Psicologia dei Gruppi e delle Relazioni Sociali

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Lesson: 14 - (1/4)
Title: Conflict

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Lesson 14 Conflict

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Group members do not always get along well with one another. Even in the most serene circumstances the group's atmosphere may shift rapidly, so that once close collaborators become hostile adversaries. Because conflict is a ubiquitous aspect of group life, it must be managed to minimize its negative effects.

Group and Decision
Conflict

When conflict occurs in a group, the actions or beliefs of one or more members of the group are unacceptable to and resisted by one or more of the other group members. Members stand against each other rather than in support of each other (Levine & Thompson, 1996; Pruitt & Kim, 2004; Wilmot & Hocker, 2007).

The process begins when the routine course of events in a group is disrupted by an *initial conflict*—differences of opinion, disagreements over who should lead the group, individuals competing with each other for scarce resources, and the like.

Whatever the cause of the initial disunity, the *conflict grows as persuasion gives way to arguing, emotions take the place of logic, and the once unified group splits into factions and coalitions*.

Period of *conflict escalation* is, in most cases, followed by a reduction in conflict through *conflict resolution*. This lesson, then, focuses on conflict inside a group—between two or more members—or intragroup conflict

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Conflict
Disagreement, discord, and friction that occur when the actions or beliefs of one or more members of the group are unacceptable to and resisted by one or more of the other group members.
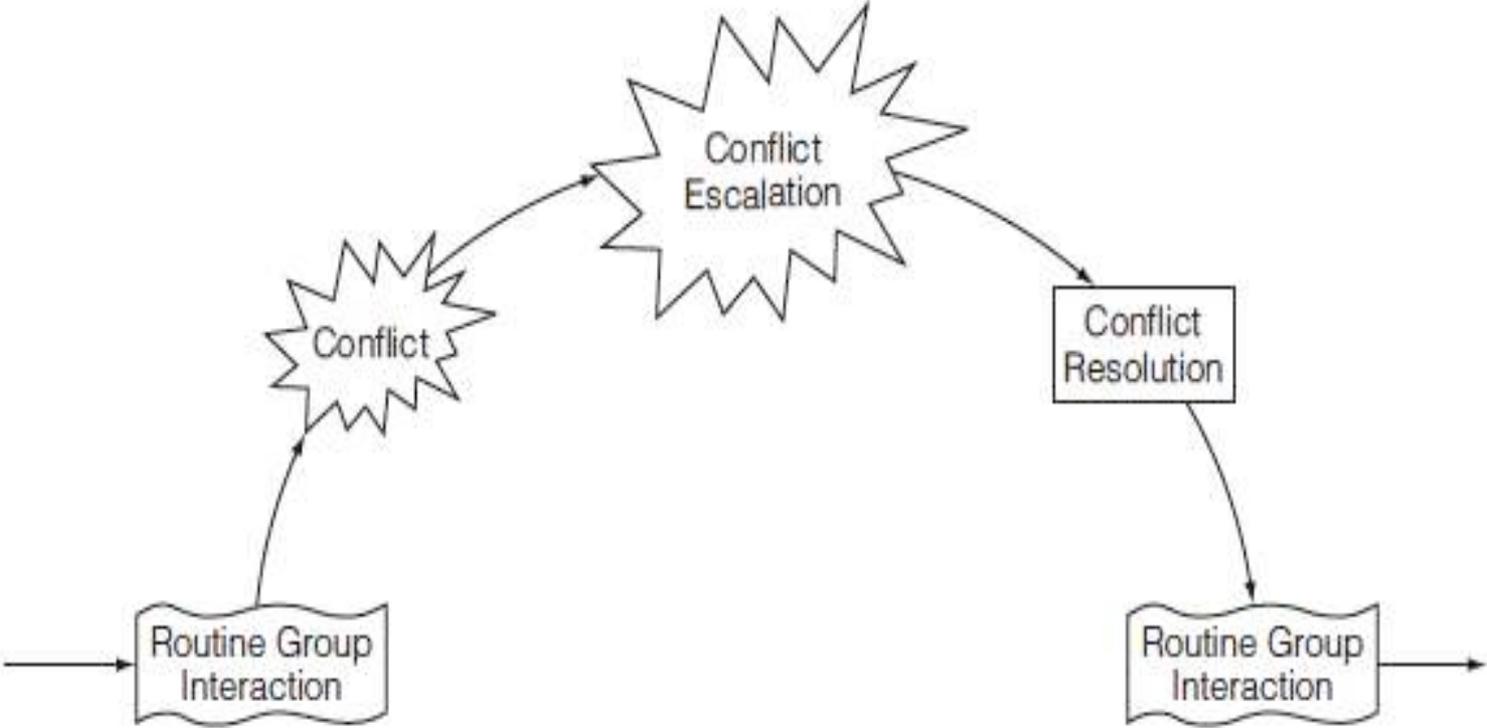
Group and Decision
Conflict

F I G U R E 13.1 The course of conflict in groups.

