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CHAPTER EIGHT

Intergroup Conflict

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Intergroup conflict is expressed in many forms and in many different settings in all societies. In organizations, poorly managed differences between departments or between factions within the same unit can dampen morale, create animosity, and reduce motivation and productivity. In community settings, schisms between interest groups on important social issues can lead to polarization and hostility, while low intensity conflict between ethnic, racial, or religious groups finds expression in prejudice, discrimination, and social activism to reduce inequity. At the societal level, high intensity conflict between such identity groups on a broader scale can break out into ethnopolitical warfare, which engages the international community as well as local actors. At all levels of human interaction, poorly handled conflict between authorities and constituents or between majorities and minorities can lead to frustration and alienation on both sides. In fact, wherever important differences exist between groups, there is the potential for destructive intergroup conflict.

It is important to note that destructive intergroup conflict is only one major form of relationship in the wider domain of intergroup relations, that is, interactions among individuals that occur in terms of their group identifications. The discipline of intergroup relations is concerned with all manner of relationships among groups, including cooperative interactions and competitive ones, as well as constructive intergroup conflict. In most ongoing intergroup relationships in all manner of settings, cooperative relations exist and conflict is handled in a more or less constructive manner to the satisfaction of the parties involved.

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However, when this does not occur around incompatible goals or activities, and the parties work to control or frustrate each other in adversarial and antagonistic ways, the scene is set for destructive intergroup conflict to occur. Given that such conflicts can be very costly to the parties involved as well as the wider system, especially at the intercommunal and international levels, it is essential to understand them and to look for ways of managing and resolving them, which is the focus of the current chapter.

From the point of view generally held in the social sciences, intergroup conflict is not simply a matter of misperception or misunderstanding, but is based in real differences between groups in terms of social power, access to resources, important life values, or other significant incompatibilities. However, these realistic sources of conflict are typically exacerbated by subjective processes in the ways that individuals see and interpret the world, and in the ways that groups function in the face of differences and perceived threat. As individuals and within groups, human beings are not well equipped to deal with important differences between themselves and others, and often engage in behaviors that make the situation worse, unless social processes and institutions are available to them to manage their incompatibilities effectively. When differences are handled constructively, such conflict can be a source of learning, creativity, and social change toward a more pluralistic, harmonious, and equitable world.

Although intergroup conflict finds innumerable expressions, this chapter will focus on the general processes of causation, escalation, and resolution that are applicable to these many forms. However, it needs to be understood that each organizational, community, cultural, political, and societal setting requires further analysis in order to truly understand the intergroup conflicts at that level of interaction and within that particular setting, prior to suggesting avenues for handling these constructively. In addition, the general concepts and principles that are available from Western social scientific research and practice have to be interpreted, modified, and augmented in culturally sensitive ways in order to have utility in different cultural settings. In some cases, general prescriptions will be inappropriate and counterproductive, and application will need to await further developments in theory and practice, both local and global.

While compatible with much theory and research in the social sciences on intergroup conflict, this chapter will draw especially on work in social psychology, an "inter-discipline" between sociology and psychology that seeks to integrate understanding of individual processes, especially in perception and cognition, with knowledge of social processes, particularly those at the group and intergroup level. Studies of the development and resolution of intergroup conflict over time (for example, with boys camp groups [Sherif, 1966], management personnel in training workshops [Blake and Mouton, 1961], volunteers in a prison simulation [Haney, Banks, and Zimbardo, 1973], and university students in a simulated community conflict over resources and values

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[Fisher and others, 1990]), have illuminated our understanding of the processes and outcomes that can arise from realistic group incompatibilities. Much of this understanding has been captured in general treatments of conflict—its sources, its tendency to escalate, and general strategies directed toward its management (see, for example, Deutsch, 1973, 1983, 1991; Fisher, 1990; Kriesberg, 2003; Pruitt and Kim, 2004). Knowledge is also drawn from theories of social identity (Tajfel and Turner, 1986), ethnocentrism (Levine and Campbell, 1972), social dominance (Sidanius and Pratto, 1999), and intergroup relations (Taylor and Moghaddam, 1994). In addition, social and organizational psychologists have contributed to the development of methods to manage and resolve intergroup conflict in various settings (Blake and Mouton, 1984; Blake, Shepard and Mouton, 1964; Brown, 1983; Fisher, 1994, 1997).

From these and other sources, one can deduce a social-psychological approach to addressing intergroup conflict that is phenomenological (stressing the subjective reality of the groups), interactive (emphasizing the behavioral interaction of the groups in expressing, maintaining, and resolving their conflict), and multi-level (realizing that understanding is necessary at multiple levels of analysis from various disciplines within a systems orientation). Thus, the ideas that are covered in this chapter come from many sources that are further identified in the example references given above, and need to be combined with the fruits of the other social sciences in order to gain the necessary context and greater meaning. Therefore, the interested reader is requested to search the literature for concepts and practices that are identified here, rather than referencing this chapter as the primary source.

