

# AlpWeek

Alps in our hands

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**23.09.2024 - 25.09.2024**

Nova Gorica, Slovenia

**Alpski Teden**

Alpe v naših rokah

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**Semaine Alpine**

Alpes entre nos mains

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**Settimana Alpina**

Alpi nelle nostre mani

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**AlpenWoche**

Alpen in unseren Händen

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**Session No 3: Us VERSUS them – or WITH them?**

**What diversity and polarisation have to do with each other**



*lecht*  *lps*

# Us **VERSUS** them – or **WITH** them?

What diversity and polarisation have to do with each other

Eva-Maria Cattoen

CIPRA-Alpweek – 24.09.2024



# Eva-Maria Cattoen

Managing director - LechtAlps

Mediator and expert for participatory processes and conflict management in the environmental and regional development sector

## LechtAlps-Team:

Eva-Maria Cattoen, Eric Cattoen, Maria Bacher

**We work within a broad international network.**

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# Active listening



*„Humans have two ears and one mouth so that they can hear twice as much as they speak.“*

Epiktetos, Greek Philosopher

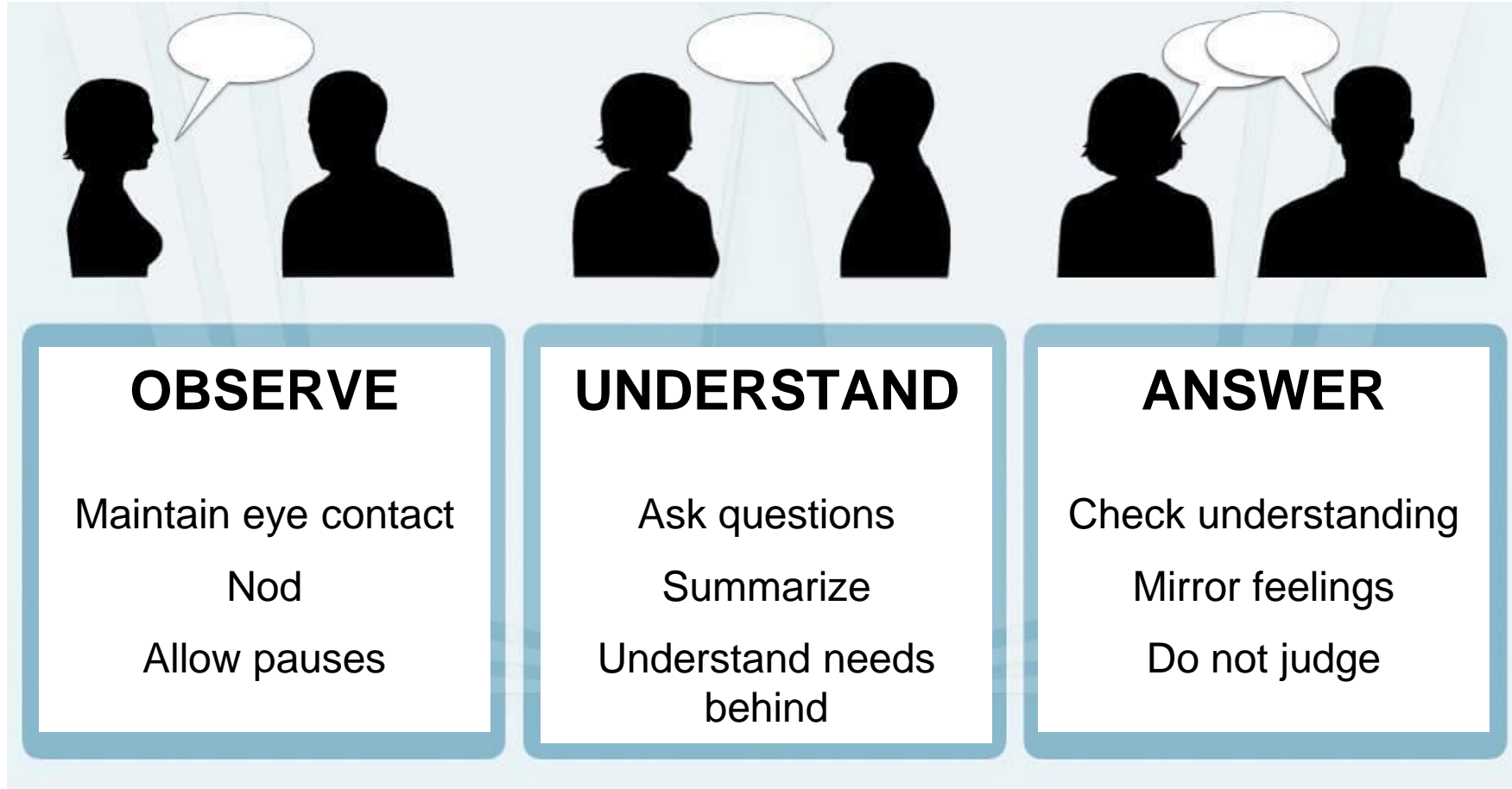
Active listening means listening with interest and openness.