Group and Decision

Conflict

THE ROOTS OF CONFLICT

Period of *conflict escalation* is, in most cases, followed by a reduction in conflict through *conflict resolution*. This lesson, then, focuses on conflict inside a group—between two or more members—or intragroup conflict

Most people, if given the choice, avoid situation that are rife with conflict (Witteman, 1991).
Yet conflict seems to be an unavoidable consequence of life in groups. When individuals are sequestered away from other people, their ambitions, goals, and perspectives are their own concern. But a group, by its very nature, brings individuals into contact with other people—people who have their own idiosyncratic interests, motivations, outlooks, and preferences. As these individuals interact with one another, their diverse interests and preferences can pull them in different directions.

Instead of working together, they compete against one another.
Instead of sharing resources and power, members selfishly claim more than their fair share.
Instead of accepting each other for who they are, members treat those they like better than those they dislike.

Intragroup conflict
Disagreement or confrontation between members of the same group.

Intergroup conflict
A disagreement or confrontation between two or more groups and their members that can include physical violence, interpersonal discord, and psychological tension.

Group and Decision

Conflict

Winning: Conflict and Competition

Independence: When people are independent, the pursuit of their aims and objectives influences no one else. The lone artist and craftsperson struggle alone in the pursuit of their goals, but their independence from others means that should they succeed or fail only they are influenced.

Promotive Interdependence: But people in groups are, by definition, interdependent, so their outcomes are often linked together. ***Many such situations promote cooperation between members, for the success of any one member of the group will improve the chances of success for the other members***. Morton Deutsch called this form of interaction *promotive interdependence* (Deutsch, 1949b).

Contrient Interdependence: But situations can also pit individuals against one another. When two people play backgammon, one must win and the other must lose. When two coworkers both want to be promoted to office manager, if one succeeds the other will fail. In a footrace, only one runner will end up in first place. As Deutsch explained, such situations involve competition: The ***success of any one person means that someone else must fail***. Deutsch (1949b) called this form of interaction *contrient interdependence*.

> *Independence* *A performance situation that is structured in such a way that the success of any one member is unrelated to the chance of other members' succeeding.*
> *Cooperation A performance situation that is structured in such a way that the success of any one member of the group improves the chances of other members' succeeding.*
> *Competition A performance situation that is structured in such a way that success depends on performing better than others.*

Group and Decision

Conflict

Winning: Conflict and Competition

Competition is a powerful motivator of behavior.

- When individuals **compete against one another**, they typically expend **greater effort, express more interest and satisfaction in their work, and set their personal goals higher** (Tjosvold et al., 2006).

- But **competition can also promote conflict between individuals**. First, they can improve their own work in the hopes that they rise above the others. Second, they can undermine, sabotage, disrupt, or interfere with others' work so that their own becomes better by comparison (Amegashie & Runkel, 2007).

- **Conflict was much more pronounced in the competitive groups**. Members reported **less dependency on others, less desire to win the respect of others, and greater interpersonal animosity.** Members of **cooperative groups**, in contrast, **act friendlier during the meetings, are more encouraging and supportive, and communicate more frequently** (Deutsch, 1949a, 1949b, 1980).

- **Cooperative situations tend to be friendly, intimate, and involving**, whereas competitive situations are **viewed as unfriendly, nonintimate, and uninvolving** (Graziano, Hair, & Finch, 1997; King & Sorrentino, 1983).

- **Sports teams tend to be more cohesive** and—depending on the demands of the particular sport—more **successful when coaches instill a desire for team success rather than individual success** (Schmitt, 1981).

Group and Decision
Conflict

Mixed-Motive Conflict

Few situations involve pure cooperation or pure competition; the motive to compete is often mixed with the motive to cooperate. The men found themselves in a mixed-motive situation—they were tempted to compete and cooperate at the same time.

Researchers use a specialized technique, known as the prisoner's dilemma game (PDG), to study conflict in mixed-motive situations (Poundstone, 1992).

Mixed-motive situation
A performance setting in which the interdependence among interactants involves both competitive and cooperative goal structures.

Prisoner's dilemma game (PDG)
A simulation of social interaction in which players must make either cooperative or competitive choices in order to win; used in the study of cooperation, competition, and the development of mutual trust.

Group and Decision
Conflict

Mixed-Motive Conflict

How do people react when asked to make a choice in the prisoner's dilemma game?

- Some cooperate and some compete, but the ***proportion of cooperators to competitors varies depending on the relationships between members, their expectations and personalities, and a variety of other factors*** (Weber & Messick, 2004).
- If the gains for competing relative to cooperating are increased, people compete more. ***When people are told they are playing the "Wall Street Game" they compete more than if the simulation is called the "Community Game"*** (Ross & Ward 1995).
- ***If the instructions refer to the other person as the "opponent" then competition increases, but the label "partner" shrinks competitiveness*** (Burnham, McCabe, & Smith, 2000).
- If ***people know they will be playing multiple trials against the same person, then cooperation increases***. (Bó, 2005).
- ***When played for several rounds, people's actions in the PDG are also profoundly influenced by their partner's choices***.
- When playing with someone who consistently makes ***cooperative choices, people tend to cooperate themselves***. Those who encounter ***competitors, however, soon adopt this strategy***, and they, too, begin to compete. Gradually, then, ***behavioral assimilation*** occurs as group members' choices become synchronized over time.

Lesson: 14 – (2/4)
Title: Conflict

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Group and Decision
Conflict

Behavioural Assimilation and Reciprocity
This behavioral assimilation is an outward expression of a strong regulatory social norm: *Reciprocity.*
Reciprocity suggests that when people who help you later need help, you are obligated to return their favor.

