

3. Understanding conflict

3.1 Introduction

Even though conflicts are so common, thinking about conflict in theoretical terms only became a recognised field of scholarship after the Second World War. In recent decades, many theories have emerged to describe the phenomenon of conflict that is so much a part of human life.

The understanding one has of a conflict is strongly influenced by the way one thinks about the nature of conflict. Definitions of conflict move backwards and forwards between conflict being perceived as a negative or as a positive process. Some present conflict as a natural phenomenon, others as an alien or abnormal happening in social life, and yet others consider it as a necessary condition for the development and growth of individuals and societies. Young people are faced with the whole range of conflict types: they meet it from intrapersonal to international situations; they deal with conflict at home, in educational institutions and at work; they deal with it as it takes place in the social environment around them.

Taking the above into account, the main tasks of this chapter are to help readers to understand how conflict is seen by the experts, that is, how it is conceptualised, and to demonstrate how conflict works, in other words, to describe and explain its dynamics.

In discussing the experts' ideas about conflict, we try to take into account the special issues that are involved in working on conflict in a youth-work context. Conflict analysis is the systematic framework for gaining a deeper understanding of the origin and nature of a conflict, by uncovering the core issues at the root of it, the different parties involved, its main actors, and the power they have or do not have to influence what is happening. A wide range of conflict analysis methods and some of the tools which can be used for conflict analysis are discussed in the first part of the chapter, "Conflict in concepts".

The second part of the chapter is "Conflict in dynamics". Conflict is an ever-changing process and all our judgments about it have to carefully take into account the passage of time. The balance of power and available resources, actors or the components of a conflict can change dramatically as time goes by. Conflict analysis, therefore, has to be an ongoing process. Linked to this is the idea that dealing with conflict is a long-term process. The stages of conflict, and the steps in the escalation and de-escalation of a conflict, are discussed in detail in this part of the chapter.

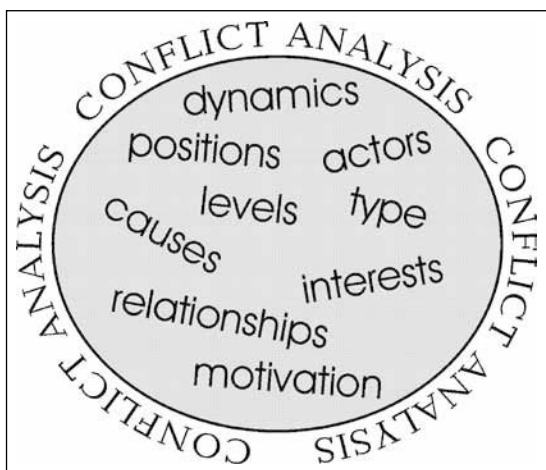
3.2 Part 1 – Conflict in concepts

In this part of the chapter, we will look at analysing conflicts and breaking them down into more manageable pieces, which can help us to work on them constructively.

3.2.1 Analysis

The term “conflict assessment” is also often used for the process of gaining a deeper understanding and broad overview of the conflict. In this T-Kit we will use the term “conflict analysis” to mean the systematic study of the profile, causes, actors and dynamics of conflict.

To deal with a conflict effectively, it first needs to be analysed and understood. Conflict analysis is the most important and necessary step that has to be taken before any conflict intervention can be carried out, and aims at gaining a clearer and deeper understanding of the origin, nature and dynamics of the conflict in question. At the same time, conflict analysis is an activity that has to take place during the whole process of dealing with conflict, as conflict continuously changes. Analysing conflicts includes not only collecting information and evidence about the conflict, but also interpreting and evaluating the information collected.



Conflict analysis enables the identification of:

- the type of the conflict;
- the reasons for the conflict;
- the causes and consequences of the conflict;
- the components and the different actors involved;
- the levels at which the conflict takes place.

Conflict analysis can also provide information on how the conflict is seen (for example, manifest, latent),

its dynamics, the relationships and hierarchy of positions between the conflicting parties, and their interests, needs and motivations. In this chapter we will look at each of these in more depth and explore some methods that are used for analysing conflicts for information about each of the different elements listed.

Conflict analysis can be carried out through a variety of methods, including:

- the direct and immediate registration of events or observation;
- measuring social relationships and the degree of relatedness among people or sociometry;¹
- the analysis of all available information provided through various mediums for data storage or the study of documents;
- interviews and meetings with conflict parties, and other interested parties;

- diagnostic scales, tests and enquiries or surveys;
- gaming techniques, imitation models or experimentation and modelling.

Something to think about!

Have you ever used any of the above methods to analyse a conflict that took place in the context of your youth work? If so, was it useful? Why was it useful?

There is no one “correct” method for conflict analysis. It is a process that uses analytical tools to understand a conflict from various points of view. It does not have to be a strongly structured process, and existing methods are most often adapted for particular cases, conditions and the specific aims of the conflict analysis being conducted.

In the following table we summarise some methods which are commonly used in the field, and which youth work can rely on to make systematic analyses of conflicts they encounter – whether in their youth work or in the wider environment surrounding youth work. Each of these is described in more depth at a later point in the T-Kit.

Conflict analysis method	Brief description
Conflict mapping	This is a visual method to show the relationships between conflict parties. It provides the opportunity to identify real and potential allies and opponents (for more details see Chapter 4, “Conflict mapping”, p. 28).
ABC Triangle	Provides for the identification of three basic components in conflicts: attitudes, behaviour and contradiction (for more details see “Components of conflict” in this chapter, p. 77).
Onion of positions, interests and needs	This is a visual method using the metaphor of the onion for identifying the positions of conflict parties (for more details see Chapter 4, “Rosenberg: Connecting feelings to needs”, p. 136).
Tree of Conflict	This is a visual method that likens a conflict to a tree. The trunk of a tree represents the main problem, the roots – its main or deeply laid causes, and the leaves – its consequences (for more details see “Causes” in this chapter, p. 68).
Pyramid of Conflict	Using the image of a pyramid, this method is used to identify people or groups who have an interest in the conflict and its eventual perpetuation (see this chapter, p. 70).

The methods of conflict analysis presented in the table have been developed and described by practitioners of conflict in some key publications of the field. A selection of the most relevant titles can be found in the resource box at the end of this chapter.

The purpose of conflict analysis will, to some extent, determine the nature of the method of conflict analysis you will choose to use. Nevertheless, all conflict analysis methods have some key questions in common. These can be combined in different ways to tailor a conflict analysis process to the conflict you are working on. In the

table below, we present a summary of these key questions for conflict analysis. These questions are valid for all kinds of conflict, whether it takes place between two people or between two states. As a first step in conflict analysis, youth workers might try to apply these questions to the conflict they plan to work on.

Key questions for conflict analysis²

Profile

What is the political, economic, social and cultural context?

What are emergent political, economic, social or cultural issues?

Is there a history of conflict?

Causes

What are the structural causes of the conflict?

What other issues can be considered causes of the conflict?

What triggers could contribute to the outbreak/further escalation of the conflict?

What new factors contribute to prolonging the conflict?

What factors can contribute to de-escalation or resolution of the conflict?

Actors

Who are the main actors?

What are their interests, goals, positions, capacities and relationships?

What capacities for compromise and co-operation can be identified?

What actors can be identified as spoilers? Why? Are they intentional spoilers?

Dynamics

How did/might the conflict develop?

What are windows of opportunity?

What scenarios can you imagine for changing the conflict dynamics?

Something to think about!

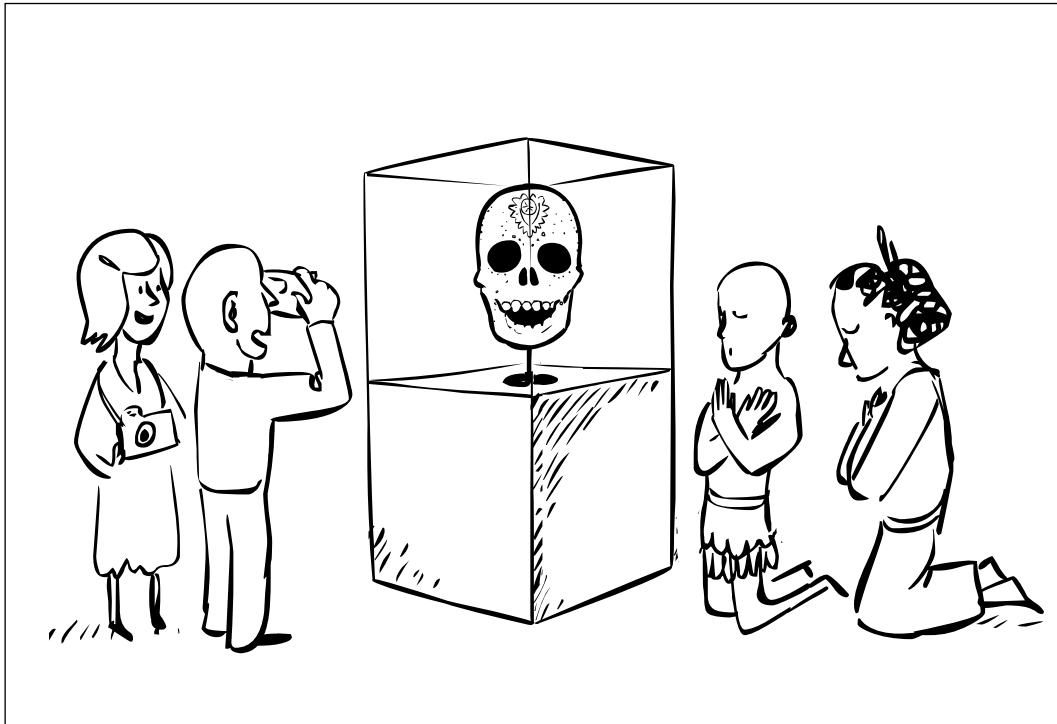
Think of a recent conflict you experienced in the context of youth work, and apply this questionnaire to it. Write down your answers to the questions. What can you conclude about the conflict now?

Dilemma 3: Culture

DILEMMA

Culture is everything! Culture is everywhere!

Everyone from politicians to journalists seems to be talking about culture. However, on closer inspection, they attribute different meanings to the concept. What are the meanings associated with culture? Why is culture such a contested concept?



According to one expert:

... culture may be used to describe “ways of life” and life practices, collectivities based on location, nation, history, lifestyle and ethnicity, systems and webs of representation and meaning, and realms of artistic value and heritage.³

It has come to be used as an explanation for why people from different parts of the world sometimes have difficulty in understanding each other and is often blamed for the existence of tensions between different communities.

A common analogy for culture is the iceberg. You can only see the smallest part of the iceberg. Its main mass is hidden under the water. In this understanding of culture, outward signs are only the smallest part. Many other characteristics, habits and ways of going about everyday life are not visible. It is rather the hidden dimensions of culture that determine how people behave. People are often not even aware of these hidden aspects or of their influence on their behaviour. Attractive as it might be, however, this approach can trap us into thinking of culture as something static and unchanging, something which is impossible to acquire or learn if one is not born into it. This points to what one expert explains as the tension between ideas of culture as

“living culturally” (namely, as a process) and as “living in cultures” (namely, as belonging).⁴ It also points to the fact that, as human beings, we have a tendency to become aware of what it is to be a member of a culture when we are confronted with someone who we consider to be culturally different. However, this can also trap us in relativism, excusing certain practices as justifiable because they are “cultural”, even when it is clear that they constitute gross abuses of human rights. This points at what another expert considers to be the necessity of “intolerance of tolerance” in youth work: human rights always have to be the bottom line when it comes to tolerance.⁵

Recent attention in politics and the media to migration and terrorism have raised the profile of culture as a problem for European society. If, before 11 September 2001, both were managed by the governments and societies concerned, then the period after has been marked by increased alarm and even hysteria over cultural difference. Since then, the idea of a “clash of civilisations”⁶ has gained currency for explaining why some groups of people, considered culturally different because they are associated with another country or region of the world, because they have a different skin colour or because they belong to a particular religious group, react with violence to their situation in society.

However, in the view of some, the “clash of civilisations” has become a smokescreen for political elites to avoid taking responsibility for their lack of effectiveness in catering for the basic needs of their citizens and the non-citizens under their care. The deep sense of alienation and discrimination such communities experience is seen as the fundamental cause of conflict and violence, rather than the presence of the so-called other culture per se. It is argued that, in fact, culture obscures more than it explains, when it comes to the roots of conflict and violence. Rather than the multiplication of repressive measures and increased policing of youth from ethnic minorities or the demonisation of young migrants, policy makers should find ways of addressing the structural injustices that they face in their everyday lives, including racism in access to education, jobs and better living conditions. Such commentators dismiss the “clash of civilisations” thesis as nothing more than populist scaremongering.

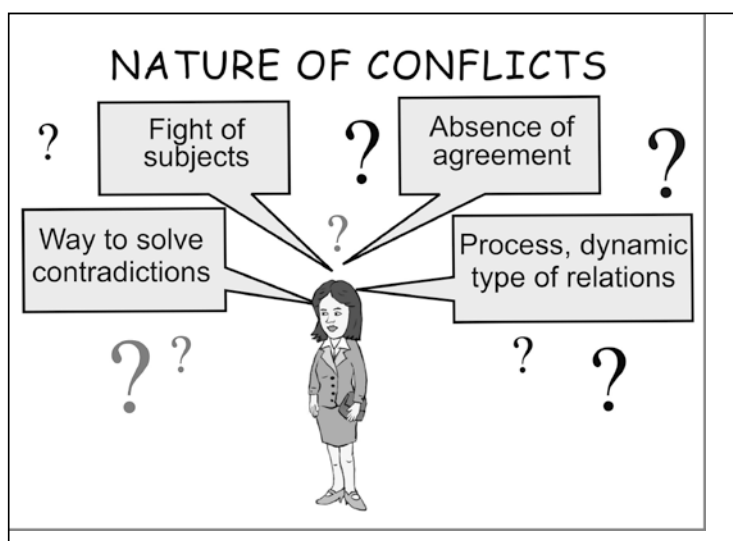
Nevertheless, and worryingly for human rights, this idea has become a central guiding principle for the elaboration of policies pertaining to integration and immigration by some governments, amongst them, several in the European Union. Cultural diversity was for a long time considered valuable in Europe – or rather it was promoted as such by international organisations and by the process of European integration. The marked shift of European politics to the right, with several countries’ legitimately elected national governments including right-wing, nationalistic and even openly racist political parties, has led to the emergence of social movements in defence of cultural diversity. International and non-governmental organisations in Europe and worldwide have become active in countering “cultural diversity fatigue”. These movements are both political and intellectual – combining practical activism with research and theorisation of institutional racism. However, their approaches differ considerably. Notably, approaches rooted in principles of tolerance and integration can be distinguished from those based on ideas of respect, equality, inclusion and active participation.

