trust between the larger political organizations, constituencies and communities that were involved in the conflict (the IRA/ Sinn Fein and the pro-British organizations and Protestant community in Northern Ireland), then between the British government and public, and finally trust in their own ability to come up with workable solutions to the problems that created the conflict.

*Example 3:* In an empirical investigation into how terrorism ends, Jones and Libicki (2008) show that in 40% of their cases, terrorism ends when the organizations or their leaders are accepted or integrated in a *political processes leading to some solution*.<sup>16</sup> In 10% of the cases terrorist organizations lay down arms or are dissolved because they are defeated militarily, in another 10% they lay down arms because they reach (some of) their political goals, and 40% end because leaders and cadres are arrested or killed due to efficient intelligence, local informers and local police investigation. However, religious terrorist groups very seldom lay down arms due to such factors, or because of blood-letting. These groups are in fact the least likely to lay down arms (Jones and Libicki, 2008). This is partly due to the fact that their political goals are wide, amorphous and non-negotiable. However, the fact that political goals may be amorphous or malleable does not reduce the ability of the mentioned organizations to make and adjust strategies, as well as to adjust to new situations tactically. All of this is evident in the cases of the Taliban and Al-Qaeda.

### **“Dialogue” is the answer. What is the question?**

Taking into account the meagre success in the ‘war on terror’, as well as the fact that *one efficient spoiler alone can sometimes destroy a peace process* although an overwhelming majority of the people want peace, three questions have to be formulated explicitly:

- 1) Is it possible to win (all) hearts and minds in a struggle against terror/-ism by means of open dialogues ?

If the answer to question 1 is not affirmative

- 2) Must we involve all stakeholders, or should participation in a peace process be qualified, and would-be participants *prioritized* according to some peace related criteria, such as their willingness to make compromise and join the peace process?

- 3) From a realistic perspective: Who can have meaningful dialogues with whom?

Terrorism (and state ‘counter-terrorism’) is a consciously chosen strategy by actors and groups who have abandoned or rejected other alternatives and have decided to start a cycle of violence by appealing to deep-seated “myths justifying hostility” (Kaufman, 2001: 210) which are also alive in their community and among their constituents. Therefore change will take the form of *a series of ideological and political “battles”* among people of the same culture or civilization. These battles will take place among people who share some interests, values, symbols, history, religion, culture, language, cosmology or other features of identity, but disagree deeply on other issues, such as the priority of human rights, humanism, tolerance, empathy, violence, war as a means to an end (instrumental violence), *jus in bello*, prisoner treatment, universalism in ethics, democracy, freedom of impression and expression, economic order, justice, rationalism in politics and ethics, and limits to the exercise of political and military power in the name of religion, nation, ethnic group, democracy etc..

In the conflicts with the highest intensity, the conflict of ideas within each side/on all sides of a conflict - i.e. among actors who are categorized as belonging to the same side of an ongoing conflict although they may not identify with either side - will be

about what values we consider as 'holy', 'absolute' or 'key' for our cultural identity, civilization, community, ethnic group, nation, religion, political order etc. Even though actors may agree on a set of values, they may disagree on the priority of those values, about *absolutism in value issues*, which values should be considered absolute (e.g. religious values versus human rights) and *what means* we are prepared use to rescue or promote those values: 'Are we so sure of the righteousness of our own ideas and ideals that we will sacrifice our sons and daughters for these idea(l)s'? Moral debates seldom reach the level where the very *idea of martyrdom* as a driver of war is brought up for discussion (Koenigsberg, 2009). If that is the case, the idea of martyrdom has to be confronted directly, not as a 'consequence' of conflict, but as one of the root causes of violent conflict. Both in the Western /'Christian' world and in the Islamic world we have a long history of cultivating the idea of martyrdom and the ultimate sacrifice: giving one's life in war as an heroic act.

Both in the Islamic and Western world we need a broad discussion about what principles are worth sacrificing for, whether the principles involved in the dispute are really principles, and if they are derived from holy (or basic, constitutional) works, are these fundamental/holy principles worth dying for? We have to discuss this, but also our legacy of enlightenment, democracy, freedom, equality and social responsibility, how much we value individual freedoms and the right to live in personal safety mean to us, what we mean by empathy or solidarity with the most needy, and whether we recognize the right of the individual to criticize our own cultural and religious traditions.

'We' / the West also have to find out how we relate to theocratic regimes and theocratic social orders, to the problem of moral relativism and ideas of economic, cultural and political supremacy in the Western/ Christian civilization, as well as the problem of taboos and absolutism, and ideas of moral supremacy in the Middle Eastern/ Islamic civilization (and in Christian fundamentalism). We also need to discuss the problem of ethnocentrism and double standards – open as well as latent ones - in both civilizations.

In the West there is a question that is different from the main issues in theocratic or autocratic states: Can and should we sacrifice (some of the) freedom of expression in text, pictures and other cultural utterances, liberal principles in our criminal law system, liberal /tolerant and “negotiating” childrearing practices, (some of the) individual freedoms for the young people generally, and girls especially, in experimenting and discovering their own way in life, or should we try to accommodate Islamic practices in order to integrate Muslims in our political life? Where are the limits to political flexibility and adaptability?<sup>17</sup>

The answers to these questions by the most belligerent actors on both sides are often surprisingly similar, despite differences in the way they formulate and legitimize their answers.<sup>18</sup> In addition, they also tend to reject the legitimacy of the questions posed above.

One reason for the survival and proliferation of some terrorist groups may be the spiritual dimension to the kind of terrorism they perpetrate. This is probably underestimated by national as well as international secular powers that are fighting against them: These groups refer to a holy order, and war as duty towards God, the religious community and fear of / hopes for the afterlife. This makes such groups persevering and resistant to political arguments, as well as military ones, as it provides the perpetrators of such terrorism with legitimacy among a deeply religious constituency. Reilly describes the willingness to commit terror in the name of God as a “spiritual disorder”, a “perverted outcome of a search for meaning” among men who feel a loss of meaning in the modern / western/ secular political order (Reilly, 2007).

Juergensmeyer describes terror justified by religion as an attempt at “symbolic empowerment”, which is especially important for marginalized men who feel alienated, but also disempowered by modern, secular development (Juergensmeyer, 2000: ix). These men resort to violence against what they perceive as a “world gone awry”. According to Kimmel, some of these men see contemporary development as the result of a conspiracy of evil forces, where (male) honour, justice, social order and

clearly defined (gender, class/ caste, race etc.) roles and identities, to which they attach so much *meaning*, is about to break down. They *prefer meaning* over (modern) values like freedom, democracy, peace, and equality, and try to act to project this conclusion onto the rest of the world (Kimmel, 2009).

The combination of “myth-symbol complexes” and “opportunity to mobilize around them” (Kaufmann, 2001:212), often combined with excessive fear and ideas of being involved in a cosmic struggle between good and evil (Galtung, 1996)<sup>19</sup>, makes it extremely difficult to eliminate, or even successfully suppress religious terrorist groups by violent means: For the members of these groups, violent attacks confirm their worldview, and arguments from outsiders tend to have no impact. They combine the components of their worldview into a kind of *identity politics*, which feeds charismatic leaders with supporters and recruits with almost unbreakable bonds to their leaders.

#### **Questions to address. Premises for dialogue.**

*Summing up the discussion above*, religious terrorists insist on submission to their will on the basis of myth-symbol complexes familiar to - *and meaningful* to – sections of the population to which terrorists appeal, sometimes even with support from secret state agencies, or the *deep-state* of a country (Rashid, 2008). These actors are as much at odds with ordinary, secular citizens (“infidels”) among their own constituency, as they are with “Westerners”. They perpetrate ruthless attacks on ordinary civilians who would otherwise be indifferent or negative to the “cause” of these men. Terrorist actions force neutrals to become attentive, obedient, silent and cautious. They want to attract media attention, achieve symbolic empowerment through media reach, and recruit supporters and cadres to their organizations. Terrorist actions work as recruitment adverts for their organizations, and once the fear or expectation of violence is established, the rules of the game change in favour of violent actors on both sides of the conflict. This is common to all terrorism.

However, religious terrorists have an additional perspective: Eternity. From their perspective, they are engaged in a cosmic battle between two forces of a Manichean type (Galtung, 1996:16). They see the world around them, in culture, politics, economy etc., as a multifaceted, complex attack on the spiritual world order as God once created it, which was meant to last as it was *forever*. They feel humiliated and disempowered by visible as well as invisible 'forces' that encroach upon their world. Some of these men conclude that these forces are representatives of the Devil. They resort to terrorism to save or restore "God's order", "moral order", "purity" etc., the way they see it (Juergensmeyer 2000:184-195). Suicide bombers truly believe that they will achieve grace, redemption and reward for their deeds in the afterlife.

On this background, there is reason to see religious terrorism in a different light than secular terrorism, and also to review experiences from Northern Ireland and Iraq, before we apply them on religious terrorism. For example, the experience from Northern Ireland and Iraq apparently support Galtung's model of empathic, symmetric dialogues in all directions, among all parties and stakeholders. However, what the cases of Iraq as well as Northern Ireland *also* teach us is that we have to pay close attention to several decisive details and preconditions for successful talks, such as:

- *Who can talk to whom, from a realistic point of view?*

- *The possibility to have secluded talks:* Not all parts of the process can be open. As shown in both the above-mentioned cases, and as shown even more clearly by the Palestinian-Israeli talks in Oslo, there is a time for secluded talks, and a time for publication. On this point, the critique of the "Alpha approach" in model 1 is exaggerated.

