CHAPTER – 1

INTRODUCTION

According to traditional wisdom, the warp and woof of history is the succession of human and social conflicts, punctuated by wars and other forms of organized violence. It is only temporarily that swords are shielded and guns are silent. In viewing and reviewing the thousands of years of recorded history, what strikes the eye of the casual beholder and thus the great majority of humankind, is the omnipresence of conflict. Even in our intellectual vocabulary - and in many of our respected dictionaries - peace is hardly more than truce: a temporary respite from violence with ultimate victory or defeat the paradigm.

This view of the unfolding of human affairs has deep roots in the contemporary psyche. It inspires more than scholarship: it influences action. Modern states seek security through arms: they may aspire to peace but prepare for war. This perception of history and the human condition have no eternal validity. In today's world, it is not merely false: it is a menace to well-being and survival. In a world where the technologies of destruction can destroy human life twenty times over, and where the technologies of production, services, and communication are sophisticated but vulnerable, conflict is not an option but the road to genocide.

No species, not even one endowed with the capacity to reflect and make plans - and thus the freedom to commit errors - goes blindly to extinction. If in the past princes and emperors, kings and presidents
declared war, and if slaves and vassals, subjects and citizens rose to their bidding and seized arms, they did so because wars promised to resolve conflicts, to save honour, and to satisfy ambition. Had they possessed the arsenals of modern warfare instead of bows and arrows, cannons, rifles, and even tanks, ships, and airplanes carrying conventional explosives, they would no doubt have reflected on their choice of instruments. For the history of humanity, however bloody and violent it may be, is not the story of madmen and savages, but the relentless though tortuous growth of the human spirit - and advance of human civilization. Humanity does not willingly regress to the condition of nuclear-age savages, to an existence that, as Hobbes feared, is nasty, brutish, and perhaps very short.¹

Conflicts are inevitable because resources and time are limited or because alternative courses of action are usually numerous. The individual, acting by himself, decides to express or repress an impulse. Together with other persons in its group, he competes with another group to capture honours or to improve a common status. As a member of a tribe, or ethnic grouping, or a nation, he and his compatriots believe they are compelled to struggle with a rival or enemy to secure or maintain what they consider to be their sovereign or justifiable rights. Undoubtedly some conflicts are desirable: the spice they add to living provides an incentive to achieve personal or group goals.² But many, perhaps most, conflicts are painful or non-productive; hence conflict resolutions are consciously or unconsciously, whole or halfheartedly

pursued. If there were a magic formula or procedure for resolving conflicts, as there is not, modern societies would have, for example, fewer riots, and wars, and psychiatric institutes.

To simplify the present exposition, a value judgement is explicitly made: a person or some persons in conflict seek a 'favourable' resolution. Conflicts are assumed to be resolvable - if a hedge be tolerated - at least in the long run. Resolutions result either from all external constraint or from a somewhat prolonged interaction between competing impulses or individuals. In the first category would be a person who, wishing to be counter-aggressive toward an insulting stranger, curbs his hostility in accordance with a rigid convention in that social situation; representatives of management and labour who have agreed to submit disputes to binding arbitration. Interactions leading or not leading to challenging resolutions are considered here: the smoker cannot resist the urge to smoke, but would avoid lung damage; workers strike and the plant shuts down: and great powers idiotically strengthen their nuclear arsenals.

Apparently, intractable conflicts may be resolvable when and if it is possible to peer beneath the ostensible reasons for their existence and thus to uncover the 'real' objectives. A conflict between two persons seeking all advantage only either of them can attain may lead to a compromise or a zero-sum solution with a winner and a loser. The verbal, emotional phrasing of demands, however, does not necessarily reflect 'real' desires which, if ascertainable, could be integrated into a creative resolution. For a holiday, a wife would go to Place A, her husband to Place B; after coolly determining the underlying goal of
each, they select Place C which provides the wife with the natural beauty she seeks and the husband with the sports attainable at B. This oversimplified, hypothetical analogy may indeed function as a guiding model to creative resolutions of conflict, in spite of the sceptical assertion that only a compromise has been achieved, since Place C may not be as satisfying as place A would have been to the wife and place B to the husband.

In real life and in the absence of external constraints, therefore, sometimes insuperable difficulties must sometimes be overcome to achieve resolution of a conflict:

(1) The party or parties must seek a resolution and be willing and able to interact within himself or with others. The disturbed person who cannot decide whether to be or not to be faces the cosmic or trivial alternatives, or seeks aid from a friend, clergyman, or psychiatrist. Contending parties in an industrial dispute agree to negotiate or refer their differences to a third party such as an arbitration board, a court, and in an international dispute refer it to Mediation or the United Nations Security Council. Traditional societies have often evolved standardized procedures to resolve internal disputes.3

(2) Problems that can plague interactions are legion. In psychoanalysis and some other non-physiological therapies, the patients' repressed or significant impulses do not readily emerge from their unconscious or unverbalizable cages or relevant behaviour modification is elusive. During negotiations, the parties in conflict are likely to

3 Gulliver, P. H., Disputes and Negotiations (New York: Free Press), 1979, p. 75.
mistrust each other and quite naturally seek to win as many concessions as possible from an opponent, evidence for which abounds and is ever discoverable at every international confrontation especially, to our sorrow, in modern times."4 As each party caucuses before and during the negotiation, its members who are not supermen, are prone to exhibit all imaginable human frailties: misperceptions, projections upon others, stereotypes, defective information, selective exposure, exaggerated vigilance, defensive avoidance, impatience, feigned conformity in the interest of in-group morale, in fact all the shortcomings that make ordinary and extraordinary decision making considerably less rational than some classical economists, theoretical political scientists, and logicians perforce assume.5

(3) These obstacles appear after the participants leave the intimate, face-to-face situation and re-enter their normal milieu. Even if they themselves are important policy-makers, they must convince their followers that the achieved resolution is desirable: or as official or unofficial representatives they must effectively communicate that resolution to their superiors. They may have grown to love one another and their opponents while momentarily detached from the conflict, but now they face suspicion and hostility from non-participants. Unanticipated changes in conditions may occur. The resolution realized at a distance, in short, may turn out to be unrealizable in the work a day

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On the other hand, the transition from dreams to reality need not always be tortuous or impossible. Perhaps the basis for a resolution at a more opportune time in the future may have been created.

