

Slide 1


Conflict Frontiers

Moving
Beyond Intractability


Conflict Frontiers
Massive Open Online Seminar

Identify the Core Issues in Dispute

Massive Open Online Seminar



Heidi Burgess & Guy Burgess
Co-Directors




Conflict Information Consortium, University of Colorado
UCB 580, University of Colorado, Boulder, CO 80309-0580, (303) 492-1635, burgess@colorado.edu
Copyright © 2018 Guy Burgess and Heidi Burgess

Hi! this is Heidi Burgess. Today I'd like to talk about how one can identify and map the core issues in a conflict or dispute.

Slide 2

Conflict Frontiers

Burgess's Conflict Core and Overlay (Complicating) Factors



Crust
Continental crust (granitic)
Oceanic crust (basaltic)

Ice cap

Asthenosphere
Rigid mantle

earth
drawn to scale

Softer mantle

Outer core
(liquid)

Inner core
(solid)

Continent
Ocean

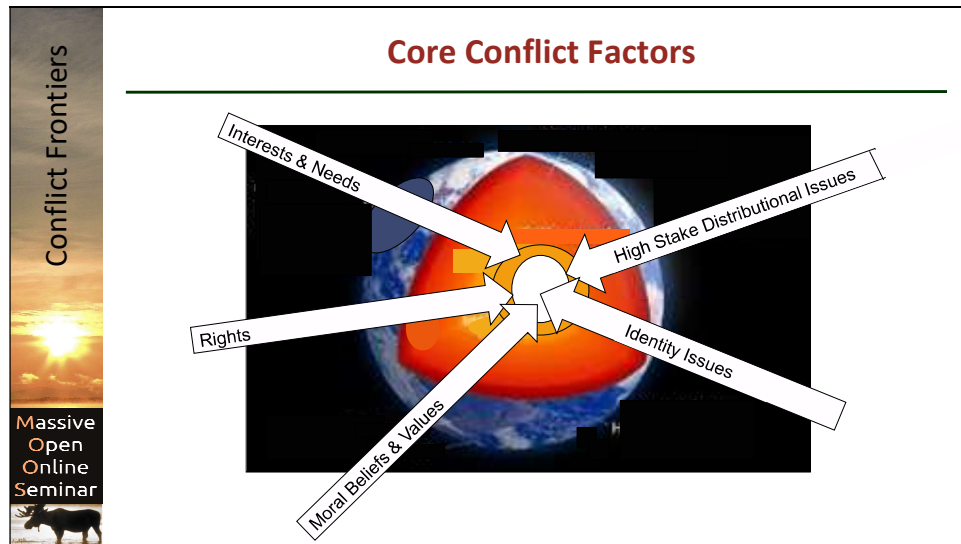
Atmosphere
Hydrosphere

In the last video and a couple other videos. I compared the core conflict and the conflict overlays to this picture of the earth. The notion is that just like the Earth has a hot core and lots of layers of rock and liquid rock over the core, so too do conflicts.

File from

Wikipedia: https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/0/07/Earth_poster.svg. Permission/attribution: By Kelvinsong (Own work) [CC BY-SA 3.0 (<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/3.0>)], via Wikimedia Commons.

Slide 3



Typically, the core conflict is made up of high-stakes distributional issues--in other words, who's going to get what: jobs, education—things that really, REALLY matter. It is also made up of identity issues which are very fundamental human needs, moral beliefs and values, rights, and other fundamental interests and needs (in addition to identity).

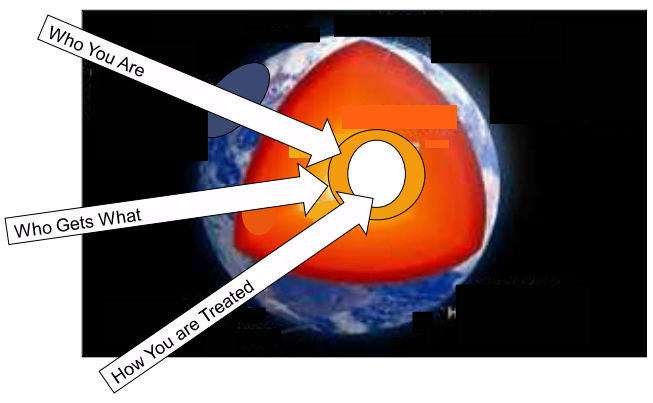
Picture Credits:

Wikipedia: https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/0/07/Earth_poster.svg. Permission/attribution: By Kelvinsong (Own work) [CC BY-SA 3.0 (<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/3.0>)], via Wikimedia Commons.

