

Competition and Conciliation: Modelling and Indicating Prehistoric Conflicts

Introduction

Conflicts are shaping our life. The wide range of different aspects and different levels of conflicts as well as different strategies of handling conflicts are addressed in different disciplines and constitute a transdisciplinary field of research. Conflicts are addressed in archaeology too, although the traditional approach is quite simple. It is simply assumed that weapons and fortifications indicate violent escalations. This approach has culminated in intense work on warfare in recent years.¹ But is this approach really so simple, that we can equate conflict with violence?

This article assumes that reality was more complicated, and that we must face different escalation levels of conflicts as well as many approaches of coping with conflicts and conciliation. The aim of this article is to sketch a concept of conflicts – a ‘model’ – that considers both sides of conflicts, escalation and de-escalation, as well as different levels for both. Furthermore, we discuss the role of territoriality in the context of conflicts and the various ways in which fortifications can be used as conflict indicators.

Conflicts

Basically, conflicts are disagreements. People have different demands, and different lines of action tend to respect the different demands to different degrees. Action, in particular interaction, is used to enhance the own position and to satisfy the own demands. While doing so, the taken action can reduce the capability of other people.² In some cases the advantage of the one is to the disadvantage of the others, and the latter feels that he has to correct the course of the process and shift the advantages towards the own demands. This is

why conflicts tend to escalate. A conflict escalation is nothing but a chain process, in which each party tries to reduce the other’s capability and to increase the own one. Because conflict processes can end fatally for at least one party, and because continuing and escalating conflict processes call for great effort for both sides, it is required in general to dissolve conflicts.

Hence, strategies for (1) coping with conflicts, (2) reducing conflict potential, and (3) dissolving conflicts or at least preventing them from escalation are essential for every society. Furthermore, such strategies continuously need to be adapted to new conditions. It is definitely a big challenge to explore the whole range of these strategies. A starting point can be a new perspective on fortifications, which are a very sensitive indicator of social, economic, cultural and historical processes. Therefore, it is necessary to broaden the range of interpretations, because information about fortifications can be used as indicators of different aspects of conflicts, including their escalation levels and, thus, even be indicative for de-escalation.

Before looking into the details of fortifications in the context of conflict research, we need to deal with the different levels of conflicts: a five-step model. These levels can be described as increments in a conflict escalation curve (**Fig. 1**).³ Conflicts emerge from conflict potential. This is the condition under which opposing parties have mutually excluding demands. An unequal distribution of natural resources and of wealth, different social status and issues of religion and ideology can produce conflict potentials. As we know from daily life, miscommunication, cultural differences, and many other reasons can also lead to conflicts. Even though being the root of a conflict process, the conflict potential is not a conflict itself. It is just the condition or possible precursor, under which it is likely for conflicts to emerge.

¹ Saunders 2012; Ralph 2013; Vandkilde 2014.

² Arponen *et al.* 2016.

³ The concept was inspired by works, such as Nagler 2001 and Bartos/Wehr 2002.

