ABSTRACT

        Six major causes of organizational conflict
(individual stress, role conflict, power struggles, differentiation,
interdependence, and external pressures) are delineated; implications
for managing these conflicts using collaboration, bargaining, and
power plays are pointed out; a conflict management paradigm pointing
out which mode of conflict management works best for which cause is
presented; and literature on organizational conflict management is
referenced. (Author/IRT)

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Monterey, California

MAJOR CAUSES OF ORGANIZATIONAL CONFLICT:
DIAGNOSIS FOR ACTION

C. Brooklyn Derr

June, 1975

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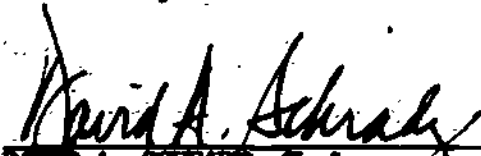| REPORT DOCUMENTATION PAGE		READ INSTRUCTIONS BEFORE COMPLETING FORM
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20. ABSTRACT (Continue on reverse side if necessary and identify by block number)

Six major causes of organizational conflict are delineated; implications for managing these conflicts using collaboration, bargaining and power plays are pointed out; a conflict management paradigm pointing out which mode of conflict management works best for which cause is presented; literature on organizational conflict management is referenced.

MAJOR CAUSES OF ORGANIZATIONAL CONFLICT:

DIAGNOSIS FOR ACTION

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MAJOR CAUSES OF ORGANIZATIONAL CONFLICT

DIAGNOSIS FOR ACTION

The success or failure of any organization is
dependent upon the use of its indigenous, collective
energies. When procedures are clear, the "esprit de
corps" is high, and the energy resources of the organi-
zation are primary and dynamically directed towards
achievement of the organization's task goals, then
the enterprise is said to be productive. The number
and depth of the unmanaged internal and external conflicts
draining its energy resources can generally determine
an organization's place on the scale between success and
failure.

The primary goal of an organization's management team,
therefore, is to divert resource energy from conflict
dissipation to task-goal implementation. In order to
do this, ways and means must be found and applied to
turn conflict energy into productivity, or at least,
to eliminate the conflict energy drain; in other words,

to use conflict-directed organization energy
positively.

This is not a simple maneuver. Organizational
conflict occurs at the same organizational level of
individuals and groups generally responsible for diag-
nosing the problems and effecting the cure. "Doctor,
cure thyself ..." but in order to do so it is important
that "to thine own self be true ..." in terms of the
organization's good, even if it means sacrificing your
own ambitions, needs and satisfactions.

In an ideologically-oriented organization created
to handle a war, social unrest or psychic disorder, for
example, the sacrifice of "self" for the "good of the
organization" carries its own rewards. In a career-
oriented organization, however, "self" must be preserved
at all costs, or there will be no career and no rewards.
This is the primary and motivating distinction between
career-oriented organizational conflict and conflict
generated within an ideologically-oriented organization.
While there is need for more general theory about conflict
and conflict management and while valid concepts and
models at any level of analysis should hold true for
other levels as well, there are, nevertheless, some unique
features of career-oriented organizational conflict which,
when highlighted, may be useful to students of complex
organizations.

.The emphasis in this article is not on the uniqueness
between the two types of organizations and their conflicts,
but rather on the major areas of dispute that occur,
especially within career-oriented organizations.

The term "conflict" (or "dispute") is used in a
variety of ways including tension, opposition, competition,
fighting, incompatible interests, violence and problem-
solving. Kenneth W. Thomas and other writers on the subject
have pointed out that the term "conflict" has no clear
referrent.[1] In this paper, the concept is operationally
defined to mean: energy expended in the enterprise in
reaction to a felt tension. The causes of that tension,
their intensity-effect and the possibilities of coping with
conflict are treated below.

FIELDS OF INTEREST AND
SCHOOLS OF THOUGHT

The management of organizational conflict,

as a special subfield of conflict
resolution, has come to be much studied and discussed,
generally, and experimentally implemented in some insti-
tutions only within the past five years. However, several
schools of thought on the subject did begin to evolve
seriously around 1960; the genesis going back to 1950
(as cited in Table I) when major journal articles on the
subject first appeared. The Table I articles are listed
by the professions (fields) they serve. It is interesting

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to note that more has been written to business and academic audiences than to practitioners in either education or public administration. In fact, the _Harvard Business Review_ has run many more articles for practitioners than the other comparable journals, and the _Administrative Science Quarterly_ has prihted far more articles on this subject for academicians.

TABLE I

Journal Articles on Organizational Conflict

	BUSINESS			EDUCATION				PUBLIC ADMINIS-TRATION	ACADEMIC		
	HBR*	AMJ*	CMR*	TCR*	AN*	EA&S*	EAO*	PAR*	ASQ*	JABS*	JCR*
	1951-73	1965-73	1958-73	1965-73	1952-73	1951-73	1965-73	1950-73	1956-73	1965-73	1957-73
Directly-Related Articles*	19	5	9	0	8	0	3	2	15	8	7
Tangentially-Related Articles*	15	1	16	2	7	1	2	7	12	6	17

*SEE APPENDICES I AND II

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"Directly-related" articles are those that concen-
trate on conflict within organizational boundaries and
are illustrative of knowledge, skills and strategies
(situations) for actually managing disputes. "Tangen-
tially-related" articles, on the other hand, may relate
information that has implications for either what we
know about varieties of organizational conflicts or how
to resolve them. This latter category does not directly
address the subject but adds to our understanding.

Table II illustrates the point that the real
concentration in this field is a post-1960 endeavor.
Only nine directly-related articles were printed in the
1950's, while sixty-seven articles have appeared since
that time. Also, some thirty-nine articles were printed
since 1968 (during the last five years), whereas only
twenty-seven were in circulation between 1960-1968. The
appendix lists all of the articles considered by the
author to be tangentially and directly related.

TABLE II

DIRECTLY-RELATED ARTICLES APPEARED ON THESE DATES

	ACADEMIC			PUBLIC ADMINIS-TRATION	EDUCATION				BUSINESS		
	JCR*	JABS*	ASQ*	PAR*	EAO*	EA&S*	AN*	TCR*	CMR*	AMJ*	*HBR*
	1957(2)		1959 1960				1956		1959		1953(3)
											1958 1960
			1961 1962				1960(2)				
	1963	1965	1965				1962				1963(2) 1964 1965(2)
				1967						1969(2)	
	1966 1967	1968 1969	1966		1968		1968 1969(2)		1968 1969 1970	1969(2)	1967(2)
	1972(2)	1970(2) 1972(2) 1973	1969(4) 1970 1971 1972(2) 1973	1972	1970 1972		1971		1972(2) 1973(3)	1973	1970 1971(2) 1972(3) 1973

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The literature mostly describes opinions about the
genesis of organizational conflict. Since 1965, however,
there has been an emphasis on effective action to manage
it. The most prevalent approach is the collaborative one
ascribed to by organization development (OD) proponents.
They point out that: conflict is neither good nor bad but a
normal consequence of organizational life; that it occurs is not
so important as how it is managed. The method that leads to
effectiveness is one which views the dispute as creative tension
energy which, when brought to the surface and problem solved, can
lead to innovation, better interpersonal relationships and increased
productivity.[2]

A more recent approach to organizational design and
theory has focused on intervening in the organization to
match the internal tasks and structure to the demands of
the external environment. This school of thought contends
that: there is no "best" way to design the enterprise, since
appropriate structure, for example, is contingent upon the task,
the environment and the needs of individuals and groups working in
the system. The theory and empirical research supporting
this point of view has resulted in a body of literature
known as "Contingency Theory."[3] One rule of thumb is
that: the prescription for improvement must be appropriate and,
therefore, can only be made after a careful diagnosis.

In a Contingency Approach, effective conflict manage-
ment depends on an in-depth assessment of the major causes
of the dispute.

Almost any effective action will depend on a valid
and useful diagnosis of the problem(s). Whether the
research supports a more normative (collaborative) OD
view about effective conflict management or a Contingency
Theory approach is a much debated question. The following
describes the author's synthesis of what the literature
says are the major reasons for conflict--those which have
implications for intervention and management--which will later be
treated with some of his and others' experiences in the
application of different management procedures.

