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THE ROLE OF COMMUNICATION IN ORGANIZATIONAL
CONFLICT MANAGEMENT

by

Peter J. Campbell, Jr.

An Abstract

of a thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree of Master of Science
in the School of Communications at
Ithaca College

May 1986

Thesis Advisor: Dr. Sandra Fish

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Organizational conflict is a factor affecting all organizations. This study is designed to present an overview of organizational conflict and its causes, conflict management techniques, and communication skills necessary for conflict management.

The study begins with the presentation of the definitions of the major terms used throughout the study: conflict, conflict management, organization, and communication. Following these definitions is a discussion of the psychodynamic, field, phase and social exchange theories of conflict. Each theory is discussed in its own right and with respect to its implications for organizational conflict and its management.

In addition to a review of theories, the study includes an analysis of the various causes of conflict, focusing on aggression, climate, communication and perception. Other factors affecting these such as interdependence, power and trust are also discussed.

The study next shifts to an analysis of what can be done to respond to conflict. To this end, various approaches to conflict including those of Blake and Mouton, Thomas and Pondy, and Robbins are examined.

Communication is the most essential element in conflict management, and the final chapter is a discussion of the communication skills necessary for effective conflict management. The primary conclusion drawn is that one can learn to recognize causes of conflict as well as conflict management and communication skills and that conflict management training should become an essential aspect of organizational training programs.

THE ROLE OF COMMUNICATION IN ORGANIZATIONAL
CONFLICT MANAGEMENT

A Thesis Presented to the Faculty
of the School of Communications
Ithaca College

In Partial Fulfillment of the
Requirements for the Degree
Master of Science

by
Peter J. Campbell, Jr.
May 1986

Ithaca College
School of Communications
Ithaca, New York

CERTIFICATE OF APPROVAL

MASTER OF SCIENCE THESIS

This is to certify that the Thesis of

Peter J. Campbell, Jr.

submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the degree of Master of Science in the School of
Communications at Ithaca College has been approved.

Thesis Advisor:

C

Candidate:

Chairman, Graduate
Program in Communications:

Dean of Graduate Studies:

Date:

May 16, 1986

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INTRODUCTION

"Conflict ... is a theme that has occupied the thinking of man more than any other, save only God and love" (Rapoport, 1960, p. 11). This statement is difficult to refute in light of both history and current events. Nations go to war, unions go on strike, and people take one another to court, all as a result of conflict. Not only is conflict evident in action around us, but it is prevalent in research literature as well. Numerous publications regularly devote space to articles dealing with the study of conflict; in fact, conflict is so widespread that at least one periodical, The Journal of Conflict Resolution, is devoted solely to its study. These efforts to study and analyze conflict are necessarily not simply a means leading to an understanding of conflict and its causes, nature, and ramifications, but also as a means of using this understanding to bring about efforts to reduce conflict to the lowest possible level where feasible.

The scope of conflict is such that one would be hard pressed to develop a coherent approach to its study that is all inclusive. While it is true that there are similarities between various types of conflict, interpersonal and international, for example, it is also true that attempting to deal with various levels simultaneously is often quite befuddling. For the sake of clarity and convenience it is useful to single out one level of conflict and work with it. This thesis is constructed in such a manner, focusing on organizational conflict.

Organizational conflict can exist on several levels, the two most readily apparent being interorganizational and intraorganizational. Conflict between organizations, such as between a manufacturing firm and the trucking firm that carries the manufactured product, is interorganizational conflict. Intraorganizational conflict is conflict between various units within the same organization, such as conflict between the production and marketing departments of a corporation. This study is primarily concerned with the causes, nature, and ramifications of intraorganizational conflict, and the methods of conflict management that may be used when it arises. While intraorganizational conflict is the primary topic of this thesis, other areas of conflict, such as interpersonal, will be discussed as they become relevant to the study of the main topic.

Perhaps the key question in a study of this nature should be what are the effects of conflict that make it undesirable, and is it actually always undesirable? It is simple to say that conflict should be eliminated, but is that always true, and if it is, what happens when it is not eliminated? It is from this point that a study of conflict management should begin, because by exposing the effects of conflict one can see the rationale behind the different approaches to conflict management. Although the effects are multitudinous, the intent here is to offer a few examples that are common in organizational conflicts.

One effect of conflict is the creation of an unhealthy or non-productive climate. Folger and Poole state that "[c]limate represents the prevailing temper, attitudes and outlook of the

group" (1984, p. 81). Conflict can generate a climate characterized by anxiety, animosity, tension, and a lack of trust. In this type of climate it is difficult for individuals to contribute to the goals of the organization because from a personal standpoint each person will support one party in the conflict over the others. The climate created by the conflict can also foster other effects, such as diminished feelings of self-worth, lasting scars in the form of interpersonal and latent conflict, escalation of the conflict, and prevention of goal achievement by the organization as a whole.

A second effect of conflict, as suggested above, is prevention of goal achievement by the organization. Every organization has goals, be it to produce a certain number of refrigerators each month or to provide a service. In conflict situations, the ability of the organization to achieve these goals is diminished, or, in extreme cases, eliminated. In limited conflicts this prevention of goal achievement can mean merely a reduction in the ability of the organization to achieve goals. In more severe conflicts goal achievement can be prevented entirely. Evidence of both types is particularly apparent in industry where unions order production slowdowns or strikes. While each of these are also tools in the conflict resolution process, they are still direct effects of the conflict itself. Goal prevention is perhaps the most significant negative effect of conflict. Conflict can also have positive effects, such as creativity. The positive effects will also be dealt with in this study.

When a conflict is not managed early and effectively, the possibility of escalation becomes very real. Escalation can be hazardous because it is generally more difficult to manage a large conflict than it is to manage a smaller one, and as can be expected, the greater the conflict, the greater and more long-lasting the effects.

These few examples clarify the negative aspects of conflict and highlight the need for successful conflict management techniques. While there are different approaches to conflict management, one element is central to all of them, and that element is communication. In order to manage conflict, some effective form of communication must take place. The purpose of this study is to conduct a comprehensive review of organizational conflict and conflict management theory and outline the communication techniques which facilitate conflict management.

In presenting this study the following format will be used: Chapter One will consist of the definition of the terms to be used throughout the study; Chapter Two will deal with theories of conflict; Chapter Three will be a discussion of elements involved in specific situations; Chapter Four will be a presentation of theories and factors related to conflict resolution; and Chapter Five will be a discussion of specific communication skills found in conflict and its management. After the discussions in the five chapters, a conclusion will be offered that ties together the study and places it in a communication perspective.

CHAPTER ONE: DEFINITION OF TERMS

One might think that defining conflict would be one of the simpler aspects of a study of this nature, but such is not the case. The various definitions of conflict have similarities and differences that make it necessary, for the sake of this study, to articulate one definition that will be used throughout.

Prior to establishing this definition, it will be helpful to review some of the definitions found in conflict literature. This review serves the dual purpose of demonstrating the differences in thought between scholars and presenting support for a definition that is to serve as a basis for this paper.

As Deutsch points out, conflict is often confused with competition (1979, p. 28), and although there are similarities, there is a basic difference. Competition always requires that there be a winner and a loser, whereas conflict does not. Deutsch writes that "conflict can occur in a cooperative or competitive context and the processes of conflict resolution that are likely to be displayed will be strongly influenced by the context within which conflict occurs" (1979, p. 28). Deutsch goes on to state that "conflict exists whenever incompatible activities occur" (1979, p. 27). These "incompatible activities" do not have to result from a competitive situation; in fact, in an organization it is to the benefit of those involved to view the conflict in a cooperative light whenever possible to facilitate resolution.

Robbins' view of conflict introduces a new element when he states that conflict "refers to all kinds of opposition or

antagonistic interaction" (1974, p. 23). Antagonism implies a hostility between the participants in the conflict that develops on an emotional level. This emotional variable can prove to be a significant impediment to conflict resolution. Thus Robbins' definition can be seen as an expansion of Deutsch's, which refers only to process.

Other definitions contain additional elements. Folger and Poole write that "conflict is the interaction of interdependent people who perceive incompatible goals and interference from each other in achieving these goals" (1984, p. 4). This definition adds to the previous formulations by inclusion of "interdependent people." The concept of incompatibility remains, but now the parties to the conflict are clearly connected with one another.

Frost and Wilmot offer an almost identical definition. They state that "conflict is an expressed struggle between at least two interdependent parties, who perceive incompatible goals, scarce rewards, and interference from the other party in achieving their goals" (1978, p. 9). They then add what is perhaps the most essential fact in conflict management: "They [the parties in the conflict] are in a position of opposition with cooperation" (1978, p. 9). This concept of "opposition with cooperation" is the crux of conflict and conflict management because it recognizes the nature of the opposed goals and the dependence of the parties on one another that makes the resolution of the conflict desirable at the minimum and, in all likelihood, essential.

The definition of conflict as used throughout this study, then, is a combination of those of Folger and Poole and Frost and Wilmot: conflict is the interaction of at least two interdependent parties who perceive incompatible goals and interference from each other in achieving these goals. This definition recognizes that more than two parties may be involved in the conflict, and the use of the word parties instead of people indicates that conflicts can be between groups as well as individuals. In addition, it recognizes the importance of interaction between the parties. Conflict requires interaction, and interaction is communication, hence conflict requires communication behavior between the parties.

The definition of conflict discussed above highlights the desirability of resolving the conflict because it raises the issue of interdependence. Because of their interdependence, those involved in conflict will want to resolve it in order to continue their normal operations. How it is to be resolved is a problem that will be dealt with at a later point. At this point it is necessary to arrive at a definition of conflict resolution or conflict management that incorporates all aspects of the process. As in defining conflict, there is a difference of opinion among scholars in defining conflict resolution. These differences are significant because they reflect the sometimes profound differences of approach to conflict resolution.

Appelbaum and associates have written that "[c]onflict resolution refers to the process of solving group conflict-- whether by eliminating the conflict, reducing it to the members'

satisfaction, or managing it to allow for further group activity" (1974, p. 181). This definition will be used in this discussion for two reasons: first, because it illuminates the fact that a conflict cannot always be totally eliminated; and second, because it allows the use of the terms conflict management and conflict resolution in an interchangeable manner by giving them the same meaning and context. In reality this is not always the case. Conflict resolution is sometimes defined as simply the elimination of conflict, which is not always possible, nor is it always healthy. This statement is based on the assumption that conflict is not always negative and destructive, but is sometimes positive and constructive. Because conflict can be either positive or negative, it is necessary to explain each.

Negative, destructive conflict is that which occurs in a competitive or win-lose situation. It originates in a hostile, repressive, uncooperative climate and is marked by a high level of aggression. It is this type of conflict that needs to be eliminated if possible, or at least reduced to a manageable level. This type of approach to conflict leaves participants with a bitter feeling which can breed future conflicts.

Positive, constructive conflict, on the other hand, is identified by cooperative behavior leading to an outcome in which all parties achieve their goals. This type of conflict is found in an open, cooperative climate and is healthy for both the individuals and the organization.

Deutsch stresses the positive aspects of conflict which encourage conflict management and promote particular kinds of

conflict. He says that conflict prevents stagnation, stimulates interest and curiosity, provides a medium for voicing and solving problems, and is the root of personal change (1979, p. 26).

(Whether a conflict is positive or negative is a major factor in determining how it is to be treated.)

Finally, because this study deals with organizational conflict management, it is necessary to define the term organization, and then to explain the different types of conflicts which exist in organizations. Goldhaber defines the organization as ("a living open system connected by the flow of information between and among people who occupy various roles and positions") (1983, p. 14). It is a system that includes both people involved in achieving goals and the mechanisms necessary for achieving them.

Finally, because this study deals with the role of communication in conflict, one must understand what communication is. ~~Communication~~ is (a process involving both verbal and nonverbal modes in which the interaction between individuals or groups brings about an exchange of information and the creation of meaning.) Creation of meaning entails the generation of a perception within an individual brought about by a communication. For example, when an individual who is upset slams a fist on the table, s/he creates meaning for that action. Individuals present perceive anger or frustration, thus the feeling is communicated from one person to the next. Although one attempts to create a meaning, there is no guarantee that that will be the meaning perceived by another.

Although the main thrust of this study is managing intra-organizational conflict, it is important to understand the role of other types of conflict, particularly interpersonal conflict. (Intraorganizational conflict can be initiated or escalated by interpersonal conflict). Applbaum, et al. write that [i]nterpersonal conflict occurs when there is an open difference over mutually exclusive alternatives by individuals who perceive themselves to be in disagreement" (1974, p. 173). (This type of conflict is significant because it can lead to the presence of personality clashes. A personality clash is one between individuals based solely on their feelings toward one another.) It is a purely emotional reaction of one person toward another which may or may not have rational support. Intraorganizational conflicts in which means or goals are the root issues are difficult enough to resolve without introducing personality clashes. Nonetheless, situations which breed conflict enmesh personalities which frequently become the focus in conflict interaction.

(Personality clashes can be more harmful to an organization's efforts to achieve its goals than are conflicts over specific goals between groups within the organization) Hill, 1979, p. 207). This fact amplifies the need to minimize the influence of personality differences in the resolution process. Organizational conflicts involve issues; and when the individuals attempting to resolve the conflict concentrate on personalities, the issues get ignored. In addition, concentration on personalities leads to escalation, which is the opposite of resolution. For these reasons it is necessary to strive to keep the conflict on an

issue-oriented level, which means dealing with the issues, not personalities to as great an extent as possible. In this study intraorganizational conflict refers to any conflict between groups within an organization, including all the variables, such as personality clashes, which make up the conflict.

Throughout the course of this study conflict and conflict management will be brought into a communication perspective. The definition of both terms demonstrates the need for communication: conflict will not originate without it, nor will it be reduced, managed, or eliminated until some communication takes place. Beginning with Chapter Two the types of communication involved in each conflict activity will be discussed.

The methodology involved in this study consists of a review of conflict management literature with critique and evaluation. Conclusions are based on the evaluation of the literature. In selecting the literature to be used in this study the focus was on materials specifically related to conflicts in a corporate setting, and, to a lesser degree on interpersonal conflict. Communication literature was selected with an emphasis on communication processes and skills involved in conflict and conflict management.

CHAPTER TWO: THEORIES OF CONFLICT

Conflict theories abound which attempt to explain the nature and origins of conflict. A summary of the major theories is necessary to understand what conflict management is designed to cope with. The theories to be discussed are psychodynamic, field, phase, and exchange theories.

As stated in Chapter One, because conflicts in organizations involve people, it is necessary to have some understanding of what causes individuals to engage in conflict. The psychodynamic theory attempts to do just this, using as its premise Freud's theory of the id, ego, and superego.

The id is the "primary source of psychic energy and the seat of the instincts" (Hall, 1954, p. 20). The id contains the passions, and functions on a pleasure principle; a release of psychic energy reduces internal tension, thus providing pleasure. The problem created by this is that the id does not differentiate between ways of releasing energy; to the id releases are not good or bad, but are simply ways of reducing unpleasant tensions in favor of pleasure (Freud, 1960).

Offsetting this action of the id is the superego, which "answers to everything that is expected of the higher nature of man" (Freud, 1960, p. 27). The superego contains the ego ideal which provides a behavior model and tells us who we want to be, and the conscience or "negative" ideal which tells us what is to be avoided. Freud said that the superego arises from the values instilled in children by their parents who teach them what is right and wrong. Religion, morality, and social sense

all contribute to the development of the superego (Freud, 1960, p. 27).

Somewhere in between the id and the superego lies the ego. "The ego represents what may be called reason and common sense" (Freud, 1960, p. 13). It is governed by the reality principle and mediates between the id and the superego. The ego attempts to channel the desires of the id to release tension in a positive manner. It knows what is positive and negative from the influence of the superego. The ego, then, tries to find a realistic activity that satisfies the id's desire for a tension release without violating the superego's code of ethics (Freud, 1960).

In psychodynamic conflict theory the id, ego, and superego come into play as the result of both internal and external factors. In a conflict, the reaction of the id is a desire for any action aimed at removing the tension; the superego governing one's moral outlook attempts to channel the action away from negativity; and the ego attempts to balance the two and select appropriate activities. This leads to suppression of the tension by directing one's energy away from the tension towards a substitute activity. Folger and Poole write that suppression "leads to less anxiety, guilt or pain than attempting to fulfill a destructive or impossible need" (1984, p. 13).

The problem with suppression is that it is frustrating, creating a cycle. Frustration breeds aggression, which in turn breeds greater frustration if it is suppressed. If one is unable to find a substitute activity, one runs the risk of some form of negative action being displayed, one that is perhaps more violent

than would have initially taken place (Deutsch and Krauss, 1965, p. 11). Such action can prove self-destructive. Take the simple example of a conflict between a superior and a subordinate. After suppressing the conflict for a time, the subordinate reacts by intentionally submitting late a report that the superior is responsible for submitting to his or her immediate superior. While the subordinate may receive some measure of pleasure from seeing a superior reprimanded, in all likelihood this reprimand will make its way down to the subordinate, thus defeating the purpose of the initial action and possibly escalating the conflict as well. It may also result in more serious repercussions to the subordinate, such as punishment or dismissal. Suppression is thus a two-edged sword which can either help or harm the parties involved. It helps when one is able to find a substitute activity and it harms when one is unable to find a substitute activity.

A second strategy of psychodynamic theory is displacement, which means directing the blame in a conflict situation toward someone or something not directly involved, particularly outsiders (Coser, 1956, pp. 43-48). Displacement means finding scapegoats; individuals outside the immediate group are particularly well-suited for this because it is easier to get other parties to accept the outside scapegoats than members of the involved groups. Displacement, like suppression, is an avoidance technique designed to make the conflict go away rather than be dealt with in a constructive manner.