INTERGROUP CONFLICT: SOURCES AND DYNAMICS

The essence of intergroup conflict lies in three elements: incompatibilities, behaviors, and sentiments. A broad definition of destructive conflict sees it as a social situation in which there are perceived incompatibilities in goals or values between two (or more) parties, attempts by the parties to control one another, and antagonistic feelings toward each other (Fisher, 1990). When the parties are groups, individuals are acting and reacting toward members of the other group in terms of their social identification with their group, which forms an important part of their social identity, rather than as individuals. The definition stresses that incompatibilities by themselves do not constitute conflict, since the parties could live in peaceful coexistence. However, when there are attempts to control the other party in order to deal with the incompatibility, and when such interactions result in and are fuelled by antagonistic emotions, destructive conflict exists. This definition is in line with an approach to studying conflict known as "realistic group conflict theory," which stresses that

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objective conflicts of interest cause conflict. In contrast, "social identity theory" holds that the simple categorization of individuals into groups (in a minimally competitive social context) is enough to create differentiation between groups and some amount of bias in favor of one's ingroup and discrimination against outgroups. In real life, both contributions are typically in play, and it is not easy to know which is the primary one, although the bias here is to put more weight into real differences of interest.

Sources of Intergroup Conflict

What are some areas of incompatibilities that can give rise to destructive intergroup conflict? One useful typology proposed by Daniel Katz identifies economic, value, and power differences as primary drivers. Economic conflict is competition over scarce resources, and can occur in all manner of settings over all manner of desired goods or services. Resources are typically in finite if not short supply, and groups understandably often approach this "distributive situation" with a "fixed-pie" assumption that what one gains, the other loses. The stage is thus set for competitive strategies and behaviors to obtain one's fair share (which is seen as unfair by the other group) and in so doing to frustrate the other group's goal-directed behavior. Reciprocal interactions along this line usually generate perceptions of threat and feelings of hostility.

Value conflicts involve differences in what groups believe in, from minor variances in preferences or principles to major cleavages in ideologies or ways of life. Conflict can arise over valued means or valued ends, that is, over how goals are achieved or what their nature or priorities are. Organizations often comprise groups in conflict over how decisions should be made (such as autocratically or democratically) and over the outcomes to be prized (such as the best quality service or highest return on investment). Societies and the world at large are composed of different cultural and religious groups, who have myriad variations in their preferences, practices, and priorities that can place them in situations of incompatibility. Again, the question is how the groups, particularly the dominant group(s) choose to deal with these differences, for example, by forcing their cultural norms on other groups or by supporting intercultural respect and harmony.

Power conflict occurs when each group wishes to maximize its influence and control in the relationship with the other. At base, this is a struggle for dominance, whether in a corporate office or a region of the globe, and is not resolvable in the first instance, often resulting in a victory and a defeat or a tense stalemate and deadlock. Power conflict often recycles through various substantive issues, and over time the dynamic of a mutual win-lose orientation becomes apparent. This, however, is not to confuse the inherent use of power in all types of conflict in which parties work to influence each other. Power conflict is often distinguished by the use of negative power, through behaviors such as threat,

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deception, or manipulation, as opposed to tactics of positive power such as persuasion, the use of valid information, and a consideration of the pros and cons of alternative actions. (Also, see Chapter Five, Power and Conflict.)

To this typology can be added the more contemporary concern with needs conflict, that is differences around the degree to which the basic human needs of groups, and the individuals within them, are being frustrated or satisfied. This line of theorizing comes partly from the work of psychologist Abraham Maslow and sociologist Paul Sites, and has been brought into the conflict domain by international relations specialists John Burton, Edward Azar, and others. Basic needs are seen as the fundamental requirements for human development, and proposed lists include those for security, identity, recognition of identity, freedom, distributive justice, and participation. Identity groups are seen as the primary vehicle through which these necessities are expressed and satisfied, thus leading to intergroup conflict when one group's basic needs are frustrated or denied. It is proposed that the most destructive and intractable conflicts on the world scene between identity groups, that is, racial, religious, ethnic or cultural groups, are due to need frustration. However, identity groups also exist in organizations and communities, wherever groups form around a common social identity, and if needs for recognition of that identity or for dignity, safety, or control are denied, then conflict is similarly predicted (Rothman, 1997).

An important qualification is that many conflicts are mixtures of the above sources rather than pure types. This can be true in the initial causation, as when power and economic competition are simultaneously expressed, or over time, as when value differences or need frustrations are addressed through the increasing use of negative power. The typology also does not rule out misperception and miscommunication as potential sources of conflict, but it is unlikely that serious intergroup conflict could sustain itself for any period of time based solely on these subjective aspects. This is not to deny that misperceptions can lead to behaviors that give rise to serious conflict, as when, for example, one group launches a pre-emptive strike against another, out of the mistaken fear that the other is about to attack. However, destructive conflict is typically over real differences, poorly managed.

Perceptual and Cognitive Factors

Regardless of the source, conflict between groups often engages perceptual, cognitive, emotional, and behavioral mechanisms at both the individual and group levels, which exacerbate the initial incompatibilities. Social identity theory tells us that the simple perceptual act of group categorization in a minimally competitive context will set in motion a process of group differentiation with resulting ingroup favoritism. This is apparently due to the need of individuals to attain and maintain a positive social identity, which they do by first engaging in the social categorization of groups, and then by making favorable social

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comparisons of their own group in relation to other groups. Thus, there is pressure to gain distinctiveness for one's own group and to evaluate it positively in comparison with other groups, thereby leading to discrimination against other groups.

