Conflict, Negotiation and Perspective Taking

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By

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With a contribution by Roland Reichenbach

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To the perfect example -- Jesus Christ, the Prince of Peace, who showed us the path to fairness and reconciliation.

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ABOUT THE AUTHORS

Sandra Pineda de Forsberg has a PhD in Peace Education from Zurich University, Switzerland, with an emphasis on negotiation competencies and perspective-taking, and a Master's degree in International Relations from Uppsala University, Sweden. Working over 15 years internationally with various NGOs, she has delivered public affairs strategies, collaborating with local community leaders as well as upper government levels. In the corporate world, Sandra has worked as an international business relations director in the digital B2B sector. Currently, she engages in peace education research and provides innovative professional coaching and leadership programs through her company, Pineda de Forsberg Consulting. Sandra's heart goes out to children. Convinced that reducing community violence is important for social and economic development, she promotes literacy and peace education programs for disadvantaged children, including indigenous communities in her native Colombia, through her NGO, PHEBE Children. PHEBE also provides humanitarian relief and entrepreneurship initiatives aiming for long-term sustainability.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

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As social human beings we are negotiating continually; the act of negotiation is embedded in all domains of our lives, whether we realize it or not. Our survival over millennia has been dependent on multifaceted social interactions requiring collaboration to obtain what a single individual could not achieve alone.[1] Indeed, social interactions pertaining to private, personal, and public, fora are crucial to our humanity and the advancement of our continued existence in a constantly changing world. Discovering and exploring social relations normally start within the family, as children, and continue to adulthood. Throughout our life span we are confronted with the basic fact that other people are different from ourselves, and we are dependent on others in a variety of ways. People's individuality includes a personal repertoire of preferences, ambitions, and values that may differ from, or even clash with, those of others, which, in turn, often results in disputes of different kinds. Therefore, just as social interactions and interdependence are inherent to our humanity, so are differences and conflicts. Despite often contrasting opinions, we still need to maintain a certain level of interdependence with a significant number of other individuals to uphold the functional social fabrics of which we are a part. As conflicts within relationships are normal and even unavoidable, we consequently spend a good amount of time dealing with disagreements. Realizing this, we may ask ourselves: How do I actually behave when these contrasting interpersonal differences throw me into conflicts with other people? This relationship is important to me – yet we are in disagreement, what do I do? Which strategy would be best to approach this conflict effectively?

To address this theme, we study the use of negotiation as an effective approach for conflict resolution. The goal of negotiation is to work collaboratively to achieve beneficial agreements for the parties involved in a conflict which has emerged: be they entrepreneurs setting up a business

deal, friends deciding where to go for holidays, spouses agreeing on how much money to spend on a family trip, students deciding on group work themes, managers determining salary increases or positioning different career development paths, or other scenarios. Situations that require negotiation are plentiful, and there is no negotiation of a conflict without collaboration.

In this book, we aim to empower the negotiator by considering three themes: conflict, negotiation, and perspective-taking – all three woven together in one fabric. With a richer and deeper understanding of the nature of conflict, as well as appreciation for the important role of interpersonal perspective-taking in order to attain an accurate perception of the counterpart, conflicts can be transformed through productive negotiation into mutually agreeable outcomes.

The discussion in this book is based on certain key tenets. First, to understand the practice of negotiation it is important to recognize the issues behind the conflicts that negotiations are intended to solve. Being unique individuals with distinct needs and desires, who live in a socially interconnected environment, makes disagreements inevitable. Conflicts, therefore, constitute a normal and common phenomenon. Second, another cornerstone in our understanding of conflict is that conflicts do not necessarily constitute a negative phenomenon *per se*. When properly handled, conflicts can lead to improvements in relationships and stimulate practical solutions to underlying problems. Third, with conflicts surrounding us at different levels, there are ample opportunities to engage in negotiation; indeed, it is hardly possible to avoid negotiation: "Like it or not, you are a negotiator".[2] Fourth, negotiation provides several distinct advantages over mediation and arbitration strategies. For instance, the opportunity for the involved parties themselves to take responsibility for finding a solution without seeking assistance from 'outsiders' makes a negotiation situation a potentially empowering experience. Fifth, the fact that we face conflicts every day compelling us to negotiate does not automatically make us good negotiators. The truth is that most people do not cultivate efficient negotiation competencies following a methodical approach, but instead acquire learning by doing, which is useful, yet insufficient.[3] As a matter of fact, in order to conduct successful negotiations, a set of relevant competencies, training, and realistic judgment, is required. Sixth, interpersonal perspective-taking is particularly useful in negotiation by facilitating the coordination of different standpoints, wherefore we give this social competence particular attention. Moreover, perspective-taking abilities applied in a negotiation setting will shape the interpersonal negotiation strategies used at the different phases of a negotiation.[4] Thus,

taking perspective on the counterpart's needs provides insights and information useful for attaining positive results.

