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## COOPERATION AND CONFLICT

### A PERSONAL PERSPECTIVE ON THE HISTORY OF THE SOCIAL PSYCHOLOGICAL STUDY OF CONFLICT RESOLUTION

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#### INTRODUCTION

Conflict is an inevitable and pervasive aspect of organizational life. It occurs within and between individuals, within and between teams and groups, within and between different levels of an organization, within and between organizations. Conflict has been given a bad name by its association with psychopathology, disruption, violence, civil disorder, and war. These are some of the harmful potentials of conflict when it takes a destructive course. When it takes a constructive course, conflict is potentially of considerable personal and social value. It prevents stagnation, it stimulates interest and curiosity, it is the medium through which problems can be aired and creative solutions developed, it is the motor of personal and social change.

It is sometimes assumed that conflicts within teams in organizations should be suppressed, that conflict impairs cooperation and productivity among the members of a team. This may be true when conflict takes a destructive course as in a bitter quarrel. However, it is apt to strengthen the relations among team members and to enhance productivity when it takes the form of a lively controversy.

In this chapter, I present an overview of the major research questions addressed in the literature related to conflict resolution, as well as a historical perspective to see what progress has been made in this area. My premise is that anyone interested in understanding teamwork and cooperative working should be familiar with the field of conflict resolution. As I stated above, conflict is inevitable in teamwork; how the conflict is managed can lead either to the enhancement or disruption of cooperation and team productivity.

## Some Definitions

Throughout my many years of empirical and theoretical work in the field of conflict studies, I have thought of conflict in the context of competition and cooperation. I have viewed these latter as idealized psychological processes which are rarely found in their “pure” form in nature, but, instead, are found more typically mixed together. I have also thought that most forms of conflict could be viewed as mixtures of competitive and cooperative processes and, further, that the course of a conflict and its consequences would be heavily dependent upon the nature of the cooperative–competitive mix. These views of conflict lead me to emphasize the link between the social psychological studies of cooperation and competition and the studies of conflict in my assessment of this latter area.

I have defined conflict in the following way (Deutsch, 1973, p. 10): “A *conflict* occurs whenever incompatible activities occur. . . . An action that is incompatible with another action prevents, obstructs, interferes, injures, or in some way makes the latter less likely or less effective.” Conflicts may arise between two or more parties from their opposing interests, goals, values, beliefs, preferences, or their misunderstandings about any of the foregoing. These are *potential* sources of conflict which may give rise to actions by the parties which are incompatible with one another; if they do not give rise to incompatible actions, a conflict does not exist: it is only potential.

The terms “competition” and “conflict” are often used synonymously or interchangeably. This reflects a basic confusion. Although competition produces conflict, not all instances of conflict reflect competition. Competition implies an opposition in the goals of the interdependent parties such that the probability of goal attainment for one decreases as the probability for the other increases. In conflict that is derived from competition, the incompatible action reflects incompatible goals. However, conflict may occur even when there is no perceived or actual incompatibility of goals. Thus if two team members of a sales group are in conflict about the best way to increase sales or if a husband and wife are in conflict about how to treat their son’s mosquito bites, it is not necessarily because they have mutually exclusive goals; here, their goals may be concordant. My distinction between conflict and competition is not made merely to split hairs. It is important and basic to a theme that underlies much of my work. Namely, conflict can occur in a cooperative or a competitive context, and the processes of conflict resolution that are likely to be displayed will be strongly influenced by the context within which the conflict occurs.

## AT THE BEGINNING . . .

The writings of three intellectual giants—Darwin, Marx, and Freud—dominated the intellectual atmosphere during social psychology’s infancy. Each of these major theorists significantly influenced the writings of the early social psychologists on conflict as well as in many other areas. All three theorists appeared—on a *superficial* reading—to emphasize the competitive, destructive aspects of conflict. Darwin stressed “the competitive struggle for existence” and “the survival of the fittest.” He wrote (quoted in Hyman, 1966, p. 29): “. . . all nature is at war, one organism with another, or with external nature. Seeing the contented face of nature, this may at first be well doubted; but reflection will inevitably prove it is too true.” Marx emphasized “class struggle,” and as the struggle proceeds, “the whole society breaks up more and more into two great hostile camps, two great, directly

antagonistic classes: bourgeoisie and proletariat.” He ends *The Communist Manifesto* with a ringing call to class struggle: “The proletarians have nothing to lose but their chains. They have a world to win. Working men of all countries, unite.” Freud’s view of psychosexual development was largely that of constant struggle between the biologically rooted infantile id and the socially determined, internalized parental surrogate, the superego. As Schachtel (1959, p. 10) has noted:

The concepts and language used by Freud to describe the great metamorphosis from life in the womb to life in the world abound with images of war, coercion, reluctant compromise, unwelcome necessity, imposed sacrifices, uneasy truce under pressure, enforced detours and roundabout ways to return to the original peaceful state of absence of consciousness and stimulation. . . .

Thus, the intellectual atmosphere prevalent during the period when social psychology began to emerge contributed to viewing conflict from the perspective of “competitive struggle.” Social conditions too—the intense competition among businesses and among nations, the devastation of World War I, the economic depression of the 1920s and 1930s, the rise of Nazism and other totalitarian systems—reinforced this perspective.

The vulgarization of Darwin’s ideas in the form of “social Darwinism” provided an intellectual rationale for racism, sexism, class superiority, and war. Such ideas as “survival of the fittest,” “hereditary determinism,” and “stages of evolution” were eagerly *misapplied* to the relations between different human social groups—classes and nations as well as social races—to rationalize imperialist policies. The influence of evolutionary thinking was so strong that, as a critic suggested, it gave rise to a new imperialist beatitude: “Blessed are the strong, for they shall prey upon the weak” (Banton, 1967, p. 48). The rich and powerful were biologically superior; they had achieved their positions as a result of natural selection. It would be against nature to interfere with the inequality and suffering of the poor and weak.

Social Darwinism and the mode of explaining behavior in terms of innate, evolutionary derived instincts were in retreat by the mid-1920s. The prestige of the empirical methods in the physical sciences, the point of view of social determinism advanced by Karl Marx and various sociological theorists, and the findings of cultural anthropologists all contributed to their decline.<sup>1</sup> Since the decline of the instinctual mode of explaining such conflict phenomena as war, intergroup hostility, and human exploitation, two others have been dominant: the “psychological” and the “socio-political-economic.” The “psychological” mode attempts to explain such phenomena in terms of “what goes on in the minds of men” (Klineberg, 1964) or “tensions that cause war” (Cantril, 1950); in other words, in terms of the perceptions, beliefs, values, ideology, motivations, and other psychological states and characteristics that individual men and women have acquired as a result of their experiences and as these characteristics are activated by the particular situation and role in which people are located. The “socio-political-economic” mode, in contrast, seeks an explanation in terms of such social, economic, and political factors as levels of armaments, objective conflicts in economic and political interests, and the like. Although these modes of explanation are not mutually exclusive, there is a tendency for partisans of the psychological mode to consider that the causal arrow points from psychological conditions to socio-political-economic

<sup>1</sup> This is a decline, not a disappearance. The explanation of social phenomena in terms of innate factors justifies the status quo by arguing for its immutability; such justification will always be sought by those who fear change.

conditions and for partisans of the latter to believe the reverse is true. In any case, much of the social psychological writing in the 1930s, 1940s, and early 1950s on the topics of war, intergroup conflict, and industrial strife was largely nonempirical, and in one vein or the other. The psychologically trained social psychologist tended to favor the psychological mode; the Marxist-oriented or sociologically trained social psychologist more often favored the other mode.

The decline of social Darwinism and the instinctivist doctrines was hastened by the development and employment of empirical methods in social psychology. This early empirical orientation to social psychology focused on the socialization of the individual; this focus was, in part, a reaction to the instinctivist doctrine. It led to a great variety of studies, including a number investigating cooperation and competition. These latter studies are, in my view, the precursors to the empirical, social psychological study of conflict.

## **EARLY STUDIES OF COOPERATION AND COMPETITION**

Two outstanding summaries of the then existing research on cooperation and competition were published in 1937. One was in the volume of Murphy, Murphy, and Newcomb, *Experimental Social Psychology*; the other was in the monograph *Competition and Cooperation*, by May and Doob. It is not my intention here to repeat these summaries but rather to give you my sense of the state of the research and theorizing on cooperation–competition in the 1920s and 1930s.

My impression is that practically none of the earlier research on cooperation and competition would be acceptable in current social psychological journals because of methodological flaws in the studies. Almost all of them suffer from serious deficiencies in their research designs. In addition, there is little conceptual clarity about some of the basic concepts—“competition,” “cooperation,” “self-orientation”—that are used in the studies. As a result, the operational definitions used to create the differing experimental conditions have no consistency from one study to another or even within a given study.

Further, the early studies of cooperation and competition suffered from a narrowness of scope. They focused almost exclusively on the effects of “competition” versus “cooperation” on individual task output. There was no investigation of social interaction, communication processes, problem-solving methods, interpersonal attitudes, attitudes toward self, attitudes toward work, attitudes toward the group, or the like in these early investigations of cooperation–competition. The focus was narrowly limited to work output. The simplistic assumption was made that output would be an uncomplicated function of the degree of motivation induced by competition as compared with cooperation. The purposes of most of these early investigations appeared to be to support or reject a thesis inherent in the American ideology; namely, that competition fosters greater motivation to be productive than other forms of social organization.

## **FIELD THEORY, CONFLICT, AND COOPERATION–COMPETITION**

During the 1920s, 1930s, and 1940s, quite independently of the work being conducted in the United States on cooperation–competition, Kurt Lewin and his students were theorizing

and conducting research which profoundly affected later work in many areas of social psychology. Lewin's field theory—with its dynamic concepts of tension systems, “driving” and “restraining” forces, “own” and “induced” forces, valences, level of aspiration, power fields, interdependence, overlapping situations, and so on—created a new vocabulary for thinking about conflict and cooperation–competition.

As early as 1931, employing his analysis of force fields, Lewin (1931, 1935) presented a penetrating theoretical discussion of three basic types of psychological conflict: *approach–approach*—the individual stands between two positive valences of approximately equal strength; *avoidance–avoidance*—the individual stands between two negative valences of approximately equal strength; and *approach–avoidance*—the individual is exposed to opposing forces deriving from a positive and a negative valence. Hull (1938) translated Lewin's analysis into the terminology of the goal gradient, and Miller (1937, 1944) elaborated and did research upon it. Numerous experimental studies supported the theoretical analysis.