A strong statement is that conflicts are solvable. This is not necessarily an idealistic or optimistic position. It is a realistic proposition. Most actors in conflicts will find themselves in need of negotiations at one time or another. Even if a conflict results in war and destruction, there may have been other options and alternative paths for the conflicts. There are frequent statements on the inevitability of conflict, violence and war. Indeed, finding solutions may often be difficult. This difficulty arises not only out of political constraints, but also can be due to a lack of insight, or imagination. There are also views of the desirability and even necessity of violence and war. Unbearable conditions or impossible threats may make such opinions understandable. Too often, however, the results of war negate the very hope for a better future that may initially have motivated the war. Few wars follow the paths anticipated by the actors. Short wars may avoid such pitfalls, but who is to guarantee that a war will be short? Many wars have started from this premise. Afterwards, it will be asked: were all avenues used to find a peaceful solution prior to the initiation of war? Only after this can it be convincingly proven the arguments of inevitability and desirability of war approach validity. Thus the determined search for a solution is not only a moral question, it is also a rational one. This is the sole way in which, a free society will be

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prepared to accept the strains of war. Indeed, if conflicts are exposed to such early challenges, solutions may actually be found, even in unexpected situations. Thus conflicts are solvable and there are many and varied experiences of such solutions.

If conflicts are solvable, is it also true that conflicts - sooner or later - will be solved? Clearly, once a conflict has developed into a war the options are fewer. At that moment, the primary actors will pursue victory rather than a joint solution. The victory of one side over the other is, then, a possible outcome, even to the point of the other's capitulation, dissolution and disappearance as an actor. The record shows that this is what happens in some conflicts, but by no means in all. Conflicts will come to an end at some point of time. Whether that ending is a solution, a victory or a stalemate has to be scrutinized. To this should be added the question of whether the conflict is likely again to be armed and violent.

Victory is the outcome preferred by most actors. If achieved, it may solve parts of an issue, but often not the entire problem at hand. The victory of the allied countries over Nazi Germany is a case in point. After the failure of the agreement reached in Munich in 1938, it was no longer possible for the Western powers to consider negotiations with Adolf Hitler and the Nazi regime. The end of the Second World War meant the implementation of the demand for unconditional surrender and the elimination of the Nazis as an actor. This was as clear-cut a victory as can be. It did not, however, mean the end of Germany. The issue of Germany's position in the international system still had to be settled. Conflict among the victors arose over this question. It became
one of the few core issues in the Cold War. A solution developed as new
leaders emerged in West Germany. They were democratically inclined,
conscientiously building on pre-1933 democratic traditions and new
ideas from the Western powers. A reintegration of Germany into the
international system took place, ultimately even allowing for its
reunification in 1990, but only 45 years after the end of the Second
World War. It was possible with a new Germany, willing to admit its
responsibility for the past and able to accommodate to the present. If the
Second World War had been a question solely of Germany's role in the
international system, there was a route through peaceful dialogue and
development. A solution within a democratic frame-work among
democratic countries was found. It could have been found before the
Nazis took power. For any country, there are, in other words, always
alternatives to a war strategy for achieving goals. Regimes, however,
may deliberately narrow those choices and construct situations where
the outcome becomes only one: defeat or victory. Nazi Germany chose
such a path.

Conflict precedes conflict resolution. There is already
considerable analysis of the origin and the pursuit of conflict.
Machiavelli and Clausewitz are important writers in one Western
tradition of conflict analysis. Adam Smith and Karl Marx offered
competition and class analysis, respectively as other tools for
understanding. In classical Chinese discourse Sun Tzu is a central
writer, as is Kautilya in India. Military-strategic thinking has become
universally shared, and there is often, among military officers, a
surprising degree of common understanding across battle lines. Also, the
analysis of societal contradiction has such cross-cultural traits, Smith
and Marx being influential in different quarters across the globe. The same, however, is not true for conflict resolution thinking. It is a novel topic. It is less developed and less coherent. Thus, it is important to introduce the ideas of modern thinkers. It is also necessary to relate them to trends of social science thinking.

Conflict has many meanings in everyday life. To some, it refers to behaviour or action. There is conflict when a trade union initiates strike or an employer locks out its employees. It is also conflict when two states are at war with each other, and where battlefield events determine their relations. The actions constitute the conflict. If this were all, however, it would mean that a conflict ends once this behaviour ends. Few would agree to this. A cease-fire is not the end of a conflict. Even the recession of verbal statements, non-violent actions, the mobilization of petitions, demonstrations, boycotts and sanctions may only indicate that there is an interlude in the conflict. Actions may resume at some later stage. There may still be dissatisfaction. Obviously, conflict is more than the behaviour of the parties.

A closer look indicates that the parties in an industrial dispute will not cease their actions until there is some movement on the issues which sparked the dispute. The 'issue' refers to the incompatible positions taken by the parties, motivating their actions. This, then, is a deeper understanding of what a conflict is. It contains a severe disagreement between at least two sides, where their demands cannot be met by the same resources at the same time. This is an incompatibility. Positions are incompatible. There is some form of scarcity. If there is an abundance of resources, the demands from the various sides may easily
be met. The incompatibility can be solved. If there are limited resources, however, problems will arise. The easy solutions are no longer available and more ingenious ways have to be found. The parties adjust their demands so that there is no longer scarcity, the conflict disappears. The incompatible demands have been reconciled. Incompatibility appears to be a key to the existence of conflict. If it is possible for an outsider to point out incompatibilities, there is a latent conflict. Manifest conflict requires both action and incompatibility.