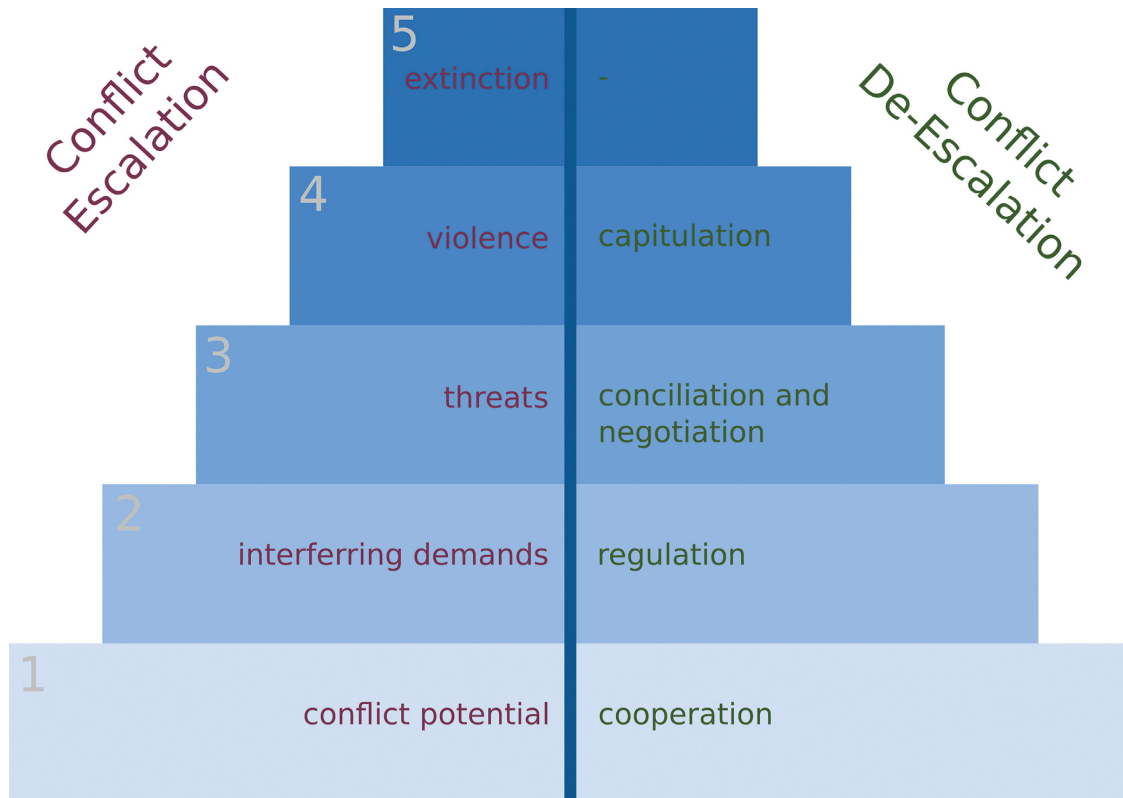


Fig. 1 Escalation and de-escalation scheme (graphic by the authors)

The first level of the conflict itself is the conscious contradiction of demands and interests. Here, people start to plan and intend actions aiming at improvements of the own capabilities. With the satisfaction of the own demands of one party, usually it becomes more difficult to satisfy the demands of the other conflict party. This motivates the previously passive party or latter party to react, which can be contradicting actions. These actions do not have to be violent at all at this level, but they can start an escalating conflict cycle, where each action provokes a more aggressive reaction, eventually raising the escalation levels.

On the third level, threats are made. Until then, the parties have acted independently and tried to persuade the conflict party to act according to the own intentions. With the third level the conflict party is told or communicated via other communication channels, that if continuing the previous behaviour, which limits the others' capabilities, sanctions are made or violence is applied. In fact, this is usual behaviour in everyday life. If we ask children to comply because otherwise they are not allowed to get something, or when Trump asks North Korea

to comply because otherwise war would be an option, these are different concretizations of the same escalation level. Even, if my boss lets me know, that I will lose my job or suffer from other disadvantages without telling me in plain words, it is the same escalation level. In all cases, the one person who threatens the other assumes, that the latter will not take the risk of suffering from what is announced and will therefore change his behaviour.

Whereas the implementation of sanctions is in the transition from the third to the fourth escalation level, the fourth level is characterised by the actual application of violence. This ranges from slapping children to well-coordinated and prepared wars and torture. With this level we leave the verbal communication and enter the world of physical action.

The fifth and last level is the extermination of the other conflict party. Although one conflict party has won the conflict now, it is doubtful that this party will also benefit from the conflict process at all. At this escalation level it is most likely that the original conflict potential is not the motivation to continue, but rather the fear of being

defeated in the conflict. The efforts and costs for both conflict parties are substantial at this level, and in general people will avoid this level.

Furthermore, people will avoid conflict escalation at all. As described above conflict processes are naturally driven to escalate, and at every escalation level we face the question, as to whether the costs respectively efforts of further escalating the conflict might not be compensated by the gains of winning the conflict. This seems to be the main reason why the importance of de-escalation is at least the same as the importance of escalation in social life. We can mirror the escalation curve with a de-escalation curve, which describes for every level useful actions for preventing the conflict to escalate further or to even lower the escalation level.

On the first de-escalation level, even before the actual conflict starts, we can take actions to lower or dissolve the conflict potential. Here, finding synergies and cooperation are just two of the most powerful tools. The different concepts on this level are extremely heterogeneous and range between just by putting more effort into successful communication and professional organized trade. From the conflict point of view, trade is just a tool to dissolve conflicts by the balance of interests. The one has the means to fulfil the needs of the other and vice versa.

Trade works as long as the two parties have different opportunities or commodities and different means, and people agree on the value of different commodities. Universal exchange goods such as currencies make it much easier to agree and to find trading partners. The satisfaction of demands is not restricted to bilateral trade, but also can be organized in rather complicated exchange systems.⁴ Obviously, these exchange systems can be the source of other conflicts, in particular, if people do not agree on values. The exchange system as the conflict-reduction function of trade reaches its limits, when one party just does not have the means to fulfil some of the others needs. Here, we enter the field of inequality. A heterogeneous distribution of resources and of means in general turns into inequality, when it is impossible to balance the differences. Inequality being nothing but differences in capabilities and opportunities seems to have a much stronger conflict potential, because it is not only the conditions, but already something on a level that affects the individual. Here again we see that the five-step model sug-

gested above is a simplification, which covers the heterogeneity within the different steps.

