

1 Perspectives on conflict resolution

Conflict is manifested through adversarial social action, involving two or more actors with the expression of differences often accompanied by intense hostilities. The conditions of scarcity (for instance, caused by soil degradation or depletion of water in river basins or lakes in Central Africa) and value incompatibilities can become a continuing source of contention. Most significantly, protracted conflict arises from the failure to manage antagonistic relationships. Despite economic difficulties and cultural diversity, South Africa and many other societies have been able to eventually overcome inter-communal rivalries and develop various types of institutions which can renegotiate opposing economic and political interests democratically.

In Switzerland, the Netherlands and other advanced democratic countries, regional and cultural divergence has not created social disruptions or armed violence. Indeed, opposing roles and positions have been harmonized and institutionally accommodated without the destruction of the social fabric. In contrast with the coexistence of multi-ethnic communities in Western Europe and North America, religious, language and racial differences have served as a means to rally various rival groups in a struggle for power and territorial gains in many other parts of the world, stretching from the Middle East, Central Asia, the Balkans, and the Caucasus to Latin America. The eruption of uncontrolled violence has cost the loss of many lives, destroyed homes and economic devastation in war-torn societies, most notably Sudan, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Sri Lanka, and Bosnia-Herzegovina. In understanding conflict, we need to examine the quality of relationships that reveals the way we relate to each other socially, economically and culturally as well as how political decisions are made.

Even though conflict has been treated like an uncontrolled fight in chaotic, lawless societies (as exemplified in Somalia and Afghanistan), differences between opponents can be handled in a non-adversarial manner. In order to establish functional relationships, the solution should be found through negotiated agreements rather than resorting to violent tactics. The opposing positions can be examined for persuasion via verbal arguments.

Traditional models of settling diverse interests focus on the management of disagreement and tension within the constraints of the prevailing system. Various dispute resolution mechanisms in communities, corporations, and government agencies have been institutionalized to promote a more rule-governed society by handling complaints arising from employment relations, poor quality of services, claims over property ownership among neighbors, or opposition to development projects.

In a more destructive, large-scale conflict, deeper sources of resentment might be related to economic disparities and political oppression. The United Nations, Organization of Security and Cooperation in Europe, African Union, and other regional organizations have

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developed conflict mitigation and management mechanisms ranging from fact-finding missions in the cases of human rights abuses or minority rights violations to good offices (designed for assistance in communication between adversarial states in support of easing tensions).

Removing misperceptions of adversaries is regarded as a vital step toward settling differences and institutionalizing a new relationship. Indeed, reduced enemy perceptions play a crucial role in initiating a collaborative process. Minimizing value incompatibilities has to touch upon reconciling a different sense of identity by acknowledging each party's needs, intrinsic to their survival and maintenance of dignity. Most importantly, the process and outcome of negotiating different values and incompatible interests reflect not only perceptual, subjective differences but also power relations between dominant and subordinate groups.

It is essential to shed light on diverse phenomena, extending from group dynamics to structural adjustment in an adversarial social system in order to accommodate the vital interests and needs of those who have been alienated and suffered from injustice. Whereas a complex conflict has many underlying sources (both structural and psychological), it is necessary to define conflict in a specific pattern of interactions between opponents being influenced by identity differences and overarching social relations as well as power asymmetry.

One of the primary tasks of conflict resolution is to avert the recurrence of destructive conflict by qualitatively altering antagonistic relationships. Beyond responding to a few manifest, contentious issues, mutually acceptable outcomes stem from finding remedies for power imbalances and inequitable social and economic relations which are often the main source of grievances. The nature of adverse relationships needs to be transformed by supporting consensus on power sharing, enhancement of individual and group well-being as well as a guarantee of security.

A large map of conflict formation and transformation can reveal the nature of a struggle as well as the processes for changing psychological perceptions. There are wide differences among conflicts in terms of their scope and group dynamics, as is illustrated by a comparison between the guerrilla warfare in Chechnya and the nonviolent protest against brutal Chinese rule in Tibet. In transforming adversarial relationships, we need to investigate how group processes are linked to structural conditions. Inter-group relations are constrained by a superimposed political structure as well as by internal group dynamics such as rivalry between factions which take different attitudes toward conflict.

The book's objectives

This book is designed to examine how to manage and resolve conflict, in part, by shedding light on the styles and methods of communication in overcoming differences along with the efforts to minimize the harmful aspects of struggle. It is important to explore diverse modes of interpreting conflict in tandem with the illumination of different ways of tackling a range of problems arising from competitive relationships within and between societies. The manner of our societies' response to conflict has broad implications for human well-being and social change. The volume treats reconciliation, along with transformation of repressive relations, as an essential part of a conflict resolution process.

Keeping the above objective in mind, this book consists of three parts. In Part I, the author presents the conceptions of conflict management, settlement and resolution as well as the examination of processes and strategies to transform conflict. Some conflicts are

harder to mitigate due to a deep rooted history of animosities, institutionalization of dominant relations and difficulties in changing an entrenched system of exploitation and suppression. These themes are echoed and conceptualized in the chapters of Part II on identity, power and structure. The chapters thus cover identity formation, the effects of power in conflict outcomes, and the changes in social and political institutions needed to forge new relationships.

Part III looks at different forms of conflict settlement and resolution, ranging from adjudication to arbitration to collaborative problem solving. Various features of negotiation are illustrated by different stages of bargaining and outcomes. Negotiation between warring parties often faces challenges, creating the need for the involvement of mediators who can facilitate communication and assist in forging compromise. Facilitation is essential to initiating dialogue and promoting understanding of difficult issues which divide communities with the aim of building consensus for problem solving. Overall, the main ethos of this book is to illustrate both the past and current human endeavors to settle and resolve conflict in such a way as to enhance reconciliation and justice.

Multiple facets of conflict

Despite its application to a variety of situations, the definition of conflict has traditionally been relegated to competition for resources or other interests, value differences or dissatisfaction with basic needs. Incompatible economic and political interests develop an attempt to suppress other groups often with threats and actual use of force. The discovery of oil, uranium and other minerals in Morocco, Nigeria, and Sudan has resulted in government attempts to tightly control ethnic minorities along with the refusal of fair sharing of incomes from mineral exploitation. The growing resentment ignited armed resistance which has been followed by government retaliatory attacks on many civilians, causing destruction of properties, indiscriminate killing, rape, and other abuses which sometimes reach genocidal levels (as has recently been illustrated in Darfur, Sudan).

The perception of scarcity often worsens competitive situations by generating an even stronger desire to have access to the limited resources. The level of competition is thus affected by the availability and value of the territories or other objects sought simultaneously by rival groups. In the absence of agreeable decision-making rules and accepted norms on the conduct of behavior, the contest can turn into activities aimed at the destruction of each other.

For instance, the 1994 genocide in Rwanda can be attributed to simmering tensions which originated from competition between Hutus and Tutsis over arable land for producing coffee beans that generate a major source of export income. The rivalry has naturally grown into an attempt to control state institutions involved in decision making on the allocation of land and export income. The contest has been further fueled by exclusive ethnic ideologies alongside the colonial legacy which granted disproportionate wealth and power to minority Tutsis.

Power struggle is inevitably involved when each group attempts to impose its own language, religious or social values on other groups which have their own unique traditions and histories. As communal conflict in Sri Lanka and Kashmir for the last several decades vividly demonstrates, minority groups have a strong desire for autonomy and self-control of their destiny. In establishing or maintaining a superior status, dominant groups may discriminate against minority ethnic culture or language. Then the newly created hierarchy is used to further control subordinate religious, racial, or linguistic groups.

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Regardless of wide differences in the types of relationships, “incompatibility of goals” features general characteristics of conflict (Jeong, 2008; Kriesberg, 1998; Mitchell, 2002; Rubin *et al.*, 1994). The pursuit of different objectives leads to interference in each other’s activities to prevent an opponent from attaining what one group desires. These conditions of conflict can result in either a sustained conflict or compromise solutions unless a superior party overwhelms and subdues the other side rather quickly. A minority group may seek outright independence, but the state controlled by a majority ethnic group may oppose the aspiration and even suppress rights to ethnic language and religion. As happened to the independence of East Timor, the matter can be determined by a popular referendum after decades of struggle. In other tense conflict situations, ethnic groups made a compromise and gave up independence in return for self-rule and the guarantee of expanded political and cultural rights. In the late 1990s and early 2000s, negotiations following serious clashes and armed revolts by ethnic Albanians in Macedonia eventually gave them freedom to teach ethnic languages at various levels of academic institutions and increased political representation in the government.

In an unregulated competition, claims to scarce status, power, and resources may result in an attempt to injure or eliminate rivals (Coser, 1956). Incompatible preferences are a more acute source of tension and struggle especially when each party seeks distributive outcomes which satisfy one group’s interests at the expense of others. A competitive struggle often arises from a situation where each party’s aspirations cannot be fulfilled simultaneously. The difficulties in dealing with extremist terrorist groups such as al-Qaeda are that their actions are not motivated by obtaining specific, tangible, negotiable objectives but by broad, ideological doctrines which seek the total destruction of an enemy society (blamed for collective responsibility for the misery in Islamic societies).

In a contentious struggle, one group’s perspectives are organized around the primacy of their own interests, as each party competes for maximizing gain. In a conflict seen as zero-sum (where one’s gains become the other’s loss), one party has to be induced or forced to yield or withdraw from their quest in the competition in order to avoid serious confrontation. A power-based contest becomes the primary means to determine a winner when contentious competition turns into an unregulated fight.

Each group attaches different degrees of importance to their struggles and outcomes, developing divergent perceptions of the incompatible interests. The more desirable one party feels winning in contention, the more intense efforts the party is likely to make. Value and identity differences along with economic and social inequality create an intractable source of conflict. Beneath a struggle for territory and wealth lie pride, identity and security. Whereas emotional threat generates the fear of losing what one values, a sense of insecurity creates loyalty to one’s own group and hatred toward rival groups.

In the absence of a past history of cooperation, aggressive actions are more likely to be ignited in polarized communities where leaders develop antagonistic attitudes toward each other. A long period of conflict entrapment increases the likelihood of greater rigidity and polarization with the reinforcement of mistrust, enemy perceptions and feelings of victimization. The stereotypes of an enemy and misunderstanding of their motives justify the denial of the legitimacy of opposing claims.

The institutionalization of negative interactions is inherent in conflicts fueled by many years of accumulated hostilities. This is vividly represented by recurrent provocations and confrontations between the Sudanese government and southern provinces which seek independence. When an intense struggle permeates the social fabric with its effect on individuals and institutions, a vicious cycle of destructive struggles touches multi-faceted

layers of adversarial relationships. As every aspect of social life is dominated by violence, the necessity to cope with conflict influences mundane daily decisions. For instance, Israelis (exposed to rocket and mortar fire from Gaza) have to curtail their outdoor activities while Palestinians (hit by frequent Israeli military strikes) need to look for safe shelters.