This is still not enough to get an initial understanding of the concept of conflict. We need to include the actors as well. Many would say that trade unions are created to make conflict. This is why they have a membership. Members expect to be protected even to the point where a manifest conflict becomes a distinct possibility. This means that there is a tension built into the relationship between the employer and the employees. 'Conflict' does exist, even if there are no actions taken or demands formulated. The conflict is internal to the system. Similar descriptions also can be found for the interstate system. It is argued that sovereign states are inevitably locked into conflict with one another. States are continuously preparing to defend themselves from possible attack in order to protect their own survival. Such preparations only confirm to others that there are real dangers, thus they too do the same. These are the dynamics of the well-known security dilemma.\(^7\) This perspective suggests that the existence of one state is a danger to any other state. As long as there is unpredictability in the system, there will be fear and, thus, conflict. For our purposes, it means that actors or

parties are fundamental for conflict to exist. If the actors are formed, and if they make an analysis where their needs for survival are in conflict with other’s, then there is conflict built into the system. This means that the history of the actors, the actors' understanding of their own role and their resources are important elements in conflict analysis.8

From this it can be inferred that conflict consists of three components: action, incompatibility and actors. Combining them, we arrive at a complete definition of a conflict as a social situation in which a minimum of two actors (parties) strive to acquire at the same moment in time an available set of scarce resources. This definition brings together essential elements from a number of commonly used definitions. It includes the actors or 'parties' in the definition which, as we have just seen, is basic. In many definitions, the actor is left as a separate item. However, the preceding arguments make clear that it is integral to the analysis and to the definition of conflict.

The word 'strive' in the defining sentence requires a comment. It is a vague term, but the point is that when the parties are acting, they are doing some-thing (however minimal) to acquire the resources. 'Strive' may even include warfare. It covers a wide range of activities.

An additional phrase needs a comment. It is said that the parties are striving to acquire the resources 'at the same moment in time'. This is sometimes overlooked in definitions and may, again, be self-evident. If one actor is satisfied with having its demands met a year from now, other actors may be able to meet their goals today. There is no conflict today. Perhaps the first actor will worry for the future - will there be

anything left? - but if the party feels it has guarantees, the incompatibility is gone. It is clearly a different matter when the demands are geared to the same moment in time. It is conventional wisdom that only one person can be prime minister at a time and that only one country can have formal jurisdiction over a particular piece of territory at a time. These resources are regarded as indivisible, for the time being. If this is what the parties believe, then this is their reality. In actual life, there are solutions even to such problems, for instance, the creation of posts as first and second prime minister (as in Cambodia in the 1990s) or finding forms of shared rule for a territory. Such solutions emerge only if the parties perceive an incompatibility to be divisible. Time, as we notice every day, is scarce but still has this quality of divisibility, something that our calendars make clear. Schedules may dissolve incompatibilities.

The notion of an 'available set of scarce resources' should not be taken to include only economic matters. The term 'resources' covers all kinds of positions that are of interest to an actor. To be a prime minister, to control a particular piece of territory, to be able to propagate a particular idea in the media can all be covered by the notion of 'available resources'. This definition demands that something is desired which is scarce, be it positions of power, attractive land, or access to airwaves. Such resources can sometimes be estimated in money, square metres or other numbers, but often they are intangible. For instance, demands for recognition, acceptance of responsibility for destructive actions or psychological retribution exemplify intangible values. They are still highly important. They may involve admissions that have implications for an actor's standing nationally or internationally, but only indirectly
relate to material resources. Thus, there are incompatibilities relating to matters of justice, moral norms and guilt.

Conflict is a broad term, widely invoked in the common vernacular and the scientific literature to suggest a state of disagreement or opposition. Conflict is an action based upon the perception of partially incompatible interests or intention between two or more persons or parties.

The popularly understood meaning of conflict is quarrel between two persons or groups. It is a physical fight or verbal duel preceded by disagreement and followed by indifference and enmity. The term may refer to isolated incidents in which a person contradicts within himself or two persons disagree between them or may extend to too broad and prolonged situations involving the whole nation.9 When we look into the core of conflict, we can find that it is a complex phenomenon and the term has wide range of connotations.

The term ‘conflict’ has two broad meanings; overt conflict: it refers to clashing actions by two or more parties, as in a war, and subjective conflict, it refers to annoyance attributed to another party. Subjective conflict is often a source of overt conflict. But subjective conflict can produce other outcomes as well; including contending, problem solving, yielding and interaction. It refers to a situation, in which a person is motivated to engage in two or more mutually exclusive activities. For example, a business man may be faced with the

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9 Abcarian, Gilbert and Palmer Monte, Society in Conflict: Introduction to Social Science (San Francisco: Canfield), 1974, p. 5.
choice of hiring a lazy relative or an inefficient stranger for an important position. Incompatible responses cannot occur simultaneously.

Conflict may occur on many different levels. On the overt behavioural level, a tribesman may be motivated both to approach and to avoid the taboo object. On the verbal level, a person may want to speak the truth but with a fear to offend. On the symbolic level, ideas may clash and produce cognitive dissonance. On the emotional level, visceral responses involved in fear and indigestion are incompatible. Motives are important in conflict, however, there is nothing basically incompatible about motives as such. Conflict occurs in all human societies but varies in degree and form of expression. In some societies, verbal rather than physical aggression is more frequent, while in other societies, more passive forms of expression may predominate.