My own initial theorizing on cooperation–competition (Deutsch, 1949a) was influenced by the Lewinian thinking on tension systems which was reflected in a series of brilliant experiments on the recall of interrupted activities (Zeigarnik, 1927), the resumption of interrupted activities (Ovsiankina, 1928), substitutability (Mahler, 1933), and the role of ego in cooperative work (Lewis & Franklin, 1944). But even more of my thinking was indebted to the ideas which were “in the air” at the MIT Research Center for Group Dynamics. Ways of characterizing and explaining group processes and group functioning, employing the language of Lewinian theorizing, were under constant discussion among the students and faculty at the MIT Center. Thus, it was quite natural that when I settled on cooperation–competition as the topic of my doctoral dissertation, I should employ the Lewinian dynamic emphasis on goals and how they are interrelated as my key theoretical wedge into this topic. Even more importantly, the preoccupation with understanding group processes at the Center pressed me to formulate my ideas about cooperation and competition so that they would be relevant to the psychological and interpersonal processes occurring within and between groups. This pressure forced my theory and research (Deutsch, 1949a, b) to go considerably beyond the prior social psychological work on cooperation–competition. My theorizing and research were concerned not only with the individual and group outcomes of cooperation and competition but also with the social psychological processes which would give rise to these outcomes.

My theorizing and research have been published and widely referred to, so there is little need here for more than a brief summary of some of the theory's predictions, which have been validated by extensive research. Assuming that the individual actions in a group are more frequently effective than bungling, among the predictions that follow from the theory are that *cooperative relations* (those in which the goals of the parties involved are predominantly positively interdependent), as compared with competitive ones, show more of these positive characteristics:

1. *Effective communication* is exhibited. Ideas are verbalized, and group members are attentive to one another, accepting of the ideas of other members, and influenced by them. They have fewer difficulties in communicating with or understanding others.
2. *Friendliness, helpfulness, and less obstructiveness* are expressed in the discussions. Members are more satisfied with the group and its solutions and favorably impressed by

the contributions of the other group members. In addition, members of the cooperative groups rate themselves high in desire to win the respect of their colleagues and in obligation to the other members.

3. *Coordination of effort, divisions of labor, orientation to task achievement, orderliness in discussion, and high productivity* are manifested in the cooperative groups (if the group task requires effective communication, coordination of effort, division of labor, or sharing of resources).
4. *Feeling of agreement with the ideas of others and a sense of basic similarity in beliefs and values, as well as confidence in one's own ideas and in the value that other members attach to those ideas*, are obtained in the cooperative groups.
5. *Willingness to enhance the other's power* (for example, the other's knowledge, skills, resources) to accomplish the other's goals increases. As the other's capabilities are strengthened, you are strengthened, they are of value to you as well as to the other. Similarly, the other is enhanced from your enhancement and benefits from your growing capabilities and power.
6. *Defining conflicting interests as a mutual problem to be solved by collaborative effort* facilitates recognizing the legitimacy of each other's interests and the necessity to search for a solution responsive to the needs of all. It tends to limit rather than expand the scope of conflicting interests. Attempts to influence the other tend to be confined to processes of persuasion.

In contrast, a competitive *process* has the opposite effects:

1. Communication is impaired as the conflicting parties seek to gain advantage by misleading the other through use of false promises, ingratiation tactics, and disinformation. It is reduced and seen as futile as they recognize that they cannot trust one another's communications to be honest or informative.
2. Obstructiveness and lack of helpfulness lead to mutual negative attitudes and suspicion of one another's intentions. One's perceptions of the other tend to focus on the person's negative qualities and ignore the positive.
3. The parties to the process are unable to divide their work, duplicating one another's efforts such that they become mirror images; if they do divide the work, they feel the need to check what the other is doing continuously.
4. The repeated experience of disagreement and critical rejection of ideas reduces confidence in oneself as well as the other.
5. The conflicting parties seek to enhance their own power and to reduce the power of the other. Any increase in the power of the other is seen as threatening to oneself.

The competitive process stimulates the view that the solution of a conflict can only be imposed by one side on the other, which in turn leads to using coercive tactics such as psychological as well as physical threats and violence. It tends to expand the scope of the issues in conflict as each side seeks superiority in power and legitimacy. The conflict becomes a power struggle or a matter of moral principle and is no longer confined to a specific issue at a given time and place. Escalating the conflict increases its motivational significance to the participants and may make a limited defeat less acceptable and more humiliating than a mutual disaster.

As Johnson and Johnson (1989) have detailed, these ideas have given rise to a large number of research studies indicating that a cooperative process (as compared to a competitive one) leads to greater productivity, more favorable interpersonal and intergroup relations, better psychological health and higher self-esteem as well as more constructive resolution of conflict.

## GAME THEORY AND GAMES

In 1944, von Neumann and Morgenstern published their now classic work, *Theory of Games and Economic Behavior*. Game theory has made a major contribution to social scientists by formulating in mathematical terms the problem of conflict of interest. However, it has not been either its mathematics or its normative prescriptions for minimizing losses when facing an intelligent adversary that has made game theory of considerable value to social psychologists. Rather, it has been its core emphasis that the parties in conflict have interdependent interests, that their fates are woven together. Although the mathematical and normative development of game theory has been most successful in connection with pure competitive conflict (“zero-sum” games), game theory has also recognized that cooperative as well as competitive interests may be intertwined in conflict (as in “coalition” games or “non-zero-sum” games).

The game theory recognition of the intertwining of cooperative and competitive interests in situations of conflict (or in Schelling’s (1960) useful term, the “mixed-motive” nature of conflict) has had a productive impact on the social psychological study of conflict, theoretically as well as methodologically. Theoretically, at least for me, it helped buttress a viewpoint that I had developed prior to my acquaintance with game theory—namely, that conflicts were typically mixtures of cooperative and competitive processes and that the course of conflict would be determined by the nature of the mixture. This emphasis on the cooperative elements involved in conflict ran counter to the then dominant view of conflict as a competitive struggle. Methodologically, game theory had an impact on an even larger group of psychologists. The mathematical formulations of game theory had the indirect but extremely valuable consequence of laying bare some fascinating paradoxical situations in such a way that they were highly suggestive of experimental work.

Game matrices as an experimental device are popular because they facilitate a precise definition of the reward structure encountered by the subjects, and hence of the way they are dependent upon one another. Partly stimulated by and partly in reaction to the research using game matrices, other research games for the study of conflict have been developed. Siegel and Fouraker (1960) developed a bilateral monopoly, “buyer–seller” negotiation game; Vinacke and Arkoff (1957) invented a three-person coalition game; Deutsch and Krauss (1960) constructed a “trucking game”; Deutsch (1973) employed an “allocation” game; and many other investigators have developed variants of these games or new ones. Pruitt and Kimmel in 1977 estimated that well over 1000 studies had been published based on experimental games. Much of this research, as is true in other areas of science, was mindless—being done because a convenient experimental format was readily available. Some of it, however, has, I believe, helped to develop more systematic understanding of conflict processes and conflict resolution. Fortunately, in recent years, experimental gaming has been supplemented by other experimental procedures and by field studies which have overcome some of the inherent limitations of experimental gaming.

## **THEMES IN CONTEMPORARY SOCIAL PSYCHOLOGICAL RESEARCH ON CONFLICT**

Social psychological research on conflict, during the past 35 years or so, has primarily addressed the following major questions:

- (1) *What are the conditions which give rise to a constructive or destructive process of conflict resolution?* In terms of bargaining and negotiation, the emphasis here is on determining the circumstances which enable the conflicting parties to arrive at a mutually satisfactory agreement which maximizes their joint outcomes. In a sense, this first question arises from a focus on the cooperative potential inherent in conflict.
- (2) *What are the circumstances, strategies, and tactics which lead one party to do better than another in a conflict situation?* The stress here is on how one can wage conflict, or bargain, so as to win or at least do better than one's adversary. This second question emerges from a focus on the competitive features of a conflict situation.
- (3) *What determines the nature of the agreement between conflicting parties, if they are able to reach an agreement?* Here the concern is with the cognitive and normative factors that lead people to conceive a possible agreement and to perceive it as a salient possibility for reaching a stable agreement: an agreement which each of the conflicting parties will see as "just" under the circumstances. This third question is a more recent one and has been addressed under the heading of research on the social psychology of equity and justice.
- (4) *How can third parties be used to prevent conflicts from becoming destructive or to help deadlocked or embittered negotiators move toward a more constructive management of their conflicts?* This fourth question has been reflected in studies of mediation and in strategies of de-escalating conflicts.
- (5) *How can people be educated to manage their conflicts more constructively?* This has been a concern of consultants working with leaders in industry and government and also with those who have responsibility for educating the children in our schools.
- (6) *How and when to intervene in prolonged, intractable conflicts?* Much of the literature in conflict resolution has been preventive rather than remedial in its emphasis. It is concerned with understanding the conditions that foster productive rather than destructive conflict (as in question (1)) or developing knowledge about the circumstances that lead to intractable, destructive conflict, in the hope of preventing such conflict. More recently, the reality that many protracted, destructive conflicts exist in the world has induced some scholars to focus their attention on this problem.
- (7) *How are we to understand why ethnic, religious, and identity conflicts frequently take an intractable, destructive course?* With the end of the Cold War, there appears to be a proliferation of such conflicts. In the past 10 years, interest in such conflicts has been renewed. Attention has been addressed to what causes such conflict but also what can be done after the typical atrocities of such conflict to bring about reconciliation and reconstruction.
- (8) *How applicable in other cultural contexts are the theories related to conflict that have largely been developed in the United States and Western Europe?* In recent years, there has been much discussion in the literature of the differences that exist in how people from varying cultural backgrounds deal with negotiations and, more generally, manage conflict.

In the next section, I shall attempt to describe tentative answers which social psychological research has given the foregoing questions.

### **What Are the Conditions which Give Rise to a Constructive or Destructive Process of Conflict Resolution?**

In social psychology this question has been most directly addressed in the work of my students and myself and summarized in my book, *The Resolution of Conflict: Constructive and Destructive Processes* (1973). Our research started off with the assumption that if the parties involved in a conflict situation had a cooperative rather than competitive orientation toward one another, they would be more likely to engage in a constructive process of conflict resolution. In my earlier research on the effects of cooperation and competition upon group process, I had demonstrated that a cooperative process was more productive in dealing with a problem that a group faces than a competitive process. I reasoned that the same would be true in a mixed-motive situation of conflict: a conflict could be viewed as a mutual problem facing the conflicting parties. Our initial research on trust and suspicion employing the prisoners' dilemma game strongly supported my reasoning, as did subsequent research employing other experimental formats. I believe that this is a very important result which has considerable theoretical and practical significance.