The structure of the book is as follows: Chapter Two entails the concept of conflict, definitions, triggers of conflict, conflict levels, and conflict resolution. In Chapter Three, the negotiation process is closely examined including negotiation strategies, negotiation phases, and negotiation competencies and styles. Chapter Four explains the perspective-taking concept as an essential negotiation competence. We discuss interpersonal perspective-taking and the related interpersonal negotiation strategies and their role in the negotiation cycle. The final chapter covers a more theoretical discussion on negotiation research topics, including the roles of external actors in negotiation, the strategic choice model, main fields in negotiation research, and the normative and descriptive negotiation research strategies.

In sum, we consider a unique combination of three essential themes: conflict, negotiation, and perspective-taking, which together comprise a foundation for understanding conflict resolution through negotiation. Although this work is mainly intended for applying negotiation in professional contexts, the principles and implementation are highly relevant for the unavoidable conflicts that occur in our private lives as well.

Notes

[1] Despain, 2010
[2] Fisher and Ury, 1981, 6
[3] Thompson, 2012
[4] Yeates et al., 1990

PROLOGUE

We begin here to establish our premise, that although conflict can be a difficult experience, it can still offer an opportunity for growth. It is held here that in conflict resolution, *negotiation* constitutes the preferred strategy for reaching mutually acceptable solutions. Finally, among the different negotiation competencies discussed, *interpersonal perspective-taking* will be given special attention as the most instrumental competence for effective negotiations.

As competencies for conflict resolution, negotiation and perspective-taking run as red threads through this work, we will briefly explain the usage of the term here. The notion of competence traditionally refers to usefulness and efficiency in a particularly functional domain, but the use of the term nowadays is not coherent and is sometimes blurred.[1] The notion of competence has been used to describe various abstract concepts, i.e., communication competencies, teamwork competencies, managerial competencies, ethics competencies, and the like.[2] The ambition has been to concretize intangible concepts into measurable notions. In this work we apply a holistic understanding of competence, denoting not only knowledge and functional skills, but also behavior and attitudes. The reason for this understanding is that handling socially and psychologically complex processes like conflicts and negotiations requires that the involved individuals muster a broad range of different types of capabilities. Nevertheless, the overall performance of the negotiator, whether good or bad, is shown in the outcome of the conflicts and business transactions.

To start us off, we share former President John F. Kennedy's inspiring words regarding negotiation, in his first speech as President of the United States of America, during the Cold War era:

> "So, let us begin anew-remembering on both sides that civility is not a sign of weakness, and sincerity is always subject to proof. Let us never negotiate out of fear. But let us never fear to negotiate".[3]

The above quote from Kennedy advises us to take a negotiated approach towards conflict, and reminds us that fear should not steer our actions. The statement also affirms that respect is a sign of strength that we are encouraged to embrace. In addition, Kennedy makes it clear that information exchanged should always be open to validation. Later in the

speech (not quoted here) Kennedy also discusses the importance of delving into what unites, instead of overstressing those problems that divide. He invited a dual formulation of serious, concrete, and accurate proposals for the inspection and control of arms. Kennedy concisely proposed an integrative negotiation approach to the conflict.

With this prologue we will now address the topic of conflict.

Notes

[1] Le Deist, 2005
[2] Norris, 1991
[3] Kennedy, 1961

CHAPTER 2

CONFLICT

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We will now examine the phenomenon of conflicts as the precursor to negotiations, as well as focusing on the interpersonal level as it relates to conflict negotiation.

Background and definitions

We are unique individuals with particular interests and desires living in a socially intertwined context where we work, do business, engage in family life, and conduct many other activities. We need each other in order to achieve many of our goals, and it is this interdependency in relationships that can trigger disagreements. Conflict develops when two or more individuals have opposing interests and different needs, express contrary opinions, or misunderstand each other. Whatever its root, conflict can be an extremely negative experience with unfortunate and even devastating consequences for the relationship and for the greater community.