For several powerful political leaders, deeper and wider European integration has its limits. However, no matter how convincing some European politicians consider the fact that some terrorists are indeed Muslim, all major religions have produced extremists (let us not forget the Crusades). Terrorists are also nationalist, atheist, Marxist, anarchist and may be of a multitude of other beliefs. Today, some human beings are deemed illegal. The very real threat to people’s lives and livelihoods that is today

posed by international terrorism, Islamic or otherwise, cannot be overcome by limiting cultural diversity or freedom. In fact, recent European history shows only too well that this approach only leads to war and genocide. Cultural diversity in Europe is simply not going to go away. Finding positive ways for people from different cultural backgrounds to interact with each other is also about being clear about how much of the difficulty to interact is, first and foremost, existent and, secondly, caused by the cultural dimension of their differences.

As such, resituating culture and its explanatory power for perceived social evils has become more urgent than ever.

3.2.2 Definitions



The word “conflict” comes from the Latin word *conflictus*, which means collision or clash. Nevertheless, considerable disagreement exists over how to define conflict. Many attempts to define conflict in a way that best sums up its major aspects have been made. People who work in the field continue to work on

developing definitions of conflicts according to their various features. For example, definitions exist based on the major causes of conflict, such as material resources, power, values or feelings (these are sometimes called “causative agents”). There are also definitions based on the nature of the conflict parties, such as individuals, organisations or states. These definitions have developed along with what is today known as conflict theory, taking into account newly emerging practices of conflict analysis and intervention.

Defining conflict also depends on the concept one has of the nature of conflict as something that takes place in society and between people. For example, conflict is commonly understood as:

- a form of opposition between parties;
- an absence of agreement between parties;
- a way to solve social contradictions;
- a natural process in human social interaction.⁷

However, the recent general trend has been to consider conflict as something normal, an everyday social phenomenon, and a simple and natural characteristic of human social systems. Society by its very nature, as human beings themselves, is not perfect, so disharmony and contradictions are inevitable parts of social development.⁸ The distinction that has to be made is between conflict itself and the negative consequences that some ways of dealing with conflicts have, such as war. In this perspective, a war is not the conflict, but rather the negative result of how the conflict was dealt with.

The following table contains the most recognised definitions of conflict, in chronological order.⁹

Definition	Key terms	Author(s)
Conflict(s) ...		
... is a struggle between opponents over values and claims to scarce status, power and resources. ¹⁰	struggle opposition scarcity	Coser (1956)
... are bargaining situations in which the ability of one participant to achieve his ends is dependent on the choices or decisions that the other participant makes. ¹¹	strategy bargaining dependence	Schelling (1960)
... is a dynamic process in which structure, attitudes and behaviours are constantly changing and influencing one another. ¹²	structure attitudes behaviours	Galtung (1969)
... takes place whenever incompatible activities occur. One party is interfering, disrupting, obstructing, or in some other way making another party's actions less effective. ¹³	incompatibility interference effectiveness	Deutsch (1973)
... is a process in which two or more parties attempt to frustrate the attainment of the other's goals. The factors underlying conflict are threefold: interdependence, differences in goals, and differences in perceptions. ¹⁴	goals interdependence perceptions	Wall (1985)
... is a perceived divergence of interest, or a belief that the parties' current aspirations cannot be achieved simultaneously. ¹⁵	interests aspirations beliefs	Pruitt and Rubin (1986)
... are communicative interactions amongst people who are interdependent and who perceive that their interests are incompatible, inconsistent or in tension. ¹⁶	communication interdependence tension	Conrad (1991)
... – understood as incompatible activities – occurs within co-operative as well as competitive contexts. Conflict parties can hold co-operative or competitive goals. ¹⁷	incompatibility co-operation competition	Tjosvold and Van de Vliet (1994)
... is the interaction of interdependent people who perceive incompatible goals and interference from each other in achieving those goals. ¹⁸	interaction interdependence incompatibility	Folger, Poole and Stutman (1993)
... is an interaction between actors (individuals, groups, organisations, etc.) where at least one actor senses incompatibilities between their thinking, imagination, perception, and/or feeling, and those of the others.	interaction incompatibility impairment	Glasl (1994)

Something to think about!

How would you define conflict? Compare your definition with the ones in the list above. Which one is closest to your definition? What are the similarities and differences? Debate the similarities and differences with your team before beginning to develop an activity!

One definition which we find useful for understanding the basic elements and factors involved in conflict is:

“A disagreement through which the parties involved perceive a threat to their needs, interests or concerns.”¹⁹

Identifying the major elements of this last definition is crucial for understanding conflict factors, regardless of the conflict type, as the first step towards analysing conflicts and managing them. Using the above definition as a basis, factors of a conflict are:

Disagreement: people often have disagreements (differences of opinion regarding certain facts, different interpretations of reality, etc.). Nevertheless, they manage to work and live together. A disagreement is only one factor of a conflict. Conflict is a situation in which people perceive a threat to their physical or emotional well-being. In fact, conflict tends to be accompanied by significant levels of misunderstanding that exaggerate the importance given to the disagreement. An understanding of the “real” nature of a disagreement will help parties to identify their true needs. For more information on identifying disagreements see the ABC Triangle in this chapter, p. 77.

Parties involved: at first sight, one might think that it is easy to identify the parties to a conflict. People are often surprised to find out that they are also a party to a conflict they may not have even heard about. This is common in international and historical conflicts. For example, an ordinary citizen of a certain country might not realise that they are considered the enemy by a certain political or religious group of which they may have little or no knowledge. For more information on the identification of parties in a conflict see the section on conflict parties in this chapter, p. 70.

Perceived threat: there is a difference between a perceived threat and a real threat. Perceived means that the threat is anticipated or expected. This means the threat is thought to exist, but it does not necessarily mean it does exist (yet). In conflict situations, people often respond to the perceived threat, rather than the real threat facing them. Fear of a perceived threat is exceptionally powerful. Understanding the true threat issues and developing strategies to deal with them are essential to constructively dealing with conflict. People’s behaviour and feelings change along with the development of a sense of the threat they experience, and so do their responses to the perceived threat. For more on responses to perceived threat, see the spiral of ABC and the section on conflict escalation and de-escalation in this chapter, p. 80.

Needs, interests and concerns: these elements can have different shapes, forms and importance for a conflict. They can determine the level of intensity of a conflict. Needs, interests and concerns can be tangible (such as money, food, water and other resources) or intangible (such as feelings of security, love or revenge). For more on the role of needs, interests and concerns for conflict escalation, see the section on conflict escalation and de-escalation in this chapter, p. 80.

These elements vary in their influence on a conflict depending on the conflict’s intensity and many other considerations.

Something to think about!

When you hear the word “conflict”, what associations and images come to mind? Write down any words you think of and draw the images you associate with conflict. What connotations do these words have? Are they positive, neutral or negative?

3.2.3 Types

The categorisation of conflicts into types can help us to understand the nature of the conflict we are dealing with better. Categorisation provides us with guidelines for the issues we should consider when developing methods of intervention. However, many different ways of classifying conflicts exist.

There is often controversy over classification. Naming a conflict means making assumptions about the nature of that conflict. In some cases, such assumptions have negative meanings. For example, a conflict classified as “ethnic” (in other words, as one between two ethnic groups) could also be classified as religious, political or as intra-society. The controversial question is why the classification should be described as ethnic rather than as religious or political; naming it ethnic could have negative associations.

The criteria used for classification vary. Among others, they include:

- the conflict parties;
- the context of the conflict or the areas of social life in which the conflict takes place (for example, political, economic, cultural, etc.);
- the motivations or needs behind the conflict;
- the consequences of the conflict;
- the duration of the conflict;
- the intensity of the conflict;
- the absence or presence of violence in the conflict.

In Figure 1, you can see how these different aspects can be used to break down conflicts into different types.

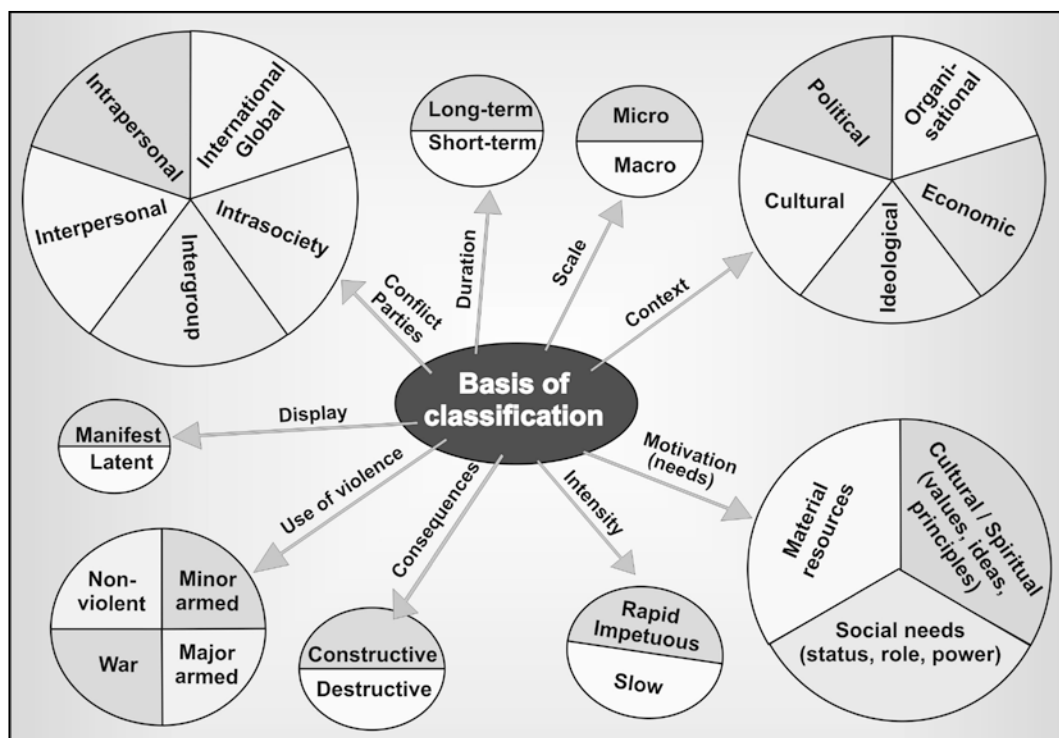


Figure 1. Types of conflict

For example:

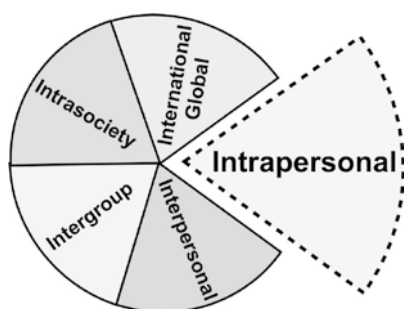
- If the context is taken as a basis for conflict classification, corresponding conflict types are: political, cultural, ideological, economic, organisational and so on.
- The motivation and needs criterion produces three main types of conflict:
 - conflicts based on material needs (resources);
 - conflicts based on social needs (balance of power between parties, status, roles in a group);
 - conflicts based on cultural and spiritual needs (values, ideas, principles).
- In addition, many twin criteria are used in the classification of conflicts, such as:
 - duration (long-term and short-term);
 - intensity (slow and rapid or impetuous);
 - display (manifest and latent, also known as hot/cold and open/closed);
 - consequences (constructive and destructive);
 - scale (micro and macro).
- Four types of conflict are identified in which the use of violence criterion is applied: non-violent, minor armed, major armed and war.

These types can be helpful for describing conflicts, but it is important to remember that there are many overlaps and several classification criteria which might be needed to describe the conflict adequately.

Something to think about!

From the list above, which basis of classification do you find the most useful in the conflicts you usually encounter in youth work? What does this tell you about the work you are doing on conflict with young people?

If the basis for classification is the different kinds of conflict parties, then the conflict types are: intrapersonal, interpersonal, intergroup, intrasociety and international/global. This is a very commonly used conflict classification and we will refer back to it often during the course of the T-Kit.

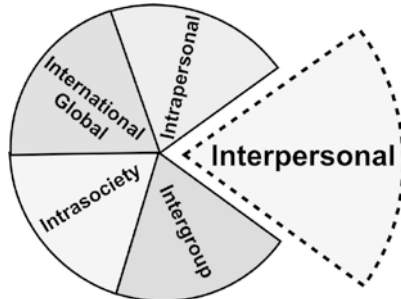


Intrapersonal conflicts: these are conflicts which occur within an individual as a result of frustration they feel with themselves over their personal goals, targets, plans, or accomplishments, or as a result of competing values and questions of conscience. There are several sub-types of intrapersonal conflict. Intrapersonal conflict can be seen as a person's inability to make a decision (motivational), as an inner fight between good and evil (moral), or as the gap between reality and ambition (unrealised desire or unbalanced self-appraisal).

The seriousness of an intrapersonal conflict can range from not being able to make up your mind over whether to eat pizza or a sandwich for dinner, to whether to join a militant group or a peace organisation. Intrapersonal conflicts are not necessarily negative. Intrapersonal conflicts are also a sign that a person is experiencing some sort of personal growth. An individual's inner struggle shows that a process of reflection is taking place.

Something to think about!

Think of an intrapersonal conflict you have experienced. What was the issue? How did you resolve it?



Interpersonal conflicts: these are conflicts that take place between two individuals, which reoccur on a regular basis during their relationship. Examples include conflicts between couples in relationships, between superiors and subordinates in a work context, between students and teachers or professors, or between representatives of two or more cultural groups.

Interpersonal conflict has been described as:

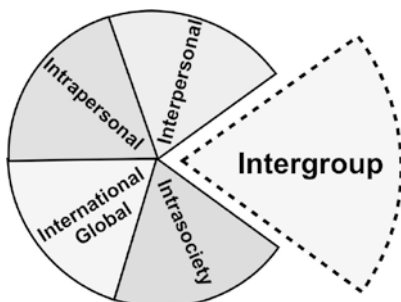
... a situation in which one or both persons in a relationship are experiencing difficulty in working or living with each other. This usually occurs due to different or incompatible needs, goals or styles.²⁰

Conflicts of this kind are usually associated with negative personal feelings such as hate, betrayal, distrust or anger. Whether power is shared equally or unequally between conflict parties plays an important role for the parties in considering different approaches to dealing with conflicts of this type.

For example, a manager and a secretary are in conflict over responsibilities. The manager has more power because he or she is higher up in the hierarchy of the company than the secretary, who according to the rules should take instructions from the manager. The manager decides to use this power, and disciplines the secretary for not doing what he or she was told to do. The power dynamics – the power symmetry – would be different, and so would the outcomes, if the conflict took place between two secretaries, or if the manager and secretary were of the same sex, or for that matter, if it took place between two managers.

Something to think about!

Think of an interpersonal conflict you have recently encountered in the context of youth work? What was the issue? Describe the power symmetry involved? What was the outcome? How did the power symmetry influence the outcome?