The final aspect of psychodynamic theory to be reviewed is the place of anxiety in conflicts. "Anxiety is defined as an internal

state of tension that arises when someone perceives impending danger. It arises when people believe their drives or needs will be thwarted" (Folger and Poole, 1984, p. 14). The result of anxiety tends to be rigidity and inflexibility. Such inflexibility causes a conflict to go on unresolved, perhaps leading to escalation. Anxiety is thus an obstacle to conflict management.

One drawback of psychodynamic theory is that it fails to offer solutions but simply states possible areas of difficulty. Furthermore, as Folger and Poole note, psychodynamic theory is not designed to deal with social interaction, but with "internal psychological processes" (1984, p. 16). It fails to explain how psychic energy will be channeled or what substitute activities or persons will be chosen in suppression or displacement (Folger and Poole, 1984, p. 16).

The importance of psychodynamic theory lies in its identification of the aspects of individuals' actions. Knowing that suppression, displacement and anxiety are human characteristics acquaints the conflict manager with obstacles to be faced on the interpersonal level. In organizational conflicts that are singularly or primarily tied to interpersonal conflict this knowledge can prove invaluable.

This theory is important in organizational conflict because at a basic level there is an interpersonal dimension to every conflict and its resolution. In addition, it demonstrates communication behaviors. Suppression is a behavior that indicates a desire to avoid conflict. When a substitute activity is found one is able to vent frustration or anger, satisfying the desire to

release the tension without the expense of confrontation. When a substitute activity fails to materialize, suppression causes one to internalize the emotions present in the conflict situation, thus delaying their impact. It is marked by actions designed to indicate to others that the individual does not want to deal with the issues involved. Displacement is a similar device. By focusing blame for a situation on scapegoats, one publicly acknowledges a conflict but avoids direct confrontation. In both instances communication behaviors confirm both conflict and the individuals' desire to avoid it.

Anxiety produces mixed communication behaviors ranging from defensive ones such as excuses, to attacking ones such as accusations. The communication behaviors indicate the attitude of the individuals involved in conflict and the approach to the situation that they choose to follow.

Field theory, developed by Lewin, builds on psychodynamic theory. It deals with the concept of a life-space that is part of every individual. The life-space "includes both the person and his psychological environment" (Lewin, 1951, p. 240) and is determined psychologically. Lewin writes that "[o]bjectivity in psychology demands representing the field as it exists for the individual at that particular time" (Lewin, 1951, p. 240). The two basic elements of the life-space are climate and interdependence. Because individuals are affected by climate and interdependence differently, the amount of influence these elements have differ from one person to the next.

In field theory, climate is seen as a "quality of the field 'as a whole.'" As such, it pervades all thought and action in

the situation; it gives a 'flavor'--for example, of warmth, safety, fear or distrust--to everything that happens" (Folger and Poole, 1984, p. 17). This climate is the source of conflict, or, more accurately, the elements of the climate, such as feelings of distrust, are the sources of conflict. Other elements of the climate, such as respect for individuals or trust, reduce conflict. How one perceives the climate determines whether or not conflict will result.

Within this climate, field theory states, is a measure of interdependence. Deutsch defined two types of interdependence: promotive, which is characterized by a positive correlation between the action of the participants, and contrient, which involves a negative correlation. In promotive interdependence, the parties realize that when one side gains, all sides gain, and when one side suffers losses, all sides suffer losses. In contrient interdependence, gains by one come at the expense of others (Deutsch, 1973, p. 20). Each of these types of interdependence is marked by particular behavioral characteristics.

Promotive interdependence is characterized by the parties' concentrating on mutual interests, trust, friendliness, and open, honest communication. In contrient interdependence, "people will focus on antagonistic interests and on constraining each other, exhibit suspicious and hostile attitudes, overemphasize differences, and communicate in a misleading and restrained manner" (Folger and Poole, 1984, p. 18). Furthermore, promotive interdependence promotes cooperative interaction while contrient promotes competition. As a result of the opposing characteristics

of the two types of interdependence, a climate that promotes one of these behaviors will tend to lock out the possibility of the other (Folger and Poole, 1984, p. 18).

An additional element of field theory is proposed by Janis and Mann: a vigilant attitude. Janis and Mann believe that when a climate is too cooperative, members suffer from "group-think" and thus lose the critical perspective necessary to prevent stagnation, hence their proposal for the vigilant attitude in which members trust and respect each other but maintain objectivity about each others' ideas. The vigilant approach entails a constant objective analysis of information and questioning of offered solutions in order to obtain a satisfactory solution. Janis and Mann write, "[e]specially for complex choices involving multiple objectives, we expect that a moderate to high degree of vigilant information processing is a necessary, albeit insufficient, condition for arriving at a decision that will prove satisfactory . . . in the long run" (1977, p. 12).

A vigilant attitude draws from the positive attributes of conflict cited in Chapter One. Like the promotive and contrient orientations, it stresses the interdependence of the members of the group which has been noted as a key element in conflict. A detailed discussion of the impact of interdependence in conflict will be provided at a later point.

While the field theory certainly aids in understanding the nature of conflict, it is not perfect. Deutsch's concepts of interdependence highlight it as the sole significant aspect of a conflict situation while underestimating other factors in the

relationship. In addition, these theories rely heavily upon perception (Folger and Poole, 1984, p. 19). Each individual perceives cooperation or competition and reacts accordingly. This can create dangerous circumstances for the group when each individual's perceptions differ greatly from those of the rest of the group. In a situation where perceptions are predominantly in accordance with one another it is less of a factor. The drawback is not the emphasis on perception, but the failure to suggest methods of responding to the differences of perception. The large role of perception in conflict will be discussed more extensively in the portion of this paper dealing with variables affecting conflict.

On the positive side, field theory is significant because it makes clear the "importance of interdependence, the role of climates in conflict, and the cyclical flow between climate and interaction" (Folger and Poole, 1984, p. 19). How people deal with one another is a factor in climate establishment and the climate in return affects how people deal with one another. Field theory also points out the importance of perception, both individual and group, in the conflict situation.

Field theory highlights the relationship between conflict and communication because it stresses the bond between climate and interaction. Climate is the result of the interaction that takes place in a group, and the interaction is in turn influenced by the climate. As stated earlier, all interaction is communication, thus the relationship between conflict and interaction can also be seen as being between climate and communication. When

individuals engage in supportive, open communication, the climate takes on that tenor and in turn promotes more supportive, open communication. As a result, the interaction between members of this group will consist of supportive actions, for example, helping another to complete a task in order to finish it early. This pattern holds true no matter what type of communication or climate is involved.

This relationship between climate and communication demonstrates that both, because of their influence on one another, are significant factors in conflict. Both have separate effects on conflict, its origin and resolution, but when viewed as a linked pair it becomes evident that an understanding of their relationship yields a greater understanding of their impact on conflict. It is necessary to recognize that the three are linked to fully appreciate how to approach them in conflict management.

The next theory to be discussed is phase theory. The basic premise behind phase theory is that "conflicts can be broken down into recognizable, sequential periods marked by different behaviors and sequences of behaviors" (Folger and Poole, 1984, p. 21). In effect, conflict moves through distinct phases marked by communication behaviors. In the phase theory proposed by Rummel, conflict goes through five phases: latent, initiation, balancing power, balance of power, and disruption (Rummel, 1976, pp. 267-283).

Each phase is characterized by different events and responses by the participants. The latent phase contains the potential for conflict because people have different views or outlooks on how

goals can and should be achieved. This phase exists almost continuously. The initiation phase is the result of a "triggering event" that causes action by the parties involved in the conflict. The triggering event causes the parties to pass from an acceptance of difference of opinion to action aimed at either resolving the differences or establishing one view as the only legitimate one. It is during the initiation phase that the conflict begins to exist in the open (Rummel, 1976, pp. 267-271).

The balancing power phase is the period during which the parties assess each other's capabilities, looking for the other party's strengths and weaknesses. Throughout this phase the parties search for an accommodation or settlement, confronting the issue all the while. If an accommodation is not reached, the conflict continues and other factors such as coercion come into play (Rummel, 1976, pp. 271-278). It is necessary to examine the strengths and weaknesses of each other's positions while simultaneously searching for a settlement in order to provide a settlement that satisfies each party.

During the balance of power phase, an accommodation is achieved. "Through balancing, each [party] has come to understand the other's stakes and determines the associated strength of will. Each now appreciates the other's credibility, and has measured the other's capability" (Rummel, 1976, p. 278). The parties acknowledge the settlement that has been reached, come to a full understanding of it, and accept it. This phase brings to an end the particular conflict, but in Rummel's theory there is another phase, the disruption phase. The disruption phase

exists when something occurs to return the situation to conflict as a result of upsetting the balance of power. The disruption phase precedes the latent phase by introducing the item that causes the differences of opinion to arise (Rummel, 1976, pp. 281-283).

Rummel's phase theory can be seen as a cyclical process in which a conflict arises and is resolved and is eventually replaced by another. It is also a step by step process in which one proceeds through a distinct series of phases. This step by step process is an element of all phase theories.

The phase theory of Ellis and Fisher has three phases: interpersonal, confrontation and substantive conflict. In the interpersonal conflict phase, conflict results from personal differences (Ellis and Fisher, 1975, p. 206). This phase is characterized by a low level of disagreement centered mainly on personal, not issue differences. According to Ellis and Fisher, this leads to the second phase, confrontation, which is characterized by a polarization of opinions, more expression of opinions, and attempts to determine support for specific solutions (Ellis and Fisher, 1975, p. 207). This is similar to Rummel's balancing power phase. From the confrontation the parties advance to substantive conflict, during which the parties' level of agreement increases as they attempt to achieve a final settlement.

The final phase theory to be discussed is Walton's, which can be viewed as a condensed version of the previous two. This theory consists of only two phases, the differentiation phase

and the integration phase. Both of these phases include the elements of more than one of the phases of Rummel or Ellis and Fisher.

According to Walton, during the differentiation phase latent conflicts arise and differences between members of the organization are clearly evident. In essence, the members recognize and verbalize their difference during this phase. The parties then proceed to the integration phase, during which they move toward a solution that Walton calls hopefully satisfying to all, but at least acceptable to all (Walton, 1969, pp. 105-107). To Walton, a satisfying outcome is one that goes beyond meeting the minimum desires of each party to a point where it pleases them.

In each of these theories it is clear that a conflict follows a series of steps beginning with the introduction of a circumstance that creates differences of opinion, through the verbalization of the differences to the search for a solution acceptable to all, culminating in the selection of the acceptable solution. It is important to note that in the early phases the conflict originates on a personal level brought about by individuals' perceptions. If conflict is to be managed successfully it is imperative for it to pass from this phase to the phase in which issues become the focal point. This issue-oriented conflict can be approached in a more rational manner than can personal conflicts. It is because issue conflicts arise from personal views that it is important for the organizational conflict manager to be aware of the interpersonal aspects of organizational conflict.

A final note on phase theory concerns what Folger and Poole call phase analysis. As they put it, phase analysis suggests that an understanding of conflict behaviors can only be gained if conflicts are looked at broadly with an eye towards the sequence of behaviors that occur over time (1984, p. 21). In order to resolve a conflict it is necessary to understand the phases and the actions during each. This does not preclude specific conflict management skills to be discussed later but rather it supplements them because one can discern which skills are most appropriate in each phase. Phase analysis provides a framework within which conflict management can take place.

Social exchange theory is based on the premise that people are interdependent and that their interaction involves rewards and costs (Homans, 1961, p. 35; Thibaut and Kelley, 1959). Complicating this is the fact that people act out of self-interest, meaning that in relationships with others one's primary objective is meeting one's own needs (Roloff, 1981, p. 87; Blau, 1964, p. 19).

In a relationship built on interdependence it is not possible to act purely out of self-interest if the relationship is to endure. Quite obviously, if the parties in a relationship decide that their self-interest is all important, the idea of interdependence falls by the wayside and the nature of the relationship alters dramatically. In order to maintain some balance between self-interest and dependence, individuals in conflict are expected to abide by the rule of fairness, which states that rewards should be proportionate to costs (Homans, 1961, p. 75).

By the rule of fairness it is understood that while self-interest motivates the participants' actions, they can expect no more in return than they put into the relationship. This is what is meant by costs and rewards. Rewards are benefits one receives and costs are incurred in attaining rewards.

The second assumption in exchange theory clears up the matter of rewards and costs. The assumption is that rewards and costs are the results of the exchange of resources of the participants (Roloff, 1981, p. 21). Rewards, then, are resources one receives as the result of a social exchange and costs are the resources one expends in the exchange. The total of rewards and costs is called the outcome of the exchange.

Resources can be of many natures such as economic, social or personal. In social exchange theory, resources tend to be intangible items such as love, respect, authority, approval, information, assistance and the like, rather than tangible items such as money (Folger and Poole, 1984, p. 24). As a result, resource exchange relies heavily on the nature of the interaction and the perception of the parties involved. It requires an understanding of the symbolic meaning of actions, such as compliment, and an understanding of what resources should be exchanged in return. This leads to what Folger and Poole call a corollary to the two assumptions in social exchange theory: "parties exchange resources in order to influence others to behave in ways that yield acceptable outcomes" (1984, p. 24).

In social exchange theory, conflict arises when the outcomes in the exchange are perceived by one party to be low with respect

to that party's costs and when, as a result, an effort made to raise the outcomes meets with resistance (Roloff, 1981; Homans, 1961). In other words, "[c]onflict is triggered when the individual comes to believe that the other is responsible for low outcomes or that the other stands in the way of improvements" (Folger and Poole, 1984, p. 24). Thus, the conflict results from the perception that the other party brings about the low outcomes and the resistance to changing the situation. In each of these theories perception plays an important role, one that will be dealt with in depth in the discussion of the causes of conflict.

Although the social exchange theory deals with interpersonal conflict, it can have an impact in organizational conflict on two levels. On the first level, the interpersonal conflict that arises can affect the organization when the individuals involved are in key positions. Key positions are those of leadership, whether formal or informal, that influence the activities of others in the organization. Conflicts between individuals in key positions can bring an organization to a slowdown or a halt. In addition, interpersonal conflict between superiors and subordinates as well as between subordinates themselves can lead to organizational conflict if it escalates. This can be particularly true when a group of subordinates becomes involved in a conflict situation with a superior, for example when assembly line workers are involved in a conflict with their shop steward.

On a second level, one can extrapolate the exchange theory from a personal level to an organizational level. Since

organizations have interdependent relationships and do exchange resources with other organizations, the fair play concept discussed earlier is equally applicable. Organizational conflict will arise, then, for the same reasons that interpersonal conflict arises and similar conflict management techniques will be utilized. This means that while organizational conflict can arise from interpersonal conflict, some organizational conflicts do not. For example, a conflict between Ford and the United Auto Workers can arise over wage and benefit issues. While interpersonal conflicts may take place during the resolution process, interpersonal conflict does not have to take place prior to organizational conflict.

Each of these theories deals with conflict on an organizational level in one manner or another. Both the phase and field theories clearly correspond to organizations. They are theories that explain conflict arising in an organizational context without necessarily growing from an interpersonal conflict. Psychodynamic and exchange theories explain conflict that can grow from an interpersonal level to the organizational or, through extrapolation, can be viewed as theories which contribute to understanding organizational conflict.

While it is possible to view a conflict in the light of a single theory, it is also possible to see elements of each theory at work in a given situation. For example, in any relationship in which the parties are interdependent, some form of exchange takes place, participants will look out for their own best interests, attitudes created by participants' perceptions will

influence their actions, anxiety will arise from uncertainty, and, when a conflict arises, one can see the step by step process involved in the initiation and escalation or resolution of that conflict situation.

Each of these theories has implications for communication in conflict. It is through communication; expressions of frustration, anger, disapproval, etc., that the existence and nature of conflict is made known. For one involved in conflict management, then, it is important to be able to read the behavior of people in order to understand what communication is taking place and to develop appropriate communication behavior with which to respond.

Because characteristics of these theories can be pulled out and applied in separate situations, it is important in conflict management for the parties involved to be aware of all of the theories and their characteristics. In order to be successful at conflict management it is helpful for the parties to be familiar with the many possible characteristics of a conflict situation and the ways in which they can be interconnected. In order to achieve this level of proficiency, the conflict manager must explain the theory to become familiar not only with the characteristics of conflict, but with the factors affecting it as well.

CHAPTER THREE: CAUSES AND CHARACTERISTICS OF CONFLICT

The causes of conflict are numerous and the nature of each conflict is influenced by its specific causes. While there can be no all-inclusive listing of these causes, several factors can be identified that lead to and characterize conflicts. These factors include aggression, climate, communication and perception. It is possible for any of these items to be the cause of a conflict singularly or in combination with others, which is frequently the case. In addition to being causes of conflict, these factors may also be addressed in resolving the conflict. They influence and are in turn influenced by other elements such as interdependence, power, trust and self-esteem throughout the course of the conflict.

Aggression is a cause of conflict because it manifests behavior that restricts cooperation, which is essential for goal achievement. Thomas and Pondy have stated that

acts are labelled as aggressive by individuals when three conditions are met: (a) the act involves constraint of one's behavioral alternatives or outcomes; (b) the act is perceived as intentionally detrimental to one's interests; (c) the act is considered anti-normative or illegitimate (unprovoked, unnecessary etc.) (1979, p. 57).