- However, *reciprocity also implies that people who harm you are also deserving of harm themselves*. The converse of "You scratch my back and I'll scratch yours" is "An eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth" (Falk & Fischbacher, 2006).

Unfortunately, negative reciprocity tends to be stronger than positive reciprocity.

- A *cooperative person who runs into a competitive partner is more likely to begin to compete before the competitive person begins to cooperate* (Kelley & Stahelski, 1970a, 1970b, 1970c).
- *Negative reciprocity is kept in check if cooperatively oriented individuals have the opportunity to withdraw from the interaction or can communicate their "good" intentions to their partners*, but in most situations, a partner turns into an opponent faster than an opponent turns into an ally (Kollock, 1998; Miller & Holmes, 1975).

Behavioral assimilation *The eventual matching of the behaviors displayed by cooperating or competing group members.*
Reciprocity *The tendency for individuals to pay back in kind what they receive from others.*

Group and Decision
Conflict

Social values orientation (SVO)
The dispositional tendency to respond to conflict settings in a particular way; cooperators, for example, tend to make choices that benefit both parties in a conflict, whereas competitors act to maximize their own outcomes.

Group and Decision
Conflict

Degree of concern for other people's outcomes relative to one's own determines a person's social values orientation (SVO)(Van Lange et al., 2007).

Individualistic orientation: Proself individualists are concerned only with their own outcomes. They make decisions based on what they think they personally will achieve, without concern for others' outcomes. They neither interfere with nor assist other group members, for they focus only on their own outcomes. Their actions may indirectly impact other group members, but such influence is not their goal.

Competitive orientation: Competitors are proself individuals who strive to maximize their own outcomes, but they also seek to minimize others' outcomes. They view disagreements as win–lose situations and find satisfaction in forcing their ideas on others. Concessions and compromise, they believe, are only for losers. A competitor believes that "each person should get the most he can" and plays to win even when playing a game with a child (Brenner & Vinacke, 1979, p. 291).

Cooperative orientation: Prosocial cooperators strive to maximize their own outcomes and others' outcomes as well. They value accommodative interpersonal strategies that generate win–win situations. A cooperator would argue that "when people deal with each other, it's better when everyone comes out even." If they play a game with a child they would be more likely to make sure "no one really wins or loses" (Brenner & Vinacke, 1979, p. 291).

Altruistic orientation: Altruists are motivated to help others who are in need. They are low in self-interest and highly prosocial. They willingly sacrifice their own outcomes in the hopes of helping others achieve some gain.

Group and Decision
Conflict

Social Dilemmas

Group life, by its very nature, creates social dilemmas for group members. The members, as individuals, are motivated to maximize their own rewards and minimize their costs. They strive to extract all they can from the group, while minimizing the amount of time and energy the group takes from them. Yet, as group members, they also wish to contribute to the group, for they realize that their selfishness can destroy the group. Conflicts arise when individualistic motives trump group-oriented motives, and the collective intervenes to redress the imbalance.

The ***Social trap***, or ***Commons dilemma***, occurs when members share a common resource that they want to maintain for their group, but individual members are tempted to take more than their fair share (Pruitt, 1998). But if everyone acts selfishly, the common resource will be destroyed. Members are tempted by the short-term gains that will bring about long-term losses to the collective (Komorita & Parks, 1994; Shepperd, 1993)

Group and Decision
Conflict

Social dilemma

An interpersonal situation where individuals must choose between maximizing their personal outcomes or maximizing their group's outcomes.

Social trap (or commons dilemma)

A social dilemma where individuals can maximize their outcome by seeking personal goals rather than the collective goals, but if too many individuals act selfishly then all members of the collective will experience substantial long-term losses.

Group and Decision
Conflict

- *In a common dilemma, group members take more than their fair share. In a public goods dilemma, they fail to give as much as they should* (Komorita & Parks, 1994).
- *Free riding can spark group conflict*. When group members in a college class described the sources of conflicts in their project groups, more than 35% of their comments targeted disputes over work load. People had much to say about the dedication of their comembers to the group's goals, for some did not put in as much time, effort, and resources as the others expected (Wall & Nolan, 1987).
- *Some groups respond to free riding by extracting promises of satisfactory contributions from members and by imposing costs on the free riders*—criticism, public humiliation, physical punishment, and fines are all ways to punish free riders. People are even willing to impose costs on themselves if it means that free riders can be punished in some way (Kiyonari & Barclay, 2008).
- *But some individual group members, to counter the inequity of working in a group with free riders, may reduce their own contributions* or withdraw from the group altogether (the "sucker effect"; see Komorita & Parks, 1994, for a review).

Public goods dilemma
A social dilemma where one may not contribute any resources in support of a public good (such as a park or a highway system) but also cannot be excluded for failing to contribute.

Group and Decision
Conflict

Fairness Dilemmas

Groups must often make decisions about how their resources will be apportioned among and made available to members. Because resources are limited, groups must develop a fair means of doling them out to members.

Fairness judgments are determined by two forms of social justice: ***procedural*** and ***distributive***. Procedural justice is concerned with the methods used to make decisions about the allocation of resources. Questions of procedural justice arise when groups do not use consistent, open, and agreed-upon methods for allocating their resources.

- Procedural justice asks, "Did we make the decision in a fair way?" (van den Bos, Wilke, & Lind, 1998).

