



Introduction: The Nature of Conflict and Conflict Resolution

Jacob Bercovitch, Victor Kremenyuk,
and I. William Zartman

INTRODUCTION

Conflict Resolution is a broad and fast growing academic field that needs to find its place in the world of disciplines. Although it is a relatively young focus of study, having begun to emerge as a specialized field only in the 1950s, when superpower conflict threatened the very existence of humankind, it has rapidly grown into a self-contained, vibrant, interdisciplinary field where theory and practice pace real-world events. Essentially, scholars working on Conflict Resolution study the phenomenon of conflict and analyze ways to bring it under control, bringing their insights and concepts to bear on actual conflicts, be they domestic or international, so as to foster better and more effective relations among states and peoples. Conflict Resolution is about ideas, theories, and methods that can improve our understanding of conflict and our collective practice of reduction in violence and enhancement of political processes for

harmonizing interests. In this field, theory and practice are inextricably linked. What we know about conflict affects the way we approach it. Whether the focus is on international, internal or communal conflict, ideas and theories are available to change the way actors approach conflict and seek to resolve it.

Although the systematic study of Conflict Resolution is relatively new, conflicts and wars have long been the subject of research and teaching in such fields as diplomatic history, international relations, history, political science, law, and social psychology. Even disciplines as diverse as economics, business, and operations research and mathematics study different aspects of conflict. Thus, the very history and foundation of Conflict Resolution is one of rich diversity and cross-fertilization. The new field of Conflict Resolution, building on the work of many analysts, diplomats, and practitioners, is today one of the most interdisciplinary of all academic fields.

While each of its components maintains its roots in its own discipline, their contributions to the field of Conflict Resolution is much larger than the sum of its parts. Each contributes its own concepts and answers to the basic question of the field: how best to approach and resolve or manage conflicts? Contributions do not all come at the same time from all sources, and these various spurts of attention drive the field forward into new areas of inquiry, knowledge, and prescriptions. At the same time, the conceptual growth of the field has practical payoffs that keep research and teaching on Conflict Resolution focused on useful and relevant knowledge.

The task for the academic efforts of a volume of this magnitude is to give the reader a general idea of the scope of the field, to identify its useful concepts, and to provide evidence and evaluations. We decided to go much further. We have invited a distinguished group of experts who can not only give a grounded assessment of the state of the art but can also look into the future. Second, the recent evolution of Conflict Resolution provided us with some good lessons for discussion: the end of the Cold War, the management and even resolution of conflicts in Africa, Latin America, the Balkans, and some significant cases of conflict prevention and even transformation in other parts of the world. Third, there is a growing role for new actors, such as transnationals, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), academics and think-tanks, and international organizations (IGOs). Fourth, there is an openness for what 15 years ago was called "new thinking," an attempt to look at old phenomena from a totally new perspective. We have tried to incorporate all these elements in this volume.

This is a particularly propitious time to launch a handbook of knowledge on Conflict Resolution. The bipolar era of the Cold War is over, and the world is balancing between mitigated unipolarism and re-emergent multipolarism. But the current era is not just post-Cold War; it has often been called the Era of Terrorism, in which the globalizing world centred on the West (and the United States)

is met by a countervailing balance-of-power reaction, not only or so much from a group of states but from self-proclaimed representatives of the offended populations, using highly unconventional means of conflict. Both the cause and the means mark a new era of conflict to be resolved. It is therefore time to take stock of the state of our knowledge, sifting what does not pertain from the past era from what is still relevant in the present and future.