At a theoretical level, it enabled me to link my prior characterization of cooperation and competitive social processes to the nature of the processes of conflict resolution which would typically give rise to constructive or destructive outcomes. That is, I had found a way to characterize the central features of constructive and destructive *processes* of conflict resolution; doing so represented a major advance beyond the characterization of *outcomes* as constructive or destructive. This was not only important in itself but it also opened up a new possibility. At both the theoretical and practical level, the characterization of constructive and destructive processes of conflict created the very significant possibility that we would be able to develop insight into the conditions which initiated or stimulated the development of cooperative–constructive versus competitive–destructive processes of conflict. Much of the research of my students and myself has been addressed to developing this insight.

Much of our early research on the conditions affecting the course of conflict was done on an ad hoc basis. We selected independent variables to manipulate based on our intuitive sense of what would give rise to a cooperative or competitive process. We did experiments with quite a number of variables: motivational orientation, communication facilities, perceived similarity of opinions and beliefs, size of conflict, availability of threats and weapons, power differences, third-party interventions, strategies and tactics of game playing by experimental stooges, the payoff structure of the game, personality characteristics, and so on. The results of these studies fell into a pattern which I slowly began to grasp.

All of these studies seemed explainable by the assumption, which I have labeled “Deutsch’s crude law of social relations,” that *the characteristic processes and effects elicited by a given type of social relationship (cooperative or competitive) also tend to elicit that type of social relationship*. Thus, cooperation induces and is induced by a perceived similarity in beliefs and attitudes; a readiness to be helpful; openness in communication; trusting and friendly attitudes; sensitivity to common interests and de-emphasis of opposed interests; an orientation toward enhancing mutual power rather than power differences; and

so on. Similarly, competition induces and is induced by the use of tactics of coercion, threat, or deception; attempts to enhance the power differences between oneself and the other; poor communication; minimization of the awareness of similarities in values and increased sensitivity to opposed interests; suspicious and hostile attitudes; the importance, rigidity, and size of the issues in conflict; and so on.

In other words, if one has systematic knowledge of the effects of cooperative and competitive processes, one will have systematic knowledge of the conditions which typically give rise to such processes and, by extension, to the conditions which affect whether a conflict will take a constructive or destructive course. My early theory of cooperation and competition is a theory of the *effects* of cooperative and competitive processes (see earlier section “Field theory, conflict, and cooperation–competition” (p. 12) and Deutsch & Coleman, 2000, Chapter 1 for a summary). Hence, from the crude law of social relations stated earlier, it follows that this theory provides insight into the conditions which give rise to cooperative and competitive processes.

The crude law is *crude*. It expresses surface similarities between “effects” and “causes”; the basic relationships are genotypical rather than phenotypical. The crude law is crude, but it can be improved. Its improvement requires a linkage with other areas in social psychology, particularly social cognition and social perception. Such a linkage would enable us to view phenotypes in their social environments in such a way as to lead us to perceive correctly the underlying genotypes. We would then be able to know under what conditions “perceived similarity” or “threat” will be experienced as having an underlying genotype different from the one that is usually associated with its phenotype.

### **What Are the Circumstances, Strategies, and Tactics which Lead One Party to Do Better than Another in a Conflict Situation?**

Most of the important theoretical work by social scientists in relation to this question has been done not by social psychologists but by economists, political scientists, and those concerned with collective bargaining. Some of the most notable contributions have been made by Chamberlain (1951), Schelling (1960, 1966), Stevens (1963), Walton and McKersie (1965), Kahn (1965), Jervis (1970, 1976), and Snyder and Diesing (1977). Machiavelli (1500) earlier had described useful strategies and tactics for winning conflicts: Machiavelli’s emphasis was on how to use one’s power most effectively so as to intimidate or overwhelm one’s adversary; Potter’s (1965) on how to play upon the good will, cooperativeness, and politeness of one’s opponent so as to upset him and make him lose his “cool.” More recently, Alinsky (1971) has described a “jujitsu” strategy that the “have-nots” can employ against the “haves” and described various tactics of harassing and ensnaring the “haves” in their own red tape by pressuring them to live up to their own formally stated rules and procedures.

Social psychologists have just barely begun to tap and test the rich array of ideas about strategies and tactics for winning conflicts or for increasing one’s bargaining power and effectiveness that exist in the common folklore as well as in the social and political science literature. This research has provided some support and qualification of preexisting ideas about bargaining strategy and tactics. I shall briefly discuss research relating to “being ignorant,” “being tough,” “being belligerent,” and “bargaining power.”

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## “BEING IGNORANT”

Common sense suggests that one is better off if one is informed rather than ignorant. Schelling (1960) has, however, advanced the interesting idea that in bargaining it is sometimes advantageous to be in a position where you are or appear to be ignorant of your opponent's preferences; similarly, it may give you an edge to be in a situation where you could inform your opponent of your preferences but the other hand could not so inform you. Research (Cummings & Harnett, 1969; Harnett & Cummings, 1968; Harnett, Cummings, & Hughes, 1968) provides experimental support for Schelling's idea. In several different bargaining situations it was demonstrated that a bargainer who did not have complete information about the bargaining schedule of his opponent began bargaining with higher initial bids, made fewer concessions, and earned higher profits than bargainers with complete information. Being ignorant of what the other wants, or appearing so, may justify to oneself and to the other a relative neglect of the other's interests in one's proposals; neglecting the other's interests when they are known is a more obvious and flagrant affront.

The bargaining tactic of “ignorance,” as well as other tactics such as “brinkmanship” and “appearing to be irrational,” can be characterized in terms of the bargaining doctrine of “the last clear chance.” The basic notion here is that a bargainer will gain an advantage if he can appear to commit himself irrevocably so that the last clear chance of avoiding mutual disaster rests with his opponent. A child who works himself up to the point that he will have a temper tantrum if his parents refuse to let him sit where he wants in the restaurant is employing this doctrine. So is the driver who cuts in front of someone on a highway while appearing to be deaf to the insistent blasts of the other's horn. Such tactics do not always work. They seem most apt to do so when the situation is asymmetrical (you can use the tactic but your opponent cannot) and when your opponent does not have a strong need to improve or uphold his reputation for “resolve” or “toughness.”

## “BEING TOUGH”

“Bargaining toughness” has been defined experimentally in terms of setting a high level of aspiration, making high demands, and offering fewer concessions or smaller concessions than one's opponent. It is a widely held view, to quote the late Leo Durocher, that “nice guys finish last.” The results of many experiments (see Magenau & Pruitt, 1978) support a more complex conclusion, stated by Bartos (1970, p. 62): “Toughness plays a dual role and has contradictory consequences. On the one hand, toughness *decreases* the likelihood of an agreement, while on the other hand, it increases the payoffs of those who survive this possibility of a failure.” A relentlessly tough approach throughout bargaining appears to result in worse outcomes than a more conciliatory approach (Hamner & Baird, 1978; Harnett & Vincelette, 1978). There is, however, some evidence to suggest that initial toughness in terms of high opening demands, combined with a readiness to reciprocate concessions, may facilitate a fuller exploration of the alternative possibilities of agreement and lead to the discovery of an agreement which maximizes payoffs to the bargainers (Kelley & Schenitzki, 1972); premature tendencies to reach an agreement without full exploration of the possibilities may be prevented by tough, initial positions (Deutsch, 1973).

### “BEING BELLIGERENT”

Since the initial research of Deutsch and Krauss (1960) demonstrated the deleterious effects of threat upon bargaining, there has been a deluge of bargaining experiments bearing upon the use of weapons, threats, fines, punishments, rewards, promises, and the like. Tedeschi, Schlenker, and Bonoma (1973, p. 141) have summarized the results of this research as follows: “Threats seldom improve and almost always decrease a bargainer’s outcomes if his adversary is similarly armed and the values are important to both parties. Yet when threats are available, bargainers are tempted to use them.” Research (see Deutsch, 1973) also demonstrates that threats have considerable reputational costs: a “threatener” as compared to a “promiser” is viewed much more negatively and is much less likely to get compliance.

Although belligerent, coercive tactics usually impair negotiation, it is evident that one is apt to yield to an adversary when there is a gun pressed against one’s head. Coercion can be successful, especially when the power of the conflicting parties is unequal. Although coercion can be successful, its success is usually limited to immediate compliance; the long-term consequences of the use of such tactics are usually counterproductive.

### “BARGAINING POWER”

Common sense would suggest that a bargainer is likely to be better off if he has more power than the adversary. The results of social psychological research indicate that the situation is more complex than it first seems. Experimentally, bargaining power is sometimes defined as the relative power of each of the bargainers to inflict harm upon one another; the relative desirability of the alternatives to bargaining that are available to each of the bargainers; the relative time pressure on each bargainer to reach an agreement; and so forth. The research evidence (Magenau & Pruitt, 1978; Rubin & Brown, 1975) indicates that when bargaining power is equal, agreement is relatively easy to reach and the outcomes to the parties are high. When bargaining power is somewhat unequal, a power struggle often ensues as the bargainer with more power tries to assert superior claims and as these are resisted by the bargainer with lesser power; the result of this struggle is that the agreement is difficult to reach and the bargainers have low outcomes. When bargaining power is markedly unequal, the differences in power are more likely to be accepted as legitimate and lead to quick agreement, with the advantage going to the more powerful bargainer. However, if the differences in power are not viewed as providing a legitimization of relatively low outcomes to the low-power bargainer, he will resist what he considers to be greed and exploitation; agreement here also will be difficult, and outcomes will be low. Differences in bargaining power may lead the bargainer with greater power to make claims which he feels are legitimate but which he cannot force the other to accept; the bargainer with lesser power may resist the claims as being exploitative and illegitimate and as a way of asserting his equal status as a person. His resistance causes the low-power bargainer to suffer relatively more than the high-power bargainer, but the high-power bargainer also suffers. In essence, the bargaining research demonstrates that having higher power than one’s bargaining opponent may be less advantageous than having equal power if your fellow bargainer is apt to resist any greater claims that you might make as a result of your greater power.

From this brief and very incomplete survey of some of the experimental research bearing on the strategy and tactics of waging conflict, it is evident that social psychological research has given some support for surprising tactics (“being ignorant”) and has raised some doubts about common assumptions relating to the advantages to be obtained from “toughness” as a strategy, from “coercive tactics,” and from “superior bargaining power.”

