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Theories of conflict

DEFINITIONS, DIMENSIONS, NEGATIONS,
FORMATIONS

Columbia University, 1958
University of Oslo, 1969-1971
Universität Zürich, 1972
University of Hawai'i 1973

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Preface

Theories of Conflict is based on lectures given when the author was professor of sociology at Columbia University 1958-60, of conflict and peace studies at the University of Oslo 1969-1977, and visiting professor at Universität Zürich spring 1972 and University of Hawai'i spring 1973. The book was mainly written in Zürich and Honolulu, gently facilitated by the late Professor Peter Heinz in Zürich and Professor George Kent in Honolulu. To both my most sincere gratitude.

The predecessor, A Framework for the Analysis of Social Conflict, New York, NY: Bureau of Applied Social Research, Columbia University, 1958, is reproduced here in the original version as an Appendix. But neither that one, nor this book, nor another book, Theories of Peace, International Peace Research Institute, Oslo, 1967 was published. Why?

Answer: because the books had not lived through enough confrontations with real life conflicts, as opposed to meetings with other books in libraries, and with their authors at conferences. My model for a peace science from the beginning back in 1951 was medical science, and its theory-practice interface. The lectures, and this book, clarify concepts and theories. Artists and sculptors would have called them sketches. They are working books. I wanted as fresh a start as possible, based on intuitions and brushes with reality, not readings and academic discussions only, however indispensable.

Not building primarily on others there are no references. They come in A Theory of Conflict, A Theory of Development, A Theory of Civilization, A Theory of Peace, TRANSCEND University Press, 2009.

The concepts were tried out, like in “Three Approaches to Peace: Peacekeeping, Peacemaking and Peacebuilding”, “Anti-Semitism in the Making”, “Towards a Theory of Race Relations”, “Institutionalized Conflict Resolution: A Theoretical Paradigm”, “Conflict as a Way of Life”, “The Middle East and the Theory of Conflict”; in Essays in Peace Research, Volumes II, III and V, Copenhagen: Ejlers, 1976-79-80.

In Part Four (commissioned by the Norwegian Minister of Foreign Affairs in 1974)

reality comes closer. But there are many theory and practice steps from there, via Peace By Peaceful Means, London: SAGE, 1998, to 50 Years: 100 Peace & Conflict Perspectives, TRANSCEND University Press 2008 (see www.transcend.org/tup).

The reader will find in this book such ideas as dissociative vs associative relations, actor vs structural conflicts based on values vs interests, symmetric vs asymmetric conflict, conflict transformation, empirical vs potential reality, conflict transcendence as opposed to compromise, conflict resolution vs conflict repression, conflict resolution through transformation of potential into empirical reality, goals vs pursuit by means of resources, the focus on equity and the rejection of the conflict-manager who steals somebody else's conflict and deprives them of that chance of growth. Needless to say, they have all been developed further, but basically they are all here.

Chapters 1-2 have been published as the entry "Conflict Theory" in Lester Kurtz, ed. Encyclopedia of Violence, Peace and Conflict, Amsterdam etc.: Elsevier, Second edition, 2008, pp. 391-400; otherwise nothing has been published elsewhere.

And nothing has been changed apart from some language editing, like making sentences and paragraphs shorter. I am most grateful to S.P. Udayakumar, then (1992) my assistant at the University of Hawai'i, for making the digital version, and to my assistants Summer 2009, Naakow Grant-Hayford and Karoline Weber, for their help with the final manuscript; all three also wonderful dialogue partners.

There are things I would have said differently today but I can identify with the 1973 version, and found it interesting to revisit myself 36 years later, even 51 years later (for the Appendix).

It was also interesting to revisit the chapter commissioned by the Norwegian foreign minister at the time, Knut Frydenlund. Written in 1973-74 the Cold War was certainly on, but as is evident from Part Four I did not believe in the East-West conflict becoming hot in the "Atlantic Theater", "only" in the Third World. NATO and the WTO were seen in the chapter not so much as pitted against each other as ways of consolidating the gains from World War II with both of them enforcing their systems and deploying military force for that purpose.

Thus, I saw world dynamics more in terms of "Center vs periphery formations" than in terms of "Center vs Center formations". There were two of them, capitalist imperialism and socialist imperialism, and upheavals were predicted in both, with US and Soviet interventions. More concretely, the Soviet empire was seen as an early victim of upheavals in Eastern Europe, and the Soviet system itself would collapse because of its anti-human character. The US imperial control was also seen as crumbling in the longer run.

Nor did I believe in any general “North-South” conflict, the conflicts being inside the two imperial formations. The focus was also on superpower cooperation in the sense of respecting the other’s “sphere of interest”, protesting interventions but not too much, using repression cooperation, passive or negative, as a way of building cooperative ties, very apprehensive of a nuclear war between them.

Basically both the US and the Soviet Union would try to keep their periphery elites in power and strike a deal on that basis. This actually culminated in the Gorbachev cooperation with Reagan and Bush, with hands off the other side intervening in Panama and in Caucasus-Balticum. In the terminology used in Part One the prognosis was in terms of asymmetric center-periphery conflict, with nonviolence and guerilla strategies, not in terms of any big symmetric encounter. Afghanistan was not predicted, however, neither the Communist take-over, nor the Soviet “protection”, nor the US intervention.

Another prediction was in terms of an emerging European vs Asian conflict, now in full bloom, militarily-politically with West Asia and economically-culturally with East Asia. The prognosis of China-Japan cooperation seemed far-fetched, but with the power and paradigm shift in Japan from LDP to DPJ it now looks more probable.

I only hope the reader will also derive something useful from the book.

Jondal and Alfaz, August 2009

Johan Galtung

Chapter 1

DEFINITIONS OF CONFLICT

1.1 Contradiction and Incompatibility: A First Approach

Once upon a time, during the Han dynasty, there was (perhaps) a man who was a dealer in weapons, somewhere in China. In his store were the means of attack as well as the means of defense, and among them a halberd and a shield. The man, the dealer in arms, had anticipated not only modern patterns of advertising, but also the modern arms race with its ballistic missiles, its anti-ballistic missiles and anti-anti-ballistic missiles, and had two posters.