The concept of "ethnocentrism" captures how identity groups tend to be ethnically centered, to accept and even glorify those who are alike (the ingroup), and to denigrate, discriminate against, and reject those who are unlike (outgroups). Realistic group conflict theory sees ethnocentrism as an outcome of objective conflicts of interest and competitive interactions by groups to obtain their goals, a process in which a perception of threat plays a key role by heightening ingroup solidarity and engendering hostility toward the threatening outgroup, especially if there is a history of antagonism between the groups (Levine and Campbell, 1972). In contrast, research supporting social identity theory demonstrates that intergroup discrimination can occur without any clear conflict of interest or any intergroup interaction (Tajfel and Turner, 1986). However, the discrimination appears to be limited to ingroup favoritism rather than outgroup derogation and hostility. A direct approach to intergroup discrimination is taken by social dominance theory, which augments both realistic group and social identity theories by stressing group differences in power while still explaining individual differences in discrimination (Sidanius, Pratto, van Laar, and Levin, 2004). This theory holds that individuals vary in their social dominance orientation (SDO) and that high SDO supports ideologies that promote group-based hierarchies and legitimize both individual and institutional discrimination in favor of more powerful groups in society (Sidanius and Pratto, 1999). All three theories predict that individuals in intergroup conflict will engage in misperceptions that accentuate group differences.

Groups in conflict tend to develop negative "stereotypes" of each other—oversimplified, inaccurate, rigid, and derogatory beliefs about the characteristics of the other group that are applied indiscriminately to all the individuals in that group. These come about partly through the processes of group categorization, which exaggerate the differences between groups and the homogeneity of the outgroup. However, they also come about through selective perception and memory retrieval, by which qualities and behaviors that fit the stereotype are accepted and retained, while those that do not are rejected. Mutual stereotyping leads in part to a "mirror image" in which each group sees the other negatively, as aggressive, untrustworthy, manipulative, and itself positively, as peaceful, trustworthy, and cooperative. Through the process of socialization, these simplified pictures are passed on to new group members (children, recruits, new employees) so that they can take their rightful place in defending the interests of their ingroup against outgroup enemies.

Cognitive biases also enter into intergroup conflict in the attributions that individuals make about the behavior of others, such as, how they make

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judgements about the causes of behaviors or events. In intergroup relations, there is a tendency to see outgroup members as personally responsible for negative behavior ("He is sadistic."), rather than this being due to situational factors ("He was ordered to do it."). In addition, the personal characteristics that are the focus of attribution tend to be group qualities that are embodied in the negative stereotype ("They are all monsters."). In contrast, undesirable behaviors by ingroup members tend to be attributed to external conditions for which the member is not responsible ("What else could the poor man do?"). Thus, attributions perpetuate and strengthen stereotypes and mirror images, and also fuel hostility between conflicting groups as each holds the other largely responsible for the shared mess they are in.

Group Level Factors

The individual processes of perception and cognition make important contributions to understanding intergroup conflict, but its complexity and intractability are also due to group-level forces. Social groups, like individuals, do not usually respond in a constructive manner to differences that appear to threaten the identity or well-being of the group. The functioning of each group, in terms of identity, cohesiveness, conformity pressures, and decision making, has a significant impact on how conflict is played out and ultimately resolved or terminated. In addition, the structure and culture of the organization, community, or society in which intergroup conflict occurs will influence both its expression and its management. Unfortunately, these latter areas are not as well explored as they should be, and space limitations here preclude a consideration of these higher level influences.

All individuals are members of social groups, either by birth or by choice, and the group identifications that one carries form the central element of one's social identity. Many theorists, including those who developed social identity theory, believe that an individual's self-esteem is linked to group membership, in that a positive self-concept requires favorable evaluations of one's group(s) and invidious comparisons with other groups. Thus, the seeds are sown for ethnic groups to display ethnocentrism, and national groups to exhibit nationalism—pride and loyalty to one's nation and denigration of other nations. However, we do not need to be at the level of large collectivities to see the functioning of group identity. Professional groups, scientific disciplines, political parties, government departments, lobby groups, businesses, sports teams, street gangs—all have their sense of group identity that affects their relations with other groups. The dark side of social identity is that in expressing commitment and affection to ingroups, there is a tendency to devalue and disrespect outgroups, thus contributing to intergroup conflict in situations involving incompatibilities.

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Along with identity, groups tend to develop cohesiveness, essentially a shared sense of attraction to the group and motivation to remain in it. In addition to increasing satisfaction and productivity, cohesiveness is a very powerful force in fostering conformity to the group, and thus has important implications for intergroup conflict. Not only are cohesive groups more effective in striving toward their goals, but it is also generally accepted that intergroup conflict increases cohesiveness within the competing groups, primarily through the effects of threat. Thus, the interplay between group cohesiveness and competition is a significant factor in sustaining intergroup conflict.