Aggressive behavior can create any type of conflict from interpersonal to international, and it serves to intensify conflict no matter what the cause. It is frequently a component in competitive conflicts.

Communication can be a cause of conflict for a variety of reasons. If there is a lack of communication which prevents

goal attainment, conflict results. If something is written or stated that prevents one from reading a goal, once again the result is conflict. If the members of an organization receive too little or too much information, conflict is likely to occur. Robbins lists four aspects of communication that lead to conflict; deviation from traditional channels, repression of information, transmission of too much information, and ambiguous or threatening information (1974, pp. 79-83).

Personnel normally involved in decision-making are by-passed when traditional channels are ignored, thus creating a communication gap. This gap usually becomes known by the by-passed individual when one of three events occurs: first, the by-passed person is told to take action on the communication and is forced to profess ignorance of it; the by-passed person learns of the communication inadvertently by overhearing discussion of it; or the individual is informed of the communication by a third party who does so as a personal favor. A natural reaction of the by-passed person may be anger, which in turn may lead to conflict when the issue is confronted. The individual who has been by-passed feels left out of the situation and fears that more serious consequences will follow.

The amount and quality of information also figure in the role of communication in conflict. Transmission of too much information can lead to confusion, fear and anger, all seeds of conflict. When too much information is provided a group is forced to wade through it in order to determine what is important; when information is withheld the group is forced to take action

without the requisite knowledge or search for the additional information. In either case substantial time is expended that is very unproductive, leading to frustration and resentment, and, once again, conflict.

Ambiguous information causes confusion and frustration because it is an example of quality deficient information. It is information that is unclear and insufficient for any productive purpose. It presents an additional obstacle in a conflict, as does too little or too much information, when it breeds rumors. Rumors are a constant threat in these situations because people are not given the quantity and quality of information necessary for making sound decisions. As Weinberg and Eich point out, rumors tend to spread quickly, lead to confrontation, and discredit normal channels of communication (1978, p. 30). Because rumors spread misinformation, it is necessary to squelch them as rapidly as possible. The most productive way of doing this is by presenting the accurate information. In this respect it is easy to understand Smith's statement that "[i]f the information given is sufficient quantitatively and qualitatively, effective and acceptable decisions can be made, and the required coordination can be achieved through the development of common programs and feed-back processes" (1973, p. 333).

Thomas and Pondy have found in their studies that managers consider communication failure to be the most important aspect of conflict. They write that "[a]lthough many conflicts are based upon substantive differences and conflict of interest,

communication failures remain an important (or exacerbating) factor in conflict" (1979, p. 52). This work by Thomas and Pondy substantiates Robbins' list of communication factors as sources of conflict and emphasizes the need for command of communication skills in conflict management. One who is well trained in communication skills can utilize them to help reach resolution and prevent conflict escalation when possible. In addition, it supports the position that communication failure is not limited to a lack of communication. This is a significant point, for as Putnam, Birkmeyer and Jones point out, there is a large contingent of people who believe the simple premise that more information and more communication produces more conflict management (No Date, p. 8). People who accept this premise confuse quantity with quality and generally fail to manage conflict successfully.

Before leaving the topic of communication as a source of conflict, it is interesting to note the view of some, notably Jandt, and Frost and Wilmot, that communication is not only a source but is actually conflict itself. Jandt writes that

social conflict is communicative behavior. There is no conflict without verbal and non-verbal communication. Humans define their relationships by communication and a relationship characterized by communication is a relationship - hence, a form of communicative behavior (1973, p. 2).

This view is presented to highlight the differences of thought in the nature of communication in conflict.

Climate is a source of conflict because it has a direct effect on the ability of the members of the organization to perform their jobs and thus achieve objectives. As noted

earlier, climates can be open or repressive, cooperative or uncooperative, friendly or hostile, by degrees, depending on the organization, its structure, and the people in it. One could quickly jump to the conclusion that hostile, repressive, uncooperative climates yield larger amounts of conflict than do climates reflecting the opposite characteristics, but this is not necessarily true. Research has shown that (open, friendly, cooperative climates are not free from conflict and in fact often have more open conflict than their opposite) (Folger and Poole, 1984; Robbins, 1974; Jandt, 1973).

The significant difference lies not in the quantity of the conflict, but in the quality. The destructive conflict which normally results from the repressive or hostile climate is of a much more dangerous nature than the productive conflict evident in open climates. The destructive conflict detracts from the organization, whereas productive conflict spurs on the members' creativity (Jandt, 1973, p. 3).

If one item can be called the major cause of conflict it would have to be differences in perception. Perception is referred to in all of the theories of conflict and it plays a major role in resolving conflict. In almost any work on conflict or conflict management one will find numerous comments regarding the role of perception in conflict. A review of these demonstrates both the prevalence of the topic in the literature and the importance of understanding it to understand conflict.

Boulding states that ("[i]t is not the 'objective' hostility of the parties which is important, but the perceived hostility, that is the hostility of each as perceived by the other" (1957, p. 132).) Rapoport writes that "[c]ontroversial issues tend to be polarized not only because commitments have been made but also because certain perceptions are actively excluded from consciousness if they do not fit the chosen world image" (1960, p. 258). (Deutsch adds to the discussion when he writes, "[i]f each side in a conflict tends to perceive its own motives and behaviors as more benevolent and legitimate than those of the other side, it is evident that the conflict will spiral upward in intensity" (1973, p. 164).))

Clearly, (one's perception of actions, statements or attitudes are strongly involved in shaping one's own actions, statements and attitudes.) (When one believes that a second party shares beliefs and values and demonstrates this through words and actions, he or she has no difficulty getting along with that party.) When we perceive someone to have opposing views, we tend to see things in their words and actions that may not actually be there. The presence or absence of such things becomes enormously less significant than the perception.

Fisher and Ury make this point quite strongly when they write:

Ultimately, however, conflict lies not in the objective reality, but in people's heads. Truth is one more argument - perhaps a good one, perhaps not - for dealing with the difference. Fears, even if ill-founded, are real fears and need to be dealt with. Hopes, even if unrealistic, may cause a war. Facts, even if established, may do nothing to solve the problem (1983, p. 23).

(It is quite apparent that individuals' differences of perception can be not only a cause of conflict but a major impediment to the resolution process.) This is particularly true when one looks at the negative products of perception: lack of trust, defensiveness, fear, resentment, and attribution of intent to name but a few. Several of these will be discussed more thoroughly in the next chapter. One cannot overemphasize the role of perception in conflict nor fail to recognize the impact it has on so many other aspects of the conflict situation.

The causes of conflict discussed above tend to be of an intangible variety. They are attributes that are sometimes difficult to identify precisely. Turner and Weed illustrate more concrete situations in organizations that lead to conflict. These situations are work overload, work underload, conflicting demands, responsibility without authority, win-lose situations, line and staff conflict, dead end jobs, and worker evaluations (1983, pp. 22-23, p. 60). While perhaps more tangible and easier to recognize, these factors are not necessarily easier to resolve. Their concreteness, however, should facilitate the creation of options that could lead to conflict resolution. Turner and Weed arrive at these situations based upon their belief that conflict arises from situations, not from the personality traits of individuals. They see the causes discussed above as the result of these situations. One grows angry or frustrated because there is no room for promotion within the organization or because supervisors change priorities constantly (Turner and Weed, 1983, p. 60).

This is not an all-inclusive list of the causes of conflict, but it is comprehensively representative. Other items such as power, trust, self-esteem, promises, and threats have a strong influence on how a conflict situation develops and how conflict management is approached and they will be included in the study where appropriate. A final item deserving discussion at this time is interdependence.

Interdependence is included in the definition of conflict, thus highlighting its importance. It is particularly important in intraorganizational conflict because:

a conflict is more passionate and more radical when it arises out of close relationships. The coexistence of union and opposition in such relationships makes for the peculiar sharpness of the conflict. Enmity calls forth deeper and more violent reactions, the greater the involvement of the parties among whom it originates (Coser, 1956, p. 71).

This "peculiar sharpness" must be kept in mind in the context of this study.

The fact that interdependence can be a significant factor in organizational conflict should be readily apparent. At least as apparent, if not more, should be that the same interdependence creates the need for conflict resolution. Because the various groups in an organization rely on one another to achieve goals, it is to their mutual benefit to keep conflict to a minimum and resolve it as quickly as possible. This aspect of interdependence will be discussed in Chapter Four.

In addition to the causes of conflict that have already been discussed, there are also characteristics of conflict and

conflict situations that should be noted. Folger and Poole list three characteristics of conflict situations: tenseness and threat, uncertainty, and fragility (1984, p. 3). The parties to a conflict will experience these emotions throughout the conflict, particularly in the early stages. The tenseness and fear of threat results from the fact that the conflict has arisen and the fear that the other party may follow tactics designed to intimidate or guarantee a one-sided outcome. The uncertainty arises from the fact that neither party can guarantee what course the conflict will follow, what the resolution will be, and how the relationship between the parties will be affected. Fragility is the nature of the situation itself, for when parties are involved in conflict their normal methods of working are disrupted. Because of the tense, threatening, uncertain atmosphere that is created, the parties must be very careful in their speech and action to ensure that they communicate precisely what they intend to, hence the fragility. In addition, because groups in an organization tend to be interdependent, the nature of the relationship itself becomes fragile. Knowing that they must go on working together when the conflict is resolved, the parties must be concerned with preserving their relationship. These three characteristics will be evident in virtually every conflict and will have some impact in the course of the conflict, including the resolution process.

Organizational conflict, according to Dubin, is both continuous and institutionalized (1957). Conflict is continuous because, by the nature of the relationships in an organization,

conflicts will arise and be resolved on an on-going basis. Because the relationships are on-going, the conflicts must be resolved. As Dubin puts it, "[t]he parties are really committed to resolving the differences because the continuity of the relationship depends upon finding ways to settle issues" (1957, p. 192).

In describing the institutionalized nature of conflict, Dubin writes:

Conflict between groups is not random. Neither is conflict about chance subjects which happen to be the fleeting concern of a group. Conflict between groups has form and exhibits order. The very orderliness of conflict provides the basis upon which we can view conflicts as institutionalized. Institutionalized behavior is systematic social relations (1957, p. 187).

This institutionalized nature can be seen when a conflict is viewed as rising from a source, becoming a focal point of group activity, and then being managed to allow resumption of normal activity. Folger and Poole call the process a "cycle of initiation - response - counterresponse" (1984, p. 8).

Filley notes other characteristic of organizational conflict: "[m]ost conflicts involve disagreements involving means rather than ends" (1977, p. 7). As an example, consider an organization in which production is lagging behind the normal level. The goal of resolving the conflict is the resumption of the normal production rate, but the different groups affected may see the means to achieving this end in different lights. Finding a means acceptable to the concerned groups is what is required to manage the conflict.

Finally, in organizational conflict there is a need for cooperation because, as Tedeschi points out, "[m]ost conflicts are nonzero sum in character, where there is something to be gained by both parties" (1970, p. 155). A nonzero sum conflict is one in which both parties can achieve satisfaction versus one in which one party achieves satisfaction at the expense of others. If in intraorganizational conflict it is generally the means around which the conflict revolves, not the ends, and if the goal of the organization is accepted, resolving the conflict thus has a benefit for all the involved parties. By cooperating in the resolution process all sides win.

A knowledge of conflict theories as well as of the causes and characteristics of conflict gives the conflict manager a resource from which to draw. Although this knowledge is an essential resource, it is insufficient in and of itself to resolve conflict. It is also necessary to understand the conflict management approaches available to facilitate resolution. In the next chapter, factors affecting conflict management will be reviewed for just this purpose.

The causes of conflict discussed in this chapter have different impacts on communication. Aggression can be manifested in many communicative behaviors, be they actions or words. Superceding the orders of another and making threats are examples of communication activities that are aggressive. As for climate, the relationship with communication has already been established, but it bears restating. The climate is the

result of both verbal and nonverbal communication, which is in turn influenced by the climate in an on-going cycle.

In perception, communication is essential. One's perception is the result of communication that has taken place. Perception is the created meaning that is a part of the definition of communication provided earlier. A receiver, for various reasons such as organizational situations and human nature, provides his/her own perception to another's behavior, particularly if that behavior creates an ambiguous communication.) As a result, the need for clear communication and effective communication practices such as open climates and listening becomes evident. One must behave in a manner which ensures that the communication is understood and perceived as intended. These aspects of communication will be discussed more thoroughly in the next chapter.

What is true in all of these situations is that communication takes place that alerts the parties involved to the fact that a conflict situation exists. If it is clear that communication makes the conflict situation evident, it should also be clear that communication is necessary for its resolution.

CHAPTER FOUR: FACTORS AFFECTING THE RESOLUTION OF CONFLICT

Frost and Wilmot write that there are ~~four actions~~ that parties may take in conflict; "[t]hey may (1) avoid, (2) maintain at the present level, (3) reduce, or (4) escalate it" (1978, p. 104). Each of these options is either a form or result of conflict management. Theories of conflict management range from those calling for the total elimination of conflict to those actively encouraging it. In this chapter several major theories will be discussed, as well as some of the more salient influences on conflict management.

Boulding writes that "the resolution of conflict depends on two factors: the reduction of the intensity of the conflict, on the one hand, and the development of overriding organizations which include both parties, on the other" (1957, p. 133). This guideline is integral to most theories of conflict resolution because it points out the necessity of reducing conflict while maintaining or increasing the organizational ties that enhance goal achievement when searching for satisfactory outcomes. Filley, drawing from the work of Blake and Mouton, states that there are three outcomes of conflict: the lose-lose outcome, the win-lose outcome, and the win-win outcome (1979, p. 3). Each of these outcomes is the result of at least one of the following modes of conflict management: withdrawal, smoothing, compromising, forcing, or problem-solving, which is also known as the integrative method (1979, p. 3).

Withdrawal is characterized by one or both parties avoiding the conflict entirely. In smoothing, each party yields on its

position somewhat after common ground for resolution is discovered. The common ground is found by placing emphasis on common interests in the early stages of the resolution process. Smoothing differs from compromise in that smoothing builds on common interests, while in compromise each side gives in so that no one realizes all of their goals. Compromise is a surrendering process not necessarily the result of common interests but more frequently the product of concessions such as, "If I can keep A, you can keep B." Forcing is behavior by one party which causes the other party to acquiesce to demands or threats. Problem-solving takes place when parties confront the conflict head on and meet their objectives and affective needs (Filley, 1979, p. 3).

Filley attributes the lose-lose outcome to compromise and identifies some of the activities leading to this as bribing, in which one party acquiesces to the desires of the other in return for some gain; resorting to third parties, by which direct confrontation is avoided; and by resorting to rules mechanisms to avoid confrontation. In this situation neither party to the conflict gains what it desires and both go away dissatisfied. In the win-lose situation one side gains its objectives at the expense of the other. This is achieved through forcing, which is characterized by dominance through power, majority rule, railroading, and refusing to respond to another. A win-win solution is achieved through problem-solving, in which the conflict is expressed but channeled toward a solution in which both parties achieve what they desire. Cooperative actions are essential to achieving this outcome (Filley, 1979, p. 40).

The win-win outcome is quite obviously preferable to the lose-lose or the win-lose outcomes in most situations.) In "The Fifth Achievement," Blake and Mouton present the rationale for the problem-solving or integrative method as the single method for achieving the win-win outcome. They state that the win-win outcome is achieved infrequently because society does not accept what is required to complete the process, that being the "resolution of differences in a direct, man-to-man way" (1973, p. 92). Society suffers from what Filley calls "The Ethic of the Good Loser," which states that in any disagreement there must be a winner and a loser, and that the loser must accept the loss in a quiet, dignified manner. In conflict resolution one party can take the approach that it will be the winner and the way to ensure that the loser does accept the loss is to label the loser bad or evil if s/he complains. Accepting the loss is what is expected from a loser (1979, p. 2).

Blake and Mouton believe that before win-win outcomes can be achieved people must realize that there is nothing wrong with seeking satisfaction of their objectives, and that conflict management skills can and must be developed. They call this

the fifth achievement, ... the establishment of a problem solving society where differences among men [and women] are subject to resolution through insights that permit protagonists themselves to identify and implement solutions to their differences upon the basis of committed agreement (1973, p. 91).