Distributive justice, in contrast, concerns how rewards and costs are shared by (distributed across) the group members.

> ### *Distributive justice*
> ***Perceived fairness of the distribution of rights and resources.***

Group and Decision
Conflict

Distributive Justice

Distributive justice asks, "Did I get my fair share?" and the answer often depends on distributive norms:

Equity: Base members' outcomes on their inputs: An individual who has invested a good deal of time, energy, money, or other type of input in the group should receive more from the group than individuals who have contributed little.

Equality: All group members, irrespective of their inputs, should be given an equal share of the payoff. For example, even though a person contributes only 20% of the group's resources, he or she should receive as much as the person who contributes 40%.

Power: Those with more authority, status, or control over the group should receive more than those in lower-level positions ("to the victor go the spoils").

Need: Those with the greatest needs should be provided with the resources they need to meet those needs.

Responsibility: Those who have the most should share with those who have less.

Group and Decision
Conflict

Responsibility Dilemmas

When a group completes its work, members often dispute who deserves credit and who deserves blame. Just as individuals carry out extensive appraisals of their own successes and failures, so do group members devote significant cognitive resources to the analysis and comprehension of their collective endeavors. This appraisal, however, is complicated by the collaborative nature of group activities.

- ***Each group member, however, generally sees himself or herself as somewhat more worthy of credit than others in the group***. This tendency, termed egocentrism, can be easily documented just by asking people to indicate how responsible they feel they are for any group activity, where 0% means they are not responsible at all and 100% that they alone are responsible for what the group has achieved. These scores, when summed across group members, invariably exceed 100% (Ross & Sicoly, 1979; Savitsky, 2007).

- ***This bias occurs, in part, because people are far more aware of their own contributions than those of others***—they literally see themselves busily contributing to the group effort and overlook the work of others. Thus, egoce***ntrism can be reduced by asking group members to think about their collaborators' contributions; a process termed unpacking***. (Caruso et al., 2006; Savitsky et al., 2005).

- Group members' claims of ***responsibility can be either group-serving (sociocentric) or self-serving (egocentric)***. Because these types of responsibility claims protect and enhance the group, they lower levels of relationship conflict within the group (Peterson & Behfar, 2003).

- Frequently, however, ***self-serving members blame one another for the group's misfortunes or take the lion's share of the credit after a success*** (Forsyth, Zyzniewski, & Giammanco, 2002; Rantilla, 2000).

- These ***self-serving attributions result in conflict and a loss of cohesion*** (Leary & Forsyth, 1987).

Lesson: 14 – (3/4)
Title: Conflict

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Group and Decision
Conflict

Controlling: Conflict over Power

The differentiation of members in terms of status, prestige, and power is a ubiquitous feature of groups. As the group strives to coordinate its members' task-directed activities, some individuals will begin to assert more authority over the others. Those who occupy positions of authority have the right to issue orders to others, who are expected to follow those directives. Once individuals gain power over others, they tend to defend their sources of power through manipulation, the formation of coalitions, information control, and favoritism.

- These power processes occur with great regularity in groups, but they nonetheless cause waves of tension, conflict, and anger to ripple through the group (Coleman, 2000; Sell et al., 2004).
- Infighting, power struggles, and disputes are particularly common in business and corporate settings. Calvin Morrill (1995)

Group and Decision
Conflict

Working Task and Process conflict

As the group goes about its work on shared tasks and activities, members sometimes disagree with one another. This type of conflict is termed **task conflict or substantive conflict** because it stems from disagreements about issues that are relevant to the group's goals and outcomes. Groups and organizations use such conflicts to make plans, increase creativity, solve problems, decide issues, and resolve misunderstandings.

Although task conflicts help groups reach their goals, these disagreements can spill over into more personal conflicts. People who disagree with the group, even when their position is a reasonable one, often provoke considerable animosity within the group. The dissenter who refuses to accept others' views is liked less, assigned low-status tasks, and sometimes ostracized. As the group struggles to reach consensus on the substantive issues at hand, it responds negatively to those group members who slow down this process (Kruglanski & Webster, 1991).

> **Task conflict (or substantive conflict)**
> **Disagreements over issues that are relevant to the group's recognized goals and procedures.**

Group and Decision
Conflict

Working Task and Process conflict

Task conflict occurs when ideas, opinions, and interpretations clash. Process conflict, or procedural conflict, occurs when strategies, policies, and methods clash.

- ***Group members may find themselves uncertain about how to resolve a problem***, with some championing continued discussion and others favoring a vote. The leader of the group may make decisions and initiate actions without consulting the group; but the group may become irritated if denied an opportunity to participate in decision making (Smoke & Zajonc, 1962).
- ***During procedural conflicts, groups do not just disagree—they disagree on how to disagree***. Many groups minimize procedural ambiguities by adopting formal rules—by laws, constitutions, statements of policies, or mission and procedure statements—that specify goals, decisional processes, and responsibilities (Houle, 1989).
- ***Many decisionmaking groups also rely on specific rules to regulate their discussions***. The best-known set of rules was developed by Henry M. Robert, an engineer who was irritated by the conflict that characterized many of the meetings he attended.

Process conflict (or procedural conflict)
Disagreement over the methods the group should use to complete its basic tasks.