In addition to trade, there are other powerful tools for reducing the conflict potential. One is making innovations. New technologies can sometimes compensate the initial differences and lead to a more balanced system, at least for a certain period. Sometimes it is also possible just to switch to substitutional concepts. If the one resource is not available, we could adapt our behaviour, so that the other resource can fulfil the same function. It is obvious, that these tools also have limitations. They require a certain degree of creativity and cultural flexibility. If communities principally stick to traditional behaviour, they do not have much of a chance to adapt their behaviour to new requirements. This applies in particular once successful and internalized solutions can turn into a kind of burden that prevents conflict potentials from being resolved.

On the second conflict-escalation level regulations are used. Regulations at least can prevent conflicts from escalating further. Sometimes this is enough to stop the upwards spiral of escalation and sets a downwards spiral of conflict escalation in motion. Sometimes regulations resolve the conflict in all, in particular if the conflict is based on miscommunication and personal issues. The most important kind of regulations are legal regulations and laws. However, only some of them are known in the manifestation of written sources, such as the famous Codex Hammurabi. Still, we should assume different kinds of legal regulations in illiterate societies, as well. Such legal regulations lower the conflict potential and prevent conflict escalation by using different mechanisms. Laws limit the number of options to decisions and perhaps the number of decisions to make. This can directly prevent conflict-escalating behaviour on the one hand and lower the conflict potential by reducing the complexity of the social system on the other hand. A high degree of complexity in social systems (which is the contrary conception to 'social complexity' as used in archaeology) leaves space for miscommunication as well as for unbalanced opportunities. Nevertheless, laws can establish and legitimate social inequality and, hence, be the source of new conflicts. Herewith, we come to a different kind of regulations: structures. Structures such as social hierarchies can be based on laws, but they can also be based just on practice and tradition or on specific distributions or accumulation

⁴ E.g. Malinowski 1922; Murra 1972.

of power. Structures similar to laws limit the number of options. In the case of social systems, an individual living in a status-based social hierarchy will less question the own position in the system and search for opportunities to change this position than someone living in a prestige-based social system.⁵ Structures decrease the internal frictions in the system. Territoriality and borders as well as centrality, a topic to which we shall return later in this article, are also regulations which serves to prevent conflicts from escalation.

On the third level, we already have veritable conflicts with all the psychological side effects. Threats lead to communication roadblocks and, hence, interrupt or even prevent the dialogue that could solve the underlying issue. It is not easy to overcome such situations⁶ and to resume the dialogue. On this escalation level, the most important thing is to get away from one-sided threats that just demand to be complied with, and back to a dialogue between the conflict parties. This is why negotiations and consequential conciliation can be considered the corresponding de-escalation tools to threats. These approaches include direct negotiations as well as mediation and counselling. They are described in detail in literature on psychology and sociology.⁷

On the fourth level there are only few options left for de-escalation: capitulation or withdrawal. If actual violence is applied, one can strike back (further escalation), or say stop and offer to comply (capitulation), or escape to areas out of the range of the other party (withdrawal, e.g. exile, migration, inner emigration). In the case of capitulation one gets back to the level of negotiations. For the defeated party in the conflict this usually means a weaker position than before. Capitulation can mean to give in completely and to pay compensation on top of that, but it is also possible to negotiate a more balanced result.

De-escalation on the fifth level is just not possible, because the extinction of one conflict party leaves only the surviving party.

Looking at the whole conflict escalation process it is obvious that the higher the escalation level is, the lower are the possible gains in a conflict. The

possible profit decreases, because the opportunities to cooperate and to find synergies are more limited at each escalation level. The costs of conflict increase, even for the successful conflict party. At the higher escalation levels the defeated conflict party must face considerable conflict costs, which are much higher than the possible gains of the initial conflict potential. From this point of view, conflict escalation is completely irrational, and so a conflict resolution at a low escalation level is the best thing to do. Despite this conspicuousness, there is an internal power forcing conflicts to escalate and effort is required to resist this power. This escalation power has many factors, such as psychological effects, wrong assumptions and external forces. The assumption of being cheated and ripped off, whether true or not, can be a very powerful force in a conflict process. Another problem is the interconnection of conflicts. One conflict or even a conflict resolution can produce new conflict potentials and start new conflict processes. Furthermore, subgroups can exist in each conflict party that benefit from ongoing conflicts, even if the majority of the party suffers from severe disadvantages (e.g. suppliers, merit seekers). Such discrete aspects sometimes emerge from party-internal conflicts.

Indicators

Now, we have gotten a certain notion of conflict escalation and de-escalation models, but how do we recognise conflicts, the different conflict escalation levels and de-escalation basing on archaeological information? Certainly, many facets of conflicts are not accessible based on archaeological information alone. In particular, the content and mode of negotiations are rather hidden to archaeologists, as well as are those conflict potentials based on misunderstandings and subjective estimations. Nonetheless, there are other facets that are accessible in the archaeological record. We can define certain direct and indirect conflict indicators. These indicators include fortifications, weapons, iconography of weapons and violence, human remains indicating physical violence, battlefields, historical sources telling about conflicts, such as Nordic sagas, unequal distribution of wealth, social status and resources, high population density, war-booty offerings, rituals, indicators of power and reign, and burnt layers in settlements in connection with weapons.