Workplace conflict constitutes a significant issue in today's society. Studies on conflict management suggest that conflicts in the workplace have increased in recent times with no positive countertrends in sight. Moreover, interpersonal conflict at work is associated with anxiety and fatigue, particularly when employees only manage the upsetting issues passively.[1] One challenge is the proper management of disputes in order to mitigate the damaging effects of conflict on collaboration and productivity.[2] In addition, conflict damages businesses with high yearly costs. Studies have shown that 20 to 40 percent of a manager's working hours are used to manage conflict.[3] Employee sick-leave due to conflict-related stress results in substantial health care costs, with related reduced organizational productivity and even personnel loss.[4]

In light of the vast and often negative impact that conflict exerts at different levels, it becomes evident that learning to address conflict

constructively can be of great help to any organization. Although often a difficult process, a conflict can indeed become a very productive experience with positive results and improved relationships. To perceive conflict as negative is quite common, but instead we can ask ourselves how to deal with this conflict in the best possible way. How we approach conflict can influence whether a conflict will have productive or damaging results.[5] The following discussion will examine first, definitions of conflict; second, what triggers conflict and the levels of conflict; third, conflict resolution types and characteristics; and fourth, how different views and attitudes about conflict affects how conflicts are dealt with.

As long as people have interacted with one another they have ended up in conflicts and tried to find resolutions. The word 'conflict' stems from the Latin words *conflictus* – meaning the act of hitting together – and from *confligere* – meaning to physically strike together.[6] Over time, the term has developed additional connotations beyond the original physical aspect that today may also include verbal aggression and moral overtones. However, within academic research and professional practice, conflict and conflict resolution are recent disciplines established after World War II. Conflict is not a monolithic concept: it has been stated that there is no comprehensive scholarly agreement on how to conceptualize conflict.[7] Regardless, we will look at some attempts to define conflict:

- "Struggle over values and claims to scarce status, power, and resources in which the aims of the opponents are to neutralize, injure or eliminate the rival".[8]

- Whereas a competitive situation might exist without any awareness of it by the parties concerned, a conflict, on the other hand, "is a situation of competition in which the parties are aware of the incompatibility of potential future positions and in which each party wishes to occupy a position that is incompatible with the wishes of the other".[9]

- Conflict results from purposeful interaction among two or more parties in a competitive setting. It refers to overt behavior rather than to potential for action and to subjective states.[10]

- Earlier scholars examining social conflict conceptualized it as "struggle for status […] later as struggle not only for status, but also for scarce resources and significant social change".[11]

- Within the area of interpersonal relations, conflict denotes the clash of objectives or values between two or more individuals in a relationship trying to influence each other while demonstrating hostile emotions.[12]

- "The process which begins when one party perceives that another has frustrated, or is about to frustrate, some concern of his."[13]

- Conflict constitutes "an intrinsic and inevitable aspect of social change".[14]

At this point, we find that there is also value in identifying certain key terms that are associated with conflict. These include:

- Key terms linked to conflict in older literature: competition, tensions, disputes, opposition, antagonism, quarrel, disagreement, controversy, and violence.[15]

- Key words recently associated with conflict include interdependence, interference, and obstruction.[16]

- Concepts suggested to describe aspects of interpersonal conflict: including "disagreement, negative emotion, or interference".[17]

The small selection of definitions presented here gives a glimpse of the discourse on the definition of conflict. Often, scholars have not clarified the selected terms, or compared them with other conceptualizations, to elucidate similarities or differences.[18] We observe here that the definitions above assume that conflict is linked with hostility between the parties. However, the idea that conflict can constitute a route to a solution and betterment of the situation is not mentioned here. We propose that conflict denotes the competitive exchange between adversaries contending for tangible and/or intangible assets, where the outcome often impacts the power balance between the involved parties and/or control over the relationship.

The variety of definitions discussed also reflects the diversity of conflict resolution research. It should also be noted that many different types of conflict are subject to research, ranging from interpersonal to international conflicts.

Moreover, any conflict may be investigated from a different scholarly angle drawing from insights garnered in different disciplines. A sample of scientific theories used to describe conflicts is listed below:

- Individual characteristic theories study the individual and personal aspects of the parties engaged in the conflict.