The idea of conflict is basic to our understanding and appreciation of man’s exchange with reality of human action. Conflict can be seen simply as a distinct category of social behaviour as two parties trying to get something they both cannot have. Moreover, conflict can be apprehended as a potentiality or a situation as a structure or a manifestation as an event or a process. The concept of conflict is multidimensional, it envelops a family of forms.

Different scholars understand it differently. In the simple form, conflict refers to a situation which is “Oriented intentionally to carry out the actor’s will against the existence of the other party or parties.”

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This definition is given with an assumption that the actor pursues a desired goal which may or may not be the goal of the opposing party but the latter opposed that any way. The realization of the goal by the actor may harass the opposing party or put it in a lower position and the very thought of losing position induces the opposing party to oppose the actor. Conflict between aggressor and victim can be cited as an example here. The encounter between murderer and victim, rapist and the raped, landlord and bonded labourer, exploiter and the exploited cover conflicts of this kind.

Some thinkers are inclined to define conflict as a state of mutual antagonism or hostility between two or more parties. This refers to open clashes between individuals, street fights, or on large scale, deadly quarrels between nation states or several decades of cold war.

Vihelm Aubert says, “The starting point must be sought in a state existing between two individuals characterized by some overt signs of antagonism. The term conflict here will be reserved for this state of tension between two actors. As a minimum, it must be demanded that at least one of the actors, in words or action, gives expression to a motive to frustrate the other or he actually frustrates him.”

Conflict, according to some other thinkers, is a condition of incompatibility of interest or values. Jessie Bernard says. “Conflict is

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one which arises when there are controversial and mutually exclusive
goals or values pursued by different closely placed parties.”

Kenneth Boulding says, “Conflict exists when any potential positions of two behaviour units are mutually incompatible.”
He further defines “conflict as a situation of a 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 wishes of the other.” In Boulding’s sense, it is clear that firstly, a conflict may exist even though there is no antagonism or hostility latent as overt between the parties. Secondly, the parties to a conflict ought to be aware of the conflict. This distinction indicates that conflict can be competition or an incompatibility.

Incompatibility may arise because the parties are like players, competing for the same prize such as power, position, authority, territory or materials or disagreement about the rules of the game. The former is a conflict of interests and the latter conflict of values, thought; the distinction is rarely clear-cut.

A classic understanding of conflict sees it as a dynamic phenomenon: one actor is reacting to what another actor is doing, which leads to further action. Quickly, the stakes in the conflict escalate. One

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15 Ibid., p. 5.
sequence of events follows another, and it is difficult to decipher which party is more responsible for what happens. In popular understanding, it is expressed as 'it takes two to conflict'. There are many observations which evoke this theme, notably the prevalence of mirror images, that parties at issues are seeing the conflict in the same way, only reversing the picture. There are also dynamics pushing the actors in conflicts into two camps (polarization), creating commanding leadership (centralization), and forming institutions with particular responsibilities and a little insight (secrecy and protection). The conflict takes on a life of its own, engulfing the actors and, seemingly irresistibly, pushing them into an ever increasing conflict. The idea of conflict as a social phenomenon moving by itself is powerful. It is invoked when parties say that they have no alternatives. The dynamics of the conflict have removed all other possible actions, and are said to give a party no choice but to continue to react at increasing levels of threat and violence.

For the analysis of such dynamics, some tools have been developed. Game theory is a way of illustrating how parties act within the confines set up by the game itself. If the parties follow the rules, the outcomes are predictable. But it also raises the possibility that actors can change the dynamics by making particular moves or even breaking some of the 'rules' that the conflict has generated. Such an analysis was developed in the 1960s for the polarized East-West conflict, suggesting credible de-escalating steps that could lead to positive responses. The idea was that if one actor begins to act on its own, the other(s) may
follow, and thus the dynamics change direction. Some of these ideas were used for the US-Soviet relations in early periods of détente.\(^{17}\)

In a slightly more complicated version, the conflict triangle - introduced by Johan Galtung in the 1960s - provides a helpful analytical tool by Galtung\(^ {18}\), Mitchell\(^ {19}\) and Wiberg\(^ {20}\). It suggests that a conflict moves among the triangle’s three corners, where corner A refers to conflict attitudes, B to conflict behaviour and C the conflict or contradiction itself (the incompatibility). A conflict sequence can begin in any of these corners. In later writings, Galtung gives somewhat more emphasis to C as a more frequent starting point. The dynamics are still most important, however, even when expressed in conflicts having life-cycles. From this, it follows that the resolution of conflict, conflict transformation, is a 'never-ending process'. A solution 'in the sense of a steady-state, durable formation is at best a temporary goal'. The conflict is transformed, for instance, through transcendence (where the goals are met fully for the conflict parties), compromise (goals are met less than fully for the sides) and withdrawals (goals are given up)\(^ {21}\)

Although structural features, such as frustration and structural violence are mentioned in this approach, dynamics are more central. The

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dynamics can be affected and steered in ways that make conflict creative. This is achieved by the parties themselves or with contributions from outsiders, intervening in a benign way. In Galtung's version of conflict dynamics, finding agreements through diplomatic means is less important, but not excluded. In fact, his examples point to the importance of procedures for changing conflict dynamics. Ingenious conference arrangements can help make complexity more manageable, as exemplified by the Law of the Sea Conference in Caracas in 1974 and the Helsinki process for detente in the East-West conflict in Europe, initiated in 1972. Such examples might be surprising as these conferences did not involve a solution to the substance in the conflicts, but only provided a reasonable process through which the issues could be handled. It points out, however, that negotiations are ways in which conflicts can be transformed. Finding a mutually acceptable process may be a necessary precursor to a solution.