Group and Decision
Conflict

Liking and Disliking: Personal Conflicts

Many conflicts stemmed from disagreements and power struggles, as children argued about the rules of games, what is fair and what is not, and who gets to make decisions.

- Adults do not always play well together either. ***Personal conflicts, also called affective conflicts*** (Guetzkow & Gyr, 1954), ***personality conflicts*** (Wall & Nolan, 1987), ***emotional conflicts*** (Jehn, 1995), or ***relationship conflicts*** (De Dreu & Weingart, 2003), ***are rooted in individuals' antipathies for other group members***.
- ***Personal likes and dislikes do not always translate into group conflict***, but people often mention their disaffection for another group member when they air their complaints about their groups (Alicke et al., 1992).
- In many cases, peop***le explain their conflicts by blaming the other person's negative personal qualities, such as moodiness, compulsivity, incompetence, communication difficulties, and sloppiness*** (Kelley, 1979).
- ***Group members who treat others unfairly or impolitely engender more conflict than those who behave politely*** (Ohbuchi, Chiba, & Fukushima, 1996).
- ***People who have agreeable personalities are usually better liked by others, and they also exert a calming influence on their groups***. (Graziano, Jensen-Campbell, & Hair, 1996).

Group and Decision
Confrontation and Escalation

Although the parties to the conflict may hope to reach a solution to their dispute quickly, a host of psychological and interpersonal factors can frustrate their attempts to control the conflict.

<div align="center">Uncertainty --> Commitment</div>

- ***As conflicts escalate, group members' doubts and uncertainties are replaced by a firm commitment to their position*** (Staw & Ross, 1987).
- ***When people try to persuade others, they search out supporting arguments***. If this elaboration process yields further consistent information, they become even more committed to their initial position. People rationalize their choices once they have made them: They seek out information that supports their views, they reject information that conflicts with their stance, and they become entrenched in their original position (Ross & Ward, 1995).
- Moreover, ***people feel that once they commit to a position publicly, they must stick with it***. They may realize that they are wrong, but to save face, they continue to argue against their opponents (Wilson, 1992).
- Finally, ***if other group members argue too strongly, reactance may set in***. ***Reactance occurs, group members become even more committed to their position*** (Brehm & Brehm, 1981; Curhan, Neale, & Ross, 2004).

Group and Decision
Confrontation and Escalation

Perception --> Missperception

Individuals' reactions during conflict are shaped in fundamental ways by their perception of the situation and the people in that situation.

- ***Group members' inferences about each others' strengths, attitudes, values, and other personal qualities provide the basis for mutual understanding, but during conflict these perceptions tend to be so distorted*** that they inflame rather than smooth conflict (Thompson & Nadler, 2000).
- *Misattribution* Sometimes group members settle on explanations that sustain and enhance members' interpersonal relations (Fincham & Bradbury, 1992, 1993)
- *Misperceiving Motivations* When conflict occurs in a group, members begin to wonder about one another's motivations During conflict members often become distrustful of one another, wondering if their once cooperative motivations have been replaced by competitive ones. .(Maki, Thorngate, & McClintock, 1979).
- ***Competitors also tend to deliberately misrepresent their intentions***, sometimes claiming to be more cooperatively intentioned than they actually are (Steinel & De Dreu, 2004).

Group and Decision
Confrontation and Escalation

Soft Tactics --> Hard Tactics

- ***Threats, punishment, and bullying are all hard, contentious tactics*** because they are direct, nonrational, and unilateral. ***People use softer tactics at the outset of a conflict***, but as the conflict escalates, they shift to stronger and stronger tactics. (Carnevale & Pruitt, 1992).
- ***Usually groups try to solve the problem initially with statements and requests***. When those methods fail, they ***shift to demands and complaints***. When those methods fails, they ***try problem solving and appeals to a third party*** (the experimenter). In the ***most extreme cases, they use threats, abuse, and anger to try to influence the irritating confederate*** (Mikolic, Parker, & Pruitt, 1997).
- ***People who use harder tactics often overwhelm their antagonists***, and such methods ***intensify conflicts.*** (Morton Deutsch and Robert Krauss, 1960).
- To ***establishing a communication link between adversaries does not necessarily help them to solve their dispute*** (Krauss & Morsella, 2000).
- ***If one party can or does threaten the other party, the threatened party will fare best if he or she cannot respond with a counterthreat*** (Borah, 1963; Deutsch & Lewicki, 1970; Froman & Cohen, 1969; Gallo, 1966).
- ***Equally powerful opponents, however, learn to avoid the use of their power if the fear of retaliation is high*** (Lawler, Ford, & Blegen, 1988).

Group and Decision
Confrontation and Escalation
Reciprocity --> Upward Conflict Spiral

Conflict-ridden groups may seem normless, with hostility and dissatisfaction spinning out of control. Yet upward conflict spirals are in many cases sustained by the norm of reciprocity.

