



Introduction to conflict and political analysis

Conflict is a natural situation and natural state of affairs !!!

intensity Level	terminology	level of violence	intensity class
1	dispute	non-violent conflicts	low intensity
2	non-violent crisis		
3	violent crisis	violent conflicts	medium intensity
4	limited war		high intensity
5	war		

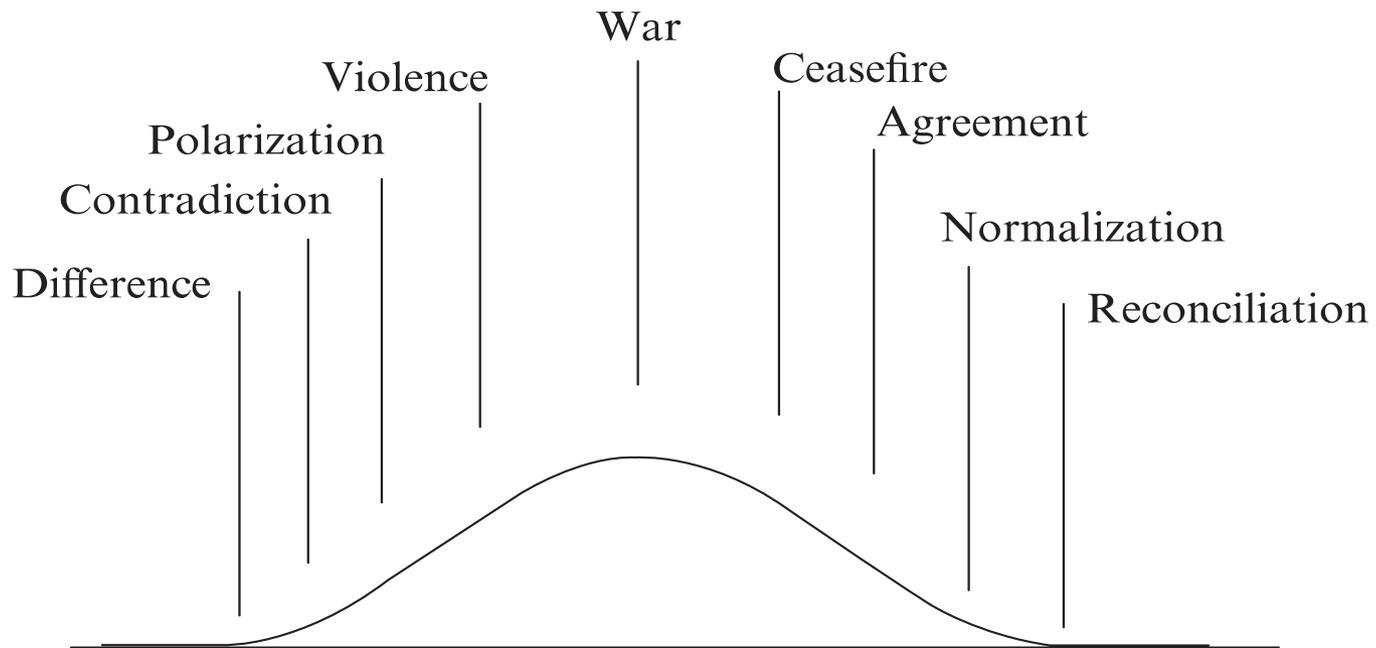
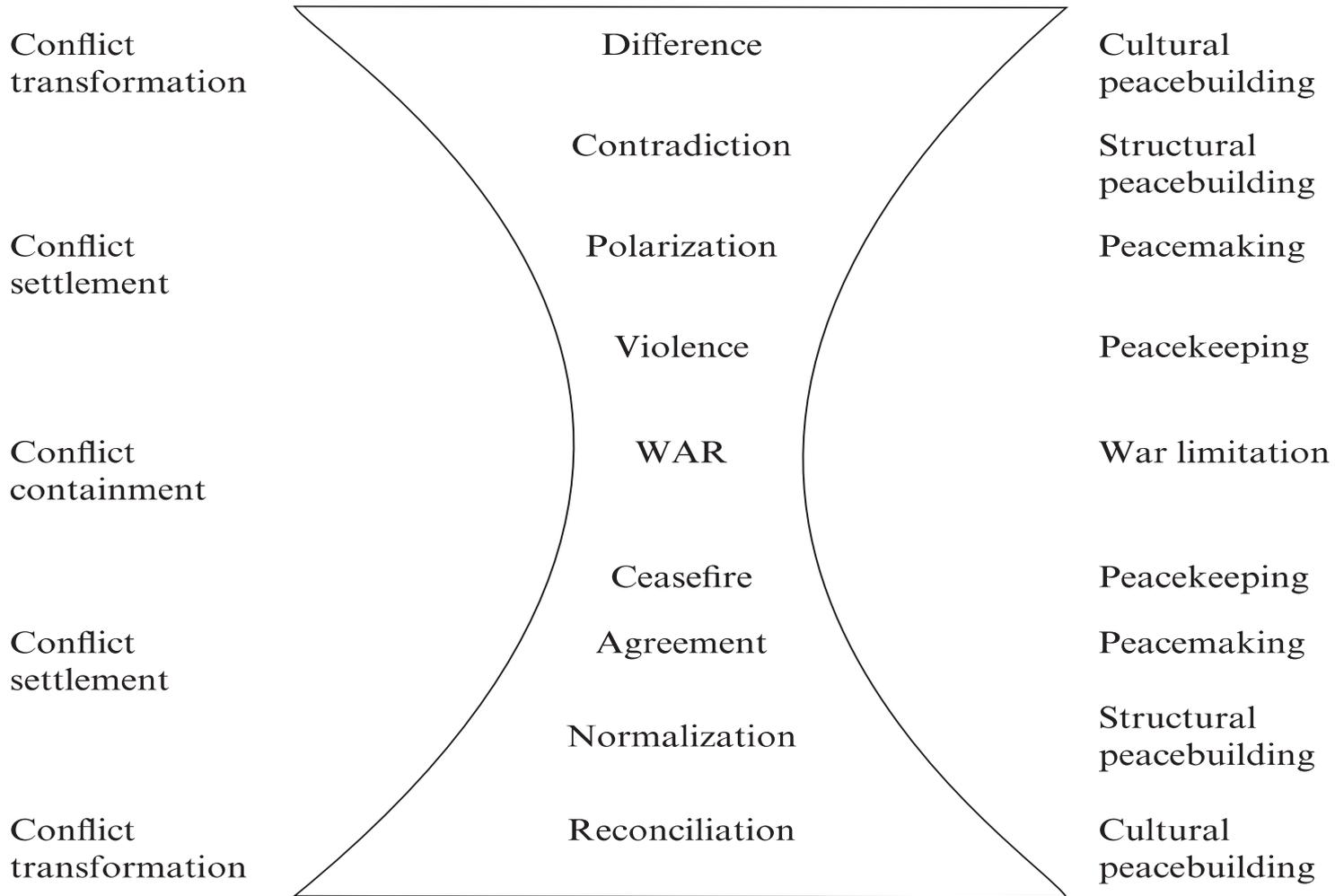