MAJOR CAUSES OF CONFLICT

According to the literature, there are innumerable
origins of organizational dispute and each produces its
own variety of effects. In general, there are six major
sources: (1) the interpersonal disagreements that arise
when one person is experiencing individual stress;
(2) the problems resulting from role conflict, a condition
that occurs when there is a clash over one's role in the
organization;. (3) the power struggles that pit persons and
groups against one another to achieve their own selfish
objectives; (4) the misunderstandings and disagreements

from differentiation, i.e., the clashes that arise because people approach common problems from very different orientations; (5) the interdependence requirements for collaboration which, if not extensive and balanced between the parties, cause communication and interaction breakdowns which, in turn, if critical, lead to more intensive conflicts; and (6) the external pressures from forces outside the enterprise that breed internal pressures as the system seeks to adapt but not to disrupt its internal order.

INDIVIDUAL STRESS

Oftimes the feelings, anxieties and tensions ex-perienced by a person are so strong as to influence his work relationships with others. The origin of these internal conflicts may or may not be directly attributed to the organization. People bring their whole selves to the workplace and they may be experiencing stress as a result of their membership in other organizations (e.g. voluntary groups, the family) or they may be working through psychological issues (e.g. depression, per-sonality change, identity crisis). There are, however, several causes of individual stress that are directly related to the organization.

Unfulfilled Expectations

There is often an expectation gap between what
the employee understands the job or task to be and what
it actually is. In some organizations, recruiters tend
to overemphasize favorable aspects of a job so that
false expectations are generated. This is especially
true when the job is professional in nature (e.g.,
requiring individual expertise that comes from special
training, the product of which can only be judged by
others with similar knowledge) because the conditions
and emphasis of the position vary according to the
organizations' needs and therefore cannot be defined.
Problems in his field of expertise that were high priority
at the time of recruitment might be downgraded, forcing
the professional to accept a lesser degree of importance
in the organization, in direct ratio to the problem-solving
emphasis required by the organization.

In other instances, the recruit himself is so intent
on achieving his own objectives that he interprets the
recruiters messages to suit himself. He is later disap-
pointed to discover that it is not possible to redefine
the "grey" areas between his objectives and those of the
organization to his satisfaction within the already
established social system.

The rate of organizational change in our society

often makes it impossible to keep original promises and
contracts. The needs and objectives of the organization
may change dramatically with new technology, new com-
petition and new client orientations. Jobs and tasks
inside the system must vary accordingly to adapt to
demands coming from the external environment.

Research by Schein[4] and Kotter[5] stresses that a
worker's satisfaction and productivity in his first year
is largely determined by the degree to which his expectations
and those of the organization match. Kotter's work under-
scores the importance (for employee motivation) of matching
expectations even over the possibility of an unexpected
bonus. Argyris[6], and Levinson[7] have also stressed
the importance of stated and unstated expectations as a
powerful determinant of organizational behavior.

Values

It is increasingly commonplace for an employee's
personal values to be in conflict with the norms, procedures
and goals of the enterprise. Employees believe less and
less that they should subordinate their interest to those
of the organization.

The emergence of the notion that a person has a
greater moral duty to exercise his judgment against the
organization for the good of society is growing. For
example, Ralph Nader encourages government employees to

serve as social watchdogs and report to public scrutiny·
groups, any information that conflicts with their inter-
pretation of the public good. The cases of Daniel Ells-
Berg releasing the Pentagon Papers for publication and
Jack Anderson reporting the National Security Council's
discussion of the India-Pakistan War "tilt" are illus-
trations of this new version of morality.

    Values greatly influence individual behavior. They
determine what the individual regards as good, right and
important. They govern his attitudes towards causes and
issues. They control the way he internalizes, assimilates,
and transmits information and concepts. They even serve
as guides for his behavior. When a person experiences
a conflict between his values and those of the organization,
he undergoes personal stress that may well affect his
performance and cause difficulties for the enterprise.[8]

Authority Relationships

    An individual's psychological tolerance for and
response to authority figures are critical impact factors
on his relationship to the organization. Various types
of subordinates may have different responses to the
same boss: one may work well with one boss and clash
with another; a colleague might favor the second boss
and fight with the first. The leadership style of the
boss and the disposition of the subordinate towards
authority persons in general and towards a leadership

style in particular, will determine the extent to which
there exists personal stress in the subordinate that
could lead to organization conflict.[9]

Some persons have deep, psychological needs to
dominate or control. Such a type can be impulsive and
actively seek to overthrow the authority person. This
is the so-called "trouble-maker." His insatiable need
for power causes him to create conflict situations to
undermine the authority person who dominates him.

When he organizes others against the boss, the
friction he creates within the organization reacts
detrimentally upon the system and ultimately against
him.

There is still another type of individual who also
wants to dominate but he uses a more passive modus
operandi. Suffering from a sense of guilt about his
negative feelings towards his boss, his aggression is
usually more hidden and his tactics are more indirect
and manipulative. He is capable of spreading malicious
gossip and of sabotaging the work to make the authority
person look bad.

Then there is the individual who needs to be in control
of his own destiny so that any directives by an authority
figure are negatively viewed. His greatest goal is either
to have a well-defined job where he can do the minimum
and have the rest of the time to himself, or to be in the
capacity of a professional with maximum flexibility and

autonomy. He rebels against authority by avoiding it,
trying to become as free as possible from its influence.
He even avoids interaction and participation for fear
that he will then be forced to follow the group's
decision instead of acting independently. Such an employee
seeks to build barricades around himself in order to
enjoy maximum autonomy.

Relative Deprivation

People frequently evaluate their well-being in
relative rather than absolute terms. They compare them-
selves with others and their apparent standing in the
comparison determines their happiness. The feeling of
being deprived in relation to others rather than actually
being deprived is a state known as "relative deprivation."[10]

However, relative deprivation theory presumes that
there will be close association with a reference group so
that the degree of similarity between the individual and
the other people (of reference) can be established. The
individual will then have to choose which state he prefers.
Such conditions exist in a complex organization. People
work closely within their own work group and they compare
themselves as to salary, work conditions, status, authority,
opportunities, etc., to others in the group. Groups within
the system compare themselves to other groups.

Persons and/or groups in organized setting do experience relative deprivation. As a result, the individual may be openly hostile to another member of the group, or the group hostile to another group. They may feel that the organization is taking advantage of them and that they should act against it (e.g., sabotage) or should do less work. They may simply feel hurt because they are not valued and, as a consequence, may withdraw, performing only the minimum required of them.

Self-Esteem

Chris Argyris maintains that three aspects of individual personality relate to one's competence and effectiveness.[11] First, the person must accept himself so that he values himself; he is then open to receive feedback regarding his attitudes, his work and work products, and to be minimally defensive. This is because he values his whole self enough to consider criticism willingly and accept suggestions that can improve a part of himself that is lacking (without, in turn, devaluing his whole self). Second, the person must get confirmation that his view of reality on any given subject or problem compares favorably with the view of others; this gives him more self-confidence in his own perceptions. Finally, the person needs the freedom to be able to express his own capabilities and concerns for improving the system so that

he feels essential to its effectiveness.

The feelings of essentiality, confirmation and self-acceptance are preconditions to being effective in organizations. These are all part of a person's total self-esteem.

On the other hand, individuals with low self-esteem in one or more of the "self" areas, can generate many organizational conflicts. Such persons tend to become overly defensive in order to be able to survive with the low opinions they hold of themselves. As a result, they depersonalize any feedback and attribute it to uncontrollable events or to other people. They rationalize away negative information rather than acting to improve the situation. They regard such data as a cumulative attack on themselves rather than accept as useful that feedback which seems to be accurate.

Conflicts occur when the person of low self-esteem's defensive behavior blocks honest and meaningful interaction with fellow workers; also when they perceive that he is fragile, they tend to ignore or avoid him; when such a person, under stress, withdraws and denies to the others access to information he holds (including his opinions) he holds back as well the benefit of his best performance which, under normal conditions, would require taking risks.

ROLE CONFLICT

Some social psychologists argue that an organization
is substantially a number of organized acts among people.
People act on materials, on machines, and on one another.
Thus, the organization is comprised of persons interacting
in certain roles, and it is possible to understand an
individual's behavior in the organization by finding out
what his roles are in respect to others.