One advertised his halberd: This halberd is so sharp that it can pierce any shield!
The other advertised his shield: This shield is so strong that no halberd can pierce it!

And thus it was that the Chinese characters for halberd and shield, juxtaposed in that order, became the character for contradiction:

矛盾

in Chinese pronounced: mau tun

in Japanese pronounced: mu jun

But are these two statements really contradictory? And what does it mean that they are contradictory, if we agree that they are?

To explore this point, fundamental for any theory of conflict, let us look at these two statements:

P1 Point X is on one side of a strip of paper;
 Point Y is on the other side of the same strip.

P2 The curve X-Y connects the two points without ever crossing the edge of the strip of paper.

Even a beginner in mathematics will yawn at this hackneyed example, and we apologize to them. Others might like to tear out a narrow rectangular strip of paper, mark X on one side and Y on the other and try a solution: twist the strip, join the two narrow edges together, and the curve X-Y can be drawn with no difficulty.

The example serves to illustrate one point: there is more to reality than what meets the naked eye. What appears impossible may become possible once the concept of reality, in casu a strip of paper, is extended, or at least transformed. The Möbius strip is only one simple example: mathematics is, indeed, full of them. For ex mathematicians have it in their power to expand their reality so as to make possible what was impossible in the reality to which they were formerly constrained. Take the example of what happened to numbers:

<i>Starting with</i>	<i>they had to add</i>	<i>so as to permit</i>	<i>and they got</i>
natural numbers	fractions	unlimited division	positive numbers
positive numbers	irrational numbers	unlimited roots	positive real numbers
positive real numbers	negative numbers	unlimited subtraction	real numbers
real numbers	imaginary numbers	unlimited “roots”	complex numbers
complex numbers	etc.		

In the original “reality” of natural numbers the two statements:

P1 N is a natural number

P2 N is the difference between a and b, $b > a$

constitute a contradiction, for there is no such natural number.

Back to the Chinese merchant: is there a reality in which his two statements would not form a contradiction, without stretching the definitions of halberd and shield? There probably is. His statements concern the relative impact two weapons, both presumably made of metal – or at least of some mineral, the Aztecs used swords of obsidian – have

on each other. These impacts are well studied in geology (mineralogy) under the general heading of “hardness”, and the scale of hardness, from the lowest, talc, to 10, diamond, is problematic. Shape plays considerable role, but so do external circumstances. It is not inconceivable that one material may outdo another at one temperature, but has to capitulate at another.

To this the answer might be that sword and shield differ in form, not in substance, and that they are used under exactly the same circumstances; in the heat of the battle, to be precise. The merchant might still retort if a suit were brought against him, that his particular halberd would only pierce “a little”, because it would be blunted, again “a little”. In other words, to beat that merchant sharper definitions would be needed to bring out a contradiction. The legend adds, however, that when confronted with the contradiction in his two statements the merchant was at a loss.

In the following “contradiction” will be given a specific meaning. The point of departure is a set of theses or sentences that say something about reality, whether they are data-sentences dividing the world into observed and unobserved, theory-sentences (hypotheses) dividing the world into foreseen and unforeseen, or value-sentences dividing the world into desired and rejected. The difference between “is” and “ought” does not concern us here. Either kind is ultimately descriptive of reality, they all refer to states of the world. Nor are we concerned with operationalization, testability or such matters. An intuitive understanding of what the thesis says about reality is sufficient. The important point are the dichotomies.

Imagine, then, that we have a set of theses, T. To say that T is a contradiction is another way of saying that some states of the world the theses express are mutually incompatible. This, in turn, is another way of saying that the realization of one thesis will impede the realization of at least one other thesis. By realization, then, we mean that something is, or becomes, part of empirical reality, which means that the thesis is, or becomes, a data-sentence. It is or becomes “confirmed”, “true”, “tenable”, while at the same time also being a theory-sentence or a value-sentence.

If the thesis is all three at the same time the meaning is that the state of the world that is observed, is also foreseen and pursued, which might be said to be a definition of the best of all worlds.

In defining contradiction as a property of a set of theses, in other words as a meta-thesis, it is assumed that no single thesis is formulated in such a way that it is a contradiction. If it were, it should be split into at least two theses.

Further, contradiction is taken in its literary sense, contra dicere, “to speak against”,

between theses. But this does not mean that a contradiction is seen as merely verbal, for each thesis is seen as indicative of a state of the world, e.g. “equitable international relations”, and “capitalist international economic system”.

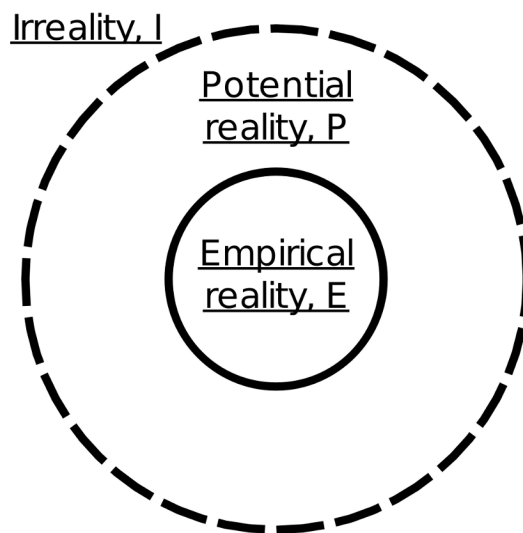
The contradiction, hence, is not seen as a “struggle between words”, but as something with reference to empirical reality. All it says is that “the combination of these empirical states of the empirical world is impossible”. “The theses cannot all be tenable”, the “theses are mutually incompatible”, “T is a contradiction”, are, consequently, synonymous statements.

To issue a contradiction-certificate, then, is to say something about empirical reality. More particularly, something very dramatic, viz., that something is empirically impossible; the world cannot accommodate all those empirical realities.