Slide 4

Conflict Frontiers

Core Conflict Factors



Who You Are

Who Gets What

How You are Treated

Massive Open Online Seminar

Another way to put this is core conflicts tend to be about who you are, who gets what, and how you are treated.

Slide 5

Conflict Frontiers

For Example



Interests & Needs: Security, Identity, Stability, Status
Rights: Rule of Law—and not.
Values: Fundamentalist Christian; "America First"
Distributional Issues: Jobs

Interests & Needs: Security, Opportunity, Identity, Respect.
Rights: Right to seek asylum, fair processes
Values: Christian, hard work, family.
Distributional Issues: education, jobs,

Massive Open Online Seminar

An example of how this plays out in the real world is the immigration conflict between Trump and the anti-immigration Republicans, on one side, and the immigrants and the pro-immigration mostly, but not entirely, Democrats on the other side. Let's look at the core issues that are driving both sides in this conflict.

On the Republican side, one of the core issues is security. There's been a lot of talk about how whites are going to become the minority race in this country. There is a fear that jobs are being lost. As more and more immigrants are coming in and taking those jobs and additionally, Trump supporters think that immigrants are driving wages down.

There is a fear that their communities are changing--that their uniform white, male dominated society of the past is becoming much more complex, much more diverse, and that makes some people feel uncomfortable and threatened. So they are seeking security, both in terms of their well-being and their jobs, and their identity and their status. They seek stability in their cultures and their communities, rather than change.

In terms of rights, they want to see the law enforced. They don't like the idea of people being able to come into this country illegally and work and hide and successfully pretend that they are American citizens. However, they're not really committed to the rule of law--at least Trump isn't committed to rule of laws. Today, he called the deportation of people who cross the border illegally, without due process. So he is in favor of the rule of law as long as it works in his favor.

This group's values are primarily fundamentalist Christian. That's an oversimplification, of course, but that's a big driving factor among the "America first" identity group, and indeed, "America first" is a core value. Oftentimes, it means white America or even white, male America first which is a driving value.

In terms of distribution, the key issue is probably jobs. They see their jobs disappearing as immigrants come in and take them.

On the other side, the interests and needs are actually somewhat parallel. Security is the biggest one. The reason that immigrants are coming to the United States from Central and South America is because those societies are falling apart. They are war-torn and gang-torn and the drug trade is leading to lots of violence as well. So people are feeling very insecure. Their economies are not good enough to give good jobs to everybody, so they're coming to the United States to seek opportunity. They want respect and they want their identity preserved, but they want to be able to live here safely and securely while maintaining their basic culture.

As for rights they want rule of law, which means that they want fair process. They want the right to seek asylum as our laws say they have the right to do, and they want to be able to gain citizenship--most of them want anyway. This is particularly true for "the dreamers." The dreamers are young adults and children who were brought to the United States by their parents when they were minors. They are being threatened with deportation since they are not legal citizens, but there is nowhere for them to go. Many of them never knew the country from which their parents came. So they really don't have a home to be deported to.

