Conflict Resolution

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Understanding

- **Conflict resolution is conceptualized as the methods and processes involved in facilitating the peaceful ending of conflict and retribution.**

- **Conflict Resolution involves a wide range of methods and procedures for addressing conflict exist, including negotiation, mediation, mediation-arbitration, diplomacy, and creative peacebuilding.**

Definition

- **Conflict resolution means a process of resolving dispute or disagreement. It mainly aims at reconciling opposing arguments in a manner that promotes and protects the human rights of all parties concerned.**

Definition by Peter Wallensteen

- **Conflict resolution is a social situation where the armed conflicting parties in a (voluntarily) agreement resolve to live peacefully with – and/or dissolve – their basic incompatibilities and henceforth cease to use arms against one another.**

Conflict Resolution Mechanisms

Wallensteen presented seven distinct theoretical mechanisms for conflict resolutions:

1. A shift in priorities for one of the conflicting parties.

While it is rare that a party completely changes its basic positions, it can display a shift in to what it gives highest priority. This stance can create new possibilities for conflict resolutions.

2. The contested resource is divided.

Means both conflicting parties display some extent of shift in priorities which then opens up for some form of "meeting the other side halfway" agreement.

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3. **Horse-trading between the conflicting parties. This means that one side gets all of its demands met on one issue, while the other side gets all of its demands met on another issue.**

4. **The parties decide to share control, and rule together over the contested resource. It could be permanent, or a temporary arrangement for a transition period that, when over, has led to a transcendence of the conflict.**

5. **The parties agree to leave control to someone else. In this mechanism the primary parties agree, or accept, that a third party takes control over the contested resource.**

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6. The parties resort to *conflict resolution mechanisms*, notably arbitration or other legal procedures. This means finding a procedure for resolving the conflict through some of the previously mentioned five ways, but with the added quality that it is done through a process outside of the parties' immediate control.

7. Some issues can be *left for later*. This means political conditions and popular attitudes can change, and some issues can gain from being delayed, as their significance may pale with time.

Five types of conflict handling behaviour (Thomas and Kilman, 1976)

- *Competition* is a win-or-lose style of handling conflicts. It is appropriate in dealing with conflicts which have no disagreements.

- *Collaboration* aims at finding some solution that can satisfy the conflicting parties. It is based on a willingness to accept as valid the interests of the other party whilst protecting one's own interests. It is integrative and has high concern for personal goals as well as relationship.

- *Compromise* is a common way of dealing with conflicts, particularly when the conflicting parties have relatively equal power and mutually independent goals. It is based on the belief that a middle route should be found to resolve the conflict situation, with concern for personal goals as well as relationships.

- *Avoidance* is based on the belief that conflict is evil, unwanted or boorish. It should be delayed or ignored. Avoidance strategy has low cooperation and low confrontation. It is useful either when conflicts are insignificant or when the other party is unyielding because of rigid attitudes.

- *Accommodation* involves high cooperation and low confrontation. It plays down differences and stresses commonalities. Accommodating can be a good strategy when one party accepts that it is wrong and has a lot to lose and little to gain.
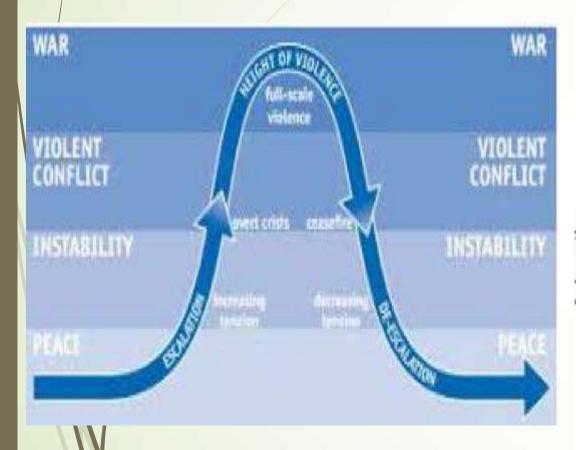
Fundamental strategies for conflict resolution

- Reaching Agreement on rules and procedures.
- Reducing tension and synchronizing the de-escalation of hostility.
- Improving the accuracy of communication, particularly improving each party's understanding of the other's perception.
- Controlling the number and size of issues in the discussion.
- Establishing common ground where parties can find a basis for agreement.
- Enhancing the desirability of the options and alternatives that each party presents to the other.
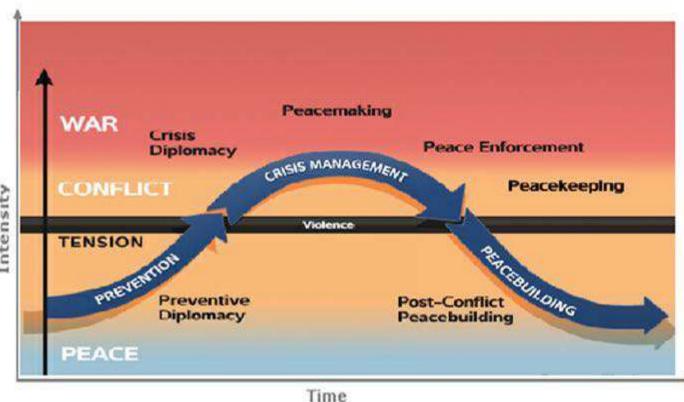
Models of Conflict resolution

Conflict resolution curve

- **The conflict resolution curve derived from an analytical model that offers a peaceful solution by motivating conflicting entities.**