The fifth achievement is intended to go beyond the processes traditionally used for resolving differences, which Blake and

Mouton list as "the scientific method; politics; law, with its associated police powers; and organizational hierarchy" (1973, p. 89). These traditional channels do not allow the freedom necessary for integrative problem-solving and in fact inhibit them at times. The scientific method selects one solution as most valid and declares all others to be unacceptable; political solutions in a democratic society resolve conflict by a majority vote which does not satisfy the minority, nor does it change their attitudes; law only solves legal difficulties; and organizational hierarchy usually has the will of the superior to be the deciding factor in a dispute. As Blake and Mouton see it:

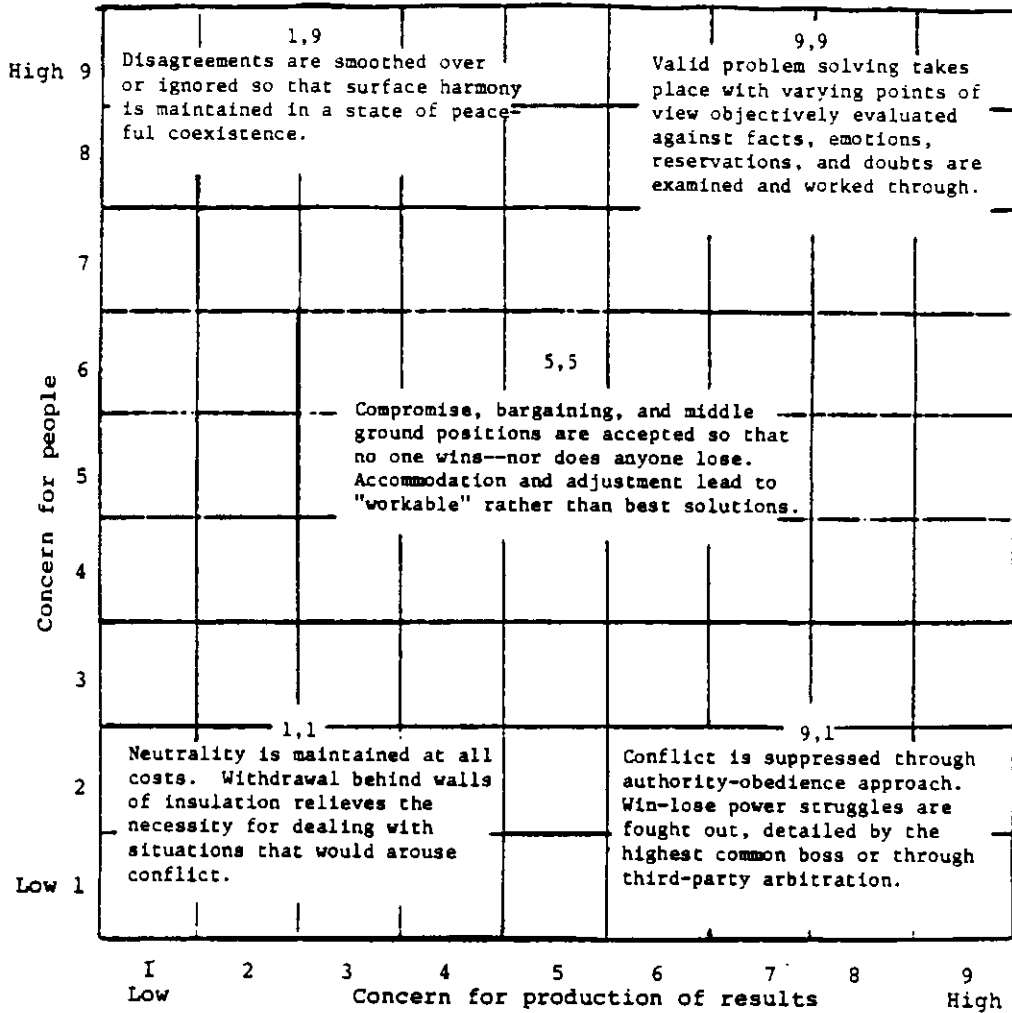
Whenever a man [or woman] meets a situation of conflict, he [or she] has at least two basic considerations in mind. One of these is the people with whom he [or she] is in disagreement. Another is production of results, or getting a resolution to the disagreement. It is the amount and kind of each of these elements that determine his [or her] thinking in dealing with conflict (1973, p. 93).

Table 4-1 shows these considerations.

The fifth achievement breaks through classical structures and promotes face to face problem-solving without interference from these structural restrictions. It involves training individuals in conflict theory and its causes, and development of skills designed to reach conflict resolution.

Deutsch supports the general concept of Blake and Mouton, which he calls "cooperative problem-solving," and he offers three positive results from its implementation:

TABLE 4-1
THE CONFLICT GRID



(Blake and Mouton, 1973, p. 94)

1. It aids open and honest communication of relevant information between the participants.
2. It encourages the recognition of the legitimacy of each other's interests and the necessity of searching for a solution which is responsive to the needs of each side.
3. It leads to a trusting, friendly attitude which increases sensitivity to similarities and common interests, while minimizing the salience of differences (1973, pp. 175-176).

In an organizational context the likelihood of cooperative problem-solving taking place is influenced by the nature of the relationship between the parties. As Deutsch writes, "[t]he stronger and the more salient the existing cooperative as compared with the competitive bonds linking the conflicting parties, the more likely it is that the conflict will be resolved cooperatively" (1973, p. 180).

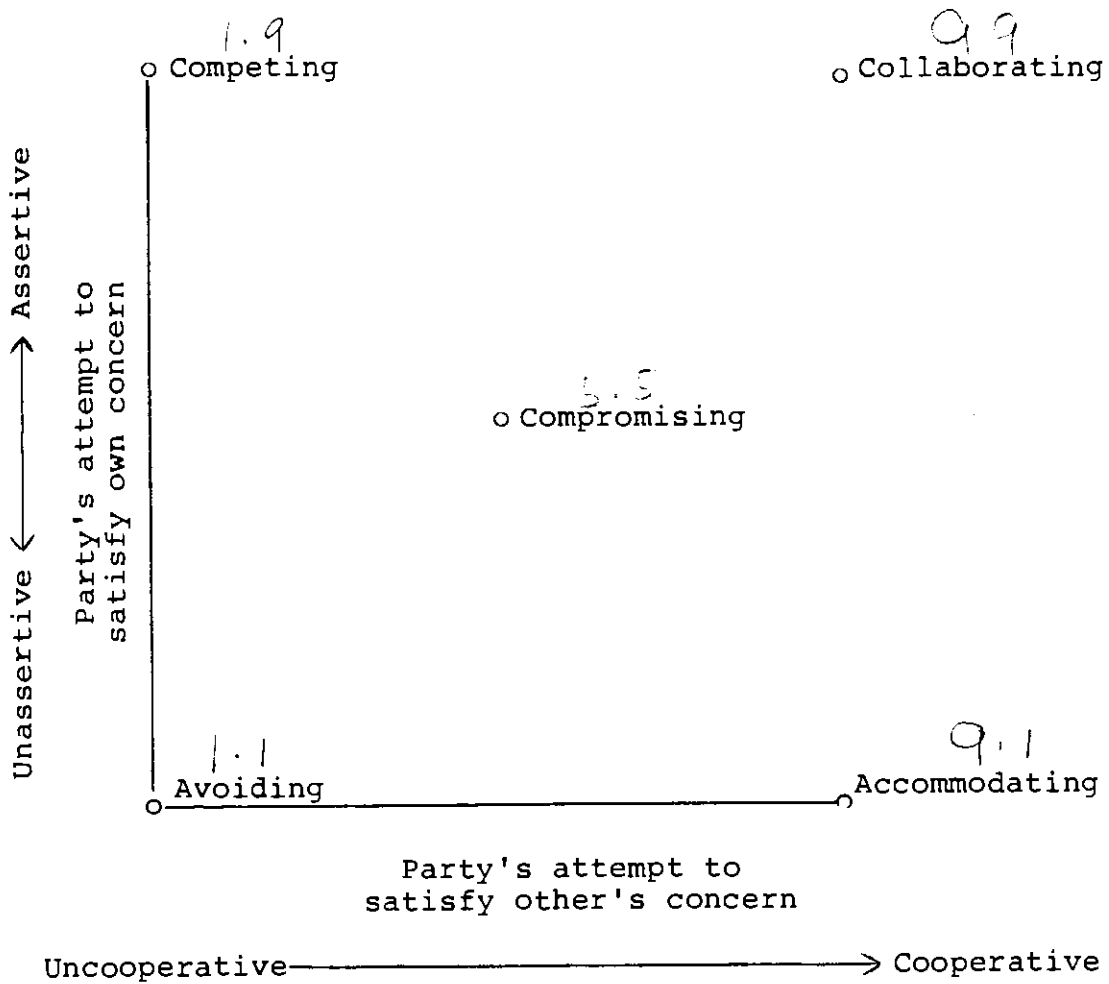
Jamieson and Thomas also accept the positive concept of problem-solving, but they have somewhat different modes of implementing it. They believe that all conflict outcomes are the result of the combination of two basic conflict modes that parties can choose: cooperation and assertiveness. Cooperation is one's attempt to satisfy the concerns of the other, and assertiveness is an attempt to satisfy one's own needs. Each party chooses a form of each of these behaviors and the combinations of the party's choices yields the outcomes (1979, p. 66).

As with Filley, Jamieson and Thomas identify five conflict behaviors: competing, collaborating, avoiding, accommodating, and compromising. Competing is characterized by assertive, uncooperative behavior and yields either a win-lose or lose-lose

outcome. Collaborating parties demonstrate assertive, cooperative behavior in which they confront disagreements and attempt to resolve the problem, a mode equivalent to Filley's problem-solving. Avoiding results when parties assume an uncooperative, unassertive posture marked by withdrawal, buck-passing, and failure to take a position. When both parties take this approach a lose-lose outcome is assured; when one party chooses any other alternative except collaboration, a win-lose outcome results. Accommodating is the result of unassertive, cooperative behavior and will produce either a win-lose or a lose-lose outcome. Compromising, as with Filley, is marked by giving in and trading, resulting in a lose-lose situation. It is characterized by intermediate assertiveness and cooperation (1979, pp. 66-67). Table 4-2 gives a graphic display of these mode combinations and outcomes.

Thomas and Pondy have developed what they call an "intent" model for conflict management based on their belief that the attribution of intent to the words and actions of the other party directs the actions of the participants. They open their model by asserting that "[t]he key to conflict management by principal parties is understanding the role of higher mental processes during a conflict episode" (1979, p. 51). They state that the most significant of these processes is attributing intent to the actions of the other party because it makes these actions more comprehensible. In addition, attributing intent influences emotional responses by conflict parties. The rational and emotional reaction caused by attributed intent

FIVE CONFLICT HANDLING MODES, PLOTTED ACCORDING TO PARTY'S ATTEMPT TO SATISFY OWN AND OTHER'S CONCERNS



(Jamieson and Thomas, 1979, p. 67).

will dictate the choices of action of the parties throughout the conflict (1979, pp. 51-52).

In understanding intent and thus successfully resolving conflict, each party plays two parts: actor and observer. The aim of the actor is to control the intent attributed by the observer and in particular to avoid giving an impression of intentional harm. In order to achieve this goal, the actor can choose from five activities: scanning, explaining, preparing, excusing and repairing. Scanning involves obtaining feedback from the other party to find out what intent has been attributed to the other in their role as observer. Explaining is the process by which the actor communicates the intent s/he wants the observer to understand and is meant to be benign. Preparing is the actor's way of dealing with the anticipated frustration that his or her actions will cause the observer. Thomas and Pondy call preparing the giving of an advanced warning offered as a gesture of good will. Excusing is an action taken when the actor learns of the observer's frustration after the fact and is an attempt to convince the observer that causing the frustration was not deliberate, and that if it was deliberate, it was legitimate. Finally, when causing the frustration was deliberate, the actor can engage in repairing activities designed to convince the other party that the intent was good even if the result was not. Apologies are an example of a repairing activity (1979, pp. 57-58). Table 4-3 lists the five activities and sample statements pertinent to each.

TABLE 4-3

ACTIVITIES BY THE ACTOR FOR MANAGING IMPRESSIONS OF OWN INTENT

Scanning	"Is anything wrong?" "What's your reaction to that?"
Explaining	"What I meant to say . . ." "I think you misunderstood . . ."
Preparing	"I regret to do this." "Unfortunately, circumstances require . . ." "This is nothing personal."
Excusing	Unintentional-- "It was an accident." "I had no idea that . . ." No alternatives-- "I was forced to . . ." "I had no choice." "It was unavoidable." Legitimate-- "You deserved it." "We were only protecting ourselves."
Repairing	Apologies-- "We were in error." "I am sorry." Penance-- "Please accept this . . ." "Let us make it up to you." "What can I do?"

(Thomas and Pondy, 1979, p. 58)

The observer is on the other side of the fence from the actor. The role of the observer is to discern the other's intent, because one must know the other's intent in order to respond properly. Just how important it is to understand the other's intent depends on the nature of the relationship between the parties: the closer or more important the relationship, the more important the understanding (Thomas and Pondy, 1979, pp. 58-59). In an intraorganizational context, then, this understanding is quite important and somewhat easier to achieve because the relationship serves as a reference from which to base intent. In relationships such as intraorganizational ones the observer is thus better prepared to understand the intent of the other party. The more accurate the intent attributed to the other party, the more appropriate the observer's responses.

According to Thomas and Pondy, each party performs both roles during a conflict, thus the nature of the relationship between the parties is the single most important factor in determining how the conflict will progress. The second most important factor is time. Experience demonstrates that time lags facilitate conflict understanding the management (Thomas and Pondy, 1979, p. 60). By avoiding immediate, normally emotional reactions during the conflict, one avoids escalation while encouraging a resolution based on rational decisions.

The model offered by Thomas and Pondy is not so much a theory of conflict management as it is a guideline for behavior during conflict. It proposes actions that can be followed by parties in a conflict no matter what approach they take to it;

however, these actions seem to be ideally suited to a problem-solving approach because they encourage the parties to understand both their own and the other party's intentions. An understanding of intent clarifies for participants the direction each wants the conflict to follow. By promoting such understanding, this model can be used to assist participants in face to face conflict resolution.

In addition, Thomas and Pondy's model is clearly based on communication behavior between both parties. They present a method for attempting to ensure that the meaning of an action is clear and that the perception of the observer is that intended by the actor. This highlights once again the connection between perception, climate, and communication. While the perception of the actor's intent as understood by the observer is a result of the communication behavior that takes place, it is also influenced by the climate of the group. The climate provides a frame of reference from which the observer can draw. Both the actor and the observer can tell from the group climate what kind of behaviors are acceptable, which assists in both forming and receiving intentions.

The approaches to conflict management discussed above all have in common the desire to either eliminate or reduce to a minimum a conflict that has arisen and to alter the existing conditions or situation. Not all approaches to conflict management share this goal. Robbins has developed what he calls the "interactionist" approach, which is one of the three philosophies of conflict management that he identifies.

The first philosophy of conflict management is the traditional, which calls for the total elimination of conflict, something Robbins considers not only unattainable, but undesirable as well. The second philosophy is the behavioral, which accepts conflict as a part of the social norm. Finally, there is the interactionist philosophy which not only accepts conflict, but openly encourages it (1974, p. 20). In the interactionist approach, "[c]onflict is the vital seed from which growth and success germinate" (Robbins, 1974, p. 15). It is not simply positive or negative, it is necessary. Robbins states that:

the interactionist believes that just as the level of conflict may be too high and require a reduction, it is often too low and in need of increased intensity. The interactionists believe organizations that do not stimulate conflict increase the probability of stagnant thinking, inadequate decisions, and at the extreme, organizational demise (1974, p. 14).

The interactionists do not call for a continuously increasing level of conflict, for this would have the same effects they believe would result from too little conflict. What the interactionists propose is encouraging and discouraging conflict as necessary to maintain what they believe to be a proper level of conflict, one which promotes growth and creativity and prevents stagnation. Both Coser (1956) and Jandt (1973) have also pointed out these positive attributes of conflict. It can also be said that the interactionists encourage the positive conflict while discouraging the destructive conflict discussed in Chapter One. They promote constructive conflict which produces benefits for

the participants while discouraging destructive conflict which irreparably harms the participants and their relationship.

Robbins believes that the major obstacle to his approach, as it is to Blake and Mouton's, is socialization. Society teaches people to avoid conflict at all costs because it is looked upon as an unpleasant, hostile activity. What is required is training that teaches people to understand and accept the positive aspects of conflict (1974, p. 17). In this respect he agrees with Blake and Mouton; they all see a need for changing the way society views conflict in order to deal with it more effectively.

Robbins lists eight characteristics of organizational structure that directly affect any of the conflict management processes: size, bureaucratic qualities, heterogeneity of staff, style of supervision, participation, reward systems, power, and interdependence (1974, pp. 41-50). Size affects the conflict in the quantity of conflict. Larger organizations will have more potential for conflict because they deal with more issues and have larger numbers of people than do smaller organizations. This is not a guarantee that there will be more conflict in larger organizations than in smaller ones because there are so many other variables, but the numbers indicate a greater potential for it. The size of the organization can also affect the intensity of the conflict. In large scale conflicts resolution becomes more difficult because the numbers involved make it hard to reduce the resolution to a one to one situation which facilitates constructive outcomes. As a result, the conflict

can linger and escalate, causing more damage than the initial conflict would have had it been resolved as quickly as possible.

The bureaucratic qualities of an organization and their effect on conflict depend on the type of organization with which one is involved. Organizations can, by degree, be open or closed, centralized or decentralized, hierarchical or flat. As for their impact on conflict resolution, open and decentralized organizations are best suited to problem-solving because they have more people involved in decision making and encourage more communication in all directions. They are less bureaucratic than centralized organizations.

Bureaucracy tends to be an element of highly centralized organizations such as the military. Smith writes that "the potential for conflict tends to be greater in centralized, bureaucratic organizations" (1973, p. 353) such as the military because, as Applbaum, et al. write, they have "a very limited capacity to handle it" (1974, p. 185). Writing from experience as a member of the military, this author can attest to the limited ability of bureaucratic organizations to handle conflict and, in particular, to resolve it in a mode that satisfies all parties.

The military and other highly centralized organizations work with a very specific chain of command. Major decisions are made at the top and passed down. Although there may be a discussion of available options, once the decision is made by the senior member all levels of the organization are expected to accept it and implement it. This in itself can generate conflict that has no outlet. When conflict does arise in these organizations,

the ultimate result is that the person furthest up the chain of command decides what should be done to resolve the situation and that is what is done. This type of resolution does not necessarily resolve the conflict because it is an imposed solution.

Bureaucracy promotes the buck-passing approach to conflict situations because it allows individuals to hand off conflicts or place the blame for solutions on those above them in the organization. This frequently prevents one from encountering face to face the party with whom a resolution can be achieved. Indeed, bureaucracy seems best able to resolve conflict by keeping it unresolved until people give up any hope of resolving it. The total effect of bureaucracy is to avoid conflict if possible, but when that becomes impossible to impose a solution, thus satisfying only some of the participants and leaving the others to seek alternatives.

