Tools For Conflict Analysis and Resolution
Sciences Po Lille, 2022

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Aim of Course: Conflict in its many forms has been a permanent feature of human history. While not all conflict is destructive, violent conflict has caused innumerable deaths and intense suffering. Over the centuries, inter-state war has been the major concern of the international community. The Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries are widely regarded as the most violent and destructive period of the modern era. As a result of the massive loss of life over the past two centuries, the study of conflict has developed considerably. Many books and articles have been written on the causes of war and the prospects for peace among sovereign states in world society.

Today, however, the vast majority of conflicts and potential conflicts of concern to the international community are internal conflicts, most often in states or across regions undergoing major political, social, and economic transition and dislocation. These conflicts generally have different causes from inter-state war, as well as different effects and dynamics. A major challenge is to improve our understanding of such conflict in order to develop new approaches to conflict management and prevention.

Tools for Conflict Analysis is designed to examine the various practical tools that have been developed to map, understand and analyze conflict in its different forms with a particular focus on contemporary conflicts and civil wars. The course will also provide an opportunity to apply these tools to specific cases of conflict. To this end, students will be required for their *final assessment* to choose one case study of contemporary conflict and conduct an analytical description of the chosen conflict, notably using conflict mapping instruments.

Practicalities: Students are expected to attend all lectures, and to contribute to class discussions.

Assessment: The students will apply the acquired knowledge and skills to the preparation of a written essay focusing on a specific case study. The essay provides students with an opportunity to focus on tools and issues discussed in the course and to pursue them in some depth using various sources of data (academic literature, policy-related literature, news articles, think tank and NGO-generated data, etc.).

The essay should be up to between 4,000 and 5,000 words in length, including footnotes and references. The essay should demonstrate the student's ability to carry out effective research, their analytical skills, and their ability to present an informed and well-written argument.

The essay, whose focus has to be pre-agreed with the course convenor, should address an ongoing or recent violent conflict, and seek to explain it drawing upon tools explored in the course. The essay is worth 100% of the final mark.

Course Material: Some useful sources are:

Journals:

- *Conflict Resolution Quarterly*
- *Conflict, Security and Development*
- *Cooperation and Conflict*
- *International Peacekeeping*
- *Journal of Conflict Resolution*
- *Journal of Peacebuilding and Development*
- *Journal of Peace Research*
- *Peacebuilding*
- *Peace Review*
- *Security Dialogue*

Some Internet Source Materials:

http://www.oxfordresearchgroup.org.uk/
http://globalpolicy.gmu.edu/
http://visionofhumanity.org
http://www.systemicpeace.org/
http://www.prio.no/
http://www.rand.org/research_areas/terrorism/database/
http://www.sipri.org
http://www.mar.umd.edu
https://www.ucdp.uu.se
https://www.crisisgroup.org

Course Outline

Introduction
- Why conflict analysis?
- History of conflict analysis
- Obstacles to conflict analysis
- Guiding principles for conflict analysis

1. **From conflict to violence to war**
   a. International classifications and databases
   b. Current trends
   c. Group work 1

2. **Understanding what conflicts are about**
   a. Causes, stakes, issues and dimensions of conflicts
   b. The iceberg (group work 2)
   c. Criteria for comparing conflicts
   d. Categories of actors
   e. The pyramid
   f. Galtung's triangle
   g. Levels of analysis
   h. The conflict tree (group work 3)

3. **Understanding conflict escalation**
    a. How does conflict escalation occur?
    b. The concept of conflict escalation
    c. Psychological mechanisms of conflict escalation
    d. The probability of escalation
    e. Patterns of escalation: Signal flares, accelerators and triggering factors
    f. The onion (group work 4)
    g. The concept of early warning
    h. From early warning to monitoring
    i. Crucial points to influence policy makers
    j. Early warning, monitoring and action

4. **Understanding the cycle of conflict**
    a. The cycle of conflict and related conflict resolution tools
    b. The conflict curve (Lund)
    c. Potential interventions on the conflict cycle
    d. Multiple "carrot and stick" approaches
    e. Force-field analysis
    f. Timelines (group work 5)

5. **Preparing a conflict map**
    a. Conflict tracking guide
    b. Using maps and cartographies
    c. Introduction to conflict mapping (group work 6)

A short bibliography

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OLIVA Fabio, CHARBONNIER Lorraine (2016). *Conflict Analysis Handbook. A Field and Headquarter Guide to Conflict Assessments*. Turin: United Nations System Staff College.
ROUSSET, J. and SÖDERHOLM, A. (2015). *Conflict Analysis in the United Nations: A review of the current state of information exchange between OCHA, DPA and DPKO*. London School of Economics and Political Science, OCHA.
SANDOLE, Dennis, Sean BYRNE, Ingrid SANDOLE-STAROSTA, and Jessica SENEHI (eds.) (2009). *Handbook of Conflict Analysis and Resolution*. London: Routledge.