Thus, a contradiction statement is itself a thesis, which may also be contradictory to another thesis, the latter being a contradiction thesis or not.

We are brought into a hierarchy of contradictions of second order, third order etc. Of these the contradictions of second order - non-contradictory theses contradicting each other - seem most important, or at least more tractable at an intuitive level.

To explore this further the following distinction is useful:



I: “What is impossible, and is not”

P: “What is possible, but is not”

E: “What is possible, and is”

Innermost is that tiny little thing known as empirical reality, E, the fetish of empiricism. It is, and, consequently, is possible. But from that it does not follow that “what is not is

impossible”; only that “what is impossible, is not” the counterpositive statement. The latter is descriptive of what is here called irreality, I, the outermost sphere.

Between the two is potential reality, P; that which is possible but is not (yet). But if it is not, how, then, can we know that it is possible? We cannot know by referring to data about that which is observed, nor about what is pursued. We can only know by bringing that reality into being, through practice, in other words. Where that will bring humankind is unknown and unknowable; for that reason the borderline between potential reality and irreality cannot be fixed. But the borderline between that which is, and that which might be is assumed, in this connection, to be unproblematic, although there will be decision problems in practice. There will be grey zones, e.g. disagreements among competent observers.

We have assumed that any contradiction thesis refers to empirical reality; in other words, that it is a statement pronouncing something as impossible in empirical reality. Each single thesis in T may or may not refer to empirical reality.

But if contradictory, each one of them can only refer to empirical reality, be realized in other words, under the condition that the negation of the other theses, singly or combined, is realized. This statement may, obviously, also be true or false, since it is an empirical statement. If it is false then it has to be shown where in empirical reality the theses in T are compatible. If it is true in empirical reality, then there is still the problem of whether it would remain true in a potential reality. And the more interesting problem: whether a process can be identified whereby that potential reality can be brought into empirical existence.

In line with ordinary usage we shall now say that to transcend a contradiction (“einen Widerspruch aufheben”) is to make empirical a potential reality so that T is no longer a contradiction, in other words create a reality where the theses are no longer mutually incompatible, but can all be empirically realized.

The Möbius strip may be seen as an example of a transcendence of that kind by transforming reality. But is the Möbius strip part of empirical reality before the reader, you, all readers, everybody, did that little experiment? Yes, and that serves to underline the difference between objective and subjective transcendence. A contradiction is objectively transcended if this empirical reality is possible. To what extent it is also subjectively transcended depends on the degree and extension of consciousness about this possibility.

For this reason any contradiction-certificate may itself contradict a thesis about partly discovered, contested empirical reality, and this is a crucial type of the second order contradiction referred to above. When somebody says “but that is incompatible”, and

somebody else exclaims “to the contrary, it is possible, I have seen it in ...” a second order contradiction has been identified.

What makes the whole idea of contradiction so basic is not the concept of incompatibility, or exclusion, which would also be found in empiricism, but the idea of transcendence. Underlying it is the assumption that known empirical reality is only a fraction of potential reality, and that other realities can be brought into being. What is incompatible today may become compatible, not sub speciae aeternitatis, but tomorrow, even now, here.

It should be pointed out that we have systematically avoided referring to two theses. That figure of speech reduces T to a set of two theses only, and is not general enough. It tends to arrest thinking and confine it to the thought-prison of the dichotomy, so ubiquitous and so difficult a prison to break out of. This is particularly important in conflict theory where conflicts much too often are conceived of in dichotomous terms: North-South conflict, capital-labor, democracy-dictatorship, etc. This is not to deny the usefulness of dichotomies under some circumstances, but those circumstances should be spelt out and demonstrated empirically. The dichotomy should not be built into the thought form, the discourse, from the very beginning. From the circumstance that there cannot be less than 2 theses in T to constitute a contradiction it does not follow that 2 is also the maximum number.

Another word to be used with care is synthesis. It does not merely refer to a simple mixture, an eclectic combination, an in-between compromise, but to a “higher unity”. What is intended by “transcendence”, however, is something more modest: a transformation of empirical reality so that what once was a contradiction no longer is.

The incompatible has become compatible. Whether this new reality is “higher” or not is another matter, and to assume that history somehow proceeds towards ever higher realities is obscene for anybody who has lived through the twentieth century. The term “transcendence” will be used for anything from the smallest micro-changes to the real watersheds in history, and for subjective and objective transcendence.

A third word to be used with care is “antithesis”. There is an image of antagonism evoked by the term “anti”, as if each thesis stands for a force trying to fight its way against the other force, the “thesis”. Again, this is an image that is very useful under circumstances to be spelt out, but artificial under other circumstances, like in the Möbius strip example. We prefer not to build it into the contradiction concept from the very beginning, but to develop it as a special case. Moreover, there is also an element of anthropomorphism, and even an over-accentuation of consciousness implicit in the image, however unintended this may be. The world becomes animated in a way hardly conducive

to further exploration. We aim at a broader discourse than this dichotomous speech, wrongly attributed to Hegel, with thesis vs antithesis producing synthesis.

1.2 Contradiction and Incompatibility: A More Formal Approach

Let us now formalize this somewhat, and in a way which may imply a limitation of the perspective; although we are not convinced that this is necessarily so.

We shall assume that any thesis in \underline{T} is a proposition, in the sense of attributing properties to something. In another context we have defined a proposition as any statement

$$P_s (X_1, X_2, \dots, X_n) \text{ or } P_s (\underline{X})$$

where S is a set of m units, X is a set of n variables and P is a distribution, probabilistic or deterministic, of S on \underline{X} . For $m=n=1$ we get simple propositions like “God is good”, “I have a car”; for $m=200$ and $n=2$ we may get propositions like “the higher a country is on the international division of labor, the higher its GNP per capita”.