- *Legitimacy* of the process among the belligerents "own" constituencies is crucial

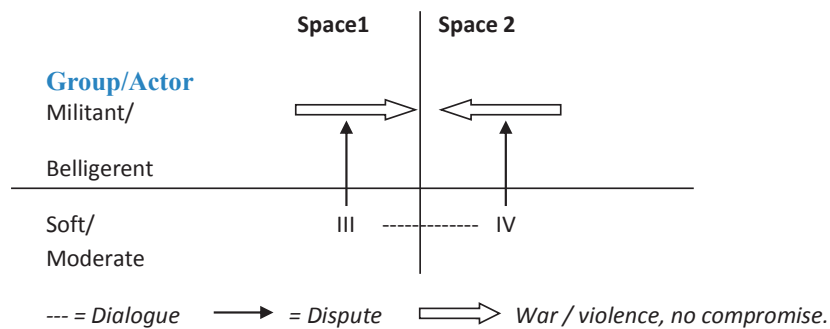
- *Timing*, not least of publicizing that talks are going on, and of results

- *Potential spoilers*, who must be involved in the peace process *somehow*: Spoilers can and often *will* try to revive violence if they are excluded from the peace talks.

- The *opportunity structure*: There are risks and possibilities involved in both pursuing / continuing a violent path, and in abandoning it. Although states as well as terrorist organizations claim to be fighting for long-term goals that cannot be traded off for short-term gains, they also need legitimacy and support among their political core supporters, as well as in the wider community to which they appeal and seek support, and from which they are recruiting cadres. The fact that the public may force the belligerents to the negotiation / mediation table, is an underestimated factor.

On this background I will present a model which has been applied before, with success:

**Figure 3. Two spaces x two kinds of actors** <sup>20</sup>



*Comments to figure 3:*

The Alpha actors in figure 2 are now called “Militants/ Belligerents”, and the betas are called “Soft / Moderate”. “Groups” may be nations, communities, organized political or other groups within nations/communities or supra-state actors (NATO, UN etc.). The difference between figure 3 and figure 2 is: In figure 3, symmetric dialogue is considered a realistic option for only one type of actors, *those who recognize one another as equals*, and are interested in dialogue. In times of conflict, this means that symmetric dialogues are possible among moderates on both sides of the dividing line, but not between hardliners, and in reality also not between hardliners and



“softliners”, even though they are members of the same group, sharing important aspects of history, culture, language, nation, religion etc. (i.e., have a shared identity). The difference between models 1 and 3 is that in model 1 betas are passive *onlookers* to Alphas in action, or receivers to their announcements. In model 3 they are *active participants in political processes*, and claim to be heard and respected as political actors on a par with Alpha actors.

The lack of realism in carrying out genuine dialogues between “softliners” and “hardliners” is taken into consideration in model 3. This exactly what model 2 disregards.<sup>21</sup>

Model 3 shows an important aspect of the communication that took place between two kinds of actors on both sides of the iron curtain during the cold war: While hawks on both sides dug deeper trenches and built higher walls between the camps, invested ever more in sophisticated military weaponry, thought they could *win* a nuclear (and star) war, and escalated their belligerent propaganda to ever new heights, peace movements in both camps *confronted the cold warriors on their own side*, the war profiteers in their “own” military-industrial-scientific complex, and the duplicity of the talk of “freedom” on the one side and “equality” on the other side. Influential groups of professionals and NGOs more and more explicitly expressed their loyalty to the cause of peace, and war lobbyists and the war industry in the east and west were confronted with the (un)ethical consequences of their ever-more sophisticated weapons. In the west, leaders of the peace movement were subject to surveillance and bullying by intelligence services, police and mass media. In the socialist camp the leaders of peace movements were treated even worse: Gagged, arrested, interrogated, put in house arrest or prison like enemies of the state. However, people on both sides resisted the pressure, visited and met with one another legally or illegally, supported and demonstrated for, and kept up the good dialogue with their peace partners on the other side. From this perspective, the peace movements came out of the cold war as the *winners over the cold war*. I shall now try to apply this model to the ‘war on terror/-ism.’

### Can dialogue work on terrorism?

The global/warlike Jihadists have not been winning the battle of “the hearts and minds” of Muslims: An overwhelming majority of the world’s Muslims dissociate themselves from terrorism. Among Muslims who accept terrorism as a means of ‘just war’, most limit their support to *defensive* war, i.e. to local or national defense against states or powers which encroach upon Islamic territory, such as in Palestine or Afghanistan. Very few Muslims defend violence, let alone terror, as a means to expand Islam, or establish a new Khalifate (Esposito and Mogahed, 2007:95), and there is no evidence to support the idea that the extremists are in a process of “winning” the hearts or respect of Muslims (Pew, 2010:3,8). This does not imply that fundamentalist Islamist groups are entirely out of step with Muslim way of thinking, or have less support than Western belligerents, in the Muslim world. This is where the myth-symbol complex comes in: Many are prepared to defend their faith or the Prophet by the sword and not only by the tongue, and a minority of extremists may always appeal to, and mobilize on, deep-seated myths and fears of the other. It *does* imply however, that there is a difference between defensive Jihadists and offensive ones, that this difference is important, and so is the difference between local, defensive Islamists and Jihadist Salafis (Kepel, 2006) like Al-Qaeda. The latter groups work to expand Islam by the sword, consider Western civilians as legitimate military targets, and hence use terror attacks against unsuspecting civilians worldwide, while groups like Hamas apply terror tactics locally against occupation of a territory they claim the right to. The latter type of groups refer to the right to self-defense according to international law.

But it is also a fact that alienated young Muslims are continuously being recruited in ever more countries, and that they are recruited to extremist organizations by means of two very typical western inventions: The “CNN” effect (immediate TV broadcasting of terrorist attacks) and *the internet*.<sup>22</sup>

In the West, repeated opinion polls have shown that an overwhelming majority among the public were not keen to participate in wars in other foreign countries unless the action were sanctioned by the UN.<sup>23</sup> This resulted in a continuous western

majority against the war in Iraq, and also weak support of that in Afghanistan. However, the opinion on terrorists among local populations, such as the Taliban and Al-Qaeda among most groups of Afghans and Pakistanis, is often no more positive than their view of the West. Consequently, there is a potential for mobilization against terror(ism) among the Afghan and Pakistani peoples that has so far not been developed in the service of peace.

*Summing up the evidence*, it is clear enough that the 'war on terror' has had a limited effect on terrorism, and the groups it was designed to hunt down and destroy are capable of giving the USA more resistance locally now than in 2001. The total number of terrorist activities observable since 2007, does not (yet) indicate a sustainable reduction in terrorism. Religious guerrilla groups using terrorist tactics usually do not surrender, they can hardly – if at all - be eliminated by physical means (at least within the limits of *jus in bello* and international humanitarian law), and trying to exhaust their forces by blood-letting is a highly uncertain undertaking, which may easily backfire. Modern war history, from Vietnam to the Middle East and Central Asia, indicates that guerilla groups and terror(ist) groups can use pinprick actions successfully in campaigns to blood-let and exhaust a militarily superior enemy: This is because they have a much longer time-horizon than states/large armies, because their war is a lot cheaper in economic terms and because "counter-terror" tactics from a superior power tend to victimize civilians, which only serves to reinforce recruitment to guerrilla terrorist organizations, especially in areas where tribal or religiously motivated honour codes prevail.

This implies that military suppression does not work well against such groups. However, open, symmetric dialogues according to model two have not occurred so far and are not likely to: The identity gap and the gap between the worldviews of these actors are too wide: people with worldviews and perspectives as different as international jihadists and (e.g.) secular Westerners, however open-minded, will hardly find much common ground. Further, between parties/actors with such different identities, the question of *who you are* will easily overshadow the question of what you think, which interests you represent, what are your goals etc.

However, large numbers of people, probably the majority on both sides, can find common ground on exactly one point: They want an end to war and belligerence *immediately*, and are prepared to sacrifice a lot to achieve it with non-violent means. Moderate people *can* join forces with moderate people on the other side of the dividing line. They can change their situation as passive onlookers and potential victims of violence, and become actors in the struggle to stop an ongoing madness. This implies that the battle for peace is a sharp battle over ideas *within* each of the religions, cultures or civilizations over which the belligerents are fighting. This is where model 3 may be a useful tool.

### Concluding remarks.

The decline in major conflicts and fatalities worldwide since 1990 can be partly explained by an escalation of third party mediation, and a strong escalation of international peace activism by NGOs, UN Organizations, UN peace making and peace keeping missions (Mack (ed.), 2005; PRIO, 2006; Mack, 2010, Jones & Libicki (Rand), 2008).<sup>24</sup> Such approaches have, so far, hardly been tried on the ongoing war between states and terrorist groups. However, there are some notable experiences that should not be overlooked.