⁵ Refer to Schumann 2015 for prestige and status and to Nakoinz/Lüth 2018 for hierarchies for the status vs. prestige discourse.

⁶ Gordon 2000.

⁷ E.g. Forsyth 2009; Mayer 2012; Moore 2014.

We need to state that the traditional scheme of indicating conflicts is somewhat superficial in our view. Yes, burnt layers and weapons can indicate conflicts. But what do they tell us about conflicts exactly? Are they concerned with conflict potentials or with actual conflicts? Furthermore, which conflict level can be addressed? Are conflict escalation or conflict de-escalation or even conflict resolution indicated? Which kind of conflict is it?

We therefore propose structuring the conflict indicators and grading them according to their value. In addition, past conflicts cannot be analysed using a single indicator; instead multi-proxy approaches should always be pursued in order to minimize the risk of potential biases. Conflict indicators can be placed in a ranking order. The works of Deborah Pearsall provide this inspiration.⁸ She subdivided the indicators to prove diets or agriculture into different levels, ranging from direct (based on human remains) and meaningful to indirect (e.g. 'storage, exchange, and production of surpluses')⁹ and less meaningful indicators. Taking this as an example, conflict indicators, e.g. for escalations, can be broken down from indirect to direct indicators, as follows: indicators for conflict potentials (e.g. population pressure, resource scarcity, social inequality), indicators for the threat of violence (e.g. fortifications, rock art, pictograms, prestige weapons), violent escalations (e.g. battlefields, use-wear on weapons, destruction layers), and violence on individuals (e.g. human remains indicating physical violence). In addition, conflict indicators should be quantifiable or should be made quantifiable. This can be done on a proportional basis. The statement "there were more swords in the Middle Bronze Age than in the Late Bronze Age" is not an indication of a decrease in conflicts during the later Bronze Age. Only when the number of swords is put into a ratio do they become meaningful. For example, this can be the ratio of the weight of the swords to the weight of jewellery artefacts made of the same material. Or the ratio of the number of swords to the number of known graves. Another example are fortifications. Only their ratio in numbers or areas to those of unfortified settlements can serve as an indirect indicator of the intensity of conflicts. In addition, we propose to set aside these indicators for escalations dually as such indicators, which we can use

to investigate de-escalations in the archaeological record. These conflict indicators for de-escalations can be structured according to their value in a similar way to the previously mentioned conflict indicators for escalations: indicators for cooperation (e.g. trade, exchange), indicators for the avoidance of violence (e.g. fortifications, borders, social organisation), indicators for ending violence (e.g. war-booty sacrifices), and indicators for peaceful periods (e.g. population distributions with high number of individuals reaching mature or senile ages).

Another important requirement for this type of indicators, which make it possible to examine the course of conflicts in a more complex way than hitherto and, above all, also include the possibilities of past societies for conflict resolution and conflict avoidance, is their diachronic traceability. Only then can conflict courses and ideally conflict curves be identified. In order to be able to distinguish whether indicators in the archaeological record were the result or the cause of conflicts or their reconciliation, a very high chronological resolution is also necessary in order to avoid producing bias. An example is the comparison of archaeological and ecological archives: Did the decline in resources (e.g. the yield of arable land) create a conflict potential that ultimately led to an escalation? Or was there an escalation as a result of which resources decreased (e.g. because not enough manpower could be invested in agriculture)? So far, this is still the proposal of an approach to a more holistic view of conflict scenarios of the past. In our opinion, however, the great opportunity that can be derived from this approach is that of looking at past conflicts as more complex phenomena than has been the case so far. Through the possibility of examining particularly long conflict processes in the archaeological record, we may be able to provide insights that can contribute to the management and avoidance of current conflicts through a better understanding. However, we must accept the fact that in the end we can only identify the causes, but without written sources we will never be able to identify the triggers of conflicts. Since fortifications and territories can provide an indicator of escalations as well as de-escalations through their multiple functions in conflicts, we will discuss these in detail below.

⁸ Pearsall 2000; 2009.

⁹ Pearsall 2009, 610.

Fortifications

As mentioned above, fortifications are closely connected to conflicts; however, they are obviously not just abstract conflict indicators, but assist in answering the questions posed in the last paragraph. First, we must consider the different functions of fortifications, which are mainly to protect, to symbolize and to delimit. Second, these functions concern different subjects, such as people, whole communities, institutions, production, ideological entities, wealth and status. These two facets create a functional matrix of fortifications, in which the relevance or intensity for each function/subject combination is indicated. To fill this functional matrix a considerable amount of information is required, which is only possible after an elaborated study of each site.