For our purpose, however, we shall usually assume that the propositions in T are about one variable only ($n=1$). A proposition involving two variables will then show up as a contradiction between two propositions involving one variable each, e.g. “C is low on the international division of labor in year Y” and “C is high on GNP per capita in year Y+”. The contradiction is in what the proposition excludes. In so doing we have also, implicitly, said that the incompatibility may be probabilistic rather than deterministic, and also that the two statements do not necessarily refer to the same point in time. This restriction to $n=1$ is, however, only a convention to facilitate and standardize presentation.

A contradiction can be defined involving theses of any order of complexity, for any number of variables. Thus, a contradiction between a thesis with one variable and one involving two other variables would be tantamount to a proposition with three variables, and so on.

Thus, the general paradigm for a contradiction would be based on m units and n variables, and t theses, \underline{T} , specifying the distribution of m units on n variables. Here are two cases, both with $t=2$.

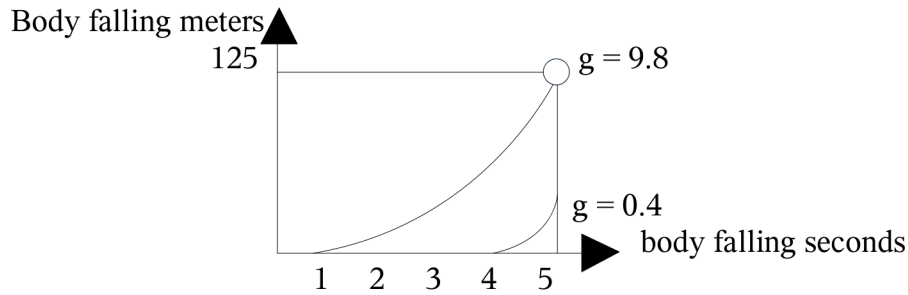
In the first case $m=1$ and $n=2$, there is one unit, the “body”, and two variables. The two theses locate the unit on either variable:

T1 “The body has fallen freely 5 seconds”

T2 “The body has fallen freely 5m”

But if the body is subject to the laws of free fall, then elapsed time t and distance s relate to each other like $s = 1/2gt^2$, so 5 meters is (about) what it would have fallen after 1, not after 5 seconds, when the distance covered would be (about) 125 meters, under the conditions of free fall with $g = 9.8$. So T is a contradiction, but not for $g = 0.4$.

Figure 1.1.



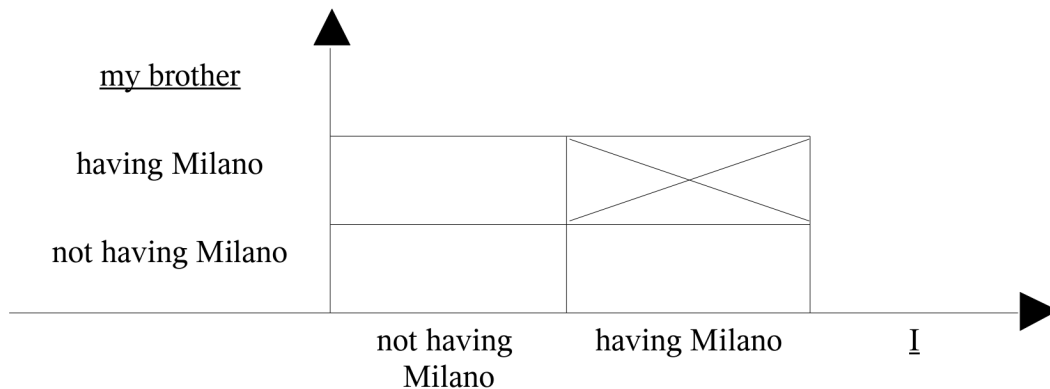
In the second case $m = 2$ and $n = 1$: there are two units and one variable. The two theses also locate the units on the variable.

T1 for the unit “I”: “I have Milano”

T2 for the unit “my brother”: “my brother has Milano”

However, the variable is only in a formal sense one and the same, that of possessing Milano. In a more real sense there are two variables: “I having Milano” and “My brother having Milano”. As diagram:

Figure 1.2.



Of the four possible combinations one is excluded; hence, \underline{T} is a contradiction. But there are certainly ways of transcending this contradiction, to be discussed later.

In general, then, when there are m units and n variables we shall need (mxn) axes to explore the contradiction. This defines an (mxn) dimensional space, \underline{S} , like the two-dimensional spaces in the two examples. Each thesis in \underline{T} defines a sub-space where the unit is (or the units are) located, according to that thesis. These subspaces intersect and form a region we shall call INT, for intersection. Each point in this region stands for the realization of all t theses in \underline{T} . It should be noticed that t is not necessarily equal to mxn , nor is INT necessarily a proper set. It may be empty because there is no intersection or equal to the total space defined by the mxn axes. But in general we assume that INT is a proper set different from either.

Each point in \underline{S} represents a reality. We now divide \underline{S} into two parts, the compatibility region, COMP, and the incompatibility region, INC. This division is not done on the basis of the theses in \underline{T} , but on the basis of the empirical distribution of m units on the n variables. Thus, we assume that there exists some basis for saying whether a point is realizable, i.e. belongs to empirical reality, or not. In the former case it belongs to the compatibility region, in the latter case to the incompatibility region. In the first example above the basis for this distinction was the law of motion, COMP being a parabola, in the second case the meaning of possessing Milano.

We can now give a more formal definition of contradiction: A contradiction obtains when the intersection is located in the incompatibility region, or simply

$$\text{Contradiction: } INT \subset INC$$

Nothing new has been said in formulating it this way, but this formulation makes the transition to a theory of conflict very easy since INT has a special meaning in that theory, and INC has exactly the meaning already given to it.

We then proceed on the basis of the idea of incompatibility to work out a definition of conflict. To do this the idea of incompatibility is retained in the form given at the end of the preceding section, as a contradiction, leaving open whether or not the contradiction can be transcended by changing empirical reality.

Conflict, then, is a special case of incompatibility, but what kind of special case? What are the differentiae specificae that make a conflict out of an incompatibility? We assume them to be two in number, and a first formulation might be as follows:

- [1] the variables referred to in the theses are goal-dimensions;
- [2] the units referred to in the theses are live actors.