In Iraq, mediation lead to agreements on division of territories, mutual respect, peaceful interaction and power balance among Iraqi groups that were fighting for control over territories in a situation, in which the state had virtually lost control over large sections of its territory. This resulted in de-escalation of what *might have resulted in a full-scale civil war*, and possibly further de-stabilization of the whole Middle East. So far, the wars in Afghanistan and Pakistan, which may be decisive for the future development of terrorism, have developed into a quagmire, rather like Iraq did in the period 2003-2007. This is partly due to the fact that terrorism in both places is inspired by religious convictions, and such terrorist groups can hardly be beaten by military means, as their goals are many, wide, amorphous, and often leaning towards the extreme. Although violence tends to subside when concrete

political conflicts are solved, i.e. when a form of political settlement is found, *or* when insurgents using terrorist tactics are integrated into ordinary political processes, this is not necessarily the case with religious terrorism (Jones & Libicki, op. cit.). Rational choice models of conflict resolution or conflict settlement do not work well in such cases, because myth-symbol complexes feed fear and anger (Kaufmann, 2001, op.cit.). **In other words, cultural codes partly shape the preferences on which the rational-choice models rely.** The cultural and normative frames, in which choices and arguments are embedded, are best understood by people who share the same basic codes and identities as those who exploit these myth-symbol complexes for belligerent purposes. Hence, cultural insiders are the ones who can rock belligerent actors in such conflicts.

An often forgotten lesson from the cold war is the way NGOs, especially peace movements, women's movements, religious movements and environmental movements *on both sides of the iron curtain perforated and undermined the negative attitudes* that spurred, motivated and provided legitimacy and *popular support for the maintenance of the iron curtain* among the constituencies on both sides. If it were not for the work of the peace groups, *the mental iron curtain* might have foiled the fall of the political iron curtain, prolonged the life of the cultural and social iron curtain, and survived them both for a long time. This fact may have been underestimated by the protagonists of "Realpolitik". Dialogue combined with dispute, as shown in figure 3, can contribute to undermining the kind of blindness following on from "Realpolitik", by undermining the stereotypes, enemy images and (blind) fear on which the hawks feed.

Model three refers to experiences by peace movements during the cold war, to experiences that have led to an increasing number of negotiated settlements of hard conflicts, to methods that contribute to de-legitimizing violence and terror methods, and to de-legitimizing the *culture of impunity* that has been a companion of (civil) war and terror at all times until quite recently (Mack, 2005).

Whether this kind of approach can also contribute to bringing down global, violent Jihadist terrorism and (Western) state-/counter-terrorism, we will not know until religious leaders and others in the Muslim world who have an impact on potential recruits of Islamist terrorist organizations give an unambiguous message to these organizations. The message of Western electorates brought some of the main Western protagonists for war down from power. However, the hope for *change* that came with the US election in 2008 will be undermined if the threat-perceptions, especially fear of Islamist terrorist attacks, do not subside among the public in the West. The messages from Muslim-to-Muslim must be as unambiguous and clear-cut as the messages that were sent to the Western hawks by the Western electorates during recent years. If the threat-perceptions and images of Muslims as dangerous are re-invigorated by renewed terror campaigns, and especially if there is one more “big” attack in the West, peace actors all over the world can only hold their breath.

## Notes

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<sup>1</sup> I find this definition reasonable, as it delimits the concept of “terrorism” to *intentional attacks on civilians, irrespective of whether the actor is an insurgent or a state*. One-sided, state-based violence is included in the numbers, while collateral casualties as a consequence of armed clashes between belligerents or armed groups are excluded. However, genocides and politicides should be subtracted from the number: Despite the fact that terror is an important goal of such actions, they are a different phenomenon than terrorism: While terrorism is considered as a tactic, i.e. a *means*, in war and violent conflict, genocide and politicide are goals in themselves. They also produce very high casualty numbers. Hence, if these are confounded with terrorism, we get very inflated and misleading statistics on *terrorism proper*. A wider definition including collateral casualties and attacks on compounds would make statistics more uncertain, numbers confounded, and discussion more confusing.

<sup>2</sup> Mack (ed.) 2005. *Factsheet*: <http://www.humansecurityreport.info/press/Terrorism-Factsheet.pdf>; Mack (2006), fig2.1: <http://www.humansecuritybrief.info/2006/figures/Figure2.1.pdf>

<sup>3</sup> PRIO 2009 <http://www.prio.no/News/NewsItem/?oid=84112>

<sup>4</sup> Numbers and definitions are contested. However, even Mack (2007), who is very reluctant to accept that terrorism has been on the rise since 1998, admits that *including Iraq*, it has surged since 1998.

<sup>5</sup> <http://www.humansecuritybrief.info/figures.html>;  
[http://www.humansecuritybrief.info/figures/Figure\\_1.4.jpg](http://www.humansecuritybrief.info/figures/Figure_1.4.jpg)

<sup>6</sup> [http://www.humansecuritybrief.info/figures/Figure\\_1.3.jpg](http://www.humansecuritybrief.info/figures/Figure_1.3.jpg)

<sup>7</sup> ‘Open’ here means ‘known to the public’. The talks are always behind closed doors.

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<sup>8</sup> During Camp David, Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Barak reportedly warned Yasser Arafat: "If we don't finish the job now, at the next meeting I will no longer be prime minister." To which the Palestinian leader retorted: "If I give in on Jerusalem, I will be killed and then you will have to negotiate with Ahmad Yassin." (David Hirst: Camp David exposes 'final status' fallacy *Daily Star*, 28 July 2000: <http://www.fromoccupiedpalestine.org/taxonomy/term/153?page=4>).

<sup>9</sup> [www.cmi.fi](http://www.cmi.fi): Press Release Sept 3 2007

<sup>10</sup> Direct links to the press release and the full text by CMI:

<http://www.cmi.fi/?content=press&id=73> [http://www.cmi.fi/files/Helsinki\\_agreement\\_English.pdf](http://www.cmi.fi/files/Helsinki_agreement_English.pdf)

<sup>11</sup> Jones & Libicki (2008) give a detailed account of Petraeus' measures, and their effects in Iraq. However, they also disregard the international mediators, such as the Ahtisaari group.

<sup>12</sup> Even Jones & Libicki (op.cit.), who show the effects of Petraeus' counterinsurgency tactics, fail to show how the diplomacy by Iraqi and external mediators partly *preceded* the change in military counter-insurgency tactics, when the US started to mobilise the Iraqi "awakening councils."

<sup>13</sup> From the perspective of Betty Williams and the Community of Peace People in Northern Ireland it took *three decades*. They started their campaign against violence in 1975.

<sup>14</sup> There have been incidents every year since 2005, but none of them have restarted the conflict. In January 2008, a bomb was found and dismantled outside a school in Belfast. According to the police, it was meant for a military installation, and the group behind the attack were former IRA-members who are dissatisfied with the peace process. However, just like the Omagh bomb, this further alienated the perpetrators from their constituencies, the Catholic majority in Northern Ireland, as well as the IRA/Sinn Fein, who were now solidly planted on the peace track.

<sup>15</sup> There were a number of actors involved; a separate, let alone *secret*, agreement between the two main actors, the British Government and IRA/Sinn Fein, would not have solved the conflict.

<sup>16</sup> Jones and Libicki (2008) count 102 such cases (Jones and Libicki, 2008, Appendix A: 14-186). The PLO and the IRA/UVF are two well-known examples.

<sup>17</sup> When Osama bin Laden said "Americans love life while *muslims love death*," he pointed, although in a morbid and twisted way, to deep-seated difference between the normative systems in a deeply religious culture and a secular culture. This difference may ring more dramatic, when expressed in bin Laden's words, than it is in the everyday life of the two cultures. However, the difference may be important grounds on which belligerent actors recruit suicide bombers, and legitimize their actions. Therefore, such differences should be discussed in relaxed dialogues in order to avoid misunderstandings. That can happen only if we allow a moral discourse on violence and peace that *transcends the cultures in which the ideas of martyrdom and identity work*.

<sup>18</sup> In the case of Taliban and Al-Qaeda, the explicit verbal messages are, for example, extremely ethno-religious, despite their incantation of Ummah.

<sup>19</sup> Galtung (1996) calls this Manicheism.

<sup>20</sup> In this figure, the concept of "identity" might be substituted for "space": The vertical dimension refers only to the fact that there are belligerent/militant as well as moderate / "soft" actors on both sides of a conflict line. "Soft" or "moderate" actors communicate with/against actors with whom they share many decisive identity markers, such as language, history etc., but they have different attitudes and opinions on war, violence and hence issues related to the ongoing conflict. However, the social space in which they communicate is "bounded" and apparently closed to people outside that space. Therefore it is difficult to communicate with likeminded on "the other side." This is partly due to the conflict itself, which creates imagined community of interests, as well as physical and psychological boundaries which are hard to overcome or perforate.

<sup>21</sup> Imagine a symmetric, relaxed dialogue between Cheney and Al Zawahiri, or Livni / Perez of Israel and Mashaal/Haniyah of the Hamas, searching for a rational solution to their conflict. Possible? Theoretically maybe, but highly unlikely, and therefore excluded from the range of possibilities here.

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However, dialogues and symmetric encounters between peace actors from both sides of the divide in Israel – Palestine is a fact, and has been so for decades. Such contacts are possible also between peace actors from the West and Afghanistan or Pakistan, although this is limited by terrorism and war itself.

<sup>22</sup> A simple Google search provides 60 such sites in a few seconds (checked January 2009). However, the most belligerent sites are not easily available.