We now turn to the escalation levels and will discuss some examples that show not only the potential, but also the limitations and problems with conflict indicators. When talking about fortifications, we address the whole site and its vicinity and not only the ramparts. After all, fortifications are not only relevant for this analysis because of the defensive character of the ramparts. They represent a very important category of sites:

1. The ramparts usually lead to monuments that are visible without excavations; hence, the catalogue of fortifications is more complete than that of unfortified sites.
2. The rather intense research carried out on fortifications in the previous century and before provide us with substantial information as compared to most unfortified settlements; hence, allow more detailed analysis than is possible in other places.
3. The effort of building the ramparts indicates a certain significance of the place; hence, they might have played a more important role in the social, political and economic networks of the time in question than ordinary settlements. These arguments are rather tendential and do not apply in every case, but in general fortifications appear to be a very sensitive indicator of economic, social and historical processes.

On the first level, fortifications can indicate conflict potential. Fortifications always demonstrate a certain kind of exclusion and, therefore, solidify inequality by defining an inside/outside or a centre/periphery. They also can control the access to natural resources, and hence, also pro-

duce inequality. Fortifications usually require a concentrated effort which might be organized by elites. This indicates organizational structures that involve inequality. A more specific example is the change of conditions directly or indirectly caused by fortifications. In the case of Bruszczewo, pollution was detected.¹⁰ Such changes in conditions usually affect some people more than others and, therefore, bear considerable conflict potentials.

Many approaches allow de-escalation on the first level. If one considers fortifications in the context of the model presented above, there are some possibilities for investigating the first level of de-escalations by using fortifications. The ramparts alone indicate a certain kind of cooperation because a substantial common effort in building monumental fortifications shapes the community. This procedure can level out other conflict potentials similar to the effect that even a merely suspected enemy can have on the social dynamics of a community. Fighting the enemy and building the wall become more important than bearing animosity between people, and therefore can strengthen social cohesion. Another example is trade, which reduces the unequal distribution of commodities. With the Mt. Lassois as one example, this effect is shown to be of greatest significance for the Iron Age communities.¹¹

On the second escalation level interfering interests emerge and actually start the conflict. Established social hierarchies and unequally distributed resources can increment conflicting interests. Restricted access to technological knowledge and capabilities can also lead to interfering interests. Although we can assume that numerous such conflict potentials have developed into actual interfering interests, it is very difficult to prove them in the archaeological record. Perhaps the existence of elites at the Heuneburg, a so called princely seat of the Hallstatt culture, and the crisis during the Early Iron Age in Hallstatt D2 period (530–510 BC) can be interpreted as the result of an internal, social conflict rather than of a raid by external enemies.¹² The production facilities at the Bronze Age Asva sites in Estonia indicate a certain difference in technological knowledge or just in opportunities for technical production between people living at the sites and elsewhere.¹³

¹⁰ Müller/Czebreszuk/Kneisel 2010.

¹¹ Mötsch 2011; Chaume 2001.

¹² Nakoinz 2017.

¹³ Lang 2007; Sperling *et al.* 2014.

De-escalation on the other hand, whether as intended reaction or as side effect, is plainly visible in the archaeological sources. Here we can mention all kinds of regulations. Borders, such as linear fortifications, lines of fortification or lines of markers can indicate a territorial regulation (see below for more details on territoriality). We just mention the *'hulbælter'*, which are pit-zone fortifications of the first millennium BC in Denmark as example (Fig. 2).¹⁴ Centres of settlement systems indicate regulations in organizational structures. Standardisations of weights, sizes and products also can demonstrate regulations. Standardised grave goods can be used as indicator of status in contrast to prestige.¹⁵ Another aspect are settlement hierarchies and similar strategies for reducing the complexity of the settlement system. The less the complexity of the system is, the lower are planning issues and the chance of interfering interests.

The third escalation level, threat of violence, is also rather easy to estimate basing on archaeological sources. On the one hand, the ramparts themselves as defensive structure indicate the existence of a real or imagined violent threat. On the other hand, ramparts may have functioned as a threat themselves. An offensive threat can be seen in the Trelleborg type fortifications from the 10th century AD, which is interpreted as military boot camp.¹⁶ All weapons, made to apply violence are threats of violence themselves. We need only distinguish between symbolic threats of unusable weapons and actual threats by real weapons. The intensity of the threat might vary from having weapons, from wearing weapons to gesturing with weapons. The intensity of a threat cannot be detected by archaeological sources, although we can perceive the threat themselves and the varying amounts of threats in different periods. Violent scenes and depictions of weapons in art and in particular in rock art of the Bronze Age, the rock carvings of Tanum, are threats or the celebration of violence. Another example for rock art depicting violent scenes are those in Serra da Capivara in Brazil (ca. 12,000 BC).¹⁷

What we cannot detect are other kinds of threats such as the verbal threat of sanctions. But here too fortifications can play a certain role. In