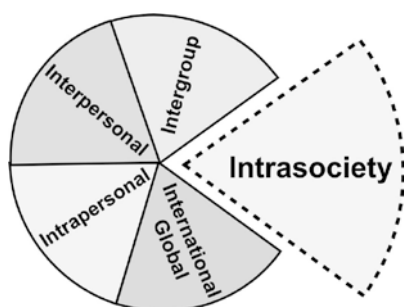
Intergroup conflicts: intergroup conflicts take place between various formal and non-formal groups. For example, intergroup conflicts take place between the government and trade unions, between groups that form one class (for example, different elements within the working class), between departments within an organisation, or between cultural groups in a community. These conflicts often take place in organisations (for example, a conflict between the representative of

the union and the management in a particular factory over working hours), or in educational institutions (between lecturers and students, or between the class and a single student in the class).

A good example of intergroup conflict is the interaction of different kinds of youth subcultures, for example, Gothics or Emos and Hoppers, in the school or youth-work context. These interactions can be quite prone to conflict because members of the different groups value their particular subculture strongly and feel opposition towards the subculture of the others. In some cases, where ideology is a strong factor, such as, among right and left-wing radical youth (for example, skinheads and anarchists), such intergroup conflicts have been known to lead to violence. While these groups' identities are not formed on the basis of "being against" the others, they see themselves as natural enemies because their ideological positions are diametrically opposed.

Something to think about!

Think of an intergroup conflict you were involved in within the context of youth work? What was the issue? Who was involved? Why do you consider it an intergroup conflict?



Intrasociety conflicts: intrasociety conflicts or social conflicts most often refer to conflicts of a larger scale that have a strong public resonance. For example, these include confrontations between the ruling political elite and the opposition, or between the government and NGOs on issues of social importance. It can be difficult to make distinctions between intergroup conflicts and intrasociety conflicts. For example, conflicts between the top management of a big company

and a trade union over pay conditions for employees might at first sight seem like a simple intergroup conflict. The same can be said for a conflict between a student group and the administration of a university over access to decision making in the university. However, these have serious consequences for the wider society because they raise important debates about worker pay conditions or about the rights of students to be involved in university decision making. These are issues that many people in society find important and want to take a stand on (that is, they have strong social resonance). When this is the case, the conflict can be considered an intrasociety conflict rather than an intergroup conflict.

The main factor for distinguishing between intergroup and intrasociety conflicts is the importance of the conflict issue for the society concerned, its consequences for the society, its public resonance and its scale. This type of conflict is very much associated with power and competition. When members of a certain group think that members of another group are a threat to their sources of power (for example, values, resources, legitimacy or protection) and start seeing any gain to the other as a loss to them, conflicts of this type will tend to escalate. Violence between groups of students from different ethnic or political groups, fighting between youth gangs, discrimination and/or violence against sexual minorities are examples of intrasociety conflicts.

Something to think about!

Think of an intrasociety conflict that was much reported in the media and is relevant for the kind of young people you work with. What was the issue? Who was involved? Why was it important for society?

Intergroup and intrasociety conflicts are also important for groups. They are a way for

groups to build identities. Members of the same group tend to search for common denominators and build a set of values, norms and institutions to preserve their identities. In the field of psychology, this kind of identity building is referred to as “in-group favouritism” and “out-group discrimination”. In 1971, a group of academics at Stanford University in the United States developed their ideas about how these social mechanisms work. They conducted a simulation of prison life. Prisoners were split into two groups and were given roles. One group was to continue to behave as prisoners. The other group was given the role of the guards. This experiment showed that the simple fact of creating two groups with differing roles and with differing amounts of power caused the prisoners to change their behaviour and attitudes towards each other, thereby favouring their own group.²¹

Die Welle (The Wave) is a German film from 2008 (directed by Dennis Gansel) based on the book *The Wave* (by Todd Strasser, under the pen-name Morton Rhue), a fictionalised account of the “Third Wave” teaching experiment that took place in a history class at Cubberley High School in Palo Alto, California in the United States in 1967, under the supervision of history teacher Ron Jones. The German film is a remake of the 1981 television film of the same name. The Third Wave was intended to help senior students of history understand the appeal of fascism in Nazi Germany. Jones initiated changes in the way he ran his classes, bringing in more discipline and obedience. He allowed a kind of movement to emerge, following the credo: “Strength through discipline, strength through community, strength through action, strength through pride”. The members of the movement took it so seriously that they started to follow orders blindly and exclude people who were sceptical of the consequences the movement was having on social relations in the school. Students were shocked to find out that they had behaved just like ordinary people in Germany during the war, by participating actively in the movement.

More information: www.welle.film.de; www.thewave.tk and <http://web.archive.org/http://www.vaniercollege.qc.ca>.

Youth gangs are another good example of how this kind of identity develops. Youth gangs develop identities in opposition to the police or other gangs, based on a sense of solidarity in marginalisation. This subsequently creates rules for how individuals can become members of the gang. These rules are overseen by the collective, and any deviation from the rules, for example, dating a girl or boy from another gang’s territory, is a reason for exclusion.

The 2007 film, **Freedom Writers**, in which Hilary Swank plays a highly committed trainee teacher who helps a class of socially marginalised young people from a “rough” area in the sprawl of urban America to overcome their position as an underclass, and which is based on the true story of Erin Gruwell, demonstrates the way in which structural disadvantage, legacies of violence in the immediate environment, especially in the family, minimal regulation of the availability of small arms, and neglect of young people in need, conspire to create parallel societies with their own rules, which are above the law and impenetrable, even to the most well-meaning outsider.

More information: www.freedomwritersfoundation.org/site/c.kqIXL2PFJtH/b.2259975/k.BF19/Home.htm and www.freedomwriters.com.

Intergroup and intrasociety conflicts have often been instrumentalised politically. Those in positions of power manipulate the group feelings that these conflicts stir up, rallying the masses in order to achieve their goals or to serve their personal, hidden agendas. Civil wars and “ethnic cleansing” have been the result of the instrumentalisation of intrasociety conflicts.

Something to think about!

Think of an intrasociety conflict that you consider to have been the source for building a group identity. What was the issue? Who was involved? Was the conflict instrumentalised politically? If so, by whom and for what reasons?



International/global conflicts: these include conflicts between nation states, global and regional competition over natural resources, conflicts in various international organisations over political issues, armed interventions involving significant loss of life, ethnic or religious conflicts, wars for self-determination and/or the creation of new nation states.

Increasingly, however, it also applies to intergroup/intrasociety conflicts within one country when one group is fighting for independence or increased social, political or economic power.²²

A distinction is made between armed conflicts and international conflicts. This is because international conflicts can be monetary/economic and/or political, but are not necessarily armed, even if the public perception of international conflicts often involves violence or terrorism.

An important aspect of international conflicts is that they can become intractable. Intractable conflicts are long-standing conflicts that take place between individuals, groups, communities or nation states that resist all attempts at management, and continue escalating towards ever-higher levels of hostility and intensity. There are many contemporary intractable conflicts. Some of these conflicts take place within states and some take place between states.

There is no doubt that they are amongst the most dangerous conflicts in the world today. They threaten not only their immediate environment, but entire regions and large parts of the world too. These conflicts have dominated the international arena and have spawned much of the violence and terrorism that we witness today.²³

Something to think about!

Consider one international conflict that is commonly reported in the media. What do you think makes it intractable?

International and global conflicts are also considered to be macro-level conflicts. In other words, they have significance that goes beyond the individuals concerned, having consequences for the wider society, for example. In contrast, so-called micro-level conflicts do not have important consequences for people beyond those directly involved. Interpersonal conflicts are well-classified as micro-level conflicts, because even though they have important effects on the individuals taking part, these effects do not influence the course of the development of the wider society. Intergroup conflicts, especially those that involve groups of different sizes with different levels of power, may be classified as either micro- or macro-level conflicts, because their outcomes will have effects on the individuals, but might also have longer-lasting consequences in terms of how those groups are perceived or treated in a society. This distinction is important when it comes to deciding on how to intervene, and which methods to use when intervening. We will, therefore, make more frequent reference to the distinction between macro- and micro-level conflicts in Chapter 4, "Youth working with conflict".

Something to think about! Think about a typical conflict you encounter in your youth work reality. Can you classify it using the different types listed above? What impacts does this kind of conflict have on the young people you work with? What impact does this have on the youth work you do? How do you deal with its consequences for your youth work?

3.2.4 Impacts on young people

The various types of conflict discussed affect different kinds of young people in very different ways. They do not all have to result in violence, but this can happen if the conflict is not dealt with adequately or at the appropriate time.

In the following table we look at some of the consequences that different kinds of conflict can have on young people if allowed to:

Conflict type	Potential basis for conflict	Consequences for young people
Intrapersonal	Dissatisfaction with oneself Self-questioning on values or identity	Stigma Increased vulnerability to self-harm, emotionally damaging risks or abuse by adults Isolation from peers or family
Interpersonal	Differences of opinion, values or ideas about relationships	Clarity and coherence of expression Psychological and emotional problems
Intergroup/ intrasociety	Culture Religion Language Ethnicity Community affiliation	Institutionalised forms of racism Exclusion of minority religious or immigrant communities Discrimination in education or employment Exclusion from mainstream society
Intergroup/ intrasociety	Group identity	Involvement in violence Membership of a gang Risk of death by gunfire, being trafficked, becoming addicted Survival Access to gratification
Intrasociety	Social class	Disadvantage Structural unemployment Delinquency, crime and aggressive behaviour Emergence of a “youth underclass” Youth revolt

International/ global	Violence/war ²⁴ Terrorism	Psychological and physical damage Disability Exploitation as child soldiers Trafficking Involvement in right-wing, left-wing and religious fundamentalist activities Brainwashing and instrumentalisation by adults
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Something to think about!

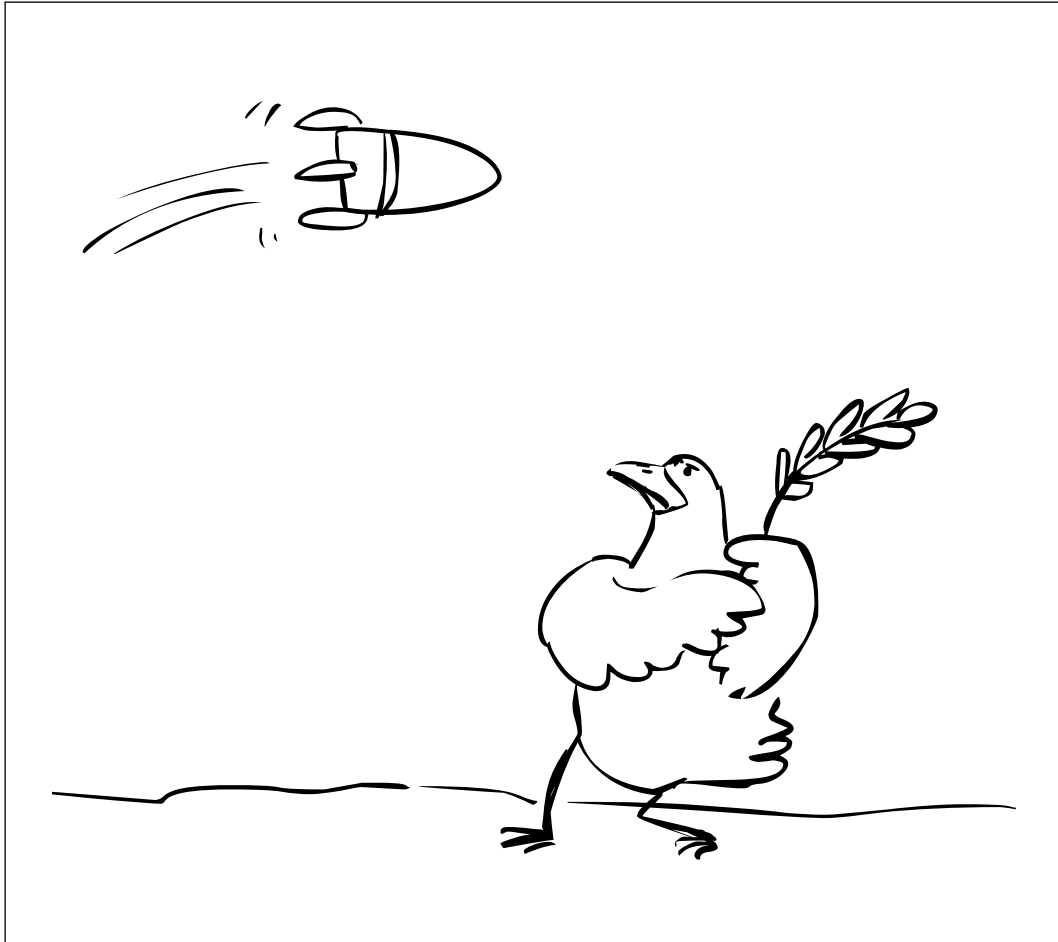
Can you think of some “positive” consequences that the conflicts in the above table might have for young people? Why do you think these conflicts can also have positive consequences?

Dilemma 4: Peace

DILEMMA

“There is no way to peace. Peace is the way.”²⁵

Mahatma Gandhi



Since 1945 the world has only seen 26 days without war.²⁶ In all, only two European countries have maintained peace for almost two centuries – Sweden since 1814, and Switzerland since 1815 – at least, on paper. On closer inspection, would it be fair to say that both countries have experienced true peace during that entire period? Would the citizens of Sweden and Switzerland, for example, consider the two World Wars periods of peace? Hardly.

Peace can most simply be described as the absence of war. Originating from the Latin word **pax**, the term traditionally equalled **absentia belli**, which translates into an absence of war. However, today peace also holds many other meanings and connotations. As much as it is still often understood within those narrow parameters, many challenge the concept as incomplete. The Norwegian peace researcher Johan Galtung suggests that the underlying issues of conflict, namely, the structural conditions such as the unequal distribution of resources, discrimination and power imbalances,

*must be resolved in order for true peace to come about. The mere absence of war could be described as a negative peace.*²⁷

The term “negative peace” describes peace in its traditional sense. It is a state-centred approach, founded on the general belief that all social relations are ultimately regulated by violence.²⁸ Peace is not perceived as a natural state of affairs, but merely as the opposite of war. The goal is to avoid war and this is accomplished by approaches such as the balance of power, or deterrence rather than co-operation. A society in peace is, in this sense, a society that, even if not openly and visibly violent, is characterised by ongoing and systematic oppression and injustice. This allows the stronger and more powerful in a society to use the threat of violence to maintain oppression and power. Yet is peace really peace if it is built on the threat of violence? Should peace have winners and losers?

In international relations it is common for third parties, such as the United Nations (UN), North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) or other international institutions, to try to force peace treaties on warring parties. It is questionable if this is sustainable. The danger inherent in putting the lid on a conflict before it is ready is that it boils over again. There are many examples of the consequences of this kind of forced peace, amongst them some of the countries most notorious for being “international bad guys”, for example Germany after the Second World War, the United States after Vietnam, and Serbia after the Kosovo crisis, to mention just a few.