The rise in importance of Conflict Resolution as an identified field of inquiry follows the same path of context-relevant scholarship that accounted for the rise of previous paradigms. Just as the patent inadequacies of the inter-war Idealism were shown so clearly by World War II and then the Cold War, giving rise to the school of International Relations dubbed "Realism," in both study and practice, so the failure of Realism to provide guidance for the conflict management policies practiced despite the Cold War hostility and to explain the collapse of the Cold War in the end gave impetus to a new approach that came to bear the name of Conflict Resolution. New elements and patterns of thinking appeared alongside the old patterns. A natural question came to the fore: is it worth destroying each other for the achievement of existing goals? Are there other, more dignified means of solving existing problems? Are we doomed to fight each other for ever? What is more humane: to fight or to talk, even when you hate your opponent? The questions needed answers and Conflict Resolution has tried to fill the gap. It has meant at least two things: to try to resolve what already existed, and to suggest ways to prevent new unnecessary conflicts in the future and, increasingly, to *manage* what cannot be fully resolved.

Conflict Resolution is a vibrant field of enquiry. This is the first thing to understand. One can hardly imagine the current world of policy without it. It is not an abstract theoretical construction but an element of both academic research and practical policy. And it is growing: it is not a sketchy outline of possible strategies but a robust and healthy

policy of decision-making. The more it has to show both as an explanation and a guide to practice, the more promising will be the future of Conflict Resolution.

Given these identifying characteristics of the current era, this Handbook adopts the considered assumptions (1) that the new challenges of the post-Cold War era make Conflict Resolution more difficult, but (2) that basic tools developed over past experiences have not changed and are still applicable. Terrorist conflict borrows the causes and grievances of past and local conflicts to anchor itself in local scenes; it makes its principal, specific cause the corruption and inadequacies of local governments and their foreign, globalizing support, and draws on alienated populations for its permissive sea of support. But the tools available to meet its outbursts are both broad and limited, comprising the same array of prevention, management, resolution, and transformation that past experience has developed. If there is something new demanded by the new era, it is the need to put great emphasis on handling structural causes (grievances and alienation) and on pursuing post-conflict reconstruction (peace-building). It is important to extend consideration of peacemaking measures into prevention, before the conflict erupts into violence, and implementation, before conflict re-erupts into violence.

Numerous scholars and researchers have sought to develop an adequate body of knowledge on conflict, in order to guide us in deciding how to reduce it, enhance it, or resolve it. That the quest for knowledge about conflict still continues unabated reflects not so much on the skills and expertise of those involved in it, as it does on the immensity and complexity of the phenomenon to be investigated. Social conflict is, after all, interwoven with the entire fabric as a social system. We may certainly strive to attain knowledge on that, but the process, however long or well-structured, cannot be totally satisfactory. With this in mind, we propose to examine in this chapter the ideas, values, definitions, and approaches in the study of conflict, and to attempt to integrate these in an

effort to develop a comprehensive framework of the state of knowledge in this field.

Conflict Resolution as a field of study was most developed in North America and then in Europe. From there, it began to grow and spread. Academic journals, independent centres, university departments, and clusters of scholarship and teaching are now found in every part of the world. The number of scholars and institutions devoted to conflict resolution and making a practical difference to conflicts in places such as the Middle East, South Africa, Northern Ireland, Central America, and East Asia is an impressive testimony to the global commitment to the ideas of conflict resolution and the power of ideas to achieve this objective.

CONFLICT

Conflict, to begin with, refers either to a violent dispute or to an incompatibility of positions, according to Webster. To adopt the first definition is to lose sight of the initial reasons why the dispute arose or came to violence, one of the most important aspects of conflict. The second definition, adopted here, allows analysis to examine the initial sources and incompatibilities of positions, and to explain the process whereby it escalated to or towards violence.

As such, conflict is normal, ubiquitous, and unavoidable. It is an inherent feature of human existence. It is even useful on occasion. It is difficult to conceive of a situation which is conflict-free. Indeed, the very presence of conflict is at the heart of all human societies. This being the case, it is hardly surprising to note that "conflict is a theme that has occupied the thinking of men more than any other, save only God and love" (Rapoport, 1960: 12). The notion that it can be eliminated is idealistic and unreal, in general, although it may be applicable to specific instances. What can be eliminated (even if it should not, in some selected cases) is the violent expression of conflict, in the first definition. Further, in some cases, the possibility of resorting to violence, as threat or coercion, may be a necessary

adjunct to de-escalation, and of course it is useless as a threat if its implementation is inconceivable or incredible. That is one of the many fine lines in the subject.