The next characteristic of organizational structure discussed by Robbins is heterogeneity of staff, which involves tenure and turnover. Research by Hall and Williams in this area revealed that established groups engaged in more constructive conflict than did ad hoc groups. The established groups worked toward a solution cooperatively, whereas the ad hoc groups resorted to compromise. They also found that established groups concentrated on the issues involved in the conflict while the ad hoc groups focused on the individuals presenting ideas (1966, pp. 214-222). This same study revealed a decline in conflict the longer people have been with an organization.

Robbins, being an interactionist, views this decline in conflict as a liability and supports "planned employee turnover and the purposeful inclusion of 'young rebels' into groups to promote better adjustment to alterations in the environment and thus aid group performance effectiveness" (1974, p. 44). This suggestion is a measure designed to avoid the stagnation and lack of creative thought often found in organizations in which people hold the same position for long periods of time and develop a status quo.

The style of supervision influences conflict in organizations to a large degree because it places a high value on the judgment and ability of subordinates (Robbins, 1974, p. 45). Close supervision tends to indicate a lack of trust in individuals, thus causing more conflict than does looser or more distant supervision. It also creates greater conflict because of the proximity between the superior and the subordinate and their different roles in the organization.

In addition to demonstrating a lack of trust, close supervision is frequently aggravating. It is tedious to have someone constantly peering over one's shoulder, particularly if the individual doing the peering is always questioning one's actions. Such situations breed resentment and anger, hence conflict. From a conflict management perspective, the intensity of the conflict will be high, thus making resolution difficult. Because of the effect on trust and self-esteem, supervision style can be very significant in a conflict situation.

Participation in the organization can have either positive or negative effects in conflict which coincide with the structure of the organization. In general, when individuals have input in the conflict resolution process they are more willing to accept the outcomes; when they do not, they will not. This reaction results because the opportunity to offer input into the decision increases an individual's sense of self-worth. Even in large organizations, if participation in some minor way is included in the resolution process, the agreement reached has a much better chance of being accepted by the members. When members are not participants, nor are they offered input into the resolution process, they are not likely to accept the agreement as willingly. As Burke points out, people "are likely to report more satisfactory use of conflict if they are given some consideration in its resolution" (1979, p. 199). Conversely, exclusion from the resolution process is likely to increase conflict. Allowing maximum participation is thus a favorable conflict management strategy in most cases, but Robbins points out that in situations in which conflicts over goals exist, greater participation tends to increase conflict in a negative manner because instead of searching for a solution, each party lobbies for its goal at the exclusion of other's.

Reward systems minimize or exacerbate conflict depending on the way in which they are applied to the entire organization. When applied in a uniform manner or one which supports contributions to the organizational goals, they minimize conflict because all parties believe they are being treated fairly. In a 1969

study Walton and Dutton found the opposite to be true as well. They found that "the more the rewards and evaluations of higher management emphasize the separate performance of each department rather than their combined performance, the greater the conflict" (Robbins, 1974, p. 47). To support this finding Robbins includes an example of the rewards offered a production unit and a sales unit in the same company. Each unit is rewarded for a different and conflicting reason: "[o]ne unit is being rewarded for fewer runs that minimize cost, while the other unit is rewarded for speed, which frequently entails the need for a greater number of runs" (1974, p. 27). When dual reward systems that are not mutually compatible are used they will set groups in opposition; when a uniform system is used it will minimize conflict and contribute to the organizational goals.

Other reward systems also influence the course of conflict, such as bribery. One can buy off the person generating the conflict with money, favors, or position; or one can avoid conflict entirely by rewarding a third party for dealing with it. From this perspective reward systems can be particularly effective in preventing a problem-solving resolution because in most organizations someone can readily be found who will accept bribes or rewards for whatever reason, thus saving the rewarder from having to get involved in the conflict.

Just as perception is arguably the leading cause of conflict, power is probably the most significant element in conflict resolution within organizations. Folger and Poole define power as the "capacity to act effectively," and, "a person is powerful

when he or she has the resources to act and to influence others and the skills to do this effectively" (1984, p. 49). In organizations, power tends to be positional; certain positions give individuals control of more resources affecting how they can act towards others. This is particularly true in centralized, hierarchical organizations in which power is at the top and flows downward.

Authority, which comes from the power to give commands, is typical of the use of power in organizations. In conflict resolution, power enables those in superior positions to dictate solutions, equitable or not, because:

the unique aspect of authority is that subordinates acquiesce without questioning and are willing to (1) suspend any intellectual or moral judgments about the appropriateness or the superior's directives, or (2) act as if they subscribe to the judgment of the superior even if in fact, they find the directive distasteful, irrational, or morally suspect (Bacharach and Lawler, 1980, pp. 28-29).

Power can only exist because there is a relationship between the parties engaged in conflict. For power to be exerted, "it must be given credence by the group--either consciously or unconsciously group members must endorse them" (Folger and Poole, 1984, p. 111).

Power would seem to be a factor that puts one party in the conflict in total control. If one party has all of the power resources this would be the case, but the resolution achieved would probably not be long term due to the dissatisfaction of the powerless party. If conflict is to be productive, all parties involved must have some power (Folger and Poole, 1984, p. 49). Because power exists as a result of a relationship

between the parties it is relative, and depends on how both parties perceive the relationship. This is the basis of French and Raven's six types of power: reward, coercive, legitimate, referent, expert, and informational (French and Raven, 1959; Raven, 1965).

If the parties in a conflict are labelled O and P, the six power types work as follows: reward power is based on P's belief that O has the ability to provide rewards, or the expectation that O will do something nice if P complies with O's wishes; coercive power results from P's perception that O can and will punish P for not complying with O's wishes; legitimate power is based on P's belief that O has a right to prescribe P's behavior by the nature of their positions; referent power is based on P's desire to maintain a friendly relationship with O; expert power results from P's belief that O has some special knowledge or ability; and informational power is the result of communication between O and P (French and Raven, 1959, p. 156; Raven, 1965, p. 373). Although O appears to have all the power in each of these situations, it is only because P accepts or believes that to be the case. Once P stops believing that O has one of these sources of power, O's power is diminished until it can be demonstrated to P that it does exist.

The six bases of power discussed by French and Raven are often available to individuals based upon their position in the organization. Individuals in positions of superiority or authority have access to legitimate, reward and coercive power, while referent, informational and expert power are available to anyone

(Janieson and Pondy, 1979, p. 66). This generally leaves subordinates in a weak position in the conflict management process because their greatest power tends to be with their peers, not with their superiors. In a superior-subordinate conflict the subordinate's limited power sources limits its options. This is the case in centralized organizations more so than in decentralized ones. Although the superior must first convince the subordinate that the power is available before it can be used, it is highly unlikely in an organizational context that the subordinate will not accept the power as a part of the superior's position. In a superior-subordinate conflict the superior has more bases of power, but the subordinate holds the endorsement of those bases, thus preventing an imposed resolution.

In the superior-subordinate conflict the party holding the power is the stronger power while the other is the weaker party. Folger and Poole call conflicts of this nature unbalanced conflicts, and they point out two dangers to the weaker party: first, the stronger party will be able to define the conflict alone; and second, the tendency is for weakness to be self-perpetuating. If one party defines the conflict the weaker party is at a disadvantage in attempting to resolve it because s/he is not involved in the conflict definition, and the resulting solution could be ineffective or outright harmful. Weakness becomes self-perpetuating when the weaker party continually succumbs to the power moves of the stronger party without challenge or countermoves. The result of this is an increase in the control of the stronger party and a corresponding decrease

in the ability of the weaker party to affect the outcome. In this situation the weaker party poses a dilemma in that it may commit an act of desperation which can destroy the group or lead to later retribution (Folger and Poole, 1984, pp. 141-142).

In a superior-subordinate conflict the subordinate does have some options to exercise in attempting to achieve his/her goals, the first of which is influence. Bacharach and Lawler define influence as the "provision of information from one level to another by one person to another" (1980, p. 29). One exercises influence by:

offering advice, making suggestions, entering into discussions, persuading and the like, but the individual does not make the final decision. He or she does not exercise authority. Influence, thus, consists of efforts to affect organizational decisions indirectly, while authority makes final decisions (Bacharach and Lawler, 1980, p. 29).

Influence is the power held by subordinates which can be exercised to offset, to an extent, the authority of superiors.

The second option available to subordinates is much more drastic, and that is the seizure of power (Bacharach and Lawler, 1980, p. 42). Bacharach and Lawler write that "[i]ndividuals and perhaps subgroups within organizations are not passive recipients of power but rather are active participants mobilizing power for their own ends" (1980, p. 42). By seizing whatever power they can, subordinates strengthen their position and their ability to achieve a satisfactory outcome.

In realizing the differences between authority and influence it is important to note their sources in order to fully understand who has access to them. Bacharach and Lawler write that

the "source of authority is solely structural; the source of influence may be personal characteristics, expertise, or opportunity" (1980, p. 44). By differentiating between authority and influence one is able to understand that in a conflict situation each party will normally have some power available.

In addition to French and Raven's six types of power, Folger and Poole write, there are four power modes or uses: direct application of power, direct and virtual use of power, indirect use, and hidden use (1984, pp. 121-124). The direct application of power is intended to force a second party to do something whether it wants to or not. In order to obtain compliance, one party brings the physical, political and economical resources available to it to bear on the situation. Direct and virtual use of power is a demonstration of the potential use of direct force by showing one's resources and threatening to use them. It is an attempt to coerce the other party into taking a desired action.

Both the direct and the direct and virtual modes are explicit power statements; indirect and hidden modes are implicit. In the indirect mode the use or potential use is never brought into the open; it is tacitly accepted by both sides that one party does have a certain amount of power and can exert it as required. Such tacitly accepted power could be the result of position, previous experience, or a number of other factors. The use of hidden power is an attempt to control the situation by burying certain issues before they can become a part of the situation (Folger and Poole, 1984, pp. 121-124). As Folger and Poole write, "if an issue never materializes and nothing happens, it

seems as though power has never come into play, when in fact it is responsible for the lack of action" (1984, p. 129). These four modes compliment the earlier power types, making an understanding of power tactics more clear.

This lengthy discussion of power is necessary because the use of power clearly has a major impact on the course of a conflict, the conflict management process, and several of the other structural aspects of organizations involved in conflict. Folger and Poole's comments summarize the significance of power in conflict:

When one person successfully exerts power, the move usually brings about a reduction of the options for his or her opponent, by limiting the forms of interaction the other person can engage in, by eliminating a possible resolution to the conflict, or by restricting the opponent's ability to employ countervailing power. These constraints influence the direction the conflict takes. They make certain behaviors desirable or, alternatively, unthinkable (1984, p. 116).

Interdependence is the last of the structural aspects of the organization listed by Robbins. Interdependence creates the necessity for conflict resolution because the ability of the organization to achieve its goals can only be realized when the groups within the organization work together. When in conflict with one another, the groups disrupt the normal operation of the organization. In order to resolve the conflict they must come to a mutually satisfactory settlement. Because they are interdependent, the process of achieving the satisfactory settlement among involved parties is a necessity if the organization is to function smoothly. Interdependence thus facilitates the

resolution process because the parties involved need one another to achieve future goals and thus need to preserve their relationship in the future. From this perspective interdependence has a positive effect on conflict resolution, but, as stated earlier, because of the closeness of the relationship between interdependent parties there is a danger of a particularly passionate conflict (Coser, 1956, p. 71). Because of the nature of the relationship the dispute may be bitter, while all along the parties know they must resolve the conflict and preserve the relationship for their collective and individual needs. Because the various groups in an organization rely on each other to achieve goals, it is to their mutual benefit to resolve the conflict as fairly and as quickly as possible.

The factors listed by Robbins are organizational, but there are individual qualities that affect the resolution process as well, among them leadership, trust, and self-esteem. Smith writes that "effective leadership seems to be an important variable in the prevention or resolution of conflict" (1973, p. 358) and goes on to point out one of the positive effects leadership can have in conflict management. He writes:

By providing practical or social support, the leadership may operate as a compensatory mechanism to offset problems of communications, organizational commitment, or differences of interest generated by a hierarchical form of government (1973, p. 358).

As Smith points out, a leader can have a profound effect on subordinates; and if an individual is to be an effective leader, s/he will be able to offer direction and assistance in conflict management and not merely dictate solutions.

Dictation of solutions, however, remains characteristic of many leaders, as noted by Maier and Sashkin. They found that the most common approach to conflict management by a leader "even after considerable training, is to try to persuade the workers to adopt the solution he [or she] has in mind, as contrasted with the approach of posing a problem and requesting the workers' participation in finding a solution" (1979, p. 126).

As with other factors, there are positive and negative sides of leadership to consider. Maier and Sashkin adequately define the major negative aspect above. On the positive side it can be said that supportive leadership that makes use of two-way, open communication provides an excellent climate for open, cooperative conflict management and should be given due consideration in management training programs.

Trust is the fulcrum upon which conflict management balances. Trust promotes cooperation, facilitates communication, and creates an open, positive climate. Zand writes that "[p]ersons who trust one another will provide relevant, comprehensive, accurate and timely information, and thereby contribute realistic data for problem-solving efforts" (1979, p. 179). Gibb calls trust a "releasing process. It frees my creativity, allows me to focus my energy on creating and discovering rather than on defending" (1978, p. 17).

Without the openness and security provided by trust, conflict management will not succeed. Each party must believe that the other will do what it says in an agreement if agreement is to be achieved. Arms control negotiations between the United

States and the Soviet Union bear witness both to the need for trust and the difficulty in achieving it. In the organizational context trust is essential because, once again, of the interdependence of the groups within an organization. The groups within an organization can achieve trust through past and ongoing performance. Once trust is established it can go a long way toward facilitating conflict management, for it is easy to work with someone who can be trusted. Without trust one faces the defensiveness and wall-building that prohibit cooperation, communication and conflict management; with it, fair, satisfactory agreements can be achieved and believed.

Successful conflict management is a group-centered process, but when face-saving takes place the individual stops this process and places more emphasis on him/herself (Folger and Poole, 1984, p. 156). Fisher and Ury describe face-saving by saying that it "reflects a person's needs to reconcile the stand he takes in a negotiation or an agreement with his principles and with his past words and deeds" (1983, p. 29). Dealing with face, or self-esteem, is difficult because people are frequently reluctant to admit that it has become an issue. As a result, the conflict management process gets bogged down by the intransigent position taken by the individual attempting to save face. As Folger and Poole state it:

face-saving makes inflexibility likely because face-saving concerns usually entail the real possibility of a future impasse in the conflict. Motives to save face are difficult to alleviate in conflicts and tend to foster interaction that heads toward stalemates and standoffs (1984, p. 153).

In addition, "the emergence of a concern with saving face inevitably adds an issue to the conflict. The additional problem tends to take precedence because it stands in the way of getting back to the main issue" (Folger and Poole, 1984, p. 153). Face-saving is particularly dangerous when it remains hidden, thus preventing its recognition as a factor in the situation by all sides.

Face-saving has a definite derogatory effect on conflict management for the reason discussed above. In order to prevent it from occurring or to reduce it once it has arisen, one has several options. As a preventive option, Fisher and Ury stress the importance of dealing with interests, not positions. A position is the view one takes as the acceptable solution in a conflict, whereas an interest is what causes one to take that position. Because interests usually have more than one satisfactory position, concentration on the interests prevents one from being backed into a corner; establishing a position and sticking to it does not (Fisher and Ury, 1983, pp. 42-43).

Folger and Poole list several options to combat face-saving such as establishing a climate that prevents it from arising, recognizing it and bringing it into the open when it does arise, treating it as a part of the resolution process, and exchanging concessions on the issue (1984, pp. 181-182).

By preventing or eliminating face-saving, parties in the conflict management process reduce the peripheral elements that impede the resolution process and allow themselves to work together in an atmosphere of mutual respect.

Before going on to a discussion of specific communication skills it seems appropriate at this time to summarize the role of communication in conflict and its resolution. The first relationship is the basic one: some form of communication takes place that brings to the fore the fact that a conflict exists. The communication does not necessarily generate the conflict, for a given situation can do that. Communication behavior is the articulation of the conflict which brings its existence to the cognizance of the involved parties.

Once a conflict arises, some form of communication must take place in order for it to be resolved. Resolution is situational, thus the form of communication that applies depends on circumstances and what is expected from the resolution. If the purpose of the resolution is the elimination of the conflict, one style of behavior such as forcing may be appropriate. If the preservation of the relationship is of equal importance, other styles such as collaboration may be appropriate. When attempting to resolve the conflict the personnel involved must adopt the communication behavior best suited to their goal in the process as well as to achieving a solution.

Conflict management is an intricate process that can be approached from several different perspectives involving many elements. In order to be successful in the conflict management process one must understand as much as possible about the process and the factors affecting it. This knowledge gives one the background with which to work, but it is not enough, for in order to manage conflict successfully one must be able to

communicate and to do so effectively. Communication in conflict and its management will be the topic of the final chapter.

CHAPTER FIVE: COMMUNICATION IN CONFLICT RESOLUTION

The most essential element in conflict is communication. A conflict will not originate, escalate, or be resolved without some form of communication taking place. This chapter will be a discussion of some of the types of communication that are present in the conflict situation as well as specific communication skills which assist individuals in becoming better prepared to successfully manage conflict.