Role behavior in a complex organization refers to
"the recurring actions of an individual, appropriately
interrelated with the repetitive activities of others so
as to yield a predictive outcome."[12] Members of the
organization perform their interactions with others who
are often called the "role-set." The role-set is composed
of those persons who are interdependent with a particular
person in the organization, and the activities that define
his role are maintained through the expectations of members
of the role-set. Sometimes, however, the person does not
choose to conform to these expectations and conflict arises.

The strongest individual stress aspects in role
conflict are the expectations' gaps that cause personal
tension. These are often due to the clash between the
person and his role-set rather than, for example, the
person and the whole organization. The other causes of
individual stress presented above are all intensified as
an individual interacts with other members of his role-set.

However, there is an important distinction between role conflict and individual stress per se. In the former, the emphasis is placed on understanding the disputes that occur when there is interaction between the person and his role set. In the latter category, there is an effort to try to determine what happened within the person that led him first to experience conflict and later to act it out on the role set. Role conflict is interpersonal and intragroup in nature; individual stress is intrapersonal but eventually leading to the interpersonal level of analysis. As Katz and Kahn state about the nature of role theory:

> It is the received role which is the immediate source of influence and motivation of his behavior (insofar as it is influenced by members of his role set). Finally, the focal person acts; showing some combination of compliance and non-compliance with the expectations of his role-set. [13]

There are a number of reasons why individuals may not conform to the expectations of members of their role set. One: contradictory messages received from others, such as trying to live up to the expectations of the principal of a school which may violate important norms of a teaching team. Two: different persons within a role-set may have diverse expectations and the individual may have to choose one set of expectations instead of another. Example: sometimes a new teacher may have to

choose between what his/her professor, in college taught
to strive toward and the different philosophies and
methods of the faculty with which she/he is now working.

Three: interrole conflicts manifested due to the
multiple roles in the organization which most persons
must assume. An individual may be a teacher, the head
of a curriculum committee, the member of a planning
committee, and at the same time a teachers' association
representative. A choice will have to be made by this
person between the expectations of the different roles
takers with whom he interacts, for an expectation of one
might well be in conflict with the expectations of another.

Four: role overload, a result of expectations of
members of the various role sets which are too demanding.
It may be impossible to satisfy them all.

Five: personal reluctance on the part of the
individual who simply does not want to comply with the
expectations of members of his role-set. The expectations
may be perceived by the individual as against his personal
values, not personally interesting to him, in violation
of his professional orientation to the work, or different
from his own perceptions of what is needed. This part of
role conflict theory is similar to the individual stress
category. Once again, however, the emphasis in this
last differentiation between an individual's perceptions
and what is needed lies in the choice he makes about how

to oppose the others in the group, and not on his personal
tensions which may lead sometimes unintentionally, to
interpersonal disputes.

POWER STRUGGLES.

Power struggles seem to be a natural part of
organizational life. Robert Ardrey claims that man has
a real need for territory or a piece of the action he can
call his own.[14] David McClelland has distinguished
between socialized power, that is, the desire to use
influence to serve and be more socially responsible, and
personalized power, defined as the need to control and
use power to advance one's self. The socialized power
need is normal among leaders and might be beneficial to
the organization.[15] Of course, personalized power need
can also be destructive. Michael Crozier states that
power plays of one kind or another were at the heart of
all the conflicts he has studied.[16] And the conclusive
thesis of Anthony Jay's "Management and Machiavelli" is
that bureaucratic politics (power playing) are normal and
natural and should therefore be dealt with dispassionately
as a reality of organizational life.[17]

Power struggles occur when some persons or a group(s)
try to gain advantage over others. One common reason for
a power struggle is competition for scarce resources (e.g.,

status, information, work load, budget). The objective
is to set up a destructive win-lose situation whereby
one of the parties will be destroyed, or at least
dominated by the victor.

A second cause of power struggles in complex organi-
zations arises when parties seek to gain influence through
the informal organization. The person or group(s) who
have the recognition-based power are the key to this gambit.
That is, when he is (or they are) perceived by organizational
members as having access to the boss, or have gained by
whatever means deference from others, received key assign-
ments, he (or they) are able because of position to deliver
services and favors, etc., and a power-wielding position
has been established.

A third cause of power struggle conflict springs
from the incompatible drives for autonomy and influence
By definition, to be influential is to be involved with
others and to be autonomous is to be neither involved nor
influenced. To be influential therefore, fulfills certain
power needs for control over others, while to be autonomous
allows one to be his own man (exercise control over self).
Figure I represents the "power triangle" and helps us
better to understand some of these dynamics or the
organizational power struggle leading to conflict.

FIGURE I:

THE POWER TRIANGLE

Figure shows a triangle labeled AUTONOMY (left side), INFLUENCE (right side), AUTHORITY (base).
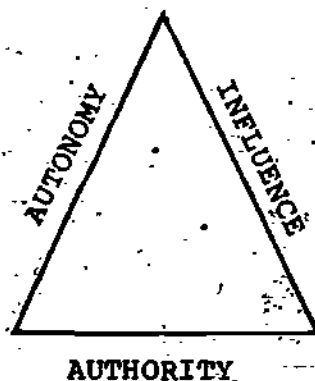
Influence and autonomy are mutually incompatible
objectives that clash at the vertex and are linked
together by the common base of formal authority. Persons
trying to be autonomous attempt to resist the rules,
policies and pressures of those in authority, and those
who seek influence either try to enlist the support of
authority figures (to use them) or vie for the positions
themselves so that they can combine informal influence
with formal authority. Conflict arises when, for example,
subordinates resist the orders of those in authority or
when the organization cannot.gain full compliance by
subordinates for its decisions.

Conflicts also arise within a person or group that
attempts to be both influential and autonomous. A "best
of both worlds" approach seldom succeeds and, in this
case, it is difficult to straddle the line between getting
involved and staying aloof.

A valid reason for conflict develops when an emergent
leader with influence (e.g., senior professor) disagrees
with the authority person (e.g., department chairman). In

some organizations, the emergent leader can gain more
influence by remaining a marginal or informal leader,
i.e., keeping a low profile and manipulating through others.

Conflict also occurs when an individual succeeds
at gaining freedom from the restrictions and thereby the
influence of his role set. Such a person is often disputed
because he cannot be counted on to do his share of the
work) support the norms considered by the role set to be
important or to contribute to a resolution of the problems
and issues being deliberated by them for which they are
responsible.

The fourth of the power struggles causes is manifested
when persons of equal authority in a work group (peers) vie
for leadership positions and influence. Most group decisions
are usually made by compromises or consensus. Either
process results in unleashing powerful points of view that
try to sway the group; these can lead to unmanaged negative
feelings and disagreements. In fact, wide open channels of
communication can encourage the expression of tensions--all
of which is to the good, but only if those feelings are
managed.

Group-based emergent leadership is often captured by
articulate spokesmen because the scene (a group with members
talking) is one in which expressive persons can dominate.
This sometimes causes conflicts for the inarticulate, the
timid and for those who have a different reactive style

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(e.g., American Indians, through tribal traditions inculcated from birth, generally listen and remain silent until there is a movement towards consensus, or they really have a deep felt position to take).

Intragroup conflicts also emerge when newcomers find it difficult to gain true access to the rest of the group or when trying to establish their influence-identity through certain incumbents, they offend or irritate others.

The indigenous seeds of power struggles take root when group-based decision making does not work. The confidential information that was freely exchanged because there was initial trust is now used by warring factions in the form of delitorious gossip or making strategy decisions against the opposition.

A fifth power struggle confrontation occurs when some of the interrelated departments and organizations are not bound by either a common authority or the need to collaborate (interdependence). These independent units, however, tend to get involved in important power struggles to strengthen their already strong positions. They fight unilaterally for jurisdiction over various functions (territories); they vie with competitors for scarce resources within the common marketplace, demonstrating to clients that they can out-perform their competitors (e.g. by profit statements), failing really to communicate in the "selling" phase the joint problems they have in common with the others; they

distort or withhold information from clients and competitors
alike. Thus, as the opposing units unite defensively,
strong intragroup feelings of solidarity against the
autonomous unit are built, and as a result, numerous inter-
personal hostilities and attitudes of distrust develop.
These are difficult, if not impossible, to overcome at a
later time when the autonomous unit needs to work together
with one or more of the other units.