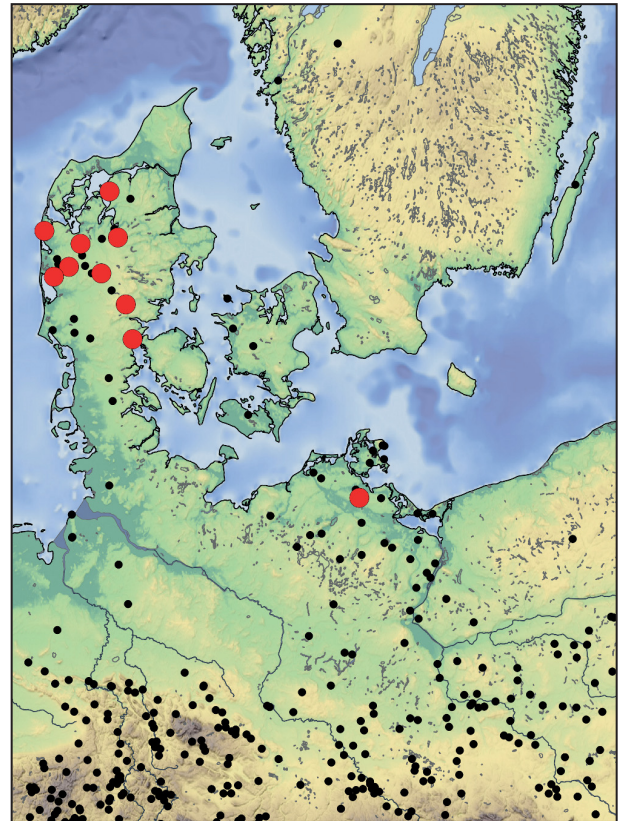


Fig. 2 Fortifications of the Bronze- and Pre-Roman Iron Age: red: linear pit-zone fortifications and palisades; black: other fortifications (based on Nakoinz *et al.* 2017 Fig. 15)

certain contexts they might symbolize the power to cut supply and trading connections and to start military actions. Such indicators are far from proper evidence and cannot be viewed more than circumstantial evidence.

The de-escalation on the third level is difficult to prove as it involves negotiations. Communication and in particular verbal communication is hard to trace in archaeological sources. Offering a compromise and mediation and conciliation by a third party are likely to be frequently applied methods, but they are not manifested in archaeological sources. For tracing negotiations we must look for symbols that were part of the course of negotiations. Fortifications can play two different roles. On the one hand, showing strength by building fortifications can slow down the escalation or even freeze the *status quo*. In this case the fortification can be built by one of the conflict parties or by a third party controlling and pacifying the region. This approach as a deterrence strategy. On the other hand, symbolic and defensive fortifications can be built, which are not suitable for defending communities and places. The fortification symbolizes the power that can intervene in the conflict.

¹⁴ Eriksen/Rindel 2018.

¹⁵ Schumann 2015.

¹⁶ Roesdahl 1973.

¹⁷ Pessis 2013.

The symbol is a firm reference to regulations. This strategy can be a kind of counter-threat that brings the conflict back to the second escalation level. The symbolic fortification communicates something like: ‘There is a force which can make you obey, if you do not come back to negotiations and discussions.’ The Celtic oppidum of Bibracte might serve as an example of this approach.¹⁸ Furthermore, frontier or border fortifications in the form of walls or linear earthworks can be indications of reactions to threats of violence with the aim to avoid them. Examples include the Danevirke, the upper Germanic-Rhaetian Limes or Offa’s dyke. They are indeed identifiable in the archaeological record and even the intensity of their use – by investments in maintenance or combat remains – can be estimated to a certain degree.

Another indicator of negotiations can be hoards including weapons. In fact, these hoards lead to a reduction in number of available weapons and, hence, to a pacification of the region. If we can exclude violent methods of obtaining the weapons for the deposits, it is necessary to convince the people owning the weapons by negotiations. We do not know details about the conciliations and negotiations, but we can deduce them from the context. The hoard from Lebus might be an example.¹⁹

In contrast to traditional approaches actual violence is neither indicated by weapons and fortifications, nor by depictions of violent actions. Even though this limits the chances of inducing actual violence, there still are many opportunities. Weapons with traces of use can be problematic, because we have to distinguish traces from training and traces from violent actions; yet, substantial damages usually point towards the latter. More convincing are injuries observed on human remains. Battlefields comprise several indicators and, hence, are very substantial indicators of violence; however they are not exclusively found at fortifications. Alesia is an example of both:²⁰ a battlefield and a fortification. In this rare case, we also know some details from written sources. Defensive fortifications with indicators of use, such as arrowheads in the walls are also rather convincing indicators of violence. Smolenice Molpir can be mentioned as example.²¹

¹⁸ Barrier *et al.* 2013.

¹⁹ Schopper 2017.

²⁰ Reddé/Schnurbein 2001.

²¹ Hellmuth 2006.