Positive peace, on the other hand, advocates for peace using peaceful means. This means that the methods used to achieve peace are also important for the outcome. Positive peace proposes that involving all parties in a negotiated solution will surely make it more sustainable. This understanding of peace also stresses the fact that even during periods without war, people are still being killed and injured, physically and mentally. Inequality in social structures limits what individuals can achieve in their lives. Institutional violence, racism, exploitation and other barriers to equal opportunities limit peace. The civil rights movement in the United States that aimed to end racial segregation in America in the 1950s and 1960s highlighted the need for justice in peace. The system in place was structurally unjust and deprived African Americans of their rights. At the time, some opponents criticised the civil rights movement for disturbing the peace. Hence, positive peace aims at accomplishing freedoms, rights and equality as a basis for sustaining peace.

Martin Luther King, Jr said, “Peace is not merely a distant goal that we seek, but a means by which we arrive at that goal.”²⁹

The point is to envision peace not as a destination, but as a process. Peace is often misunderstood as soft, silent, weak and static. Quite the opposite, peace requires courage and has to be worked on at all times. It does not involve sitting silently and praying for the violence to end but requires that active, but peaceful, measures be taken to improve the situation.

Should humans be considered evil by nature, or war as the natural social condition? After all, wars still exist and violence is everywhere. Yes those in war-torn regions are no more hostile or aggressive by nature than those in any other part of the world. Conditions, needs and expectations have determined that developments in their countries have taken place in ways that are not peaceful. For example, centuries of peace treaties and international agreements formed the state borders in the Balkans with little or no involvement of the people living there. Major powers decided when there was peace and when there was war, and under which conditions. The same is

true for large parts of Asia, Africa, South America and the Caucasus. When asked, most children place world peace at the top of their wish list. The outspoken agenda of most politicians is to contribute to the emergence of peaceful international and civil relations and to world peace. Fathers, mothers, young and old everywhere wish for a world free of violence and full of opportunities for everyone. This consensus notwithstanding, in the last 60 years there were only 26 days on which there was an absence of war. This can only be considered one enormous failure.

3.2.5 Causes and actors

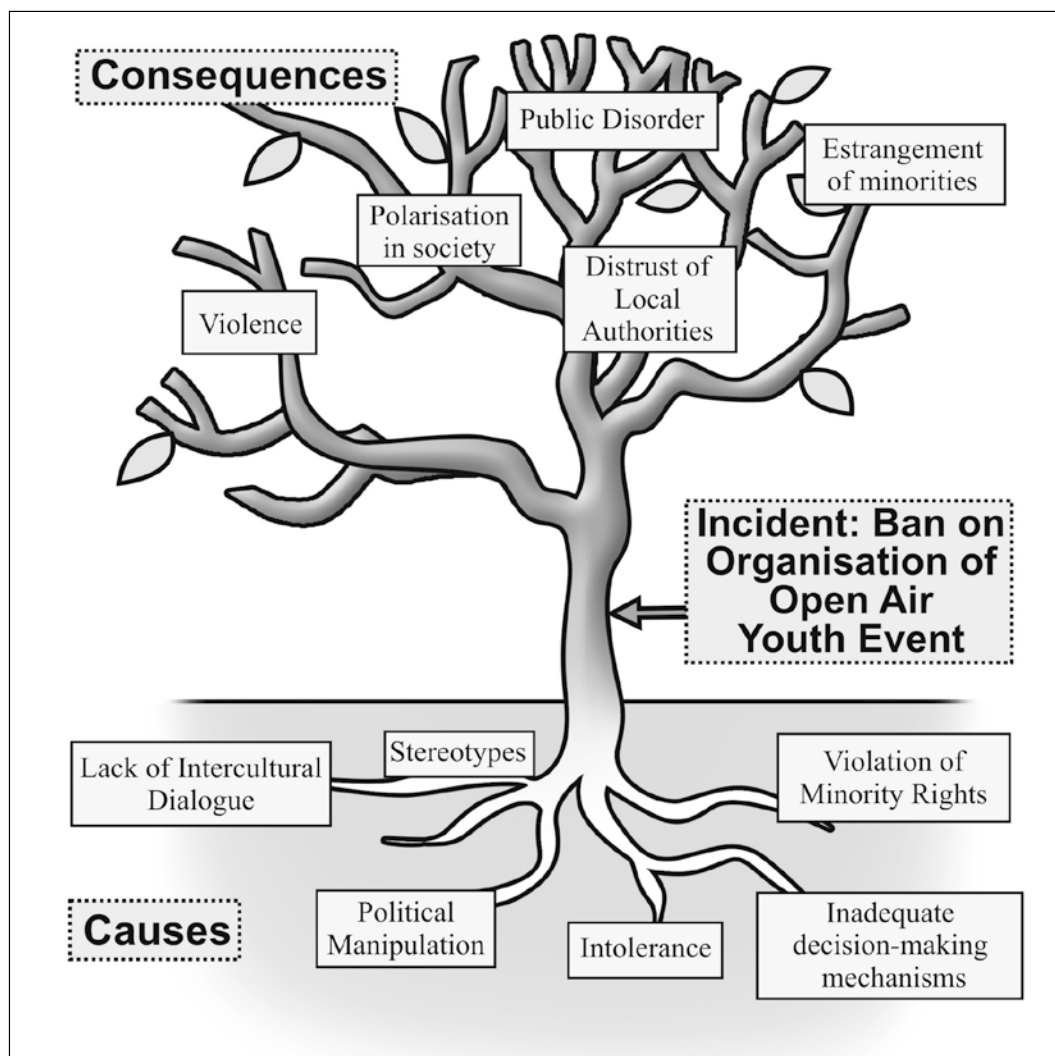


Figure 2. Tree of Conflict, here showing a hypothetical example of the city council banning the organisation of an open-air event by some youth subcultural groups

Causes

There are many causes of conflict. These can include clashing material interests, a lack of material benefits, differences in identity, ideological or spiritual outlook, stereotypes and prejudices, frustrations with interpersonal relations, or a lack of knowledge, skills and experience for overcoming differences. Identifying and understanding the possible causes of a conflict is essential to dealing with it effectively, and is a key part of conflict analysis.

The picture shows the Tree of Conflict. This is a simple method of conflict analysis that can be used by youth workers to find out about the underlying causes of a conflict. The Tree of Conflict assumes that part of the conflict is not seen. The causes of a conflict are considered to be its roots: these are under the ground and, therefore, not visible to those involved. The consequences of the conflict are its branches and leaves: these are visible to all.

In this example of a Tree of Conflict, there is a conflict between local authorities, which represent the conservative political majority, and some youth subcultural groups. The city council, under pressure from the conservative political majority, has not permitted representatives of youth subcultural groups (in the minority) to organise an open-air event in one of the most popular pedestrian zones of the city. The city council claims there will be disorder. The consequences of banning the open-air event include strong protest demonstrations on the part of the youth subcultural groups, public disorder, violence, distrust of the local authorities, clashes with other youth groups and the police. However, the root causes of this conflict might be inadequate decision-making mechanisms in the city council, which exclude the minority youth subcultural groups, a lack of intercultural dialogue and political manipulation, amongst others.

This illustrates that the causes of conflict are the various events and problems which take place before the conflict comes to the surface, and which give rise to it.

Something to think about!

Think of a conflict you consider important or relevant for your work with young people. Using the Tree of Conflict, try to identify its causes. What new aspects of this conflict have been revealed by using the tree?

Even when using a method such as the Tree of Conflict, it is important to consider the objective and subjective dimensions of the causes of a conflict. Sometimes, people think that a particular element is a cause of conflict, but in fact it is only their subjective opinion of what has been at the root of the problem. At other times, it is clear what the facts are. We need to remain aware that conflict parties often hide their real motivations and needs, instead of speaking about the real conflict causes. They might do this because they think they will gain some strategic advantage. Whatever the reason, it is important to focus on uncovering the real causes of the conflict. For the conflict parties, some of these may be painful to discuss openly. In other scenarios, the conflict parties may not be aware of some of the causes. Making clear distinctions between causes of conflict and all the other factors that are involved – the behaviour of the conflicting parties, their needs and the consequences of the conflict – is important because it is the conflict analysis that directs efforts to develop appropriate approaches to intervention.

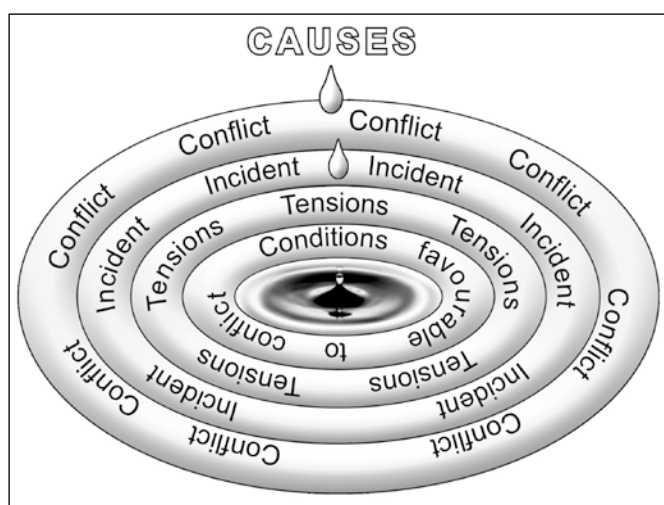


Figure 3. Causes and emergence of conflicts: sequence of events

Making those distinctions can be complicated, because as Figure 3 shows, it is not always easy to establish the sequence of events that leads to the emergence of a conflict. In this figure, the emergence of the conflict is symbolised by ripples in water. The causes are the drops, which cause the water to ripple outwards from the centre in concentric circles. This representation of conflict underlines that what the

conflict parties do and do not do can become causes, which then bring about conditions favourable to conflict, which then bring about tensions, which then bring about an incident, which only then sparks the conflict.

Parties and actors

The identification of the actors involved in the conflict is another key task of conflict analysis and helps us to understand the conflict in more depth. In general, actors in conflict can be divided into two main groups: conflict parties and third parties.

A conflict party is an individual, group, organisation, informal association, community, ethnic group, state or international organisation which is actively engaged in the conflict, has a certain interest in the outcomes of the conflict and takes actions to reach its goals in relation to the conflict. Except in the case of intrapersonal conflicts (see above), there are always at least two conflict parties in any conflict. A conflict party can be a main, direct or indirect actor in the conflict and they can have supporters who are not actively involved in conflict action.

A third party, on the other hand, is not involved in the conflict and is impartial. This means that the third party is only interested in the process of resolving the conflict, not in its outcome. A third party intervenes between the parties to help them with their conflict management efforts. These can be mediators, facilitators, observers, researchers, arbitrators or enforcers. The identification of conflict parties can be complicated. Conflicts can have many levels and often have many actors, not all of which are even aware that they are part of the conflict.

Something to think about!

Do you think youth work can/should act as a third party in a conflict? What does it mean for youth work to act as a third party in a conflict? Have you ever played that role? What did it involve? How did you manage the situation?

The Conflict Pyramid³⁰ is a model that helps us to identify the actors of the conflict, the different levels they occupy and the amount of power and influence they have. It can be used to identify actors in conflict in many different settings (for example, school, youth organisation, international company, state).

The upper part of the pyramid is made up of people in key positions who represent the top leadership in the conflict setting. The middle-range leadership is found at the centre level. The bottom, and the major part of the pyramid, is reserved for the grass roots, meaning the largest number of people in the conflict setting. This model is based on the example of an international conflict, so the examples that follow are from that context. However, the model can easily be adapted to any other social situation and conflict setting, because in a conflict setting some parties always have more power than others. This is the case in an armed international or civil conflict, but it can also be the case in a school, an NGO or in the family, where there are hierarchies and where some people have the right to make decisions but not others. Examples include the head teacher in your high school, the president of your organisation, or even your parents.

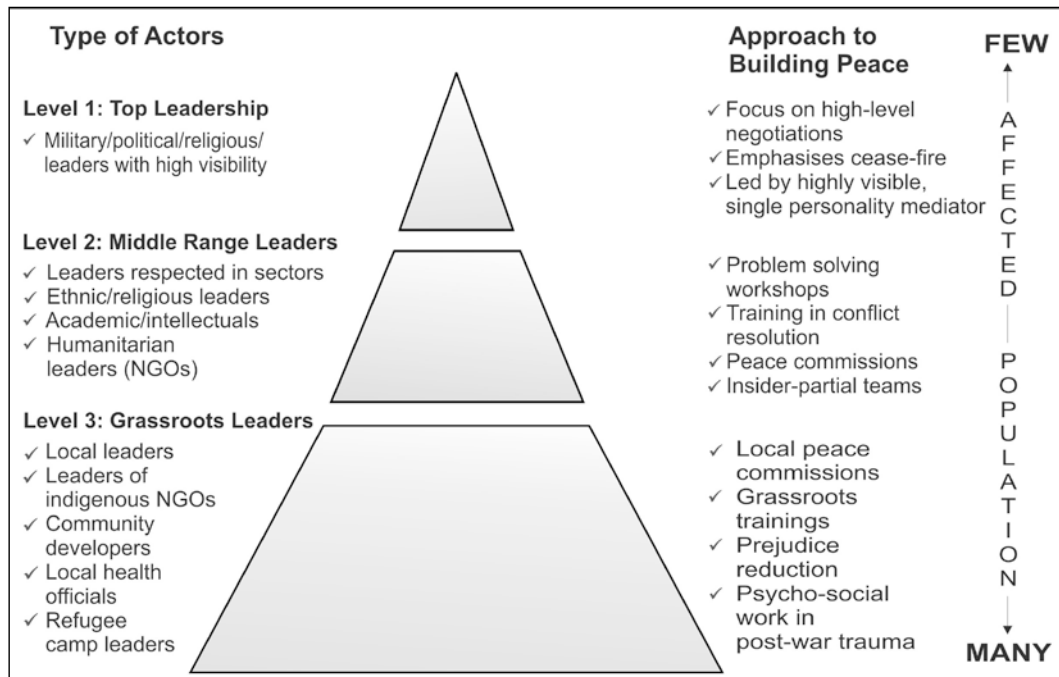


Figure 4. "Peace-Building Pyramid" from Lederach J. P., *Building Peace: Sustainable Reconciliation in Divided Societies*, United States Institute of Peace Press, Washington, DC, 1997, p. 39.

We will now look into each level of the pyramid in more detail. As shown above, the model is divided into three different levels: (1) the top elite, (2) the middle range and (3) the grass roots.