<sup>23</sup> In most West-European and even some East-European countries, as well as in most countries around the world, a majority (in many countries 60-90%) were against the invasion of Iraq, and continued to be against long after the invasion. Two exceptions to this were the USA and Israel, where a majority were in favour of the invasions, at least up to 2006. Since 2010, the support for the US war in Afghanistan has declined in the USA, and in 2011 the majority want troops brought home earlier than the determined date.

<sup>24</sup> Two other factors that have contributed substantially to this development, are 1) the establishment of international tribunals and trials for war crimes and violations of humanitarian law, culminating in the establishment of the International Criminal Court (ICC), and 2) the decline in the number and impact of authoritarian regimes (2 out of 3 have disappeared since 1970s). Despite their importance for the broader discussion to which this paper relates, those two factors are outside the scope and focus of this paper.



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## **5. “The Dream of the Good.” A Peace Education Project Exploring the Potential to Educate for Peace at an Individual Level**

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### **Abstract**

Numerous educational efforts have been tried in order to address problems of conflicts and violence at various levels of society. These efforts have been effective to various degrees. This paper investigates the effectiveness of the Swedish based peace education project “The Dream of the Good” (DODG), through its use of mind/body-oriented methods, to develop non-violent attitudes and behaviour (peacefulness) in individual students. This investigation is integrated into a wider discussion of whether didactic programs may be planned and implemented to effect such changes. The paper first discusses assumptions related to the development of students’ peacefulness, and how effective existing peace programs are toward this end. Following a presentation of DODG, mechanisms of aggression and peaceful development are reviewed theoretically, with particular reference to mind/body-oriented methods, from the perspectives of behavioural science and Buddhist philosophy. Finally, empirical findings, from an interview study of DODG and a small controlled follow-up study, are presented.

### **Introduction**

In recent years, there have been numerous educational efforts attempting to address problems of violence and conflict at societal, community, and interpersonal levels (see Harris, 2004; Nevo & Brem, 2002). Despite the many forms of these efforts, the common denominator is usually a content orientation towards specific conflicts, violent issues, or skills and abilities in peace work. Examples include: teaching to weaken enemy images in the Israel–Palestine conflict (Salomon, 2004), work for politically oppressed groups (Freire, 1996), teaching of conflict

resolution skills (Carter, 2004), and teaching of skills for improving situations of bullying (Rigby, 2005, 2006). The Swedish based peace education project *The Dream of the Good (DODG)* does not focus on specific contents of this kind. It does, however, focus pointedly on peaceful development of individual students. It seeks to strengthen dispositions for non-violence, empathy and kindness through practical methods based on relaxation and the influencing of mind set to create deepened awareness. If effective, these methods can improve students' *general* capability to deal with conflicts and adverse circumstances in a non-violent way.

DODG directs its efforts at school children in primary to upper secondary school, as well as in kindergartens. It has been defined as a pilot project in the strategy of The Appeal of the Nobel Peace Laureate Foundation<sup>1</sup>, which works to introduce peace education and a culture of non-violence in all schools around the world. In this article the potential of DODG will be assessed, through its key principles and methods, in educating the individual in non-violence. This will be integrated into a wider discussion of whether individual peacefulness can be developed by social learning processes, and whether it is possible to design successful educational programs.

Firstly, this paper will look at assumptions related to the development of peace at an individual level; the DODG project and this study will be contextualised in relation to previous peace education research. Secondly, a theoretical discussion of the causes of aggression and the possibility for peaceful development, with particular reference to the key principles and methods of DODG, will be addressed. In this endeavour, two perspectives will be used: behavioural sciences of the West and Buddhist philosophy of the East. After this, empirical findings will be presented; results were obtained from interviews with participants in the DODG project in Sweden, as well as from a small controlled study of DODG methods in Norwegian schools. In conclusion there will be outline recommendations based on the findings.

### **Developing peace at the individual level**

Peace, at any level in society, requires that its members have the ability to contain aggression, exhibit a minimum of pro-social and cooperative behaviour, and can deal with, as well as transform, arising conflicts in a non-violent way. These abilities, which are required by individuals of society, constitute what is defined in this paper as *individual peacefulness*. Individual peacefulness overlaps with, but is not identical to, the concept of inner or personal peace<sup>2</sup>. Rather, it presupposes a minimum of inner peace. It corresponds to Gandhi's concept

‘ahimsa’ (see Burns & Weber, 1995; Juergensmeyer, 2002), whereby a non-violent mind is the basis for non-violent actions. As such, individual peacefulness entails a capacity to act and *react* non-violently in situations of frustrated goals, and other adverse circumstances. Furthermore, it entails the ability to react non-violently in a spontaneous manner, without the suppression of negative emotions; as suppression may be violence against oneself or a subtle form of redirected aggression (Barash, 2005).

Three *assumptions* underlie and inform this paper:

- (1) All people have the capacity or potential for individual peacefulness.
- (2) This capacity can be developed as a consequence of social learning processes.
- (3) It is possible to plan such learning processes and design didactic programs to achieve increased individual peacefulness among all or most students.

In relation to these assumptions, it has to be acknowledged that very few people, if any, seem to have a fully developed individual peacefulness and the ability to consistently act non-violently. However, this does not mean that individuals cannot achieve significant peaceful development despite the difficulty of achieving a fully evolved form. On the contrary, the assumption that individual peacefulness cannot be developed would prove theoretically and empirically problematic. It would imply that any educational effort to reduce violent behaviour and strengthen cooperation and kindness, found for instance in anti-bullying programs or within religious education, have no effect, and that any psychological treatment of aggression (see Isdal, 2000) is useless. It would also suggest that individual peacefulness is entirely dependent on *inherent* attitude and behavioural dispositions in combination with the culture, social structures and circumstances that a person faces. This is inconsistent with our findings.

There is no denial that the social structures, institutions and other circumstances can influence, or in many cases disfavour, individual peacefulness. Furthermore, it takes a relatively peaceful culture to establish beneficial institutions and social structures, and to maintain them under difficult circumstances. There can be no expectation that such advantageous structures will be established by aggressive or violent individuals. This is even more relevant when the aim is *positive peace*, which implies an excess of cooperation and pro-social behaviour in society, a capacity for the non-violent transformation of conflicts, and the absence of all forms of violence (Galtung, 1996).

Accepting the need for individual peacefulness leads to the question of attaining *peaceful development*. In Western philosophy, Baruch Spinoza has thoroughly investigated this aspect (Gamlund, 2005). He concluded that to overcome the negative effects of past conflicts, harm and injustice, the individual has to be liberated from *passive affects* such as anger, hatred, resentment and aversion. This can be achieved by focusing on *active affects* like love, generosity, and fortitude, and thereby developing the ability to habitually react with active affects (Gamlund, 2005). Thus passive affects will loosen control over the individual who will be able to reduce the dominance of negative emotions and may, through a process of habituation, even reciprocate evil with good. This process opens the potential for forgiveness whereby victim and perpetrator of past injustice can be liberated from the curse of the past.

Spinoza's recommendations are interesting for peace makers, but they are explained primarily at a principle level rather than a methodological one. By attempting Spinoza's prescriptions, the individual embarks on a sustained self-educational process that demands a high level of cognitive and moral ability. These abilities may be difficult to develop in a person who is persistently facing difficult circumstances where passive affects dominate, or is grappling with previous traumas or aggression problems. Peace researchers and educators have to answer the challenging question of how to devise didactic programmes to change mental habits in favour of 'active affects' and assure a decreasing frequency of negative 'passive affects'.<sup>3</sup> The following questions should be embedded in the programme design: how can the majority of participants be reached? Under what conditions will the teaching be most effective? And how can lasting effects of individual peacefulness be obtained? With this in mind a clearer outline of the current peace education efforts needs to be drawn.

### **Peace education programs**

Ian Harris divides Western peace education programs into five types: international education, development education, environment education, human rights education, and conflict resolution education (Harris, 2004). Of these categories, conflict resolution education has its main focus on the individual and interpersonal levels and seeks to develop peace related skills and qualities, which in turn contribute toward peace in affected schools and communities. Programs in this category have Maria Montessori's theories of education and the Quaker project described in "The friendly classroom for a small planet" as roots, and they tend to focus on skills and qualities such as anger management, emotional awareness, empathy, assertiveness

and self worth in addition to creative conflict resolution and communication (Harris, 2004). In contrast, other program types concentrate more on a broader social setting, such as international and national levels, and they typically focus on theoretical knowledge of theories, systems, institutions and conflicts.

Harris also includes, in his review, peace educators working in a deeper psychological way aiming to “heal wounds that create pools of rage in the psyche” in the students (Harris, 2004, p. 17). Examples are given of programs focused on: resolving stresses created by violence in students’ lives; developing affective skills; and building resilience to avoid violence, sex and drugs in interpersonal relations. Such programs and the conflict resolution projects based on the “Friendly class room” approach are related. They both aim to attack the roots of violence in the individual psyche through a focus on one’s ‘inner self’ (Harris, 2004); although psychologically inspired programs probably work at deeper levels. By such a focus they are also related to the *Dream of the Good*. To the extent that these educational efforts are effective, they help create good mental habits with increased occurrences of ‘active affects’ in place of the negative passive ones.