In order to understand the role of communication in conflict, it is useful to discuss briefly communication and its place in the organization. This brief discussion will reinforce the fact that communication is both a cause of conflict and a necessity for its resolution.

Goldhaber defines organizational communication as a "dynamic process by which the organization interacts with the environment and by means of which the organization's subjects interact with each other" (1983, p. 28). This interaction takes place through communication networks, which are pathways over which messages travel (Goldhaber, 1983, p. 148). Communication networks can be formal, such as those that follow the organizational structure, or informal, which do not follow organized patterns. An example of a formal network is the passing of information from an official such as a department head to subordinates, such as a shop supervisor, who in turn passes the information to the workers. Official information such as policy is normally passed through a formal network. An informal network is any network through which

unofficial information such as rumor is passed. Both network types can be involved in conflict.

In addition to the networks, the direction of flow of information in an organization is significant. According to Katz and Kahn, there are three directions in which communications can flow: downward, laterally, and upward. Downward information flow deals with job descriptions and directives, organizational policies, and goals. It reflects in large measure the objectives of the organization and its program for achieving them. Lateral flow consists of messages that promote coordination of effort and emotional and social support. Upward flow contains feedback from workers regarding their conditions, problems and performance, organizational policies and practices, and their thoughts on what the organization can and should do in given situations (Katz and Kahn, 1966, pp. 235-245).

In theory, the combination of networks and the direction of flow permits the organization to keep everyone informed about policy, goals, needs and performance, but in practice this does not always occur. In the normal organization communication breaks down, the information passed gets distorted or omitted, or the information itself can be received unfavorably because of its content. Goldhaber writes: "[u]sually several things happen to a message as it travels in an organization. Details are omitted (levelling), added (adding), highlighted (sharpening), or modified (assimilating) to conform to the interests, needs, and feelings of the reproducer" (1983, p. 24).

Communication, then, is a part of the problem as well as a part of the solution. This is important to reemphasize at this

point because people often believe that more communication will automatically resolve the conflict, which is not necessarily true. As Turner and Weed point out:

One solution that is often considered is 'improving communication' on the assumption that conflict is always caused by misunderstanding. Although misunderstandings can cause conflict, few conflicts are simple misunderstandings that can be improved with more communication (1983, p. 10).

The quality of the communication is at least as important as the quantity.

Conflict resolution can take place in either a formal or informal manner. The informal method takes place when parties acknowledge that a conflict exists and resolve the conflict before it becomes necessary to adopt a formal procedure. They resolve the conflict by finding a solution satisfactory to all concerned and achieving consensus. This is informal to the extent that the parties are able to resolve the conflict before their positions harden and it becomes necessary to become involved in bargaining or negotiating, which is the formal method of conflict resolution. Formal networks may be used to achieve consensus, as might formal methods of communication such as evaluations and feedback.

Fisher and Ury describe negotiation as "a basic means of getting what you want from others. It is back and forth communication designed to reach an agreement when you and the other side have some interests that are shared and some that are opposed" (1983, p. xi). Bacharach and Lawler add that "[b]argaining is the action component of conflict" (1960, p. 108). It is a formal

process in which the parties present their desired objectives, often in the form of demands, and attempt to achieve an agreement. Negotiation provides the formal framework within which conflict resolution takes place. During the negotiations, the parties approach the conflict from different perspectives and use different strategies, tactics, and skills, all of which require a command of communication skills. For the purpose of this study bargaining and negotiating are considered to be the same and the terms will be used interchangeably. In discussing negotiation, the procedure will be to present the strategies, tactics and communication skills in that order. Strategies and tactics, while not forms of communication themselves, are frameworks that guide the selection of particular communication behaviors, thus their inclusion at this point.

STRATEGIES

To understand the use of strategies and tactics in bargaining it is first necessary to know the difference between the two. Frost and Wilmot write: "Strategies are large, general game plans in conflicts, and tactics are the moves made to advance the conflict in the strategic direction that the participants informally and implicitly work out among themselves" (1978, p. 105). An example that clarifies this can be drawn from current American foreign policy. The Reagan Administration, hostile toward the Sandinista government in Nicaragua, wants a fundamental change in the nature of that government. The strategy chosen by the administration is to force that change in the

nature of that government, whereas a recent tactic selected to bring about the change was a total embargo of Nicaragua by the United States. The strategy is to force the Sandinistas to change the government by their own accord, while the tactics are the steps taken to bring it about such as the embargo.

In organizational bargaining the same type strategy-tactic combination is used. The parties in the conflict each determine their strategies, then select the steps they will follow to achieve their goals.

Frost and Wilmot state that strategic choices in conflict are planned methods of operation by which participants attempt to "move the conflict in one of the four basic directions of escalation, deescalation, maintenance, or avoidance" (1978, p. 105). In bargaining there are two extreme positions or strategies, soft and hard, between which other strategies lie. Fisher and Ury write: "The soft negotiator wants to avoid personal conflict and so makes concessions readily in order to reach an agreement. He wants an amicable resolution; yet he often winds up exploited and feeling bitter" (1983, p. xii). Individuals who adopt the soft negotiating stance are those who follow accommodation as their conflict style; they are cooperative and unassertive. The difficulty with choosing this strategy is that one runs the risk of walking away from the negotiation without satisfying his or her objectives in the conflict. As a result, although the conflict is resolved temporarily, it is likely to arise again.

Hard negotiators, as one would suspect, conduct themselves in the complete antithesis of the soft negotiator. They see "any situation as a contest of wills in which the side that takes the more extreme positions and holds out longer fares better. He wants to win; yet he often ends up producing an equally hard response which exhausts him and his resources and harms his relationship with the other side" (Fisher and Ury, 1983, p. xii). Hard negotiators are competitors; assertive, often aggressive, and uncooperative. Their actions are marked by "extreme opening demands, relatively few concessions, and small concessions when he or she does move" (Folger and Poole, 1984, p. 32). They view the conflict as a win-lose situation in which they intend to be victorious. There are several problems with this approach. First, if each side adopts this strategy the resolution process will drag on and be fruitless. Labor negotiations often take this path. Secondly, if a win-lose outcome results, the losing side is not going to be satisfied and future conflict is a near certainty. Third, the interdependence involved in an organization makes this approach particularly dangerous because it jeopardizes the basic relationship between the parties.

Folger and Poole discuss two strategies that lie between the hard and soft positions, the first of which is the "reformed sinner" strategy. "In this strategy the person initially competes for a period of time, then shifts over to cooperation. This method demonstrates that the individual could compete if he or she wanted to, but that they choose to cooperate and reward the other" (1984, p. 33). The strength in this strategy is that

it demonstrates one's power in the negotiation so that the other party knows that it is an available resource, but by refraining from using it one convinces the other party that offers of cooperation are sincere (Folger and Poole, 1984, p. 33).

Matching is a "tit for tat" strategy in which participants match the moves of one another. If one party makes a hostile or competitive move, the other responds in kind; if one party makes a cooperative move, the other does likewise. Although this can be effective in promoting the cooperation of both parties, one must be careful to prevent being trapped in a competitive move loop which results in an escalating spiral (Folger and Poole, 1984, pp. 33-34). Current negotiations between the Major League Baseball Players Association and the owners reflect this strategy with the resulting escalating spiral. In this instance, both sides have adopted the competitive position and are in danger of harming a relationship which already lacks trust between the parties. When cooperation results, this strategy is successful; when escalation results it is not.

The final strategy to be discussed is what Bacharach and Lawler call integrative bargaining. Integrative bargaining is a collaborative effort in which the involved parties are both assertive and cooperative. The interdependent nature of the relationship between the parties strongly promotes this strategy. In integrative bargaining, "[t]he task for bargainers, therefore, becomes not simply to bargain aggressively in their own interests but also to engage in joint problem solving that will illuminate the common ground between them" (Bacharach and Lawler, 1980,

p. 110). This is important because of the relationship between the parties for, as Fisher and Ury write, "[e]very negotiator wants to reach an agreement that satisfies his substantive interests. That is why one negotiates. Beyond that, a negotiator also has an interest in his relationship with the other side."

They go on to add:

Most negotiations take place in the context of an ongoing relationship where it is important to carry on each negotiation in a way that will help rather than hinder future relations and future negotiations. In fact, with many long term clients ... the ongoing relationship is far more important than the outcome of any particular negotiation (1983, p. 20).

The integrative strategy encourages actions designed to resolve the conflict in a manner that prevents dissatisfaction with the solution or a threat to the future of the relationship. The importance of doing both cannot be overstated. The fact that a failure to reach a settlement which satisfies all parties can lead to future repercussions has been documented earlier and bears reemphasizing. When a settlement does not satisfy all parties there will be lingering resentment which requires only a triggering event to initiate a new and perhaps more intense conflict. The reason for the increased intensity is the latent resentment springing from frustration over the unsatisfactory settlement of the earlier conflict. The importance of maintaining the relationship exists because the groups are interdependent. By definition interdependent groups need one another, thus destroying or adversely altering the relationship leaves both parties and the organization as a whole incapable of functioning

properly. It is because the integrative strategy recognizes these facts that it seems best suited for resolving organizational conflict in a manner that satisfies all of the participants and maintains their relationship.

TACTICS

Once a party has selected a strategy, it then chooses the tactics that move the conflict in that direction. Bacharach and Lawler define tactics as "the behavioral mechanisms and patterns that coalitions use to influence each other and achieve a satisfactory conclusion to a conflict encounter" (1980, p. 120). When choosing tactics, bargainers have as their primary consideration selecting "those tactics to which they attach the greatest probability of success" (Bacharach and Lawler, 1980, p. 161). The tactics available cover a wide range but can generally be classified into relatively few groups.

Donohue states that negotiating tactics fall into three groups: attacking, defending, and regressing. Attacking tactics are used to discredit or modify the other party's positions or to force the other party to follow one's lead. Offensive tactics such as extreme offers and threats are used to increase one's outcome at the expense of others. Defending tactics are used to keep the other party at bay. This is accomplished by rejecting the demands of the other party. The purpose of this tactic is to make one's expected outcomes less vulnerable to attack. Regressive tactics are a form of avoidance and include such tactics as making concessions by accepting the proposals of

others even when they reduce one's expected outcomes (Donohue, 1981, p. 110).

These tactic groups can clearly be seen as ways of implementing a negotiating strategy based on a particular style or approach to conflict. Attackers normally follow a hard strategy, regressors a soft strategy, and defenders a strategy somewhere in between. Attackers follow the competitive style, regressors the accommodation style, and defenders the competitive.

Bacharach and Lawler state that there are four basic bargaining tactics:

Improving the quality of the bargainer's alternatives; decreasing the quality of the opponent's alternatives; decreasing the value of what the opponent gives to the bargainer; and increasing the extent to which the opponent values what the bargainer provides (1980, p. 156).

Improving the quality of the bargainer's alternatives "reduces the bargainer's dependence on the opponent and thereby limits a foundation for the opponent's influence" (Bacharach and Lawler, 1980, p. 156). When a bargainer is less dependent on the opponent the bargainer is free to pursue a resolution without being subject to a bald display of power by the opponent. Decreasing the quality of the opponent's alternatives takes this process a step further, for it "increases the opponent's dependence on the bargainer and hence the bargainer's power" (Bacharach and Lawler, 1980, p. 156). The last two tactics have similar results. Decreasing the value of what the bargainer receives from the opponent decreases the opponent's power and the bargainer's dependence, while increasing the value of what the

bargainer gives the opponent increases the bargainer's power and the opponent's dependence (Bacharach and Lawler, 1980, p. 156).

In each of the above tactics, power, or at least perceived power, is an important element. The more powerful one is, the more likely the outcome will satisfy that party. This is not to say that the negotiation tactics are intended to force a win-lose outcome, although should one party accumulate enough power and adopt a hard negotiating strategy that is quite possible. In the course of the negotiation each party will exercise these tactics so that power will balance and an integrative solution can be reached.

COMMUNICATION ACTIVITIES AND TACTICS

In the conflict management process communication takes many forms and travels in many directions, but is always taking place. As Bolton says, "[a] person cannot not communicate" (1979, p. 78). Sometimes communication enhances conflict management and sometimes it prevents or inhibits it. Understanding the role of communication in conflict requires a discussion of the activities that can take place and the effects they have on communication itself as well as on the conflict.

Bolton writes about the communication barriers that work against conflict management. He lists twelve specific barriers, dividing them into three groups: judging, sending solutions, and avoiding the concerns of others (1979, p. 17). Judging barriers are criticizing, name-calling, diagnosing, and offering evaluative

praise. While these activities in themselves may not always be negative, the effect they can have on a second party often is. Criticizing is harmful because it finds fault, perhaps based on fact, perhaps not, without offering any positive feedback. Name-calling or labeling is an aggressive, offensive action that only insults and angers the opponent. Diagnosing is belittling and implies the other party is not intelligent enough to understand the situation. Evaluative praise can also be seen as a threat similar to flattery (Bolton, 1979, pp. 17-20). It is praise offered to set an individual up to be manipulated. Each of these activities forces the other party to adopt a defensive posture, severely inhibiting progress toward a settlement.

The activities grouped as sending solutions are ordering, threatening, moralizing, excessive or inappropriate questioning, and advising (Bolton, 1979, p. 17). "An order is a solution sent coercively and backed by force," and a threat is "a solution that is sent with an emphasis on the punishment that will be forthcoming if the solution is not implemented" (Bolton, 1979, p. 21). The use of coercion and threat will be discussed in detail at a later point. Moralizing statements are those in which an individual tells another what they should do, an action that causes either guilt or resentment. Excessive or inappropriate questioning prevents the parties from concentrating on the issues involved in the conflict and from making progress toward a solution. Advising is similar to diagnosing in that it implies inferiority on the part of the other party. It is a way of

telling the opponent that s/he is incapable of dealing with the conflict without someone else providing guidance.

Activities designed to avoid the concern of others are diverting, logical argument, and reassuring. Diverting is changing the subject, thus preventing resolution by failure to confront the issues. It is most often used as an avoidance tactic, but it can also be used as an attack. It is used in an attacking manner when the purpose is not only to avoid the present issue, but to introduce another on which the diverter hopes to force a preferred solution. Logical argument is an attempt to convince the opponent of the correctness of one's own position, and as Bolton points out, "when there is conflict between people, providing logical arguments can be infuriating (1979, p. 23). Reassurance is "a way of seeming to comfort another while actually doing the opposite" (Bolton, 1979, p. 25). The way it works is that one person offers a reassuring statement and repeats it if the other person does not agree or accept it. This exchange escalates until both parties are angry and frustrated.

All of these activities are barriers to conflict management because they force one party to become defensive about themselves personally and about their view of the situation. As stated earlier, the introduction of personality into the conflict deflects the attention of the parties from the issues and causes the individual on the defensive to become concerned with saving face. Involving personality and face only serves to embitter participants and escalate the conflict.

Semlak discusses types of communication that are similar to those listed by Bolton. He writes about avoidance communication, which "precludes the solving of conflict because both parties do not accept the underlying assumption of bargaining that a mutual solution can be achieved" (1982, p. 30). Two manifestations of this behavior are denying that the conflict exists, and changing the subject or diverting as Bolton calls it (Semlak, 1982, pp. 38-39). The opposite of avoidance communication is polarization communication.

Polarization communication is communication that portrays the issue at hand in a win-lose situation. Such communication portrays the various positions as miles apart and suggests that any settlement will be at the expense of one party's central issues (Semlak, 1982, p. 36).

Communication of this nature corresponds to the hard negotiating stance and the competitive conflict style. It defeats the purpose of negotiations, or, as Semlak writes, it "violates the principles of limited risk and mutually acceptable solutions essential to the negotiation process" (1982, p. 36). Both avoidance and polarization communication must be overcome if conflict resolution is to take place.

Yet another type of communication that interferes with conflict management is attack. This is an activity similar to those of the attack group of negotiating tactics discussed by Donohue. The negative attack is the behind the back approach which takes the form of bad-mouthing, gossip, and rumor. The danger in this is that the person criticized is "never quite sure what the criticisms are, and of course, can't be sure what people really

believe" (Turner and Weed, 1983, p. 7). The positive aspect of attack, at least in the views of Turner and Weed, comes from the up-front attackers who "make work more pleasant for the person who is the target, because that person can get some positive feedback--sympathy, support, and agreement as well" (1983, p. 7). This view is included because of its difference with Bolton, who finds all criticism to be barriers. Both points of view have some validity; however, if criticism is to be used in a positive manner the person doing the criticizing must use extreme care to ensure achieving the desired result.

As mentioned earlier, coercion and threat can play a major role in conflict resolution. Bacharach and Lawler define coercion as "the capability to punish or threaten punishment of another" (1980, p. 174). Coercion consists of three elements: the coercive potential, the threat, and the actual punishment. "The coercive potential is the backbone of the threat" (Bacharach and Lawler, 1980, p. 178). The potential is the resources which enable one to make the threat and administer the punishment. As Bacharach and Lawler put it, "[c]oercive potential refers to the maximum amount of punishment that can be administered to the opponent (the total amount of benefit that can be withdrawn and the total costs that can be added)" (1980, p. 176). Had the United States attempted to coerce the Shiite hijackers in June, 1985 to release the hostages the three elements would be employed in a scenario resembling the following: the United States threatens to attack Shiite neighborhoods in Beirut using naval gunfire and aircraft from a nearby aircraft carrier. The

potential is the United States Sixth Fleet which has the capability to administer the punishment, the threat is the statement of what action will be taken, and the punishment is the actual attack.