DIFFERENTIATION

The relationship between organization and environment
has been the focus of much recent research and theory
building. Both empirical and theoretical studies have
shown that, given certain task environmental requirements,
some patterns of structure and behavior are more appropriate
than others; that organizations conforming more closely
with these patterns are more effective.[18] This concept,
subject of a growing body of literature, is called
"Contingency Theory." It is a "contingent" theory because
the theme common to these studies is that effective patterns
of organizational structure and behavior are contingent
on environmental and task demands.[19] An organizational
pattern, initially well-suited to an existing environment,
ceases to be appropriate as major environmental changes
occur. They require compensating changes in the task
patterns of the organization in order for the organization to
function dynamically within the new environmental atmosphere.

The basic premise of Contingency Theory is that an unstable environment requires the organization to exhibit alertness, flexibility and dynamic responsiveness to whatever changes may occur.

Several empirical and theoretical studies of organizational response to environmental change support this conclusion.[20] For example, Burns and Stalker have shown that in order to survive, organizations thrust into dynamic and uncertain environments require different patterns of structure and conflict resolution than do organizations comfortably ensconsed in stable and unchanging environments.[21] Work by Emery and Tist, Dill, Starbuck, and Terreberry also support these findings and suggest that as environments evolve in terms of diversity, turbulence, rates of change, or uncertainty, organizational patterns of behavior must evolve with them.[22]

One of the most recent and elaborate Contingency Theories has been advanced by Lawrence and Lorsch. Their approach has already received much attention in business circles.[23] Building on several other studies concerning organizational-environmental "fit," Lawrence and Lorsch viewed organizations as open systems capable of internal differentiation. Within this premise, they developed a contingency model for studying the relationship between environment and internally differentiated complex organizations.[24] Observing that organizational environments often offer a wide diversity of issues, they

postulated that organizations segment themselves into subunits, each subunit concentrating on one part of the organization's task and environment. The authors' hypothesized that if the individual "subenvironments" and the corresponding tasks of these subunits were different from each other, then the internal organization of each of the various subunits would also have to differ.

They theorized that segmentation into subunits has two consequences: (1) the efforts of the various segmented parts are integrated, making the entire organization viable; and (2) differentiation among members of the various parts is created. "Differentiation" was operationally defined as the differences among members of major subunits in cognitive and attitudinal orientations, i.e., differences in attitudes and behavior, not simply division of labor or specialization of knowledge. Differentiation was measured in four areas: goal orientation, formality of structure, time orientation, and interpersonal orientation.

Using these constructs, Lawrence and Lorsch postulated, and later showed empirically, "that the greater the differentiation among parts, the more difficult it was to bring about integration of effort."[25] Integration was defined as the perceived state of collaboration between major pairs of subunits.

In a comparative study of organizations in three different U.S. industries, Lawrence and Lorsch found that each industry required different patterns of differentiation

if organizations were to be effective. In the more diverse
and uncertain industry-environments, subunits had to be
more differentiated from each other if the total organi-
zation was to cope with the diversity of its tasks and
subenvironments. Environmental diversity was operationally
defined as the degree to which the subenvironments corresponding
to various subunits differed in their relative certainty of information,
time span of feedback, and the major issues they presented to the
organization.[26]

Lawrence and Lorsch discovered that the more effective
firms (in terms of economic criteria) in industries .
characterized by high diversity were more differentiated
than the less effective firms.[27] They also found that
these firms had simultaneously achieved higher states of
integration between subunits. In the more diverse environ-
ments, high differentiation was required between subunits
but considerable integration was needed to bring together
these differentiated but interdependent parts.

A study of the best performing organizations operating
in the differentiation mode showed that they were more
effective in resolving interdepartmental conflict and in
joint decision making than the lesser performing firms.
It was found that the mechanics for integration in the
latter were more highly developed than in the former. These
conclusions suggest that the higher the degree of differen-
tiation among subunits, the greater the need for elaborate

.integrating (conflict management) devices.

James Thompson indirectly reinforces this contention
when he states that division of labor (segmentation) is
one of the major causes of organizational conflict and that
this is due to the diverse orientations of the heterogeneous
organizational population (differentiation).[28]

Todd Laporte, in studying a government research and
development organization, discovered a minimum of differen-
tiation and therefore a minimum of conflict because the
workers were for the most part self-dependent scientists
who required little interaction with other scientists to
accomplish their part of the organization's task.[29] However,
in Harrison White's studies of the disagreements between
an R & D and a production department in an industrial
enterprise, the kinds of conflicts he describes are similar
to the ones discovered by Lawrence and Lorsch in the highly
differentiated firms, and by-and-large substantiate their
conclusions.[30]

Conflicts occur because people and groups approach
problems with totally different orientations. This is
especially true at the intergroup level of analysis where
whole departments become cohesive and competitive and take
on special indulgent characteristics to serve and protect
their domain, causing conflict thereby with other groups
outside their orbit whose orientation and objectives are
different. This is just as true at the interpersonal level
when two different individuals try to collaborate (e.g.,

academic consultant and line administrator, the directors
of two different departments, and old-timer and a young
MBA in the same task force).

INTERDEPENDENCE

The more two persons or groups are required by the
nature of the task to work together (be interdependent),
the greater the potential for conflict. If persons must
work closely and dependently with one another to get the
job done, they will be more sensitive to their disagreements.
Forced to collaborate, the magnitude of the consequences
of disagreements are intensified on a one-to-one basis
because of the nature of the close, enduring relationship.
As a result, the potential for friendship or antagonism is
in direct ratio to the intensity and frequency of their
disagreements. Thus, whenever conflict arises, it is made
more intense or less intense by the relative climate of the
interdependence between the individuals.

A residual effect of high interdependence seems to be
the corresponding drive for autonomy.[31] If the imposition
of joint activity is too demanding, the people involved
will consider it an invasion of their right to pursue some
of their own interests. Interdependence, therefore, breeds
conflict when people with needs for autonomy for their own
interests tend to resist it (depending on how heavy are
the requirements for collaboration).

When collaboration is superimposed by the organization on departments or other groups, some common conflicts often emerge. Usually they are the kinds of problems we discussed in the previous section on differentiation. Moreover, if the two groups have had a history of poor relations in the past, the new venture is adversely affected from the beginning. This negative entry into collaboration can quickly accumulate into a struggle over who will possess what information, spend what budget, initiate action or control decisions.

On the other hand, the lack of interdependence can also be a cause of organizational conflict. Persons who do not have to collaborate on the main body of their work and therefore do not frequently communicate or interact with others, tend to guard their insular domain by being secretive and distrustful. They generally do not understand nor seek knowledge of the problems of other persons or groups. Operating without validated information, they will react to apparent or imagined encroachments on their autonomy, creating real conflicts where often, none need to exist.

EXTERNAL PRESSURE

Complex organizations, whether they be business or schools, must accomplish three major functions simultaneously in order to survive: they must adapt to demands coming from the external environment, they must change internally to facilitate such adaption, and they must meed organizational

objectives.[32] Thus, an enterprise does not exist in a
vacuum; rather, it is a part of its own external environ-
ment and must meet those external demands in order to
continue existence. These factors are part of the Lawrence
and Lorsch theory described above in the section on
differentiation.

The boundaries of an organization at the interface
with its environment are not self-contained but are
permeable. There is a continual process of importing,
converting and exporting materials to and from the environ-
ment. Walter Buckley underscores this concept:

> That a system is open, means, not simply that it engages
> in interchanges with the environment, but that this
> interchange is an essential factor underlying the system's
> viability, its reproductive ability or continuity and
> its ability to change.[33]

The external environment can be a formidable force
impinging on the organization. It can cause organizational
conflict as the internal system tries to adapt to or defend
against pressures from without. For example, every business
recognizes the impact of its clients and competitors on
its performance; every school system feels vulnerable to
the demands of parent and community groups, to changes in
teaching and administration.

Some OD theorists believe that exceptional conflict
possibilities are put on the system when the environment

is generally uncertain or unstable (e.g., in innovative
industries such as electronics or plastics or, in the
public sector, when government funding is uncertain).
Persons in such tentative systems are fearful and are
under constant pressure to provide for their own survival.
This leads to many conflicts, even when a disaster threat
is not imminent. However, when crisis reigns and chaos
is rampant, the authority persons at the top of the organi-
zation tighten their controls so as to assure system survival
and thereby their own. As a result, many become involved
in vicious power struggle conflicts. Each tries to dominate
and secure his position with added power and at the same time,
take advantage of the crisis in order to possess greater
influence and more territory when it has passed.

