Conflict Resolution: an individual, national and global issue

Centre for Future Societies Research

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Today I will cover...

- the elements of conflict
- conflict operates in a system
- no single action or strategy is likely to resolve a conflict
The Elements of Conflict
Although the “objective” aspects of the dispute may be apparent ...

... the “subjective” aspects remain to be discovered.
What can you do?

Manage emotions

• 3 questions to ask yourself:
  Why am I feeling this?
  What do I want to change?
  Whose problem is this?

• 3 goals in assertive communication:
  Avoid punishing / blaming
  Communicate clearly
  Improve the relationship
What can you do?

Look at the resolution logistics

• The physical setting
• Do you need ground rules (what is the procedural power)
• Manage communications (written, verbal)
• What is the appropriate body language
• Will separate sessions be needed
• Is an interim agreement possible (can build in review)
• Is it safe for participants to meet in person (if not, is a shuttle process appropriate)
Conflict Operates in a System
## Rights or Regulatory Approach?

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rights based approach</th>
<th>Regulatory based approach</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Focus on social change</strong></td>
<td>Emphasis on design of processes and institutions</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Focus on identity and culture</strong></td>
<td>Pursues the public interest</td>
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<td><strong>Has the effect of restraining the State</strong></td>
<td>Can interfere with rights or can enhance them – for example, setting minimum standards</td>
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<td><strong>Focus on ‘cultural consciousness’</strong></td>
<td>Focus on ‘efficiency and effectiveness’</td>
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<td>Can be thought of as ‘discretion structured by rules’</td>
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Adapted from Morgan, Bronwen (ed), *The Intersection of Rights and Regulation: New Directions in Socio-Legal Scholarship*, (Ashgate Publishing Limited, 2007)
Complex Stakeholder Networks

No single action or strategy is likely to resolve a conflict.
...intractability is not due to the fact that individual elements...cannot be changed...but because changed elements will typically be reinstated by other elements in the system back into the hostile pattern.

Key Differences Between Two Party And Multi-Party Conflict

• Coalitions

• Process management

• ‘Kaleidoscopic’ nature of BATNA analysis

Important to Keep in Mind…

DEFINING THE ISSUES

EXPLORING SOLUTIONS
What about Multi-Party Conflicts?

DEFINING THE ISSUES

EXPLORING SOLUTIONS
Conflict Dynamics

• Multiple elements influence each other

• Once some elements change, their new status can influence the process

• At some point, a change may occur in sentiments, attitudes, or behaviours (of individuals or groups)

• Clarity may be obtained about what is unlikely to change
Strategies which may assist

Understand the elements of the conflict

Are any elements more important than others?

Is the conflict ready for resolution (it’s ‘ripeness’)?

Make sure the right people are present
Creating conditions to assist resolution

Increase participant awareness
(of the process and the issues)

Reduce fear

Engender trust

Pay attention

Ease logistical constraints

Address cultural considerations
Maintaining Engagement

- Involve necessary participants and stakeholders
- Learn what does and doesn’t work (continuous feedback)
Questions?

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