Violent internal conflicts pose a major challenge to development. Violent conflicts occur disproportionately in poor countries and are detrimental to the Bank's mission of poverty reduction. They constrain development efforts, divert scarce financial and physical resources, and weaken a country's social fabric and human capital.[1]

To address issues related to violent conflict, the Bank's Operational Policy on Development Cooperation and Conflict (OP2.30) mandates the integration of sensitivity to conflict in Bank assistance through conflict analysis. The need for conflict analysis is based on the recognition that the probability of success of development assistance is improved by a complementary analytical framework that identifies sources of violent conflicts and opportunities for their outbreak and escalation. The Conflict Analysis Framework (CAF) seeks to support country and regional efforts to analyze and address conflicts in the context of country assistance, poverty reduction and other development strategies.

CAF aims to highlight key factors influencing conflict, focusing on six areas: social and ethnic relations; governance and political institutions; human rights and security; economic structure and performance; environment and natural resources; and external factors. A better understanding of what affects the level and dynamics of conflict can help operational teams ensure that development interventions do not instigate, exacerbate, or revive situations of violent conflict, but instead—if well designed—help reduce conflict.

Conflict Analysis and Conflict Prevention

Conflict is inherent to all societies. Differences in interests and opinions between groups are natural, but how such differences are expressed and managed determines if conflicts manifest themselves in primarily political (non-violent) or violent ways. When groups within a society—including the government—pursue their objectives in accordance with the laws and established norms of that society, conflict tends to be predominantly political.[2] In other cases, groups turn to violence to pursue their goals, and the use of violence outweighs the use of political means. These violent conflicts are of concern to poverty reduction and development, and are addressed by CAF. In this context, conflict prevention would entail activities that can reduce the likelihood that conflicts will turn violent.

The Bank's contribution to conflict prevention is two-fold. It supports strategies and activities that aim at making countries more resilient to the eruption and escalation of violent conflict, and programs that address the sources of conflict. Building resilience to violent conflict involves the strengthening of participatory and inclusive social processes and institutions that may help manage conflicts in non-violent ways. Sources of conflict differ from country to country, and include root causes of conflict as well as opportunities for groups to engage in violent activities. Some of the sources are addressed by the Bank through poverty reduction and other development assistance. Examples of sources include youth unemployment, differential social opportunities, and a country's reliance on high-value primary commodities.

Conflict analysis is a critical cog in conflict prevention as it can help highlight potential areas of concern, and guide a development strategy that addresses potential sources of conflict and identifies opportunities to strengthen conflict resiliency.

When to Conduct Conflict Analysis

CAF is designed for country-level analysis (or for a province or region in a large country) and is expected to contribute to poverty reduction strategies and other country strategies. It can be used as a stand-alone analysis or as a part of an upstream macro-social analysis.[3] To ascertain whether a country needs to undertake conflict analysis, CAF includes a brief screening process, consisting of nine main indicators (table below).[4] While each of these factors could play a determinant role, none of them is individually necessary nor sufficient for the outbreak, escalation or revival of violent conflicts. Still, high scoring on several of these indicators suggests the need for conflict analysis.

Risk Screening Indicators

Indicators	Relation to Conflict
1. History of conflict	If a country has experienced violent conflict in the past 10 years, there is a high possibility of recurrence of conflict.
2. Income per capita	Countries with low per capita Gross National Incomes are more likely to experience violent conflict.
3. Primary commodity exports	Countries with a high dependence on primary commodity exports face a higher risk of experiencing violent conflict.
4. Political instability:	
• Transformation of state structure	• Restructuring of the state at frequent intervals signals serious instability and the likelihood that violence may be employed to bring about systemic changes.
• Breakdown of law and order	• When the government is not able to maintain control or effective rule (in certain parts or throughout the country), the breakdown of law and order, and hence violence, is likely. In terms of their link to violent conflict, these two aspects can occur in tandem or independently.
5. Political and civil rights	The deliberate and systematic denial of civil liberties and political rights increases the likelihood that groups will express dissenting views through violence, thus increasing the probability of violent conflict.
6. Militarization	Countries may have high defense spending as a share of GDP, and large armies as proportion of their population. Militarization may also include the availability of arms and the existence of armed non-state actors. These factors suggest the likelihood of emerging or escalating violent conflict.
7. Ethnic dominance	When one ethnic group controls state institutions and/or the economy, there is a high risk of outbreak of violent conflict.
8. Active regional conflicts	Regional conflicts are likely to have a cascading effect, such that the internal stability of a country is threatened, increasing the probability of violent conflict.
9. Youth unemployment	Youth unemployment (especially for males) can have a critical bearing on the probability of violent conflict. Lack of jobs and opportunities tend to create frustration, making unemployed youth prime candidates for recruitment by militant organizations with funds and arms at their disposal.