In the end, Galtung concedes, agreements on substance are also needed. They may be informal, as in the examples of how children divide an orange and spouses solve a dispute over vacation plans, or formal, as is the case when ending a multilateral conference (the Convention on the Law of the Sea, the Helsinki Final Act). Transcendence means finding an agreement on who divides the orange and chooses among the parts, or finding a place where the husband can climb in the mountains and the wife remain on the beach. Accords concluded in such disputes do not need to be written in a document, as there is considerable confidence and integration among the parties. But Galtung's third example, the creation of a confederation between Israel

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22 Ibid., pp. 92-93.
and Palestine, is unthinkable without negotiations, a signed agreement, a constitution, and other mutually understood arrangements. This illustrates that conflict resolution after war cannot be thought of in the same way as solving conflicts between parties with a high level of mutual trust. It is not without reason that wars tend to end with documents, signatures and ceremonies. It is a way for the parties to make sure that the other side is committed to the process and to the agreement. An agreement may help to transform the conflict from a destructive, divisive experience to a constructive, shared endeavour.

The work by Galtung has here been used as an example of the dynamic perspective on conflict analysis. There is a considerable body of thinking along similar lines by Kriesberg, Mitchell, Pruitt and Rubin and Wiberg. It represents an early perspective in the development of conflict analysis and parallel game theory advanced by Axelrod and Rapoport. It remains rich in its emphasis on the changing and powerful dynamics of conflict. Without insight into such
dynamics, conflict analysis misses an important aspect. Central to it is the understanding of how difficult it is to break the dynamics. Conflict resolution has a task in achieving just that, a change in the direction of the flow of events, so that escalation is turned into deescalation and polarization into positive interaction.

Particularly fruitful is Galtung's depiction of incompatibility as central to the dynamics of conflict. A way to do an incompatibility analysis is reproduced in Figure 1.1

**Figure 1.1**

*Analysis of Incompatibility (Following Galtung)*
Figure 1.1 shows two actors, A and B, with contradictory goals. What the dispute is about is not significant. It could concern a piece of territory, a sum of money, an attractive government post, or other scarce valuables. If A gets 100 per cent of the available resources, there is nothing left for B, and vice versa. If either of them wins, the situation finds itself at point A or point B, respectively, meaning complete victory for one actor and complete defeat for the other. It is an outcome that an actor is not likely to abide by easily and voluntarily. Anything beyond these points may, however, be more acceptable and possible. Along the diagonal there are positions at which the parties may meet. C marks a classical point, where the parties divide the resources 50-50, equally (much or little) for each side. The parties may also agree on going to point E, none of them takes anything, but instead the valuables are handed over to actor C, also an agreed solution. In a more sinister scenario, C may enter the conflict and take the valuables from the fighting parties - an opportunistic move by an outsider. The resources may also have been destroyed during the fighting. In the space to the left and below the diagonal in Figure 1.1, there are many outcomes. Different forms of compromise may be found here. To the right and above the line, however, there are other complications. This is where Galtung’s ideas lead: transcendance. The hope is to find points of type D, where both parties can get what they want at the same time. The mathematical formulation is, of course, impossible. There cannot be 200 per cent of something, but this space indicates the challenge of finding solutions beyond established rules and thinking. Creativity is needed for transcendance. Political battle often stifles innovation and reduces the options perceived by the actors. Sometimes, the strains of the effort may result in imaginative actions.
The dynamic approach to conflict analysis points to the significance of establishing a dialogue between the parties. This is where, for instance, finding a conference format is important. It requires that the parties can participate, but together with others who can serve as practical go-betweens and add issues which may unlock positions. It also points to the importance of confidence-building measures, not only in the military field but also in social, cultural, economic and other areas, as they can be instrumental in changing the dynamics of a conflict. Conferences and confidence-building are mostly multilateral, and in this approach, the injection of mediators and facilitators is important. Third parties take a particular role in such settings.

A most original idea is of conflict resolution mechanisms. This refers to the creation of independent procedures in which the parties can have confidence. These are formal or informal arrangements to which they can agree to hand over their conflict, whose solution they can accept and which can define the termination of a conflict.\(^\text{30}\) Such mechanisms exist in internal affairs, for instance, courts, democratic procedures, and elections called to solve a parliamentary stalemate. They are to be found in history as duels, oracles and ordeals. They are scarce in international relations, where court systems are weak and politically they easily become arenas of dispute, rather than frameworks for handling conflicts.\(^\text{31}\) In internal affairs, the possibilities of appeal are important, creating opportunities to review what has been done on lower


levels. As part of a future conflict resolution mechanism this can also be a useful device in the international system.32

Finally, it follows from this perspective that parties with non-violent methods are potentially efficient in changing the dynamics. This gives a role to peace movements but also to other groups and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) that work for conciliation and understanding across divides. Such parties can even be involved in conflicts and take sides, but they pursue the goals with peaceful means, not with violence. They constitute an alternative approach for a community wishing to achieve change, but not convinced that violence is an appropriate action. For instance, in Western Europe, Social Democratic ways of impacting on capitalist systems seem to have achieved more welfare, have stronger support in the public and lasted longer than did the bitterly competing Communist parties. This particular divide focused on the possibility of peaceful versus violent change. Similarly, the non-violent party representing the Nationalist community in Northern Ireland (SDLP) has consistently drawn a larger share of the Catholic vote than has the party closer to the IRA (Sinn Fein). These non-violent actors may be important in bridging the dynamics, and giving space for alternative actions. Actors wedded to peace or to the pursuit of goals with peaceful means may have their most important role in conflict resolution primarily through their ability to influence conflict dynamics.

Still, this perspective is weak in its understanding of why conflicts start. Is it reasonable to assume that conflicts really begin with

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conflict attitudes, or are such attitudes a result of previous behaviour and pre-existing incompatibilities? Can there be a more complex background that also has to be part of the analysis? What if the parties who often are modelled to be of equal strength in fact are highly unequal? These are critical challenges to conflict theory. This gives reason for considering alternative approaches.