In addition, conflict preoccupies political and intellectual agendas filtered through the public domain. Even cultural and educational systems are adapted to the support of the justification of ideologies and values mobilized for the conflict. While Jewish school trips to holocaust sites in Poland are intended for the remembrance of past sufferings, they unintentionally re-traumatize the new generation and turn them into supporters of harsh government measures against Palestinians. As the quality of life further deteriorates owing to the Israeli closure of their borders, Palestinians in Gaza develop further resentment, passing it on to their children who grow up with the language of hatred and demonization of Jews.

In a deadlocked conflict rooted in historical, collective memories (of centuries of foreign occupation and war, for instance, in the Balkans), winning a conflict becomes a matter of survival. Individuals and groups are adapted to conflict realities filled with new and old animosities and prejudices against opponents. Old memories are evoked to strengthen the will to fight on regardless of continuing suffering and loss. Inter-group differentiation is made clearer by an emphasis on exclusive symbols attached to the group's current experience and history, reflecting on a sense of legitimacy about one's own claims and feelings of victimization. These symbols further intensify the dividing lines between us versus them.

The tensions between Unionists and Nationalists in Northern Ireland have been symbolized by the Orange Order marches which celebrate the Protestant victory over the Catholics at the Battle of the Boyne in July 1690. The migration of unemployed rural Catholics to parts of the traditional routes of the marches created controversy, as Catholics interpret the celebration as a provocation to show who is superior. Protestants regard any attempt to restrict their freedom to walk through what have been the traditional routes for centuries as a move to marginalize their Protestant identity.

The politicization of religion and other identity bases creates difficulties in reconciling different positions. In a deeply rooted power struggle, every issue becomes perceived as incompatible and non-negotiable by partisans. As differences are not regarded as reconcilable, it is difficult to moderate or change one's behavior that is deemed necessary for bringing the fight to an end. In a total conflict, every member of an adversary group becomes a potential object of indiscriminate attacks.

Behavioral and psychological aspects of pathological conflict

In antagonistic group mobilization, a high degree of tension is manifested in the threatened use of force as well as verbal confrontations. Indeed, anger, hatred, and dehumanization are amplified by demeaning verbal communication and degrading nonverbal behavior. The initial use of violence may be aimed at achieving limited objectives and demonstrating one's unyielding commitment and will often combine with the manifestation of frustration. The uncontrolled emotional, psychological aspects of conflict can be an obstacle to resolving differences in substantive issues. As observed in many internal wars in Africa, the destructive side of a complex conflict can be ascribed to perceptual, attitudinal, and behavioral distortion which even entails gross humanitarian crimes often characterized by killing and rape in front of family members and forcing them to pay for the bullets after the execution of loved ones.

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When the conduct of struggles begins to involve the abandonment of established rules and norms accustomed to constrain each other's behavior, oppression and violence become an unrestrained means of control over enemy "others." During the Guatemalan civil wars (in the 1980s–1990s), indigenous women were often sexually assaulted by government security forces and their affiliated paramilitary group members. In the Bosnian war, Serb militias used rape as a weapon of ethnic cleansing. In civil wars in the Democratic Republic of Congo, women were forced to eat the dead bodies of their family members as well as being abducted as sexual slaves for armed gang members. Many undisciplined armed groups in Burundi, Sierra Leone, Uganda, and other places in Africa have used children as tools of unspeakable crimes such as killing adults with stones. The pathological aspects of conflict can certainly not be reversed without the restoration of some kind of order which imposes discipline on armed militias not subject to control by any responsible leadership.

Adaptation mechanisms

The effects of conflict on the psychology of individuals and society grow deeper along with the progression of the struggle. In a protracted conflict, opponents develop social mechanisms to continue the struggle and justify one's own action internally as well as externally. In order to overcome the adverse effects of suffering inflicted on them in a continuing contest of will, each party ought to have physical endurance from the destruction of violent assault, ranging from suicide bombings to guerrilla campaigns to bombings of residential areas in total warfare. In particular, each party has to psychologically cope with the loss of economic livelihood and the deaths of their community members. Even in nonviolent struggles, those who have to absorb physical injuries and psychological terror (in such cases as the Tibetan monks protesting against Chinese rule) need to maintain high morale and preserve their own spirits as well as hopes for a better future in the midst of an oppressive reality.

In general, the psychology of conflict drives the attitudes and behaviors of individuals and groups toward more polarized views of the world. Perceived injustice is often a source of anger which feeds continuing protests and a demand for justice. Ever-increasing degrees of hostile activities can be mobilized in confrontations against enemies under the name of group survival. Conflict over matters of values and identities is posed as a total concern with survival and furnishes new meaning in life.

Societies have to develop mechanisms for responding not only to death, injury, and material loss but also to anxiety and other psychological stresses which are even harder to measure. Physical and psychological hardships can be endured by an emphasis on readiness for personal sacrifice, unity, and a call for courage. In the solidification of a conflict, a collective emotional orientation supports mistrustful attitudes toward opponents, strengthening the internal group bond and social identity. Given the feelings of pain and grief as well as the sense of a lack of control and helplessness, intra-group solidarity is needed to maintain a determination to fight and ability to endure.

In fact, conflict changes beliefs about one's own images and others as well as aspirations, goals, norms, and values. In particular, emotions related to threat and other enemy images tend to be associated with extreme groups' beliefs such as exclusive nationalistic ideologies. The beliefs incorporated into stereotypical thinking, myths, and collective memories serve as a motivational basis to keep up morale. Threatening situations increase cognitive closure, as groups tend to get more strongly attached to their in-group beliefs. Psychological mechanisms in support of stress management are needed to sustain mental and physical capabilities to cope with enemy attacks.

Conflict settlement versus resolution

The removal of misperceptions may be sufficient enough to end hostile activities if there is a consensus on desirable conditions for resolving differences. Unfortunately, many conflicts are attributed to unsatisfactory social relations rather than miscommunication. Institutional arrangements (in support of the maintenance of the existing hierarchy) may merely protract the challenges from those who are alienated from the system.

Once understanding is reached regarding mutually agreeable goals, opposing groups can concentrate on the means to achieve them. For instance, in the early 1990s when the minority white government in South Africa finally realized that it would no longer be feasible to maintain their power by excluding the majority black population, the main task had become how to guarantee coexistence among different racial groups in the country. The agreement on the establishment of a new constitutional government elected by the majority popular vote led to efforts to control violence by the leadership of both the government and the African National Congress.

Mutually acceptable solutions arise from a collaborative search for strategies to put an end to a struggle. A voluntary process to resolve differences stems from a willingness to jointly analyze interests and needs underneath divisive issues. In spite of the settlement of a few specific issues, underlying relationships may remain contentious, short of complete satisfaction due to a lack of procedures to explore deeper causes. An eventual agreement can be developed by the analysis of sources related to the failure of an existing system and a commitment to the establishment of new social relationships based on the guarantee of political opposition, free elections, power sharing, land reform, etc. These reform measures constituted a basis for the negotiation to end decades of civil wars in El Salvador and Guatemala in the early and mid-1990s.

Resolution strategies can be distinguished from a settlement process in which compromises can be achieved without a satisfactory removal of deeply entrenched, contentious issues. In the absence of serious examination of the real sources of grievances, the same type of conflict can recur. For instance, in Kenya, repeated post-election violence is expected to continue as long as inter-tribal rivalry persists in the failure to reduce economic inequity and to guarantee more proportionate power sharing deemed to be fair by opposing groups. When its main focus is on achieving compromised solutions in diffusing an imminent crisis, settlement is likely to be oriented to temporary adjustment, while keeping the economic, social, and political status quo.

In fact, conflict settlement has been contrasted with conflict resolution in terms of end result. Despite the 2005 accord between the Sudanese government and the Southern People's Liberation Movement, the unresolved issue of control over the oil-rich region on the border between the north and south provoked government attacks on residents of the southern town of Abyei in May 2008. The prospect for peace has been darkened by fear and animosity. In clarifying issues representing points of confrontation, conflict resolution is supposed to explore opportunities for forging new relationships by facilitating peaceful change and reconciliation.

The imposition of settlement terms by coercive bargaining may lead to short-term acceptance of the outcome. One of the protagonists may be forced to change their behavior and strategies under unfavorable circumstances. Temporary behavioral change may not last long in the absence of the modification of an adversarial relationship. When fundamental goals (such as a quest for self-rule) remain unsatisfied, antagonistic relations may submerge but can eventually resurface. If one party is forced to give in to the demand of another

party owing to fear or threats, it will surely not bring about attitudinal changes. In many situations where relative degrees of power determine the outcome of conflict, a dissatisfied party is likely to look for future opportunities to redress old issues with a shift in power balance.

Indeed, conflict can certainly be settled in the manner of abandoning coercive tactics aimed at hurting the other party, opening the door for a long process of relationship transformation. The termination of violence or other arrangements to decrease the intensity of a destructive struggle leave breathing room for exploring strategies to overcome key differences if the adversaries are willing to search for a harmonious relationship. As the 1998 Good Friday Agreement designed to end sectarian fighting in Northern Ireland indicates, the cessation of violence may eventually contribute to reaching substantive deals which provide a foundation for fundamental arrangements on power sharing, social integration, or economic interdependence. However, regarding the cessation of active hostilities in the Western Sahara occupied by Morocco, Cyprus, Armenia–Azerbaijan and other frozen conflict situations, mitigation efforts have merely been confined to cease-fire, withdrawal of active hostilities, and limited confidence-building measures.

In peace talks determining the future status of Northern Ireland during the late 1990s, a commitment to ending sectarian fighting propelled the recognition of the needs for democratic participation of all sectarian groups and rights to self-governance. A firm obligation to a cease-fire by the Irish Republican Army (IRA) was a precondition to the resumption of substantive political negotiations which centered on power-sharing arrangements. At the same time, behavioral changes such as the complete abandonment of violence and demobilization of the IRA have been sustainable due to a successful conclusion of the far-reaching agreement on the embracement of the Catholic community in a new governance structure.

As illustrated above, the term conflict resolution refers to a process of not only modifying and eventually ending a contentious struggle but also removing its sources such as alienation from a political process. The process to find a formula for resolving conflict is far more complex than the mere settlement of differences in peripheral issues. In fact, pragmatic solutions which evade central concerns can bring about short-term settlement, but an improved environment is necessary to resolve more complicated, difficult issues. The 1994 US–North Korea Agreed Framework diffused a crisis by halting North Korean nuclear programs, but growing antagonism and mistrust (developed since the establishment of the Bush administration) provoked a complete collapse of the denuclearization deal in the early 2000s.