- **Conflict resolution curve (CRC) separates conflict styles into two separate domains: domain of competing entities and domain of accommodating entities.**
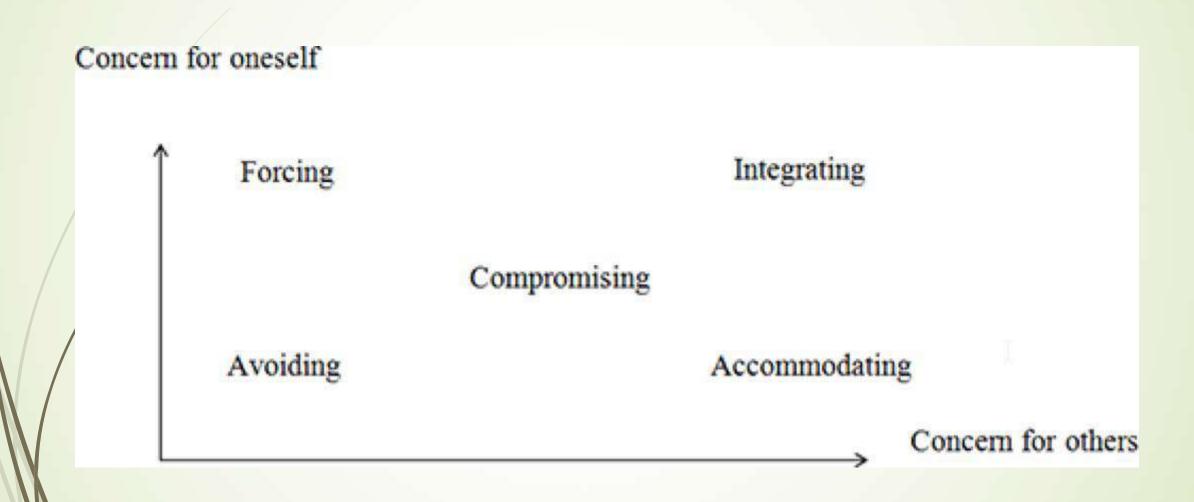
Conflict Resolution Curve Diagram

CRC cont..

➤ There is a sort of agreement between targets and aggressors on this curve. Their judgements of badness compared to goodness of each other are analogous on CRC.

➤ So, arrival of all conflicting entities to some negotiable points on CRC is important before peace building. CRC does not exist (i.e., singular) in reality if the chance of aggression if the aggressor is certain. Under such circumstances it might lead to apocalypse with mutual destruction.

➤ The curve explains why nonviolent struggles ultimately toppled repressive regimes from power and sometimes forced leaders to change the nature of governance.

Dual Concern Model (DCM)

- The dual concern model of conflict resolution is a conceptual perspective that assumes individuals' preferred method of dealing with conflict is based on two underlying themes:

    1. Concern for self (assertiveness)

    2. Concern for others (empathy)

- According to the model, group members balance their concern for satisfying personal needs and interests with their concern for satisfying the needs and interests of others in different ways.

- The intersection of these two dimensions ultimately leads individuals towards exhibiting different styles of conflict resolution.

- The dual model identifies five with number four being the target to complete the cycle and illuminate the issue at hand. Conflict resolution strategies that individuals may use depend on their dispositions toward pro-self or pro-social goals.

Diagram of Dual Concern Model

Concern for oneself

Forcing   Integrating

              Compromising

Avoiding   Accommodating

                                           Concern for others

Avoidance Conflict Style

- ► Conflict avoidance style is used when an individual has withdrawn in dealing with the other party, when one is uncomfortable with conflict, or due to cultural contexts.

- ► It is characterized by joking, changing or avoiding the topic, or even denying that a problem exists.

- ► During conflict, these avoiders adopt a "wait and see" attitude, often allowing conflict to phase out on its own without any personal involvement.

- ► By neglecting to address high-conflict situations, avoiders risk allowing problems to spin out of control.

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- **Yielding conflict style-** **"accommodating"**, smoothing or suppression

- **These conflict styles are characterized by a high level of concern for others and a low level of concern for oneself.**

- **This passive pro-social approach emerges when individuals derive personal satisfaction from meeting the needs of others and have a general concern for maintaining stable, positive social relationships.**

Competitive Conflict Style

➡ **This style of conflict maximizes individual assertiveness (i.e., concern for self) and minimizes empathy (i.e., concern for others).**

➡ **Groups consisting of competitive members generally enjoy seeking domination over others, and typically see conflict as a "win or lose" predicament.**

➡ **Fighters tend to force others to accept their personal views by employing competitive power tactics e.g. arguments, insults, accusations or even violence) that foster intimidation.**

Conciliation Conflict Style

- The Conciliation conflict style- conciliation, "compromising", bargaining or negotiation conflict style is typical of individuals who possess an intermediate level of concern for both personal and others' outcomes.

- Compromisers value fairness and, in doing so, anticipate mutual beneficial interactions.

- By accepting some demands put forth by others, compromisers believe this agreeableness will encourage others to meet them halfway, thus promoting conflict resolution.

- This conflict style can be considered an extension of both "yielding" and "cooperative" strategies.

Cooperation Conflict Style

- It is characterized by an active concern for both pro-social and pro-self behaviour, the cooperation, integration, confrontation or problem-solving conflict style is typically used when an individual has elevated interests in their own outcomes as well as in the outcomes of others.

- During conflict, co-operators collaborate with others in an effort to find an amicable solution that satisfies all parties involved in the conflict.

- Individuals using this type of conflict style tend to be both highly assertive and highly empathetic. By seeing conflict as a creative opportunity, collaborators willingly invest time and resources into finding a "win-win" solution.

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