One school of thought identifies it as a *psychological* state of affairs, a particular situation “in which the parties are aware of the incompatibility of potential future positions” (Boulding, 1962: 5). Conflict is thus seen as a situation in which the parties *perceive* goal incompatibility, but do not necessarily engage in behaviour which is mutually incompatible. The idea that conflict refers to a cognitive rather than a behavioural state is supported by Stanger (1956; 1967) and Hammond (1965). Such a conception leads to an examination of attitudes in conflict, hostility, emotional orientations, perceptual conditions and other psychological processes (e.g. cognitive rigidity) which are brought out in a conflict.

Of course, parties can find themselves holding incompatible positions and let it go at that. But once they move from that passive or static position and start expanding efforts to prevail, active conflict begins: escalation is dynamic conflict. The term conflict is derived from the Latin word *confligere* where it means to strike together. This physical sense of two or more bodies moving against each other has been retained by those who offer an empirical definition of conflict. Conflict thus defined refers to overt and coercive behaviour initiated by one contending party against another.

In the physical sense, conflict may be taken to mean “a struggle over values and claims to scarce status, power and resources in which the aims of the opponents are to neutralise, injure or eliminate their rivals” (Coser, 1956: 7). Himes suggests that social conflict “refers to purposeful struggles between collective actors who use social power to defeat or remove opponents and to gain status, power, resources and other scarce values” (1980: 14). Morton Deutsch, whose influence on the discipline has been so seminal, refers to conflict as a situation which manifests itself whenever incompatible *activities* occur (1973: 10, our emphasis).

Mack & Snyder (1957) suggest that the term refers to a range of empirical phenomena which can be identified or characterized by four conditions: the existence of two or more parties, a situation of resource or position scarcity, the presence of behaviour that is designed to hurt or injure the other, and mutually opposed goals. These properties are offered by Mack and Snyder as the necessary empirical conditions for the existence of conflict. These conditions may exist within and among individuals, groups or nations. We can therefore speak of interpersonal, intergroup and international conflict. We can also speak of conflict *within* parties, and conflict *between* parties. We can distinguish between institutionalized and non-institutionalized conflict, conflicts between equal parties and conflicts between asymmetric parties (i.e. subordinate v superordinate). On the basis of these empirical conditions, we can generate quite a large number of possible conflict situations or types of conflicts (see Boulding, 1957; 1962). Let us look at each of these in some detail.

Parties in conflict

One of the key issues in the analysis of any conflict concerns the identity of the parties. The term “parties in conflict” is taken here to mean individuals, groups, organizations, nations, or other systems in conflict. It is an analytical construct referring to those units which initiate a conflict, pursue it, and determine its outcome. If we want to understand conflict situations, we have to know something about the parties in conflict.

Identifying parties in the abstract may be self-evident; identifying them in a particular conflict situation is much more complicated. Parties in conflict normally entail sub-systems or are themselves sub-systems of a larger unit. Parties in conflict may experience intra-party strife, or they may be manipulated by a stronger and much wealthier party. Some conflict parties may act as autonomous units, others may not. Some parties can be identified as wholly rational beings acting in their best interests, others cannot. To compound the

analytical problems involved in identifying conflict parties, it must be recognized that an observer may define some units as conflict parties, whereas the participants themselves may not concur. Indeed, the identity of the parties in conflict may very well be an issue which all those involved are likely to contend.

Notwithstanding all these serious conceptual difficulties, as well as the many others which relate to parties' attributes and the degree of symmetry or asymmetry between them, it is useful to distinguish types of parties on several aggregation levels and give conventional names to sets of elements. Thus, the concept of parties in conflict may refer to an entire scale of entities ranging from the individual to the national and international organization. Each aggregation level could denote different conflict parties and different levels of analysis. One possible classification of parties in conflict, or levels of analysis, could include the following social categories: individuals, groups, communities, ethnic groups, nations, states, and regions.