- Social process theories seek to draw conclusions from conflicts at a small scale to explain patterns occurring at a larger scale.

- Social structural theories try to explain conflicts as a result of the composition and function of society.

Formal theories use logical and mathematical models to describe social conflicts.[19] With these theories we are introduced to different perspectives that are applied to understanding conflicts, ranging from individual, to social and formal theories. To describe a conflict taking all these factors into account is clearly beyond the scope of this book, but we acknowledge that each school of thought (listed above) may add to our understanding of conflict, including the complexity inherent in conflicts.

Triggers of conflict

Now we move to the origin of the conflict itself: when does a conflict start and how? The starting point is the awareness that a conflict is at hand. Referring to the conflict definition above, the author comments on this phase, thus: "This definition was broad enough to include a wide variety of conflict phenomena, but specified a beginning point for the conflict process – i.e. the point when other social processes (e.g. decision-making, discussion) 'switched over' into conflict".[20] The trigger of a conflict will shape the overall character of a conflict, and also influence how the conflict can be addressed by opponents. Below are three classic categories of conflict trigger:[21]

Economic conflict trigger

Economic conflict denotes a situation with conflicting interests for limited resources. The actors involved typically strive to obtain maximum resources. For example, water scarcity can be a trigger for conflict, as when people leave small Syrian villages for main cities, searching for water. Another example is trade unions fighting for pay rises opposed by company leadership who do not perceive increased salaries as compatible with short-term profit or long-term business continuity. Interpersonal economic conflicts may happen when, for example, a parent is not willing to provide more pocket money despite an adolescent's demands. Disagreement in the family about finances, particularly between spouses, is a common conflict

issue.[22] Monetary discussions between business partners can also trigger conflict, with parties desiring a bigger portion of the assets, or disagreements on how finances should be managed.

Value and world view conflict trigger

Incompatibilities in beliefs, values, and traditions, between individuals or groups of people are well-known triggers of conflict. Conflicts based on incompatible personal convictions do not easily lend themselves to negotiated solutions, and can develop into intractable disputes. One example may be workplace problems that relate to generational differences in work-value, and ultimately influence workers' efficiency.[23]

Conflicts triggered by differing religious or political/economic views (i.e. socialism vs. capitalism) belong to this category, and can engage individuals and whole societies. Nowadays, communities and nations (mainly in the 'West') seek to avoid conflict by balancing freedom and tolerance while keeping their own moral values and upholding a stable society. Obviously, there is tension here, but to view conflict *per se* as neither inherently bad nor good can help to respond to this tension through constructive dialogue and negotiation.

Power conflict trigger

The desire for power has been described as an essential motivator of human behavior. Being an abstract concept with many expressions, power is inherent in every individual, and shaped by several factors, such as personal qualities, background, and context, among others. There is also structural power related to formal authority granted by institutions, organizations, and legal systems, for example.[24] Conflicts over power are inevitable as individuals compete for influence and prestige within organizations and groups. Here, each actor wants to retain or increase power to impact the relationship and the social context. For an actor to achieve greater power in the relationship requires making the other party weaker, and a win-win scenario for power-based conflict is not envisioned. Consequently, conflict triggered by a power struggle typically ends with a winner and a loser. The conflict may also end up in a prolonged standstill, with unceasing hostility between the contenders. A power-based conflict resolution tactic is a choice that one or both actors make in any given conflict; it occurs in interpersonal relationships, and at all societal levels. For example, conflicts handled using power in professional settings shape managerial perceptions. This was shown in a study in which managers who

used coercive power were regarded by their colleagues as displaying a conflictive management style.[25] How power is used, and for what purposes, will influence how conflicts arise.

However, to classify a conflict as purely power-based is often difficult, as the outcome of conflicts triggered by economic or value-based factors are often interwoven with a multi-faceted power struggle that eventually determines the outcome. A solved conflict in one area with unequal outcomes will also likely influence the power relationship between the parties. Moreover, a dispute over physical resources may be triggered by an underlying ambition for increased power, where the limited resources merely serve as an excuse for acquiring power.