Top elite

Members of the top elite usually occupy important positions in society and are highly visible. In an international armed conflict these can be, for example, government officials, international organisations or key political, military or religious leaders. They are actively involved in the decision-making processes that help to continue the conflict and will eventually lead to its resolution or transformation. This is because they have, or at some point had, a legitimate mandate to be involved in making those decisions, for example, if they were elected by universal suffrage and made the decision to go to war using a relevant legal channel, such as the parliament. However, as a result of their high profile, they are often locked into positions where they feel that they must maintain an image of power and strength, resisting "loss of face". This makes it difficult for them to accept anything less than their publicly stated goals.³¹

Middle range leadership

The middle range leadership is a larger group of people than the top elite. It includes leaders from civil society and the middle management in governmental organisations. Leaders in the health, business and agriculture sectors, as well as ethnic community and religious leaders, academics and international or national NGO leaders, can also be found in this category. These are people who function in leadership positions, and have the respect of a large number of other people, but are not necessarily connected with formal government or major opposition movements. As a result, they

occupy positions of medium visibility.³² They are also engaged in the everyday realities of trying to understand or manage situations caused by the conflict, even if they are not directly and negatively affected by its consequences. The leaders at the middle level are often regarded as the most influential in conflicts because of their contacts with the top and grass-roots levels. Their position out of the immediate limelight provides them with space and the possibility to manoeuvre more freely.

Grass roots

The last and largest group in the pyramid is the grass roots, comprising the population at large. These are all those ordinary people who are involved in local NGOs, and community, women's or youth groups, and include activists, lower level health officials and, in some societies, local elders, members of indigenous and local organisations and refugee camp leaders.³³ These grass-roots leaders represent the masses, those who struggle daily with the consequences of the conflict. These leaders are closest to the realities of the people most affected by the conflict and are the most trusted by them. This makes it possible for them to act as honest brokers on behalf of the people they represent. Nevertheless, they have little formal access to the top elite and usually have to rely on the members of the middle range leadership to get a hearing.³⁴

The Conflict Pyramid helps us to analyse the key actors present and involved in the conflict at each of the levels described. The three levels are present in each and every context: whether you are speaking about a conflict in a nation state or a small community, you will always have an elite, a middle range and the grass-roots level.

Something to think about!

Can you identify the three levels of the pyramid in a youth-work situation you have experienced? Where would you position yourself and your organisation? How did you manage to communicate with the other levels?

The 50/50 Training Course Model

In the 1990s, the Directorate of Youth and Sport of the Council of Europe developed a training model for youth policy co-operation called the 50/50 course. The concept of the course is that 50% of the participants come from the non-governmental sector and 50% from the governmental sector. The idea is that by learning about youth policy together in the course, the different sectors will develop a capacity for in-depth co-operation. An example of this training model in action was the training course that took place in summer 2009 in Vladivostok, in the Russian Federation, as part of the DYS programme of field activities in that country. The course aimed at training youth workers and civil servants active in youth work and youth policy implementation in the areas of non-formal education and youth policy co-operation.

More information is available on request from the Directorate of Youth and Sport at: youth@coe.int.

By way of example, consider a conflict over how the scarce resources of a local youth organisation should be used. Some ordinary members (at the grass-roots level) would like more resources to be made available for operational programmes to make members more active. However, the staff of the organisation (the middle range) object because, firstly, they are already overworked with the number of activities they are

organising for members, and secondly, they feel the purpose of activating members would be better served by hiring another full-time staff member to work on membership activities and to pay more direct attention to the needs and wishes of the members who are active. The elected board of the organisation (the top elite) will have to discuss a way of solving the conflict, because they have been mandated to make decisions about how to allocate the budget of the organisation and about its priorities. Whatever course of action they may finally choose, this example points to the fact that even a simple conflict over how to allocate the resources of a youth organisation is endowed with all three levels.

The conflict parties own the conflict and they are the ones who should resolve it. An agreement to end the conflict will be considered legitimate and more stable if the conflicting parties have been involved in its making. If a resolution is, instead, imposed from the outside without taking the concerns and needs of all parties into consideration, the chances of a sustainable solution are reduced and the risk of the conflict reoccurring is higher. Expelling people or groups from the conflict management process, a method often used to punish those who continue to resist proposed solutions, gives the rejected parties no reason to respect the resolution. In order for lasting change to come about, all levels of the social pyramid have to be addressed and directly involved.

Conflicts are highly complex, so there might be several pyramids in any given conflict. For example, the conflict might play out differently at the international level than at the national level, and different actors might be involved at different levels in each of the international and national pyramids. Furthermore, several pyramids can be found within each pyramid. Every level has its own elite, and even among the grass-roots level there is an elite with more power and means to influence the others. This complexity must also be addressed and analysed in order to gain a full understanding of the power relations influencing the development of the conflict.³⁵

In general, associations of young people and youth organisations are among middle range and grass-roots leaders. Their participation in working on intrasociety conflict can be very productive, as they can communicate across the borders between the levels and have access to large constituencies of other young people. At the same time, young people are often considered to be the segment of the population most threatening to the *status quo* of political regimes, whether these are democratic, authoritarian or somewhere in between. Young people played a significant role in the new social movements that developed in Western Europe in the 1970s and 1980s, including the environmental, women's liberation, gay and lesbian, peace and anti-nuclear movements. They also participated in mass protests and demonstrations that helped to bring down communist regimes at the beginning of the 1990s and were very active in the replacement of authoritarian leaders by the opposition during the recent "electoral revolutions" in Serbia in 2000 (OTPOR), Georgia in 2003 (KMARA) and in Ukraine in 2004 (PORA).³⁶

Something to think about!

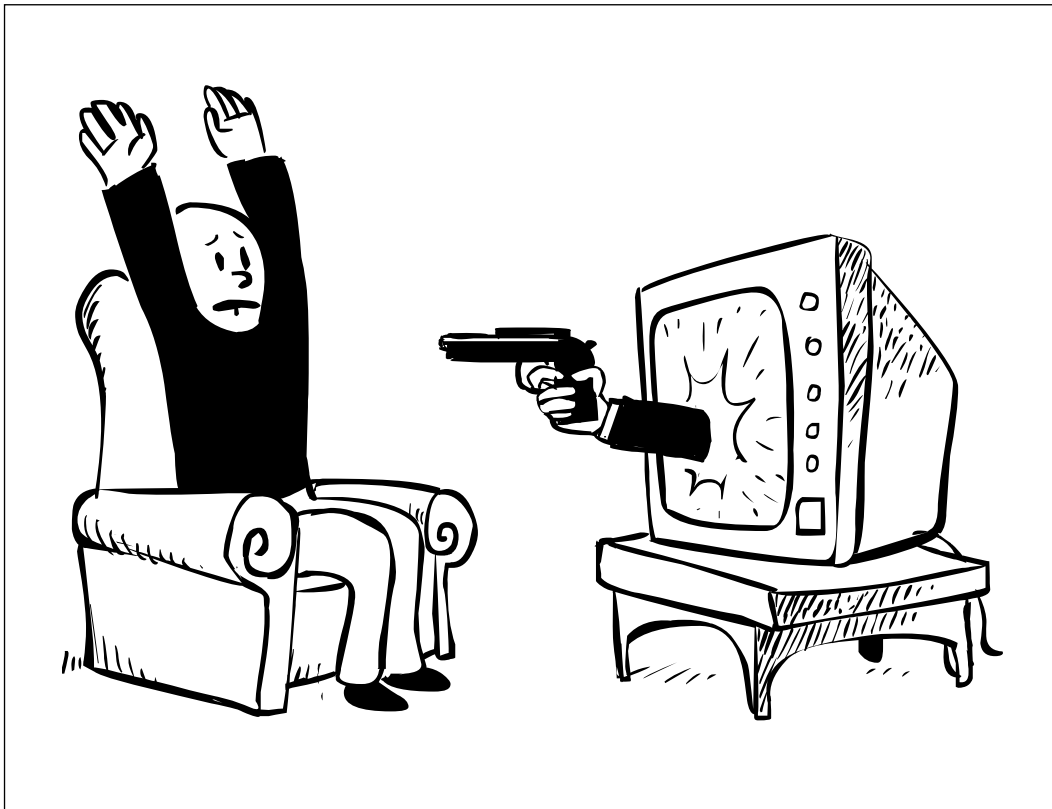
What level are you trying to change? Using the pyramid that describes the top, middle and grass-roots levels of conflict, consider with your colleagues what level you and your youth organisation/youth work are trying to change with your conflict interventions? Why are you working at this level? Could you work at any other level? If not, why not?

Dilemma 5: Violence

DILEMMA

“If you are not a revolutionary at twenty you have no heart, and if you are still one at thirty you have no brains ... We are all familiar with the well-established doctor or lawyer who talks with muted pride about his ‘very revolutionary son’, confident that this state of affairs will be no more lasting than an attack of flu ...”³⁷

Peter Lauritzen



Young people are very often blamed for the violence that seems to have become pervasive in our modern societies. Adults are very concerned about the amount of violence young people consume through mass media entertainment and new information technologies, especially computer games, and they worry about the long-term psychosocial effects that this exposure to violence will have on the families and social interactions of the young people concerned. This impression is certainly exacerbated by the occasional youth “uprising” that takes some large European capital by storm once every few years, the October 2005 riots in the suburbs of Paris and those in Greece in May 2009³⁸ being probably the most recent examples that received the attention of the media.

One would be forgiven for believing that violence has become more widespread in recent decades. We are confronted on a daily basis in the mass media and in public spaces with scenes of more or less gratuitous violence, many of which involve young

people. Older people, especially, are tempted to look back at their own time as young people and to think the “grass was greener”, that there was less violence when they were growing up. To an extent, this is inevitable – nostalgia is always rosy. However, with increasing attention in the media being given to violence, the population as a whole is more aware and necessarily fearful of muggings and robberies, drug-related crime and the rare but shocking and, therefore, memorable, school shootings in the United States and Europe.³⁹ Of further concern, especially to parents with children in school, is the fact that many schools can no longer be considered really “safe”, whether because of the presence of weapons, gangs or bullying.

Public debate on the issue of violence and especially of youth violence faces very challenging questions. What do young people consider entertaining in the gratuitous violence they consume through the mass media and technology? How can we distinguish legitimate revolutionary fervour from gratuitous and unjustifiable violence? When does a young freedom fighter become a terrorist? Can violence of any kind ever be justified? Who are the victims and who are the perpetrators?

Governments have come under increasing pressure from adult voters to “do something” to stem the tide of youth violence. Policy has responded with punishment and policing. Unfortunately, as in the case of many other complex and challenging social phenomena, the root causes of violence and how best to deal with them are not always well understood. This has tended to give public debate to the issue a rather emotional and moralistic tone. In addition, policy responses have tended to propose black or white solutions, vacillating between the poles of treating young people involved in violence as helpless victims or as hardened criminals.

Why do young people turn to violence? What can be done to prevent violence without demonising young people as amoral delinquents? Case-by-case differences notwithstanding, a variety of ideas exist on the causes of youth violence and some “generic” causes have been distinguished. These, while not universal, can provide insights into what kinds of solutions might be considered appropriate and effective for dealing with the phenomenon.

One group of analysts has argued that young people who face “no future” will turn to violence as a means of demonstrating their dissatisfaction and frustration with their lot, one of disadvantage and hopelessness and that, in the face of a closed political system, deaf to their needs, young people will choose violence over dialogue and negotiation. Overall, this view presents the idea of youth violence as an expression of young people’s sense of themselves as unimportant in the concerns of mainstream politics and society, as marginalised and unconsidered. Others have identified the violence that permeates youth consciousness as originating in the consumption of violence through computer games and toys, television and cinema products from early childhood. Young people cannot but be prone to violence considering what the liberal market media economy “feeds” them with from a young age. Others again have identified the presence of war and the absence of peace in the lives of many young people as the cause of inordinate emotional and psychological damage that predisposes them to further violence as adults, whether in the form of participation in war, or of domestic violence.

Yet others have argued that the “securitarian discourse” of modern 20th and 21st-century political realities (first the Cold War, then the War on Terror) has created a climate of fear of the (often implicitly defined) “other” – the unknown enemy in our midst. Certain religious groups have fallen especially foul of this socio-political scapegoating, with young men from certain communities being at once construed as vio-

lent (possible terrorists) at the same time as being more vulnerable to falling prey to manipulation by extremist groups as a result of the marginalisation and exclusion they feel they experience in mainstream society.⁴⁰ This is also true of young people living in degraded suburbs and urban ghettos, the so-called dropout generation of anti-socials, significant numbers of whom are also of migrant or minority background.⁴¹

Overall, there remains little social and political recognition for the complex reasons that underlie the violence committed by young people. Young people can be at one and the same time perpetrators and victims of youth violence. Without social recognition of the problem, there can be no solution, and the root causes of the violence being perpetuated by the young perpetrator-victim cannot be tackled. What it boils down to in the end is that violence is a human rights issue.⁴²

3.3 Part 2 – Conflict in dynamics

In this section, we look at how all the different elements of the conflict we have analysed interact and how conflicts develop and change in their lifetimes – in other words, we look at their dynamics.

3.3.1 Components

Understanding the components of a conflict, or the elements it is made up of, is just as important as understanding who its actors are or what caused it. A useful tool for understanding the different components of a given conflict is the ABC Triangle.⁴³ By using this model we can distinguish between different ingredients involved in a conflict, providing us with an understanding of its most significant aspects. This provides us with clues as to where to begin working on it.

The psychology behind the development of conflicts is considered to be similar at both the micro and macro levels.⁴⁴ In other words, the triangle is applicable at all levels, for individuals, groups or communities, and even states. The model proposes that conflicts consist of three basic components: (1) attitudes, (2) behaviour and (3) contradictions. These can be identified in every single conflict, although to different extents. The components are placed in the three corners of a triangle to illustrate the mutual relationship between them (see Figure 5).