This classification of parties in conflict assumes that there exist significant differences in the degree of organization and differentiation between the various levels. These differences imply that conflict between individuals might differ in some important aspects, from conflict between two nations. Classifying conflict parties on the basis of different structural dimensions suggests that conflict behaviour is not necessarily a continuous process, nor can one type of conflict be subsumed merely as a special case of conflict at a higher or lower level. Each conflict party develops its own means and procedures for dealing with its adversaries and pursuing its conflicts.

The discussion on the nature of parties in conflict may in fact be carried a step further by suggesting a dichotomy between intrasystem conflict and intersystem conflict. This distinction has appeared, in one form or another, in the writings of Coser (1956), Mack and Snyder (1957), and Boulding (1957). It was given its most explicit treatment by Galtung (1965) who developed a four-cell scheme based on the distinctions between individual

and collective parties, and intra-system and inter-system conflict. Galtung's scheme can be used in a different form which retains the basic dichotomy but expands upon it by introducing a distinction between equal and unequal parties, and taking into account four, rather than two, main types of conflict parties. Taken together, a systematic party-based classification may be presented in a tabular form with abstract categories and concrete examples.

This classification purports to bring a semblance of order to the discussion of parties in conflict. It can also serve as a reminder, in case it is needed, of just how far we are from having theories to account for the various types of conflict, let alone from a general theory of social conflict. A large number of variables may be used to define, describe and analyse the course and consequences of various conflicts. Of these, the nature of the parties and their structural-organizational locus is perhaps one of the most important.

Issues in conflict

Conflict situations are essentially situations in which parties hold divergent or incompatible goals which motivate their behaviour. These incompatible goals define the range of issues in conflict – they tell us what the conflict is about.

Issues in conflict define the logical structure of a conflict situation. As parties in conflict differ so widely in terms of their values, beliefs and goals, it is to be expected that they will differ with respect to their perception of the issues in conflict. In fact, conflict parties often disagree on the issues in conflict, or on what the conflict is about. One party may see the issues in conflict as pertaining to the right of self-determination, while the other may see them as pertaining to its security and survival. Getting both parties to agree on what the conflict is about, or to think in terms of similar issues, may go a long way towards its successful resolution or management.

Why do parties have such different conceptions of the issues in conflict? Why do they often have opposed "definitions of

the situation"? To answer this, we must realize that the parties' response to conflict stimuli is neither mechanistic or rational, nor interchangeable. On receiving a conflict stimulus (e.g. experience of frustration as a result of goal-interference), parties go through a complicated series of steps before they assign meaning to their experience, conceptualize its issues and select a response behaviour. This sequence of steps is affected by the state of each party, its values and needs, its historical experience, competence, context and modes of attribution. As these internal and external dimensions differ so widely between parties, we can perhaps appreciate why there are so many different interpretations of the situation or definitions of the issues in conflict.

As so many factors affect the perceptions – and definitions – of issues in conflict, how can we classify conflict issues? Various categories may be used (e.g. affective v substantive, realistic v non-realistic), but a more satisfactory way would be to define issues in conflict in terms of (a) the parties' evaluation (b) the rewards associated with various issues, and (c) their content.

1. Conflicted evaluations. Broadly speaking, two kinds of issues are at stake in all conflict situations; issues expressing a disagreement over means, and issues expressing disagreement over ends. The former, which we may describe as issues of interest, occur in situations where the parties agree on what they want, but disagree on how to obtain it. The latter, described as issues of value, characterize conflict situations where the parties differ even on what they want, or what is desirable (Aubert, 1963).