The clients or consumers of organizations sometimes
bring direct force to bear on the serving organization.
However, some environmental groups are part of the system's
own mechanism for gaining external cooperation and feedback.
For example, stockholders vote and express their opinions
at the annual meeting. The PTA serves as a channel for
parents to discuss their views with the school system. Many
feel, however, that the effectiveness of an environmental
group's input on the system is minimal because the organi-
zation controls whether or not to act on their suggestions.
Or, if it does act, it may do so in such a way that the
interest of persons in the system are first protected and/or

served, distorting and possibly destroying the intent of
the suggestion and the effectiveness of implementation.
Also, organizations can and do coerce the involvement
of these kinds of groups in decisions to back their own
self-serving versions of a group-sponsored program of action
by deceptive promises to utilize the program in a way
that will satisfy the group's objectives. When the
deception surfaces, it is too late and generally too
embarrassing for the deceived group to admit its gulla-
bility by sabotaging a program it supported.

However, recent decades in American history have
demonstrated the powerful impact of protest groups on
organizations. Students have incapacitated universities;
schools have been boycotted and, sometimes, shut down by
rioting students and unhappy citizen groups; governmental
agencies, particularly those whose functions related to
the Vietnam Way and presently those whose focus is on
poverty, race relations, etc., have been the victims of
many irate citizens' assaults.

Protestors have a whole menu of destructive techniques
they use effectively to engineer disorders, slowdowns, and
sometimes ruin to the target organizations: whole schools
are immobilized and thrown into chaos by the simple act of
setting off fire alarms or by calling in false bomb reports;
valuable productive time of a organization's important
personnel is dissipated responding to false accusations, to

"crank" letters and phone calls, to forged communications
containing information that is false, malicious and
embarrassing; a store's service is disrupted when an
"army" of phoney-customers take up the clerks' time with a
series of nuisance questions and false accusations for
the simple purpose of harassment and to make the regular
customers impatient with the resulting lack of service.
Often the technique is a subtle campaign of half-truths
designed to get the media on the side of the protestors
and take a position against the organization. This is
not to say that all protest groups that resort to such
extreme techniques are not advocates of worthy causes.
Generally, all other methods of making their cause felt
and acted upon have failed and some sort of extreme
technique is a last resort. On the other hand, there
are protest groups whose purpose is not to better conditions
or improve the system within socially acceptable coordinates.
Their objective is to destroy the organization and the
system itself because the system will not accept them on
equal terms--and to this end, no action nor tactic is
too extreme.

The author has extensively researched the evolution
of protest groups and their target organizations, over
a period of years, tracing the progression of the strategies
employed to influence the organization from legitimate and
traditional presentations'through channels provided for by

the system through the extreme means of force and violence
which were ultimately resorted to when the system refused
their demands and fought off their strategic moves. The
study was concerned with the black communities in New York
and Boston vying for their communities' control of the
public schools.

In the first study, the author identified twelve
major groups that influenced the Boston School Department
between 1962-1970. The major ones were in order of their
importance: parent and citizen groups in the black
community, local universities, the mass media, federal and
state governmental agencies, the teachers union, other
parental groups, dissenting students, reform groups from
suburbia, professional organizations, the business community,
City Hall, and accredited agencies.[33]

In a second, as yet unpublished study of five groups
in the black community in New York and Boston that were
vying for community control of the schools, the author
identifies the major strategies they use to exert influence
upon the system. First, local organizations used the
traditional and legitimate channels (e.g., contacting the
school personnel in charge about given problems, also
through the PTA) trying to work with the school system
organization. Failing to achieve their goals, a number
of environmental groups reported using the political process
to try and exert pressure: they organized rallies and
mass meetings to which they invited school board members;

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they used a lobby to try and influence the city council
and state legislature; they solicited the support of the
mass media for their cause; they evoked their considerable
membership to send telegrams and letters to public officials.
Then an attempt was made to "bore" from within: the bureau-
cracy of the environmental group tried to work quietly and
directly with members of the school system bureaucracy,
hoping to achieve their objectives at lower hierarchial
levels, without going through the politicized process of
working with those at the top of the organization who
seemed antagonistic and prejudicial. Failing at this level,
the external groups used a third party, someone respected
by the school system and whole community (e.g., a university
person or someone from industry). This tactic had as its
objective to use this person to get the other side to the
bargaining table so that the environmental group could be
seen as an equal power. Then, still trying to work within
the system, these external groups tried to go around the
established hierarchy of the school system by eliciting
the support of higher sources of influence: the courts,
the mayor, the state department of education. It was only
after they were frustrated at every level within the
system that they tried to sabotage directly the efforts of
the school system by disrupting ongoing programs, by
training students to disrupt classes and other scholastic
activities; by striking, by being selectively uncooperative

and by leaking information to the press to be used against
the school system. Finally, some of these environmental
groups seceded from the school system and set up alternative
models worthy of the public's support. Other groups resorted
to threats of violence and then to actual violence in order
to try and get the school system to respond to their demands:
first, they threatened and then actually organized riots
and heated protests; and finally, they threatened to cause
harm to officials and to burn school buildings.

The school system fought back with every resource at
its command. In the early stages, appeasement was tried,
offering the environmental groups small, inconsequential
concessions to drop their huge demands and support the
status quo. When this failed to stem the tide of protests
and demands, the systems marshalled their legal mandates
to combat the problem groups. Furthermore, they demanded
and were given (for the most part) the support of the career
personnel within the organizations, who refused to collaborate
with the unknowledgeable laymen on the simple principle that
they were non-professional and not competent to judge nor
deal with the matter over which they were protesting. The
systems reinforced their intransigent position on every
issue through biased public relations campaigns and by
diversion, bringing to the fore other important projects
and concerns, ignoring the environmental groups' problems
as though they were non-existent. They further weakened the
groups' impact by banning or outlawing them from the system,

thereby discouraging the possibility of external funding
to support their fights. By refusing to give the groups
public hearings or to interact with them on any level, they
succeeded in eliminating much of their public visibility.
And, lastly, when faced with threats and with actual
violence, the systems retaliated in kind, utilizing police
and in extreme cases, the National Guard.

Another more recent trend by client and consumer groups
to bring external pressure to bear on the internal organi-
zation, is the activity of "scrutiny" groups, such as the
Ralph Nader organization. These citizen watchdog groups
exist to make private and public organizations socially
responsible. The media have traditionally played this role
and continue to be a powerful environmental force but they
are joined by this new force. The purposes and tactics of
scrutiny groups are much different from those of the pro-
testors and, in some ways, it is easier for the organization
to defend against the latter.

Scrutiny groups seek after scarce information that
might indict an organization and demonstrate that it is not
adequately serving society. They infiltrate the system and,
through spying, get access to carefully guarded information.
They investigate public records. They snoop and probe.
Such groups not only make an organization nervous but can
cause it to change or face undesirable consequences (e.g.,
boycott, loss of votes).

Another type of client group that needs to be mentioned

is the regulating agency. Accrediting agencies review
the school curriculum and have considerable impact on it.
Government teams and agencies investigate and regulate
business activities. Fact-finding committees keep watch
on the activities of public agencies.

Healthy organizations adapt to important environmental
demands but do so in a way that does not disrupt their cord
functions. They engage in strategic planning to affect
some orderly response to external pressures; otherwise,
they manage by crisis. Many enterprises seek to influence
their environments as well (e.g., through advertising) to
make the process even more rational. Because the impact
of the external environment is felt within the organization,
an objective is to be adaptive and innovative by managing
the conflicts caused by external pressures. Their object:
to be prepared and therefore not to be the victims of
environmental whims and crises.