In theory, there are seven distinct ways in which the parties can live with or dissolve their incompatibility. First, a party may change its goals, that is, shift its priorities. It is rare that a party will completely change its basic positions, but it can display a shift in what it gives highest priority to. This may open ways in which the other side can reciprocate. Leadership changes are particularly pertinent in this respect. With such changes, new possibilities are created. It does not mean that conflict resolution has to wait for a revolution. Leadership is often recruited from a limited segment of the population, and continuity remains important. Still, new leaders think differently and, thus, new leadership matters. There are also other changes that can take place. Changes in the surrounding world may be important, leading to shifts in strategic priorities. Among major powers, the rise of a new power or the fall of an old one may be such a condition. For less powerful actors, changes in major power relations have many implications. Shifts between detente and confrontation can be important for conflict resolution, as was clearly seen at the end of the Cold War. Economic crises can change priorities. The costs of pursuing a war may drain important resources and, thus, the chances of a peace dividend may seem more attractive. However, the possibility for such changes should not be overestimated and it would be outright dangerous for a party to
hinge a negotiation policy on expectations of change in a particular direction. New leaders may be weaker, major power relations may change for the worse, economic crises may induce less interest in compromise, etc. But it is important for the parties continuously to probe the other side, to find out if there are shifts in priority.

The second way is a classical one: the parties stick to their goals but find a point at which resources can be divided. This is point C in figure 1.1. It is sometimes seen as the essence of compromise, but it is only one form of compromise. It may mean that both sides change priority. However, it is done in such a way that the change by side A is coupled to a change by side B. To meet halfway, at some point which has a symbolic value, is easier for the parties. Then, it is also possible for them to defend the deal to other decision-makers and to the general public. It may appear reasonable and be in accordance with values in the society. If the incompatibility concerns territory, this may mean drawing a border approximately half the distance between the two demands. It makes sense, but only so long as the areas are not inhabited by people who will have their own interests, or if the area contains resources that also should be part of the deal. Compromise is most readily made with monetary resources. Negotiations between employers and employees have a long history of finding optimal points at which to draw the dividing line between the two sides. In many such situations, it is important for the parties to get some resources, rather than nothing.

A third way is horse-trading, where one side has all of its demands met on one issue, while the other has all of its goals met on another issue. It means using two separate incompatibility diagrams.
(Figure 1.1), one for each issue, and where each party gets 100 per cent. This can also be described as a compromise, but works in a different way from the division we just described. In horse-trading over territory, the idea would be that A takes area 1 and B takes area 2, although both of them have had demands on areas 1 and 2. Instead of making a complicated division, an entire piece of territory is taken over by one or the other. Again, as we noted before, this assumes that there are no particular features to the territory, or that such features somehow are equal for both (for instance, oil in both). In a contest over political power positions, A may support B in some matters and receive corresponding support from B in others, meaning A and B abandon previous views and together form what is sometimes referred to as 'national pacts' or 'historical compromises'.

A fourth way is shared control. In this case, the parties decide to rule together over the disputed resource. This comes close to outcome D indicated in Figure 1.1. A territory can be shared by being ruled as a condominium, where decisions require the consent of both parties. An economic resource can be operated by a joint company and a formula devised for investment and profit sharing. A country can be run by a coalition government, a frequent phenomenon in most parliamentary democracies. Shared control may require some degree of trust; it may also be a temporary arrangement for a transition period. Power-sharing arrangements also exemplify this. This is where all parties are represented in government according to a formula agreed upon beforehand (for each five per cent of the national vote a party gets one seat in the cabinet, for instance). Even if agreed to only for a predetermined period, it can mean that a conflict is successfully
transcended, and that at the end of the period the conflict situation is very different from what it was at the beginning. This can also be applied to international regimes setting up rules for using water in shared rivers. In international affairs such arrangements may mean the beginning of regional integration, in internal affairs they can make contributions to the integration of a fragmented society.

A fifth way is to leave control to somebody else, which means externalizing control, so that the warring parties agree not to rule the resources themselves. This is outcome E. in Figure 1.1. The primary parties agree, or accept, that a third actor takes control. Such solutions have gained prominence in the discussions on international conflicts during the 1990s.

Sixth, there is the possibility of resorting to conflict resolution mechanisms, notably arbitration or other legal procedures that the parties can accept. It means finding a procedure that can resolve the conflict according to some of the previously mentioned five ways, with the added quality that it is done through a process outside the parties' immediate control. The legal mechanism builds on the idea of neutrality, distance and resort to precedents and history. Among conflict resolution mechanisms, we would also include holding new elections and arranging a referendum, which means leaving the issue to a concerned but still non-predetermined audience. For this to be a legitimate way of ending a conflict, the conflicting parties should have a fair chance of presenting their views. Studies show that if parties feel that they have
been given a fair chance, they are more likely to accept defeat. A number of border disputes have been resolved with the use of arbitration. A remarkable case is the drawing of the border between Iraq and Kuwait after the Gulf War, settled according to an exchange of documents between the two parties, but under the authorization of the UN Security Council.

Seventh, issues can be left to later or even to oblivion. By appointing a commission, parties can gain time, and when the commission reports, political conditions and popular attitudes may have changed. Some issues may gain from being delayed, as their significance may pale or their symbolic character may be reduced. This is an argument for not solving all questions at the same time. But it requires that there be a second chance to bring them up. In fact, the second chance is important for a loser to accept defeat or enter into a compromise. If there is a credible way in which one can return to the issue later or run in a new election, then the agreement is more acceptable. The party does not argue that the issue is given less priority, only that its time is not yet ripe. In the case of the first mechanism, in contrast, there is a significant change of position and the party does not return to its previous view.