Conducting Conflict Analysis

If a country is found to be at risk of violent conflict, or is already experiencing large-scale violence, a full conflict analysis should be conducted. CAF uses six categories of variables related to conflict. The categories consist of several variables, each with corresponding indicators on three levels of intensity (warning; increasing intensity; de-escalation) that reflect change in the level of violent conflict. These indicators are used to estimate the impact of a variable on a country's level of conflict and its link with poverty. As a consequence, sensitive issues are highlighted so that programs can take them into account. The importance of the different variables differs from country to country, and from conflict to conflict. A factor that has a strong impact on conflict in country A might have less relevance in country B and none in country C. The framework attempts to be both comprehensive and flexible to guide analysis in very different country situations, each with unique characteristics. Bank country teams should therefore adapt CAF to their particular situation, by translating the generic variables presented in the framework to the specific country situation, and add or delete variables according to their relevance. The teams' country knowledge is important in determining the specific dynamics and linkages.

Categories of Variables

Social and Ethnic Relations	Governance and Political Institutions	Human Rights and Security	Economic Structure and Performance	Environment and Natural Resources	External Forces
Social and economic cleavages	Governance and political institutions	Role of media and freedom of expression	Economic growth	Availability of natural resources	Regional conflicts
Ethnic cleavages	Stability of political institutions	Human rights status	Income disparities	Access to natural resources (including land)	Role of kindred groups outside country
Regional imbalances		Militarization of society	Per capita income changes		Role of diasporas
Differential social opportunities	Equity of law/judicial system	Security of civilians	Inflationary trends	In-country and cross-border competition over natural resources	
Bridging social capital			External debt management		
Group identity-building	Links between government and citizens		Reliance on high-value primary commodities		
Myth-making			Employment and access to productive resources		
Culture or tradition of violence			Conflict-induced poverty		

Analysis of each variable is done along seven dimensions to determine the way it relates to conflict and to poverty:

- history/changes: how the issue has evolved over a pertinent time span;
- dynamics/trends: what is determining the future path of the issue, and how it is likely to develop;
- public perceptions: public attitudes and biases regarding the issue;
- politicization: how the issue is used politically by different groups;
- organization: the extent to which the issue has led to the establishment of interest groups, and/or influenced political parties and militant organizations;
- link to conflict and intensity: how the factor contributes to conflict and the current level of intensity; and
- link to poverty: how the issue relates to poverty.

The results of the analysis on the above seven dimensions will help develop a prioritized list of factors that relate closely with conflict, according to their degree of import. Factors with a high degree of impact on conflict and poverty, especially if their degree of importance is increasing, should be considered priority areas and be of special concern in country strategies. The analysis of each variable would provide essential information about how the factors play out in the country, and should guide development assistance on the issue.

Based on the needs and opportunities of the specific country, conflict analysis can be conducted along the following steps:

1. Reinterpretation of existing information on the conflict situation of a country along the lines of CAF (brief desk study);
2. Workshops with country specialists to cover each of the six CAF categories;
3. Follow-up studies, as needed, on issues identified in the workshop;
4. Country consultation with different stakeholder groups, as needed; and
5. Concluding workshops to discuss integration into the poverty reduction strategy, country strategy or other country programs.

Integrating Conflict Analysis into Strategy

While there is an increasing awareness both in the Bank and among partners about the potential folly of ignoring conflict in strategy work, many country development strategies still remain largely "conflict blind". At worst, conflict-blind development assistance may inadvertently exacerbate conflict; at best, it may simply be irrelevant to the issues that force many of a country's citizens into a situation of violent conflict.