When conflict issues are defined in terms of interests, the basic incompatibility between the parties is perceived as differences on the preferred distribution of resources. When they are defined as conflicts of value, the basic incompatibility is perceived in terms of differences in beliefs, ideologies, and cognitive structure. Such differences in the parties' definition, or evaluation, of the issues in conflict, have a significant effect on the process of conflict management. Conflicts

over values, or dissensual conflicts, are much less amenable to a compromise solution than conflicts of interests, or consensual conflicts (Druckman & Zechmeister, 1970; 1973). If conflict parties could somehow be persuaded to define their issues on the interests, rather than the values dimension, a meaningful and viable basis for cooperation could be created.

2. Differential rewards. Another way of looking at conflict issues is to ascertain the rewards, or punishments, which can accrue to each party from various possible issues which define the extent of their conflict. Conflict is minimal when conflict issues are defined so as to produce identical or correlated rewards for both parties (e.g. if one party gets more resources, the other party also gets more); it is maximal when the rewards for one party occur at the expense of the other (e.g. what one wins, the other loses). Conflicts of this type, often called zero-sum conflicts (because the parties' rewards also add up to zero), are characteristic of situations where parties are motivated by totally antagonistic interests stemming from each other's claim to *exclusive* position, ownership, or resources. There is only one possible outcome, namely, victory for one party and defeat for the other, and the likelihood of cooperation or compromise is extremely limited indeed.

Conflicts in real life are naturally much more complex than that. Issues are not normally defined in such a dichotomous manner. As most conflict situations contain a mixture of common and antagonistic interests, the issues in contention will not be viewed as a zero-sum situation. When the rewards or costs associated with each issue are not the same for each party, we talk of mixed motive situations or variable-sum conflict. In such situations, the parties may be motivated by (a) the desire to cooperate around the common interests, and (b) the desire to get a more favourable share of the resource, or position that is at the centre of their conflict. Even conflicts which may appear at first sight to be zero-sum (e.g. USA v Soviet Union) contain many common interests (e.g. avoiding a nuclear war) and are over issues with varying

degrees of costs and rewards. The rewards associated with different conflict issues thus determine the extent and purity of a conflict, as well as the nature and possibilities of its management.

3. Contending content. This seems to be the most common way of analysing issues in conflict. Here we do not concern ourselves with whether conflicts are objective or subjective, nor do we concern ourselves with the extent and intensity of conflict in a relationship. Instead, we simply classify issues in terms of their content. Thus, we can have conflict situations where the issues centre around survival or scarcity. We can have situations where issues pertain to resources (e.g. territory, income), or to interaction norms (e.g. status, prestige, honour). Issues can express a basically intangible incompatibility (e.g. a conflict over union recognition), or a basically tangible incompatibility (e.g. how to divide profits between labour and management).

A useful discussion of conflict situations in terms of their issue contents appears in Deutsch (1973), Holsti (1983) and Mitchell (1981). Deutsch describes five basic types of conflict issues: (a) resources, (b) preferences, (c) the nature of relationship, (d) values, and (e) beliefs. Holsti, focusing on international conflict, gives prominence to six types of issues: (a) limited territorial, (b) nature of government, (c) national honour, (d) liberation conflict, (e) imperialism, and (f) national unification. The most useful classification of issue contents appears in Mitchell. He describes five basic types of issues which I merely propose to paraphrase and state more simply as (a) issues of resources, (b) issues of sovereignty, (c) issues of survival, (d) issues of honour, and (e) issues of ideology.

Environment of conflict

The intellectual orientation towards conflict adopted in this book emphasizes the development of a taxonomy to influence the formulation of theories and the designs of empirical research. Such a taxonomy would

enable better reference to and consideration of the conflict environment in any analysis of conflict.

A conflict relationship occurs within a specific social context; it affects it, and is in turn affected by it. A conflict may take place in a structured environment in which the parties' behaviour – and the manner by which resources are allocated – are specified or prescribed by norms (e.g. collective bargaining). A structured environment makes available various instrumentalities of conflict management, and determines kinds of behaviour which are considered legitimate or illegitimate. Conflict parties in a structured environment have a shared understanding which encourages appropriate responses, non-coercive strategies and a cooperative perspective.