The word ‘conflict’ indicates patterns of behaviour. But social scientists mean it to refer to the cause of that act as well. That is to say, underlined condition for hostility which is called root conflict is equally, if not more important than the manifestation of the hostility, the

behaviour. For example, killing or rape; it may be more correct to consider them as an expression rather than forms of conflict, acts indicating the existence of say social, economic, cultural, psychopathological, gender or personality conflict.

Conflict of interest stems from a situation of scarcity. Both the parties want the same thing but there is not enough available for each to have what it wants. The situation of scarcity is not only the condition that brings forth conflict. When the interest is intensified to the extent of becoming ‘greed’, even a situation of ‘just enough’ would bring forth conflict.34

Galtung refers to conflict as some type of incompatibility. He distinguishes conflict as an undefined, latent condition, and its manifestation in terms of the attitude and behaviour of actors. A destructive behaviour and destructive attitude should not be confused with conflict. Conflict refers to some type of incompatibility: one goal stands in the way of another party.35

Figure 1.2

Incompatibility

Incompatibility → Interests of Parties

Goals of Action

Means of Action

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Attitudes and behaviour, Galtung explains, are usually assumed to be negative when they are related to conflict. These negative manifestations can take the form of sudden burst of hatred or direct violence. But they can also take institutionalised form of generalized social distance and structural violence.  \[36\]

**Figure 1.3**

**Violent Conflict**

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Conflict

Attitude  Behaviour

Hatred  Social  Direct  Structural
Distance  Violence  Violence
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The term ‘conflict’ is ambiguous. It involves many factors. It may refer to the behaviour of different parties, the underlined conditions of conflict or the factors that motivate the actors for conflict. When there is a conflict, there is a continuous issue, embargo-condition, a condition of deprivation, denial, injustice that bring forth conflict, there is character discrepancy between the parties that is an inflaming volatile attitude that worsens the situation resulting in hostile outburst of action between the parties. All factors of a situation together constitute a conflict. Therefore, a clear understanding of the term ‘conflict’ requires

\[36\] Ibid.
a comprehensive definition which has been constructed by Galtung as “Conflict Triangle”.37

**Figure 1.4**

**Conflict Triangle**

Conflict situation is one in which two or more social units or parties perceive that they are ‘differentially placed’ and are having mutually incompatible goals; in which there is discrepancy what is and what ought to be, disparity, discrimination, denial of rights, exploitation, scarcity, competition etc. A situation of this kind by itself is not conflict, but is potent with conflict chances.

Conflict attitude means the aggressive or volatile nature of the parties which, in a situation of conflict, converts into behaviours.38 Conflict attitude can be greed, anger, impatience, frustration, fear, interpersonal tension, aggressive drive etc.

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37 Ibid.
Conflict behaviour means action intended to carry out will against the resistance of other party. It is action taken by a party in a conflict situation with the intention of making the opponent abandon or modify its goal.\textsuperscript{39}

According to Merton, this state of incompatibility is called ‘latent conflict situation’. Here the actors do not realize the urgency or the immediacy of conflict. When these actors, the privileged masters, get the energy and cognizance to translate the objective interest into subjective goal, they move to alter the situation and conflict occurs.\textsuperscript{40}

Adam Curle sees the linear sequence of this process.\textsuperscript{41}

(a) Low awareness – of injustice but ignorantly passive. This is potential conflict [Mitchel calls this state “incipient conflict”]

(b) A high awareness of basic conflict of interest through education and conscientization [this is latent conflict]

(c) Confrontation of the oppressed and the oppressor through non-violent means [it is overt conflict]

(d) Conciliation and bargaining aiming at a settlement [solution]

(e) Restructuring the formerly un-peaceful relation.

While some scholars say conflict is primarily cyclical in its development and moves through a predictable sequence of stages, others

\textsuperscript{39} Ibid., pp. 26-29.
\textsuperscript{40} Merton, Robert, Social Theory and Social Structure (New York: The Free Press), 1968, Ch. 3.
\textsuperscript{41} Curle, Adam, Making Peace (New York: Barnes), 1971, quoted by Wehr Paul (1979), p. 9
say it is dialectical and has stage wise process in which synthesis takes place and by which society is transformed from one state to another.

Karl Marx saw conflict developing in phases with each phase unfolding from the preceding one and leading ultimately to complete revolution. This would at last produce free society and there would be no more conflict as there would be no class. He says that the unity and togetherness of group is determined by its commonly perceived interest or goal with another group. “The separate individuals form a class or unit only in so far as they have to carry on a common battle against another class; otherwise they are on hostile terms with each other as competitors.”

Simmel holds that “Conflict sets social boundaries between groups, socialites and nations by strengthening group consciousness and awareness of separatedness thus establishing the identity of groups, societies and nations within.” The function of conflict is exploited by some states for personal interest. When a nation is riddled with internal strife, the last strategy the leaders apply is declaring conflict (war) with another nation. Simmel states, “a state of conflict pulls the members so tightly together and subjects them to such uniform impulse. This is the reason why war with the outside is sometimes the last chance for the state ridden with inner antagonisms to overcome these antagonisms.”

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44 Ibid., pp. 87-88.
Conflict is generally considered as evil or as Parson says, “a disease.”45 “It is treated as a pathological condition equilibrium.”46 Conflict within or without places people in stress and strain. It may result in physical altercation, destruction or annihilation or its less intensity arrests the regular course of life. In the process of conflict huge measure of energy is depleted which, in turn, stunts the growth and development.