What one thesis does is to indicate the location of a set of actors on one goal-dimension, and a set of such theses will serve to indicate their location in a space of goal-dimensions.

Here it should, at once, be said that “goal” is taken in a very general sense. It has no necessary connotation of “end” or “value”. All it says is that the variables with which conflict theory deals are not “flat”; they are equipped with a goal-gradient. Concrete ways of conceiving of goals will be spelt out in the next section.

It should also be emphasized that the units, i.e. the “sets of actors”, may range all the way from the single individual to highly structured sets of sets of sets and so on of individuals; like groups, countries, regions, worlds.

Moreover, we assume generally that these individuals are human beings, from individuals to collectivities; not denying that it may be fruitful to talk about “conflict” in the animal world. But we are not convinced that the referent is the same; it looks as if in that case we should rather talk about “hostile” or “antagonistic” behavior as something short of any transcendence.

1.3 The Goal Dimension: Drives vs Consumption

Basic in this connection, hence, is the concept of the goal-dimension. Life is manifold and human life perhaps even more so. We take it as axiomatic that life, and not only human, is the pursuit of goals, not necessarily deliberate, whether it takes the form of approaching positive, or avoiding negative, goals. What is positively and negatively evaluated varies from culture to culture, whether the culture is collective or individual, and from species to species.

Each individual has explicit and implicit cultural elements, standards, of his-her own; also changing and rarely completely clearly structured. But goals nevertheless serve as positive or negative sign-posts, perceived or not perceived, along the life-line of any individual or set of individuals (collectivity), sometimes creating drives to arrive at, or to avoid, these sign-posts. The sign-posts are approached and they are avoided, and approach and avoidance are both processes that fill the better part of the lives of individuals and collectivities. They should be distinguished from the goal-states which are the sign-posts themselves, where the positive value is approached and-or the negative value completely avoided. In the consumed goal-state there is no approach or avoidance. The drive is extinguished until it reappears, or attention is given to other goals. Thus, a goal-state has a temporary stability: the author with the completed book, the hunter with the game, the couple in intercourse, the person enjoying his meal, the politician elected to his office, the conqueror at the moment of conquest, the people that have obtained nationhood, the

nations that have obtained statehood, the leaders that have managed to integrate the revolution that has liberated the people, the party that has managed to “privatize” the public sector, the other party that has managed to “nationalize” the private sector.

Thus, there is a basic asymmetry in life between pursuit and consumption: what one has not, or is not, may make itself more clearly felt than what one has, or is. The person deprived of air, whether because of drowning or suffocating for some other reason, appreciates air fully, and probably even enjoys hours of gratitude if air is made available for consumption again. But very few have the capacity to appreciate the air around us every minute of the day, nor do we feel that we no longer are hungry for food or sex right after consumption of the goal-state.

The entrepreneurial type can be defined as one who is always looking for new things to create. He is not merely enjoying the institution he has built, resting on his laurels. The military conqueror is known to look for more conquests to be made, the politician for more changes to be made in the social structure, “and thus man chases woman until the woman in the end catches him” (G.B. Shaw), and so on. To live is to strive; where there is no drive, no strife, there is no life.

It may be objected that this may be a way of characterizing a specific collective or individual culture more than a general statement about goals. Modern man, to the extent he resembles Sorokin’s sensate man, is process and change oriented. He is looking for ways of changing the external world, engaged in the struggle for control, if necessary through conquest. But how about Sorokin’s ideational man, striving for changes in the internal world, perhaps summarized as a struggle for salvation? Do they experience lack of salvation, or salvation, as such? Biographical and other evidence seem to point in the first direction: it is the uncertainty, the struggle with forces inside and outside oneself that seem to dominate that person’s mind.

Salvation is described as a bliss relative to sinful life before conversion, but it has to be re-conquered all the time. If it has been obtained for oneself, then an ideational “entrepreneur” may want to extend it to others and become a missionary, or to deepen the scope of his own salvation becoming a monk, a hermit. In other words, the striving is still there, only along other dimensions.

Thus, the distinction is probably not only between process and goal, between the awareness of hunger and the lack of awareness of its satisfaction, but also between individuals and collectivities with various degree of appetite and ability to struggle for more of the goals and to invent new goals. That drives are extinguished upon consumption, and that there is an asymmetry between the drive state and the consumption state, are

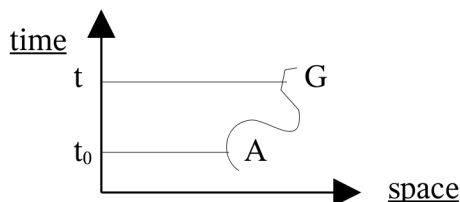
both true by definition.

The libertine losing interest in the woman after the first intercourse proves nothing new about the structure of goal-pursuit in general, only that his goal-state—even though he may not have known this himself—was precisely the first and only intercourse. The non-libertine may be interested in follow-ups, not to mention to broaden and deepen the scope of interaction seeing that same person as the source of mutual satisfaction of multiple goals. It is customary to refer to the accompanying sentiment as love if the scope is relatively broad, saying nothing about the time-perspective and whether there is an effort to broaden it further. When there are no more efforts, no new drives, only consumption, love may become routinized, even dead.

We can think in terms of a wave pattern: the drives are transformed into energy and released into some kind of activity in an undulating pattern. Frequencies and amplitudes may vary, but it is difficult to imagine a life where the wave is reduced to a completely level line. Except, by death, like the brain waves in encephalograms.

Let us put this in more formal terms crucial for understanding conflict. In the diagram the line is the life-line of an actor, an individual or a collectivity as, moving through time and space:

Figure The life-line of any actor



At G, at time t, there is consumption of a goal, gratification. At t_0 , when the actor is at A, he is at a distance from G: the value may be consumed gradually over time, like gradually achieving mastery of a new language. Or, it may be in terms of spatial distance, as when the invasion army is approaching the capital; or in terms of time distance, the libertine again, calculating time needed till surrender. The difference matters: the first interpretation may mean a gradual extinction of the drive and the others a wetting of appetites.