However, managing these types of conflicts is very
difficult. The sets of enterprises comprising the relevant
environment lack a common authority to bring them together,
and often compete for scarce resources (e.g., within the
industry). They are not compelled to collaborate in order
to be effective and must accept a far more abstract and
complex situation than if they were managing their own internal
disputes.[35]

Other

Scholars have mentioned other causes of organizational conflict that do not necessarily fall into the categories mentioned above. Mayer Zald feels that, in addition to the balance of power and the level of interdependence and communication, the level of conflict is intensified according to the organization's goals. This happens when organizational goals lead individuals and groups to pursue mixed policies and when those goals give the organization a more problem-solving (treatment) orientation rather than a routinized or custodial orientation.[36]

Joe Kelly also mentions the more formal aspects of organizational life that cause conflict: the physical shape of the building (e.g., the lack of privacy impinges on one's autonomy), the career structure, status incongruency, "who has what," formal authority in the hierarchy, organizational size, and the class struggle between workers and managers.[37]

A number of writers have discussed the inability to communicate effectively as the chief contributor to organizational disagreements. Louis Pondy also believes, along with many game theorists, that a more perfect exchange of information allows one to act more in his own self-interest, whereas ignorance forces the parties to agree on alternatives of mutual interest. Thus, perfect communication is not always a desired state.[38] However, Warren Schmidt and

Robert Tannenbaum warn that unless a dispute is based on
the same set of perceived facts, conflicts could arise
simply because of misperceptions and uncommon information.[39]

While good communication is essential for managing
conflict, poor communication may only be a symptom of still
another underlying cause of disagreement. Communication
helps to resolve many of the disputes mentioned above,
but it is a tool for managing a conflict that is usually
caused by one of the six problems heretofore discussed.

Finally, organizational conflicts are attributed to
line versus staff misunderstandings,[40] to the degree of
information about one another's activities, to competition
and the need to compete, to status differences to conflicting
ideas and to personality clashes.

IMPLICATIONS FOR ACTION

Based on a valid diagnosis of the situation, the
Conflict Manager can then intervene to help manage the
dispute. Conflict has been defined as energy expended in
reaction to felt tension. The objective of an intervenor
is to make use of this energy for the good of the enterprise.
An individual worker or a group within the system, however,
may be most concerned about protecting self-interests,
winning, keeping a lower profile or promoting good working
relationships. Thus if the CM is to use this tension-energy
productively, he must attempt to find a resolution strategy
which matches the self-interests of individuals, groups and
the organization.   48

Contingency Theory is one conceptual tool useful to integrate mutual self-interests for managing organizational conflict. There are three major conflict management approaches from which an intervenor can draw to formulate an approach appropriate for resolving a dispute: collaboration, bargaining and power-play. The appropriate use of any one of these methods depends on the individual and the organizational state.

Collaboration: This theory maintains that people should surface their differences (get them out in the open) and then work on the problems until they have attained mutually satisfactory solutions. This approach assumes that people will be motivated to expend the time and energy for such problem-solving activity. It tries to exploit the possible mutual gains of the parties in the dispute and views the conflict as a creative force pushing them to achieve an improved state of affairs to which both sides are fully committed.

Bargaining: This mode for managing conflicts assumes that neither party will emerge satisfied from the confrontation but that both, through negotiation, can get something they do not have at the start, or more of something they need, usually by giving up something of lesser importance. One party generally wins more than the other; by the skillful use of tactical trades, he can get the maximum possible from the other side. Sometimes the tactics used

in trading are underhanded and create bad feelings. In
the end, when an agreement is reached, it is usually
enforced by a written contract with sanctions in case of
non-compliance. In the event no agreement is reached, a
third-party mediator may be employed to bind the sides to
eventual arbitration.

Power-play: This mode differs from the other two
approaches because its emphasis is on self-interest.
Whereas, in collaboration and bargaining the two sides
come together to try to resolve their problems, when power
is the dominant mode, the actions are unilateral or in
coalitions acting unilaterally. All of the power technician's
resources are unleashed against his opponent to win on a
given issue or a long-range program. He gives neither
internal commitment nor does he agree to external sanctions
guaranteeing compliance to joint decisions.

Collaboration is the most preferred strategy for the
good of the enterprise because: (1) it promotes authentic
interpersonal relations; (2) it is a creative force for
innovation and improvement; (3) it enhances feedback and
information flow, and (4) it has a way of ameliorating the
climate of the organization so that there is more openness,
trust, risk-taking and good feelings of integrity.

Bargaining is the second most preferred alternative.
It is an approach that, at the least, brings the parties
together and it can lead to binding them together to joint

decisions. It gets the substantive issues out on the table
where they can be better understood and acted upon. It
allows for interaction on the problem.

Power-play is the least desirable method for organizational effectiveness (although it may be the most desirable approach for an individual who has the potential for winning). Generally, aggressive and hostile feelings exist between those locked in a power struggle, shutting off communication and interaction. Vicious gossip may ensue, causing rumors and otherwise distorting information. All of this tends to drive information underground so that the organization and the parties involved cannot learn from their experience since there is little honest feedback. A large amount of sabotage and non-compliance takes place which harms the system. People acting in their own self-interest often subvert the organization.

Serious cases of individual stress lead to personal preoccupation with "self," at the expense of the organization. The employee may, however, remain important to the enterprise if a selfish bargain is struck whereby some of his needs are met in return for useful service. Otherwise, the person may have to be fired or transferred. In less dramatic instances, a more collaborative stance can be taken with unhappy individuals through counseling, coaching, and third-party consultation.

Instances of external pressures are also more prone

to being fought using power or they can be resolved through bargaining. Independent entities in conflict have no common authority to bring them together, since they compete for scarce resources and lack common purpose. To become more collaborative, they need to establish power parity, find ways to enhance their mutual interests (perhaps by fighting a common enemy), structure more independence, and provide resources to support common efforts and skillful interactions.

Bargaining is a method for winning power parity which, when used effectively, permits the parties to begin a co-equal relationship when it is achieved. To assume a trading position connotes equality, as each party recognizes that the other has something of value to offer and/or withhold. Acting in good faith, trust can then be established between both parties. With such a climate for collaboration, the parties can begin to plan, problem-solve and carefully define their mutual interests.

For example, the author and his colleagues conducted a bargaining intervention within an elementary school (between independent teaching teams) and changed the balance of power to a condition of more power parity. This made it possible to increase the collaboration efforts between the parties.[40] Once power parity and interdependence have been established, open-systems planning schemes provide technology for organization-environmental collaboration.[41]

Role conflicts can be managed by matching the psycho-
logical expectations of members of the role set, by adapting
the design of the work in such a way that there is no role
overload and so that one is evaluated on the in-role tasks
he performs. This can be accomplished by team-building
within the role group to develop processes for effective
communication, by conflict management, decision-making,
goal-setting and by planning, establishing, and changing
the norms and values. A third-party consultant can often
help role group members by more objectively clarifying the
disputes. He can do this by structuring the time, place
and ground rules for the encounter, and by helping the
members find solutions to problems by engaging in an
exploratory process and encouraging them to confront in a
skillful manner.

Power struggles demand a somewhat different collabora-
tive strategy. A CM can resort to authority and mandate a
solution to the problem. He can attempt to co-opt the
influential parties in order to get them to join the effort.
He can build coalitions of influentials. He can develop a
"favor" system whereby others owe him debts of gratitude
and recognize he will be the source of future benefits--
thereby making them support his activities.

However, a more collaborative style than any mentioned
above would be to build a climate wherein openness, trust
and risk-taking were rewarded. Workers would attempt to

exert their influence and share their power agendas (self-interests) quite openly in collaborating with others. The best ideas (not necessarily those coming from the highest authority) would prevail. Decisions would be made by the group. People would be encouraged to participate, as effectively as possible, in this problem-solving activity.

Increasing _interdependence_ ups the stakes and makes conflict management more compelling and more apt to be engaged in by the workers. By the same token, decreasing interdependence leads to conflicts which may have less consequence for the enterprise since the parties do not have to interact to accomplish important tasks. However, decreasing interdependence may be a method in and of itself to reduce the importance of conflicts and, thus, to manage them. If an organization can afford to decrease interdependence by the nature of its critical task as influenced by the external environment, it may view a failure to manage conflicts as simply lost opportunities for improvement rather than threats to its survival.

Differentiation is a common manifestation lending itself to collaborative conflict management. There are various ways to resolve this phenomenon: by emphasizing common purposes around which the various orientations can coalesce; by increasing the individual rewards for accomplishing the collective task; by encouraging skillful listening and communication so that differences are clarified and understood; by engaging in a problem-solving process maximizing

the resources of the various members; and lastly, by

using a consultant to help the group work through its

differences. Additionally, the use in the hierarchy of

positions with the authority and information to make

coordination an important priority helps the differential

parties to achieve a state of collaboration.

The following figure suggests a contingency approach

to conflict management.