### **Program effectiveness**

Nevo and Brem undertook the task of summarizing the effectiveness of all peace education programs published during the period 1981– 2000 (Nevo & Brem, 2002). 79 of approximately 300 programs, of numerous types, had associated evaluation studies that could be reviewed. Nevo and Brem determined effectiveness based on statistical difference in terms of the aims of the individual program. This could be any combination of the following types of aims: improving peace related skills, knowledge, beliefs, attitudes and behaviour, and reducing violence related attitudes, beliefs and behaviour. One example aimed to improve conflict resolution skills and reduce the incidence of violence. Nevo and Brem found in excess of 80 % of the programs to be effective, which they concluded to be “an encouraging picture”, even though they pointed out certain methodological weaknesses in their study. A later analysis by Gervais (2004), based on Nevo and Brem’s review, concluded that the reviewed peace programs did not contribute to peaceful attitudes and behaviour, but this conclusion seems unwarranted.<sup>4</sup> In any case, Nevo and Brem have provided a *summary* of the effectiveness of all peace programs and do not provide details of programs focused on the enhancement of individual peacefulness.



Among more individually focused programs, studies have shown that conflict resolution education may improve school climate through decreased aggressiveness, violence, drop-out rates and improved cooperation and attitudes (see Harris, 2004). Furthermore, Rigby (2006) found that most bullying intervention programs have an effect. This applies to programs trying to stop bullying in a direct way, as well as for those that apply mediation or conflict resolution models (Pikas, 2002; Rigby, 2005). Interestingly, these program types are frequently less academic in their approach than the majority of peace education programs. It suggests that effectiveness may be due to a pragmatic approach focused on emotional literacy and how to relate to others peacefully, rather than teaching peace related theories and values.

Nonetheless, it is still a challenge to devise effective peace education programs. Nevo & Brem (2002) compared the characteristics of effective and non-effective peace programs.<sup>5</sup> It seems that the more challenging the aim of the peace program, or the harder the test for effectiveness, the less are chances of success. They found that *more* non-effective programs than effective ones: attempted to reduce actual violence; focused on secondary school (age 13–15); used official statistics as a measurement device; and lasted more than year. The last finding seems somewhat counterintuitive, but can possibly be explained by difficulties in keeping students focused on program intent if the duration is protracted. In addition to the above differences, Nevo and Brem also found that *fewer* non-effective programs than effective ones used simulations (of conflicts, mediation etc.) as a didactic tool. This is much in line with the above suggestion: that hands-on programs focusing on teaching to relate to others and oneself, and developing emotional literacy, are more effective than a more academic appeal to rationality. On this basis, it seems preferable to design peace education programmes that focus on individual students and reach them emotionally by practical methods.

### **Need for effective programs**

Most existing peace programmes are academically orientated and thereby appeal to rationality (Harris, 2004; Nevo & Brem, 2002). New peace projects are needed to reach students on an emotional level to help them develop peaceful attitudes and behaviours. One way forward is to introduce mind and body focused methods such as stillness, meditation, yoga and massage in class settings, which may be coupled to deeper reflection aiming to change how students relate to themselves and others. Similar methods have long been practiced in many Eastern countries

in order to transform negative emotions and bring about peaceful attitudes and behaviour in individuals.

Such didactic methods are clearly lacking in peace education literature, as they were not found in Nevo and Brem's summary of peace education projects<sup>6</sup>. Such methods have most likely, to the extent they have been used in Western schools, hardly been regarded as tools of peace education by researchers. Their introduction will typically focus on creating mental and physical well being (inner peace) as a basis for non violent, cooperative and helpful attitudes and behaviour (individual peacefulness). That is, to teach school children to *feel good* in relation to themselves and others, as opposed to *be good*, as is often the case in moral and religious education (Straughan, 1988). Still, if successful, such teaching may contribute to 'the art of living in peace', which is a primary goal for religious peace education programmes (King, 2007), as well as for many conflict resolution programmes of schools and communities. The following project description of DODG shows how such a programme can be designed and implemented.

### **The Dream of the Good project**

The Dream of the Good project is a peace education initiative that pragmatically addresses how to bring about peacefulness in individual students.<sup>7</sup> It does not focus on specific conflicts, peace communication skills and the like, but aims to bring about changes in a student that are beneficial to all life circumstances. The DODG emphasizes *how* the individual relates to the content of the mind whatever that content is, and it does so through methods that focus on stillness and awareness as described below. Theoretically, DODG draws inspiration and justification from behavioural sciences, modern physics, religious and spiritual philosophy, and cultural holistic perspectives, though without being biased towards any specific theoretical, philosophical or religious set of ideas. Rather, it assumes an encompassing and holistic approach.

### **Key principles and tools of the DODG project.**

Two key principles are emphasized in the DODG project:

(1) *To enhance understanding and awareness of a 'connection between self and experience'*

This is the realization of how one's experience of the world is intimately dependant on oneself and thus possible to change. An increased awareness of the *self-other* connection is understood to aid the motivation to seek peace for oneself, in contrast to solely fighting against unpleasant external conditions. 'Connection between self and experience', or 'connection', refers predominantly to how unconscious, or less conscious, parts of the psyche affect our thoughts, feelings and behaviour. This encompasses the way that negative emotions can be projected onto the outside world, how creative qualities of the mind are involved in perception, and how current experiences are related to previous thoughts, emotions and behaviour (habitual reactions).

(2) *To enhance capacity for, and experiences of, 'calm and concentration'*

Calm and concentration can be created through different relaxation methods (mind/body techniques) and are found to counteract negative and stressing thoughts and emotions (see theoretical review). Such methods allow for increased awareness of the mind's content and make it possible to consciously deal with negative thoughts and emotions. Increased awareness is also understood to reinforce the first key principle by allowing for a deeper understanding of how our experiences are dependent on ourselves. Calm and concentration is seen to help access one's inner resources, and the stress reduction and well-being achieved may provide inspiration for further use of the methods.

### **Methodology and tools of the DODG**

The DODG disseminates its tools and methods to schools through seminars for teachers and headmasters. The schools involved are offered a large "toolbox" with the aim of inspiring and facilitating the peaceful development of teachers and students alike. Teachers may incorporate the methods into their teaching as presented by DODG, or they may adjust them to their teaching context. Main relaxation methods include *stillness/meditation, yoga, qigong and massage*. A primary method for fostering awareness of 'connection' is group *dialogues on existential questions*, which are usually coupled with prior relaxation. The dialogues provide a setting for students to examine their own thoughts and beliefs, to dispel rigid views of each other, and to foster feelings of connectedness and empathy, through common exploration of questions related to meaning. The toolbox also includes holistic knowledge of indigenous

peoples, dream analysis, inner leadership and conflict handling, “plug-ins” relating regular school subjects to understanding of the mind, and peace films featuring existential dialogues. These all focus on increasing awareness of ‘connection’.

### **Theoretical perspectives from east and west**

The encompassing theoretical base of DODG suggests that its potential to bring about individual peacefulness should be assessed from a range of perspectives. Yet, space constraints have informed the selection of two perspectives: modern behavioural science and Buddhist philosophy. Modern research-based behavioural science, especially the field of social psychology, provides a perspective rooted in a Western scientific tradition. The most important concerns in this approach are that findings are inter-subjectively verifiable, based on transparent methods, and reproducible by other social scientists. Buddhist philosophy provides a different, Eastern perspective that represents an approximately 2500 year old tradition of introspective research of the mind. As the researcher’s, or practitioner’s, own mind—as opposed to external objects or data—is the focus of the research, it allows for findings of a different nature related to insights obtained by hermeneutic methods in Western social science, as explained by Dilthey (1988). However, validation of findings based on introspection requires practitioners to be accomplished in the methods and their underlying philosophy. These findings are thus poorly suited for control on the basis of criteria set by Western science.

### **Causes of aggression and violence – perspectives of behavioural Sciences**

In this study, aggression and violent behaviour represent the opposite of individual peacefulness and need to be understood and discussed. In Western social sciences, a broad range of theories and theoretical perspectives on the causes of aggression may be divided into biological, environmental, and psychological levels (see Passer & Smith, 2001). In biological psychology, the human body’s emergency response to stressors (Cannon, 1914), believed to have evolutionary significance (the ‘fight or flight response’), triggers neuro-chemical and hormonal reactions that prepare the body for increased muscle activity: higher blood pressure and heart rate, an elevated physical reaction, and a sharpened focus on external objects perceived as *threats*. Simultaneously, feelings of anger, fear, or possibly a combination of both, are often aroused (Berkowitz, 1990). In a modern, rapid society, the ‘fight or flight response’ is found to be frequently triggered in situations where there is no imminent physical danger, thus rendering

these somatic reactions dysfunctional (Benson, 2000). This can result in a stress related illness and suppressed but emotionally active aggression, if adequate opportunity for “acting out” is not available.

In environmental terms, according to the ‘frustration-aggression-hypothesis’ (Dollard *et al.*, 1944), frustrated progress towards a goal increases the risk of aggression (Passer & Smith, 2001). There are indications that the instigation of aggression depends on whether negative emotions arise (Berkowitch, 1989). Accordingly, many events that are often aversely experienced, like physical pain, exposure to heat, cold water, foul odours, provocation, and crowding, have been found to increase the occurrence of aggression (Passer & Smith, 2001). The environment can further serve to reinforce or model for aggressive behaviour and violence. Children with violent role models (Passer & Smith, 1999; Stormshak *et al.*, 2000), or who are rewarded or recognised for aggressive behaviour (Patterson, Littmann & Bricker, 1967), have frequently been found to become aggressive.