In a structured environment, conflict management is institutionalized. This suggests that when dissatisfaction expresses itself or when conflict arises, well-supported and generally well-understood procedures for handling can be, and usually are, invoked. Goals, issues and the parties' sense of grievance are channelled by these procedures, and the likelihood of a compromise solution is enhanced considerably.

When a conflict occurs in an unstructured environment (e.g. a revolution), the parties typically believe they are in a zero-sum (i.e. win or lose) relationship. Here the parties lack the formal and informal norms that could provide a sense of community. Consequently, when a conflict becomes manifest, each party's behaviour may be limited only by its own capacity and disposition. Each party considers the other as a threat, and each is prepared to act violently against the other, even if it means injuring or destroying it.

The environment within which the conflict parties exist helps to shape their perceptions of the conflict, their options, responses and possible outcomes (Brickman, 1974). The aspects of a situation may not necessarily be accurately mirrored in the parties' subjective perceptions. A discussion of the contextual variable with particular reference to the degree of differentiation, social organization,

collective identity and nature of social change is, however, absolutely indispensable in developing an integrated approach to the study of conflict. Logical positivism and methodological individualism with their reductive tendencies may have excluded meaningful consideration of the social context. This is an unwarranted exclusion which offers no help in trying to organize the field of social conflict. It must be rectified.

Attitudes in conflict

Conflict is a social phenomenon that is generated and supported by a number of psychological factors. Of these, attitude formation is undoubtedly the most important.

The concept of attitude is one of the most widely used concepts in the social sciences. Broadly speaking, attitudes define the parties' evaluative and response tendencies in social situations. Attitudes are relatively enduring dispositions, having three basic dimensions: (a) the cognitive, (b) the affective, and (c) the behavioural. The cognitive dimension refers to the parties' beliefs and ideas about their environment, the affective dimension refers to the parties' feelings and emotions and the behavioural dimension refers to the specific readiness to respond. Each of these dimensions is affected by, and influences, a conflict situation. The result is that attitudes in conflict are made more negative or extreme, and are so structured as to view the other party in the worst possible light. To understand why this happens and why attitudes in conflict are so resistant to change, we need to know how attitudes are formed or acquired.

Perception is the process by which individuals receive and extract information about their environment. It is a cognitive process which involves reception of stimulus, mental organization and response. The final step in the process – the response – consists of an overt act, or the formation of an attitude. Attitudes are thus determined by each person's perception and conform to his picture, or image, of his environment.

Perception does not just happen randomly, nor can an individual perceive the numerous stimuli which bombard him in the course of his daily life. An individual is not merely a passive recipient of undetected stimuli, he is an active participant in the process. He *selects* stimuli and *organizes* them into patterns and meaningful categories. Selection and organization are crucial in the process of perception. It is precisely because individuals do not merely respond to a stimulus – they interpret, organize and react to it in their own way – that each person may hold a unique perception of the world.

Most of our perceptions seem clear and veridical (i.e. directly given to us). They seem to result from a stimulus in the environment and make up a set of images congruent with that environment. We assume that if we see a person or an object in a certain way, others will perceive it in the same way. The idea that there is such a thing as 'pure perception', or an unmediated and unidirectional stimulus response sequence may have had some appeal to nineteenth-century British empiricists. It is, however, a completely erroneous idea.

People from different cultures, or with different experiences, 'see' the same stimuli differently. What they see may appear veridical, but in reality it is only so because their needs, values, expectations and cognitive processes create the world which they perceive. Vision alone does not account for perception. Mental processes, dispositions and abilities determine the way we see the world and understand it. This is why what we perceive is in a sense exclusively ours. It may or may not be shared by others. If it is, we operate without validated or consensual grounds. Thus, one party in a conflict situation may attribute the causes of its own behaviour to events in the environment over which it has no control, while attributing the causes of the other's behaviour to personality attributes (e.g. inherent aggression) or faults.