Groups in conflict are notorious for the conformity pressures that they place on members to toe the line and support the cause. Group norms (standards of acceptable behavior) and related social influence processes dictate both the stereotypes and the discriminatory behavior that are appropriate with respect to outgroups. Members who deviate from these norms are called to task, and may be ridiculed, punished, ostracized, or eliminated, depending on the severity of the conflict and the deviant behavior. Polarized opinions are a characteristic of cohesive groups under threat, and insidious and powerful influences are brought to bear on members who voice disagreement with the majority.

Cohesiveness is the main factor behind the phenomenon of "groupthink" as articulated by Irving Janis (1982), by which an insulated group of decision makers under stress pushes concurrence seeking to the point that it overrides the realistic and moral appraisal of alternatives. Janis identifies a number of U.S. foreign policy fiascos (the Bay of Pigs invasion, the bombing of Cambodia) as examples in which independent critical thinking was replaced by decisions to engage in irrational and dehumanizing actions toward outgroups. *Groupthink* is characterized by symptoms showing overestimation of the group's power and morality, closed-mindedness, and severe pressures toward uniformity. This is compatible with a large body of theory and research that demonstrates that decision making in general is not a rational, orderly process, but indeed involves cognitive biases, group liabilities, and organizational constraints that produce less than optimal outcomes. (Also see Chapter Nine, The PSDM Model: Integrating Problem Solving and Decision Making in Conflict Resolution). The sobering thought with regard to intergroup conflict is that groups on both sides may be making faulty decisions that exacerbate rather than alleviate the situation.

The role of group leadership in intergroup conflict is also an important element of decision making, given that leaders and other higher status members hold more power than the rank and file. A common phenomenon in situations of competition and conflict is that more aggressive leaders tend to come to the fore, while cooperative or accommodating leaders tend to lose power or position. Janis postulated that a lack of impartial leadership was also an important condition of groupthink, in that directive leadership that was committed to

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particular directions or decisions tended to influence cohesive groups toward concurrence seeking. In addition, groups in conflict tend to influence leaders in aggressive directions, and this "constituent pressure" supports militant leaders toward the use of "contentious tactics" in interactions with the outgroup.

Escalation Dynamics

All of the individual and group factors described so far have one thing in common—they tend to influence conflict interactions in the direction of escalation, that is, the process by which conflicts become more intense and more hostile. Escalation involves the increasing use of heavier methods of influence, especially coercive or punishing tactics, by each group to reach its goals in opposition to those of the other group. Escalation also typically results in the proliferation of issues, not simply basic ones that the conflict is perceived to be about (wages or benefits in union-management conflict), but also process issues that arise from how the two parties treat each other (the use of deception in negotiations). Escalation feeds largely on fear and defensiveness, in which threats by one party to gain its objectives are met by counterthreats from the other, and these reciprocal interactions move to a higher level of costs each time around in a climate of increasing mistrust. The "self-fulfilling prophecy" first identified by Robert Merton (1952) comes into play in a specific manner, in that defensiveness and mistrust motivate cautious or controlling moves, which elicit a defensive and hostile counteraction that is then perceived as justifying the initial action. This type of interaction, for example, led Ralph White (1984), to characterize the Cold War as partly due to "defensively motivated aggression."

Our understanding of escalatory processes has been enhanced by the work of Morton Deutsch (see Chapter 2) on the differences between cooperative and competitive interactions. The modal approach that parties take in terms of perceptions, attitudes, communication, and task orientation tends to show a consistency that is very powerful in determining the nature of their interaction over time. Deutsch's Crude Law of Social Relations captures a great deal of the reality of intergroup conflict—the characteristic processes and effects elicited by a type of social relationship (cooperative or competitive) tend also to elicit that type of social relationship. As Deutsch points out, cooperative processes of problem solving are similar to constructive processes of conflict resolution, while competitive processes are similar to destructive ones in addressing conflict. The competitive-destructive dynamic has also been captured by Deutsch (1983) in his elucidation of the "malignant social process," which describes the increasingly dangerous and costly interaction of high intensity intergroup conflict. Through a combination of cognitive rigidities and biases, self-fulfilling prophecies, and unwitting commitments to prior beliefs and actions, parties are drawn into escalating spirals wherein past investments justify increasing risks and unacceptable losses foreclose a way out. Thus, it is understandable how

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groups get locked into destructive conflict, and by themselves appear unable to de-escalate or resolve the situation.

Resistances to Resolution

The downside of escalation is not found only in the pains and costs that the parties endure, but in the resistances to de-escalation and resolution that the negative interactions create. The late Jeffrey Rubin, Dean Pruitt, Sung Hee Kim, and their colleagues have been at the forefront of studying and theorizing about how parties get locked into their conflicts. At the individual level, they see psychological changes, including hostile attitudes and perceptions, which first encourage escalation (through the biases noted above), but then support the persistence of escalatory interactions (through similar biases). To these they add the processes of "deindividuation" (by which outgroup members are not seen as individuals but as members of a category who carry no inhibitions against maltreatment), and "dehumanization" (wherein outgroup members are perceived as less than human and thus appropriate for inhumane treatment).