FIGURE II: CONFLICT MANAGEMENT CIRCLE
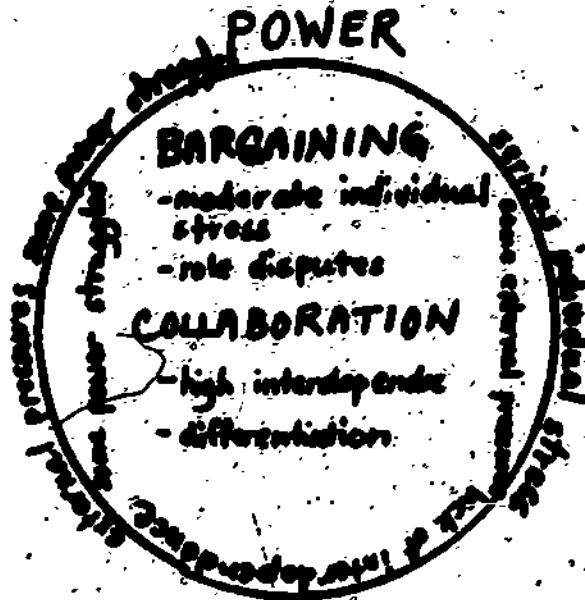
At the boundary of the orbit are those problems

which often originate outside the system and over which

it has little control. At the core of the process are

instances of conflict which lend themselves to a more

collaborative approach. The collaborative method will

also lead to more organizational improvement. While
bargaining is the second most preferred CM mode, it is
less central to the orbit than collaboration. Power tactics
may be necessary (even functional) to deal with some
problems but, in general, are to be applied only where
conditions do not exist for a more long-term improvement
strategy.

For example, external threats which seek to destroy
the legitimacy of the enterprise (e.g., revolutionary
movements, scrutiny activities) can be combatted using
power tactics. This is also true for serious individual
stress and for some internal power struggles. Those
individuals with a high psychological need for power, a
desire for winning their interests at any cost or a commit-
ment to hurting the organization, may need to be dealt with
commensurately.

However, bargaining may be the best strategy to use
under the following conditions: when power parity needs to
be established in order to work through a problem; when
external pressures are such that a common solution to the
problem is possible and parties are willing to collaborate;
when individuals feeling moderate tension want to strike a
more satisfactory personal contract with the system. Bar-
gaining is also important when resources are scarce and
parties must compete for an absolute.

Without a doubt, for organizational health, collaboration

is the most effective way to manage conflicts. It is
true that collaborative methods lend themselves to some
instances of individual stress and external pressure.
— Yet, this approach is best employed with role disputes,
differentiation and power-equalization alternatives to
power struggles under conditions of high interdependence.

Table III below illustrates the various technologies
applicable to each major cause of conflict given the
three different approaches.

TABLE III   53.

CONFLICT MANAGEMENT PARADIGM

Causes of Conflict	CM TECHNOLOGIES		
	Collaboration	Bargaining	Power
External pressures	open systems planning	negotiation	force and threats of force, use of laws co-optation, strategic use of information, coalition building
Individual stress	counseling, coaching, problem-solving	contracting	fire, transfer, careful job description
Power struggles	build organizational climate, make decisions close to information source, best ideas prevail, encourage participation, problem-solving	negotiation, solve substantive issues of scarce resource allocation, establish power parity	use of legitimate authority, co-optation, coalition building, favor system
Low interdependence	increasing group interaction	negotiation to enhance interaction	use of legitimate authority to structure more interaction
Role disputes, differentiation, high interdependence	team building, communication skills, problem solving, confrontive style, imaging, third-party consultation, climate		support with formal authority and rewards

Appendix III which follows is an attempt to describe
briefly the various terms and technologies in Table III.
In general, when the causes of conflict are role disputes,
differentiation, high interdependence or some forms of
power struggles, a collaborative strategy seems to be
most effective.

We can conclude by stating a simple ground rule which
the Conflict Manager can use to guide his interventions:
assess the situation and then act appropriately. As Michel
Crozier has stated in a critique of the strictly rational
and the strictly human relations approach to dispute
settlement:

> A human being, however, does
> not have only a hand and a
> heart. He also has a head,
> which means he is free to
> play his own game...
> Subordinates can be considered
> as free agents who can discuss
> their own problems and bargain
> about them, who do not only
> submit to a power structure but
> also participate in that structure. [43]

Managing organizational conflicts situationally
allows for the integration of the heart, the hand and
the head in one of the most important aspects of
organizational life.

APPENDIX I

NAMES OF JOURNALS CORRESPONDING TO LETTER ABBREVIATIONS

* HBR: The Harvard Business Review

   AMJ: Academy of Management Journal

   CMR: California Management Review

   TCR: Teachers College Record

   AN: Administrator's Notebook

 EA&S: Educational Administration and Supervision

   EAQ: Educational Administration Quarterly

   PAR: Public Administration Review

   ASQ: Administrative Science Quarterly

  JABS: Journal of Applied Behavioral Science

   JCR: Journal of Conflict Resolution

APPENDIX II

ARTICLES APPEARING IN JOURNALS LISTED IN TABLE I

The Harvard Business Review (HBR*)

I. Directly-Related Articles

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Nov./Dec., 1953, 31, #6.

Wendell Johnson, "The Fateful Process of Mr. A. Talking to
Mr. B.," Jan./Feb., 1953, 31, #1.

Chris Argyris, "Human Problems with Budgets," Jan./Feb.,
1953, 31, #1.

William C. Schutz, "Interpersonal Underworld," July/Aug.,
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Robert N. McMurry, "Conflicts in Human Values," May/June,
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Warren H. Schmidt and Robert Tannenbaum, "Management of
Differences," Nov./Dec., 1960, 38, #6.

John A. Seiler, "Diagnosing Interdepartmental Conflict,"
Sept./Oct., 1963, 41, #5.

David W. Ewing, "Tension Can Be An Asset," Sept./Oct., 1964,
42, #5.

Abraham Zaleznick, "The Dynamics of Subordinancy," May/June,
1965, 43, #3.

F.J. Roethlisberger, "The Foreman: Master and Victim of
Double Talk," Sept./Oct., 1965, 43, #5.

Isodore Silver, "The Corporate Ombudsman," May/June, 1967,
45, #3.

Paul R. Lawrence and Jay W. Lorsch, "New Management Job: The Integrator," Nov./Dec., 1967, 45, #6.

Joe Kelley, "Make Conflict Work for You," July/Aug., 1970, 48, #4.

Harry Levinson, "Conflicts That Plague Family Businesses," Mar./Apr., 1971, 49, #2.

M. Scott Myers, "Overcoming Union Opposition to Job Enrichment," May/June, 1971, 49, #3.

Alonzo McDonald, "Conflict At The Summit: A Deadly Game," Mar./Apr., 1972, 50, #2.

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Kenneth M. Thompson, "Human Relations in Collective Bargaining," Mar./Apr., 1953, 31, #2.

Irving J. Lee, "Procedure for 'Coercing' Agreement," Jan./Feb., 1954, 32, #1.

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Mar./Apr., 1966, 44, #2, 84-97.

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July/Aug., 1973, 51, #4.

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Still More Equal," Sept./Oct., 1973, 51, #5.

M. Barbara Boyle, "Equal Opportunity For Women Is Smart
Business," May/June, 1973, 51, #3.

George M. Prince, "Creative Meetings Through Power Sharing,"
July/Aug. 1972, 50, #4, 47-54.

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R.J. Hills, "A New Concept of Staff Relationships," March, 1960, 8, #7.

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Rodney Muth, "Teacher Perceptions of Power, Conflict and Consensus," April 24, 1973, Vol. XXI, #4.

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Richard E. Walton and John M. Dutton, "The Management of Interdepartmental Conflict," March, 1969, 14, #1, 78-83.

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II. Tangentially-Related Articles

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APPENDIX III

GLOSSARY OF UNCOMMON TECHNOLOGICAL TERMS

Coaching:

Helping a person by encouraging, advising, instructing, and otherwise aiding in the accomplishment of a goal.

Communication skills:

Learning how to listen, understand issues, explore verbal and non-verbal messages so that the conflict can be worked productively.

Confrontation style:

Teaching people to value a style which openly surfaces disagreements and then, based on the data, attempt to confront the issues and solve the problems.

Contracting:

Setting psychological expectations and making agreements by explicitly discussing agendas, wants, needs, quid pro quos and services.

