

What is it?

Conflict analysis involves structured inquiry into the causes and potential trajectory of a conflict and seeks to identify opportunities for managing, transforming or resolving disputes.

Why do we need it?

In order to explore strategies of managing and possibly resolving conflicts, our goal needs to be an in-depth analysis of human behavior and its surrounding environment (Jeong, 2011). We need to examine the interconnectivity of diverse elements within and between conflict systems. Thorough analysis is the absolute prerequisite for conflict resolution and transformation.

What does it achieve?

- ◇ It is first step in intervening to manage a particular conflict
- ◇ It is a structured analysis of a particular conflict at a particular time
- ◇ It asks questions to identify components of a conflict
- ◇ It discovers dynamics of a conflict
- ◇ It provides a complete picture of a conflict- as complete as possible
- ◇ Mapping frameworks can be turned into questionnaires for parties
- ◇ It can be used for self-intervention if you are in a conflict
- ◇ It helps opposing parties distinguish their existing positions from their interests and needs
- ◇ A conflict map is an initial snapshot which should be updated by regular 'conflict tracking'
- ◇ There is no "right" framework



Our Role as Conflict Transformers

The majority of social conflicts can be directly traced back to structural inequalities. Therefore it is important to examine the role of structural violence and the interplay of power and knowledge. Conflict resolution professionals should be guided by a set of underlying principles when using the tools available in the field.

Those integrative perspectives for dealing with conflict are:

- ◇ Embracing the notion of "otherness"
- ◇ Interrelation of the personal, social and professional
- ◇ Identifying one's own role in structural violence
- ◇ Positive peace above neutrality
- ◇ Long-term vision for positive peace
- ◇ Proactive form of conflict resolution

As conflict resolvers we should:

- ◇ Develop a genuine conception of equality of all humans
- ◇ Develop a realization that we share an interconnected social and natural world
- ◇ Be humble in understanding our role as conflict resolution professionals
- ◇ Be aware and honest about our cultural biases
- ◇ Be listeners not preachers
- ◇ Let processes develop from the bottom up not from the top down

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Conflict Analysis



*A quick-guide to structured
conflict assessment frameworks*

Wehr's Conflict Mapping*

1. Short summary description
2. A conflict history
3. Conflict context (geographical boundaries, political structures, communications networks, etc.)
4. Conflict parties (primary, secondary, interested third parties), including power relations (symmetrical or asymmetrical), main goals and potential for coalitions
5. Conflict issues (facts-based, values-based, interests based, non-realistic)
6. Conflict dynamics (precipitating events, issue emergence, polarization, spiraling, stereotyping)
7. Alternative routes to a solution of the problem(s)
8. Conflict regulation or resolution potential (internal limiting factors, external limiting factors, interested or neutral third parties, techniques of conflict management)

*Wehr, P. (1979) *Conflict Regulation*. Boulder, CO: Westview Press

Theoretical Lenses for the Analysis of Social Conflict

Globalization - Collective Violence - Power -
Human Needs - Identity - Belonging - Resources -
Environment - Prejudice - Worldviews - Assimilation -
Structural Violence - Competition - Social Control -
Human nature - Social Psychological Response -
Group features and processes - Scarcity - Inequality -
Values and Beliefs - Gender - Religion - Nationalism -
Communication - Relative Deprivation - Oppression -
Justice - Climate Change - Poverty - Corruption - ...

Basic Framework of Questions to Guide Analysis

1. What are the **SOURCES** (or origins) of this conflict? Describe the history of the conflict in an objective manner.
2. Who are the **PARTIES** to this conflict? Distinguish by primary parties, secondary parties and interested third parties.
3. What are the **ISSUES** of this conflict? What is the conflict about? Identify the issues, usually there are more than the seemingly obvious.
4. What are the **TACTICS** being used by the various parties? What are the parties doing in the conflict, how are they doing it. What are the interactions, are there constructive approaches, are there destructive approaches?
5. What, if anything, has **CHANGED** as the conflict developed over time? Oftentimes conflict start with certain issues that change over time; in other words, one cause might disappear, while the conflict still continues; changes often mean there are new elements in the conflict.
6. How did the conflict **ENLARGE**? In a conflict spiral, you usually find some ways of escalation. Often there will be more issues, heavier tactics, stronger moves and countermoves, etc. Identify those factors.
7. What were the **ROLES** of other parties? How do they affect the conflict?
8. What has been the **OUTCOME** of the conflict up to now? This is easier with historical conflicts, but you can also identify where the conflict is right now and provide an outlook.
9. Who are **WINNERS** of the conflict up to now? This is easier with historical conflicts, but you can also identify current winners. Make sure to look at underlying, smoldering conflicts that may start at any time.

Needs-Fears Mapping

The Needs-Fears Mapping is an actor oriented mapping tool. For each actor, the issues, interests/expectations/needs, fears, means and options are listed in a table

Parties	Issues	Interests/Needs	Fears	Means	Options
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Narrative Analysis

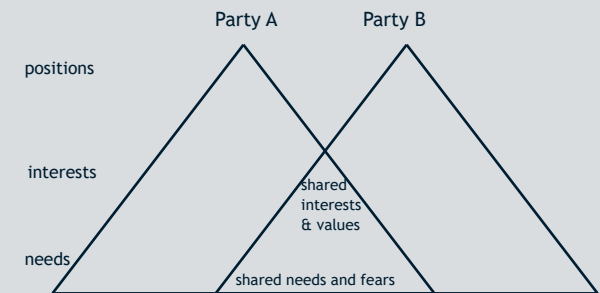
This method illuminates the multiple dimensions of a conflict by examining the stories that rival parties tell about their grievances and their desires.

Who? What? Why? When? Where? How? Conclusions?

Properties of Conflict Interaction

1. Conflict is constituted and sustained by moves and countermoves during interaction
2. Patterns of behavior in conflict tend to perpetuate themselves
3. Conflict interaction is shaped by the culture and climate of the situation
4. Conflict interaction is influenced by and in turn affects relationships

Positions, Interests & Needs



Most conflicts can be traced back to what one might consider basic human needs. Some are: respect, trust, relationship, safety, communication, control, acceptance, security, power, acknowledgment, and values.