If G is the consumption of an apple, the zero point stands for zero bites; then the first bite and so on till the apple is consumed.

For the goal of democracy one may count the number of participatory sectors of society, for the goal of socialism the number of equitable sectors; representing gradual realization of the goal.

How about ownership: either the actor owns the means of production, communication, destruction, or not? Depends on how many he has to consult with; ownership may also be represented in a graded fashion.

This gives us four different meanings when we talk about “goal”, and they should be kept apart.

Table 1.1 Four Aspects of “goal”

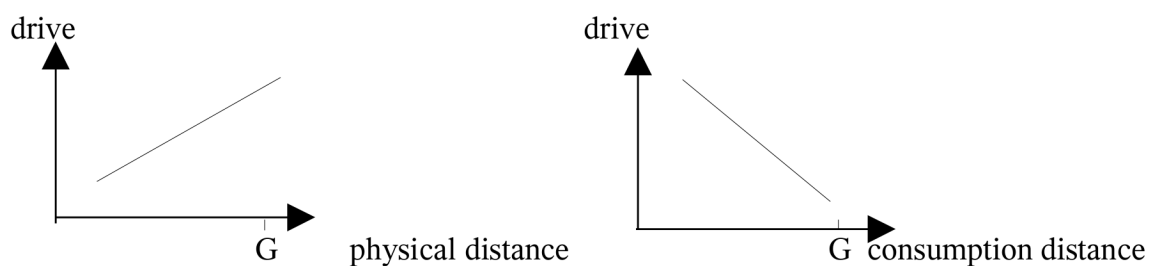
	<u>goal as dimension</u>	<u>goal as end point</u>
<u>goal as standard of evaluation</u>	a variable	“goal”
<u>goal as consumption</u>	degree of goal-consumption	goal-state: goal-consumption completed

When “peace” is mentioned as a goal it is usually in the upper right hand corner sense, and “peace” is usually clarified when spelt out as a variable because positive peace is then contrasted with negative peace. Shades and grades of peace can then be specified.

All this should be distinguished from locating an actor on a goal-dimension, and particularly from locating him at the end of the dimension where the goal is consumed: the actor is in or at the goal-state. One thing is goal and goal-dimensions as abstract entities belonging to the culture, or to the analytical apparatus; another is goal or degree of goal-attainment as a concrete state of the actor.

Thus far we have talked about goals and drives and it might be tempting to relate the two. This has been done fairly often at the level of individual: one has tried to measure the drive as a function of the physical distance from the goal, and of the degree of realization of the goal. The relation between drive and distance is often referred to as the gradient, and they may look as follows:

Figure 1.3. The Relation Between Goal and Drive



In the first case, consumption starts at G and the drive becomes more intense the closer one is; in the second case the consumption ends at G and the drive is extinguished. Combined into one diagram yields an A-shaped curve known to many actors for many goals.

1.4 Conflict: Actors in Pursuit of Incompatible Goals

Let us now add another actor to create a social system.

If life, action, is the pursuit of goals, then social life, interaction, is the exchange of value. Actors enter into exchange relations, for many reasons, one of them being that they think they gain utility (subjective value); another because they are used to do so; still another because they are forced to. The farmer and the city-dweller exchanging food with manufactured goods are useful as examples of a limited type of exchange. The prison inmate and his guard also exchange values—the inmate is usually forced into his position and the guard is usually paid to be there—but the values exchanged are predominantly negative, like not being a troublemaker against relaxing the rules. We refer to the interaction relation as dissociative if the values exchanged are mainly negative or neutral, and as associative if the values exchanged are predominantly positive.

Both examples above have a certain superficial equivalence or reciprocity about them: the farmer gets his due in terms of manufactured goods, the guard gets back from the inmate as trouble whatever he, the guard, may have added to the punishment in terms of strict reinforcement of regulations, etc. But reciprocity, or equity, is not a generally valid social rule. In the relationship between slave-owner and slave, or between nineteenth century capitalist and worker, it makes no sense to talk about equity in the exchange.

In the following sections the difference between equality among actors and equity in the exchange between actors will be explored. Cases of gross inequity in exchange will be referred to as exploitation, which may even go so far as to involve an exchange between positive and negative value, as when the slave contributes to profit and receives all kinds of deprivation in return.

How is exchange on unequal terms possible? Simply because the two-person free-will market model has very limited applicability. It portrays the individual as master, seeking optimal value exchanges, and not as an element in a more comprehensive and complex social structure where repression plays a major role.

The social structure may prescribe for the individual his patterns of exchange and fix the exchange price for his labor (wages), his love (that love should be reciprocated), etc. Not all actors are able to change the prices since they are often not geared to one isolated individual but to positions, to statuses and roles, as a worker, a lover, an enterprise, a big power, etc., not easily changed. But not all spheres of life are thus regulated and circumscribed, and the spheres that are only regulated up to a certain level leave lots of possibilities for the change-oriented individual, group or nation.

Thus, individuals as well as collectivities are both free and bound, both able to fix the terms of exchange as they want and to withdraw from unrewarding bargains, and unable to do so. With a less complex image of social reality no analysis will carry us very far.

To summarize: life is the pursuit of goals, social life is the exchange of value - and that which pursues values, and exchanges values, is referred to as an actor.

In the pursuit he acts, and in the exchange he interacts; actors move along their life-lines, dotted with goal-consumption, culminating in goal-states.

Occasionally the life-lines intersect: the actors come together in space and time, become relevant to each other and may engage in value-exchange or interaction; positive, neutral, negative.

And this is, of course, where conflict enters, although it can also be defined for one actor.