As opposed to a status quo approach of settlement, conflict resolution indicates a movement from one condition to another which can be more acceptable on a long-term basis. In South Africa, system transformation accompanied by the agreement between the white minority government and the African National Congress has granted the black majority a control over the government while guaranteeing civic, social, and economic rights for the white minority population. In Northern Ireland, a power-sharing government has emerged after many years of struggle between Protestants and Catholics over how to dissolve such deadlocked issues as a shift in territorial boundaries and political power as well as strategies to disarm paramilitary groups. Although it may take time to develop a more amicable relationship, conflict resolution generally brings about a new framework for coexistence which eliminates the necessities of continued engagement in an uncontrolled fight for domination.

In a search for the deeply rooted foundation of conflicts, a general understanding has been forged that violent behavior cannot be simply eradicated by the mere injection of fear.

Most importantly, a shift in prejudiced group values and attitudes toward others has to go along with structural changes in conflict dynamics. The process of resolving conflict entails synchronization in the alteration of underlying behavioral patterns designed to end violence in tandem with improved communication. Perceptual and attitudinal changes are aimed at reducing tensions, which can, in turn, improve an atmosphere of searching for ultimate solutions. In the end, the creation of interdependent, symbiotic relationships serves as a prerequisite for the development of lasting peace (which has been observed in Franco-German relations since World War II).

When conflict has been handled constructively, all the parties are better off than before. This is contrasted with a response to conflict by force that does not require the consideration of each other's well-being. The fundamental nature of social conflict focuses on the social norms and political processes in question beyond motives and other psychological environments. In fact, conflict in a given system cannot be resolved without changes in institutional processes and structures required for responding to the root causes of problems such as forced annexation of territories, denial of rights to use an ethnic language, confiscation of land and other properties, random abduction and torture of opposing group members, etc. The sources of marginalization need to be identified to explore strategies for changes in the system.

Successful conditions for conflict resolution

Besides the commitment of parties to problem solving, susceptibility to a win-win solution is contingent on the constellation of interests and the availability of alternative options. The mechanisms of reducing structural inequalities create a more tolerant social environment. The improved inter-group relations could not emerge in an insecure social, economic, political, and military environment which creates uncertainty.

When competitive interests have a high win-lose component, one or both sides feel threatened by the other. The term "interests" has been employed generically to cover all motivations, including the fulfillment of one's needs and realization of values and ideals. In general, however, economic aspirations can alter with circumstances and be negotiated. In fact, competition over material goods and role occupancy tends to be transitory as long as it does not entail components of food, shelter, freedom, and inherent human needs for physical and psychological well-being (Burton, 2001).

Not every contentious issue is subject to compromise, especially when it is related to fundamental rights to freedom and autonomy (related to control the destiny of one's own life). It is also difficult to reconcile differences in value-oriented conflicts over abortion rights opposed by Catholic church hierarchies or the appointment of gay bishops within the Anglican churches, since passions are attached to what people believe. Differences in approaches to population control between environmental groups and conservative religious leaders have been the most acute to reconcile at various global events which discuss the future health of this planet. While the control of rapid population growth is critically needed for the mitigation of ecological destruction, fundamental Christian and Islamic groups have been adamantly opposing any birth control measures by invoking their rigid religious doctrines. The demand for the recognition of political independence or self-rule is yet another example of a serious trigger for conflicts, for instance, in such places as Kosovo and Kashmir.

Differences over material interests need to be separated from highly emotional and value-oriented issues that do not easily succumb to trade. Externally imposed decisions do not quell

the yearnings for freedom and self-rule, but only aggravate the sufferings of civilian populations as is evidenced in Russian military campaigns against the Chechens. The conditions for the realization of human dignity and self-fulfillment should be recognized in addressing the discontent originating from discrimination and other sources of social inequality.

Most importantly, the premise of conflict resolution has been based on the understanding that differences in nonnegotiable needs and cultural values are not something to be divided but have to be accommodated (Burton, 1997; Kelman, 2008; Mitchell, 2002). In return for the satisfaction of one's own essential concerns, the other party's freedom, autonomy, and other vital needs ought to be respected in formulating non-zero sum, win-win solutions. Perceptual changes can lead to redefining shared needs and interests instead of making an attempt to gain bigger concessions from opponents. Instead of being judgmental about the adversary's demand, a collaborative process promotes understanding of each other's anxiety and fears about security. Mutual accommodations can bring net advantages to all through the art of collaborative problem solving.

Structural approaches to conflict resolution

In a long-lasting conflict, it is not always clear how to predict when resolution can be achieved. In addition, questions linger as to whether agreement on contentious issues at hand is sufficient to prevent future hostilities. The perceptions of a desirable outcome at an acceptable cost diverge among parties according to the nature of their goals and issues. In general, "any initial agreement on different aspects of problems which have arisen from a broad conflict relationship is most likely to be partial" (Jeong, 1999, p. 15).

An agreed settlement may not be favored any more if the changing circumstances controlled by either party demand renegotiation. For instance, global warming is most likely to generate a contentious process to renegotiate various terms in the existing Antarctic treaty which bans mineral exploration. Owing to new internal or external circumstances faced by each party, the necessity for adjustment to original agreements arises, demanding renegotiation of implementation terms. In post-conflict transitions in Mozambique, El Salvador, and other places, rebel leadership often refused to proceed to full disarmament and demobilization of their fighters as scheduled when there was a delay in electoral reform.

The integration of reconciliation and reconstruction of social fabric in a continuing spectrum of conflict resolution is necessary due to various challenges in establishing the foundation of stable relationships. Even if reaching agreements on basic principles after a long period of hostilities leads to the acceptance of new conditions for resolving future differences, it does not necessarily mean the immediate end of adversarial relationships. If negotiated settlements break down, adversaries are more eager to revert back to costly struggles. Worthless peace treaties and off-again-on-again civil wars have been characterizing conflicts in Burundi, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, and other African countries, as well as Sri Lanka and Colombia. The end state of negotiated settlement can be unpredictable until the successful establishment of a political framework that can put together fragmented social structures.

In general, conflict resolution needs to be assessed in terms of an outcome as well as a process which can enhance a prospect for warring parties to abide by their agreements. In ending civil wars, thus, peace treaties have often included political or economic incentives for laying down arms. In addition, the reintegration of the population as well as the return of refugees and rebuilding the economy, especially in such cases as Bosnia-Herzegovina, can still remain a vital task even a decade after the conclusion of a peace treaty.

The nature of post-conflict institutional building is likely to be affected by the means adopted for a struggle. In general, nonviolence minimizes the lasting effects of adversarial struggle. The process of achieving independence through armed struggles in Angola and Mozambique resulted in two to three decades of internal warfare between rival factions over the control of the newly created state after the colonial power Portugal left voluntarily in 1974. This is contrasted with India which nurtured stable democratic institutions after gaining independence in 1947 by nonviolent struggle.

The process of conflict resolution is supposed to reconstitute and recreate a democratic public domain through empowerment of those whose voice has been marginalized. Thus a response to deeper sources of social disintegration entails more substantive efforts than self-control of anger and frustration.

Preventive management of conflict does not need to wait until popular discontent and mobilization turn into violent confrontation. The longer the grievance remains, the more intense tensions are likely to be built up. The suppression of negative feelings or other expressions by force or co-optation can simply postpone the inevitable explosion. Existing relationships can be renegotiated to eliminate economic disparities and political discrimination which serve as a source of resentment and grievances.

Methods for dealing with conflict

Depending on the nature and sources of conflict, there are different ways to deal with conflict. In many contemporary conflicts, official and unofficial conflict management methods have been utilized in support of communication functions or improvement in relations designed to create a favorable atmosphere for a negotiated solution. As part of official diplomacy, governments can be engaged in sending special envoys for negotiation while international organizations may dispatch fact-finding missions to investigate cease-fire or human rights violations. Other formal activities range from good offices to conciliation to mediation aimed at diffusing a crisis. The scope of conflict management covers informal meetings through back channels of communication as well as unofficial contacts through intermediaries.

The failure of negotiation is often attributed to a contest of will that leads to a refusal to make concessions needed to reach a compromise. When one side is forced to accept the other's position, resentment emerges as its own concerns go unaddressed. In order to avoid military confrontations, adversaries must engage in a search for mutual solutions that meet the goals of both sides. When 15 British sailors were seized off the Iranian coast in April 2007, intensive diplomatic moves were taken to diffuse the crisis. Eventually, Iran freed the sailors in return for the apologies by British officials in tandem with the release of an Iranian diplomat held by the Iraqi intelligence forces under the US military command.

The settlement process of an inter-state conflict may combine threats and coercion with persuasion to break each other's intransigent positions. While Britain attempted to put pressure on Iran by seeking the UN Security Council resolution to condemn the act, British Prime Minister Tony Blair highly praised the Iranian civilization in his statement addressed to the Iranian people. The Iranian President described the sailors' eventual release as an Easter gift to the British people, a gracious act, rather than a concession made under international pressure. In order not to appear to be formally conceding, both governments referred their goodwill gestures or intentions to the other countries' populace, not government.

In negotiation, parties can reach an agreement through a compromise formulated by the trade-off of different priorities. Negotiations are needed in a variety of settings not just being limited to resolving contentious issues between adversaries. In an organizational setting, NATO members negotiated on the number of troops each country had to contribute to military operations in Afghanistan. In spite of their asymmetrical relationships, the Bush administration could not dictate its own terms in negotiation with the Iraqi government on the time limits of US troop presence, facing stiff resistance. Even in adversarial relationships, compromise is less costly than the pursuit of economic sanctions, other punitive methods or military actions designed to force one's own solutions. In order to achieve a successfully negotiated outcome, both parties must feel that the end result is the best they could accomplish and that it is worth accepting and supporting.

In contentious bargaining, the adoption of win-lose strategies tends to produce an outcome that is likely to reflect power differentials. The involvement of a third party often helps forge mutually satisfying outcomes through a free flow of information and open exchanges of ideas which assist in discovering common interests. The degrees of the intervener's decision-making power, types of responsibilities, and their relationships with contestants can have a significant impact on the process of settling contentious issues.

The types of required communication functions depend not only on the sources of conflict but also the nature of the existing relationship between the parties. In general, hostage negotiations are conducted under very unusual elements of surprise, urgency, mistrust, and the importance of confidential and indirect channels. In such cases as arguments between close allies, sorting out factual differences and clearing misperceptions may be sufficient enough. In mediation, the quality of communication between protagonists and the acceptance of a final deal by each party reflect on an intermediary capacity to convince, cajole, or induce a reluctant party and eventually change their perceptions.