Sigmund Freud expressed, “Almost every intimate emotional relation between people which lasts for some time - marriage, friendship, the relation between parent-children - leaves a sediment feelings of aversion and hostility. When this hostility is directed against people who are otherwise loved there is conflict.”47 He suggested that opposite instincts exist side by side in the unconscious, with no disharmony. Conflict occurs only when the overt, verbal, symbolic or emotional responses required to fulfill one motive are incompatible with those required to fulfill another. The situation frequently involves other motives that produce incompatible response tendencies.

However, scholars opine that conflict is a sort of ventilation that salvages individuals suffocating with the accumulation of hostility. It drains the tension caused by the precipitation of aversion and brings them all closer again.

Conversely, if anyone tries to avoid such conflict or resolves it, he would only help the sedimentation of aversion which, at a point of

46 Coser, Lewis, Continuities in the Study of Social Conflict, op. cit.
time, proves to be fatal, would break the relation forever. Hence conflict serves, contrary to the general belief, a unifying role. Society in this respect is “sewn together by its inner conflict.”

A final common assumption among conflict researchers is that the phenomenon of conflict, in one form or another, is an inevitable and ever present feature of society and social interaction.

The very nature of individual as a ‘unit’ of the society, brings forth reasons for conflict. The norm of Homo-Sapien is to be together. Humans live as social animals. But at the same time, every individual, despite being bound together by many commonalities and counterpetal characters, is absolutely of unique make-up. Each individual develops his own concepts, perceptions, understanding and likes and dislikes. Each is different in some ways from others. No two individuals are identical, not even identical twins are similar.

From this physiology to their cognition, everything is different. When individuals having all differences within live socially together, their interactions, tend to have elements of contradiction, disagreement and in-congenity; in other words, incompatibility in thoughts, words and deeds. Hence their relationship is potent with conflict.

The last century (called by Sorokin as the bloodiest of all centuries) offered humans increased opportunities for conflict processes

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such as industrialization and urbanization that encourage contact among people, competition, numerous forms of group differentiation (ethnic, occupational, status) and consequent visibility of inequalities and stratification within society. Since competition, contact and visibility are pre-requisites for conflict, Mack claims, “the mathematical possibilities of conflict increases both within and between societies under industrialization.”

Social research indicates a trend of high degree job dissatisfaction, labour conflicts, labour-management conflicts. Workers want better working facilities, credit for work done, leisure and recreation, while the owner demands efficiency, sincerity and more output of work, higher productivity and more profit. A worker or a farmer with his moderate income is constantly in conflict with the rising trend of material expectation of family. He is not able to fulfill the wants of the family members and they, under the pressure of their wants fail to understand the bread winner and there is conflict between them.

There is a conflict between parents and children over behavioural practice, attitudes, manners, education, rights and duties, likes and dislikes etc. In family, conflict occurs on parental role, employment of mothers, intergenerational gap, material aberration etc.

Individual is, in a complex social system, in conflict at every step. One may develop quarrel with fellow passenger, in market, wherever interaction takes place. People conflict with each other in the name of religion, caste, creed, political identity, ideology etc.

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Political conflicts too have constant occurrence. Clashes occur between cadres in fixing up posters, tying banners, drawing symbols on walls, campaigning for the party candidate etc. While these are at the grass root level, the fight for recognition, equitable rights, autonomy and self-determination are major political conflicts found at the national level.

In addition to conflict with fellow beings, we find ourselves in conflict with our physical environment. The greediness of humans and their consumption needs resulted in forests being cut down beyond recovery. India’s forest cover has been reduced to 11% as against the minimum requirement of 35% of the total land area. Natural resources such as fossil oil and various minerals, once regarded as inexhaustible, are being rapidly depleted. One unilateral conflict with lower beings has resulted in the extinction of many rare species and pushed many more to the verge of extinction. One clash with nature leads to less percepitation, unseasonal monsoon, ozone layer depletion and the resultant UV rays penetration, air pollution and consequent acid rain, rising level of sea etc. are the priori retaliation of the nature.

Thus individual is in conflict with self, fellow beings, family members, superiors, subordinates etc. Society is in conflict over faith, belief, worship, ideology, caste etc. Nations find themselves in conflict within and without. There is conflict over the maritime line and over atmospheric control. In short, humanity is in a continuous state of conflict.

The hope of human existence surprisingly is that in spite of perpetual conflict, humans continue to thrive successfully, overcoming
all these conflicts. It is perhaps the gift of nature that we are able to show great resilience against much of the day-to-day conflicts. On the basis of the nature of conflict and the occasion, we tackle them with different efficiency.

Sometimes, we avoid conflict, some conflict we accommodate, with some we reconcile, and compromise with some others. Depending on the moods and temperament, we react on the occasions either aggressively or with restraints. Taking into account the nature of our relationship with a particular opponent, we respond either in a hostile manner or be passive on different occasions and regarding different methods of solving conflict. When the opponent is a dear one, like sister’s son, spouse etc., we adopt more rational and humane approach to solve the conflict. Any attempt to resolve conflicts that emerge from multiple causes, therefore, has to be multidimensional if the result is to be permanent. In other words, any attempt to resolve conflicts ought to be one that deals with every cause of the conflict.

“It will be possible to envisage a society free from conflict, such a society seems so remote from the world as we know it that the inevitability of continual and repetitive conflict seems more sensible”, says Robert Lee. Thus it would be difficult to conceive of an ongoing society where social conflict is absent. The society without conflict is a dead society…like it or not, conflict is a reality of human existence and, therefore, a means of understanding social behaviour.

Conflict is, therefore, universal fact, as Heracleitus pointed out. Our very experience pre-supposes conflict in its generation, and our knowledge, apart from its priori categories, is based on such conflict. Man is learning about himself, others and reality, his growth and development and his increasing ability to create his own heaven or hell. The desire to eradicate conflict, the hope for harmony and universal co-operation, is the wish for a frozen, unchanging world with all relationships fixed in their patterns - with all in balance.