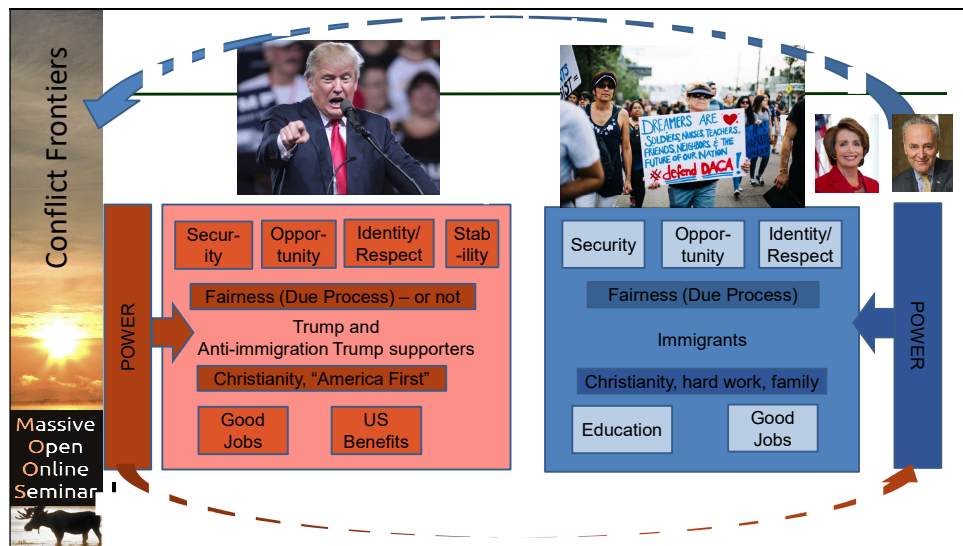
In terms of values, most of the folks who are in their crosshairs of the immigration conflict now are Christian, because are coming from Central and South America. They value hard work and they value family--not all that much different from what Americans value. But they are clashing with anti-immigrant Americans nevertheless.

In terms of distributional issues, they are seeking education and jobs just like the Republicans are--although I left education off the Republican side because that doesn't seem to be as much of a priority for Republicans as it is for the immigrants.

Picture Credits: Donald Trump: Picture by Gage Skidmore; On flickr at: <https://www.flickr.com/photos/gageskidmore/27484886630>. CC BY-SA 2.0.

Dreamers march by Molly Adams. On Flickr at: <https://www.flickr.com/photos/mollyswork/36774203140>. Creative Commons Attribution 2.0 Generic (CC BY 2.0)

Slide 6



So if we were to put this in a map, the first map that I would draw would look something like this. You'll see on both sides, there is a concept of power. Both sides are looking to gain power and use that power to gain their interests, needs, values, and distributional goods.

In terms of the anti-immigrants—Trump and supporters, they are looking, as I said before, for security, for opportunity, for identity, for respect, stability and good jobs and US benefits. And they think they're going to get this by having more power than the other side.

Indeed, with President Trump in office, a Republican Congress and the Supreme Court becoming increasingly Republican, the red side--that's the Trump-Republican side IS gaining a tremendous amount of power. So the notion is, the more power they have, the less power the other side has.

Now, I put two new pictures on this slide of Nancy Pelosi and Chuck Schumer, who, of course, are leaders of the U.S. House and Senate, respectively on the Democratic side. They, together with all of the American citizens who are supporting immigration who are shown in the front big picture on the right, these folks are giving power to the immigrants (I should have put the Dems on the left, I suppose, and Trump and the Republicans on the right...but I didn't.)

So the immigrants are seeking security, opportunity, identity, respect, education, and good jobs. They want to support their families and they think they need more power to do this. And they are right! Everybody on both sides agrees that the more power that the Republicans have, the less power they immigrants have and if the immigrants gain power, particularly, if they gain citizenship. the fear (among Republicans) is that they will vote Democratic. Then the Republicans will lose power. So power seems to be a negative relationship. The more one side has, the less the other side has. In conflict maps, that's typically shown by a dotted arrow. So there's a dotted arrow going from the Republicans' power to the Democrats' power. And there's a dotted arrow going back the other way: whoever has more, the other has less. That's the simple assumption, but it's not entirely true.