Structural changes at the group level also result from escalation. Hostile perceptions of the outgroup and destructive motives toward them become cemented in group norms and pressures are brought to bear for members to accept these as right. As mentioned above, increased cohesiveness and militant leadership tend to support more contentious tactics and aggressive objectives. In addition, militant subgroups, who benefit from the conflict in terms of status, power, or wealth, develop strong vested interests in its continuation. At the level of the larger social system, the organization, community, or global society, intense conflict induces "polarization" by which other players, who are initially outside the conflict, get drawn into coalitions that ultimately fracture the system into two opposing camps. This not only increases the intensity of the conflict, but eliminates neutrals who could serve a useful third party role in resolution.

The final contributor to de-escalation resistance is the phenomena of overcommitment and entrapment. Psychological and group changes tend to strengthen commitments made to contentious behaviors, such that they become self-reinforcing, partly through the act of rationalization. Whatever was done in the past is seen as necessary, and the barrier to conflict termination is the other party's intransigence. Commitment to destructive and costly courses of action is increased further by "entrapment," in which costs already incurred are justified by continuing expenditures in pursuit of victory. Even though irrational by outside judgement, each party pursues its goals, believing that the ultimate reward is just around the corner and that only its attainment will justify what has already been expended. The longer mutual intransigence persists, the more the parties feel compelled to justify their positions through continued intransigence.

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Implications for Understanding and Practice

The complexity and intractability of destructive, escalated intergroup conflict boggles the mind and depresses the spirit of those who would deign to do anything about it, whether members of the conflicting groups or outsiders. This is true whether the conflict involves factions in a organization that have crossed each other off, interest groups in a community that can only yell at each other about the issues that divide them, or ethnic groups that believe total eradication of the enemy is the only viable solution. Nonetheless, this horrendous social problem is a phenomenon that can be understood, and that can be rendered amenable, over time, to actions and interventions that transform seemingly intractable incompatibilities into workable relationships. The task is not easy, and civilization is a far way from having the knowledge and expertise required. However, based on what we now know, some implications for addressing intergroup conflict can be discerned.

A number of implications are in the form of broad orientations to approaching the resolution of intergroup conflict, which need to be further operationalized as more specific strategies and tactics. First among these is the premise that intense intergroup conflict is both an objective and subjective phenomenon, and that attempts to address only one set of factors or the other are doomed to failure, either immediate or long term. Thus, methods are required that settle substantive interests *and* that address psychological, social, and cultural aspects—the stuff of identity conflicts. Given this complexity and its attendant intransigence, it is typically the case that members of the parties themselves are unable to engage in the analysis and interaction required. Thus, it is implied that the involvement of third parties outside the conflict, who are perceived as impartial, competent, and trustworthy, is usually required to de-escalate and resolve the situation. In doing so, third parties must realize that de-escalation is not the simple reverse of escalation, because of the residues and resistances that have been built up through a history of antagonistic interaction.

A further implication of the objective/subjective mix is that different methods of intervention may be required at different stages of escalation in order to de-escalate the conflict to a level where subsequent interventions will now work. For example, interventions that focus on perceptual, attitudinal, and relationship issues may be required before third party efforts at mediating agreements on substantive matters can be successful. This form of contingency modelling has been put forward by myself and Loraleigh Keashly as well as other scholar-practitioners in the field, including Dean Pruitt and Paul Olzack. (See also Chapter Twenty-One, Changing Minds: Persuasion in Negotiation and Conflict Resolution).

A related implication is that intervention in intergroup conflict needs to start with a thorough analysis of the situation, including a cultural analysis where appropriate, before interventions are designed and implemented. Such analysis

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should not only involve the third party, but the members or representatives of the groups themselves, because each phase of de-escalation and resolution depends on earlier ones. For example, analysis, understanding, and dialogue are necessary for reconciliation to occur, and the development of alternative solutions must be based on a diagnosis of each party's motivations, aspirations, and constraints.

Finally, the objective and subjective mix of conflict also implies that changes are required in both the process or relationship qualities and in the substantive or structural aspects for intergroup conflict to be resolved in an enduring manner. That is, the clearing up of misattributions and the rebuilding of trust, for example, need to go hand in hand with the development of decision-making procedures and resource allocation systems that address the basic incompatibilities. Thus, conflict resolution is prescribed not simply as a mechanism for dealing with difficult differences within existing social systems, but also as an approach that can facilitate constructive social change toward more responsive and equitable systems.

Elsewhere, I have delineated a set of generic principles for resolving intergroup conflict, which embody implications that flow from the ideas provided above (Fisher, 1994). These principles will be summarized here in a manner that specifies further implications that they incorporate or are based on. The principles are organized into three major phases of addressing intergroup conflict: analysis, confrontation, and resolution.

Implications for Analyzing the Conflict

As noted above, conflict analysis should be the lead activity in moving into a field of incompatibilities and destructive interactions. Unlike the analysis that parties usually engage in (which identifies political, economic, legal, and/or military strategies and resources they can use to prevail), conflict analysis carried out by third parties in a facilitative role focuses on the sources and dynamics of the conflict that have brought it to its present state of intractability. This will, of course, involve identifying the parties and factions, and the issues that they maintain the conflict is about. However, it will also go beneath the surface issues to identify the underlying interests, values, and needs that relate to the positions the parties take, that is, their demands and offers. A cultural analysis of parties who differ from each other and/or from the intervener should also be carried out to illuminate their "culture of conflict," that is, how they conceptualize conflict and believe it should be addressed in terms of accepted norms, practices, and institutions (Ross, 1993). In addition, this initial phase must entail a "process analysis" that surfaces and discusses the perceptions, thoughts, goals, fears, and needs of each party, and a "trust-building process" that allows for the parties to exchange clarifications, acknowledgements, assurances, and possible contributions to rebuilding their relationship.