We can now define conflict, building on the notions of contradiction and incompatibility developed in the general goal-notions explored here. According to these notions there are goals to be realized; the realization sometimes referred to as goal-consumption. Thus, with the units being sets of individuals and the variables being goal-dimensions, INT becomes the region of acceptable goal-realization, here called ACC, or the acceptability region. A conflict, then, is a contradiction where the acceptability region is located inside the incompatibility region:

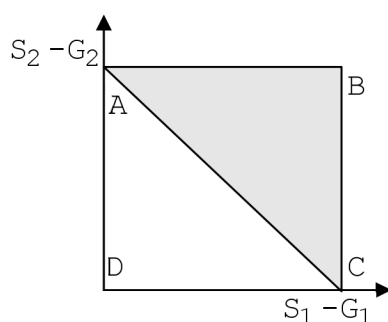
$$ACC \subset INC$$

This will serve as a point of departure. A conflict simply involves incompatible goals. But there is more to it: those goals are pursued, leading to Conflict=Actors in Pursuit of Incompatible Goals.

1.5 Two Types of Conflict: Structure-Conflict and Actor-Conflict

We now proceed to the basic distinction in conflict theory, with an effort to outline the major features of two fundamental types of conflict, here referred to as structural and actor conflict respectively. They both conform to the definition given in the preceding section and fit into the basic conflict paradigm:

Figure 1.4.



Thus, in either case there are two sets of actors, S_1 and S_2 , and two goals, G_1 and G_2 , and B, the point of bliss with both achieved, located inside the incompatibility region. But from this point on dissimilarities rather than similarities will dominate.

The basic difference lies in the interaction relation between S_1 and S_2 in the two cases; the two fundamental types are based on vertical and horizontal interaction, respectively.

To start with, the extreme version of vertical interaction will be spelt out; the horizontal interaction is then the negation of all three criteria.

The vertical interaction relation can be defined by three criteria that complement and reinforce each other:

1. Exploitation, or vertical division of labor: the interaction relation is set up in such a way that the total value effects are much more beneficial to S_1 than to S_2 .
2. Penetration: S_1 penetrates into S_2 shaping S_2 's consciousness
3. Fragmentation: the interaction relation is set up in such a way that whereas S_1 is kept together in associative relations, S_2 is kept apart in dissociative relations.

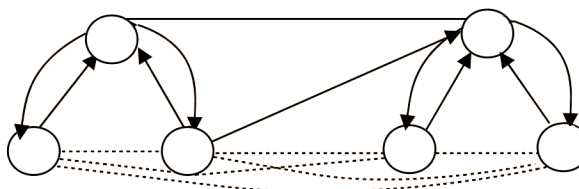
This definition is abstract and has to be concretized. To do so let us consider two different cases: S_1 and S_2 are collectivities, and S_1 and S_2 are individuals.

In the first case, like a relation between countries, the vertical relation just defined is identical with what can be referred to as an imperialistic relation. Diagrammatically it looks like this:

Figure 1.5.

Center S_1

Periphery S_2



S_1 is the center countries, S_2 the periphery countries. S_1 is connected with horizontal ties, and to S_2 with vertical ties; the arrows indicating the direction of the exploitation.

The two other criteria can then be regarded as structural devices to protect this exploitation: S_1 penetrates into the top of S_2 (curved arrows); which concretely means that the elite in S_2 thinks and acts in accordance with the desires of S_1 , and particularly of the elites in S_1 , and the countries in S_2 are kept apart from each other by well-known divide et impera strategies, playing on mutual isolation and-or mutual hostility.

Much more could be said about this archetypical structure, and one contemporary example would be the relation between the European Community and the associated African, Caribbean and Asian-Pacific states.

The diagram above can also be used for the second case, the relations between individuals since it is, essentially, the organogram of very many, perhaps most, organizations. The top is integrated by association, the bottom disintegrated by dissociation. The division of labor gives the interesting, the challenging, the personality-expanding tasks to the top, and the routine tasks to the bottom. The economic concomitants in terms of unequal salary etc. are tangible. At the same time there is penetration: the social outlooks of the two layers are “harmonized”, the bottom values what the top not only values but also enjoys, and consequently supports the structure.

How does this work in a third case, with two individuals only, S_1 being the topdog and S_2 the underdog? The archetypical example might be patriarchal husband-wife relations, where the verticality of the division of labor is obvious. But there is also penetration, with the wife’s consciousness being formed by the husband. And there is fragmentation, only that in this case it is not immediately and physically observable. The disintegration takes place inside the underdog, the integration inside the topdog and expresses itself in differential degrees of coordination and harmony in their personality.

The topdog will be well composed, goals coordinated and resources mobilized whereas the underdog will be at a loss and tend to follow the topdog. The underdog will also incline in other directions, but the topdog in a sense penetrates into them all. The integration of the underdog is based on an integration in the topdog: just like an empire is integrated in the center of the Center country, and a company is integrated in its board of directors, trustees etc.

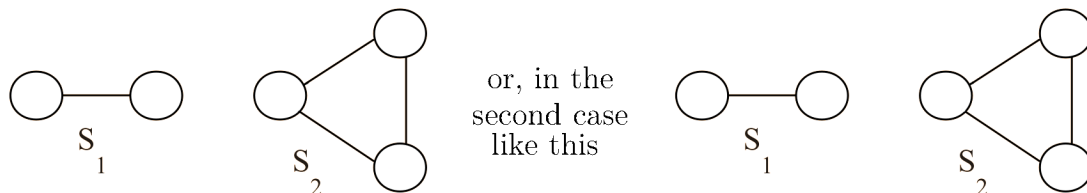
The structure in the diagram implies a double dislocation of the center of gravity away from the periphery, the underdogs, not only in terms of division of labor, but also in terms of level of association or integration. The periphery, the underdog, is integrated in the center, the topdog. Thus, the relation is doubly vertical: it is exploitative, and that exploitation is protected by the whole organizational structure.

What, then, would a horizontal interaction relation look like? By negating the three criteria we get the following:

1. Equity: Horizontal division of labor, which splits into two:
 - (a) the interaction is set up in such a way that the total value effects are about equally beneficial to S_1 and S_2 .
 - (b) there is no interaction, hence no exploitation.
2. Equal consciousness-formation which also splits into two
 - (a) there is mutual inter-penetration, S_2 forms the consciousness of S_1 as much as S_1 forms the consciousness of S_2 (dialogue).
 - (b) there is no interaction, hence no penetration.
3. Equal organization-building the level of association in S_1 and S_2 is about the same.