- ***If one group member criticizes the ideas, opinions, or characteristics of another, the victim of the attack will feel justified in counterattacking unless some situational factor legitimizes the hostility of the former*** (Eisenberger, et al., 2004).
- If interactants followed the norm of reciprocity exactly, a mild threat would elicit a mild threat in return, and an attack would lead to a counterattack. But ***interactants tend to follow the norm of rough reciprocity—they give too much (overmatching) or too little (undermatching) in return***. Reciprocity guided the player's actions, for the more often the confederate sent threats, the more often the participant sent threats; when the confederate's threats were large, the participant's threats were large; and confederates who exacted large fines triggered large fines from the participant.
- This reciprocity, however, was rough rather than exact. ***At low levels of conflict, the participants overmatched threats and punishments, and at high levels of conflict, they undermatched their threats.*** The overmatching that occurs initially may serve as a strong warning, whereas the undermatching at high levels of conflict may be used to send a conciliatory message (Youngs, 1986).

Group and Decision
Confrontation and Escalation
Few --> Many

Coalitions exist in most groups, but when conflict erupts, group members use coalitions to shift the balance of power in their favor.

- **The initial disagreement may involve only two group members, but as conflicts intensify, previously neutral members often join with one faction**. Similarly, even when members initially express many different views, with time, these **multiparty conflicts are reduced to two-party blocs through coalition formation.**
- **Coalitions can even link rivals who decide to join forces temporarily to achieve a specific outcome** (a mixed-motive situation). Although allies may wish to compete with one another, no single individual has enough power to succeed alone. **Hence, while the coalition exists, the competitive motive must be stifled** (Komorita & Parks, 1994).
- **Coalitions contribute to conflicts because they draw more members of the group into the fray**.
- **Coalitions are often viewed as contentious, heavyhanded influence tactics** because individuals in the coalition work not only to ensure their own outcomes but also to worsen the outcomes of non– coalition members.
- **Coalitions form with people and against other people**.
- **Those who are excluded from a coalition react with hostility to the coalition members and seek to regain power by forming their own coalitions**. Thus, coalitions must be constantly maintained through strategic bargaining and negotiation (Mannix, 1993; Murnighan, 1986; Stevenson, Pearce, & Porter, 1985).

Group and Decision
Confrontation and Escalation

Irritation --> Anger

Few people can remain calm and collected in a conflict. When disputes arise, tempers flare, and this increase in negative emotions exacerbates the initial conflict.

- ***Most people, when asked to talk about a time when they became angry, said that they usually lost their temper when arguing with people they knew rather than with strangers***. Many admitted that their anger increased the negativity of the conflict; 49% became verbally abusive when they were angry, and 10% said they became physically aggressive (Averill, 1983).
- Participants in another study reported ***physically attacking someone or something, losing emotional control, or imagining violence against someone else when they were angry*** (Shaver et al., 1987).
- ***Even when group members began by discussing their points calmly and dispassionately, as they became locked into their positions, emotional expression begins to replace logical discussion*** (De Dreu et al., 2007).
- Unfortunately, ***all manner of negative behaviors***, including the rejection of concessions, the tendering of unworkable initial offers, and the use of contentious influence strategies, ***increase as members' affect becomes more negative*** (Pillutla & Murnighan, 1996; Van Kleef, De Dreu, & Manstead, 2004).
- ***Anger is also a contagious emotion in groups*** (Kelly, 2001). Group members, when negotiating with someone who has become angry, tend to become angry themselves (Van Kleef et al., 2004).

Lesson: 14 – (4/4)
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Group and Decision
Conflict Resolution

Committment --> Negotiation

Just as conflicts escalate when group members become firmly committed to a position and will not budge, conflicts de-escalate when group members are willing to negotiate with others to reach a solution that benefits all parties.

- Negotiation sometimes amounts to little more than simple bargaining or mutual compromise. In such distributive negotiations, both parties retain their competitive orientation and take turns making small concessions until some equally dissatisfying middle ground is reached (Lewicki, Saunders, & Barry, 2006).
- Integrative negotiation, in contrast, is a collaborative conflict resolution method (Rubin, 1994). Such negotiators are principled rather than competitive, to use the terminology of the Harvard Negotiation Project.

Soft bargainers see negotiation as too close to competition, so they choose a gentle style of negotiation. They make offers that are not in their best interests, they yield to others' demands, they avoid any confrontation, and they maintain good relations with fellow negotiators.

Hard bargainers, in contrast, use tough, competitive tactics during negotiations. They begin by taking an extreme position on the issue, and then they make small concessions only grudgingly. The hard bargainer uses contentious strategies of influence (Fisher, 1983).

Principled negotiators, meanwhile, seek integrative solutions by sidestepping commitment to specific positions. Instead of risking entrapment, principled negotiators focus on the problem rather than the intentions, motives, and needs of the people involved.

Group and Decision
Conflict Resolution

T A B L E 13.2 **Comparisons between the Three Approaches to Negotiation**

Element	Soft Negotiation	Hard Negotiation	Principled Negotiation
Perception of others	Friends	Adversaries	Problem solvers
Goals	Agreement	Victory	A wise outcome reached efficiently and amicably
Concessions	Make concessions to cultivate the relationship	Demand concessions as a condition of the relationship	Separate the people from the problem
People vs. problems	Be soft on the people and the problem	Be hard on the problem and the people	Be soft on the people, hard on the problem
Trust	Trust others	Distrust others	Proceed independently of trust
Positions	Change your position easily	Dig into your position	Focus on interests, not positions
Negotiation	Make offers	Make threats	Explore interests
Bottom line	Disclose your bottom line	Mislead as to your bottom line	Avoid having a bottom line
Losses and gains	Accept one-sided losses to reach agreement	Demand one-sided gains as a price of agreement	Invent options for mutual gains
Search	Search for a single answer —the one they will accept	Search for a single answer —the one you will accept	Develop multiple options to choose from; decide later
Criteria	Insist on agreement	Insist on your position	Insist on using objective criteria
Contest of will	Avoid a contest of wills	Win the contest of wills	Reach a result based on standards, independent of will
Pressure	Yield to pressure	Apply pressure	Reason and be open to reason; yield to principle, not pressure

SOURCE: Adapted from Fisher & Ury, 1981.