In the workplace context, key causes behind conflict at work involve power, organizational challenges, and significance. The specific factors or situations that often ignite conflicts include problematic interpersonal relations, blurring organizational configurations, competitive agendas between colleagues and departments, competition for resources, budgets, employee redundancies, job extensions, and international competition.[26] Managers are responsible for orchestrating the organization of the workforce so that different roles and contributions optimally complement each other for overall productivity. When there are gaps in this assessment, conflicts at work can arise from employees whose skills and experience are not aligned to their work responsibilities, or to those of associates or individuals who employ the services or manufactured goods of the organization.[27] The understanding of the interdependence between actors in an organization is therefore of fundamental importance to understand and manage conflict. In fact, without any interdependence no conflict between parties is likely to occur. In the next section below, we will examine more closely interdependence in relation to conflict.

The role of interdependence in conflict

Interdependence between individuals influences social relations in all domains of life. It is usually a means to add value to others by providing complementing resources and assets in a reciprocal exchange within the relationship. Interdependence is, however, closely related to conflict. In this context, conflict resolution can be understood as the intentional exchange between two or more individuals who are struggling to allocate or reallocate the conditions of their interdependence.[28] Without interdependence, there are no relational points of contact, and no real conflict of interests. Moreover, conflict frequency and severity often correlate positively with the degree of interdependence in a relationship. In this sense, interdependence

could be viewed as a kind of conflict trigger. The nature of interdependence that exists between two actors also influences how the conflict is solved. The more interdependence at hand, the more difficult it is to simply impose one's own will on the other. Instead, an exchange is often required to find common ground. The type of interdependence involved is therefore carefully considered by the parties in conflicts where neither adversary is powerful or independent enough to enforce his or her will or to resolve the conflict alone.[29]

Interdependence constitutes an asset in any relationship when the actors possess a balanced self-image that affects interpersonal interactions and relations. This includes acquiring a genuine sense of responsibility for one's actions and accepting constructive interdependence vis-à-vis others. In a conflict episode it is then possible to draw from the strength of the existing interdependence and forge together a mutually beneficial outcome. Another aspect to consider is that the closer the relationship, the higher the degree of interdependence, and the more potential incompatibilities are experienced by the parties that may affect the relationship, their shared activities, and goals. Interdependence in close relationships makes conflict more likely to occur by virtue of this same interdependence involving considerable risk for evoking negative emotions. To be engaged in emotional relationships involves a risk of provoking conflicts because of the high level of interdependency over time. However, in close and stable relationships, the parties can develop approaches to avoid letting conflict distance them from one another. Balanced dialogue and emotional investment are thus maintained through interdependent interactions that help overcome negative emotions evoked in a conflict.

Conflicts are overly complex phenomena that may arise from many different underlying causes. A conflict needs to be addressed, taking into consideration the factors that characterize the conflict, including the type of interdependence that led to the conflict itself. Thus, interdependence can play a double role in conflict: interdependence sparks conflict, but in a close relationship where the interdependence is itself valued by the parties, it can facilitate a productive collaboration for resolving a conflict.

Conflict levels

Research on organizational conflict proposes that conflict can be examined across diverse levels.[30] 'Level' here indicates the number of persons and the type of relationship involved in the conflict. The conflict level has a direct impact in identifying the cause and determining the method of handling the conflict.

Below we have listed examples of conflict levels with a short description of the distinctive features:[31]

Intrapersonal conflict

This type of conflict manifests itself as an internal tension perceived by the person, and is often experienced by someone who avoids conflict. An example of this may be an employee who dislikes his or her job responsibilities, but does not resign because the salary is good. The individual in this situation is both attracted to, and repelled by, the same object. Another employment-related example may be a person who is content with his or her job, but is uncomfortable with the bad reputation of the employer company. And a third example would be an employee who has a well-functioning professional relationship with a colleague, but abhors his rude jokes and is afraid to express his sentiments. Whichever problem, the conflict is contained within the individual.

Interpersonal conflict

This conflict type is manifested between two individuals with opposing views and interests over a concrete mutual problem. This may include, for example, disputes between colleagues, teammates, spouses, classmates, or employees. When a conflict mainly involves two actors, these conflicts easily become personal and positional. Consequently, differentiating between the issue and the opponent may become difficult over time. The perception of the conflict may creep along these lines: "The concrete issue of dispute is the problem" becomes "the colleague's view about the issue is the problem", which, in turn, may ultimately be perceived as "the colleague is the real problem".

Intragroup conflict

This conflict type occurs within groups such as families, various communities belonging to the same tribe, and members of a team, as examples. One example is team members who are located in different parts of the world, and yet belong to the same team and work on the same project. Here, lack of personal face-to-face interactions may contribute to intragroup conflict through detachment, reduced shared group identity, and an increase in egotistic behaviors. The negative impact of these disputes may delay project goal achievement, affect financial gains, or disrupt the harmony of the members.