De-escalation on the fourth level is to capitulate, which ranges from asking for armistice to total surrender. Capitulation is not directly visible in archaeological sources. In the case of Alesia we have some written sources telling us about the total defeat. Perhaps we can use battlefields without the extinction of one of the conflict parties as an indicator of capitulation? Perhaps we will find a solution for this in the future with more experience in the multi-proxy aspect of the approach. Thus, periods characterised by less violence than in the directly preceding periods and combined with a cultural phenomenon expanding into one region from another could indicate the ending of violence and the defeat of one side.

The escalation on the fifth level, the extermination of the conflict party, is also difficult to prove. Even though we have battlefields with a substantial amount of deaths in one party, there is no proof that this conflict party was exterminated. Furthermore, this does not even prove that the conflict party with the many losses was the defeated party. Could a hillfort, abandoned after a violent conflict and without continuation at another location point towards extermination of one conflict party? Or does it indicate rather a capitulation and a total conflict resolution by negotiations? If anything points towards the extermination of a conflict partner it is a compilation of dead bodies in the conflict party. The sanctuary of dead warriors at Ribemont-sur-Ancre might be one example.²² Is the abrupt end of a cultural phenomenon in one region without a continuation in another after an evident violence escalation an indicator of extermination? Or is the archaeological record a result of the assimilation of one group (which would be a kind of cultural extermination)?

Territoriality

Territoriality was mentioned above and can be understood as a kind of regulation of spatial organization. Territoriality appears to have the capacity of preventing conflict escalations under certain circumstances, while territoriality also emerges as conflict potential under other circumstances. For a deeper understanding of these aspects of territoriality, we need to explore the meaning of this term and the associated concepts.

²² Brunaux 2009.

We start with a definition: A territory is an area with concise boundaries assigned to a certain entity.²³ This is a formal definition which does not state anything about the content of territories. In particular, it is not assumed to deal with political territories only. Territories are well distinguished areas, which can be assigned to political, social, economic, religious and all other kinds of entities. While different territories of the same category are disjunct, territories of different categories can overlap.

Territories also range between very small and continental areas, and it is obvious that there are different ideas about territories. According to the formal definition the well separated area-exclusivity used by a village is a territorial area – a territory, in the same sense as national territories. But the two examples show, that despite the same formal definition, both kinds of territorial areas have a different meaning to us and affect different aspects in life.

After this discussion of territories, we can define territoriality as the extensive usage of territories for different purposes. In our current world, territoriality is the leading principle of spatial organization. This is a specific result of historical development, yet not an inevitable one. In prehistoric times, a certain type of territoriality seems to be rather old. This type of territoriality is concerned with the space separated by the walls of one building and, thus, very local. It is a relevant question whether or not territoriality on a regional level was also used in early times, and furthermore for which of the mentioned categories (political, social, economic, and religious entities) they were relevant and applied. For each we can ask, on which scale and concerning which entities territoriality was used in which regions. One hypothesis could be that territoriality on a larger scale emerges in times of conflicts and marks times of substantial transformations of the human behaviour, in particular when coping with conflicts.

Some phenomena have been discussed concerning territoriality. Here, we wish to mention three of them. A. Paasi stated: “Boundaries not only divide but also define and regulate social action.”²⁴ The aspect that territories constitute social facts is also stressed by other authors. This aspect highlights that territories and in particular concise borders are used to shape society by using the tools of spatial organization. A border does

not just describe something, but also forces people to behave in a certain way and to perceive the world in a different way.

The different perception is an important aspect, which also makes it possible to utilize territories for certain purposes. D. Sibley speaks of the purifications of space.²⁵ This is a kind of psychological effect. When a territory is defined, we tend to perceive the different areas as homogeneous, even if they are not. The territories guide our perception. The change of perception when defining territories was called a “territorial trap” by J. Agnew,²⁶ highlighting that we cannot just delete the borders and territories. We are ‘trapped’ in a certain way of perception.

The territorialized way of perception is very handy, because a system comprising some homogeneous areas is less complex than one that comprises many different and heterogeneous elements. The less complex system is easier to understand and to predict. There is only one question: Does the simplified territorial surface hide a highly complex reality or is the original rather simple and territorial-like structure of the system just blurred by a certain degree of variance? In other words: does the territorialized way of perception provide us with a reasonable model for dealing with the real world? This question has to be answered for both the ancient past (our research object) and the present day (the world in which researchers deals with research objects).

Coming back to conflicts, we can state that territories have the capacity to prevent conflict escalation by forming a clear regulation of spatial organization. Furthermore, territories can reduce conflict potentials through the reduction of complexity. In contrast to this mechanism they also can produce new conflict potentials by creating new inequalities.

While territories reduce the complexity of a system, they can be involved in rather complicated and even complex nested structures. In reality, spatial hierarchies embed binary topologies of territories. At each level two sub-communities emerge, which behave differently towards different other sub-communities. In particular, the case of fortifications shows the different interlinked levels of territoriality (**Fig. 3**). While the acropolis delimits the ruling class from the own community, the outer fortification separates the citizens (the

²³ Haggett 1973, 303; Nakoinz 2013, 70.