Court procedures and arbitration fit in a conventional framework that is managed within the boundaries of existing laws and norms. Territorial or other types of disputes between two states can be referred to the International Court of Justice. Although their verdict is supposed to be final, sometimes it continues to generate tension when one of the contending parties is reluctant to accept the verdicts. In situations where minority or other dissident groups develop nonconformity with state institutions, domestic courts, lawyers, and public officials tend to treat the conflict in a superficial way often by disregarding deep grievance attributed to social injustice. In addition, decisions on constitutional issues by a judicial body can further politicize the conflict and widen distance between opposing social forces, as is illustrated by the Turkish court verdict on the dissolution of legitimate Islamic political parties.

In judicial settlements and arbitration, the imposition of a third-party decision quickly determines the fate of disputes. A direct form of communication between protagonists is not necessary in a judicial setting. Adjudication is an adversarial process since the outcome often reflects a win-lose zero-sum solution to the problem. Arbitration is not successful when value differences of participants create difficulties in the development of objective criteria applied to the verdict. The World Trade Organization's arbitration panels award decisions based on existing treaties and generally accepted practice. Facts and laws are not suitable means to sort out emotional problems or incompatible values, limiting their utility to fact-based disputes or legal rights issues. In a nutshell, an authoritative third-party decision does not take socio-psychological issues seriously even though they can be a source of contention.

While mediation often helps communication between parties, a focus on the settlement of narrow issues would not delve into the analysis of deeper sources of exploitative social

and economic conditions. Dialogue or other interactive processes of conflict resolution utilize a collaborative method to explore the root causes of conflict and conditions for satisfying vital needs of adversaries. When official negotiating channels are closed or dysfunctional, citizen groups can play an important role in nurturing a climate of trust and even develop proposals to be delivered to their own governments. In 2006, unofficial contacts between Israeli and Syrian advocacy groups yielded an informal agreement on the conditions for the Israeli return of the Golan Heights to Syria.

Themes and agendas

This book examines diverse types of conflict at various levels of complexity, and discusses practices and concepts applied in mitigating hostilities needed to settle differences between adversaries. The strategies and methods for the control of antagonistic behavior need to be adaptable to specific conflict dynamics. In identifying strategies to remove or at least mitigate conditions for a protracted conflict, a suitable starting point is to identify the causes of conflict and control escalation processes. The movement from mere disagreement to more polarized, extreme positions narrows the application of options based on a nondestructive, collaborative process.

A settlement process hinges either directly or indirectly upon the nature and causes of conflict. It is not often orderly due to the involvement of distorted psychological attributions leading to misjudgments and inaccurate assumptions about the events and behavior. Various noncoercive intervention methods based on persuasion and other collaborative efforts may have to overcome the psychological hindrances associated with mental anguish in decision making, cognitive inconsistency as well as a group process which reinforces stereotypical enemy images. A positive relationship can be cultivated through empathy and increased interdependence between opposing parties.

One of the main aims of this book project is to illuminate the processes and methods of turning contentious battles into collaborative process. The practice of conflict resolution has been emphasizing integrative outcomes with a paradigm shift from adversarial (win–lose) to positive sum (win–win) solutions; the willingness to address each other’s concerns for mutual coexistence stimulates a search for joint benefits.

In response to the above challenges, this volume highlights the underlying dynamics of social and psychological relations involved in the process of conflict resolution. While the first half of the book covers various issues related to transforming conflict relationships, the second half focuses on negotiation, mediation, facilitation, and methods of reconciliation.

Following this introductory chapter, the next chapter discusses the quality of relationship, behavioral, and attitudinal changes in managing conflict dynamics. Chapter 3 examines multiple dimensions of conflict transformation after pointing out the shortcomings of a conflict management approach. After investigating various types of direct and indirect relationships between identity and conflict, Chapter 4 looks at the conditions for reconstruction of social identities. Chapter 5 illustrates different degrees of power asymmetry along such dimensions as both physical and psychological endurance in absorbing the cost of struggles as well as resource mobilization capabilities. Chapter 6 highlights the role of structural sources of discontent, including alienation from institutions and practices of governance as well as their impact on conflict resolution efforts.

Chapter 7 sheds light on ethical issues, questions of justice and neutrality after providing comparative perspectives of how judicial settlement and arbitration differ from negotiation, mediation, facilitation, and other collaborative methods. In understanding a negotiation

process, Chapter 8 reviews bargaining strategies (related to compromise and concession making) and elements to influence them. Chapter 9 examines models of mediation practiced in international diplomacy with the provision of typologies of mediators and their characteristics. In Chapter 10, in general, facilitative methods illustrate the nature of communication oriented toward attitudinal and cognitive changes. In Chapter 11, successful reconciliation consists of apologies for atrocious acts, recognition of sufferings, expression of mercy and forgiveness, healing and the cultivation of mutual respect and security.

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2 Managing intractable conflict

One of the main issues (which partisans face in a protracted conflict) is how to overcome the debacle and move on to solutions which are acceptable to them. In a continuing struggle such as a long-term civil war, waiting for fighting to subside naturally is too costly, further contributing to the intractability. Efforts can be made to mitigate a conflict prior to seeking settlement. Diverse methods and strategies can be adopted to control various types of escalation and entrapment. Long-term entrapment (such as US–Soviet relations during the Cold War period) was structurally managed by regular communication and other crisis management mechanisms.

This chapter reviews actor behavior and decision making from the perspective of managing the adversarial relationships and dynamics involved in the resolution of differences. Though many conflicts may seemingly look chaotic, they can be characterized by a series of moves and countermoves. A conflict management and resolution process needs to focus on the behavior of parties, relationships, and institutions (which regulate the choices of individual actors) beyond the immediate issues under dispute. Peace building has become an essential task for a transition from conflict to the establishment of stable interactions between former adversaries in the process of reconstructing violence-torn societies. Given the costs of violence, conflict prevention has been promoted to respond to the surge of ethnic struggles in the post-Cold War era.

Conflict evolution

Despite differences in the number of phases of conflict, there is a commonly identifiable sequence of behavior that ignites and perpetuates confrontation. In large part, conflict can be characterized by the emergence of antagonistic positions and their eventual settlement through engagement in problem solving (Jeong, 2008; Kriesberg, 1998; Mitchell, 2002; Rubin *et al.*, 1994). In negotiated settlement, different positions need to be integrated or aggregated to explore mutually compatible solutions with the adoption of cooperative tactics.

In spite of variations, a sequence of behavior is likely to unfold over time along semi-predictable phases of conflict. After a latent phase turns into a manifest conflict, threats and forces might be exhibited in an attempt to get one's own way. In a series of events preceding the violent Palestinian uprising and heavy Israeli military response in the early 2000s, violent tactics were driving each other's actions to a higher level of casualties and destruction. The exchange of adversarial moves diminishes the hope of amicable solutions through negotiation. When cooperation is perceived to yield the lowest outcomes, incentives for preemptive attacks are high in order to demoralize the opponent.

Once conflict is accelerated, it runs its own course in the absence of countervailing forces which can reverse the continuing patterns of retaliatory responses to each other's punitive actions. After a round or two of escalation, a runaway spiral can expand in the absence of self-restraint or successful external intervention, either diplomatic or military, to cool down intensifying violence. In an internal conflict, an initially peaceful protest can be switched to mass violence or armed campaigns by militant groups due to government oppression of unarmed opposition movements. The origins of civil wars in Sri Lanka, Guatemala, El Salvador, Colombia, Algeria, and elsewhere can be traced back to bloody oppression of mass protests and the arrest of opposition leaders. In a long-term struggle, balance of power on the battlefield normally sustains fighting until unregulated confrontation subsides. In such internal warfare as experienced in Angola, El Salvador, Guatemala, and Mozambique, it may take more than a decade to enter the stage of de-escalation needed for a settlement (Jeong, 2008).

It is a very difficult task to change the dynamics of conflict especially when it is seen as a struggle for survival. Negative inter-group interaction entails an ontological character by denying each other's identity and security. Cognitive rigidity as well as such affective factors as feelings of anger, fear, and hatred have a negative impact on the transition to de-escalation. Intentions to harm the other party derive from dehumanization. The cessation of communication intensifies perceptual distortion. Each party believes that they have no or fewer options than fighting owing to the hostility. The rise of hard-line factions may even stiffen antagonistic positions along with the support of external allies. The political rise of Hamas among Palestinians has weakened the capacity and credibility of the moderate Fatah government based in the West Bank to negotiate with the Israelis.

To move from a contest of coercive power to win-win solutions is, therefore, complicated in a deep-rooted conflict. Due to negative energy and its behavioral manifestations embedded in social interaction, intractable conflict is not easily amenable to resolution. Escalatory behavior is normally mirrored by the other side, affecting the conflict as a whole. Unless one party overwhelms an opponent quickly and easily, the tide of every struggle either continues with varying degrees of intensity or ebbs to a dormant stage awaiting another surge of violence. Irregular intervals intervene after a finite cycle of confrontation, as each side prepares for the next round of fighting in seeking a final victory through military superiority.

Although some conflicts are more resistant to changes in the patterns of adversarial interaction, each component of conflict dynamics can be modified to bring an end to fighting. In moving toward de-escalation, an all-out struggle begins to subdue in such a way as to enhance the prospect for dialogue or negotiation. If negotiated settlement ought to be achieved, a wide range of cooperative activities are needed to overcome the legacy of an atrocious act committed during the armed struggle.

A series of conciliatory events can mitigate the destructive aspects of struggles while creating a positive environment for talks. In preparing for peace talks in Northern Ireland, meetings between the political representatives of adversarial communities, including the exchange of views between the leader of the moderate Unionist Social Democratic and Labour Party (SDLP) John Hume and the IRA-affiliated Sinn Fein's Gerry Adams, paved the way for an all-inclusive conference that started in 1996. The momentum for inter-communal dialogue was initially created by the 1985 Anglo-Irish Agreement which confirmed the necessity of the consent of the majority of Unionists in any change in the status of Northern Ireland.

The varying duration and patterns of a struggle shape the nature of conflict dynamics. The process of a protracted conflict is likely to alter the initial conditions for conflict with the creation of an emotional residue attached to loss in the struggle. Long-lasting conflict

reinforces militant social elements, and a return to the previous relationship may not be possible or desirable. The end of a civil war may mean the adaptation of insurgent organizations to political parties which can compete in an electoral cycle. In inter-state conflict, the restoration of occupied territory may have to be accompanied by the emergence of new security arrangements as well as the renegotiation of political relationships. At the end of the conflict process, even in fortunate situations, the protagonists may find only partial satisfaction with what they originally desired.