Behaviour in conflict

Conflict behaviour occurs in a specific interaction content and is best described as

a means by which each party proposes to achieve its goal. As such, it must be clearly understood that conflict behaviour does not necessarily refer to physical violence only. There are other means of achieving a goal, short of injuring or eliminating the adversary. Conflict behaviour is a broad term embracing a wide range of activities ranging from verbal acts (e.g. warnings, threats) to acts of direct physical damage. Conflict behaviour can be defined, as Mitchell (1981a: 122) notes, as any behaviour which occurs within the context of a conflict situation.

As the range of behaviour implied by this definition is so bewilderingly large, some order may be introduced by discussing zones of conflict behaviour. The most obvious distinction is between conflict behaviour that involves violence and coercion, and conflict behaviour that does not. A more useful distinction is that offered by Kriesberg (1982). He suggests that parties in conflict may resort to three basic types of behaviour: (a) persuasion, (b) coercion, and (c) reward (cf. Williams, 1977). All these types of behaviour purport to influence the adversary to change, modify, or abandon a goal, but they all give rise to different kinds of actual conduct.

Persuasion refers to types of conflict behaviour that seek to influence the other party through the use of reasonable arguments, appeals to common interests, and reference to generally accepted values and norms of fairness and equity. Such behaviour is, by definition, verbal only, and its characteristic features include advocacy and the utilization of symbolic means of communication. It is a mode of behaviour which has low costs in both resources and risks. Coercion involves trying to influence the other party through the imposition of unacceptable costs or actual injury. Coercive behaviour takes many forms. It may be threatened (deterrence) or implemented (violence). When implemented, it invariably involves the use of force and the infliction of damage, or destruction, to life or property. Coercive behaviour, whether at the interpersonal or international level, involves negative sanctions, high expenditure

of resources and high costs and sacrifices. The last category of conflict behaviour – reward – refers to promises of positive sanctions and inducements as a strategy of encouraging compliance. Reward, as a conflict behaviour strategy, is based primarily upon positive influence and offers of benefits, and is, not unlike the threat of coercion, totally contingent upon the response of the other party.

What is possible is a channelling of the conflict into political (non-violent) mechanisms for its management. These can appropriately be called regimes, sometimes formal and legally institutionalized, and sometimes informal. In many countries, political opponents for state leadership no longer kill each other to decide succession. They accept (and manipulate) the formal selection/election regime whose rules and regulations provide a winner, but they also engage in an informal regime whose norms provide acceptance of a political solution.

It is also possible in some cases actually to resolve the conflict. The issue over which the parties hold their incompatible positions may be decided, either as part of a general regime affecting those types of issues or as a specific political exercise. Again, there is a specific decision to square the incompatibility and also a longer process of letting it sink in, implementing it, and building on it, like a road repair.

At either end of the process are two other possibilities. To really eliminate the conflict, it can be transformed, replacing incompatibilities with ties of cooperation and interdependence. Even in this case, the transformation may not remove the original incompatibilities, but simply outweigh, bypass or overcome them, leaving the conflict enmeshed in cooperation but still there.

The other end of the process is conflict prevention, the product of the previous three but also their predecessor, making them less necessary. As usual by now, prevention often does not remove the conflict but puts a lid on its escalation. It also can make that escalation unnecessary by providing a resolution before further efforts to prevail become necessary.

A number of points emerge from this rapid epistemological review:

- (1) Conflict, the existence of incompatible positions, is normal, ubiquitous, and unavoidable. Escalation is dynamic conflict. Sometimes measures can be taken to eliminate or reduce it; more often measures aim at keeping it from turning violent.
- (2) Conflict resolution, as used in the title of this compendium, refers to all four types of action: prevention, management, resolution, and transformation. Again, some will act to remove or decide the conflict, while others will merely work to keep it at a manageable, political level.
- (3) Any of these policies involves a specific act directed at the specific conflict, and a longer-term series of moves to implement that decision and to surround it with ties of acceptance. Conflict resolution involves attention to a specific conflict, with its history, emotion, and identity aspects, and also to generalized regimes, formal or informal, to provide behavioral and normative guidelines for "cases like this."