The extensive research literature on negotiation (summarized in such books as Bazerman & Neal, 1992; Breslin & Rubin, 1991; Deutsch, 1973; Deutsch & Coleman, 2000; Kritter, 1994; Lewicki & Letterer, 1985a, b; Lewicki, Sanders, & Minton, 1999; Pruitt, 1981; Pruitt & Carnevale, 1993; Rubin, Pruitt, & Kim, 1994; Thompson, 1998) has investigated many of the strategies and tactics that relate to both “integrative” or “win-win” bargaining (those related to the first listed question above) and “distributive” bargaining (those related to the second listed question): only some of which have been discussed here. For a fuller discussion of such topics as “concession making,” “the use of time pressure,” “promises and threats,” “establishing credibility,” “enhancing bargaining power,” “building rapport,” etc., the books listed above should be consulted.

### **What Determines the Nature of the Agreement between Conflicting Parties if they Are Able to Reach an Agreement?**

A bargain is defined in *Webster's Unabridged Dictionary* as “an agreement between parties settling what each shall give and receive in a transaction between them.” The definition of “bargain” fits under common social science definitions of the term “social norm.” What determines the agreement or social norm for settling the issues in conflict? Two compatible ideas have been advanced in answer to this question, one related to “perceptual prominence” and the other to “distributive justice.”

Schelling (1960) has suggested that perceptually prominent alternatives serve a key function in permitting bargainers to come to an agreement. Research has provided some support for Schelling's idea (see Magenau & Pruitt, 1978, for a summary).

Homans (1961, 1974) has suggested that the principle of distributive justice would play a role in determining how people would decide to allocate the awards and costs to be distributed between them. Although Homans was not primarily concerned with conflict or bargaining, it is evident that his conception of distributive justice does not exclude them. In his discussion, Homans has emphasized one particular canon or rule of distributive justice, that of “proportionality” or “equity”: in a just distribution, rewards will be distributed among individuals in proportion to their contributions. “Equity theorists” such as Adams (1963, 1965), Adams and Freedman (1976), and Walster, Walster, and Berscheid (1978) have continued Homans' emphasis on the rule of proportionality and have elaborated a theory and stimulated much research to support the view that psychological resistance and emotional distress will be encountered if the rule of proportionality is violated. In recent years, other social psychologists—Lerner (1975), Leventhal (1976), Sampson (1969), and myself (Deutsch, 1974, 1975)—have stressed that proportionality is only one of many common canons of distributive justice. We know very little about what makes a given rule of justice stand out as saliently appropriate in a given situation of conflict. However, a number of us (Deutsch, 1975; Lamm & Kayser, 1978a, b; Lerner, 1975; Leventhal, 1976; Mikula & Schwinger, 1978; Sampson, 1975) have articulated hypotheses

about factors favoring the selection of one or another rule and done related experiments. It seems evident that if a conflict is experienced as having been resolved unjustly, it is not likely that the conflict has been adequately resolved; similarly, a bargaining agreement that is viewed as unjust is not apt to be a stable one. "Justice" and "conflict" are intimately intertwined; the sense of injustice can give rise to conflict, and conflict can produce injustice.

Social psychological research on justice and conflict is too new to have led to definitive results. However, let me note the direction of my thinking in this area. I have applied and elaborated my crude hypothesis of social relations (the typical consequences of a given type of social relation tends to elicit that relation) so as to be relevant to the question of what rule of justice will predominate in a group or social system. I (Deutsch, 1975, 1985) have developed rationales to explain the tendency for economically oriented groups to use the principle of equity; for solidarity-oriented groups to use the principle of equality; and for caring-oriented groups to use the principle of need. I have then characterized typical effects of economically oriented relations, solidarity-oriented relations, and caring relations and have hypothesized that these different kinds of typical effects will elicit different principles of distributive justice.

Thus, among the typical consequences of an economic orientation (Diesing, 1962) are:

- (1) the development of a set of values which includes maximization, a means–end schema, neutrality or impartiality with regard to means, and competition;
- (2) the turning of man and everything associated with him into commodities—including labor, time, land, capital, personality, social relations, ideas, art, and enjoyment;
- (3) the development of measurement procedures which enable the value of different amounts and types of commodities to be compared; and
- (4) the tendency for economic activities to expand in scope and size.

The crude hypothesis advanced above would imply that an economic orientation and the principle of equity are likely to be dominant in a group or social system if its situation is characterized by impersonality, competition, maximization, an emphasis on comparability rather than uniqueness, largeness in size or scope, and so on. Specific experimental hypotheses could readily be elaborated: the more competitive the people are in a group, the more likely they are to use equity rather than equality or need as the principle of distributive justice; the more impersonal the relations of the members of a group are, the more likely they are to use equity; and so forth.

Results in my laboratory, as well as in the laboratories of other investigators, are consistent with my crude hypothesis. It seems likely that the reason "equity" has been the central principle of distributive justice to social psychologists is that there has been an unwitting acceptance of the view that the dominant orientation of American society, a competitive–economic orientation, is a universally valid orientation. This is too parochial a perspective. Equity is only one of many principles of distributive justice. It is evident that questions of justice may arise in noneconomic social relations and may be decided in terms that are unrelated to input–output ratios. For a fuller discussion of "justice and conflict," see Deutsch and Coleman (2000, Chapter 2) and for a comprehensive discussion of the social psychology of justice see Tyler et al. (1997).

## How Can Third Parties Be Used to Prevent Conflicts from Becoming Destructive or to Help Deadlocked or Embittered Negotiators Move toward a More Constructive Management of their Conflicts?

Kenneth Kressel and Dean Pruitt have edited an issue of the *Journal of Social Issues* (1985) and published a book (1989) on mediation research which provide a definitive review of the work being done in this area. As they point out, informal mediation is one of the oldest forms of conflict resolution, and formal mediation has been practiced in international and labor-management conflicts for many years. More recently, formal mediation has been increasingly applied to an ever-widening array of disputes in such areas as divorcing, small-claims cases, neighborhood feuds, landlord-tenant relations, environmental and public-resource controversies, industrial disputes, school conflicts, and civil cases. Following in the wake of the explosion of the practice of mediation (and of the proliferation of textbooks and “how-to-do-it” books on mediation), there has been important but modest growth in research and theorizing on this topic. Most of the research and theorizing has occurred in the past two decades.

Here, I shall highlight some of the main points which emerge from the cogent summary by Kressel and Pruitt of the work in this area.

There is considerable evidence of user satisfaction with mediation and some evidence that the agreements reached through mediation are both less costly to the conflicting parties and more robust than traditional adjudication (Kressel, 2000). However, there is strong evidence to suggest that mediation has dim prospects of being successful under adverse circumstances. As Kressel and Pruitt (1989, p. 405) have succinctly expressed it: “Intensely conflicted disputes involving parties of widely disparate power, with low motivation to settle, fighting about matters of principle, suffering from discord or ambivalence within their own camps, and negotiating over scarce resources are likely to defeat even the most adroit mediators.”

Kressel and Pruitt, in characterizing the research describing what mediators do, indicate that their diverse actions can be grouped under four major headings: (1) establishing a working alliance with the parties; (2) improving the climate between them; (3) addressing the issues; and (4) applying pressure for settlement. As Kressel (2000, pp. 525–526) points out:

Mediation should be helpful in any conflict in which the basic framework for negotiation is present (Moore, 1996). The framework includes these elements:

- The parties can be identified.
- They are interdependent.
- They have the basic cognitive, interpersonal, and emotional capabilities to represent themselves.
- They have interests that are not entirely incompatible.
- They face alternatives to consensual agreement that are undesirable (for example, a costly trial).

Mediation is especially likely to prove useful whenever there are additional obstacles that would make unassisted negotiations likely to fail:

- Interpersonal barriers (intense negative feelings, a dysfunctional pattern of communicating).

- Substantive barriers (strong disagreement over the issues, perceived incompatibility of interests, serious differences about the “facts” or circumstances).
- Procedural barriers (existence of impasse, absence of forum for negotiating).

Although many disputes meet these formal criteria, getting mediation started turns out to be something of a challenge. In interpersonal disputes of all kinds, one-third to two-thirds of those given the opportunity to use formal mediation decline it. It is also apparent that in work settings where informal mediation could be used (as by a manager), the would-be mediator declines to intervene, looks the other way, or chooses to employ power and authority rather than the skills of facilitation. Characteristics of the social environment, the disputing parties, and the potential mediator are among the variables that determine whether or not mediation occurs.

I have, from my theoretical perspective, expressed similar ideas, somewhat differently in answer to the question: *What framework can guide a third person who seeks to intervene therapeutically if negotiations are deadlocked or unproductive because of misunderstandings, faulty communications, the development of hostile attitudes, or the inability to discover a mutually satisfying solution?* I suggest that such a framework is implicit in the ideas that I have described earlier. The third party seeks to produce a cooperative problem-solving orientation to the conflict by creating the conditions which characterize an effective cooperative problem-solving process: these conditions are the typical effects of a successful cooperative process. Helping the conflicting parties to develop a cooperative, problem-solving orientation to their conflict may be sufficient when the conflicting parties have reasonably well-developed group problem-solving and decision-making skills. Often they do not, and, hence, they need tutelage in these skills if they are to deal with their problem successfully. And, often, conflicting parties do not have sufficient substantive knowledge concerning the issues in conflict to manage them constructively. Here, too, they may need tutelage by a third party if their conflict is to be resolved sensibly.

Third parties (mediators, conciliators, process consultants, therapists, counselors, etc.) who are called upon to provide assistance in a conflict require four kinds of skills if they are to have the flexibility required to deal with the diverse situations mediators face. The *first* set of skills are those related to the third party's establishing an effective working relationship with each of the conflicting parties so that they will trust the third party, communicate freely with her, and be responsive to her suggestions regarding an orderly process for negotiations. The *second* are those related to establishing a cooperative problem-solving attitude among the conflicting parties toward their conflict. Much of the earlier discussion of my theoretical work on conflict resolution focuses on this area. *Third* are the skills involved in developing a creative group process and group decision making. Such a process clarifies the nature of the problems that the conflicting parties are confronting (reframing their conflicting positions into a joint problem to be solved), helps to expand the range of alternatives that are perceived to be available, facilitates realistic assessment of their feasibility as well as desirability, and facilitates the implementation of agreed-upon solutions. And, *fourth*, it is often helpful for the third party to have considerable substantive knowledge about the issues around which the conflict centers. Substantive knowledge could enable the mediator to see possible solutions that might not occur to the conflicting parties and it would permit her to help them assess proposed solutions more realistically.