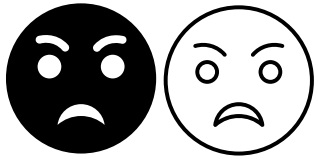
This promotes appreciation, understanding and empathy on all sides.



<http://deertracktraders.com/wp-content/uploads/IMG1000.jpg>

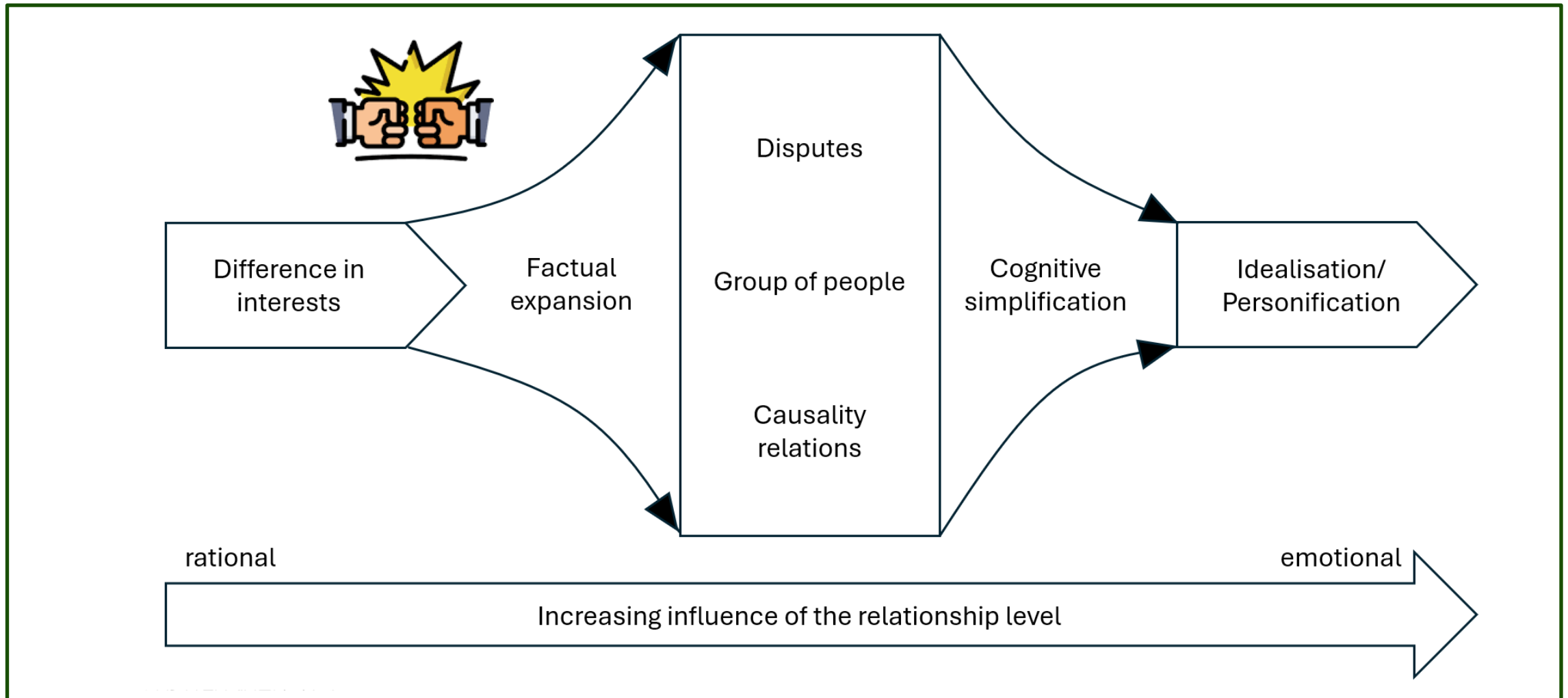