The strength of the potential influences how the threat should be administered. Bacharach and Lawler write that "[u]nder conditions of high coercive potential, the greater the clarity of the punishment, the greater the effectiveness of the threat; under conditions of ambiguous or low coercive potential, the lower the clarity of punishment, the more effective the threat" (1980, pp. 191-192). In the recent hostage crises in Beirut the second of these two conditions existed, and its use in conjunction with delicate negotiation seems to have brought about the settlement.

In bargaining, coercion can serve several functions. It can be used as an alternative to bargaining or as a tool during the actual bargaining process. When used as an alternative to bargaining the purpose of coercion is to force the opponent into concessions without giving anything in exchange. Coercion is frequently evident in superior-subordinate relationships in which the superior coerces the subordinate into some desired performance. In these instances coercion is a substitute for bargaining with subordinates, and thus a method of avoiding bargaining with them. In an actual bargaining situation, however, coercion may be employed to force concessions on specific issues and thus speed up the resolution process (Bacharach and Lawler, 1980, p. 174). While coercion might appear to be a strictly unilateral move

toward a forced solution, it can also be a tool used by the collaborative bargainer in an assertive role as an attempt to gain cooperation.

While the backbone of the coercive effort is the potential, the key communication aspect of this tactic is the threat. Tedeschi identifies two types of threats: deterrence and compellence.

Deterrence threats are communications, tacit or explicit, ordering another not to do something that the threatener considers harmful to himself. Compellence threats are communications which seek to gain behaviors from another which confer benefits on oneself (1970, p. 158).

Whether deterrence or compellence, all threats are a use of power; one has to have the potential or the power to carry out the threat if necessary, and substantial potential gives a threat credibility (Bacharach and Lawler, 1980, p. 178). In order for a threat to be effective it must be credible. Frost and Wilmot state that a threat is credible only if "(1) the other party is in a position to administer punishment, (2) the other party appears willing to invoke the punishment, and (3) the punishment is something to be avoided" (1978, p. 191). Bacharach and Lawler offer another factor in threat effectiveness, that being the threatener's past history of carrying out threats. Prior administration of punishment contained in threats makes subsequent ones more believable (1980, p. 182).

Several other factors affect the credibility of threats and the success of coercion. Repoport states that "[e]ffective communication (the ability to communicate so as to be believed) is

essential in any policy based on threats" (1960, p. 191). A threat cannot be effective if those being threatened do not understand the potential, the punishment, or the action to be avoided or performed. The threat needs to be clearly stated.

Another factor that influences the effectiveness of a threat is the status or position of the individual administering the threat. Tedeschi states that "[g]reater compliance will be obtained by a high status source of threats than by a low status source, irrespective of the status of the target, as long as the latter is not of higher status than the source" (1970, p. 186). In organizations with highly centralized bureaucratic structures this is frequently how threats are administered and why they are effective. These types of organizations also enhance the threat process because the threats can be administered through a structural method. Structurally administered threats are effective in organizations for three reasons. First, they are impersonal and therefore do not cause loss of face. Threats of this nature are directed at a group, not individuals. Company policy can follow this format. A second reason for the effectiveness of this method is that it is difficult to identify the exact source of the threat; one can only say that it comes from above. Bacharach and Lawler say that the "source is inherently ambiguous, and responsibility is dispersed across various individuals or subgroups within the organization" (1980, p. 195). Finally, structurally administered threats are effective because they separate the administration of the threat and the punishment. In this arrangement the persons who administer the punishment are

usually not those who administered the threat, thus they can kick the blame for both upstairs. This is particularly important in organizations because it enables the immediate supervisor to put the blame on others in higher positions and thus avoid destroying the relationship between the superior and the subordinate (Bacharach and Lawler, 1980, p. 196). Structurally administered threats protect the threatener and the enforcer from the retaliation of the threatened because the threatened does not know where to strike, thus making them the most effective threats in an organizational context.

It is important in coercion for the threat to be successful in order to avoid using the punishment because this enables the user to avoid the costs entailed in administering the punishment. "Enforcement of the threat not only reduces the dependence of the other but also may deplete resources of the user" (Bacharach and Lawler, 1980, p. 178). Use of the punishment is "seen as a failure of coercion. One resorts to it only when the threat potential and the threat do not achieve the desired reaction" (Bacharach and Lawler, 1980, p. 178). Once the punishment is administered the person administering the threat loses some of its power. By refusing to comply with the threat the other party makes the statement that the losses suffered as a result of the punishment are acceptable and in fact preferable to compliance with the threat. While suffering losses is never desirable, the decision to do so rather than comply can be seen as gaining an advantage in the overall resolution process because of the resources the threatening party is forced to expend to

deliver the punishment. In addition, the resolve of the threatened party is clearly established when it accepts the punishment. The threatened party accepts the punishment because it believes the expenditure of resources reduces the other party's power more than its own.

The reverse of the situation discussed above can also be true. The threatened party can decide that the threatener will not administer the punishment because of the resources it must expend, but the threatener may decide that the expenditure is worthwhile to obtain the desired action from the threatened party. In either case the party administering the punishment and the threatened party will suffer losses, thus the decisions on both sides are critical to the outcome of the conflict.

It is clear that the use of coercion is a dangerous gambit in conflict resolution because if the potential and credibility are not great enough it will fail and perhaps backfire. In addition, coercion is an activity that channels conflict resolution toward a settlement desired by one party and not the other, thus it is not likely to produce a lasting settlement. When it is the sole tactic chosen by a party, it defeats efforts to develop a cooperative climate and create a problem-solving approach to conflict. Compliance with a threat is an activity that may settle a conflict on a superficial level while simultaneously sowing the seeds of deeper, more bitter conflict. Threats are tools of those in power who have no compunction to work toward developing a climate in which constructive conflict is welcome.

A more positive communication approach is that developed by Simons, which he calls "coercive persuasion." Coercion as discussed above is a destabilizing element in conflict, whereas persuasion is a more supportive one. Simons argues that like coercion, persuasion needs some element similar to the coercive potential to make it effective. He writes that:

coercive persuasion applies to any situation in which at least one party sees himself in genuine conflict with another, has some coercive power over the other, and finds it expedient to establish, persuasively, any or all of the following: (1) his relative capacity to use coercive force, (2) his relative willingness to use coercive force, (3) the relative legitimacy of his coercive force, (4) the relative desirability of his objectives (1972, p. 232).

Instead of use to force an action, persuasion is "used to demonstrate the credibility and legitimacy of coercive power, the reasonableness of demands and counterdemands, and the moral, intellectual and coercive bankruptcy of the opposition" (Simons, 1972, p. 233). It is an activity that can be used with the "reformed sinner" tactic discussed earlier because it does rely on both assertiveness and cooperation to succeed. It is preferable to coercion in achieving integrative solutions.

The opposite of threats is promises, which Tedeschi defines as "representations that if another behaves in a way one favors, one will take an action beneficial to him, even though one might prefer not to do so" (1970, p. 159). As with threats, there is a need to establish credibility if promises are to be believed. From a communication perspective, effectiveness of promises, like that of threats, is "dependent on the individual's skill at convincing others that he or she has the resources and the

willingness to use them" (Folger and Poole, 1984, p. 125). Just as one needs coercive potential in order to threaten, one also needs resources with which to fulfill promises. By making promises one offers positive incentives for cooperation, and as Oliver has pointed out, if everyone cooperates, everyone is rewarded (1984, p. 124). The strength of promises lies in their promotion of trust and cooperative behavior. In the use of promises, both parties cooperate in order to achieve goals, adjusting their behavior to achieve mutually satisfying outcomes.

Putnam, Birkmeyer, and Jones, in summarizing research on threats and promises, found that "threats induce compliance from opponents while promises stem from the opponent's cooperative behavior. Moreover, subjects prefer cooperative bargaining strategies and are more successful in reaching a settlement when they avoid competitive tactics" (No date, p. 14). This reinforces earlier statements that on the whole threats tend to be detrimental to conflict resolution while promises tend to have a positive effect.

Frost and Wilmot discuss several other activities aimed at resolving conflict, including fractionation, negative inquiry, metacommunication, and position papers. Fractionation is the breaking down of large conflicts into smaller ones, or breaking a conflict into smaller component parts (1978, p. 137). The theory behind this activity is that smaller conflicts are easier to resolve than larger ones. Negative inquiry is a technique designed to make positive use of criticism. Instead of adopting a defensive posture when criticized, one asks questions to gain

more information in order to make improvement where possible (1978, p. 138). Metacommunication is defined as "talking about communication while it is going on" (Frost and Wilmot, 1978, p. 138). It is an exchange between the participants covering not the issues at hand, but the process in which they are involved. Metacommunication permits the participants in the conflict resolution process to keep one another apprised of the tactics they have chosen or declined to choose, as well as explain reasons for choices or actions. It is a technique requiring trust and cooperation. The position paper as discussed by Frost and Wilmot is not a document, but a process in which one issues a flat, seemingly nonnegotiable statement, then realizing exceptions or weaknesses, follows with qualifying statements (1978, pp. 139-140). This communication pattern, while not a particularly intentional one, allows for either compromise or collaboration, thus it does have positive possibilities. If one finds oneself involved in this activity, they must be careful to move the process in the positive direction and not find themselves making concession after concession.

The final communication tactic to be discussed is brainstorming. Bolton defines it as "the rapid generation and listing of solutions without clarification and without evaluation of their merits" (1979, p. 243). When brainstorming, the idea is to generate as many solutions as possible with no regard to quality. Bolton offers six guidelines for brainstorming; "don't evaluate, don't clarify or seek clarification, go for zany ideas, expand on each other's ideas, list every idea, and

avoid attaching people's names to the ideas they suggest or listing each person's contribution separately" (1979, pp. 244-245). Following these guidelines enhances the effectiveness of the brainstorming session and promotes the creativity that the process is intended to foster.

Because brainstorming can be an excellent source of possible solutions, it is worth discussing further. Fisher and Ury view brainstorming as a three-part process with different activities to be accomplished in each part. Before the actual brainstorming session, they say, the participants should define their purpose, choose the participants, change the environment by selecting a place and time distinct from regular discussions, design an informal atmosphere, and choose a facilitator whose responsibility it is to keep the participants on track. During the brainstorming session itself, they recommend seating the participants side by side facing a display of the problem, clarifying the ground rules, especially the no-criticism rule, doing the actual brainstorming, and recording the ideas in full view. After brainstorming they suggest highlighting the most promising ideas, inventing improvements for promising ideas, and arranging a time to evaluate ideas and decide which ones to offer to the other party as solutions (1984, pp. 63-65).

Adopting the brainstorming process as outlined by Fisher and Ury and following the guidelines listed by Bolton can lead to the generation of innovative resolution ideas and thus facilitate reaching an agreement by the participants in the conflict. Brainstorming is thus a communication tactic that can have a positive

impact on the resolution process and should be employed in the appropriate situations. Appropriate situations are those in which a collaborative approach to conflict is employed because this approach allows the time for brainstorming and the mutual definition of the conflict necessary for the process to be employed.

COMMUNICATION SKILLS

The various communication tactics discussed in the previous section are only a part of the communication picture. The other part of the picture is the specific communication skills, such as listening, nonverbal expressions, flexibility and assertive communications, to name but a few. Possession of communication skills is a prerequisite for one who intends to become involved in conflict management.

Perhaps the communication skill at which people are weakest is listening. When one realizes that more time is spent in listening than in speaking it is startling that people are such poor listeners. Fisher and Ury boldly state that, "[w]hatever you say, you should expect that the other side will almost always hear something different" (1984, p. 32). Usually when people listen they are not actively involved, they passively receive information. They hear, but they do not listen. Bolton attributes this to two major factors: first, the fact that the listener is physically capable of processing information at a faster rate than it is received, thus the mind wanders; and second, people are generally not taught listening skills (1979, pp. 30-31). The

second factor is the more significant of the two, for if one learns listening skills the first is less likely to occur.

What can individuals do to improve their listening skills? The first step is to "[l]isten actively and acknowledge what has been said" (Fisher and Ury, 1984, p. 35), which is easier said than done. Active listening requires a conscious effort by an individual to hear and understand what has been said. "Standard techniques of good listening are to pay close attention to what is said, to ask the other party to spell out carefully and clearly what they mean, and to request that ideas be repeated if there is ambiguity or uncertainty" (Fisher and Ury, 1984, p. 35). The strength in these steps is that they enable the listener to comprehend the other side's views and suggestions for a solution. Clear understanding allows conflicting parties to avoid dealing with the peripheral issues that have no direct bearing on the conflict.

Bolton puts listening skills into three categories, or clusters as he calls them: attending, following, and reflecting. He defines attending as "giving your physical attention to another person" and "nonverbal communication that indicates that you are paying attention to the person who is talking. Attending skills include a posture of involvement, appropriate body motion, eye contact, and a nondistracting environment" (1979, p. 33).

There are four aspects involved in a posture of involvement: inclining one's body toward the speaker, facing the other squarely, maintaining an open position, and positioning oneself at an appropriate distance from the speaker (Bolton, 1979, pp. 34-35). The

combined result of these activities is a message sent to the speaker that one is fully attentive and listening, and open to what the speaker has to say. It shows respect for the speaker which in turn gives the speaker an increased confidence, and it also helps develop an atmosphere of trust between the speaker and the listener.

Appropriate body motions are designed to show interest in the speaker while simultaneously avoiding distraction. Actions such as looking around the room blankly, shifting one's feet or fidgeting hands serve to distract the speaker and suggest that one is not listening. Bolton says that "[t]he good listener moves his body in response to the speaker" (1979, p. 36), and Adler adds, "gestures that are appropriate to the words being spoken and a posture that suggests involvement in the subject will reinforce your words" (1979, p. 47). Although they may seem like little things, these body motions can go a long way in assisting conflict resolution; the speaker, aware of the alert reception of the ideas being expressed, pays more attention to what he or she is saying, while the listener obtains a better grasp of the speaker's ideas.

Adler says that "inadequate eye contact is usually interpreted in a negative way as anxiety, dishonesty, shame, boredom, or embarrassment" (1979, p. 46). It distracts the speaker and leads to the perception that the listener is not listening. As Bolton puts it, "[e]ffective eye contact expresses interest and a desire to listen. It involves focusing one's eyes softly on the speaker and occasionally shifting the gaze from his face to

other parts of the body, to a gesturing hand for example, and then to eye contact again" (1979, p. 36). This once again shows interest and respect and is not disarming, as is staring directly at an individual, nor distracting, as is avoiding eye contact.

The final attending skill, finding a nondistracting environment, is perhaps the easiest to develop because it normally requires little effort. Turning off the television and radio, taking the phone off the hook, and removing physical barriers such as desks are simple steps, but they give the speaker the feeling of freedom to express ideas without fear of interruption. The speaker has the listener's complete attention (Bolton, 1979, p. 38).

"One of the primary tasks of a listener is to stay out of the other's way so the listener can discover how the speaker views his situation" (Bolton, 1979, p. 40). This is the guiding principle behind following skills, which are intended to allow the listener to understand what the speaker is saying. The four following skills are door openers, minimal encouragers, open questions, and attentive silence (Bolton, 1979, p. 40). Door openers are meant as an invitation to talk, if the other so desires. Door openers can be short statements intended to let someone know you are interested in hearing them speak, or even silence, depending on the situation. The purpose is to let someone know that one is prepared to listen and cares about what is said. Minimal encouragers are short indicators to the speaker that one follows what is being said. They are labelled minimal because the listener says very little and gives little or no

direction to the conversation. They are encouragers because the words and phrases used urge the speaker to continue (Bolton, 1979, p. 43). By using minimal encouragers the listener is telling the speaker that what has been said has been understood and that the listener wants the speaker to continue speaking.

Asking frequent questions allows the speaker to continue with information that is understood by the listener without confusing what is said. When questions are asked they should be relevant and expressly asked to clarify what the speaker is saying at the time. In addition, asking open questions allows the speaker to frame a response without being forced or trapped into using someone else's words or ideas. It is also important to only ask one question at a time. This permits the speaker to answer the question asked as completely as possible without confusion (Bolton, 1979, p. 45).

Attentive silence is the most difficult skill for most people to acquire because of their natural penchant for interjecting. Attentive silence requires command of the attending skills, for in silence it becomes the nonverbal key that informs the speaker of the listener's interest. Attentive silence lets the speaker know that the listener is in fact listening and is offering the courtesy necessary to allow the speaker to continue uninterrupted, but not ignored.

Silence has significant value. It gives one time to reflect on what one is going to say, allowing for an understanding of the feelings one is experiencing before attempting to put them into words. It also allows one to proceed at one's own pace. During

the silence the speaker can decide whether or not to continue speaking and at what depth. Finally, silence can serve as a prompting device, encouraging the speaker to continue. When combined with good attending, silence can produce impressive results (Bolton, 1979, p. 46).

The last group of listening skills are reflective responses. Bolton states that in reflective responses "the listener restates the feeling and/or content of what the speaker has communicated and does so in a way that demonstrates understanding and acceptance" (1979, p. 50). The reflective responses are paraphrasing, reflecting feelings, reflecting meanings, and summative reflections. "A paraphrase is a concise response to the speaker which states the essence of the other's content in the listener's own words" (Bolton, 1979, p. 51). By paraphrasing, the listener acknowledges what the speaker has said as understood by the listener. It is important to do this in a positive manner so that it is clear to the speaker that the listener is not judging. Reflecting feeling is a recognition of the emotion that the speaker is communicating. By focusing on feeling words, the general content of the message, and the speaker's position, the listener can better ascertain the emotion the speaker is feeling (Bolton, 1979, p. 51). When the listener understands the emotion of the speaker s/he lets the speaker know it. This lets the speaker know whether or not s/he is communicating effectively. The same is true when the listener reflects the speaker's meaning. Both skills cue the speaker to the listener's perception of what is being said, felt and meant, and are thus feedback mechanisms

by which the speaker can judge his or her effectiveness. When the listener accurately reflects the feelings and meanings of the speaker, the speaker's confidence rises and substantial progress can be made toward developing a mutually acceptable settlement to the conflict.