The Sahrawi quest for independence

The indigenous Sahrawi population in the former Spanish colony of Western Sahara has been engaged in a multi-decade struggle with Spain, followed by Morocco and Mauritania. The conflict's long history is full of armed fighting between the indigenous population and their different occupiers over a century. Even though the conflict has been de-escalated and managed without major warfare since 1991, the situation has not yet been resolved due to the failure to hold a promised referendum on independence.

The uprising in Spanish Western Sahara started in the early twentieth century, but the armed conflict was more effectively organized after the formation of the Sahrawi rebel Polisario Front in May 1973. Even though armed rebellions and raids successfully pushed the Spanish forces out of much of the territory, the goal of independence was not achieved. The Spanish retreat in 1975 only meant the division and transfer of the Sahrawi homeland to Morocco and Mauritania. Thus the Polisario Front continued to wage guerrilla-style hit-and-run attacks against Morocco and Mauritania along with the declaration of the Sahrawi Arab Democratic Republic.

The continued armed struggle induced Mauritanian retreat from Rio de Oro with the acceptance of Sahrawi rights to Western Sahara. A comprehensive peace treaty (August 1979) was accompanied by the formal recognition of the Sahrawi Arab Democracy. Right after this event, Morocco militarily annexed the newly independent southern half of Rio de Oro. Thus the armed resistance kept going in Western Sahara occupied by Morocco as well as the new area evacuated by Mauritania. From the mid-1980s, there was military stalemate between the Moroccan and Polisario troops. No side obtained decisive gains in spite of continued artillery strikes and sniper attacks by the guerrillas.

The war eventually became difficult for Morocco to sustain due to the economic and political strain. In September 1991, both sides agreed to a cease-fire observed by UN peacekeeping forces with the promise of a referendum on independence. The referendum did not take place the following year, as agreed, stumbling over differences in voter rights. Whereas the process was stalled, the prolonged cease-fire has been held. Many attempts, including the 2003 Baker plan, have not yet yielded a final breakthrough.

Degeneration from a peace process to war: the Israeli–Palestinian conflict

In the long history of the Israeli–Palestinian conflict, the Oslo Peace Accord (1993) was a groundbreaking event to offer a real possibility for a negotiated settlement. Yet the failure to determine the future status of Palestinians living under Israeli occupation had eventually slid into violence. By summer 2000, both sides were quite frustrated with the peace process. The Palestinians never did get close to a clear path toward the creation of a sovereign state, an end to continuing Jewish settlement in the West Bank, or economic

improvement. The Israelis did not feel a real guarantee of security against terrorism and violence by Palestinian extremists. The early stage of the peace process was full of good intentions and rational bargains, but it regressed to the gradual path of building animosities with growing frustration and support for hard-line positions within Israel. The second intifada by Palestinians in September 2000 completely shattered the foundation of hopes for lasting security which both sides originally wanted to obtain through mutual collaboration.

The new cycle of conflict between the Palestinians and Israel was provoked by the Israeli right-wing politician Ariel Sharon's visit to the Muslim shrines on the Temple Mount and the al Aqsa Mosque in Jerusalem. The Israeli–Palestinian relations were already on shaky ground after the failure of the Camp David summit attended by both Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Barak and Palestinian Authority head Yasser Arafat in July 2000. US President Bill Clinton's mediation did not narrow the gap between the widely different positions held by both sides. The post-Camp David negotiation process was rocked by violent clashes between the Israelis and Palestinians which wrecked confidence.

As Table 2.1 (pp. 22–23) presents, the intense scale of violence sparked on September 28 ended with the complete loss of any future hope for peaceful relations between the Israelis and Palestinians after the election of hard-line Likud party leader Ariel Sharon on February 6, 2001. Even high-level summit diplomacy (e.g. the October 16–17 Sharm el-Sheikh summit meeting attended by Arafat, Barak, Clinton, Egyptian President Mubarak, and Jordan's King Abdullah) failed to turn the tide of violent reprisals. Palestinian cross-border and drive-by shootings, and other attacks against Israeli communities alternated with the Israeli assassinations of suspected radical group leaders, violent settler vigilante action in tandem with the closures of Palestinian towns and villages, and destruction of Palestinian houses. The Israeli use of helicopter gunships and F-16 air attacks prompted accusations of “inappropriate” and “excessive” use of force. Although some grotesque killings were committed by extreme Palestinian groups (e.g. the murder of two Israeli soldiers by a Palestinian mob on October 12), excessive Israeli military counterattacks were often indiscriminately targeted toward civilians.

Mitigation of protracted conflict

A multi-step conflict resolution process aims to identify types of contentious issues, discover underlying causes and develop a process to remove them. Along with the analysis of a system of interaction and its surrounding environment, negative perceptions need to be changed to bring about attitudinal changes. The negative forms of change within a conflict system have to be reversed by a shift in interaction patterns from demonization to humanization, from stereotypes to empathy. The intensity of conflict can be moderated with the removal of incompatibilities by means of conjunction with a search for a formula to increase compatibilities between different positions related to each party's goals.

A different internal and external environment needs to emerge in the transition toward conciliation. The weak abilities of adversaries to manage their relationships may demand the support of external allies and also the invitation of an intermediary to narrow emotional, psychological gaps between antagonists. Psychological changes may come along with readiness for concession making that is necessary for a compromised solution. In order to accommodate each other's needs, parties need to abandon the contentious tactics associated with achieving unilateral gains. Decision making for de-escalation needs to be adjusted by the necessity for mutual concessions. New views about adversaries shape different understandings about conflict.

As a result of conflict, partisans tend to go through the transformation of their organizational structures and identity. The cessation or reduction of hostilities may come from changes in personal motivations and social context following watershed events. Dramatic events can reshape our view about a conflict, eventually preparing psychologically for disengagement. The My Lai Massacre proved to be a turning point toward de-escalation in the Vietnam War. On March 16, 1968, the killing of as many as 504 villagers (nearly all of whom were children, women, and the elderly) in My Lai by the US army unit Charlie Company badly undercut support for the war, demoralizing US war efforts.

In peaceful resolution, goals are pursued by means other than threats and actual use of violence. In managing ethnic relations, coercive approaches often produce a backlash by generating further resentment and violent resistance. The maintenance of the status quo by force is no longer feasible, or too costly to one's international reputation (or the maintenance of domestic support). The right circumstances for successful de-escalation (to break a costly impasse) can be discovered by a careful analysis of conflict situations. Prior to de-escalatory moves, parties acknowledge a stalemate situation; the parties themselves are not able to envision a way out of the conflict with dreadful costs whereas neither side is likely to win or lose in the short term. The futility of efforts to impose unilateral solutions can be realized after the recognition of the limited capacity to push for any gains along with an adversary's resistance. In the absence of palatable options, pressures of time and other elements of a crisis create pessimistic views about conflict.

Conciliatory dynamics

The withdrawal of negative sanctions (such as a trade embargo) as well as an offer of new rewards (such as economic assistance) are normally employed in an attempt to initiate positive interaction. The exchange of rewards can set off a series of events in support of mutual cooperation. The modes of behavior, strategies, and tactics are influenced by different motivations. In negotiation with the US during the Vietnam War era, North Vietnam released some US prisoners of war as a goodwill gesture. In order to obtain cooperation from the Chinese government in putting pressure on North Korea and Iran to end their nuclear programs, the Bush administration removed China from the State Department list of the worst human rights abusers in the world along with ceasing to request the release of key political prisoners.

In a successful conciliatory process, the reciprocal actions can amplify positive changes. Each party is more likely to reciprocate conciliatory gestures when their offer of a counter-reward (such as the removal of restrictions on the movement of monetary assets) does not involve a high cost to them. The US government unfroze North Korean financial assets upon Pyongyang's agreement to cease its plutonium processing programs in 2007. Given that it may take time to overcome the legacy of animosities created by punitive measures, incremental processes (e.g., the exchange of mutual visits by orchestras or sports teams) may be adopted to thaw relations (for example, US–China relations in the 1970s). The messages of compromise or conciliation (that signal reversing negative attitudes) may precede the cessation of violent tactics.

Even if parties agree to negotiate, it is often a long, tumultuous process to reach a settlement. Balancing opposing interests or values in an acceptable manner to all sides is a real test to ending intractable conflict. In meeting the other's concerns, it might be necessary to offer concessions on the issues an adversary considers crucial. Most importantly, a balanced exchange of concessions is more likely to create a high potential for a successful deal making.

Table 2.1 Escalation of Israeli–Palestinian violence, September 28, 2000 to February 2, 2001

	<i>Israeli action/reaction</i>	<i>Palestinian action/reaction</i>
9/28–30	<i>A provocative visit to the Muslim shrines on the Temple Mount and the al Aqsa Mosque by right-wing politician Ariel Sharon</i>	<i>The beginning of mass riots</i>
9/29	The Israeli security forces opening fire in the al Aqsa Mosque compound in Jerusalem’s walled Old City	Six Palestinians dead and close to 200 wounded
9/30	<i>The first major armed clashes</i>	Spread of violence to the Gaza Strip and West Bank; 14 Palestinians dead, including a 12-year-old boy
10/1–2	<i>Cease-fire agreement but quick collapse</i> The death of an Israeli border policeman Solidarity protest by Israeli Arabs	30 deaths
10/3	<i>Another cease-fire agreement but immediate resumption of clashes</i>	Six deaths
10/4–6		20 deaths
10/5	<i>Israeli closure of the West Bank and Gaza for the first time</i>	
10/8	The first death of a Jewish settler; death of one Arab Israeli	Two deaths
10/12		A Palestinian mob’s killing of two Israeli soldiers
10/12	The first helicopter attacks on Arafat’s compound and Palestinian Authority security forces	
10/16	A summit meeting in Sharm el-Sheikh, Egypt, designed to halt violence	Agreement on inquiry into the causes of violence and a return to negotiation
10/20	Israeli threat to suspend a peace process	14 Palestinian deaths, including a 14-year-old boy
10/23	The first large-scale attempt to blockade a Palestinian town Beit Jalla	
10/26		<i>The first major suicide bombing attack on an Israeli post by the Islamic Jihad</i>

10/28	The continuation of sporadic fighting with heavier fighting near Beit Jalla	
10/30	<i>The first efforts to create physical barriers between the Israelis and Palestinians</i>	
11/1	The death of three Israeli soldiers	
11/2	Two Israeli deaths by Palestinian car bombing	The Palestinian explosion of a car bomb in the Jerusalem marketplace
11/3–	Gradual decline in the number of clashes	
11/15	Israeli helicopter attacks resulting in four Palestinian deaths	
11/17		Arafat call for the cessation of shooting in the Palestinian controlled areas
11/20–	Israeli killing of Palestinian gunmen	Continuing car and roadside bombing
11/21	The missile strikes	The escalation of gunfire
11/21–	Israeli military targeting armed group members	The <i>persistence of unchecked violence</i> with continuing casualties
12/19	Israeli–Palestinian meeting to discuss prospect for peace	
12/23	Clinton proposal for resuming negotiations	
1/21/2001	Beginning of a new round of Israeli–Palestinian talks in the Egyptian Red Sea resort of Taba	Progress made despite some deadlocked issues
2/6/2001	The electoral victory of conservative Likud party	The end of the peace process

Note

Although frustration and anger ran deep especially on the Palestinian side prior to the end of September 2000, a provocative visit to the Muslim shrines by Ariel Sharon unleashed the entire cycle of mob violence, military retaliation, cease-fire, renewed violence. Violence took place alongside an attempt to reign in uncontrolled fighting and to reach a durable solution. The italicized acts and events in the above table indicate each step toward a further heightened level of hostility.