Co-optation:

Discouraging opposition by encouraging opponents to join the organization and, thereby, be forced to abide by the rules, norms and decisions they help create. This also means that the organization may have to allow itself to be influenced by the opposition in order to attract them to join it.

Counseling:

Engaging in a therapeutic relationship with a person to help him resolve (for himself) his own internal tensions.

Imaging:

A procedure designed to uncover the common perceptions and misperceptions of parties in conflict so that the problems (issues) are clearer, validated and can be used as levers for managing the dispute.

Negotiation: A procedure, varying in its degree of formality, for deciding substantive issues in a conflict and mechanisms to ensure resolution. It implies give-and-take compromise.

Open systems planning: Various methods for including parts of the external environment in the internal decision making of the organization (e.g. the charette).

Organizational climate: The norms, beliefs, values and rewarded behaviors which constitute informal laws in the enterprise. If the climate supports taking risks, for example, risk-oriented workers will not hesitate to take them.

Power parity: Trying to gain advantages through confrontation; the amassing of resources; demonstrating strength; a feeling of being treated as a peer or equal on given issues as well as in the general climate.

Problem solving: Openly sharing information (including conflicts and anger) and expanding energy to try to arrive at a common and creative solution to a problem benefiting both parties. A more or less sophisticated procedure can be used to arrive at a solution.

Team building: Building skills, a productive climate, good interpersonal relations, and conceptual understanding within the work group so that it can use conflict producing energy to accomplish their tasks creatively.

Third-party consultation: The use of someone both skilled (knowledgeable) and outside the immediate dispute to listen to the conflict and intervene in order to help the parties manage their problems more productively.

FOOTNOTES

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[8]See Kenneth E. Boulding, "Organization and Conflict," Journal of Conflict Resolution, June 1957, 2, 122-134; Robert N. McMurray, "Conflicts in Human Values," Harvard Business Review, May/June, 1963, 41. 130-145.

[9]See Abraham Zaleznick, "The Dynamics of Subordinancy," Harvard Business Review, May/June, 1965, 43, 119-131; and Victor A. Thompson, "Hierarchy, Specialization and Organizational Conflict," Administrative Science Quarterly, March, 1961, 485-521.

[10]See James D. Thompson, "Organizational Management of Conflict," Administrative Science Quarterly, March, 1960, 4, 389-409; Leonard Berkowitz, "Frustrations, Comparisons and Other Sources of Emotional Arousal as Contributors to Social Unrest," The Journal of Social Issues, Vol. 28, 1, 1972, 77-91.

[11]See Chris Argyris, Intervention Theory and Method (Reading, Mass.: Addison-Wesley, 1970), 38-43.

[12]See Daniel Katz and Robert L. Kahn, The Social Psychology of Organizations (New York: John Wiley, 1966), p. 174.

[13]Ibid., p. 198.

[14]Robert Ardrey, The Territorial Imperative (New York: Dell Publishing Company, 1966).

[15]David C. McClelland, "The Two Faces of Power," Journal of International Affairs, XXIV, 1, 1970.

[16]Michel Crozier, The Bureaucratic Phenomenon (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1964), p. 145.

[17]Antony Jay, Management and Machiavelli: An Inquiry into the Politics of Corporate Life (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1967).

[18]See particularly Tom Burns and G.M. Stalker, The Management of Innovation (London: Tavistock Institute, 1961); Joanne Woodward, Industrial Organization (London: Oxford University Press, 1965); Edward Harvey, "Technology and Structure of Organization," American Sociological Review, 33, 2 (April, 1968), 247-258; Charles Perrow, "A Framework for the Comparative Analysis of Complex Organizations," American Sociological Review, 32, 2, (April, 1967), 194-208; A.K. Rice, The Enterprise and Its Environment (London: Tavistock Institute, 1963); Lawrence and Lorsch, op. cit.; and James D. Thompson, Organizations In Action (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1967).

[19]Lawrence and Lorsch, Organization and Environment, op. cit., p. 186-210.

[20]See F.E. Emery and E.L. Trist, "The Causal Texture of Organizational Environment," Human Relations, 18, 1 (February, 1965), 21-32;

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[21]See Burns and Stalker, op. cit., p. 96, pp. 119-120, 139-140, 232-234.

[22]See Emery and Trist, op. cit.; William Dill, "Environment as an Influence on Managerial Autonomy," Administrative Science Quarterly, 2, 1958, 399-443; Thompson, op: cit., pp. 72,73; Shirley Terreberry, "The Evolution of Organization Environments," Administrative Science Quarterly, 12, 4 (March, 1968), 590-613; and William Starbuck, "Organizational Growth and Development," in James March (ed.), Handbook of Organizations (Chicago: Rand McNally, 1965); pp. 467-468.

[23]See Lawrence and Lorsch, op. cit., "Differentiation and Integration in Complex Organizations," Administrative Science Quarterly, 12, 1, June 1967, pp. 1-47; Developing Organizations: Diagnosis and Action (Reading, Mass.: Addison-Wesley, 1969); Lorsch and Lawrence, ed., Studies in Organizational Design (Homewood, Ill.: Richard D. Irwin, Inc. 1970; and Jay W. Lorsch, Product Innovation and Organization (New York: McMillan, 1965).

[24]See Lawrence and Lorsch, ibid. Several others have also pointed out that differentiation by organizations facing complex environments is a precondition to survival and effectiveness. Working from both an open system model and a Parsonian frame of reference, Katz and Khan have theorized that in order to survive, an organization differentiates itself into several subsystems, Katz and Khan, The Social Psychology of Organizations (New York: John Wiley and Sons, 1966), pp. 455-456. Rice and Miller and their associates at the Tavistock Institute have theorized that organizations differentiate themselves to perform the "primary task," i.e., the task which the organization must do to survive. A.K. Rice, The Enterprise and Its Environments (London: Tavistock Publications, 1963), pp. 190-191; E.J. Miller, "Technology, Territory and Time: the Internal Differentiation of Complex Production Systems," Human Relations, 12, 243-272.

[25]See Lawrence and Lorsch, (1967) pp. 47-48. Differentiation between subunits makes integration of effort difficult because it increases the potential conflict between subunits. Walton and Dutton have made this point in a review of the literature on interdepartmental conflict. Richard Walton and John Dutton, "Management of Interdepartmental Conflict: Model and Review," Administrative Science Quarterly, Vol. 12, 3, December, 1967, pp. 337-395. Similarly, March and Simon have explained the tendency which each subunit has to pursue it own sub-goals at the expense of other organizational goals as a necessary consequence of the cognitive limitations of humans as decision makers.

See James March and Herbett Simon, Organizations (New York: John Wiley, 1958), pp. 151-154. Organizational differentiation, as Lawrence and Lorsch have defined it, is a more extensive elaboration of the same concept because it also includes the consequences of differences in work styles and other orientations, which are sources of difficulty in interunit relationships. A detailed explanation of their methodology can be found in Lawrence and Lorsch, op. cit., pp. 247-268.

[26]See Lawrence and Lorsch, ibid., p. 91.

[27]Ibid., pp. 151-156.

[28]James D. Thompson, op. cit.

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[30]Harrison White, "Management of Conflict and Sociometric Structure," The American Journal of Sociology, 67, 185-199.

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[33]Walter Buckley, Sociology and Modern Systems Theory (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, 1967), p. 50.

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[35]Richard E. Walton, "Interorganizational Decision Making and Identity Conflict," Special Technical Report #2 (The Harvard Business School, Division of Research, March, 1969); Howard Aldrich, "Organizational Boundaries and Interorganizational Conflict," Human Relations, 24, 4, August, 1971; Eugene Litwak and Lydia F. Hylton, "Interorganizational Analysis: A Hypothesis on Coordinating Agencies," Administrative Science Quarterly, 6, March, 1962.

[36]Mayer N. Zald, "Power Balance and Staff Conflicts in Correctional Institutions," Administrative Science Quarterly, June, 1962, 7, pp. 22-49.

[37]Joe Kelley, "Make Conflict Work for You," Harvard Business Review, July/August, 1970, pp. 103-113.

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[41]C. Brooklyn Derr, "Surfacing and Managing Organizational Power," OD Practitioner, 4, 2, 1972.

[42]Will McWhinney, "Open Systems and Traditional Hierarchies," A Working Paper, Graduate School of Management and Institute For Developmental Organization, UCLA, September, 1972.

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