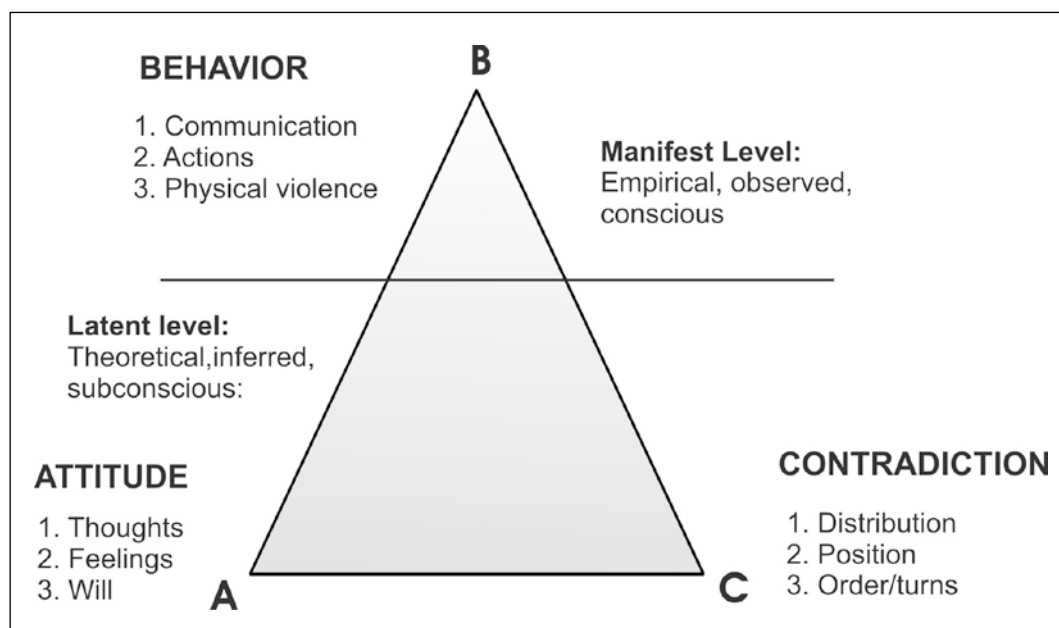


Figure 5. The Conflict Triangle, Galtung J., *Peace by Peaceful Means: Peace and Conflict, Development and Civilization*, Sage, London, 1997, p. 72

A common metaphor for conflict is that of the iceberg and it is used in the ABC Triangle. As with the roots in the Tree of Conflict, a significant part of the iceberg remains unseen, because it is underwater. However, this part determines the size and the behaviour of the iceberg, that is, where and how it moves in the water. Just like the part of the iceberg above the waterline, one can see the visible aspects of a conflict:

the complaints, the accusations and hurtful comments, and the negotiations. However, there are other aspects beneath the surface, the hidden agendas, the condescending body language, and the interests in power and resources. The iceberg metaphor serves to illustrate that only a small part of a conflict can be seen. The concealed and much larger portion of a conflict acts as a hidden force in the development of the situation, and influences attempts to work on the conflict. One's personal role in a conflict determines how much of it one is able to see. The more involved you are, the more difficult it becomes to simply step back and look at the conflict objectively.

Attitudes

According to the ABC Triangle, our attitudes and our assumptions about the conflict lie beneath the surface, marked in the model by the letter A.⁴⁵ This corner of the triangle consists of the images we have of ourselves and the others involved in the conflict, and of our thoughts, feelings and desires. Feelings refer to those the conflict parties have for each other, and also the ways the conflict parties consider and deal with their own feelings. Anger is a very significant feeling in conflicts, but it is often a reaction to another feeling, that of fear. Attitudes also cover our presumptions and subjective ideas about the underlying issues in the conflict, about what has happened, who did what, and so on. Usually perceptions differ substantially between the conflicting parties, not only about what happened, but also in relation to world view and values. This is similar in the Tree of Conflict explained above, where one has to consider the objective and subjective dimensions of how the causes of conflict are reported. The story and the perceptions of what has occurred change as time passes and as the parties become increasingly distant from each other during a conflict that is escalating.

Behaviour

The most visible aspect of a conflict is the behaviour, marked with the letter B in the model. These are the actions the conflict parties take. Human reactions to events are rather complex, so what is referred to as behaviour really consists of many elements. Different people react differently to different events. Nevertheless, the actions that combine to make the behaviour as it is understood in this model can usually be divided into three categories:

- what is said;
- what is done; and
- physical violence.

It is important to mention that sometimes what is not said or not done (non-action) can be considered part of behaviour. Avoiding action can have an equally important effect on the development of a conflict as action would, probably simply with different consequences. In addition, physical violence is treated as distinct from other actions because the use of violence changes the character of the conflict drastically. Its consequences are very serious and can radically alter the development of the conflict and its outcomes.

Contradiction

The contradiction in a conflict is the core and cause of the problem, marked with the letter C in the model. It is the specific issue(s) about which the disagreement has

taken place. The model proposes that conflicts are usually about three basic types of issues: distribution, position and order.

Distribution: the contradiction arises because there is competition for resources that have to be divided among different groups and communities. These resources could be money, time, space, food, attention or political favour, and there is a question over how much of each the different parties should get. However, none of the parties to the conflict questions the rules about distribution and their role in creating them.

Position: the contradiction emerges as a result of competition over a position. A position is understood as a resource that cannot be shared. This is because only one person at a time can hold a given position. The position in question might be that of chief executive officer in a company, class president, girlfriend, world champion or the right to govern as the sovereign leader of a state. One approach to dealing with conflicts over positions, especially in cases where the conflict parties are competing over who should legitimately govern a state, has been to try to convince the conflict parties to share the position concerned. This has been an effective strategy where the parties were open to the idea of taking turns occupying the position. An example of how this has sometimes been done is the use of rotating presidencies. Another approach to dealing with this is to find alternatively prestigious positions for competing parties to occupy (for example, president and several vice-presidents). By using these approaches the conflicting parties learn to see position as a resource that can be shared and to take a more co-operative approach.

Order: in this case, the contradiction emerges over the rules that should be followed by a given society or within an organisation, with at least one party claiming that the current rules are not adequate or fair and wanting to change the prevailing system. Examples of this type of contradiction include disagreements over how to restructure a company, and teenagers challenging the rules set by their parents. The most well-known and probably the most studied cases, however, relate to transformation of the political system in a given country, and in particular transitions from authoritarian systems of governance. In recent European history, these have included fascist or right-wing dictatorships, notably Spain, Portugal and Greece, and communist/socialist dictatorships, notably the Soviet Union and its satellite states in central and eastern Europe. Order conflicts can be more intense than the two other forms of contradiction already mentioned, since the core values of those involved are challenged, and core values are very difficult to negotiate.

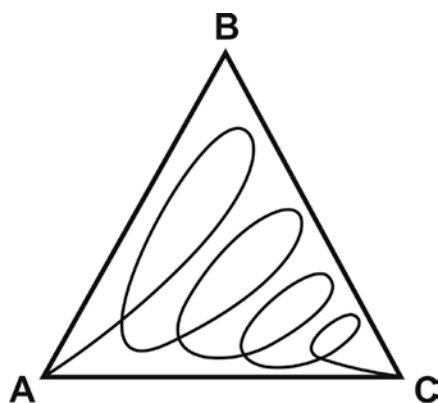


Figure 6. Evolution of the conflict spiral

Understanding conflict escalation and de-escalation

There are several ways in which conflicts can come about, and the ABC Triangle can also help us to see how. Conflicts can start with the parties realising that they have incompatible needs – this is a contradiction (C). They both want the same thing at the same time and, as the problem is impossible to resolve, both parties become frustrated. The frustration leads to aggression and contempt – these are attitudes (A), which may lead to a dispute or violent actions – this is behaviour (B).

When this happens, the conflict evolves like a spiral (see Figure 6), with a new conflict emerging over the aggressive or violent behaviour that has taken place. In this way, the components of the conflict mutually reinforce each other. Even if the main issue is resolved it does not necessarily mean that the conflict has been settled, since the conflict changes dynamically and the contradiction might now be about something completely different than it was at the beginning. New conflicts have been added to the original one.

A conflict could also begin in the behaviour corner of the triangle (B), when one party does something to the other that has negative intentions behind it, or when one party does something which is not appreciated or fully understood by the other. The same goes for the attitude corner (A). A negative attitude may be transmitted through ideology or tradition. To justify this negative attitude, the actor will search for a contradiction (C), a threat from the outside, which will confirm their assumptions. This attitude will generate negative behaviour that, in turn, will add substance to the conflict. The energy for escalation is provided by strong negative feelings, which only increase as escalation continues.

However, since a conflict can start in any corner, it can also be stopped in any corner. The focus of intervention efforts should then be aimed at the core issue or contradiction (C) causing the conflict to emerge and escalate. The ABC Triangle gives us some clues as to the kind of interventions that could help to deal with the conflict. It points to the fact that addressing the contradiction is important but not sufficient for resolution. It may also be necessary to address the parties' feelings and behaviour, since these may be reinforcing or causing the conflict to escalate. In the worst case, they may be the cause of new conflicts. All this often happens unconsciously, which is why it is helpful to use such a model to put all elements down and analyse the process.

Something to think about!

Try to define the A, B and C corners in a recent conflict you experienced. Is it clear in this case in which corner of the triangle the conflict began? To what extent are you able to deconstruct the course of events?

Another way of understanding conflict dynamics, and especially how conflicts escalate and can be de-escalated, is proposed in the “staircase” model.⁴⁶ This model has nine steps (see Figure 7). The descending staircase starts in debate about the contradiction in question, moves on to considerable hostility, and finally enters a phase of violence in which the parties try to exterminate each other. According to this model, any conflict that is not being reversed will descend the staircase with accelerating and self-amplifying dynamics.

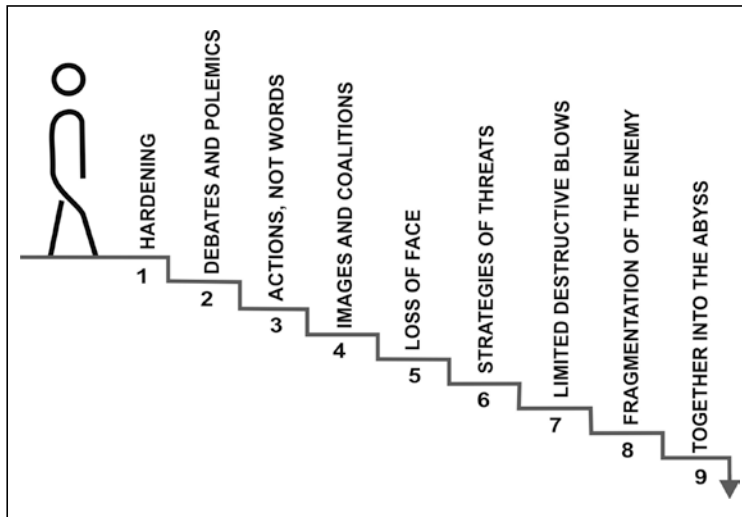
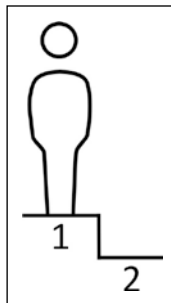


Figure 7. Based on the model “Overview of the Nine Levels of Escalation”, in Glasl F, *Confronting Conflict: A First-Aid Kit for Handling Conflict* (Hawthorn Press, Gloucestershire, 1999), pp. 84-85

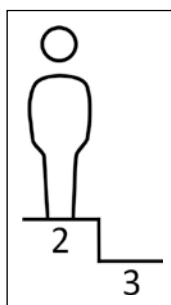
In this model, de-escalating the conflict involves getting the parties to go back up the staircase, one step at a time, reversing the actions on each step. The conflict can skip several steps down at one time, but when we want to climb back up the stairs, each step takes effort and hard work. Just as in real life, the further down the stairs one has gone, the more steps there are to climb back up, and the harder it is for the parties to resolve the conflict by themselves.

We will now take a look at each step on the staircase in more detail:



Step 1: Hardening of standpoints

The starting point of a conflict is usually relatively simple. Tensions lead to irritation, which makes for a negative atmosphere. Standpoints are hotly debated. On the first step, the parties realise that they depend on each other and their relationship moves back and forth between co-operation and competition, yet there is still commitment to resolving differences. A measure that can be taken to de-escalate the conflict at this point is simply for each of the parties to show interest in the position of the other.

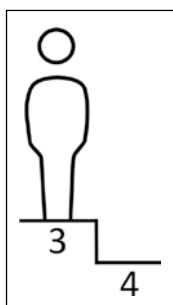


Step 2: Debate and polemics

On the second step, opinions become polarised and discussions escalate into verbal attacks. The parties look for weaknesses in the arguments of their conflict partner. The parties only hear what they want to hear, emphasising their superiority. At this point, the focus of the discussion changes from facts and actions to people. On this step, co-operation and competitiveness alternate continuously, but the parties still attempt to maintain the relationship through talking.

As soon as one of the parties feels that they have been deprived of the right to justify themselves, the conflict quickly moves to the next step. The tipping point comes when the conflict parties no longer fear conflict acceleration and move from words to action. The breakpoint appears when the parties act unilaterally and assumptions are made without mutual consultation and agreement. A measure that

can be taken to try to reverse the escalation process is for the parties to be encouraged to try to understand or empathise with the perspective of their conflict partner.



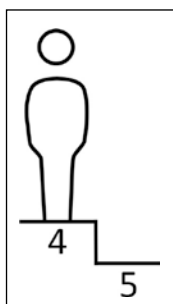
Step 3: Action – not words

On step three, there is a difference between verbal and non-verbal behaviour. The parties assume there is no point in talking to each other because another debate would only make things even worse. Each party is increasingly focused on the behaviour of the other. A group feeling is being established in opposition to the conflict partner. At this stage, a measure that can help de-escalate the situation is for informal communications to be initiated between the parties. This can help prevent the parties from taking the next step over the threshold of fear.

The first three steps on the staircase are characterised by deadlock between the parties. Fear prevents further escalation to the next level. By this point, it is no longer possible for the conflict to be solved by the parties by themselves. The involvement of a third party will be necessary.

Something to think about!

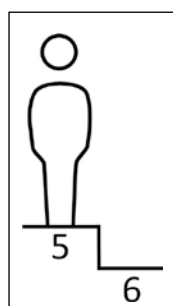
Identify a recent conflict you experienced in the context of youth work. Analyse what step it escalated to. What did you do to de-escalate the conflict?



Step 4: Preserving image and the creation of coalitions

On the fourth step the conflict parties distance themselves from each other and groups to which the conflict partner belongs (for example, religious or ethnic groups or a country). Rumours are spread and supporters are actively recruited. The competences and knowledge of the conflict partner are challenged and questioned. Both the parties view themselves as “good” and the other conflict party as “bad”. The conflict partner’s nature is seen as fixed and impossible to change – in other words, “once bad, forever bad”. At this stage, the parties

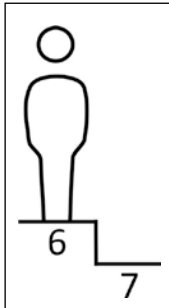
provoke their conflict partners to act as they would expect them to, and the following reactions are added to a growing list of negative characteristics. This becomes a self-fulfilling prophecy. By this step the contradiction is no longer the main problem. The conflict partner is simply blamed for everything that has happened. Suspicion grows, and current and previous actions are seen as the evil deeds of the other party. A measure that can be taken to de-escalate the situation at this point is for the parties to be encouraged to consider the language they are using (namely, accusing and blaming) and to try to use non-violent communication. For more on non-violent communication, please refer to Chapter 4, “Youth working with conflict”, p. 95.



Step 5: Loss of face

On the fifth step, the parties focus their entire attention on what they see as the other party’s truly rotten nature. Revealing this to the rest of the world becomes an important duty, and considerable energy is spent on slandering the conflict partner. The parties feel that their counterpart has violated their (personal) integrity and search for ways to take revenge. The other party is seen as demonic, devilish, and capable of anything. The insecurity caused by these prejudices adds to the irrationality of the accusations, and feeds fear.

The earlier stages in the conflict escalation process are now viewed through this perspective and all previous actions are now seen as evil deeds. A measure that can be used to try to de-escalate the situation at this stage is for the parties to be encouraged to make clear distinctions between the facts of the conflict and their feeling of being mistreated by their conflict partner.