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It is implied in these activities and outcomes that the parties will be engaging in intense, face-to-face interaction that involves genuine communication and the development of realistic empathy for each other. It is further implied that this form of analysis needs to be carried out by a skilled, impartial, and trusted third party who carries knowledge of conflict processes and skills in group dynamics and intergroup relations. It is conceivable that members of the parties can form a balanced team to undertake this consulting role, but it is doubly difficult for them due to their group identifications. Given that the third party also requires knowledge of the system and culture in which the conflict is embedded, be it organizational, community, societal, or international, it is also implied that the intervener will be a multi-skilled team of diverse individuals.

The stage of conflict analysis may reveal that objective interests predominate, and that the parties are motivated to settle their differences and either ignore subjective elements or defer their consideration to a future time. In this case, the parties may shift to a negotiation mode and move toward a mutually satisfactory agreement, or more likely, they will need to engage the services of a mediator who will assist them in crafting a settlement. It is also possible that the parties will agree to engage and accept a binding third party judgement by a superior authority—a higher manager or body in the organization, an arbitrator appointed for the purpose, or a legal adjudicator who is available to them. Unfortunately, in intense intergroup conflict, these options are either not engaged (because each group fears losing and believes they can still win), or are not successful in the long run (because the settlements do not deal with the underlying sources and subjective aspects that drove the conflict to high levels of escalation and intractability). In these cases, continuing involvement by a third party in a consultative role is often required, although it is not readily available in many settings.

Implications for Confronting the Conflict

When third-party assisted interaction is possible, the stage of productive confrontation follows analysis, in which the parties directly engage each other on the issues that divide them and work toward mutually acceptable solutions through joint problem solving. It is essential that this process be carried out under norms of mutual respect, shared exploration, and commitment to the problem-solving process rather than a fixation on positions. It is implied that the "facilitative conditions of intergroup contact" (articulated by social scientists starting with Gordon Allport) are in place for these interactions, including equal status participants from each group, positive institutional supports for the process, a cooperative reward and task structure, a good potential for participants to get to know each other as persons, and the involvement of respected, competent, and well-adjusted individuals. Thus, it is further implied that intergroup engagements need to be well designed, with appropriate selection of

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individual participants, and identification of both formal and informal activities and goals. This again is a role best left to knowledgeable, skilled, and trusted third-party consultants.

Equally challenging is the facilitation of the engagement sessions themselves, which need to incorporate qualities such as open and accurate representation of group perceptions, recognition of intergroup diversity including gender and cultural differences, and the persistence to attain mutually acceptable outcomes. A strong implication is that the parties must be encouraged to follow a strategy of collaboration rather than competition. That is, they need to engage in a combination of assertive behavior (stressing one's own needs) and cooperation (showing concern for the other party's needs). This "two-dimensional approach" or "dual concern model" is well represented in the conflict resolution field, building on the early work of Robert Blake and Jane Mouton with elaborations by Kenneth Thomas, Afzalur Rahim, and others. The parties must also engage in a joint problem-solving process that will get them to shared solutions. Knowledge of group problem solving is a starting point, but it was the pioneering efforts of Robert Blake, Jane Mouton and their colleagues that led to the development of a social technology of intergroup problem solving. They have articulated how this technology can be applied by consultants or by members of the groups themselves, at least in organizational settings.

Implications for Resolving the Conflict

Conflict resolution refers to both the collaborative process by which differences are handled and the outcomes that are jointly agreed to by the parties. As distinct from conflict management, mitigation, or amelioration, conflict resolution involves a transformation of the relationship and situation such that solutions developed by the parties are sustainable and self-correcting in the long term. It also requires that an adequate degree of reconciliation occurs between the parties, in that harmony has been restored through processes such as acknowledgement of transgressions, forgiveness by the victims, and assurances of future peace. Future incompatibilities will of course occur and further problem solving toward social change will be required, but the manner of approaching differences and the quality of the outcomes will be different. Thus, one implication of this approach is that conflicts and the relationships in which they are embedded need to be transformed in an enduring fashion as opposed to simply settling disputes or, worse yet, suppressing differences. In order to accomplish this, the resolution process and outcomes must address the basic human needs for development and satisfaction to some acceptable degree. Needs for security, identity, recognition, participation, distributive justice, and so on, must be identified in the analysis, and mechanisms to address them ("satisfiers") must be built into the outcomes. Relations between identity groups can then be built around each group having a satisfactory degree of recognition and autonomy

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(power), so that they can freely enter into an interdependent relationship that is mutually beneficial.