A summative reflection is "a brief statement of the main themes and feelings of the speaker expressed over a longer period of conversation than would be covered by any of the other reflective skills" (Bolton, 1979, p. 59). As with paraphrasing, this is most successful if the summation is framed in a positive manner. Fisher and Ury write that "[a]s you repeat what you understand them to have said, phrase it positively from their point of view, making the strength of their case clear (1984, p. 36). By doing this the listener helps build the atmosphere of trust and respect which is essential to conflict management.

These twelve skills have been covered in such depth to convey the importance of listening as a communication skill in itself, and in the context of this paper, as a fundamental skill needed by anyone involved in conflict management. As Semlak points out, "[l]istening in a bargaining situation requires remembering what has been said and utilizing that information effectively" (1982, p. 41). In addition to practicing the skills already discussed, Semlak suggests that negotiators take notes, tape record, listen for main ideas, concentrate on the subject, compensate for emotional reaction, and take breaks to avoid overloads (1982, pp. 41-42).

It should be apparent that these listening skills are not difficult if one is willing to develop them. Though simple, they can make the communication process more successful and more satisfying for the parties involved.

An understanding of nonverbal skills is also necessary in conflict management. Semlak states that negotiators "must also learn to recognize the meaning of nonverbal cues during discussions," and adds that the "effective bargainer must also learn how to control nonverbal cues" (1982, p. 41). This is important because as Goldhaber points out, nonverbal communication conveys emotion and attitudes (1983, p. 179). A small measure of the significance of nonverbal communication was shown in the discussion of attentive listening skills, but that is only a part of the use of nonverbal skills.

Examples of nonverbal communications are facial expressions, body tension, hand movements, eye contact, posture, vocalic expressions, touching behavior, personal space, objects, and environment (Bolton, 1979; Goldhaber, 1983; Semlak, 1982). Each of these nonverbal communications makes a statement and all are important, but it is not the purpose of this study to discuss them in detail. Bolton's statement regarding facial expressions applies to an extent to many of the above communications. He writes, "[t]he face not only discloses specific emotions, it telegraphs what really matters to a person" (1979, p. 81). In the face one can read fear, joy, sorrow, surprise, and all other emotions. In conflict management it is essential that participants know how to read these emotions, for they often speak much more than the words one hears.

While the face definitely discloses emotion, it must be read in conjunction with the other nonverbal signs. The tone of one's voice, the pitch, and the rhythm of the speech all are clues to how the speaker feels and what the speaker thinks about the subject. Hand gestures often highlight the meaning of one's speech, as does the eye contact one makes and the way one holds one's body, for example, tense, relaxed, or slouched. Each of these signs convey messages that individuals involved in conflict management must learn to read.

Other communication skills necessary in conflict management are flexibility, sincerity, and assertiveness. With respect to flexibility, Semlak writes, "[e]ach communication style is appropriate in some instances, but inappropriate in other instances" (1982, p. 26), thus the participants in a conflict must be willing to change, adopting the communication style appropriate to the situation. He points out that:

Conflict resolution demands that each individual reexamine his communication and determine that it contributes to the conflict. Once the individual makes the determination he must be willing to modify his communication. He must be willing to admit that his communication behavior may have been a cause of the problem and adjust his communication accordingly (1982, p. 21).

By being flexible and willing to modify communication during the conflict resolution process one shows a willingness to cooperate, which has been shown to be essential to achieving a successful, satisfying solution.

Sincerity is important because it helps to develop trust, which in turn leads to cooperation. Semlak writes that "[s]incere communication involves two dimensions: bargaining in 'good faith'

and an impression of bargaining in 'good faith.' A bargainer must bargain in good faith to be viable. This requires the absolute willingness to fulfill all terms of the solution" (1982, p. 35). Once again the significance of credibility is demonstrated. In conflict management the participants must believe that opponents mean what they say. Credibility and sincerity are two more words for saying that the parties must trust one another. If the parties trust one another, cooperation and problem solving is promoted; if they do not, mutually satisfying resolution will not take place. Perhaps the most significant example of this is the arms control talks between the United States and the Soviet Union. Neither side trusts the other and very little progress is made. Symptomatic of what the lack of sincerity causes is the "us" versus "them" attitude the conflict takes. If the conflict is to be resolved in a manner satisfying to all, the participants must view themselves as a collective "we" facing a problem that "we" both want to resolve.

Semlak offers a practical approach to communication to show good faith. He suggests using tentative language and avoiding absolutes, recommending the use of the words "probably" and "possibly" (1982, p. 36). It is a small step, but one that can have significant consequences for the resolution process.

The final communication skill to be discussed is assertiveness, which, along with the skills promoting cooperation, puts the parties in a position to achieve a solution through the collaborative approach to conflict management.

To paraphrase several authors, an individual uses assertive communication to resolve conflict by expressing his or her own needs, wants, values, and concerns in a direct manner without attacking or violating those of the opponent and without dictating a solution (Bolton, 1979; Semlak, 1982). When one is assertive, one ensures that there will not be a dictated solution to the conflict.

It is important to differentiate between assertiveness and aggressiveness. As Frost and Wilmot see it:

assertive persons enhance the self, work toward achieving desired goals, and are expressive. The aggressive person, however, carries the desire for self-expression to the extreme. His or her goals are accomplished at the expense of others. The aggressive style results in a 'put down' of others, actively working against the goals of others. The assertive person can be competitive without berating, ridiculing or damaging the other. The aggressive person is competitive primarily by trying to destroy the opponent (1978, p. 29).

Aggressive persons adopt the competitive approach to conflict, exhibiting aggressiveness, not assertiveness, and no cooperation. Assertiveness is a positive trait, aggressiveness a negative one.

Bolton has developed a formula for assertive communication:

Assertive Message = Behavior + Feelings + Effects (1979, p. 43).

He describes each of the elements separately, beginning with behavior. When designing the behavior element he advises that one be specific; not draw inferences; be objective, not judgmental; avoid absolutes and profanity; be brief; assert about real issues; and assert to the right person. For the feelings element, he says do not hide under secondary emotions, listen to your body, and express the feelings. When creating the effects

element, his guidance is to make it concrete or tangible so that it has more impact (1979, pp. 144-153). An example of an assertive message is:

"Behavior	When you use my car and don't refill the gas tank
+	
Feelings	I feel unfairly treated
+	
Effects	because I have to pay more money for gasoline"
	(Bolton, 1979, p. 153).

Bolton recommends trying this formula in low risk situations initially to both foster one's confidence and increase one's skill. When using assertiveness in a bargaining framework he suggests practicing in advance, having friends play the roles of one's adversaries (1979, pp. 162-163).

Assertiveness as a communication skill is clearly a valuable one for the conflict manager. Possessing it allows one to ward off aggressive tactics and implement a cooperative approach to conflict resolution, an approach that is preferable to the others in most situations.

This chapter has been a discussion of the communication strategies, tactics and skills that facilitate conflict management as well as those that hinder it, because the successful conflict manager must have an understanding of both. While comprehensive, this chapter is not all-inclusive. It is however, extensive enough to give the reader an appreciation of the magnitude of the role of communication in conflict and the conflict resolution process.

CONCLUSION

The need for conflict management within organizations is on-going. Indeed, as Hill points out, "Like the poor, conflict is something we will always have with us" (1982, p. 110). It is in light of this fact that the need for personnel skilled in conflict management techniques becomes apparent. It is because this need exists that this study has been undertaken. The purpose of the extensive literature review has been to provide a basic understanding of theories, strategies, tactics, skills and other factors that explain and affect conflict and the conflict resolution process to those involved in conflict management. It is the belief of this author that an understanding of the various elements of conflict and conflict management are essential for one involved in conflict management. A knowledge of these elements prepares the conflict manager to respond to a situation by providing him/her with a resource from which to draw. Understanding the various elements allows the conflict manager to anticipate or at least appreciate the actions and reactions of the involved parties.

The first point to be made in summation is that conflict is not necessarily negative. As has been stated earlier, a certain amount of conflict can be healthy because it promotes creativity and change. Conflict can be the element that brings about productivity in an organization. In this situation managing conflict means keeping the conflict from reaching an extreme in which stability is never achieved. Constant change is no better than a status quo. Because conflict is not always negative or

destructive, the conflict manager must be able to differentiate between what is productive and what is destructive.

Having established that conflict can be either productive or destructive, and given that destructive conflict is undesirable, the need to eliminate or reduce this kind of conflict becomes apparent. The fact that there are various responses to conflict and various approaches to conflict management presents one with options from which to choose when attempting to resolve a conflict of this nature. This is beneficial because each conflict situation is different and no one approach can be said to be correct for all of them. While the previous statement is true, one approach can be seen as clearly preferable to the others in most instances, and that is the collaborative or problem-solving approach. This is particularly true in an organizational context, as will be made clear.

The reason the problem-solving approach is preferable to the others is that it recognizes the need to reconcile the needs and goals of all the parties. This requires that individuals in a conflict situation exhibit assertiveness and cooperation; assertiveness in voicing their own needs and cooperation in recognizing that the needs of the others have value as well. On a more basic level, this approach stems from something more important, the belief in the value of every individual's potential to the organization.

In the context of intraorganizational conflict, several points must be remembered. First, by the definition of conflict the parties involved are interdependent, hence they need one

another to achieve their individual as well as collective goals. Second, because the groups are in an organization and they are interdependent, their relationship and its preservation must be given due consideration during the resolution process. The problem-solving approach to conflict is an excellent response to these considerations. When both parties assert, they project and protect their interests; when they cooperate, they acknowledge the need of the other party to achieve its goals, the need for the organization as a whole to achieve its goals, and the need to maintain the relationship to continue doing so. By adopting the problem-solving approach, the parties acknowledge the worth of their opponents and their goals.

In order to adopt the problem-solving approach the parties must trust one another. Trust can be earned in several ways, such as one's past performance. The way in which one has acted in the past, particularly in light of one's own statements, indicates whether or not that individual can be believed or trusted. With respect to the problem-solving approach, trust is evident in the cooperation efforts made by the participants. In an organization, interdependent groups that rely on one another on a daily basis may demonstrate an on-going level of trust in order to achieve their goals. The nature of the on-going relationship will provide some indication of how much the parties can trust one another. Ultimately, however, trust must be a unilateral move. Proven past performance, while indicative that trust has been earned, does not mean that it will not be betrayed in a given

instance. Once trust has been betrayed the nature of the basic relationship is altered and the approach to conflict may change as well.

Essential to the problem-solving approach and to developing trust is open, honest communication. This is by no means communication in which each party simply says what the other side wants to hear. It is often hard-hitting, but it is not offensive. This does not mean that the parties will not say things that upset the other side, for this will frequently happen in conflict. It means that when something that may upset the other side is said, it is said directly with no overtones of aggression or personal offense.

Communication behaviors that are matched with the problem-solving approach are face-to-face, open, honest ones. These include a free exchange of information, frank and clear statements of positions, open discussion of needs and supporting reasons. In order to achieve this the parties must keep channels of communication clear and use positive behaviors such as promises, recommendations, statements of understanding, open-ended questions, brain-storming, and listening and attending skills. These skills and behaviors are particularly appropriate to problem-solving because they allow one to be successful in both asserting one's needs and understanding those of the other side. By asserting one's own needs and understanding those of the other side, each side can decide how to go about collaborating.

The problem-solving approach has other strengths. If one party in the conflict adopts it, that party is in a position to

bring the other party around to the same approach. Because this approach requires assertiveness it will prevent one from being railroaded into accepting a solution by those attempting to follow the forcing approach; because it involves cooperation, use of it can demonstrate to those following the smoothing, compromising and withdrawing approaches that one is concerned with the other's needs as well.

For all of its strengths, the problem-solving approach is not necessarily the best approach in all situations, but in most cases of intraorganizational conflict as defined in this paper it appears to offer the best means to a solution that satisfies all of the participants and maintains their relationship.

The problem-solving approach is appropriate in situations that are not time sensitive and in goal-oriented organizations. Because of its structure, the problem-solving approach takes time to use, be it a day, a week or longer. Labor negotiations are an example of a situation in which this approach is suitable because time is normally not, or should not be a factor, and an organization is goal-oriented. In a situation in which a decision must be made quickly, forcing is more appropriate. This is a situation in which one must make a decision based upon the best available information without discussion.

The problem-solving approach is also inappropriate in situations with weak or antagonistic communication relationships because by its very nature it requires open, honest communication. When these conditions are not met alternative approaches must be selected as demanded by the situation.

Finally, it is clear that individuals can and should be trained in conflict management skills. The method of presentation in this study has shown that various theories and elements of conflict and conflict resolution can be identified, and if they can be identified they can be taught. One can learn the differences and similarities between the theories of how conflicts arise, such as the phase and social exchange theories on the organizational level and the psychodynamic and field theories on the interpersonal level. Analysis of these and other theories may assist one in applying a theory to a practical solution or it may lead one to draw aspects from more than one theory to apply to a given situation. Whatever the case may be, one can only benefit from understanding these theories.

The same is true of the other points discussed in this paper. Understanding the causes of conflict and the factors affecting it gives one an ability to judge their effects in a particular situation and allows one to respond accordingly. Knowing that climate is a factor, for example, will prompt the conflict manager to examine the climate closely to determine what effect it is having.

It is clear that there are distinct roles of communication in conflict. As has been pointed out several times, communication is required to initiate a conflict as well as to resolve one. What one can do to assist in understanding this role is identify the communication behaviors that promote conflict and those that help manage it. In order to do this, one can first identify the stages a conflict goes through. These stages are the latent, differentiation, and integration stages.

During the latent stage the groundwork is laid. The communication behaviors evident in this phase are those of every day interaction, both verbal and nonverbal. It is from these every day communications that conflict rises. In themselves these behaviors do not necessarily lead to conflict, but the perceived messages in them do. People speak to one another every day but conflict does not always result; memos are written regularly that do not cause conflict. It is when there is a message with which one expresses disagreement that conflict results, and when it is expressed the differentiation stage begins.

During the differentiation stage the conflict comes out into the open as a result of communication. Communication behaviors in this stage revolve around the voicing of opposing views and include such activities as focusing on personalities, threats, insults, accusations, refusal to listen, rigidity of positions, and a breaking off of communication. Each of these activities can lead to escalation, while some, particularly the refusal to listen, can lead to avoidance. True differentiation results from a concentration on the opposing views involved in the conflict, and an avoidance of peripheral issues and antagonistic behaviors. Once the conflict is crystallized and the parties clearly understand the issues involved as a result of these communications, the conflict passes to the integration stage.

In the integration stage communication behaviors are designed to resolve the conflict. Examples of communication skills evident

in this stage include positive ones such as promises, making concessions, brainstorming, exchanging information, focusing on issues, open questions, attending, listening, and flexibility. The behaviors demonstrated in this stage will also depend on the conflict management approach selected by the parties. The earlier discussion of the problem-solving approach highlights this.

Organizations should establish clear policies of how conflict is to be managed and what communication behaviors are to be encouraged or avoided. A formal, written policy indicates to those in the organization the seriousness with which conflict management is viewed. While establishment of a policy is symbolic, designing worker evaluations that reflect their conflict management abilities is a practical way of emphasizing its importance. Although all personnel should be trained in conflict management skills, organizations should also employ facilitators who are specialists in conflict management and who can assist in particularly difficult situations when the parties themselves fail to reach agreement. Understanding the theories, causes, and variables can assist the conflict manager in determining what are underlying causes, what are symptoms, and what are peripheral factors.

Just as theories and elements affecting conflict can be learned, so too can particular skills. This is made clear in Chapter Five in which communication skills were discussed. People can be taught to listen effectively and to read non-verbal cues, they can be taught how to respond to threats and how to

brainstorm to reach mutually satisfying solutions. These skills are of particular importance because it is through some form of communication that resolution will take place. Of all the skills discussed, the communication skills emerge as the most significant that one must acquire to be successful in conflict management.

The case for the necessity of conflict management has been solidly established. What is now necessary is the widespread establishment of conflict management training programs that take advantage of the knowledge available. These steps will not necessarily be easy. In organizations with open climates, such training programs may more easily and successfully be established. Organizations with more closed climates or authoritarian management systems would require a complete rethinking of organizational priorities and structures. In addition to conflict management training programs, organizations need to develop and implement conflict management policies. Elements of these policies would be measured to be taken in specific situations, contacts to be made, steps to be followed. Finally, organizations should have available qualified facilitators who can step in when face to face conflict management efforts have reached an impasse.

In moving from currently existing systems to a conflict management policy, organizations will have to be cognizent of how change affects people and the way in which things are accomplished. Change for the sake of change is more harmful than good, thus in making the transition from existing methods to a new policy, it will be necessary to inform and educate everyone

in the organization. The ability to offer input into the drafting of the policy should be offered to members of the organization and, when the policy is completed, it should be presented for feedback. When the policy is implemented, all members of the organization should understand it so they can take advantage of it. Above all else, the members of the organization must be brought to understand the significance of the policy to the organization and the benefits to be derived from it. In some cases, as both Blake and Mouton, and Robbins point out, this effort will require a new view of conflict. Instead of something to be feared, avoided, and eliminated, it should be faced, understood, and controlled.

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