TERMS AND ASSUMPTIONS

Within this field of ongoing debate and investigation, a few terms are the subject of a special debate all of their own. Two such concepts are particularly difficult. There will be no attempt here to decree *ex cathedra* a standard meaning, but rather to indicate the range of the debate and, where possible, the particular meaning used here.

One such term is "success" or the broader area of evaluation. It is literally an endless task to seek a "final" evaluation of the effectiveness of conflict resolution measures, and much mindless energy has gone into demanding or concocting quantitative standards. One measure of "success" is simply the accomplishment of the act—the signature of an agreement, the holding of a series of dialogue meetings, the reduction of hostile acts. This measure, of course, does not take into account subsequent events that may revive the conflict or be its unintended consequences. An extension of the first is to give a time

dimension to the benchmarks—agreements that last more than a week or five years, a time period without renewed conflict. Any such measure is completely arbitrary (as arbitrary as the commonly used measure of 1000 deaths per year as an indication of a conflict worth attention) and although it should be considered as such, it is often difficult to avoid giving it substantive meaning. A third meaning of success could be the point when the conflict resolution action, external or internal, is no longer needed, i.e. when negotiations are ended or dialogue managers are no longer required or peacekeepers can go home or cries for justice are no longer heard. Such a measure adds a substantive element that in itself becomes hard to evaluate. Many of the following chapters will discuss their own problems of measuring success, and no universal definition fits all.

The other notion is the idea of "ethics" in regard to Conflict Resolution. A mediator is a meddler and Conflict Resolution practices seek to reduce violence and attenuate conflict in cases where the parties feel themselves to be completely justified and are often enjoying their efforts. "No gain without pain!" There is not a single author in this collection who does not come from a country which attained its independence or its form of government without violence in an event later celebrated as a national holiday [this was written on the 4th of July!]. An attempt to tone down the French or Russian Revolution, the US Civil War (or War between the States), or the Algerian National Liberation Struggle, among many others, was or would have been roundly denounced by the parties (including often the eventual losers) and would have produced results, if successful, making a profound difference in world events that would evoke varying appreciations today. So Conflict Resolution carries with it a certain presumption, if not arrogance, that its practitioners know better than the conflicting parties. Conflict Resolution requires humility.

On the other hand, parties in a conflict need help. The reduction of violence, and its consequent human, economic and political losses, has a value in and of itself, and

often – although not always – the conflicting goals can be attained by other than violent means and can be made compatible with each other. Finally, the parties, either as states or as less sovereign actors, are ultimately in a position to decide whether to resist the pressures and opportunities associated with conflict resolution measures. In the end, conflict resolution, we feel, is a good thing, not an ultimate standard, a battle cry against evil, or an exclusive judgment, but an effort, in its forms of prevention, management, resolution and transformation, that works to the protection and improvement of human life and world conditions.

THE HANDBOOK

The following work is divided for convenience into four sections. The first deals with the history and methods of the study of conflict resolution. Following an opening history of the new field and an appreciation of diplomatic evolution, an overview chapter on methods and approaches leads to presentations on qualitative case study, quantitative analysis, rational choice analysis, experimentation, problem-solving and constructivism. The second section provides an overview of issues and sources of conflict. These are identified as Territory, Resources, Ecology, Ethnicity/Identity, Religion. The third turns to the Methods and Agencies of the practice of Conflict Management, beginning with Prevention, Negotiation, Mediation Arbitration, and Dialogue, and then turning to NGOs and universal and

regional IGOs. The fourth section examines new challenges to conflict resolution, new modes of conflict and diverse issues arising within these approaches. These include terrorism, insurgencies, the media, democracy, development, human rights, intractability, culture, peacekeeping, reconciliation, durability, justice, coercion and training. These sections present their subject as the result of an evolution to the current state of the art (and its development). The conclusion continues this dynamic evaluation by presenting emergent problems for theory and practice.

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