Intergroup conflict

Here, the conflict occurs between pre-defined groups, such as companies, countries, tribes, political parties, neighborhoods, or religions. This conflict typically consists of disputes between two rival powers fighting over concrete objectives, ideologies, or resource allocation. The complexity of intergroup conflict is normally very high, because of the number of individuals involved, as well as the multiple forms of mutual interactions possible. Alliances can develop, within and between groups, triggering opposing 'either us or them' attitudes.

Inter-organizational conflict

This type of conflict is closely related to the intergroup conflict type, and arises, for example, between two companies in which the pursuit of business development and success is hindered by the counterpart. When two companies are operating in the same business segment, for instance within the pharma industry, it is not uncommon that one party files a lawsuit against the other concerning breaches of intellectual property protection. In an already competitive relationship between two companies, an element of conflict is added, in this case often in a legal arena. Conflict in different areas can also occur between two companies or organizations in different sectors of society, as in the case of conflict between Swiss banks and tax authorities in other countries. Additionally, conflicts may occur between two nations, for instance the trade disputes between the US and China.

Several of these categories of conflict level overlap with one another, but the intention here is to show the plurality of conflict contexts in various social configurations in society. These categories can help identify reasons behind the conflict, as well as which approach to choose for conflict resolution.

Conflict resolution

Conflict resolution denotes the process in which parties engage to end a dispute. The conflict is managed in such a way as to reduce the level of intensity or aggression in order to begin constructive interactions for reaching closure.[32] Moreover, in conflict resolution, the communication process becomes central to transforming negative emotional frames to constructive emotional frames which help motivate the parties to pursue suitable solutions together. Thus, resolving conflicts implies at its best the process of reducing negative actions and reaching a mutual understanding

of the dispute in order to attain constructive outcomes. We will now discuss different conflict resolution approaches and styles commonly used.

Conflict resolution types

A conflict can be addressed in several ways. The first step in facing a conflict is to choose which resolution type to use. Conflict resolution constitutes an 'umbrella' concept in which negotiation is just one conflict resolution type, addressed here as the main theme of this book. Following are descriptions of various different conflict resolution types, including: coercion, adjudication, mediation, and arbitration in addition to negotiation.

Resolution approaches include:[33]

- Coercion: Forcing parties in conflict to a particular conclusion by means of aggression and/or threats;

- Adjudication: Using the power of the state and its legal system to provide an authoritative conclusion;

- Arbitration: Using a third party to decide through prior mutual consent the issues of the dispute;

- Mediation: Using a third party to help the conflicting parties come to a mutually satisfactory agreement usually through negotiation;

- Negotiation and bargaining: Solving the conflict through discussions, seeking a voluntary agreement, often in the form of a compromise.

Coercion, adjudication, and arbitration are all approaches that exclude the voluntary element in the conflict resolution process and are hence most often not preferred by the parties involved.[34] Successful coercion to obtain what one wants often involves huge resources and is recommended only in emergency cases. Adjudication, on the other hand, is a legal instrument in which the disputants bring their concerns, claims, and evidence, before a neutral, legal, accredited third party to attain favorable conflict resolution.[35] This type of conflict resolution is led by an adjudicator who uses a broad mandate to obtain the information deemed important from the parties, define the problem on his own, and devise a conflict resolution mode. Like adjudicators, arbitrators are third parties, and they determine the resolution of a dispute between two actors. But in contrast to an adjudicator, an arbitrator will invest considerable time listening to the disputants' concerns

and evidence before he or she will take a decision. The final conflict resolution mode involving a third-party role is mediation. A mediator's task is to try to convince disputants to enter a negotiation process, and work together to reach as many mutually acceptable agreements as possible. The mediator has no formal authority for imposing one outcome or another. Disputants have instead more space to verbalize their opinions and can influence the negotiation process to its very end. Moreover, usually the parties involved find the solution more gratifying in mediated resolutions than in arbitrated or adjudicated processes.