It seems reasonable to assume that the diverse situations facing mediators will emphasize one or another of the four skills just described. When the conflicting parties have suspicions

about mediation, the skills involved in establishing a good working relationship with the conflicting parties are especially important; when the relationship between the conflicting parties is a poor one, the skills involved in establishing a cooperative problem-solving attitude between the parties is crucial; when the conflicting parties have inadequate techniques for solving problems and making effective joint decisions, then the mediator needs skills related to facilitating creative group decision making; and when the conflicting parties have little knowledge of the substantive issues they are describing, the knowledgeable mediator can be a very helpful resource person on such issues.

It seems reasonable to assume that mediators will differ in the kinds of skills they have mastered and, thus, one can expect that the effectiveness of mediation will be considerably dependent upon how well matched the mediator's skills are with the needs of the case being mediated. There are undoubtedly some "universally competent" mediators who can be successful across a wide variety of cases, but it is safe to say that they are probably rare. Research has indicated that mediators differ in their styles and skills and also in their effectiveness in particular settings. However, not enough research has been done to make definitive statements about the conditions under which different styles and approaches to mediation are most effective.

Kressel (2000) classifies mediator style into two major types, each of which has two subtypes: *task-oriented* and *social-emotional*. The first subtype of the task-oriented style is the *settlement-oriented* mediator who is primarily interested in reaching agreements on any terms acceptable to the conflicting parties. By contrast, the *problem-solving* subtype attaches greater importance to sound problem solving than to settlement per se. Both subtypes, Kressel indicates, are able to resolve low-level conflicts, but the problem-solving style is more effective in providing durable settlements when there is a high conflict.

Mediators with social-emotional styles focus less on the issues and more on opening lines of communication and clarifying underlying feelings and emotions, with the view that once this is accomplished, the conflicting parties should and will be able to work through the issues to their own solution.

*Transformational mediation* (elaborated by Bush & Folger, 1994; Folger & Bush, 1996) is considered to be a social-emotional subtype. It focuses not only on the relationship between the conflicting parties through emphasizing *recognition* (which refers to improving the capacity of the disputants to become responsive to the needs and perspectives of the other), but also on *empowerment* (which refers to strengthening each party's ability to analyze its respective needs in the conflict and to make effective decisions). The optimistic hope of the advocates of transformative mediation is that the conflicting parties who are subjected to such mediation will be personally transformed whether or not they are able to reach a settlement. Its advocates are critical of settlement or problem-solving orientations to mediation. They believe that such orientations narrow the parties' opportunity to become self-reflective and autonomous as well as aware of the other's separate reflective and distinctive reality.<sup>2</sup>

As Kressel states (2000, p. 536): "Polemical claims notwithstanding, there is no empirical evidence for preferring one mediation style over another." And, I add, it seems likely that

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<sup>2</sup> See Robert Kegan (1994) for his theory of development of different orders of consciousness which suggests that the transformation that Bush and Folger seek is a desirable movement from the third stage of development where one is socially determined by one's loyalties, group membership, and cultural assumptions, to a fourth stage of development where one is self-knowledgeable, self-reflecting, and self-determining in relation to others and is able to recognize this potential in others. Kegan's research indicates that such a transformation is often difficult and slow to achieve.

the different mediation styles are apt to be differently suitable for different types of issues, parties, circumstances, and social contexts.

To sum up, research on mediation is in its early stages. The research has already demonstrated a high level of user satisfaction in a number of different contexts and it has also suggested that the robustness of agreements and the economy of the process are greater than in traditional methods. But there is as yet insufficient understanding of how to mediate difficult conflicts in adverse circumstances or how to make the most effective match between mediator characteristics and the characteristics of the case to be mediated.

### **How Can People Be Educated to Manage their Conflicts More Constructively?**

During the past two decades, there has been a rapid proliferation of training in conflict resolution—for industry, for government, for families, and for schools—and the publication of many textbooks and how-to-do-it manuals in this area. Unfortunately, there has been very little research to assess the effectiveness and consequences of such training. Most of the existing research has been immediate “consumer satisfaction” studies in which the participants in the training program evaluate their training and indicate how useful the training has been for them. The good news is that these studies indicate a high level of immediate consumer satisfaction; the bad news is that there have been only a few studies which have examined the more enduring consequences of such training. “More enduring” in these instances refers to effects that last for six months or a year (see Bodine & Crawford, 1998; Deutsch & Coleman, 2000, Chapter 27; Johnson & Johnson, 2000, and Jones & Kmitter, 2000, for reviews of the existing research).

There are many different conflict resolution programs which vary as a function of the age, occupation, and types of conflicts on which they focus. I have examined many of them and believe that there are some common elements running through them. These common elements, I believe, derive from the recognition that a constructive process of conflict resolution is similar to an effective, cooperative problem-solving process (where the conflict is perceived as the mutual problem to be solved), while a destructive process is similar to a win-lose, competitive struggle (Deutsch, 1973). In effect, most conflict resolution training programs seek to instill the attitudes, knowledge, and skills which are conducive to effective, cooperative problem solving and to discourage the attitudes and habitual responses which give rise to win-lose struggles. Below I list the central elements which are included in many training programs, but I do not have the space to describe the ingenious techniques that are employed in teaching them. The sequence in which they are taught varies as a function of the nature of the group being taught. Below, I describe what my students have labeled as “Deutsch’s Twelve Commandments of Conflict Resolution.”

1. *Know what type of conflict you are involved in.* There are three major types: the zero-sum conflict (a pure win-lose conflict), the mixed-motive (both can win, both can lose, one can win and the other can lose), and the pure cooperative (both can win or both can lose). It is important to know what kind of conflict you are in because the different types require different types of strategies and tactics. The common tendency is for inexperienced parties to define their conflict as “win-lose” even though it is a mixed-motive conflict.

In a zero-sum conflict one seeks to amass, mobilize, and utilize the various resources of power in such a way that one can bring to bear in the conflict more effective, relevant power

than one's adversary; or if this is not possible in the initial area of conflict, one seeks to transform the arena of conflict into one in which one's effective power is greater than one's adversary. Thus, if a bully challenges you to a fight because you will not "lend" him money and he is stronger than you, you might arrange to change the conflict from a physical to a legal confrontation by involving the police or other legal authority. Other strategies and tactics in win-lose conflicts involve outwitting, misleading, seducing, blackmailing, and the various forms of the black arts which have been discussed by Machiavelli, Potter, Schelling, and Alinsky, among others. The strategy and tactics of the resolution of cooperative conflicts involve primarily cooperative fact-finding and research as well as rational persuasion. The strategy and tactics involved in mixed-motive conflicts are mainly what are discussed below.

2. *Become aware of the causes and consequences of violence and of the alternatives to violence, even when one is very angry.* Become aware of what makes you very angry; learn the healthy and unhealthy ways you have of expressing anger. Learn how to actively channel your anger in ways that are not violent and are not likely to provoke violence from the other. Understand that violence begets violence and that if you "win" an argument by violence, the other will try to get even in some other way. Learn alternatives to violence in dealing with conflict.

3. *Face conflict rather than avoid it.* Recognize that conflict may make you anxious and that you may try to avoid it. Learn the typical defenses you employ to evade conflict, e.g. denial, suppression, becoming overly agreeable, rationalization, postponement, premature conflict resolution. Become aware of the negative consequences of evading a conflict—irritability, tension, persistence of the problem, etc. Learn what kinds of conflicts are best avoided rather than confronted, e.g. conflicts that will evaporate shortly, those that are inherently unresolvable, win-lose conflicts which you are unlikely to win.

4. *Respect yourself and your interests, respect the other and his or her interests.* Personal insecurity and the sense of vulnerability often lead people to define conflicts as "life and death," win-lose struggles even when they are relatively minor, mixed-motive conflicts, and this definition may lead to "conflict avoidance," "premature conflict resolution," or "obsessive involvement in the conflict." Helping people to develop a respect for themselves and their interests enables them to see their conflicts in reasonable proportion and facilitates their constructive confrontation. Helping people to learn to respect the other and the other's interests inhibits the use of competitive tactics of power, coercion, deprecation, and deception which commonly escalate the issues in conflict and often lead to violence.

5. *Distinguish clearly between "interests" and "positions."* Positions may be opposed but interests may not be. Often when conflicting parties reveal the interests underlying their positions, it is possible to find a solution which suits them both.

6. *Explore your interests and the other's interests to identify the common and compatible interests that you both share.* Identifying shared interests makes it easier to deal constructively with the interests that you perceive as being opposed. A full exploration of one another's interests increases empathy and facilitates subsequent problem solving.

7. *Define the conflicting interests between oneself and the other as a mutual problem to be solved cooperatively.* Define the conflict in the smallest terms possible, as a "here-now-this" conflict rather than as a conflict between personalities or general principles, e.g. as a conflict about a specific behavior rather than about who is a better person. Diagnose the problem clearly and then creatively seek new options for dealing with the conflict that lead to mutual gain. If no option for mutual gain can be discovered, seek to agree upon a fair rule or procedure for deciding how the conflict will be resolved.

8. *In communicating with the other, listen attentively and speak so as to be understood: this requires the active attempt to take the perspective of the other and to check continually one's success in doing so.* One should listen to the other's meaning and emotion in such a way that the other *feels* understood as well as is understood. Similarly, you want to communicate to the other one's thoughts and feelings in such a way that you have good evidence that he or she understands the way you think and feel. The feeling of being understood, as well as effective communication, enormously facilitates constructive resolution.

Skills in taking the perspective of others and in obtaining feedback about the effectiveness of one's communications are important. Role reversal seems to be helpful in developing an understanding of the perspective of the other and in providing checks on how effective the communication process has been.

9. *Be alert to the natural tendencies to bias, misperceptions, misjudgments, and stereotyped thinking that commonly occur in oneself as well as the other during heated conflict.* These errors in perception and thought interfere with communication, make empathy difficult, and impair problem solving. Psychologists can provide a checklist of the common forms of misperception and misjudgment occurring during intense conflict. These include black–white thinking, demonizing the other, shortening of one's time perspective, narrowing of one's range of perceived options, and the fundamental attribution error. The fundamental attribution error is illustrated in the tendency to attribute the aggressive actions of the other to the other's personality while attributing one's own aggressive actions to external circumstances (such as the other's hostile actions). The ability to recognize and admit one's misperceptions and misjudgments clears the air and facilitates similar acknowledgment by the other.