In terms of psychology, it is well established that feelings of fear can be associated with violent behaviour (Berkowitch, 2004). In the case of fear of authorities, as shown by the Milgram experiments (Milgram, 1969), ordinary people, not experienced with violence or torture, accepted orders to deliver lethal levels of electric shocks to trial participants. Furthermore, sadness and depression have been linked to an increased incidence of aggression, though typically as violent outbursts rather than premeditated attacks (Berkowitch, 1990).

In addition, behavioural research has found significant differences between instigation to aggression in small and large social environments. Groups appear to be more competitive and aggressive than individuals in interpersonal settings (Hewstone & Cairns, 2001). According to Tajfel’s social identity theory, individuals seek a positive identity with an *in-group*, and a threat to that group may easily instigate conflict and aggression towards out-groups, especially if group membership is highly valued or desired (Hewstone & Cairns, 2001). Also, strong group identification entails de-individuation, and potentially dilutes responsibility for own actions thus reducing barriers for aggressive behaviour (Passer & Smith, 2001). Furthermore, intra-group aggression may be activated in response to inner tensions such as competition for scarce resources and power struggles, or in response to rank-disequilibrium (Galtung, 1977).

The above research shows how various biological, environmental and psychological stressors and conditions may increase the *likelihood* of aggression and violence. Isdal (2000) suggests, in accordance with the above, that violence may be considered as a response to

conflicting emotions. According to Isdal, the aggressive dispositions of violent individuals may be understood as a response to feelings of powerlessness or difficulty in coping with various stressors and aversive conditions. In this view violence - physical, verbal, psychological or other - becomes a way of regaining feelings of control. Violent acts feel good for the perpetrator (during the act), and this feeling of reward contributes to repetitions and the development of a pattern of violent behaviour (Isdal, 2000). Isdal, who works with violent men, seeks to gradually increase their awareness of the memories, of events and associated emotions, which have led to violent reactions, to be able to change their reaction patterns.

### **Causes of Aggression and Violence – The Buddhist Perspective**

From a Buddhist point of view, aggression stems from aversive experiences that in Buddhist terms constitute *suffering*. Suffering is dealt with in ‘The Four Noble Truths’, a core teaching in all Buddhist schools of thought. The text describes the existence, origin, termination, and release from suffering (Dalai Lama, 1999). The Buddhist concept of suffering is broad and encompasses all negative experiences at both conscious and subconscious levels. The first Noble Truth describes the pervasiveness of suffering at three increasingly deeper levels (Wetlesen, 2000). At the first level, one suffers from negative feelings. This suffering accompanies various physical and mental states, and is related to frustrated desires, for instance in the form of goal interference or a damaged self-image. At the second level, one suffers because all physical and mental states are subject to change. One thus suffers from changes in relation to people and things with which one identifies, in particular from sickness, old age, death and loss. Even when things are good and stable, one is likely to fear the end of this positive state. At the third level, one suffers from existential fear; that objects and processes with which one identifies, do not have any real or inherent existence. All bodily and mental phenomena one may identify with, have a conditioned or constituted way of existing, and cannot be said to exist independently of other factors.

The second Noble Truth, about the origin of suffering, deals with ignorance or confusion about the causes of suffering. This has two aspects (Dalai Lama, 1999). Firstly, the laws of causality of actions, karma<sup>8</sup>, tell that we reap what we sow, mentally as well as physically, and that motives decide the character of actions. Actions partaken in a spirit of generosity, kindness or wisdom will eventually bear good fruit, while actions motivated by greed, anger or ignorance, will reinforce negative attitudes and dispositions, and therefore bring suffering

(Wetlesen, 2000). *How* future situations are experienced will depend on the reinforcing of attitudes and dispositions through one's current actions.

Secondly, the perceived root cause of suffering, deals with not recognizing the nature of existence. According to Buddhist philosophy nothing exists in itself independent of other factors. By not being able to recognize the true nature of existence one identifies with perceptions, roles and attitudes that one assumes to constitute the 'I' (Wetlesen, 2000). An incorrect and rigid view of the self is found to give rise to egocentric actions and dualistic thinking. This in turn allows for motives such as fight/conquer, flee/defend and associated negative attitudes and feelings, such as greed, fear and anger; the causes of aggression.

### **Peaceful Transformation**

DODG focuses on the need to direct one's attention *inwards* in order to reduce tendencies of aggression and violence, and to strengthen tendencies for empathy and pro-social behaviour. Since negative actions are often related to aversive emotions, peaceful transformation may occur through a strengthened ability to react calmly and non-violently in the face of aversive emotions, and by reducing tendencies for antipathies and conflicting emotions in various situations. By applying the DODG key principles—through relaxation techniques aiming at increased calm and concentration, and by progressively realizing a connection between 'self and experience'(thus affecting one's view)—one's ability to react non-violently, as well as one's dispositions for non-violent and peaceful actions may be strengthened. That is to say; application of the DODG principles can be seen as an aid in developing individual peacefulness.

### **Peaceful Transformation – Perspectives of Behavioural Sciences**

In Western psychology, an inward path traditionally belongs to the psychodynamic disciplines. Although many of Freud's original theories have been severely criticized, including his view of aggression as a form of catharsis of bottled-up instinctive aggressive energy, modern disciplines of psychology, such as cognitive psychology and neuro-psychology, have provided much evidence for the central premises in Freud's theories. The unconscious mind is found both to exist and operate in specific ways (Westen, 1998). Both conscious and unconscious thoughts, emotions and motifs have been found to operate in parallel in largely independent neural networks (Westen,1998). This in turn allows conscious and unconscious thoughts and emotions to motivate for different behaviours. Experiments have shown that conscious attitudes

inform behaviour when they are focused on, while primarily unconscious attitudes inform behaviour when conscious attitudes are not focused upon (Devine, 1989, Fazio, 1990). There is thus a certain automatism in unconsciously motivated behaviour. If unconscious attitudes and motives are positive and produce positive effects, this is good and efficient. However, if they produce automatic negative reactions that serve us negatively, as often seems to be the case, there is a need to focus on 'active affects' like empathy, generosity and love as a way to liberate ourselves from the grip of the 'passive affects'.

The above findings correlate with other research that suggests emotionally charged thoughts, when suppressed from consciousness, continue to remain active through an emotional pressure, whereas habituation is found to occur when they are kept in consciousness (Wegner, Shortt, Blake & Page, 1990). Thus suppressed or unconscious negative emotions may inform behaviour. Modern experiments have also found evidence for the hypothesis of *defensive projection*, here defined as a tendency to make inferences about other people based on threatening aspects of oneself (Newman & Duff, 1997); whereby the subject's own hostile and threatening qualities are projected onto others and serve to justify the subject's aggressive behaviour towards them. These findings support the DODG key principle of 'connection'. An increased awareness of own negative emotions at deeper levels of consciousness may contribute to an understanding of how one's own emotions influence perceptions of others, and negative emotions may be defused when brought to light.

The DODG key principle of 'calm and concentration', applied through the practice of stillness, meditation, massage, yoga and qigong gives rise to a *relaxation response* (Benson, 2000), or a *calm and connection reaction* as defined by Uvnäs Moberg (2003). Negative physical reactions associated with prolonged and repeated triggering of the body's 'fight and flight' response are reversed (e.g. high blood pressure and weakened immune system), and increased well-being, positive feelings and attitudes, such as caring and sociability are observed in place of frustration, anger, and fear. Correspondingly, experimental studies have shown reduced aggression among children in a nursery school by practicing reciprocal massage amongst the group (Uvnäs Moberg, 2003). Similarly, in a controlled study in a large American middle school, application of meditation-related techniques yielded increased positive and cooperative behaviour (Benson et al. 2000).<sup>9</sup> Furthermore, aggression was reduced in adolescents when using massage techniques (Diego *et al.*, 2002), whilst it improved mood and behaviour in children and youths with ADHD (Khilnani *et al.*, 2003).



In relation to the positive states of mind that relaxation techniques can induce, mood research has shown positive moods to consistently enhance pro-social behaviour in terms of helping (Eisenberg, 2000; Salovey, Mayer & Rosenhan, 1991). This evidence is associated with a more positive evaluation of oneself and others, as well as an increased awareness of the act of helping affecting the subject's mood positively. One may also expect the relaxation techniques to contribute, at least temporarily, to increased empathy since a strong link has been found between empathy and the willingness to help (Batson *et al.*, 1981; Batson & Olson, 1991; Eisenberg, 2000). Empathy is further found to be negatively related to acts of aggression (Miller & Eisenberg, 1998).

A person's empathy may be increased experimentally by having the subject focus on similarities with other people. DODG aims to increase empathy through fostering more universal feelings of connection and similarity with all mankind. This is done through challenging the 'normal' dualistic perception of the world, where everybody and everything appears to exist independently of one's own perception, thereby aiming to reduce alienation from others. In this respect, research on perception provides some theoretical pointers, as does also the previous discussion on unconscious influences on experience and present behaviour. The various forms of perception can be shown to involve creative abilities of one's mind. The way in which visual images are constructed provides an example. Electro-magnetic rays hitting the retina of the eyes, on a two dimensional surface, are not simply transmitted and reflected by neural networks and centres in the visual cortex of the brain; they are interpreted, that is *transformed by* the cortex, into a three-dimensional image (Passer & Smith, 2001). Furthermore, the interpretation of received sensory information has been found to be sensitive to psychological influences, and is dependent on previous learning (Passer & Smith, 2001), as well as being affected by cultural background (Deregowski, 1973).