A further implication related to outcomes necessary for resolution, is that mechanisms and procedures for dealing with differences assertively and cooperatively must be built into decision making and policy making. If all parties concerned with a situation of conflict are involved in a meaningful fashion, and if procedures that work to achieve consensus (not unanimity) are implemented, the chances of incompatibilities escalating into destructive conflict are markedly reduced. This assertion is built on humanistic and democratic values, which of course are not in play in many institutions, cultures and societies, and that is why conflict resolution must be seen as part of the slow march of civilization toward a participative and egalitarian world. Each social unit (organization, institution, community, society) has choices to make regarding the benefits and costs of social control (oppression in the extreme), versus the benefits and ultimately reduced costs of moving in democratic directions.

Thus, at the far end of conflict resolution, it is implied that institutions and societies must create political and economic structures that support equality and equity among different groups as well as individuals. (Refer to the discussion of the values and norms underlying constructive conflict resolution in Chapter One.) At the societal level, democratic pluralism and multiculturalism are policies that will reduce destructive intergroup conflict. Depending on the geographical distribution of groups, political arrangements involving power sharing or federalism are congruent with a conflict resolution approach. Recognition of and respect among distinct identity groups in cultural and political terms needs to go hand in hand with equality of opportunities in economic terms. Conflict resolution thus does not imply assimilation or homogenization, although members of distinct identity groups may share a political or national identity as well, but it does imply a mosaic of integrated social groups, cooperating in an interdependent fashion for mutual benefit.

IMPLICATIONS FOR TRAINING

The implications above cry out for new roles, innovative practices, and transformed policies and institutions to creatively deal with differences among diverse groups. Whether one is a member or representative of a group in conflict, or a third party charged with facilitating conflict resolution, the challenge in terms of the qualities and skills required is daunting. At the same time, there is now a welcome proliferation of education and training opportunities at all levels (elementary and secondary schools, colleges and universities, undergraduate and graduate programs, professional development workshops) in relevant areas such as interpersonal communication, problem solving, consensus

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building, conflict management, and so on. The question to be addressed here is: What are the basic skills required to build on the understanding outlined above in order to operationalize conflict resolution processes? Only a rudimentary answer will be given, because of space limitations, but hopefully it will be a useful starting point. These comments will share some points made by Deutsch (in Chapters One and Two) on the skills required for maintaining a cooperative conflict resolution process and a productive group problem-solving process.

The list of analytical and especially behavioral skills to enact the facilitation role in resolving intergroup conflict is a long one indeed, and is drawn from multiple areas of professional practice, including human relations training, counselling, cross-cultural communication, community development, organizational consulting, intergroup relations, and international diplomacy. No one intervenor can aspire to develop the full skill set required to facilitate productive confrontation at the intergroup level, and it is therefore assumed that such work will involve teams of professionals, often from different but complementary disciplines relevant to the particular context of the conflict, for example, organizational, urban community, or international region. Teams are also required since it is common at certain points to work with the groups separately as well as at the interface of their relationship.

Analytical Skills

Analytical skills from many domains of understanding are useful, but at the core of this practice is the ability to apply knowledge about social conflict, its causes, forms of expression, processes of escalation, and mechanisms for its de-escalation, management, and resolution. The task of the intervenor is to offer theoretical interpretations and insights at apparently useful points. Often these inputs will illuminate the functioning of groups in conflict, such as normative pressures toward aggressive actions, or dynamics of the interface between the groups, such as the typical manner in which majorities and minorities relate to each other. Further understanding of the context and the culture(s) in which the intergroup conflict is occurring is essential, whether one is working in an urban American community, a human service organization, or a particular region of the globe. In this regard, facilitators who are from the context and culture in question, and even from the parties in conflict, can play an especially illuminating role, if they are able to rise above their biases and preconceived notions about the conflict and its resolution.

Personal Qualities

At the personal level, intervenors require many of the qualities and skills of any professional, reflective practitioner, such as integrity and detachment. Considerable self-confidence and assuredness (although not overly so) is necessary to

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move into the cauldron of intergroup conflict. A high level of self-awareness is essential in terms of how one is affected by the behaviors of others, such as criticism or attack, and how one's own behavior is usually perceived by and affects others. One needs the capacity to tolerate considerable ambiguity, and to respond constructively to defensiveness or resistance to one's efforts. Sensitivity to gender, cultural, and other differences needs to be coupled with a respect for and capacity to work well with the wide variety of individuals and people that may be encountered. And finally, the intervenor needs the genuineness, caring, and strength of character to build meaningful and authentic relationships with others, and to persevere with them in difficult times and over the long term.

Interpersonal Skills

In terms of interpersonal functioning, facilitators of interpersonal conflict should develop many of the commonly trained communication and relationship-building skills of the helping professions. The ability to speak in genuine and respectful ways and to convey messages in a concise, organized fashion needs to be coupled with the skills of reflective, empathic listening. Included is the importance of being able to give and receive feedback on behaviors, and the ability to productively discuss differences in perceptions that often arise. Advanced skills of relating are also often useful, for example, confrontation (sensitivity to inconsistencies in another's behavior and the capacity to describe these in a clear and nonjudgemental manner) and immediacy (the ability to relate another's implied statements to your relationship or the situation at hand). In short, a team of facilitators needs the ability to respond to whatever messages members of antagonistic groups bring forward in a constructive and respectful fashion that does not antagonize individuals or escalate differences.