10. *Develop skills for dealing with difficult conflicts so that one is not helpless nor hopeless when confronting those who are more powerful, those who do not want to engage in constructive conflict resolution, or those who use dirty tricks.* It is important to recognize that one becomes less vulnerable to intimidation by a more powerful other, to someone who refuses to cooperate except on his or her terms, or to someone who plays dirty tricks (deceives, welches on an agreement, personally attacks you, etc.) if you realize that you usually have a choice: you do not have to stay in the relationship with the other. The alternative may not be great but it may be better than staying in the relationship. The freedom to choose prevents the other, if he or she benefits from the relationship, from making the relationship unacceptable to you. Second, it is useful to be open and explicit to the other about what he or she is doing that is upsetting you and to indicate the effects that these actions are having on you. Third, it is wise to avoid reciprocating the other's noxious behavior and to avoid attacking the other personally for his behavior (i.e. criticize the behavior and not the person); doing so often leads to an escalating vicious spiral.

A phrase that I have found useful in characterizing the stance one should take in difficult (as well as easy) conflicts is to be “firm, fair, and friendly.” *Firm* in resisting intimidation, exploitation, and dirty tricks; *fair* in holding to one's moral principles and not reciprocating the other's immoral behavior despite his or her provocations; and *friendly* in the sense that one is willing to initiate and reciprocate cooperation.

11. *Know oneself and how one typically responds in different sorts of conflict situations.* As I have suggested earlier, conflict frequently evokes anxiety. In clinical work, I have found that the anxiety is often based upon unconscious fantasies of being overwhelmed and helpless in the face of the other's aggression or of being so angry and aggressive oneself that one will destroy the other. Different people deal with their anxieties about conflict

in different ways. I have found it useful to emphasize six different dimensions of dealing with conflict which can be used to characterize a person's predispositions to respond to conflict. Being aware of one's predispositions may allow one to modify them when they are inappropriate in a given conflict.

(a) *Conflict avoidance–excessive involvement in conflict.* Conflict avoidance is expressed in denial, repression, suppression, avoidance, and continuing postponement of facing the conflict. Excessive involvement in conflict is sometimes expressed in a preoccupation with conflict, a chip on one's shoulder, a tendency to seek out conflict to demonstrate that one is not afraid of conflict.

(b) *Hard–soft.* Some people are prone to take a tough, aggressive, dominating, unyielding response to conflict, fearing that otherwise they will be taken advantage of and be considered soft. Others are afraid that they will be considered to be mean, hostile, or presumptuous, and as a consequence, they are excessively gentle and unassertive. They often expect the other to “read their minds” and know what they want even though they are not open in expressing their interests.

(c) *Rigid–loose.* Some people immediately seek to organize and to control the situation by setting the agenda, defining the rules, etc. They feel anxious if things threaten to get out of control and feel threatened by the unexpected. As a consequence, they are apt to push for rigid arrangements and rules and get upset by even minor deviations. At the other extreme, there are some people who are aversive to anything that seems formal, limiting, controlling, or constricting.

(d) *Intellectual–emotional.* At one extreme, emotion is repressed, controlled, or isolated so that no relevant emotion is felt or expressed as one communicates one's thoughts. The lack of appropriate emotional expressiveness may seriously impair communication: the other may take your lack of emotion as an indicator that you have no real commitment to your interests and that you lack genuine concern for the other's interests. At the other extreme, there are some people who believe that only feelings are real and that words and ideas are not to be taken seriously unless they are thoroughly soaked in emotion. Their emotional extravagance impairs the ability to mutually explore ideas and to develop creative solutions to impasses; it also makes it difficult to differentiate the significant from the insignificant, if even the trivial is accompanied with intense emotion.

(e) *Escalating versus minimizing.* At one extreme, there are some people who tend to experience any given conflict in the largest possible terms. The issues are cast so that what is at stake involves one's self, one's family, one's ethnic group, precedence for all time, or the like. The specifics of the conflict get lost as it escalates along the various dimensions of conflict: the size and number of the immediate issues involved; the number of motives and participants implicated on each side of the issue; the size and number of the principles and precedents that are perceived to be at stake; the cost that the participants are willing to bear in relation to the conflict; the number of norms of moral conduct from which behavior toward the other side is exempted; and the intensity of negative attitudes toward the other side. Escalation of the conflict makes the conflict more difficult to resolve constructively except when the escalation proceeds so rapidly that its absurdity even becomes self-apparent. At the other extreme, there are people who tend to minimize their conflicts. They are similar to the conflict avoiders but, unlike the avoiders, they do recognize the existence of the conflict. However, by minimizing the seriousness of the differences between self and other, by not recognizing how important the matter is to self and to other, one can produce serious

misunderstandings. One may also restrict the effort and work that one may need to devote to the conflict in order to resolve it constructively.

(f) *Compulsively revealing versus compulsively concealing.* At one extreme there are people who feel a compulsion to reveal whatever they think and feel about the other and their suspicions, hostilities, and fears—in the most blunt, unrationalized, and unmodulated manner. Or they may feel they have to communicate every doubt, sense of inadequacy, or weakness they have about themselves. At the other extreme, there are people who feel that they cannot reveal any of their feelings or thoughts without seriously damaging their relationship to the other. Either extreme can impair the development of a constructive relationship. One, in effect, should be open and honest in communication but, appropriately so, taking into account realistically the consequences of what one says or does not say and the current state of the relationship.

12. *Finally, throughout conflict, one should remain a moral person, i.e. a person who is caring and just, and should consider the other as a member of one's moral community, i.e. as someone who is entitled to care and justice.* In the heat of conflict, there is often the tendency to shrink one's moral community and to exclude the other from it: this permits behavior toward the other which one would otherwise consider morally reprehensible. Such behavior escalates conflict and turns it in the direction of violence and destruction.

## **How and When to Intervene in Protracted, Intractable Conflicts?**

Coleman (2000, p. 429) has characterized an intractable conflict as “one that is recalcitrant, intense, deadlocked, and extremely difficult to resolve.” Such conflicts persist over time, they usually escalate (Fisher, 2000), and tend to take on a life of their own. I have termed the social process involved in such conflicts, a malignant social process (Deutsch, 1983).

Perfectly sane and intelligent people, groups, and nations—once caught up in such a malignant process—enmesh themselves in a web of interactions and aggressive–defensive maneuvers which instead of improving their situation, make both sides feel less secure and more burdened. They trap themselves in a vicious process that leads to outcomes of mutual loss and harm. In such a social process both sides come to be right in believing that the other side is hostile, malevolent, and intent on inflicting harm. Their interactions provide ample justification for such beliefs. Typically, in such a conflict, the participants see no way of extricating themselves without becoming vulnerable to an unacceptable loss in a value central to their self-identities, self-esteems, or security.

A number of key elements contribute to the development and perpetuation of such a process. They include:

1. *An anarchic social situation*, which provides no basis for mutual trust, in which an attempt by one party to increase its own security or welfare—without regard to the security or welfare of others—is experienced as a threat by the others.
2. *A win–lose or competitive orientation* to the conflict.
3. *Inner conflict* within each of the parties, that are displaced, suppressed, or channeled into the external conflict.
4. *Cognitive rigidity*, which limits the ability to search out or create mutually satisfactory agreements.
5. *Misjudgments and misperceptions* which enhance negativity toward the other and toward possible solutions.

6. *The development and investment* in the skills, attitudes, and institutions involved in waging and perpetuating the conflict.
7. *Self-fulfilling prophecies*, in which one's hostile behavior toward the other elicits a negative response from the other which confirms one's negative view of the other.
8. *Vicious escalating spirals*, which often result from the biased tendency of each side to see their own aggressive–defensive behaviors as justified and the other side's as unjustified.
9. *A gamesmanship orientation* which turns the conflict away from issues of what in real life is being won or lost to an abstract conflict over images of power.

In the social science literature, there has been extended discussion of the question of when an intractable conflict is “ripe” for resolution. Zartman (Touval & Zartman, 1985; Zartman & Berman, 1982; Zartman, 1985), Pruitt and Olzack (1995), and Coleman (1997) have provided important discussions of the concept of ripeness and how it can be fostered. Zartman's (2000, pp. 228–229) definition of the concept is widely used: “If the (two) parties to a conflict (a) perceive themselves to be in a hurting stalemate and (b) perceive the possibility of a negotiated solution (a way out), the conflict is ripe for resolution (i.e., for negotiations toward resolution to begin).” However, as Zartman himself points out; increased pain may, under certain conditions, strengthen the determination to achieve one's objectives. Or to paraphrase one of Festinger's (1957, 1961) quotes illustrating his theory of cognitive dissonance, rats and men come to love and be committed to the things (and to the principles) for which they have suffered.

I shall not summarize here the valuable discussion of Zartman, Pruitt and Olzack, and Coleman (referred to above) about the conditions which foster ripeness. Here, I wish to consider the therapeutic principles involved in helping a married couple who were involved in a bitter stalemate conflict over issues which they considered nonnegotiable to negotiate these issues constructively (Deutsch, 1988). The couple, who were in a “mutually hurting stalemate,” sought help for several reasons. On the one hand, their conflicts were becoming physically violent: this frightened them and it also ran counter to their strong constraints making it difficult for them to separate. They felt they would be considerably worse off economically, their child would suffer, and they had mutually congenial intellectual, esthetic, sexual, and recreational interests which would be difficult for them to engage in together if separated.

Let me briefly discuss the steps involved in getting the couple to the point where they were ready to negotiate. There were two major interrelated steps, each of which involved many substeps. The first entailed helping each spouse to recognize that the present situation of a bitter, stalemated conflict no longer served his or her real interests. The second step involved aiding the couple to become aware of the possibility that each of them could be better off than they currently were if they recognized their conflict as a joint problem, which required creative, joint effort in order to improve their individual situations. The two steps do not follow one another in neat order: progress in either step facilitates progress in the other.

It should be recognized that, in many instances, the external conflicts between two parties may be generated or sustained by internal conflicts within each party, e.g. as a way of blaming the other for one's own inadequacies, difficulties, and problems so that one can avoid confronting the necessity of changing oneself. Thus, in the couple I treated, the wife perceived herself to be a victim, and felt that her failure to achieve her professional goals was due to her husband's unfair treatment of her as exemplified by his unwillingness to share responsibilities for the household and child care. Blaming her husband provided her with

a means of avoiding her own apprehensions about whether she personally had the abilities and courage to fulfill her aspirations. Similarly, the husband who provoked continuous criticism from his wife for his domineering, imperial behavior employed her criticism to justify his emotional withdrawal, thus enabling him to avoid dealing with his anxieties about personal intimacy and emotional closeness. Even though the wife's accusations concerning her husband's behavior were largely correct, as were the husband's toward her, each had an investment in maintaining the other's noxious behavior because of the defensive self-justifications such behavior provided.