Step 6: Strategies of threat

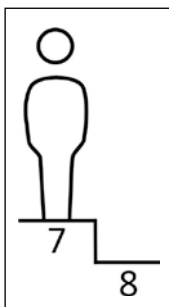
On the sixth step, stress levels grow and threats and ultimatums are made. There is an increased sense of time pressure, which increases the pace of escalation, and the chance of coming to sane and logical conclusions decreases. All of the threats of the other conflict party are taken with complete seriousness. The parties are driven by the need to monitor the actions of the other, in an attempt to prevent them from acting. A measure that can be taken at this stage to try to de-escalate the situation is to encourage the conflict parties to consider carefully their needs, and how these needs can be fulfilled by the conflict partner, rather than issuing ultimatums or threats.

The fundamental characteristic of steps four to six is mutual mistrust. To proceed to the next level the parties cross the threshold of destruction into the three final steps, which are characterised by attempts to cause damage and devastation to the other party.

The fundamental characteristic of steps four to six is mutual mistrust. To proceed to the next level the parties cross the threshold of destruction into the three final steps, which are characterised by attempts to cause damage and devastation to the other party.

Something to think about!

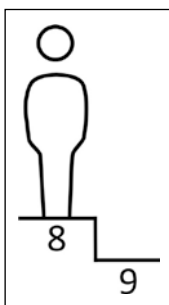
Try to identify a recent event in your country reported in the media that escalated to the sixth step. Analyse the course of events. What do you think would have helped to turn back the escalation process? Do you know of any successful example of de-escalation?



Step 7: Limited destructive blows

On the seventh step, the idea of the conflict partner being human is put into question. The enemy becomes a dehumanised object and any damage inflicted on them is seen as a victory. The focus is on limiting one's own losses. Even though both sides suffer losses, the negative consequences are neglected. The one losing the least is considered to be the winner. The conflict has come to revolve exclusively around the actions of the enemy and the goal has become to inflict damage. A measure that might at this stage contribute to de-

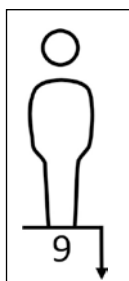
escalating the situation is to appeal to the conflict parties' sense of self-preservation. In other words, by showing the conflict parties that they stand to be damaged or hurt by their own actions against the other, they may reconsider engaging in destructive blows.



Step 8: Nerve centre attacks, fragmentation of the enemy

On the eighth step, targets known to be of importance to the other party are attacked. At a micro level (people, individuals), this could involve anything from letting the air out of the bicycle tyre of a competing colleague on a busy day, to vandalising the apartment of an ex-boyfriend, destroying photos of high emotional value, or threatening the lives of relatives. At a macro level, this could involve an army getting ready for an attack or to occupy a city. An important

limit is crossed as the action purely concentrates on what hurts the other party the most and all sense of proportionality is lost. A measure that can be taken in an attempt to de-escalate the situation is to appeal to the good sense and common decency of the parties, asking them to reconsider whether their current actions are proportionate to the situation.



Step 9: Total extermination, together into the abyss

On the ninth and last step, the drive to exterminate the conflict partner is so strong that even instincts towards self-preservation are put aside. There is no way back and the annihilation of the enemy is sought, even if the price is self-destruction. The parties might risk bankruptcy, imprisonment or physical injury: nothing matters any more. A total war of extinction is now carried out. Guilty is no longer separated from non-guilty; allies or neutral parties can no longer be identified. The only objective is to make sure that the other conflict party will be destroyed at the same time. Genocide is a good example of this. A measure that can be taken to attempt to de-escalate the situation is to ask the parties to consider their own self-preservation, at the same time as appealing to their sense of morality, asking them to consider if their actions are not more likely to hurt or damage people they love or innocent civilians as much as their enemy.

Something to think about!

The last three steps are very destructive. They can be recognised in international armed conflicts that take place in different parts of the world. Identify an international armed conflict about which you have detailed information. Analyse the step to which it has escalated so far on the basis of the information you have. What do you believe would be effective in de-escalating this conflict?

Hotel Rwanda is a 2004 historical drama film, directed by Terry George, about the case of Paul Rusesabagina (played by Don Cheadle) during the Rwandan Genocide of 1994. It documents how Rusesabagina saves the lives of his family and more than a thousand other Tutsi and Hutu refugees by sheltering them in the Hôtel des Mille Collines, where he was the hotel manager. As his country descends into madness and under constant threat of annihilation by the Hutu militia, Rusesabagina finds himself confronted with the inability of the United Nations forces to protect the people he is sheltering, and with decisions he thought he would never have to make.

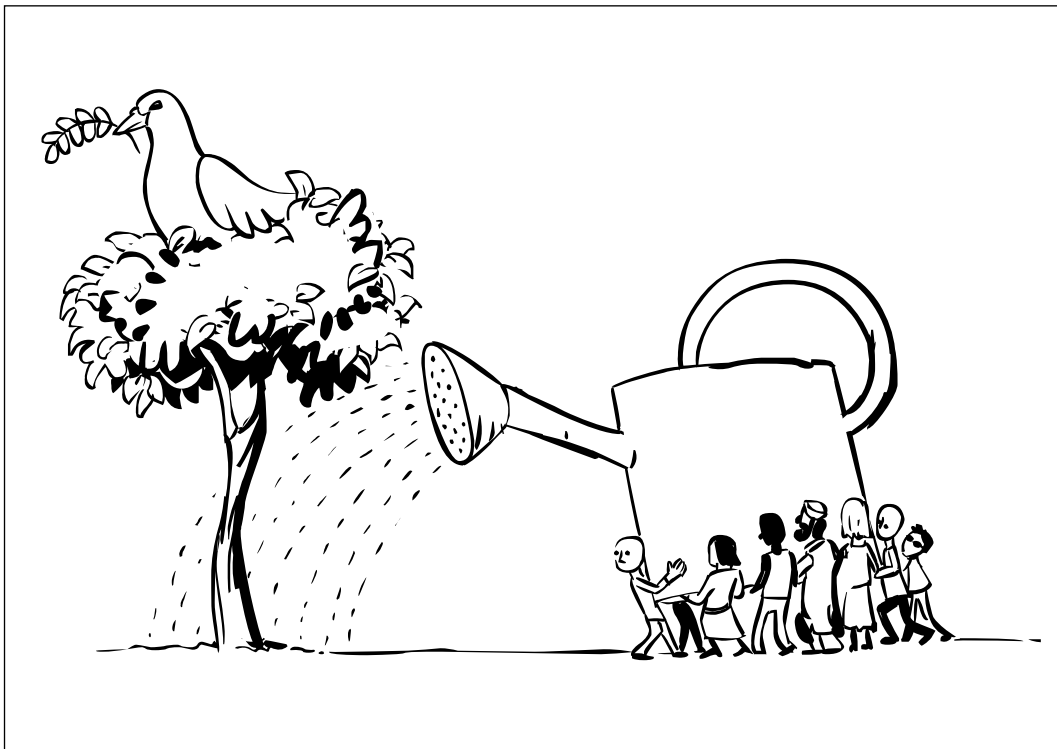
More information: www.unitedartists.com.

Dilemma 6: Democracy

DILEMMA

“The formal process of constitutional reform takes at least six months: a general sense that things are looking up as a result of economic reform is unlikely to spread before six years have passed: the third condition of the road to freedom is to provide the social foundations which transform the constitution and the economy from fair-weather into all-weather institutions capable of withstanding the storms generated within and without, and sixty years are barely enough to lay these foundations.”⁴⁷

Lord Ralf Dahrendorf



The number of armed interstate conflicts in the world has steadily declined since the early 1970s. Of the 91 interstate conflicts observed in 2008, only eight were conducted with the use of violence.⁴⁸ The global spread of democracy is commonly considered as one of the key explanations for this positive development. Research has shown that democracies do not usually wage war against each other. With the collapse of the Soviet Union, the end of communism in eastern Europe and the democratisation that followed, the world has become a more peaceful place. Democracy, in the eyes of many, is a solution for many problems.⁴⁹

Thomas L. Friedman has taken this idea even further in his “Golden Arches Theory of Conflict Prevention”.⁵⁰ He proposes that countries that have McDonald’s franchises will not go to war with one another since this would jeopardise their place in the global economic system, as symbolised by McDonald’s. Friedman’s theory, attractive

as it may be, has not been borne out by reality. In the first place, the definition of war used in assessing who is or has been at war with whom plays a role. Secondly, both the 1989 US intervention in Panama and the NATO bombing of Serbia in 1999 took place, and both countries have McDonald's fast-food restaurants.

Eccentricities aside, even if democratic states do not usually wage war against each other, they still go to war with states that have other forms of government. The United Kingdom and France, followed closely by the United States, all of which are established democracies, have been most involved in post-Second World War interstate armed conflicts.⁵¹ In the opinion of some, the ongoing wars in Afghanistan and Iraq are proof that war has become a tool for the export of democracy.⁵²

Neither does a democratic system guarantee peace inside countries. In his book *The Dark Side of Democracy – Explaining Ethnic Cleansing*, sociologist Michael Mann has argued that a major problem of modern democratic states is that the two terms that make up democracy, *demos* (the rule of the people), and *ethnos* (a group of people that share a common culture distinct from other people), have come to be misinterpreted. When the will of the people is replaced by the will of one ethnic group, the state becomes an *ethnocracy* instead of a democracy.⁵³ This means that the interests and rights of minorities become subordinated to the will of one ethnic majority, leading to social and political tensions and often outbreaks of violence.

One underlying problem is that the modern nation state was founded on the theoretical presumption of “one people, one state”. In reality, “ethnic” and other cultural differences are present in all states. The modern democratic state is structured to rule by the will of the majority. In states where “ethnicity” or “national culture” is the bond recognised by the state as uniting the majority, ethnic and national forms of exclusion are common. Paradoxical as it may seem, the democratic nation state can come to promote a form of tyranny, that of the majority. In its milder forms, exclusion is characterised by pressure to assimilate, by discrimination in employment and education (amongst other key areas), and by subordination or even suppression of minority languages and segregation of minorities from majority society. In its most extreme forms, exclusion will be characterised by expulsion, apartheid and even genocide. Policies of exclusion are usually state enforced, but violence against minorities also has social manifestations, including individual hate crimes and organised group attacks.⁵⁴ Indifference on the part of the largest part of the majority population perpetuates both state and society violence against minorities.

Such conflicts are more complex than many would care to admit. For many people in positions of power, it is convenient to label such conflicts “ethnic” or “religious” and to blame the minority community’s “lack of will to integrate” for their emergence. However, other factors play a key role in the emergence and perpetuation of such conflicts. More often than not, the distribution of power and resources is to the advantage of the political elite. It has little interest or motivation to share or give up any of these advantages. Ethnic and religious conflicts have often been used as a means of distracting attention from the self-enrichment of corrupt political elites, even in so-called democracies. In many newly founded “democratic states”, corrupt and self-serving state officials, often with the help of organised crime, were able to make off with state assets using dubious privatisation schemes by stirring up historically founded, but nevertheless latent suspicions between different ethnic and national communities.⁵⁵

It should also be noted that the motives for “national” self-determination can be very different from the real causes of the conflicts that commonly accompany the emer-

gence of self-determination movements. Unlike revolutionary movements, secessionist movements do not want to change the political status quo or overthrow the existing government. The demand is simply to start afresh by founding a new state. As such, they represent a threat to the territorial integrity of the nation state. Movements for secession and independence are created by profound dissatisfaction with the various forms of exclusion and political disenfranchisement experienced in the long term by the populations demanding self-determination. As of 2009 there were active secessionist movements in some European member states. Members of the Council of Europe are considered by the international community to be functioning democracies.⁵⁶

The existence of such conflicts begs the question of the extent to which democracies are capable of the full and equal inclusion of all citizens, regardless of their ethnic or religious origin. Might the quality of the democracy in question, and its ability to deliver justice to all, be a more important indicator for peace than the mere adoption of procedural democracy? If one takes ideas such as “positive peace”⁵⁷ seriously, then the answer is most certainly yes.

3.3.2 Stages of armed conflict

When thinking about how conflicts operate (namely, how they escalate and de-escalate), often the first thing that comes to mind is war between countries or urban violence. These are often the most common images of conflict in the media. This, however, can be misleading. In and of itself, a war is not a conflict, and neither is the violence that periodically erupts between rival gangs in large cities around the world. Rather, these are responses to conflict on the part of the conflict partners. For example, war is only one of the measures that states use for dealing with conflicts, and it can be the result of disputes over scarce water resources, access to oil reserves or political power. These are just some examples of underlying contradictions. Other approaches that a state can take in response to conflict include the imposition of boycotts, some form of international co-operation, or negotiations.

As such, it is important to remember that just because a conflict has the ingredients for violence, it does not necessarily mean that it is defined as an armed conflict. According to the Uppsala University Conflict Database, an internationally recognised tool that annually collects data on armed conflicts, an armed conflict is

... a contested incompatibility that concerns government and/or territory where the use of armed force between two parties, of which at least one is the government of a state, results in at least 25 battle-related deaths in one calendar year.⁵⁸

In armed conflicts, three chronologically ordered stages can be identified. These may reoccur in cycles if the conflict is not resolved completely. The stages are: pre-conflict, during-conflict and post-conflict. In most international/global conflicts, interventions take place during conflict and not in the pre-conflict and post-conflict stages. This is a reaction to the crisis undoubtedly experienced in the during-conflict stage. However, practice has shown the value of intervention in the pre- and post-conflict phases for preventing the outbreak of violence, in other words, for preventing the during-conflict stage.

Pre-conflict

The potential for violence exists at all times. This is because people have different values, needs and interests, and do not always know how to deal with conflicts in a non-violent manner. The pre-conflict phase is characterised by this potential. The contradiction is not yet highly visible and neither are the forms of violence. This phase can display every kind of conflict behaviour, from hostile attitudes and prejudices towards certain groups to shootings by a militia or brief skirmishes between rival gangs. The violence escalates and de-escalates alternately. This stage is also known as negative peace: there may be an absence of direct violence, but both structural and cultural violence are present.⁵⁹ Confrontational behaviour between the conflict parties usually signals the border between the pre-conflict phase and the outbreak of violence or the during-conflict phase. The approach to intervention used at this stage is referred to as conflict prevention. You can read more about conflict prevention in Chapter 4, in the section “Approaches to dealing with conflict: prevention, resolution, management and transformation”, p. 99

During conflict

At the peak of the conflict, known as the during-conflict phase, the violence is at its most intense, and people on all sides are being killed. Communications between the

sides have completely broken down. In the field of international relations, this phase is also described as “armed conflict”. For example, a minor armed conflict is defined by at least 25, but fewer than 1 000 battle-related deaths in a year. A major armed conflict has the same number of annual deaths and in total, at least 1 000 people killed in the conflict overall. “War” refers to when at least 1 000 battle-related deaths have occurred in a year.⁶⁰ These distinctions are only useful to a certain extent, however. They are not sensitive enough to the fact that there are many other kinds of armed conflict, ones that are not defined as wars taking place every day. One such example is the violence that takes place between armed gangs in large cities around the world. This kind of violence kills significant numbers of young people each year and the communities that are affected by it certainly experience many of the negative consequences of wars, although officially no “battle-related deaths” take place. One way or another, the crisis must come to an end, because escalation cannot continue indefinitely. In the case of wars, the involvement of external actors to bring about an end to the during-conflict phase is common. Their interventions can take the form of negotiations, mediation, boycotts or even military strikes. Violence usually decreases in intensity when the possibility of a settlement becomes known. At this point, intervention is required to bring the conflict to an end.