### **Peaceful Transformation – the Buddhist Perspective**

The Buddhist way to obtain individual peacefulness is described in the fourth 'Noble Truth', the path to cessation of suffering. It is also called the "Eight Fold Path" and may be seen as a practical guide to the termination of suffering. This path consists of right understanding and right thought (wisdom); right speech, right action and right livelihood (morals); and right effort, right mindfulness and right concentration (meditative efforts) (Ringu Tulku, 2005; Wetlesen, 2000). These eight parts do not represent a linear path but are rather mutually dependent. For

instance, improved mindfulness may facilitate moral actions, which helps to generate more positive states of mind, which will make meditation easier and so forth.

There is great emphasis on reflection, awareness and meditation as tools for peaceful transformation in the Eight Fold Path. Meditation has a central role and exists in thousands of different forms in Buddhism. However, they may be divided into two groups (Wetlesen, 2000). The first group, *tranquillity meditation* is concerned with concentration and a clear mind (Ringu Tulku, 1999) and corresponds to the DODG key principle of ‘calm and concentration’. This meditation form is achieved with a real or imaginary object as a focal point, or without such an object, and is an exercise in letting arising thoughts and emotions pass through consciousness without interference. The second group, *Insight meditation*, makes use of the clear and concentrated mind that is attained through tranquillity meditation, to actively examine and work on thoughts and emotions (Bornstein, 1989). In particular, insight meditation is applied to gradually attain an integrated understanding of constituted processes or phenomena as being impermanent, associated with suffering, and void of independent existence (Wetlesen, 2000).

A central purpose of meditation is to help increase patience and tolerance, in order to be able to react peacefully to situations that normally might give rise to anger. Patience here refers to a stable and peaceful state of mind (Dalai Lama, 1997), whereby one may spontaneously react in a non-aggressive manner when confronted with different situations. This state of mind is achieved through familiarizing oneself with one’s own aversions during meditation and daily life, and thus decreasing strength of the aversions rather than employing defensive tactics. The development of attitudes like affection and compassion, for instance by meditation and pro-social behaviour, is found to have positive effects on developing patience and tolerance. In these ways, mental experiences may be transformed into something more positive, and suffering, the fuel of aggression, may be reduced.

### **Empirical study of DODG**

DODG was investigated empirically through qualitative in-depth interviews with participating students and teachers at several schools and kindergartens in Stockholm, Sweden. The goal was to explore the potential of teaching based on the DODG key principles to educate individual peacefulness in an educational context. Interviews were used to detect whether the teaching programme led to participants experiencing change in terms of individual peacefulness.

### Contexts and Methods of Interview Study

The study was conducted in situ. In their entirety, the interviews encompassed a number of contexts such as different school levels, various methods to teach the two key principles, and numerous ways of implementing, or integrating, these methods into the teaching programme. Generally children and adolescents were exposed to lessons that included exercises with contents such as stillness, yoga, qigong, massage and existential dialogue. The period and frequency of exposure to DODG ranged upwards from a minimum of weekly sessions for a period of eight weeks. Table 1 summarizes the contexts in which the DODG project was studied.

**Table 1. Implementation of teaching based on the DODG key principles**

School level / Other	Key Principles as main focus*	Way of Implementation
Primary and Secondary	Relaxation	Elective Course
Secondary	Connection and Relaxation	Obligatory Course
Secondary	Relaxation	Integrated in Language Course
Upper Secondary	<b>Relaxation</b>	<b>Elective Course</b>
Kindergarten	Connection and Relaxation	Basis in Teaching
Kindergarten	Connection and Relaxation	Basis in Change Programme
Resource Persons	Connection and Relaxation	Longer Term Exposure

\* Relaxation refers to ‘calm and concentration’. Connection refers to ‘connection between self and experience’

The interviewees included teachers and students from primary school, secondary school and upper secondary school, as well as kindergarten teachers. They were selected through

consultation with DODG organizers, and primarily chosen to cover a range of different contexts and ways of implementing the DODG key principles. The interviewees did not represent a statistically significant sample. It is worth noting, however, that there probably differences were in the motivation of the student participants in DODG based teaching programmes, as the key principles could either be implemented through elective or obligatory courses. Generally the interviews were conducted in the local setting, and several were completed after a period of classroom observation.

Five high level *indicators*, or operational questions, were implemented in data collection during interviews, as well as for its subsequent analysis and reporting. The indicators were the *perceived* effects of teaching based on five variables of the DODG key principles:

1. Awareness of *Connection* between *Self* and *Experience*
2. Feelings of *Calm*, *Concentration* and *Well-being*
3. Capacity for *Non-violent Response* to conflict and stress
4. *Empathy*, *Kindness* and *Harmony*
5. *Inspiration* for individual peaceful development

Indicators 1 and 2 reflect the two key principles of the DODG, on which the indicators 3–5 are established. Therefore, if 1 and 2 are absent, 3–5 cannot be expected to be present either. Indicators 3, 4 and 5 constitute perceived effects on individual peacefulness by teaching based on the key principles. For the purpose of interview analysis and reporting, these indicators were broken down in an interview coding-scheme.<sup>10</sup>

The interviews were conducted by use of an interview guide that aimed for good exposure of the indicators, albeit through an open and naturally flowing, but controlled, conversation. The interview guide was tested in a pilot interview, and was subject to feedback by reviewers.

### ***Results of the interviews with Students and Teachers***

The results of the interviews are summarized in table 2. In three cases, two interviews were conducted amounting to a total of ten interviews.

Table 2. Interview results by indicators

<b>Dream of the Good Implementation</b>	<b>I1</b>	<b>I2</b>	<b>I3</b>	<b>I4</b>	<b>I5</b>
Primary and Secondary School – Relaxation based Elective Course	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Secondary School – Connection and Relaxation based Obligatory Course	Y	M	Y	Y	Y
Secondary School – Language Course with Integrated Relaxation	Y	M	Y	Y	Y
Upper Secondary School – Relaxation based Elective Course	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Kindergarten – Connection and Relaxation based Teaching	Y	M	Y	Y	Y
Kindergarten – Connection and Relaxation based Change Programme	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Resource Persons – Connection and Relaxation based Experiences	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y

‘Y’ = Positive findings in relation to indicator, ‘N’ = Negative Findings in relation to indicator, ‘M’ = Mixed Findings in relation to indicator

The table shows the results as positive, negative or mixed findings in relation to the indicators in the various contexts of implementation. The actual nature and strength of the responses were shown in the reported interviews. Generally, interviewees experienced positive effects from the application of DODG methods and mind set. The participants reported in particular experiencing calm and well-being<sup>11</sup>, feeling closer and more connected to others, and improving ability to react calmly and non-violently in stressing and provoking situations. Also the methods appeared to have positive effects on the co-operation and harmony in the classes in which the methodology was implemented (Sommerfelt, 2004).

### Discussion of the Interview Findings

As mentioned above, the key principles were incorporated into the teaching programme as either a separate module, obligatory/elective course, or were integrated into the regular teaching programme. Furthermore, implementation was through a wide range of relaxation and awareness creation techniques. This suggests the possibility of the *Dream of the Good* project

to educate in individual peacefulness in these contexts with these methods, at least within the Swedish educational structure.

However, as the interview results are in terms of effects perceived by the interviewees, and obtained in situ without a control group, there are limitations, from the Western scientific perspective, to using the results as evidence of *actual* improvement in individual peacefulness. The interview responses allow for attitudinal, memory and selection biases (Passer & Smith, 2001). Furthermore, results can have been affected by the voluntary status of the interview subjects and participants in DODG based teaching activities, and the data from the kindergarten children was filtered through teachers reporting their impressions of the children's reactions. Finally, a general criticism can be raised due to the nature of the interviews being based on somewhat loosely defined criteria subject to interpretation. Nevo and Brem's (2002) review of peace education projects suggest that more rigid criteria, like official statistics, make it harder to obtain a positive outcome of such research.

An issue arising from these findings is that effects (in terms of individual peacefulness) appear to be the strongest in individuals who:

*a) Have been working with meditation and related methods for an extended period of time.*

*b) Have a positive attitude to the project.*

This suggests that a habituation component, as well as an ideological or value component, may be involved in the outcome, and that these components may account for some of the effects. If so, this is a classical dilemma in educational and research philosophy that has not been addressed in the interview study: *Is it possible for an educational measure to have a positive effect if the students are not goal orientated, and have advance minimum belief in and habituation to the educational methods, its inherent values, and associated cultural activities?* In other words, do the components of habituation and value affect whether teaching programmes can be designed and implemented to develop peacefulness in *all* or *most* students.

Spinoza recommends an act of free will at a high level of rationality as a solution to dealing with passive affects and thus developing individual peacefulness; thereby replacing dominance of negative passions, such as anger, hatred, resentment and aversion, with 'active affects', such as love, generosity and fortitude. He encourages the development of *good habits* to enable conscious focus on the 'active affects' in an attempt to leave problematic passions powerless. It is more or less self-evident that habits can be learnt. Famous historical figures such as Mahatma

Gandhi and Nelson Mandela also support the fact that peacefulness can be learnt. They have acquired an ability to act compassionately and be an agent for peace in the worst of circumstances. However, it remains unclear as to: how well these habits can be *taught* in an active didactic effort, the optimal conditions for learning, and the scope of such teaching programmes in an average population. This interview study has cast some light on these questions by indicating the potential for the development of individual peacefulness in the interview group. However, this study should be extended to more effectively investigate these issues through controlled studies.