Mediation and negotiation are based on the voluntary participation of the opponents, and are therefore related but not the same. It is important to be aware of the considerable fluidity of terminology in this field. For instance, in the list above, negotiation and mediation are treated as separate entities.[36] Both are often regarded as different types of negotiation processes. However, some authors bring them together, referring to the concepts 'direct negotiations', with no need for mediator involvement, vs. 'mediation', where a third party facilitates conflict resolution without arbitrative power.[37]

Negotiation, as described in this book, refers to direct interactions between the adversaries with no external third party involved. Negotiation therefore depends exclusively on the parties involved, and their capacity to reach an agreement that all of them can accept.[38] As negotiation is described in detail later, it suffices at this point to emphasize that the sole responsibility for finding a solution to the conflict rests on the shoulders of the negotiating parties themselves. Taking this responsibility for managing a conflict can become, for the disputants, an empowering experience. As we all know, not all conflict resolution endeavors are fruitful. Therefore, there are advantages and disadvantages with each of these approaches which leave us to carefully consider which would best suit the conflict at hand.

Negotiation in comparison with other types of conflict handling

In the pursuit of alternatives to solve a conflict, negotiation, mediation, and arbitration, have similarities, and it is here suggested that mediation and arbitration are fundamentally, a form of aided negotiation.

Nevertheless, these various methods to settle conflicts or business deals have clear differences, as already stated, and are deemed suitable according to the characteristics of the dispute. A lack of transparent communication, and an unwillingness to initiate collaboration to negotiate, will make it more probable that the actors will require help, either through mediation or arbitration.

- Ownership: A negotiation is solely under the responsibility of the involved parties who control the process of working out their interdependence and autonomy; it can supersede any other form of handling a dispute or settling a deal. To start a negotiation is already a gain, because both parties show a readiness to find a mutual solution to the problem using their own willingness and creativity, as well as time, money and energy. This is not the case when a mediator or an arbitrator is hired. When the negotiation fails, and a mediator becomes involved, the actors' autonomy is inevitably compromised.

- Empowerment: Negotiation offers the involved actors an empowering experience. A study showed that during negotiation "[k]ey elements of empowerment were identified, including access to information, ability to make choices, assertiveness, and self-esteem".[39] These are key factors in achieving successful negotiations. The settling of a business deal and/or finding a resolution to a conflict – small or big – through negotiation, will have a positive impact on the actors. We are wired to accomplish something every day because it gives the feeling of progress. Therefore, as the negotiators take responsibility for the situation, pursue a solution together, and reach a deal, this experience may provide an important learning and growth opportunity.

- Familiarity: The parties' familiarity with the issue at stake constitutes an advantage with negotiation in comparison to mediation and arbitration. For mediation, a third person is needed to unlock a stalled negotiation. In both mediation and arbitration, time is needed to explain the matter and justify the positions.

- Clarity and alignment: Negotiation constitutes an autonomous process in which the negotiators produce the solution themselves, often documented in a contract crafted by the involved parties. This reduces the risk of misinterpretation concerning the transaction or relationship that the agreement is intended to regulate.

- Cost-effectiveness: Employing negotiation to solve an interpersonal dispute is typically the most cost-effective form of dealing with conflict. The negotiators normally agree to collaborate to solve the problem on their own, and therefore do not need to hire a third party to help. In the case of an arbitrator or mediator, he or she is normally hired officially, to intervene to help the disputants solve the dispute.

- Time control and time effectiveness: The timing and duration of the negotiation is controlled by the disputants themselves in a negotiation, which can therefore take place at the parties' convenience. Moreover, negotiation is usually the leanest, fastest, and most flexible form of conflict resolution. Resources and time dedicated to conflict handling hampers the productivity of an organization. Prompt responses provided, without delay from the use of intermediaries, can help resolve the problem before it starts, spiraling negatively causing additional harm.

- Confidentiality: In case of interpersonal conflicts, for example, negotiations are essentially confidential, except when the actors choose to proceed otherwise. There is no mandatory access to the negotiations by outsiders.

In conclusion, negotiation appears as the most open and autonomous form of mutual effort to solve a conflict among the three strategies discussed. Here, it is also recommended as the preferred initial action in the process of resolving any dispute and business settlement.

Dual concerns model for conflict resolution

One way to categorize conflict resolution approaches, is called the "dual concerns model", created by Blake and Mouton, which comprises five distinct behavioral categories.[40] The categories are differentiated according to the contending parties' concerns for their own goals vs. the concerns for the goals of their opponents.[41] These two types of concern form a two-dimensional model, depicted in Fig. 2-1.