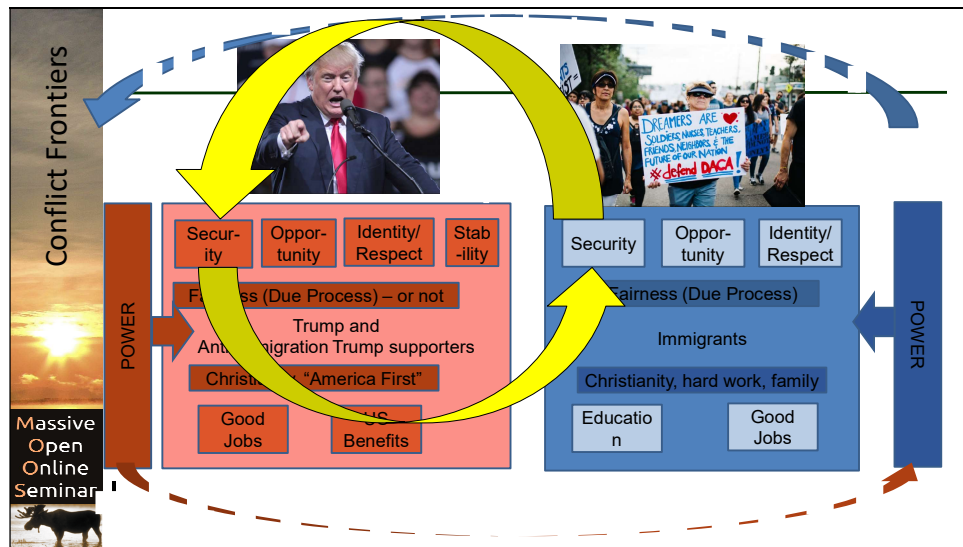
Picture Credits: Donald Trump: Picture by Gage Skidmore; On flickr at:
<https://www.flickr.com/photos/gageskidmore/27484886630>. CC BY-SA 2.0.

Dreamers march by Molly Adams. On Flickr at:
<https://www.flickr.com/photos/mollyswork/36774203140>. Creative Commons Attribution 2.0 Generic (CC BY 2.0)

Nancy Pelosi: Picture from:
https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Speaker_Nancy_Pelosi.jpg. Attribution: By Lauren Victoria Burke [Public domain], via Wikimedia Commons.

Chuck Schumer: Chuck Schumer official photo from
[https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Chuck_Schumer_official_photo_\(cropped\).jpg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Chuck_Schumer_official_photo_(cropped).jpg). By U.S. Senate Photographic Studio/Jeff McEvoy (<https://www.schumer.senate.gov/about-chuck>) [Public domain], via Wikimedia Commons.

Slide 7

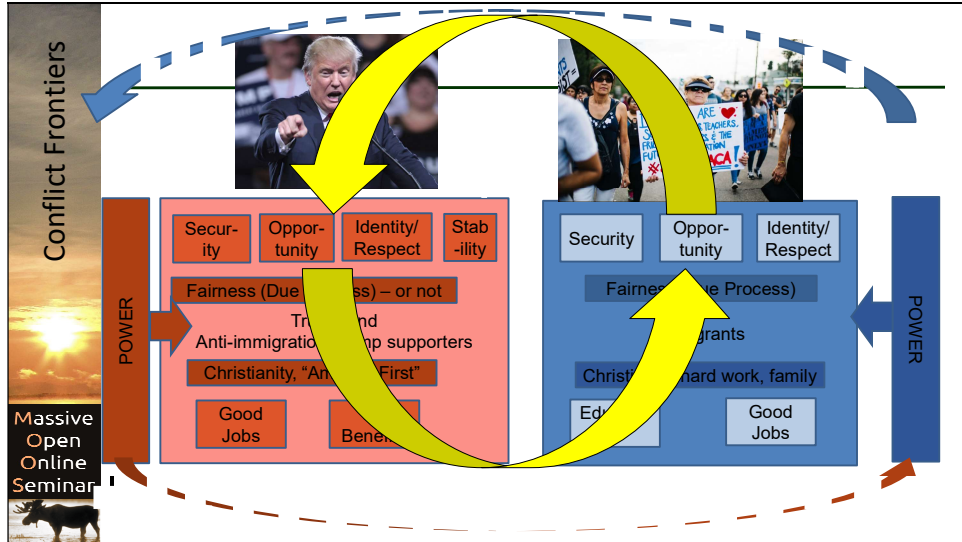


Here's something that I would add to this map. These are undotted (solid) arrows which typically, in conflict maps, mean a positive-sum relationship: the more one side has of something, the more the other side has as well. So why in the world would I have this kind of relationship on this map--between the security of each side? It turns out that if the US citizens feel secure and they have good jobs and they have decent education and they have the kind of communities they want, they're not going to feel such a need to fight against immigrants. They might even support immigrants understanding that they're just looking for a better life, and many of them have skills that would be of value to the United States and their culture is interesting. So when the Republican side feels secure, they are likely to be less hostile to immigrants. It's the feeling of insecurity that makes folks want to keep other folks out. So the more security the Republicans feel, the less they're going to be lashing out at the immigrants. And the more security the immigrants feel, the less they will need to immigrate. So it's actually a win-win situation, or what's called a positive sum-situation. The more one side has, the more the other side has at the same time.