Group and Decision

Conflict Resolution
Missperception --> Understanding

Many conflicts are based on misperceptions. Group members often assume that others are competing with them, when in fact those other people only wish to cooperate.

- *Members do not trust other people because they are convinced that others' motives are selfish ones*. Group members assume that they have incompatible goals when they do not (Simpson, 2007).
- *Group members must undo these perceptual misunderstandings by actively communicating information* about their motives and goals through discussion (Thompson, 1991).
- Other studies have suggested that *conflict declines when group members communicate their intentions in specific terms, make explicit references to trust, cooperation, and fairness, and build a shared ingroup identity* (Harinck, 2004; Weingart & Olekalns, 2004).
- *Communication is detrimental if the initial messages are inconsistent, hostile, and contentious* (McClintock, Stech, & Keil, 1983).
- *Communication can be beneficial, however, if interactants use it to create cooperative norms, if it increases trust among participants, and if it generates increased cohesion and unity in the group* (Messick & Brewer, 1983).

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Conflict Resolution
Hard Tactics --> Cooperative Tactics

- Group members cope with conflict in different ways. Some ignore the problem. Others discuss the problem, sometimes dispassionately and rationally, sometimes angrily and loudly. Still others to push their solution onto others, no matter what the others may want. Some actually resort to physical violence (Sternberg & Dobson, 1987).
- Some of these tactics escalate conflicts, but others are reliably associated with reduced hostility.

Dual Concerns As with social values orientations, variations in methods of dealing with conflict can be organized in terms of two essential themes: *concern for self* and *concern for the other* person.
According to the dual concern model of conflict resolution, some strategies aim to maximize one's own outcomes; others—such as overlooking a problem until it subsides—de-emphasize proself goals.

- Some conflict resolution strategies are also more other-focused. Yielding, for example, is prosocial, whereas contending and forcing are less prosocial (Pruitt, 1983; Sheppard, 1983; Thomas, 1992; van de Vliert & Janssen, 2001).

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Conflict Resolution

Hard Tactics --> Cooperative Tactics

Avoiding: Inaction is a passive means of dealing with disputes. Those who avoid conflicts adopt a "wait and see" attitude, hoping that problems will solve themselves. Avoiders often tolerate conflicts, allowing them to simmer without doing anything to minimize them. Rather than openly discussing disagreements, people who rely on avoidance change the subject, skip meetings, or even leave the group altogether (Bayazit & Mannix, 2003). Sometimes they simply agree to disagree (a modus vivendi).

Yielding: Accommodation is a passive but prosocial approach to conflict. People solve both large and small conflicts by giving in to the demands of others. Sometimes, they yield because they realize that their position is in error, so they agree with the viewpoint adopted by others. In other cases, however, they may withdraw their demands without really being convinced that the other side is correct, but— for the sake of group unity or in the interest of time—they withdraw all complaints. Thus, yielding can reflect either genuine conversion or superficial compliance.

Fighting: Contending is an active, proself means of dealing with conflict that involves forcing others to accept one's view. Those who use this strategy tend to see conflict as a win–lose situation and so use competitive, powerful tactics to intimidate others. Fighting (forcing, dominating, or contending) can take many forms, including authoritative mandate, challenges, arguing, insults, accusations, complaining, vengeance, and even physical violence (Morrill, 1995).

Cooperating: Cooperation is an active, prosocial, and proself approach to conflict resolution. Cooperating people identify the issues underlying the dispute and then work together to identify a solution that is satisfying to both sides

Group and Decision
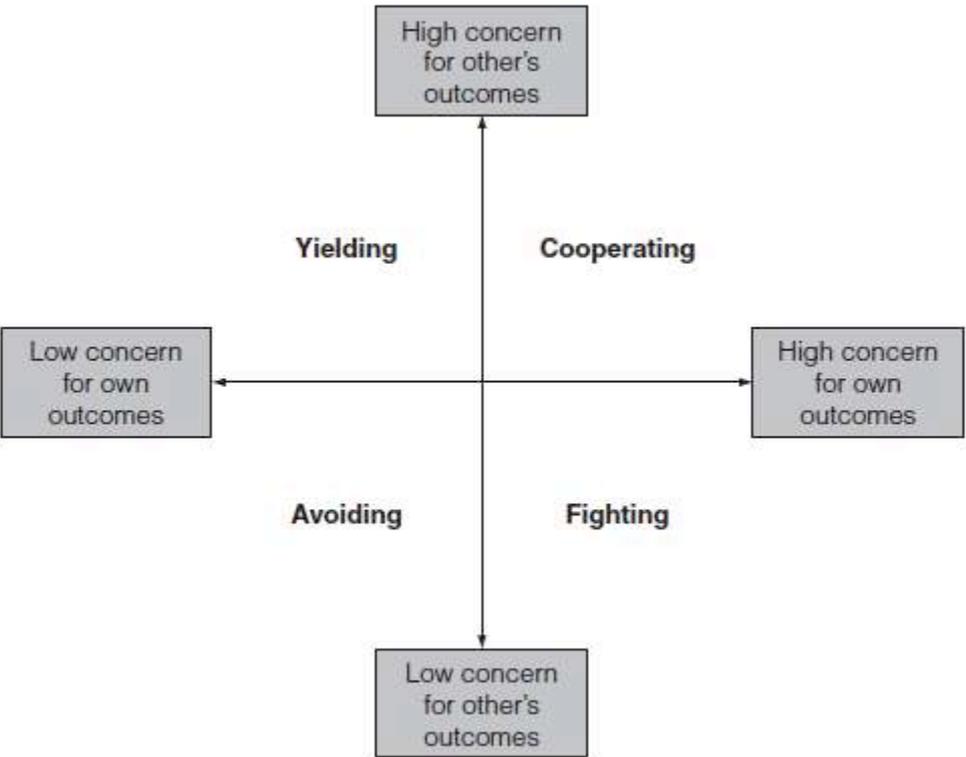## *Conflict Resolution*