# Active listening: How it works





# Why do conflicts escalate?

## Conflict expansion and simultaneous cognitive simplification



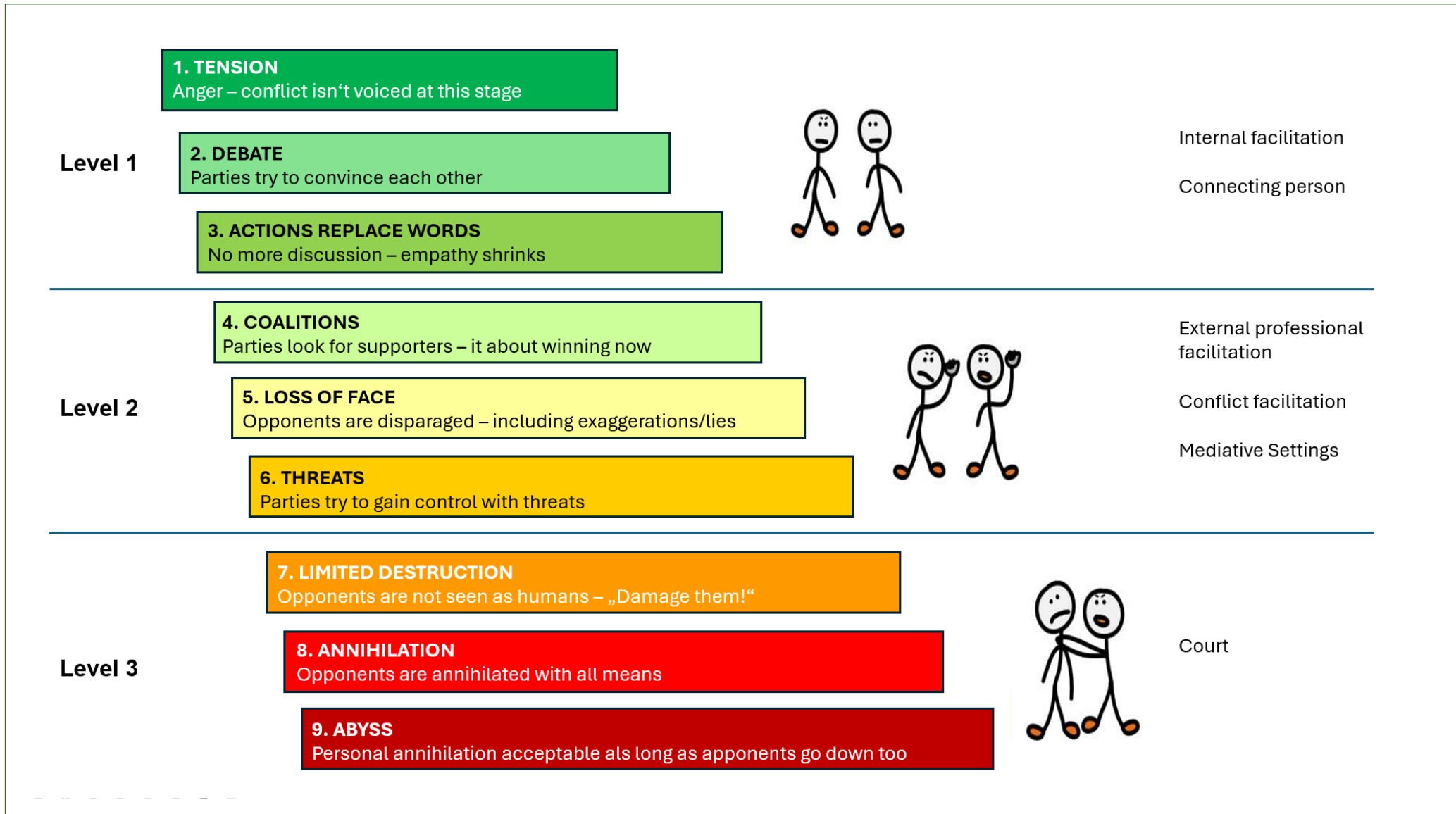
# Complexity - Dynamics behind conflicts