²⁴ Paasi 2003.

²⁵ Sibley 1988.

²⁶ Agnew 1994.

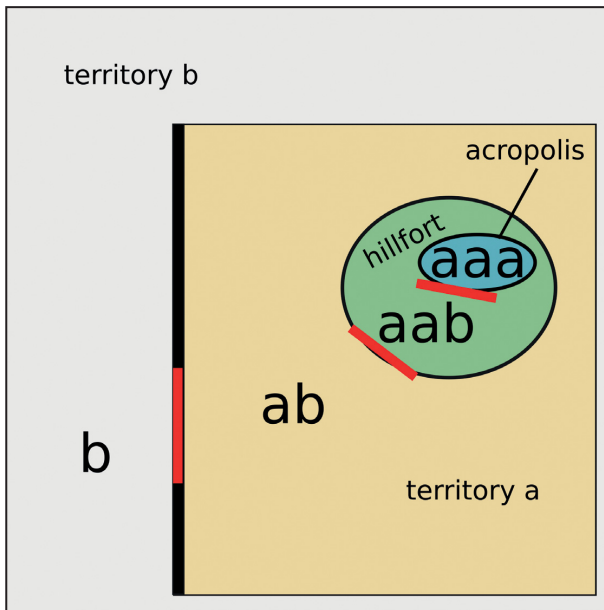


Fig. 3 Binary topology of territories (graphic by the authors)

German translation of the word ‘citizen’ is ‘*Bürger*’ which is related to German ‘*Burg*’, which can mean ‘fortress’ and also apply to fortified settlements – compare city names of Hamburg, Augsburg, Freiburg, etc.) from other people, while the border of the whole territory delimits it from foreigners and enemies. Each border regulates something, while at the same time it manifests or even produces some kind of inequality.

Conclusion

The main conclusion of this article is that conflicts are a very heterogeneous, but at the same time, a very essential phenomenon. We have to consider the different aspects of conflicts in our archaeological case studies. In particular, we should consider conciliation and not only violence or warfare in our approaches to past conflicts. In doing so we include the capability of past societies in de-escalation as important dual aspect parallel to escalation and, thus, gain better perspectives on past societies. Fortifications are not simply indicators of conflict, but can point to different aspects of conflicts, including conciliation. Finally, territoriality as tools for reducing complexity, reduce conflict potential and prevent conflict escalation is one of the most significant, yet most neglected topics concerning conflicts in archaeology.

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Oliver Nakoinz, Jutta Kneisel and Hermann Gorbahn, Competition and Conciliation: Modelling and Indicating Prehistoric Conflicts

Conflicts are shaping our life and influencing most of our behaviour. In the recent years, conflict archaeology has developed into a growing sub-discipline. This article tries to go beyond the traditional concepts of conflict archaeology that mainly addressing violence. We advocate widening the view on conflicts by including different levels of conflict escalation as well as of conflict de-escalation. Archaeological indicators for all of these facets of conflicts are discussed. Here, we concentrate on fortifications which are sensitive indicators of historical, social, economic and cultural processes and hence are able to indicate different facets of conflicts and not only violence. In this context, we also consider territoriality as relevant, because it is a kind of regulation, preventing conflicts from further escalation. The article presents a simple scheme of conflict archaeology which extends the traditional approach and provides deeper insights in human behaviour and its rational.

Oliver Nakoinz, Jutta Kneisel und Hermann Gorbahn, Kampf und Einigung: Modellieren und Anzeigen prähistorischer Konflikte

Konflikte formen unser Leben und beeinflussen häufig unser Verhalten. In den letzten Jahren ist die Konfliktarchäologie zu einer wachsenden Unterdisziplin geworden. Dieser Artikel versucht, über traditionelle Konzepte der Konfliktarchäologie, die hauptsächlich Gewalt ansprechen, hinauszugehen. Wir treten für eine Erweiterung der Sichtweise auf Konflikte ein, indem man verschiedene Stufen der Eskalation und Deeskalation des Konflikts einbezieht. Archäologische Indikatoren für all diese Facetten von Konflikten werden diskutiert. Hier konzentrieren wir uns auf Befestigungen, die sensible Indikatoren von historischen, sozialen, ökonomischen und kulturellen Prozessen sind und daher unterschiedliche Facetten von Konflikten, nicht nur Gewalt, anzeigen können. In diesem Kontext halten wir auch Territorialität für relevant, da sie eine Art Regulierung darstellt, um der weiteren Eskalation von Konflikten vorzubeugen. Dieser Artikel präsentiert ein einfaches Schema der Konfliktarchäologie, das den traditionellen Ansatz erweitert und tiefere Einsichten in menschliches Verhalten und seine Rationalität gewährt.