Hard Tactics --> Cooperative Tactics

FIGURE 13.5 The dual concern model of conflict resolution. Avoiding, yielding, cooperating, and fighting, as means of dealing with conflict, differ in the degree to which they are based on concern for oneself and concern for the other person.

Group and Decision
Conflict Resolution

Cooperation and Conflict

When conflict erupts, group members can use any or all of the basic modes of conflict resolution, but most conflict-management experts recommend cooperation above all others: "work things out," "put your cards on the table," and "air out differences," they suggest.

- ***Avoiding and fighting are generally considered to be negative methods, for they tend to intensify conflicts*** (Sternberg & Dobson, 1987) and they are viewed as more disagreeable (Jarboe & Witteman, 1996; van de Vliert & Euwema, 1994).
- ***The more positive, prosocial methods, yielding and cooperation, mitigate conflict and are viewed as more agreeable.*** They are more likely to involve more of the members in the solution, and hence they tend to increase unity.
- ***Groups may respond well to cooperation when it is used to deal with task conflicts, but what if the problems stem from personal conflicts***—differences in personality, values, lifestyles, likes, and dislikes? Carsten De Dreu and his colleagues suggests that, in such cases, collaborative approaches may aggravate the group conflict more than they mollify it (e.g., De Dreu, 1997; De Dreu & Van Vianne, 2001; De Dreu &Weingart, 2003).
- ***Apparently, the consistent use of collaboration to deal with intractable differences or petty disagreements distracted the groups from the achievement of their task-related goals*** (De Dreu & Van Vianne, 2001)

Group and Decision
Conflict Resolution

Upward → Downward Conflict Spirals

- Consistent cooperation among people over a long period generally increases mutual trust. But when group members continually compete with each other, mutual trust becomes much more elusive (Haas & Deseran, 1981).
- When people cannot trust one another, they compete simply to defend their own best interests (Lindskold, 1978).

How can the upward spiral of competition and distrust, once initiated, be reversed?

- Robert Axelrod (1984) explored this question by comparing a number of strategies in simulated competitions. The most effective competition reverser to emerge was a strategy called tit for tat (TFT)

Tit for tat (TFT)
A bargaining strategy that begins with cooperation, but then imitates the other person's choice so that cooperation is met with cooperation and competition with competition.

Group and Decision
Conflict Resolution

Many → Few

- Conflicts intensify when others take sides, but they shrink when third-party mediators help group members reach a mutually agreeable solution to their dispute (Kressel, 2000).

Although uninvolved group members may wish to stand back and let the disputants "battle it out," impasses, unflagging conflict escalation, or the combatants' entreaties may cause other group members or outside parties to help by:

Creating opportunities for both sides to express themselves while controlling contentiousness

Improving communication between the disputants by summarizing points, asking for clarification, and so on

Helping disputants save face by framing the acceptance of concessions in positive ways and by taking the blame for these concessions

Formulating and offering proposals for alternative solutions that both parties find acceptable

Manipulating aspects of the meeting, including its location, seating, formality of communication, time constraints, attendees, and agenda

Guiding the disputants through a process of integrative problem solving

Group and Decision
Conflict Resolution

Many → Few

- However, ***if the disputants want to resolve the conflict on their own terms, third-party interventions are considered an unwanted intrusion*** (Carnevale, 1986a, 1986b; Pruitt & Rubin, 1986; Raiffa, 1983; Rubin, 1980, 1986).
- ***Go-betweens, facilitators, diplomats, advisers, judges, and other kinds of mediators vary considerably in terms of their power to control others' outcomes*** (LaTour, 1978; LaTour et al., 1976).
- ***Satisfaction with a mediator depends on how well the intermediary fulfills these functions and also on the intensity of the conflict***. Mediational techniques such as arbitration are effective when the conflict is subdued, but they may not work when conflict intensity is high. Overall, most people prefer arbitration, followed by moot, mediation, and inquisitorial procedures (LaTour et al., 1976; Ross, Brantmeier, & Ciriacks, 2002; Ross & Conlon, 2000).

> ### *Mediator*
> *One who intervenes between two persons who are experiencing conflict, with a view to reconciling them.*