Post-conflict transformation

Even if the main issues may have been resolved, lingering doubts and suspicion continue due to the uncertainty of future interactions. The emergence of new relationships ought to focus on future expectations beyond present interaction patterns as well as past memories of atrocities and victimization. Institutional restructuring (needed to tackle a source of grievances) brings about new ways issues are to be addressed in the future. In the failure of continuing to deal with root causes, a post-conflict process can be derailed only to see the return of more contentious battles (Jeong, 2005).

Thus the process to bring about a negotiated solution needs to be linked to incorporating post-conflict peace building efforts. In the case of Angola and Mozambique, in spite of control of violence as well as political stability, economic and social progress has been lagging. While economic rewards and government posts were offered to the former leaders of rebel forces in Angola, ordinary combatants and refugees faced numerous economic challenges. In Guatemala and other poor countries emerging from civil wars, a high level of economic insecurity (as related to unemployment, etc.) has created social uncertainty. To keep a low level of violence, Australian peacekeepers have occasionally intervened in East Timor to prevent political instability from becoming out of control.

Once parties agree to the cessation of violence at the negotiating table, it is accompanied by the longer term challenges of land, electoral, constitutional, or security sector reform. Thus, transformation can broadly touch not only psychological relationships of overcoming victim-offender relationships but also institutional reform. Ethnic pluralism can be institutionalized by power-sharing mechanisms (based on the acknowledgment of ethnic differences and veto power on matters vital to each group) along with economic opportunities and the respect for cultural traditions of diverse groups.

In the process from settlement to reconstruction, democratic institutions nurture a foundation for human rights and reconciliation. Synergies for transforming adversarial relationships can be created by the recognition of the suffering and trauma from past atrocities and prioritization in healing social wounds. The cessation of violence and intimidation is an essential condition in the empowerment of victims and restoration of their social status.

Approaches to conflict prevention

Prevention is more effective and less costly than handling a crisis after the eruption of a violent conflict. The initial focus of prevention sheds light on controlling behavioral dynamics created by a catalyst of violence in a polarized society. Fear and mistrust lay the groundwork for the recurrence of contentious fights. In the escalation of existing tensions into violence, prevention may focus on containing the spread of fighting. A violence-control mechanism such as peacekeeping creates safe space for addressing the root causes of intractable conflicts. The ultimate goal of conflict prevention can be achieved through institutional arrangements designed for the mitigation of inequality and other sources of grievances.

Once a manifest conflict starts, prevention may focus on a destructive aspect of adversarial relationships. The rules and dynamics of struggle need to be established in the way resolution of differences does not require a violent contest of will. The efforts to promote nonviolent competition support the control of escalatory force. The destructive elements of conflict need to be replaced by a struggle which does not depend on mass violence. Beyond political intervention, civilian peace monitors (dispatched to observe and report any

incidence of human rights violations) and humanitarian aid can serve as tools to mitigate violence inflicted upon civilians.

As a matter of fact, violence control, as an initial step of prevention, is essential to engendering a hospitable environment for negotiation. In addition, it is more difficult to handle a conflict once the escalation of initial confrontation generates more issues to be handled. The mere containment of violence may produce freezing effects in intense fighting, not paving a road for problem solving in itself. A multitude of negotiation forums can be designed for active search for transforming the roots of a conflict.

The nature of intervention differs in varying crisis situations. As happened in Macedonia (during the mid-1990s) after the eruption of Albanian ethnic violence, preventive diplomacy initially consists of the dispatch of a special envoy in conjunction with a human rights monitoring team. In the immediate aftermath of the 1993 assassination of the Burundi president, James Jonah (the UN Undersecretary General for Africa) departed for Bujumbura as part of a fact-finding mission. Instead of providing the international military protection requested by Prime Minister Kinigi, the UN Secretary General's special envoy for Burundi, Ahmedou Ould-Abudallah brokered political settlement via mediation in an attempt to bring stability to the crisis situation (Maundi, 2003).

In a humanitarian crisis characterized by uncontrolled violence and starvation, coercive intervention is necessary, as seen in Somalia. As French and British forces did in the internal conflicts of Western African countries, forceful intervention can restrain horrific acts by undisciplined militia forces. The British sent troops to quell indiscriminate attacks on civilians by the rebel forces during the civil war of Sierra Leone in the mid-1990s. The French military intervened in an effort to calm a civil war which broke out in 2002 and divided Côte d'Ivoire into a rebel-held north and a government-controlled south. In addressing atrocities in gross power asymmetry, external parties may have to depend on coercive forces for the cessation of further human suffering. In response to the Haiti military dictatorship's abuse of their population, the Clinton administration restored democracy on the island by the dispatch of armed contingents in 1994.

Both overt and covert coercion, ranging from economic sanctions to military intervention, is adopted as conflict regulation strategies. As part of the pressure on the military government to seek negotiated settlement in the Sudanese civil war, its neighboring countries (Uganda, Ethiopia, Eritrea) imposed economic sanctions. Various approaches to conflict prevention and mitigation fall in a continuum between short-term intervention such as peacekeeping or enforcement and long-term security promotion (oriented toward the protection of human rights and economic well-being) and institutional change. The "minimum" condition for peace is the absence of overt physical violence through the immediate cessation of uncontrolled violence. The establishment of conditions for the safety of civilian populations can be supported by the surveillance of warlords and militia activities, and the restriction of troop movements as well as protection of refugees.

Management approaches are oriented toward handling an imminent crisis within a framework of humanitarian intervention. Preventive measures may emphasize the control of significant armed violence or its spread, but at the same time they need to pay attention to humanitarian crisis. International intervention can be designed to mitigate a negative impact of social chaos or the lack of order on direct threats to civilian populations. Coercive diplomacy might be needed in reversing an escalatory motion, but the restoration of order through military force needs to be linked to long-term planning to change the conditions for the causes of violence. Political and economic solutions are necessary to avoid continued dependence on outside assistance (Boutros-Ghali, 1995).

Early warning has been a main pillar of the UNDP Ferghana Valley Preventative Development Program and OSCE CONFLICT monitoring in Kyrgyzstan. In particular, preventive diplomacy by OSCE has allowed Kyrgyzstan to buttress social relations especially because a status quo can be challenged by weakening states and erosion of social structures. As the increased tensions in the Ferghana Valley region exposed vulnerability to violent conflict, the Kyrgyz–Tajik Conflict Prevention Project, carried out with the assistance of two regional NGOs, was aimed at the peaceful coexistence of different ethnic groups in both countries in tandem with restored social infrastructure. The program targeted border areas vulnerable to violent conflict due to inter-group tension ascribed to competition over resources on disputed borders. The conflict prevention project has been built into public awareness, education on inter-ethnic tolerance, and community mediation.

Behavioral and structural dimensions of preventive approaches

A focus on proximate causes of an unstable conflict situation might be oriented toward preventing the translation of triggering events (coups, electoral fraud) toward full-blown hostilities. Violence needs to be controlled before the achievement of any kind of agreement by a negotiation or facilitation process. On the other hand, a frequent resort to threats (intended to curb warring parties' behavior) is incompatible with building trust in a search for a more effective, long-term response to the causes of internal civil war. Long-term visions need to be developed to allay underlying stress (associated with poverty, ethnic, racial and religious differences, weak state capacity to manage tensions and power inequalities).

Prevention may shed light on the transformation of preconditions for the emergence of a conflict originating from the administrative and political incapacities of the government to produce effective policy responses, and consequently loss of authority. It can also respond to both behavioral and structural factors which drive partisans to contend with each other as well as conditions behind the formulation of antagonistic goals. In the long run, escalation to a deadly conflict can be prevented with a structural or attitudinal adjustment.

Various settings of conflict prevention demand actions to avoid the recurrence of violent incidents of antagonistic confrontations. Residual antagonism provides a fertile ground to nourish future hostilities. In terms of prevention, long-term efforts (including track II diplomacy based on sustained informal communication and contact) can be made to allay the deep emotional hostilities and negotiate a political arrangement which is more compatible with each other's needs and interests. In addition, development assistance can be reformulated in transforming a wider context of conflict by supporting regional integration along with support for good governance and civil society support. Infrastructure development linking countries of the southern Caucasus was supported by the European Union, UNDP, USAID, Oxfam, Save the Children, and ICRC with the broad aim of poverty eradication in mind.

Context of conflict regulation

In general, an indirect and regulated competition (for instance, sales in an open market) is less likely to generate adversarial relationships than class or racial conflict. In malignant social processes, however, competitive orientations make it difficult to forge common interests. In fact, direct interference with the other's preference has a high potential for producing enmity. On the other hand, adversarial competition can be prevented from turning into hostile confrontations by regulations based on the adherence to rules and the imposition of sanctions against rule violations.

When it is difficult to resolve or even reach a short-term settlement, it becomes important to control a negative orientation toward violent conflict which perpetuates long-standing cycles of hurting and destruction. Once conflict is formed, peacekeeping and other methods can be introduced to contain and reduce aggressive acts. When the accommodation of different values and needs are difficult to achieve in the short term, priority may fall to the control and mitigation of violence prior to the creation of a durable peace structure. Reaching an agreement on the cessation of armed hostilities enables warring parties to exit from the violent phase of a conflict. If adversaries fail to find a formula to address the core underlying causes of conflicts, old attitudes and structural contradictions can easily pave the way for conflict recurrence.

The necessity to control violent confrontations has led to the development of appropriate forms of third-party intervention. These entail the development of a buffer zone between warring factions and surveillance of troop movements. Peacekeeping operations have been dispatched to numerous conflict zones to hold a fragile cease-fire agreement between belligerent parties. In a comparable manner to international peacekeeping, community policing has been utilized for lessening bloodshed among gang or militia group members.