In one country case, the policy of limiting access to higher education for a minority ethnic group has been a contributing factor to two decades of deadly internal war. The reasons for the dominant ethnic group to limit such access lie in the social patterns that developed during and after colonial rule. When the country achieved independence, the smaller ethnic group had a share of higher education, and of civil service and professional jobs, that went far beyond its proportion of the general population. Nationalism and mythmaking had become important elements in a post-independence strategy by the dominant ethnic group to

consolidate power and extend its dominance into the economic sphere. It used its control of state institutions to curb access to higher education, and thus to societal influence, by the smaller ethnic group. When a militant struggle for secession evolved within the ethnic minority around a multitude of issues, the feeling of discrimination was key in the recruitment of a cadre of militants and the issue of access to education became a highly symbolic rallying point.

By using CAF as a tool to make sense of this situation and help determine how development assistance could contribute to address issues that had plagued the country for decades, planners were able to zoom in on several key variables for analysis: social and economic cleavages, ethnic cleavages, regional imbalances, horizontal social capital, mythmaking, governance and political institutions, income disparities, employment and access to productive resources, and the role of the diaspora. The critical issue of access to higher education was analyzed under the variable of 'differential social opportunities' and planners traced the history and the changes that had taken place pre- and post-independence, they analyzed the wider issues that constrain equality in education today and how they are likely to develop, and they considered public attitudes and biases within several sub-categories of the two ethnic groups. The analysis of the variable further included the important questions of how the issue of access to education had been, and still is, politicized by key players, and of the different organizations and parties that had been formed or influenced by this issue, and how they in turn were able to influence changes in the education sector.

Application of CAF on the issue of education in this particular country revealed the kind of implications there were on the society. First, how and to what extent this issue continued to fuel the conflict—had it become mainly a symbolic issue or was it still a key rallying point for young people in several parts of the country? Second, what had been the demographic and economic consequences of the educational policies, and how had they affected the patterns of poverty in the country?

The analysis found that the way the ethnic divisions and animosities manifested themselves within the education structure of the country went beyond the visible ethnic discrimination, and that it included long-lasting and insidious effects on the organizational structure of educational institutions, the training of teachers, and the content of textbooks and syllabi. It found language-based segregation to take place within most schools and universities, and such segregation to be increasingly replicated within other spheres of the society, making the animosity ever more entrenched. It found that the issue of education had a direct effect on both conflict and poverty. A large number of young people in ethnic minority areas were unable to enroll in higher education despite being qualified academically, many of them remained unemployed for long periods of time, and a substantial number of those being unemployed were recruited into the militant rebel groups. The discriminatory education system also had indirect effects on poverty. The difficulty of finding qualified teachers in ethnic minority areas negatively affected the quality of education and further limited economic opportunities for young people. Also, the violent conflict itself disrupted productive activities and limited investments, thereby increasing even further the social, economic and regional disparities that had sparked the conflict in the first place.

The analysis prompted a recommendation for program support to reorganize the ethno-linguistically segregated educational institutions (schools, universities and teacher training institutes), rewrite the ethnically biased contents of school texts, and train the teachers to meet the challenges of a multiethnic and multicultural society.

Conclusion
CAF is a tool for analyzing factors that have shown to affect or be affected by conflict. Conflict analysis can contribute to the development of conflict-sensitive approaches, to view development through a conflict lens, and to help development actors design strategies and interventions that stand a better chance of not exacerbating conflict but also to help make societies more resilient to violent conflict.

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[1] Nils Petter Gleditsch, et al, *Armed Conflict 1946-1999: A New Dataset*, 2002. In 2000, out of 25 countries classified as being in conflict, 16 were low-income; 7 were lower middle income and 2 were upper-middle and high-income countries.
[2] In some cases, the state laws themselves promote exclusion, prevent participation, and make groups feel that they have no peaceful, political alternatives, and that violence is their only option.

[3] See the Social Analysis Sourcebook developed by the World Bank (August 2002): www.worldbank.org/socialanalysissourcebook
[4] These indicators were selected by the Conflict Prevention and Reconstruction Unit in consultation with the Research Group, DECRG, World Bank. They do not necessarily represent causes of conflict, but have shown to be closely correlated with the occurrence of violent conflict. For further details on indicators, please refer to the CAF document, available from cpr@worldbank.org.