Figure 1.2 *Conflict escalation and de-escalation*







Underlying factors in conflicts

- Structural
- Economic
- Cultural
- Religious
- Ethnic
- Political

Characteristics of contemporary conflicts:

- Dominance of intrastate conflicts
- Non-linear patterns/stages
- Multiplication of actors and stakeholders
- Internationalization
- Intractability



Conflict and Political Analysis

- Understand background/history of situations and current events
- Identify relevant groups involved in the conflict including the hidden ones, i.e. “shadows”
- Understand the perceptions of groups in conflict and how they relate to each other
- Understand factors & trends that underpin conflict.

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5 core elements of conflict analysis:

- **People or Stakeholders, the WHO.**
 - **Issue or Core Problem, the WHAT.**
 - **Context, the WHERE and WHEN.**
 - **Process of Response, the HOW.**
- Interest and objectives - WHY**

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PEOPLE OR STAKEHOLDERS

- The life and dynamics of conflict depend on the emotions, personalities, perceptions, culture, interests or agendas, and relative influence of the people in the conflict.
- Stakeholders can be primary, secondary, or interested.

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CORE PROBLEM OR ISSUE

- The contending issue that results in the clash between the people. It is often multi-dimensional. By resolving one part does not necessary end the conflict.
- Problem sometimes has root causes. It is important to understand all the dimensions and sources of the conflict.
- Problem is dynamic. It changes or multiplies or decreases during the life of the conflict

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PROCESS

- Process is how the parties are responding to the conflict
- There are two main responses though they are expressed in several forms—violence and nonviolence
- Process also changes overtime; Either violence intensifies or the parties see reason and turn to nonviolent means
- Societies have evolved ways of responding to conflict. Each society has unique nuances relevant only to their context

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CONTEXT

Refers to conditions that embed a conflict situation. They can be cross-cutting conditions: prevailing perceptions, geographic location, demographic composition, and historical or sectoral: political, social, economic, religious, etc.