Peace enforcement and humanitarian intervention would be required in civil war situations, as is exemplified by the 1994 US-led intervention to stop warlord violence and mass starvation in Somalia. In a chaotic humanitarian situation, urgent relief work and other immediate assistance are needed to contain and control explosive situations. A crisis-driven response to violent conflicts often includes not only military but also civilian components such as provision of health care, prevention of widespread disease, and supply of food and other basic necessities for refugees.

Coercive diplomacy may be effective in the restoration of order prior to the application of mediation and other methods of bringing settlement. The intervention of West African Economic Union forces cooled down chaotic fighting among rival factions in Liberia between 1994 and 1996, eventually facilitating negotiations on the political transition. In the Nigerian civil war in the mid-1960s, intermediaries dispatched by the British government and the secretariat of the British Commonwealth attempted to convince both the government and Ibo rebel commanders to cease fighting.

Mitigating tension does not deal directly with the sources of deep divisions, but only buries the crisis. As is illustrated by the Israeli occupation of the Golan Heights in Syria since the Six Day War in 1966, contentious issues can be frozen to await future resolution for a prolonged period. The principles and activities involved in management are different from those of resolution.

Conflict management strategies

Strategies of conflict response are diverse, ranging from standing firm, negotiation, and disengagement, to submission. These choices have implications for balancing the pursuit of one's interests and relationship management. Standing firm with principle may be necessary to signal an adversary regarding a commitment to block excessive and unreasonable demands. It is likely to serve as a communication means to let opponents know one's own uncompromising priorities beforehand to prevent an unnecessary test of will. Those who have higher stakes in the issue are likely to take more confrontational strategies although that can be moderated by an imbalance in power and weaker capabilities to confront an adversary.

The parties may have opposing objectives, but they can agree on the means to settle differences. Principles on fairness in competition can be established in making decisions on the distribution of goods and resources. In employment or other contract relationships, reward systems can be accepted by regular bargaining. Excessive expectations can be contained or controlled by the creation of a negotiation culture which supports collaboration in search of acceptable options to all parties. Negotiated settlement becomes difficult if discussion about substantive issues translates into differences in principles, hence making any concession appear like a defeat. When functional problems turn into matters of control and power, it is more difficult to focus on the original concerns.

In cultural settings oriented toward collectivist values, avoidance and yielding are common methods of nonconfrontational conflict management. In a culture where survival traditionally depends on close cooperation among family and community members, the overt expression of hostile feelings is regarded as a threat to the group unity. The suppression of individual desires is highly valued in collaborative cultures oriented toward preserving harmony. In most affectionate relationships, yielding can be based on sacrifice to meet a close group member's needs, as is the case with women in Africa who give up food for their children in the case of starvation.

By conceding, one party accepts their loss in favor of the other's gain, but it can be the quickest way to contain, regulate, and end conflict by satisfying the demand of an adversary. It is easier to give up part of one's wants if the existence of multi-faceted issues furnishes a substitute for the concession or lends priority to other issues. The availability of alternative paths to satisfying one's objectives reduces the necessity for a contentious engagement. In a closely integrated relationship, yielding on one issue is not necessarily a loss in the long run if a future reward is likely to come.

If relationship maintenance brings about overall benefits, either tangible or intangible (for example, affection or prestige), conceding is more desirable than insisting on narrow gains. Preventing damage to the existing relationships can be a main objective when beneficial transactions exist. It is less costly to manage all the contentious issues within agreeable boundaries. A party, which regards the relationship as more beneficial than the other, is more likely to acquiesce. On the other hand, continuous submission is detrimental if the other party takes advantage of goodwill, not valuing the importance of concessions, and disregards the conceding party's concerns or needs.

As a method of conflict management, the avoidance of contentious issues can take various forms, ranging from the denial of existence of a problem to disengagement. Stepping back from a conflict may be preferred under varying circumstances from a low stake in the fight to little chance of achieving the goals and a dim hope for a solution (ascribed to the complexity of the situation).

If the fighting is not worth risking full-scale war, conflict can eventually subside by withdrawing from contentious engagement. In cases where the risk of escalation is too high, parties may be willing to scale down their demand and shy away from escalatory tactics. In a series of wars in Kashmir, both India and Pakistan carefully avoided expanding the armed confrontations to their main territories. In the 1998 Kagli conflict which was the first incident after the possession of nuclear weapons by both sides, India chose disengagement strategies not to escalate the conflict after repelling the Pakistani-backed incursions.

In the absence of perceived significance of the issues, diplomatic or military clashes can remain a one-time fiasco or episode which does not merit time or attention. The Colombian army's entry into Ecuador's territory in spring 2008 produced uproar among Ecuador and

its allies in Latin America, but it ended without a serious escalation because of the Colombian government's apology. The preservation of the status quo can be the main motivation behind the desire not to enlarge the scope of the fight, but it may work for a short-lived, minor conflict.

Even though too great a gap in substantive interests and needs as well as capacities (to pursue them) may force any of the adversaries to give in, balanced outcomes can still be sought by a creative use of avoidance and compromise. In the failure to attain integrative solutions that permit both parties to obtain what they want, the identification of commonly held principles or values can contribute to the establishment of the basis for fair decision making. The rulings by the International Court of Justice may serve as a better venue for a conflict between states whose relationships are characterized by power or status asymmetry.

Even in zero-sum situations of competition, the relationships can be preserved if the rules are considered agreeable and if the loser has a future opportunity to compete again for the prize. Before emotions flare up, thus competing parties may agree to refer to an acceptable set of values and principles as a basis for managing their conflicts. The decision-making rules may need to be occasionally reaffirmed or refined according to changing circumstances.

The acceptance of mutually agreeable, established procedures to settle differences helps avoid resistance against yielding to a person. The unfavorable decision made by a judge or panel can be more easily swallowed when the process is institutionalized (in such situations as trade disputes handled by the WTO). Indeed, deference to shared norms and values saves one's face, neutralizing emotional attachment to a win or loss.

Asymmetry in conflict styles

Trust-based relationships can be further strengthened by the reciprocation of yielding. At the same time, the strategies adopted by opposing parties can be imbalanced or diametrically opposed. Even though one party wants to avoid conflict, the other party may choose confrontational approaches by taking provocative actions to extract a response to their demand. In other situations, one of the opponents seeks mutual accommodation, but the other party may take an uncompromising position.

Most importantly, waging conflict takes a different path, depending on the extent of asymmetry in issue salience as well as power differentials among parties. A weaker side is likely to seek avoiding a major confrontation with a stronger opponent since the costs of action are perceived greater than any possible returns. In response to Israeli air strikes on a suspected nuclear laboratory in September 2007, Syria chose to limit its reaction only to verbal condemnation owing to its clear military inferiority and the lack of a good prospect to get compensation for the destroyed facilities. By forcing a weaker party to abandon their objectives or give in, a stronger party may be able to maintain control and domination.

On the other hand, issue salience may push even a subordinate party to organize protests despite fear of torture, arrest, or other harm. In unfortunate circumstances such as Tibet under Chinese occupation since 1950, very few choices exist for the marginalized party in that ascent to an oppressive rule means the acceptance of the dominant party's total control over cultural and religious life as well as the deprivation of freedom and civic rights. In such situations that gross injustice is inevitably embedded in an oppressive relationship, a weaker party can be morally or politically supported by advocacy groups.

Theories on decision making

Although a coherent body of knowledge on conflict has yet to emerge, diverse theoretical perspectives have offered an explanation about the causes of violent behavior and its control. The roots of social conflict are connected to the struggle for the imposition of a hierarchical system and the denial of dignity through institutional control of religious, social, and economic aspirations. A variety of theoretical explanation seems to be necessary due to difficulties in capturing multiple dimensions of conflict behavior and attitudes under one gigantic umbrella theory. As conflict is considered innate in human interactions, research on conflict resolution should pay more attention to decision making in broad social relationships.

Rationality and decision-making behavior

In “rational choice” theory perspectives, optimal decisions satisfy a set of calculations which serve cost–benefit analysis based on the principles of minimizing losses and maximizing gains; therefore, weighing rewards and costs of various courses of action is guided by the single criterion of self-interest. The utilitarian principles are often either implicitly or explicitly applied to decision making on initiating or ending a fight as well as negotiation strategies. Israel could have directly invaded Gaza to stop rocket fire by Palestinian militants, but given its expected heavy casualties, in June 2008, the Israeli government chose to agree to relax the economic blockade of Gaza in return for the cessation of further attacks originating from the Hamas-controlled territory.

In “rationalist” thinking, the motivations for the termination of conflict are ascribed to decreasing chances for gains through continued fighting and the availability of less costly options of settlement. In order to recover the Sinai, the Egyptian President Anwar Saddat decided to negotiate instead of preparing for yet another war after the American-sponsored truce in October 1973. In a rational choice paradigm, thus, conflict behavior is adapted to a changing balance between different interests embedded in continued fighting versus early settlement. In zero-sum situations, one’s gain is diametrically opposed to an adversary’s loss.

Negotiated settlement is aimed at converting a zero-sum game situation into win–win outcomes. By agreeing to return the Sinai occupied during the Six Day War, Israel was able to enhance security since the deal eliminated any possible future attacks by an alliance of Arabic states. Although Egypt became the first Arabic state which recognized Israel and gave up some other territories, Cairo was able to reclaim a vital part of its territory without shedding any blood.

In many real world situations, individual actors seek competitive strategies to maximize short-term, narrow self-interests, but cooperative moves are often necessary to yield a better long-term outcome in a highly interdependent relationship. For instance, unregulated pollution may increase one country’s economic competitiveness in international trade due to cheaper production costs, but it eventually hurts the country’s own long-term well-being through the negative effects of global warming. Thus multinational cooperation is essential to obtain public goods (the prevention of climate change) by regulating each state’s polluting activities.

The rules of a game can create incentives and disincentives for certain behavior. Because the outcome is in the hands of more than one player, structural features of the game itself (manifested in gains and losses associated with different moves) are key concerns in decision making. In considering that an adversary’s response changes the outcome matrix of one’s choice of actions, as in a prisoner’s dilemma games, the expected utility is

closely related to the effects of each other's strategic choices. The dramatic increase in Chinese and Indian emissions of greenhouse gases can easily outstrip reduction in the emission level of carbon dioxide by Western Europe. The overall reversal in global warming trends cannot be achieved without collective actions which prevent a "free rider" who wants to shoulder less than a fair share of costs needed to fix the problem.

One's welfare can be increased only by cooperation with adversaries. As exemplified by the arms race, one country's attempt to maximize unilateral gains (military superiority) would lead a rival state to do the same thing since unconditional cooperation (unilateral disarmament) in this situation generates the worst outcome (insecurity). In the absence of trust and agreement on coordinated actions, the most rational strategy is to persist with a competitive strategy (an arms race) to avoid an undesirable result of unilateral disarmament. Gains achieved by seeking exclusive self-interests are only shortlived, since the other party is most likely to reverse its own course of action even if they might have initially taken a cooperative move.