Picture Credits: Donald Trump: Picture by Gage Skidmore; On flickr at: <https://www.flickr.com/photos/gageskidmore/27484886630>. CC BY-SA 2.0.

Dreamers march by Molly Adams. On Flickr at: <https://www.flickr.com/photos/mollyswork/36774203140>. Creative Commons Attribution 2.0 Generic (CC BY 2.0)

Slide 8

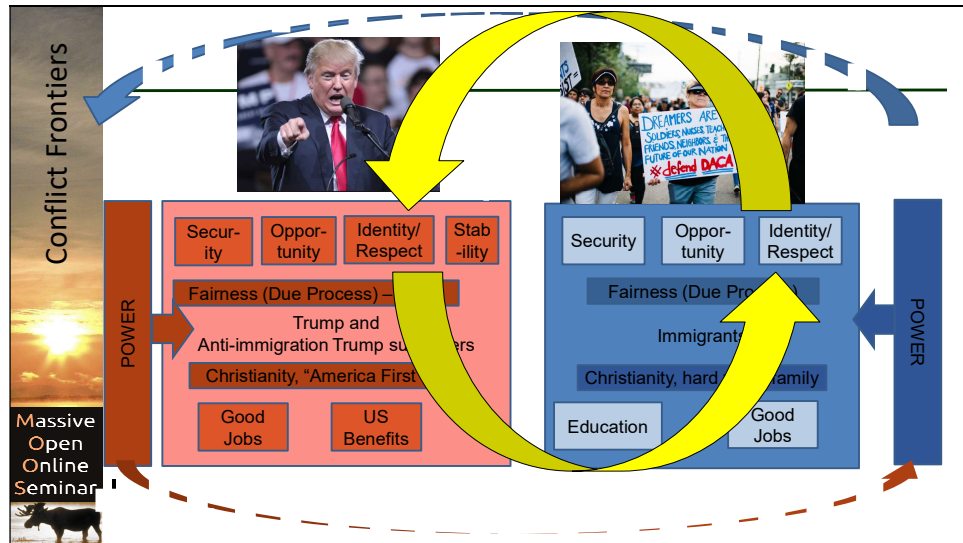


This is also true for opportunity and the argument is exactly the same. The more opportunities one side has, the more opportunities the other side can have. So it's a win-win relationship. It's not a win lose situation.

Picture Credits: Donald Trump: Picture by Gage Skidmore; On flickr at: <https://www.flickr.com/photos/gageskidmore/27484886630>. CC BY-SA 2.0.

Dreamers march by Molly Adams. On Flickr at: <https://www.flickr.com/photos/mollyswork/36774203140>. Creative Commons Attribution 2.0 Generic (CC BY 2.0)

Slide 9



The same thing is true for respect and identity too. If one side gives the other side, respect you tend to get respect back. Now, right now, the dynamic we are seeing is the opposite of this. Each side is treating the other side with gross disrespect. Particularly, Trump, has been incredibly disrespectful of immigrants—calling them murderers and rapists, and liking them to insects that “infest” a country. What’s he going to get back, indeed, he is getting back, is disrespect. That, in return, makes him angry and he gets even more disrespectful. Both sides are continuing this—what is, in this case, a lose-lose relationship where we are escalating the conflict and were decreasing the stability for everybody.

So the main point here is that it's not simply a win lose relationship where the more one side has, the less the other side has. Rather, there are different relationships for each of these elements (each sides’ interests, needs, values, etc.) So by sorting this kind of thing out in a conflict map, you can figure out what the nature of the relationships are between the various entities, and the various issues in contention. You will also a much better idea of how these various goods can be obtained in a way that benefits everybody.

In the next video, I will explore conflict overlays. Thanks!

Picture Credits: Donald Trump: Picture by Gage Skidmore; On flickr at: <https://www.flickr.com/photos/gageskidmore/27484886630>. CC BY-SA 2.0.

Dreamers march by Molly Adams. On Flickr at:
<https://www.flickr.com/photos/mollyswork/36774203140>. Creative Commons Attribution 2.0
Generic (CC BY 2.0)