- What are the geographical boundaries?
- What natural resources are serving as incentives for the conflict?
- How do local, national and international actors define the context?

Stakeholder analysis

- who the stakeholders are;
- the extent to which each group of stakeholders is affected by the conflict;
- who is most affected and should be directly involved in managing the conflict;
- the relative power and influence of different groups regarding the issues, including any obstacles to a particular group's participation in conflict management processes;
- stakeholders' interests and expectations;
- the possible different responses of the conflict stakeholders;
- the relationships among stakeholder groups;
- difficulties that stakeholders are likely to have in working together;
- each group's potential contribution to managing the conflict;
- the extent to which individuals' and groups' interests overlap with each other.

Context analysis

Why is there conflict? What is it about? This leads us to exploring the meaning carried by those engaging in or observing the conflict? How is the meaning informing their behaviour and attitude towards the conflict?

What social, political, economical, religious root or systemic conditions feed the conflict?

Where is the conflict located (Geography—border, scope, topography, vegetation, climate, etc.);

What in history drives the conflict (past historical relations, myths)

Who is involved and/or affected by the conflict? What are their roles and conditions? Demography and categories of people—women, children, elderly, cultural groups, number, population density, quality of life?

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Causes

What are the structural causes of conflict?

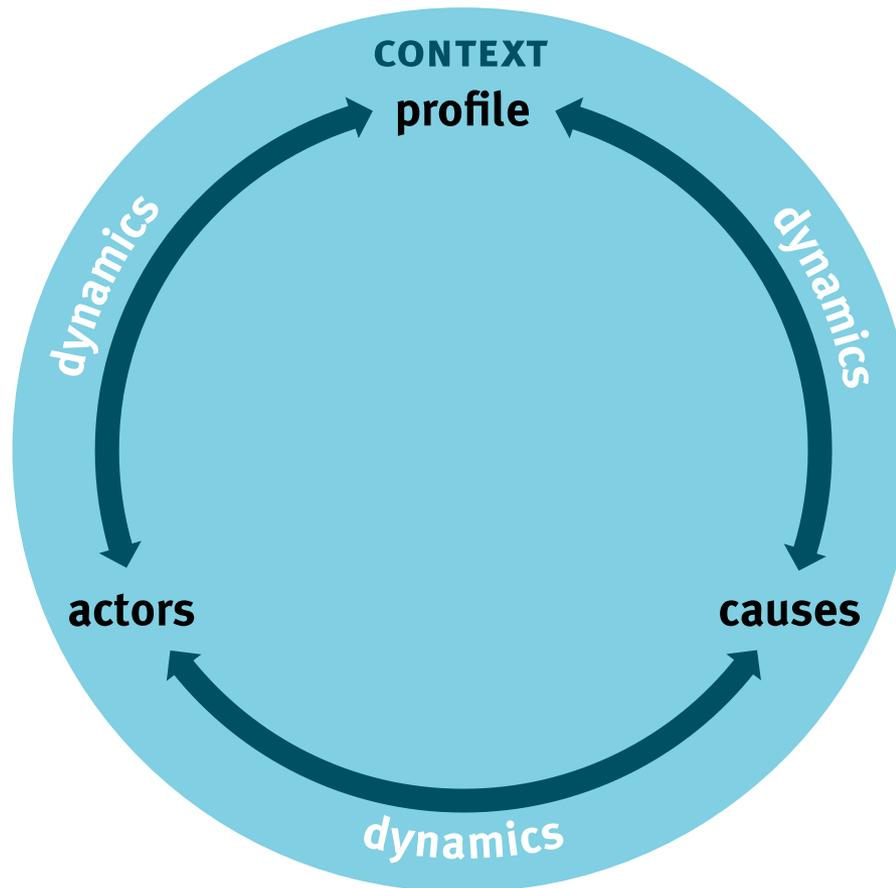
What issues can be considered as proximate causes of conflict?

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

What new factors contribute to prolonging conflict dynamics?

What factors can contribute to peace?

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