Group Leadership Skills

The third party role at the group level is that of a facilitative leader, who has the capacity to help the antagonistic groups work together toward their shared goals in the intervention and in the longer term. This requires a deep knowledge of group processes and the capacity to facilitate group interaction. With regard to task leadership, the facilitator needs the abilities to design and implement agendas that engage conflicting parties in productive confrontation, and to keep them on track as necessary. On the socio-emotional side of leadership, the facilitator needs to provide encouragement and support, release tension at certain points, and harmonize misunderstandings. The intervenor must also be capable of dealing with disruptive or aggressive behavior that challenges the work of the group. In essence, the facilitation team must work to model and uphold the norms of analytical and respectful interaction. Their role thus combines those of discussion moderator, human relations trainer, dialogue facilitator, and process consultant.

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Intergroup Skills

Another important role for the intervenor involves the ability to manage the intergroup problem-solving process toward de-escalation and resolution. Although based in models of group problem solving, the process at the intergroup level has additional challenges and pitfalls. The facilitator needs to understand that at best only an uneasy coalition can be built between members or representatives of different identity groups. That is because of the constant pull of ingroup forces in ethnocentric directions, including all of the cognitive and social biases noted above. Thus, moving the groups through the problem-solving process has to be a shared and mutually accepted experience at all stages. If any one stage, such as initial diagnosis or the creation of alternatives, is imbalanced through the domination of one group or biased in the interests of one group, the outcomes will not be sustainable. Mutuality and reciprocity are the keys, and the parties need to be constantly reminded that only through joint involvement and shared commitment can they be successful in dealing with their conflict.

An additional set of skills for individuals who intend to orchestrate intergroup confrontation revolves around the ability to manage difficult interactions at the interface of two or more groups. Building on all the previous skills, this challenge requires the facilitators to design and implement constructive interchanges between individuals from the conflicting groups that will move them toward resolving their difficulties and toward a renewed relationship. The ability to control disruptive interactions (arguments, debates, mutual accusations, and recriminations, attacks on the third party or the process) needs to be combined with the skill to manage a charged agenda over time, to stay on track, and to move toward accomplishment and closure. At all times, the facilitator is working toward increasing mutual understanding and inducing joint problem solving. Sometimes the best that can be done is for the parties to agree to disagree, but if that is done with full understanding and a sense of respect, it is a far cry from the usual antagonism and blaming. The skills of the human relations trainer are especially useful at this level of interaction. However, when working with intergroup conflict resolution, the focus of the trainer is not on individuals as they interact with other individuals in the group, but on how individuals are interacting in terms of their group identities with members of the other group.

Consultation Skills

This approach to intergroup conflict resolution sees it as a form of professional consultation, wherein the help giver uses his or her expertise to facilitate the problem solving of the client system. Thus, skills and ethical practices that are necessary to implement the process and attain the outcomes of consultation are the final requirement for this line of work. The skills of consultation revolve

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around the capacity to initiate and manage the phases of consultation, from contact to closure. Contact with the groups in conflict should come from a base of credibility, legitimacy, and impartiality, even in the case of a facilitation team composed of members of the two groups, where intervenors are respected within and outside their communities and balance on the team provides for overall impartiality. In the entry process, the consultants need to assess the antagonists' perceptions of these qualities, and all parties need to assess the goodness of fit between the intervenors' values and capabilities and the client system's need for consultation. If entry is successful, the consultant next concentrates on the critical process of contracting, wherein expectations of all parties are clarified and ground rules for the intervention are specified. Thus, the consultant must spell out the rationale, methods, and objectives of the proposed intervention and seek agreement of the parties on these. Diagnostic skills are central to the next phase of consultation, in which the intervener gathers information about the current state of the client system, in this case, the intergroup conflict, and about the preferred state as perceived by the parties. The phase of implementation then invokes many of the skills noted above, wherein the consultant delivers the activities at the intergroup interface that are intended to increase the capacity for joint problem solving. Evaluation is the last phase prior to exit, and requires the methodological skills of the social scientist in order to judge how the intervention was carried out and what its effects were, both intended and unintended. In exiting the client system, the hope of the consultant is that the parties now have the understanding and skills to manage their future relations by themselves. In all phases of consultation, the intervenor needs to function with a high degree of ethical conduct, including the ability to deal with ethical issues as they arise. Thus, casting this work as professional consultation adds another challenging layer to the training requirements for would-be intervenors.

CONCLUSION

Intergroup conflict occurs frequently and is often handled poorly at all levels of society and between societies. It is based in numerous sources and involves a complex interplay of individual perceptions, attitudes, and behaviors as well as group factors that provide a built-in tendency for escalation. Therefore, there is a considerable need for skilled intervenors and social roles and institutions to support their practice. A wide range of knowledge, much of it from a social-psychological base, yields implications for analyzing, confronting, and resolving intergroup conflict. One of the greatest challenges is training a wide range of professionals in the knowledge and skills required to facilitate the productive resolution of intergroup conflict. Through a combination of skills in

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interpersonal communication, group facilitation, intergroup problem solving, and system level consulting, outside third parties or balanced teams of representatives can assist groups to confront their differences effectively and build long-term partnerships.

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