Post-conflict

When the violence has come to an end, and an agreement has been reached, the tension decreases and relationships can be re-established between the parties. However, considerable work still needs to be done to achieve positive peace (in other words, a situation of justice and an improvement in living conditions).⁶¹ It is therefore important to work on reintegration and the rebuilding of trust to avoid the recurrence of violence. Peace-building efforts work to repair damaged relationships with the long-term goal of reconciliation between former conflicting parties.

Something to think about!

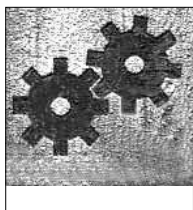
Identify the stage of violent conflict you address through your youth work. What kind of actions do you take? Why?

Youth work is often praised for making important contributions to peace-making efforts in both the pre- and post-conflict phases, rather than to the during-conflict phase. While this is accurate in one sense, it is also misleading in another. On the one hand, it has to be acknowledged that the basic conditions required for youth work to function are often no longer present in the during-conflict phase. These include safe buildings, trained youth work professionals, the availability of resources, mandates and legitimacy to work with the other side, and so on. At the same time, in the pre- and post-conflict phases, exactly because the situation has not yet gone “too far”, young people, their organisations and youth workers, may be able to convince elders, people in positions of authority and people who are close to them, to reconsider their hard-line positions. On the other hand, it is well known that youth work, whether formal or non-formal, nevertheless takes place even among hostilities, for example in refugee camps or “underground” (in other words, in secret), despite the dangers. It is also well known that youth work has the potential to literally take people out of the during-conflict context and, thereby, put them in another mindset, creating possibilities for more open-minded reconsideration of the conflict.

3.4 Conclusion

This chapter has reviewed some of the more theoretical ways of understanding what conflict is and how it works, linking different models for breaking conflict down into its component parts and different practical ways of conducting conflict analysis to youth work. In Chapter 4, “Youth working with conflict”, we will try to understand how specifically to engage with conflicts, in other words, how it is possible for youth work to make a contribution to intervening in conflicts constructively.

Resource box: understanding conflict



- Governance and Social Development Resource Centre – www.gsdr.org/go/topic-guides/conflict
- Conciliation Resources – www.c-r.org
- Responding to Conflict – www.respond.org
- International Centre of Excellence for the Study of Peace and Conflict – www.incore.ulst.ac.uk
- Center for Conflict Dynamics – www.conflictdynamics.org
- International Peace Institute – www.ipacademy.org



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- “Conducting Conflict Assessments: Guidance Notes”, DFID, 2002. Available at: <http://conflictsensitivity.org>.



- Beyond Intractability: a free knowledge base, www.beyondintractability.org.
- Understanding conflict – understanding peace. Learn Peace: A Peace Pledge Union Project, www.ppu.org.uk/learn/conflict/st_conflict.html.
- *Understanding Conflict and War* by Rummel R. J., www.mega.nu/ampp/rummel/ucw.htm.
- IDRC Digital library, <https://idl-bnc.idrc.ca/dspace>.
- ReliefWeb, www.reliefweb.int.
- *Berghof Handbook for Conflict Transformation*, www.berghof-handbook.net.
- “A Glossary of Terms and Concepts in Peace And Conflict Studies”, University For Peace, 2005. Available at: www.upeace.org/library/documents/GlossaryV2.pdf.

Notes

1. Please refer to the glossary for a full definition of sociometry.
2. International Alert and Saferworld, "Conflict-Sensitive Approaches to Development, Humanitarian Assistance and Peacebuilding: A Resource Pack", © FEWER, International Alert and Saferworld, 2003. All rights reserved. Available for download at: www.conflictsensitivity.org.
3. Titley G., "Resituating Culture: An Introduction", in Titley G. (ed.), *Resituating Culture* (Council of Europe Publishing, Strasbourg, 2004).
4. Titley G., "Plastic, Political and Contingent: Culture and Intercultural Learning in DYS Activities". Discussion document based on the evaluation of the LTTC Intercultural Learning and recent research activities, 2004. Available on request from the Directorate of Youth and Sport of the Council of Europe: youth@coe.int.
5. For more on culture, intercultural learning and youth work see Otten H., "Ten Theses on the Correlation between European Youth Work, Intercultural Learning and the Qualification and Professionalisation Demands on Full and Part-Time Staff Working in Such Contexts" (IKAB, Bonn, 2008), available online at www.ikab.de; see also www.nonformality.org.
6. Samuel P. Huntington is the author of this controversial theory, which was originally formulated in 1992, published in a 1993 article in the *Foreign Affairs* journal, and expanded in a 1996 book entitled *The Clash of Civilizations and the Remaking of World Order* (Simon & Schuster, New York, 1996). In broader public debate, the phrase has come to be used as a descriptive for a supposed contemporary social reality.
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8. Kibanov A. et al., *Conflictology: A Textbook* (INFRA-M, Moscow, 2007), p. 36 (original in Russian).
9. Adapted from Gregg Walker's table providing a selection of definitions of conflict. Available online at: www.campus-adr.org/CMHER/ReportResources/Definitions.html.
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19. Conflict Resolution Highlighted Resource (University of Wisconsin, HR Development). Available for download at: www.ohrd.wisc.edu/online/training/resolution/aboutwhatitis.htm.
20. Kloke K. and Goldsmith J., *Resolving Conflicts at Work* (Jossey-Bass, San Francisco, 2000).
21. To find out more about the prisoner experiment at Stanford University, "in-group favouritism" and "out-group discrimination", consult the following website: www.prisonexp.org. The 2001 German film *Das Experiment* (The Experiment), directed by Oliver Hirschbiegel, was inspired by the events of the Stanford prison experiment. It is based on the novel *Black Box* by Mario Giordano. The film tells the story of 19 prisoners who take part in a prison simulation experiment for two weeks. The candidates are selected by a computer to be either prisoner or guard. The experiment begins smoothly, but quickly deteriorates as the guards develop authoritarian tendencies. Professor Klaus Thon refuses to end the experiment, despite the protests of his assistant. As time progresses, the guards become increasingly violent, and go to great lengths to conceal their actions and to keep the experiment running. The prisoners resist as best they can, but suffer the consequences.
22. Malek C., "International Conflict, Conflict Resolution Information Source". Available for download at: http://v4.crinfo.org/CK_Essays/ck_international_conflict.jsp.

23. For more on intractable conflicts, please refer to the definition in the glossary and to Bercovitch J., *Characteristics of Intractable Conflicts*, in Burgess G. and Burgess H. (eds), *Beyond Intractability*, Conflict Research Consortium (Boulder, University of Colorado, 2003). Available for download at: www.beyondintractability.org.
24. Statistics on the consequences of violence and war for young people worldwide are not available, although the United Nations regularly publishes statistics on the situation of children in this context. At the time of writing the most recent report from the UN Secretary-General on children and armed conflict is that presented to the Security Council on 26 March 2009 (document reference number: A/63/785-S/2009/158). Available for download at: www.un.org/children/conflict/english/index.html.
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26. Jackson R. J., "Nato and Peacekeeping. Final Report for NATO Fellowship" (NATO, Brussels, 1997). Available online at: www.nato.int/acad/fellow/95-97/jackson.pdf.
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28. In political thought, this approach is commonly associated with the English philosopher Thomas Hobbes who, at the time of the civil war in England (1642-49), described the natural state of society as a "war of all against all". This condition can only be overcome by the establishment of an omnipotent state that guarantees security at the expense of individual freedom. For more detail, see Hobbes T., *Leviathan*, edited by Gaskin J. C. A. (Oxford University Press, Oxford, 1998). Available online at: <http://publicliterature.org/books/leviathan/xa.php>.
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30. The model was first developed by Dr John Paul Lederach, a Professor of International Peace Building at the University of Notre Dame, South Bend, Indiana, in the United States. He is also Distinguished Scholar at Eastern Mennonite University, also in the United States. He has participated in the development of peace processes in Somalia, Northern Ireland, Nicaragua, Colombia and Nepal. Within communities, his work has often been at the level of reconciliation within church and family. For more information, see: www.restorativejustice.org.
31. *Ibid.*, p. 40.
32. *Ibid.*, p. 41.
33. *Ibid.*, p. 42.
34. *Ibid.*, p. 52.
35. For more on this, refer to the "27 options model" in Chapter 4, p. 110.
36. Bunce V. and Wolchik S., "Youth and Post-Communist Electoral Revolutions: Never Trust Anyone Over 30?", in Forbrig J. and Demes P. (eds.), *Reclaiming Democracy. Civil Society and Electoral Change in Central and Eastern Europe* (German Marshall Fund of the United States and Erste Foundation, 2007).
37. Lauritzen P., "Their Violence", *Forum 21*, magazine of the Council of Europe, No. 2, 1981.
38. On the October 2005 riots in Paris, see: http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/in_depth/4417096.stm and on the May 2009 riots in Greece, see: www.euronews.net/2008/12/07/wave-of-riots-around-greece-after-teenager-shot/.
39. The most recent and mediatised cases include the Columbine High School in Colorado (USA) in April 1999, the Gutenberg Secondary School in Erfurt (Germany) in April 2002, and Winnenden Secondary School (Germany) in March 2009. Michael Moore made a documentary film about the social acceptance of guns in the United States entitled *Bowling for Columbine: Are We a Nation of Gun Nuts or Are We Just Nuts?* inspired by the case of the Columbine High School shooting. More information on the film is available at: www.bowlingforcolumbine.com/.
40. Lentin A. (ed.), "Learning from Violence: The Youth Dimension" (Directorate of Youth and Sport, Council of Europe, Strasbourg, 2004), p. 9.
41. Consultative meeting on the development of a long-term training course on access to social rights for young people from disadvantaged neighbourhoods, March 2009 (document reference number: DJS/EYCB/LTTC-SCI/2009/34; available on request from the Directorate of Youth and Sport of the Council of Europe: youth@coe.int).
42. In 2002-04, the Council of Europe undertook a project on responses to violence in everyday life in a democratic society, which resulted in an agenda for action for different authorities and young people; see: http://book.coe.int/EN/ficheouvrage.php?PAGEID=39&lang=EN&theme_catalogue=100185.
43. Galtung J., "Conflict as a Way of Life", in Galtung J. (ed.), *Peace and Social Structure: Essays in Peace Research*, Vol. III (Ejlers, Copenhagen, 1978).

44. Johan Galtung is a Norwegian sociologist and a principal founder of the discipline of peace and conflict studies. For more information, see www.transcend.org.
45. Galtung J., *Peace by Peaceful Means: Peace and Conflict, Development and Civilization* (Sage, London, 1996).
46. Friedrich Glasl is a political scientist and specialist in organisational development who specialises in reconciliation issues. Originally from Austria, he worked for many years in the Netherlands at the Institute for Organisational Development. He has been professionally active in many contexts including UNESCO, the city of Linz in Austria and the University of Salzburg. He has written several books on conflict management.
47. Ralf Dahrendorf was a German-British sociologist, philosopher, political scientist and politician. For this quote, see Dahrendorf R., *Reflections on the Revolution in Europe* (Chatto and Windus, London, 1990), pp. 99-100.
48. Heidelberg Institute for International Conflict Research, "Conflict Barometer 2008" (HIIC, Heidelberg, 2008). Available online at: http://hiik.de/en/konfliktbarometer/pdf/ConflictBarometer_2008.pdf.
49. This train of thought is widely associated with German philosopher Immanuel Kant who, in a 1795 essay entitled *Perpetual Peace*, reasoned that republican governments are less violent than other forms of government. Since this republican nature, understood as representative government with a division of legislative and executive powers, is also an ingredient of democratic governments, modern-day theorists extended this argument to state that democracies do not tend to fight wars with one another. For more detail, see Kant I., *Perpetual Peace* (Cosimo Classics, New York, 2005).
50. Friedman T. L., *The Lexus and the Olive Tree: Understanding Globalization* (Farrar, Straus and Giroux, New York, 1999).
51. The Soviet Union was also among those most active in inter-state wars after 1946, but it was not a democracy. Russia and some other former Soviet republics, which formally adopted procedural democracy, inherited the USSR's position in these rankings when the Soviet Union collapsed.
52. For more on the idea of war as a tool for exporting democracy, see Brecher J., Cultrur J. and Smith B., *In the Name of Democracy: American War Crimes in Iraq and Beyond* (Metropolitan Books, New York, 2005) and Khan J.-F., *Le Camp de la Guerre* (The Camp of War) (Fayard, Paris, 2004).
53. Mann M., *The Dark Side of Democracy: Explaining Ethnic Cleansing* (Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 2004).
54. For more detail on the concept of hate crime, refer to the glossary.
55. Glenny M., *McMafia: A Journey Through the Global Criminal Underworld* (Alfred Knopf, New York, 2008).
56. Robert Dahl's definition of democracy is widely accepted. It proposes that democracies all have the following seven characteristic institutions: elected officials – control over government decisions about policy is constitutionally vested in elected officials; free and fair elections – elected officials are chosen in frequent and fairly conducted elections in which coercion is comparatively uncommon; inclusive suffrage – practically all adults have the right to vote in the election of officials; right to run for office – practically all adults have the right to run for elective offices in the government, though age limits may be higher for holding office than for the suffrage; freedom of expression – citizens have a right to express themselves without the danger of severe punishment on political matters broadly defined, including criticism of officials, the government, the regime, the socio-economic order, and the prevailing ideology; alternative information – citizens have a right to seek out alternative sources of information. Moreover, alternative sources of information exist and are protected by laws; associational autonomy – to achieve their various rights, including those listed above, citizens also have a right to form relatively independent associations or organisations, including independent political parties and interest groups. Dahl calls democracies that conform to this description "polyarchies". Dahl published the original theory of "polyarchy" in 1956 in a paper entitled "A Preface to Democratic Theory" (University of Chicago, Chicago, 1956).
57. For more detail on the concepts of positive peace, refer to the relevant section in the glossary at the end of the book.
58. For a definition of war, please refer to the glossary, and for more in-depth explanations see the following website: www.pcr.uu.se.
59. For a full definition of negative peace, see the glossary.
60. See glossary and www.pcr.uu.se.
61. For a definition of positive peace, see the glossary.