#### **Follow-up study through a controlled pilot study – methods and results**

A small pilot study designed to lay the ground for a larger controlled study has already been conducted (Sommerfelt, 2006). In this study, the DODG methods of *yoga* and *dialogue of existential topics* were tested on 7<sup>th</sup> grade and 9<sup>th</sup> grade students in Norwegian schools<sup>12</sup>. The ten week test period had a total of 15 yoga sessions and 5 dialogue sessions. The test groups consisted of 13 and 15 students respectively; there were corresponding control groups at the same class levels. The test groups and the control groups were exposed to a pre-test/post-test questionnaire and were asked 64 questions using six variables: 1) School satisfaction, 2) Distress, 3) Self-esteem, 4) Depression, 5) Aggression (verbal and physical), and 6) Empathy (concern and perspective taking)<sup>13</sup>. Mean average scores from the questionnaire were measured before and after the DODG experiment and then registered and compared by *paired t-test* in SPSS. The results for the participants in 7<sup>th</sup> grade are shown in Table 3 and Table 4.

Table 3: Effects on individual peacefulness – 7<sup>th</sup> grade test group

	School satisfaction	Psychol. distress	Self-esteem	Depression	Aggression	Empathy
Pre-test	13.5	6.1	19.1	4.4	12.3	35.8
Post -test	13.7	4.8	21.9	2.5	11.8	36.4
Sigma	0.24	0.05	0.04	0.11	0.35	0.35

N= 13. One-tailed test of significance

Table 4: Effects on individual peacefulness – 7<sup>th</sup> grade control group

	School satisfaction	Psychol. distress	Self-esteem	Depression	Aggression	Empathy
Pre-test	13.1	5.5	24.2	4.2	8.6	34.3
Post -test	12.6	5.3	24.2	4.0	9.5	33.5
Sigma	0.40	0.73	0.94	0.85	0.57	0.66

N= 13. Two-tailed test of significance

The results show changes in the expected direction in all the six variables for the 7<sup>th</sup> grade test group. In this group the *reduction of stress* and *increase in self esteem* were statistically significant at the 95 % confidence level (one-tailed test). No significant changes were observed in the 7<sup>th</sup> grade control group. There were no statistically significant effects in any of the variables in the 9<sup>th</sup> grade test group (not shown).

The significant increases for two specific variables combined with positive tendencies for the others in the 7<sup>th</sup> grade test group must be interpreted as encouraging, especially as the groups were small and the implementation period was restricted to ten weeks. From data collected from



add-on questions to the post-test questionnaire, it is also interesting to note that these students generally perceived an improvement in class atmosphere, behaviour and calmness. In terms of the acceptance of *DODG* methods, the majority of students in this group were motivated to continue with yoga (85 %) whereas half wanted to continue with existential dialogue (50 %). However, this discrepancy may have been due yoga being more frequently practiced inducing an increased habituation effect.

The lack of observable effects in the 9<sup>th</sup> grade test-group may be due to several factors. Initially, there was a comparatively high level of conflict in this group that made implementation of *DODG* methods more difficult. The class teacher did not participate actively in the teaching and the practice of the methods and thereby did not aim to fulfil role model status and share the students' experiences<sup>14</sup>. It is also a difficult age group: Nevo and Brem (2002) showed that peace programmes addressing students of 13–15 years of age tended to be unsuccessful.

These results provide the basis for the design of a larger scale controlled study. They seem to suggest that bigger groups and an extended period of influence by *DODG* methods will result in more statistically reliable findings. This pilot study will also help to reconsider the practical methodology, the selection of test instruments, and the control of contextual factors and influences. The latter includes considering the initial level of conflict within the group, authority relationships within the student group, teacher attitude and involvement, and culturally determined attitudes towards *DODG* methods

### **Concluding remarks**

The *DODG* project is a recent initiative in the overall context of the field of peace education. In a field dominated by academic programmes appealing to rationality, it provides a pragmatic approach to teaching peace by employing practical methods and addressing student ability to deal with negative thoughts and emotions (passive affects). In its address to personal well-being, it is related to certain conflict resolution programmes like the “Friendly class room”-project, anti-bullying programmes and the psychologically based teaching reviewed by Harris (2004). Yet, its ‘connection’- and ‘relaxation’-based programme, incorporating the methods and a mind set prevalent in spiritual philosophy, makes it quite unique. Even so, these methods were readily applied in schools in Norway and Sweden without problems of stigmatisation.

Harris (2004) points to *critical thinking, kindness and corporation*, as key aspects of peaceful behaviour. *The Dream of the Good* addresses kindness and cooperation comprehensively, whereas critical thinking remains within the domain of more theoretically based peace programmes that focus on societal issues at community, national or international levels. However, if teaching based on the DODG method works as prescribed, students may develop a calmer and clearer mind, become more aware and less easily swayed by subconscious passive affects, and reduce tendencies of seeing others in terms of projected negative emotions. In this way, DODG methods can provide a basis for clear and critical thinking, and an ability to maintain a rational state of mind in the face of conflict.

This paper has illuminated the possibility of actively educating in individual peacefulness; the theoretical discussion should allow some basic understanding of the causes of aggression and principles of individual peaceful development. Furthermore, the empirical investigation into the DODG project tentatively suggests that the practice of ‘relaxation’ and ‘connection’ may be integrated into didactic programmes in order to develop the peacefulness of individual students.

However, several questions need further examination. Firstly, there is a need for more conclusive results on the effectiveness of these teaching methods. Significant results are needed in terms of effects on empathy and aggression, and may be obtained through controlled studies with sufficiently large groups and extended test periods. Furthermore, consideration has to be given to: the importance of habituation and value components in achieving peaceful development in the participants, sustainability of effects after participation, and other factors such as initial conflict level and teacher endorsement. These factors need to be embedded into future research design and controls. Ultimately, this paper suggests that these questions deserve follow-up studies in peace education research and practical educational experimentation. We encourage other researchers in the field to join our endeavours.

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## Notes

- <sup>1</sup> The Appeal of Nobel Peace Laureate Foundation is based on an appeal by all living Nobel Peace Laureates (UN Resolution 54/ 243B) that calls for a global movement for a culture of peace and teaching of non-violence in all schools around the world. The ‘Appeal Foundation’ works to act as catalyser toward this end.
- <sup>2</sup> In this paper inner or personal peace refers to the feeling of inner calm and harmony, while ‘individual peacefulness’ refers to the individual’s capacity to *act* peacefully even in adverse circumstances. Inner/personal peace and individual peacefulness should be considered interdependent. It is hard to imagine that a person in deep and enduring disharmony with himself or his environment will act in a sustained, peaceful way and be able to bring about peace in his social environment. We believe individual peacefulness is impossible without a minimum of personal peace and harmony.
- <sup>3</sup> The precondition for Spinoza’s recommendations seems to be that people can govern their own habits as an act of will or rational choice. If this were easy, we believe the world would be a far more peaceful place: It is hard to imagine how people would choose to live with a hatred or resentment which eats up their “souls” if they could easily *choose* not to do so. From one perspective it can be argued that the DODG is an attempt to create an educational programme that facilitates and helps rational choices, and a mental transformation of the kind that Spinoza recommends.
- <sup>4</sup> We found Gervais’ account of Nevo and Brem’s report to give an incorrect illustration. Gervais seems to attribute absoluteness to differences between effective and non-effective programmes and exaggerate methodological weaknesses, and thereby reach a faulty conclusion.
- <sup>5</sup> Nevo and Brem warn against inconsistency as there were only 10 peace programmes in the non-effective group. Effective programmes numbered 51 and partially effective ones numbered 18.
- <sup>6</sup> Nevo and Brem provided no category for didactic approach into which mind/body techniques fit.
- <sup>7</sup> The DODG project foundations, central ideas and project tools can be found on [www.dreamofthegood.org](http://www.dreamofthegood.org)
- <sup>8</sup> The Dalai Lama describes karma as a theory concerning causality of actions governed by intent (Dalai Lama, 1999).
- <sup>9</sup> Benson’s study also resulted in improved student grades.
- <sup>10</sup> Details of this process are accounted for by Sommerfelt (2004).
- <sup>11</sup> Table 2 displays mixed findings in relation to I2 (calm and well-being) in tree cases. The mixed findings concerns individual students who do not like to receive massage. While massage seems like an efficient technique, not everybody likes to be touched. No problems of reception were noted for the other relaxation methods of stillness/meditation, yoga and qigong. The general picture was that the relaxation methods were generally effective in creating calm and well-being.
- <sup>12</sup> In Norway 7<sup>th</sup> grade students are 12-13 years old and 9<sup>th</sup> grade students are 14-15 years old.
- <sup>13</sup> The questions were drawn from tests in psychological literature. In terms of the interview indicators, school satisfaction, psychological distress, self esteem and depression relate to I2 (calm and well-being), aggression relate to I3 (capacity for non-violent response), empathy related to I4 (empathy and kindness) and I1 (‘connection’). I5 (inspiration) was measured by an additional question on the post-test questionnaire on the wish to continue practicing the methods.

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<sup>14</sup> The DODG teaching was led by a yoga instructor.