The pursuit of self-interest by each party yields an outcome that is far less attractive than is produced by mutual cooperation. When achieving unilateral gains is a dominant strategy for each player, mutual defection (competition for superior arms capabilities) produces a less desirable outcome (decreased economic growth in combination with growth in destructive military capabilities by an adversary) than joint cooperation (disarmament and devotion of financial and technological capabilities to economic prosperity and social welfare).

The dilemma in a collective bargaining situation is that cooperation produces a better outcome than competitive strategies, producing the greatest benefit for all. Yet competition remains as a dominant strategy owing to a suspicion of an adversary's motives (for unilateral advantage at the expense of one's loss). Given a lack of trust in most conflict situations, a tit-for-tat strategy has been presented as a solution to this dilemma with stress on the norm of reciprocity. One party may start with a cooperative move on the basis of an expectation of an opponent's reciprocal action. In the event of defection by an adversary, the party can quickly switch to a competitive game with a retaliatory move. However, once the other party opts to choose a cooperative strategy, the party will forgive and return to a reciprocal exchange of cooperation. In the end, cooperation can be institutionalized to develop predictable patterns of transactions.

Despite its great heuristic (conceptual) value, the application of utilitarian perspectives is often limited in managing adverse relationships. The outcome of conflict may not be evaluated from universalistic assumptions about an individual actor's calculations about utility values if differences in psychological or other personal characteristics (such as emotional arousals and willingness to take a higher risk for bigger political gains) play a more important role in determining ultimate decisions. The decision-making choices can also be circumscribed by organizational constraints as well as the group psychology of a policy-making body. Internal divisions complicate the choice of actions by a group in that discussion about the stakes in conflict is likely to involve power struggles reflecting different factional interests. In addition, rational choice theories are more suitable for assessing purely interest-based bargaining structures than value-based, multicultural conflict settings.

Cognitive and perceptual limitations

People do not always choose decisions on the basis of maximum interests. Prospect theory suggests that most people can settle less with more certain outcomes than seeking higher benefits that are less likely to be gained with more effort. Indeed, time pressure and

complexity of data drive many decision makers to choose the most minimally acceptable alternative (encountered first) as opposed to exhaustively gathering information in a search for the maximum.

According to bounded rationality defined by Herbert Simon (1996), humans are not being fully informed to make the most suitable decisions in many given situations due to difficulties in the management of information overload. Individual cognitive functions are programmed differently to process most information which we encounter. It is often the context of an individual's experience that orders perceptions according to preset belief systems, theories, or images.

In many socio-psychological theories of conflict behavior, perceived threats are attributed to a lack of trust and misinterpretation of intentions. A high level of threat causes stress to decision makers, producing cognitive biases. As is most clearly illustrated by the Bush administration's decision on going to war in Iraq, both the limited ability to consider various options and the misrepresentation or distortion of data can be factors which contribute to the initiation of a conflict. Collective misjudgment and risk-taking behavior result from a small group decision-making environment which encourages a tendency to seek conformity, prohibiting questions about each other's reasoning and confidence in the success of aggressive actions. In ethnic warfare in Bosnia-Herzegovina and Rwanda, group dynamics are affected by stereotyped images of enemies and the dehumanization of competing out-groups.

In general, psychological challenges to conflict resolution are, to a great extent, derived from rigid perceptions and cognitive inflexibility. In fact, pessimistic attitudes toward the cessation of a struggle produce perceptual limitation on any initiatives to bring about conciliation along with a lack of knowledge about each other's true intentions and necessities. Sustainable peace might be difficult due to long-held attitudes especially hardened after the experience of atrocities. Exclusive values and ideological commitments put cognitive limitations on the recognition of an adversary's rights, needs, and interests. Orthodox Jews are making historic, biblical claims to land with expanded settlement, while Hamas denies the existing state of Israel that cannot be reversed. The dim prospect for a negotiated settlement is ascribed to rigid belief systems deduced from a blind loyalty to a group and a continued commitment to its extreme values.

Culture and social behavior

Resolving conflicts that include such dimensions as ethnic claims to territories and political autonomy often requires negotiation of incompatible values beyond material interests. In cross-cultural perspectives, an overall process of conflict and its resolution is not separable from complex systems of meaning that prescribe rules about mutual interaction, verbal interpretation, and management of expectations. Most importantly, cultural norms provide a point of reference for communication and acceptable patterns of behavior. Collective sentiments are represented in a diverse set of understandings about the outside world.

The social world is fragmented into a multitude of cultural meanings which advocate particular moral visions and knowledge bases. The articulation of issues and expectations regarding desirable forms of agreement are heavily influenced by our understandings of the self and the world. In conflict resolution, the mediation of different social worlds is derived from the interpretation of alien cultures. Meanings attached to conflict by individuals and groups are revealed through different concepts of social life which in turn affect behavioral manifestations. In a Western dispute resolution model, the conceptions of a person

prescribe the control of emotion, measured behavior and logical calculations. To be successful in interest-based bargaining, we have to adopt rational narratives.

Recurring cultural patterns and underlying principles emerge from particular social settings and institutions that facilitate the internalization of beliefs and attitudes about the establishment of our relations with an external world. A cultural scheme of reference can be utilized for understanding the identity and behavior of a social group. As people do not share the same value judgments about each other's behavior as well as assumptions about conflict processes, interaction patterns between adversaries can be relegated to differences in cultural norms about honor, respect, and trust (Faure, 2003). From the perspectives of culture, conflict resolution is considered in terms of the unique patterns of relations embodied in specific time and space.

Negotiation between North Korean and US government officials has been full of suspicion and mistrust often associated with different interpretations of each other's behavior. In arguing over the responsibility for the collapse of the 1994 landmark agreement to freeze Pyongyang's nuclear programs, the Bush administration officials focused on a specific set of issues (such as uranium enrichment programs). On the other hand, the North Koreans accused Washington of a lack of commitment to improving bilateral relations which is, in their view, essential to trust building that would in turn let them fully proceed to the abandonment of their nuclear programs without a fear of future US attacks. Insulting words (such as "tyrant" and "pygmy") and other statements disparaging the North Korean leadership by President Bush (such as "loathing" President Kim Jong-Il as well as categorizing North Korea as one of the "axes of evil") were taken far more seriously in Pyongyang than US government officials imagined. An extreme sense of humiliation, contempt, and insecurity provoked the North Koreans to take highly provocative actions that culminated in the testing of nuclear bombs in the fall of 2006, even further risking their isolation from the outside world.

In a high-context culture, the issues are not distinctively separated from the relationship or person. It is contrasted with a low-context culture which does regard the sources of contention as separate from the protagonists (Avruch, 2002). In particular, conflict in industrial societies is interpreted from an impersonal, instrumental, solution-oriented stance, but affective, relational, personal issues such as respect and shame are inevitably crucial in a traditional culture which emphasizes communal links. Thus individualistic, low-context cultures shed light on competitive bargaining strategies without much consideration of the implications for future relationships. The adoption of collaborative strategies is encouraged in collectivistic, high-context cultures that stress inclusion and association.

In many high-context cultures, "face" is viewed as a psychological-affective construct closely connected to the notions of disgrace, honor, and obligation, along with its contribution to the maintenance of mutual obligations of group members. Indeed, these relational qualities "are reciprocal forces that serve to unite groups, police the boundaries, define who is included or excluded, and enforce conformity" (Augsburger, 1992, p. 103). While "face" needs to be respected, face saving can be manipulated in international conflicts for political gains.

China is known to aggressively defend its self-image and skillfully uses face-saving devices to fend off foreign pressure to improve human rights conditions or demand balanced trade. The Chinese government successfully convinced US policy makers that pressure tactics would not encourage them, for instance, to deregulate their currency values in an international market, effectively taking the issues off official negotiation agendas. In authoritarian Asian countries, any foreign scrutiny of human rights violations has been countered under the name of "Asian values" oriented toward a collective cultural context.

This notion has been effectively challenged by former South Korean President and Nobel laureate Kim Dae-Jung who illustrated that there is no such thing as human rights abuses in Asian values.

Face saving can be applied to the promotion of the reputation and values of one's own community, but paradoxically it can lead to ignorance of the collective interests of a larger community. Japan is known for highly regarding social obligations, honor, and shame for a wrongful deed and policing its own members' behavior. For instance, when some Japanese tourists scribbled on the Italian historic monuments, they were socially ostracized in their own society, and the Japanese voluntarily offered Italy payment and other compensation with their sincere apology. However, on the issues of whaling, the Japanese government has been adamant about its violation of the international whaling ban and even attempted to sabotage and derail the long-established international policies. In spite of a widespread international outcry and condemnation, the Japanese have defended their position on whaling by referring to their "cultural tradition."

The role of power in conflict process and outcome

Power relations as well as different psychological and cultural attributes play an important role in a conflict process. In the paradigm of *realpolitik* one country's ability to affect the outcome of an international conflict is reflected in the parties' power status vis-à-vis their opponent's. In a relational context, power yields the capability to force another to act in one's own desires or wishes by changing the party's future welfare conditions (Blalock, 1989). Thus power superiority puts one group in a position to either dictate or influence another group's behavior via the control of a reward or punishment system.

The impact of power distribution on a conflict outcome can be mitigated by a range of political and psychological factors such as national unity, ideological commitment, morale, etc. While there are quantitative indicators to measure the amount of power such as economic, technological, and physical capabilities, these elements do not directly translate into specific effects. Each party certainly has different capabilities to mobilize resources to effectively resist a rival's attempt to force their own way. In direct military clashes with Israel, such antagonists as Hezbollah are likely to have more ability and determination to provide sustained resistance than the standing armies of Syria.

In understanding contemporary political realities, some argue that power struggles remain as the genesis of human conflict, since those dissatisfied with the status quo inevitably challenge dominant group positions (Darhendorf, 1959). As represented by protracted political battles in Lebanon for the last 18 months, political landscapes were redrawn by the mobilization and counter-mobilization of opposing groups in an organized campaign for challenging and defending a political status quo. In Uzbekistan and Burma, the regime's willingness to shoot unarmed civilians protesting on the streets has silenced any voice of opposition to the brutal dictatorships, but a highly oppressive state apparatus cannot be sustained for ever, and will eventually have to come to an end.

The existence of power asymmetry seems to be ubiquitous in most contentious struggles, ranging from labor strikes to competition for scarce water and land in Africa. Racial and ethnic tension arises from the superimposition of power relations on major social cleavages along with political and economic disparities. The power of a majority government can be a source for social injustice when it suppresses minority group rights to survival. The deconstruction of dominant power relations may come from the transformation of social values and institutions which permit their justification.

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