## Avalanche of topics



Photo: WSL-Institut für Schnee- und Lawinenforschung SLF, adapted by EMC

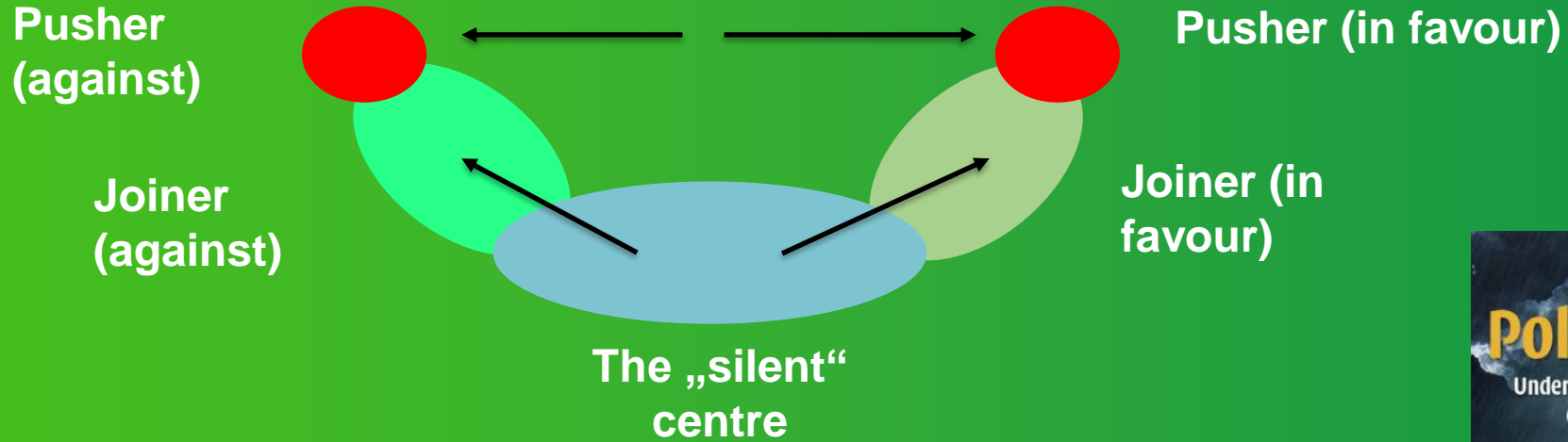
# Conflict Escalation Model



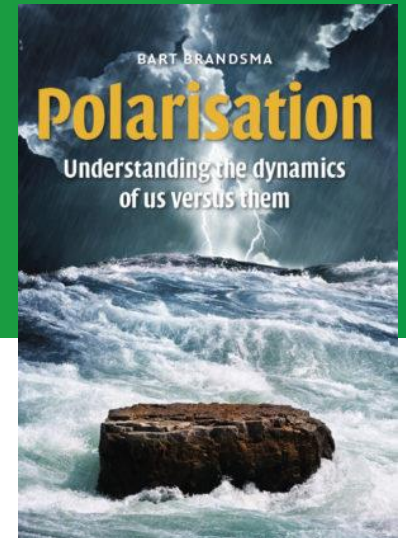




# Polarisation – Us versus them



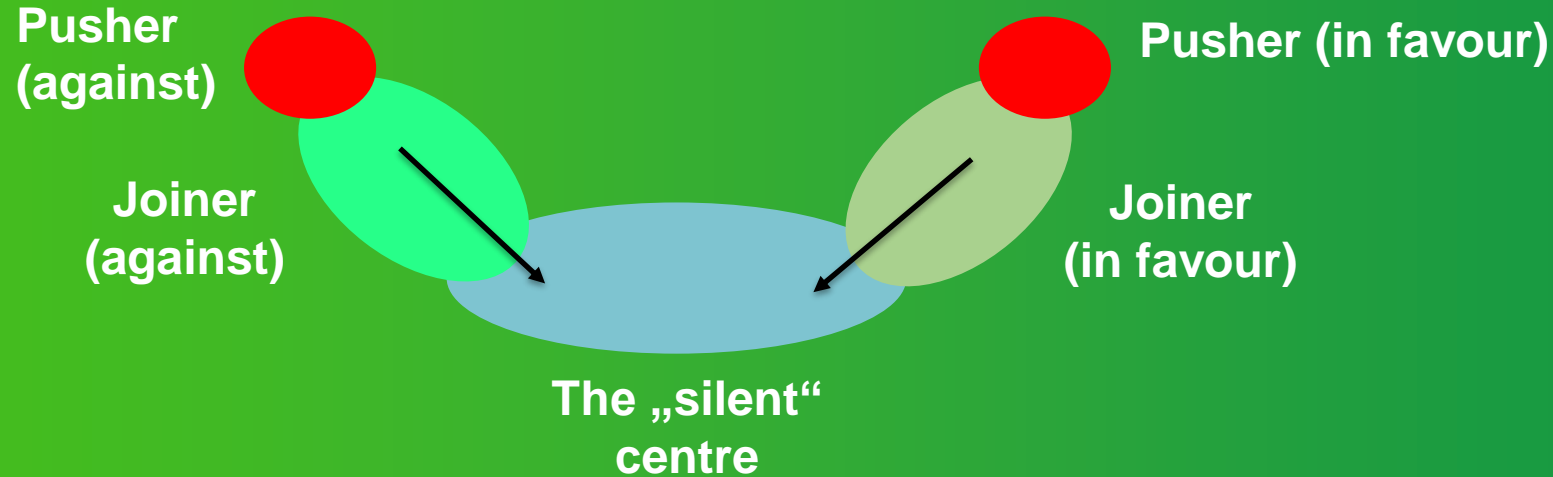
Source: *Polarisation – „Understanding the dynamics of Us versus Them“* – Bart Brandsma



- **Us vs. them:** based on the question of identity
- **What promotes polarisation?**
  - Addressing identities
  - Black and white thinking: others become suspect → Division (e.g. World War 2, war in Ruanda)



# Depolarisation by strengthening the „silent“ centre



Source: Polarisation – „Understanding the dynamics of Us versus Them“ – Bart Brandsma

## 4 Game-Changer – change of strategy:

- **Change target group:** address the „silent“ centre, don't give pushers a stage
- **Change topic:** Avoid the identity topic and switch to other topics (e.g. safety as unifying topic/interest) – can be achieved by asking why, what, where, etc.
- **Change position:** wanting to build bridges between poles can possibly reinforce the conflict because identities are often taken up again → it is better to speak out of the centre: „We as citizens of...“)
- **Change the tone:** „The tone makes the music!“ → do not moralise, but show empathy by asking questions (= mediative behaviour)

# How to enable diversity in collaboration and decision making?

- Establishing participatory processes including all stakeholder groups
- Shaping dialogue constructively
- Taking space and time for collaboration

THANKS A LOT!  
QUESTIONS?



*With people for the Alps!*

[www.LechtAlps.com](http://www.LechtAlps.com)

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# Mediative work in environmental conflicts helps ...

- reducing conflict escalation and social polarization
- using techniques for conflict management, de-escalation and process design
- strengthening the capacities for dialogue and cooperation among involved parties above differences
- improving social justice in conflict situations
- establishing resilient networks



## I - Individual

- values and faith
- habits
- knowledge
- identity
- interests
- needs
- feelings/emotions
- cognitive characteristics
- weighing up the costs and benefits



I



WE



ENVIRONMENT



## WE – social environment

- social affiliation
- relationships
- social norms



## ENVIRONMENT – Physical environment

- time
- space
- environmental factors (e.g. weather)



Human  
BEHAVIOUR



# Method example

## Harvard concept – from positions to interests