How does a therapist help the conflicting parties overcome such internal deterrents to recognizing that their bitter, stalemated conflict no longer serves their real interests? The general answer, which is quite often difficult to implement in practice, is to help each of the conflicting parties change in such a way that the conflict no longer is maintained by conditions in the parties that are extrinsic to the conflict. In essence, this entails helping each of the conflicting parties to achieve the self-esteem and self-image that would make them no longer need the destructive conflict process as a defense against their sense of personal inadequacy, their fear of taking on new and unfamiliar roles, their feeling of purposelessness and boredom, and their fears of rejection and attack if they act independently of others.

What are the conditions that are likely to help conflicting parties become aware of the possibility that each of them could be better off than they currently are if they recognize that their conflict is a joint problem that requires creative, joint efforts in order to improve the individual situations? A number of such conditions are listed below:

1. Critical to this awareness is the recognition that one cannot impose a solution which may be acceptable or satisfactory to oneself upon the other. In other words, there is recognition that a satisfactory solution for oneself requires the other's agreement, and this is unlikely unless the other is also satisfied with the solution. Such recognition implies an awareness that a mutually acceptable agreement will require at least a minimal degree of cooperation.
2. To believe that the other is ready to engage in a joint problem-solving effort, one must believe that the other has also recognized that he or she cannot impose a solution—that is, the other has also recognized that a solution has to be mutually acceptable.
3. The conflicting parties must have some hope that a mutually acceptable agreement can be found. This hope may rest upon their own perception of the outlines of a possible fair settlement or it may be based on their confidence in the expertise of third parties, or even on a generalized optimism.
4. The conflicting parties must have confidence that if a mutually acceptable agreement is concluded, both will abide by it or that violations will be detected before the losses to the self and the gains to the other become intolerable. If the other is viewed as unstable, lacking self-control, or untrustworthy, it will be difficult to have confidence in the viability of an agreement unless one has confidence in third parties who are willing and able to guarantee the integrity of the agreement.

Issues that seem vitally important to a person, such as one's identity, security, self-esteem, or reputation, often are experienced as nonnegotiable. Thus, consider the husband and wife who viewed themselves in a conflict over a nonnegotiable issue. The wife who worked (and wanted to do so) wanted the husband to share equally in the household and child-care responsibilities: she considered equality between the genders to be one of her core personal values. The husband wanted a traditional marriage with a traditional division of responsibilities, in which he would have primary responsibility for income-producing work

outside the home while his wife would have primary responsibility for the work related to the household and child care. The husband considered household work and child care as inconsistent with his deeply rooted image of adult masculinity. The conflict seemed nonnegotiable to the couple—for the wife it would be a betrayal of her feminist values to accept her husband's terms; for the husband, it would be a violation of his sense of adult masculinity to become deeply involved in housework or child care.

However, this nonnegotiable conflict became negotiable when, with the help of the therapist, the husband and wife were able to listen and really understand each other's feelings and the ways in which their respective life experiences had led them to the views they each held. Understanding the other's position fully and the feeling and experiences which were behind them made them each feel less hurt and humiliated by the other's position and more ready to seek solutions that would accommodate the interests of both. They realized that with their joint incomes they could afford to pay for household and child-care help, which would enable the wife to be considerably less burdened by these responsibilities without increasing the husband's chores in these areas: of course, doing so lessened the amount of money they had available for other purposes.

This solution was not a perfect one for either party. The wife and husband each would have preferred that the other share their own view of what a marriage should be like. However, their deeper understanding of the other's position made them feel less humiliated and threatened by it and less defensive toward the other. It also enabled them to negotiate a mutually acceptable agreement that lessened the tensions between them despite their continuing differences in basic perspectives.

The general conclusions that I draw from this and other experiences with a "nonnegotiable" issue is that most such issues are negotiable even though the underlying basic differences between the conflicting parties are not resolved when they learn to listen, understand, and empathize with the other party's position, interests, and feelings, providing they are also able to communicate to the other their understanding and empathy. Even though understanding and empathy do not imply agreement with the other's views, they indicate an openness and responsiveness which reduce hostility and defensiveness and which also allow the other to be more open and responsive. Such understanding and empathy help the conflicting parties to reduce their feelings that their self-esteem, security, or identity will be threatened and endangered by recognizing that the other's feelings and interests, as well as one's own, deserve consideration in dealing with the issues in conflict.

The positions of the conflicting parties may be irreconcilable, but their interests may be concordant. Helping parties in conflict to be fully in touch with their long-term interests may enable them to see beyond their nonnegotiable positions to their congruent interests. An atmosphere of mutual understanding and empathy fosters the conditions that permit conflicting parties to get beyond their initial rigid, nonnegotiable position to their underlying interests (for a comprehensive discussion of various methods of "interactive conflict resolution" that have been employed in intractable intergroup conflicts, see Fisher, 1997).

### **How Are we to Understand Why Ethnic, Religious, and Identity Conflicts Frequently Take an Intractable, Destructive Course?**

It is not uncommon for scholars concerned with intergroup or interethnic relations to assume, implicitly, that all or most intergroup relations are characterized by destructive conflict. However, as Ronald Fisher (2000, p. 166) points out: "In most ongoing intergroup relations

in countless settings, cooperative relations exist and conflict is handled more or less constructively, to the satisfaction of the parties involved.” Similarly, Gurr (1993, pp. 290–291), in his global survey of ethnopolitical conflicts, writes:

Some observers have concluded that ethnopolitical conflicts are intractable. The evidence suggests otherwise. . . . Our images of intractable communal conflicts are largely shaped by ethnonationalist wars in the Middle East, Asia, and Africa. Yet for each example of protracted communal conflict in these regions, one can point to neighboring states where similar conflicts have been managed more effectively. . . . In central and West Africa more than a dozen states straddle the cultural and religious divide between the Muslim, Arab-influenced peoples of the savannah and the Christian, European-influenced peoples of the forest and coastal regions. Only in Sudan and Chad have protracted civil wars been fought across this divide.

In light of the foregoing, the question above should be reformulated into several questions:

1. What are the factors which lead to a constructive rather than a destructive resolution of communal or ethnic conflict?
2. Is there anything distinctive about ethnic conflict which may predispose it to a destructive resolution?
3. If such a conflict takes a destructive course, how can reconciliation be fostered after each side has inflicted indignities and grievous harm on the other?

Gurr (1993), in his global study of ethnopolitical conflicts, provides research on 233 ethnic groups involved in communal conflicts of one sort or another which bears upon (1) above. He concludes (p. 213):

there are two keys to the constructive management of ethnopolitical conflict. One is to search out politically and socially creative policies that bridge the gaps between the interests of minorities and states. All parties, including outside observers, can contribute to this process. The second is to begin the process of creative conflict management in the early stages of open conflict. . . . States and their leaders . . . should be able to respond creatively to political mobilization and protest by communal groups before the groups cross the threshold of sustained violence.

Gurr (1993, p. 313) discusses four types of state policies that are used to accommodate the interests of ethnopolitical minorities: regional autonomy, assimilation, pluralism, and power sharing:

The conclusion for states is one of caution: public efforts to manage ethnopolitical conflicts have risks as well as potential gains. If policies of accommodation are to be effective they must be pursued cautiously but persistently over the long term, slowly enough not to stimulate a crippling reaction from other groups, persistently enough so that minorities do not defect or rebel. The conclusion for communal groups is that persistence in the nonviolent pursuit of group interests is a strategic virtue, and so is a willingness to compromise about the specifics of accommodation. . . . Violent means in the pursuit of communal interests usually are politically more effective as threats than in actuality.

The answer to the second question (what is distinctive about ethnic conflicts which may predispose them to a destructive resolution?) lies in *the importance of one's membership in an ethnic group to one's self-identity* (see Tajfel, 1978, 1981, and Turner, 1987, who have developed “Social Identity Theory” which articulates in detail the links among group membership, social identity, and self-concept). Among the strongest membership bonds are

those arising out of certain ascribed statuses such as family, sex, racial, and national group membership, all of which one acquires by birth rather than by choice. Such statuses can rarely be changed. It is the combination of their unalterability and their social significance that gives these ascribed statuses their personal importance. One's handedness, left or right, may be as difficult to alter as one's race, but it is by no means as socially significant. Membership in a family, racial, sexual, ethnic, or national group affects one's thoughts and actions in many situations; these effects are pervasive. In addition, by common definition, membership in such groups typically excludes membership in other groups of a similar type. That is, if you are black, you are not also white; if you are male, you are not also female; if you are Jewish, you are not also Christian. Thus being a member is thought to be more or less distinctive, and since membership is linked to experiences from early on in one's life, it is not unusual for one to get emotionally attached to such groups, with the result that these memberships play an important positive role in determining one's sense of identity.

Suppose that one is emotionally attached to one's identity as a Jew, woman, or black, but that it results in systematic oppression and discrimination and places one at a distinct disadvantage in obtaining many kinds of opportunities and rewards. How one copes with this situation will be largely determined by whether one views the disadvantages to be just or unjust. If those who are disadvantaged by their group identity accept their disadvantages as being warranted, they are unlikely to challenge and conflict with those who are profiting from their relatively advantaged positions. The sense of being treated unjustly because of one's membership in a group to which one is strongly attached and bound is the energizer for much intergroup conflict. The sense of injustice is felt particularly intensely in interracial, interethnic, and intersex conflicts because of the centrality of these group identities to the individual's self-esteem. When women or blacks or Jews are devalued as a group, those who are identified and identify with the groups also are personally devalued.

There is considerable evidence from the anthropological literature (see LeVine & Campbell, 1972, for a summary and references) that the pyramidal-segmentary social structure is more conducive to destructive intergroup strife within a society than the cross-cutting type. The reason for this is easy to see. If, for example, in a society which has a pyramidal-segmentary social structure a conflict arises between two ethnic groups in the society (e.g. about which group's language shall be paramount in the total society), then the individual's membership in all the groups that are nested within his ethnic group (his neighborhood, his recreation group, his kinship group, etc.) will strengthen his loyalty to his ethnic group's position. But this will happen on both sides, making it more difficult to resolve the differences between the two groups. On the other hand, in a cross-cutting social structure, members of the conflicting ethnic groups are likely to be members of common work groups, common neighborhood groups, and so on. Their common membership will make it difficult to polarize individual attitudes about the ethnic conflict. Doing so would place the individual in the dilemma of choosing between loyalty to his ethnic group and loyalty to his other groups that cut across ethnic lines. Thus cross-cutting membership and loyalties tend to function as a moderating influence in resolving any particular intergroup conflict within a society. However, if the ethnic conflict becomes sufficiently intense even cross-cutting ties may be torn, resulting in an even greater bitterness and violence as one experiences a sense of betrayal of trust.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> There are excellent discussions of relevant theory and of specific ethnic and other intergroup conflicts in Staub (1989), Gurr (1993), Ross and Rothman (1999), and Christie, Wagner, and Winter (2001). For a recent, excellent symposium on the concept of "Social Identity," see *Political Psychology*, 22(1), 2001, 111-198.

The third question, which focuses on how to achieve forgiveness and reconciliation after bitter conflict, has been of increasing interest to students of conflict. There have been outstanding discussions in Lederach (1997), Shriver (1995), Minow (1998), and in various chapters in Christie, Wagner, and Winter (2001). I have also discussed these matters in Deutsch and Coleman (2000, Chapter 2).

Wessels and Monteiro (2001, p. 263) have articulated very well the scope of the task and challenges involved in reconstruction of civil society after bitter, destructive, dehumanizing ethnic conflict. It involves interrelated tasks of economic, political, and social reconstruction as well as psychosocial intervention. As they point out, "In all of these tasks, a high priority is the establishment of *social justice*, transforming patterns of exclusion, inequity, and oppression that fuel tension and fighting."

In my discussion of reconciliation (Deutsch & Coleman, 2000, pp. 58–62), I have articulated some basic principles for establishing cooperative relations after a bitter conflict. They are:

1. *Mutual security*. After a bitter conflict, each side tends to be concerned with its own security, without adequate recognition that neither side can attain security unless the other side also feels secure. Real security requires that both sides have as their goal *mutual* security. If weapons have been involved in the prior conflict, mutually verifiable disarmament and arms control are important components of mutual security.

2. *Mutual respect*. Just as true security from physical danger requires mutual cooperation, so does security from psychological harm and humiliation. Each side must treat the other side with the respect, courtesy, politeness, and consideration normatively expected in civil society. Insult, humiliation, and inconsiderateness by one side usually leads to reciprocation by the other and decreased physical and psychological security.

3. *Humanization of the other*. During bitter conflict, each side tends to dehumanize the other and develop images of the other as an evil enemy. There is much need for both sides to experience one another in everyday contexts as parents, homemakers, schoolchildren, teachers, and merchants, which enables them to see one another as human beings who are more like themselves than not. Problem-solving workshops, along the lines developed by Burton (1969, 1987) and Kelman (1972), are also valuable in overcoming dehumanization of one another.

4. *Fair rules for managing conflict*. Even if a tentative reconciliation has begun, new conflicts inevitably occur—over the distribution of scarce resources, procedures, values, etc. It is important to anticipate that conflicts will occur and to develop beforehand the fair rules, experts, institutions, and other resources for managing such conflicts constructively and justly.

5. *Curbing the extremists on both sides*. During a protracted and bitter conflict, each side tends to produce extremists committed to the processes of the destructive conflict as well as to its continuation. Attaining some of their initial goals may be less satisfying than continuing to inflict damage on the other. It is well to recognize that extremists stimulate extremism on both sides. The parties need to cooperate in curbing extremism on their own side and restraining actions that stimulate and justify extremist elements on the other side.

6. *Gradual development of mutual trust and cooperation*. It takes repeated experience of successful, varied, mutually beneficial cooperation to develop a solid basis for mutual trust between former enemies. In the early stages of reconciliation, when trust is required for cooperation, the former enemies may be willing to trust a third party (who agrees to serve as a monitor, inspector, or guarantor of any cooperative arrangement) but not yet willing

to trust one another if there is a risk of the other failing to reciprocate cooperation. Also in the early stages, it is especially important that cooperative endeavors be successful. This requires careful selection of the opportunities and tasks for cooperation so that they are clearly achievable as well as meaningful and significant.

### **How Applicable in Other Cultures Are the Theories Related to Conflict that Have Largely Been Developed in the United States and Western Europe?**

I believe there is considerable confusion about this question. It would be presumptuous indeed to think that there exists, at this stage of the development of the field of conflict resolution, a theory which is universally valid across the various cultures, across historic time, and across different types of social actors (individuals, groups, organizations, and nations). There are some of us who hope such theory can ultimately be developed and some of us are even brash enough to think that some of the existing theoretical ideas (e.g. about cooperation–competition) may have considerable generality. However, even if we had a universally valid *theory* at the level of constructs, the operational definition of constructs (i.e. how they are defined empirically or in terms of phenomena) would inevitably differ in different cultures and even, within a given culture, from situation to situation. In Lewinian terminology, constructs are like *genotypes*, and the observational data are similar to *phenotypes*. A given genotype can be expressed in many different types of phenotypes (e.g. the color of two genotypically identical hydrangeas will differ as a function of the acidity of the soil in which they are planted). Similarly, a given construct, such as aggression, can be manifested in many ways depending on the culture and other characteristics of the specific situation in which the parties are involved.

Thus, whether or not we had a universally valid theory (which we don't),<sup>4</sup> we would still need to have detailed, specific knowledge of the culture in which we are employing whatever theoretical ideas or framework we use to orient ourselves to conflict and to cultural differences. A self-reflective practitioner will seek to be aware of his/her own framework and be open to its change in light of challenging, new experiences. S/he will also be sensitive to his/her own cultural assumptions about the power relations between him/herself and the people with whom s/he is working and their appropriateness in the culture within which s/he is working. In addition, s/he will be aware of his/her need to develop knowledge about the culture and background of the people with whom s/he is working by using existing knowledge, informants, coworkers from the culture, and by what Lederach (1995) has termed an “elicitive approach” as s/he works with people from a different culture. While the issue of “cultural” differences is obvious when comparing such differences across societies, it should be recognized that there are also “cultural” differences within societies—among the different socioeconomic classes, between the sexes, among occupations, etc. It is a common mistake to assume that cultures are homogeneous.

There are a number of excellent books which discuss specific differences among cultures as they deal with conflict and negotiation. They include Triandis (1972), Hofstede (1980),

<sup>4</sup> I believe that a number of psychological theories (e.g. equity theory) implicitly assume a culture that is individualistic and market-oriented. Sampson (1983) has an excellent critique of psychological theories from this perspective. In Deutsch and Coleman (2000, Chapter 1), I describe the values and social norms underlying our practice of conflict resolution.

Kimmel (1989), Hall and Hall (1990), Cohen (1991), Fisher (1998), Faure and Rubin (1993), Ross (1993), Rahim and Blum (1994), and Leung and Tjosvold (1998).

## **EVALUATION OF PROGRESS IN THE SOCIAL PSYCHOLOGICAL STUDY OF CONFLICT**

I now turn to the important question: what progress, if any, has occurred during the past 70 years or so in the social psychological study of conflict? I am a biased observer, but, even taking my bias into account, I am strongly inclined to believe that significant scientific progress has been made and that important contributions to society are being derived from the scientific study of conflict. Let me briefly characterize the nature of the progress in the methodological, conceptual, empirical, and technological domains.

### **Methodological**

There have been major methodological advances during the past 60 years in the study of cooperation–competition, conflict, bargaining, and negotiation. New and better techniques for studying these phenomena in the laboratory and also in the field have emerged.

### **Conceptual**

In the course of this chapter, I have outlined some of the conceptual developments that have taken place in work on cooperation and competition; on understanding the nature and determinants of constructive and destructive processes of conflict resolution; and on understanding some of the determinants and consequences of different systems of distributive justice. We are beginning to have some understanding of the conditions and processes involved in intractable conflict. Some of the psychological issues involved in ethnic conflict have been highlighted by social identity theory. The functions of such third parties as mediators, the determinants of the effectiveness of mediation, and the nature of the processes involved in mediation are being clarified. This represents significant theoretical progress and a more systematic integration of our knowledge of the social psychological aspects of conflict and distributive justice.

### **Empirical**

We know a great deal more, with considerably more certainty, about the empirical regularities associated with conflict. Thus, we know how such psychological processes as “autistic hostility,” “self-fulfilling prophecies,” “unwitting commitments,” and “biased perceptions” operate to produce an escalation of conflict. We know the social psychological correlates of intensifying conflict and of de-escalating conflict. Thus, as conflict escalates there is an increased reliance upon a strategy of power and upon the tactics of threat, coercion, and deception. Also, there is increased pressure for uniformity of opinion and for leadership and control to be taken over by those elements organized for waging conflict. De-escalation of conflict is characterized by graduated reciprocation in tension reduction;

tactics of conciliation; accentuation of similarities; and enhancement of mutual understanding and goodwill. We are increasingly aware of the social psychological regularities associated with benign and malevolent conflict. We are reasonably sure of the typical effects of certain forms of bargaining strategies and tactics and can reliably conclude that many commonsense beliefs about bargaining are much too simple part-truths.

## Technological

There have been many significant social consequences of the scientific study of conflict; not all of these can be attributed to the work of social psychologists. Social psychologists have been important contributors to some changes in thinking about conflict at the national level—as exemplified in Kennedy’s American University speech and in the Kerner Commission reports. Also, in recent years, many of the ideas generated in the social psychological study of conflict have been employed in training administrators and negotiators, in schools, labor unions, industry, government, and community organizations, how to deal with conflict more effectively. “Conflict,” “negotiation skills,” and “mediation skills” workshops are now common features of training for work in organizations in the United States, Europe, and Japan. Osgood’s (1962) strategy for de-escalating conflict—“graduated and reciprocated initiatives in tension reduction” (GRIT)—has received considerable experimental support, has been widely discussed in international and national meetings, and appears to have been the basis for the “Kennedy experiment” to end the Cold War. Key participants in the roundtable negotiations in Poland between the Communist government and Solidarity have told me that our work on conflict resolution was consciously employed to facilitate successful negotiations. Problem-solving workshops, developed by such people as John Burton, Herbert Kelman, Leonard Doob, and Edward Azar, have been widely used in international and intercommunal conflict (Fisher, 1998).

Let me conclude by stating that although there has been significant progress in the study of conflict, the progress does not yet begin to match the social need for understanding conflict. We live in a period of history when the pervasiveness and intensity of competitive conflict over natural resources are likely to increase markedly. And currently ethnic and national conflicts pose a great danger to peace in many areas of the world. We also live in a period when hydrogen bombs and other weapons of mass destruction can destroy civilized life. The social need for better ways of managing conflict is urgent. In relation to this need, it is my view that too few of us are working on the scientific issues which are likely to provide the knowledge that will lead to more constructive conflict resolution of the many intensive conflicts which await us all.

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