In other words, the relation would look more like this:

Figure 1.6.



What one observes are two actors, S_1 and S_2 , both of them capable of doing what makes them actors by our definition: autonomous goal-formulation—which presupposes that they

have control over their own consciousness-formation and are not subject to too much manipulation– and mobilization of resources to pursue those goals, which presupposes that they have control over their own internal organization. Neither condition is satisfied for the underdog Periphery in the vertical case, and that is what makes it vertical.

The difference between the two types of conflict can now be made sharper in the effort to define the conflicts, not only the two relations. So, what are the two types of conflicts about?

The way it is conceived of here there is always conflict in the vertical relation because conflict is already built into the structure whereas conflict may come and go in the horizontal relation.

The vertical structure has much more permanence, the horizontal structure is more eventful. For that reason they are best captured, analytically, in what somewhere also has been termed the structure-oriented and actor-oriented perspectives, discourses, intellectual frameworks, respectively.

According to the former, society is seen as a structure and the essential characteristics are the nature of the interaction relation and the interaction structure, not the nature of the individuals and sets of individuals. To refer to them as “actors” presupposes that they can act, i.e. that they have sufficient Spielraum, action-space, that they have alternatives and hence can set goals and pursue them. This opportunity is to a large extent denied the underdog periphery in the vertical relation; and for that reason analysis in terms of consciously formed goals and organized pursuit of them easily becomes false and misleading.

But it is not misleading in the second, horizontal, type of relation. Here there are actors by definition capable of formulating and pursuing goals. Hence the structural network can be permitted to recede into the background in an analysis, and the focus can be on the actors themselves, on their goals and strategies. Just as much as marxist types of analysis are less warranted in the latter, strategic analysis of individuals whose consciousness has been deformed by being at the bottom of a vertical division of labor, penetrated, fragmented, can only lead to illusions of harmony when the bottom does not express any goal different from that of their masters, nor takes any step in that direction. Similarly, marxist analysis of a horizontal situation leads to strained efforts to cast the relationship in terms of exploitative interaction. This, of course, is not to deny that vertical type analysis of internal relation inside S_1 and S_2 may be very fruitful in efforts to understand S_1 - S_2 relations even when the latter look horizontal.

In the following, however, marxist and liberal analytical schemes will not necessarily be

used; the analysis will move forward on its own conflict theory terms, obviously borrowing from either.

And the terms are sufficient to define the two types of conflict, i.e. the typical conflicts in the two social situations. Since the sets of individuals have already been clarified in the two cases, conflict obviously has to be explicated by turning to the goal aspect.

In a vertical relation the conflict is defined in terms of interests, and according to the following axiom:

It is in everybody's interest not to be exploited

The entire analysis of vertical conflict derives from this assumption, and we shall later show that there is a similar assumption behind the much better known analysis of horizontal conflict.

The basic point is, of course, that there is no reference to consciously formulated goals, only to "interests". These interests are objectively defined, and tied to an analysis of the interaction relation itself. If exploitative, then somebody is exploited and somebody is an exploiter. What the axiom says is that however interest is defined, it is in everybody's interest not to be exploited, even when he begs for subjugation.

Is it in somebody's interest to exploit? It is definitely, very often, somebody's subjective goal to exploit, but is it also in somebody's objective interest? A Gandhi might say no: the exploiter may think that it is in his interest, but it actually is not; not merely because the exploiter will sooner or later have an uprising topple his privileged position, but also because he becomes a slave of his own efforts to exploit and to maintain the exploitation. To destroy the exploitative structure, therefore, is also to liberate the exploiter from his exploitation, and set him free.

But the opposite view is indeed also possible. There is such an overwhelming multitude of situations where people, consciously or not, seem to accept positions of privilege, and to react against any effort to reduce the exploitation.

An analytical concept is needed to explain this as well as to explain the situation of the exploited.

The exploiter may not be conscious of his exploitation, so why does he persist in it? One answer may be: because it is in his interest to do so.

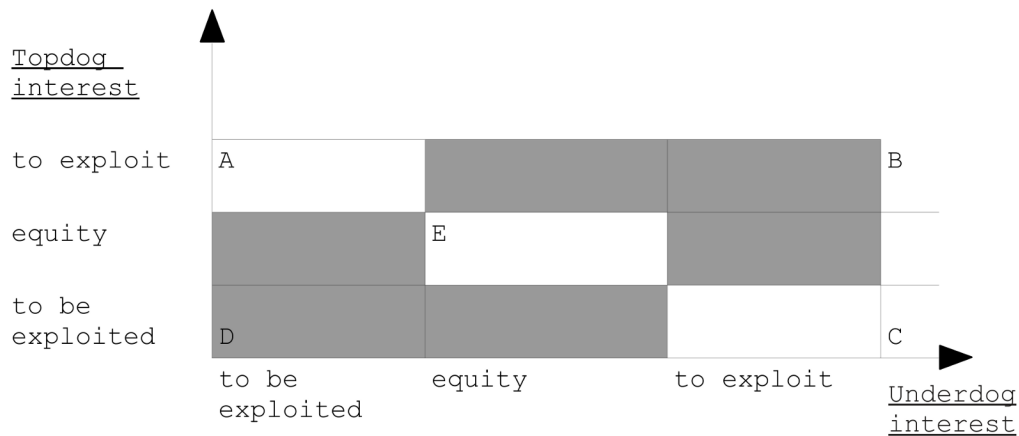
On the other hand, the exploited is in a situation not in his interest, so why does he nevertheless sometimes accept it consciously and openly? One often found answer may be: because he has false consciousness or none at all.

Thus, interest is seen as something that may or may not be expressed as a value. If the expressed goal does not coincide with the interest, which we assume for everybody is

not to be exploited, one may talk about false consciousness. Obviously, this can only be done with a criterion to decide whether there is exploitation or not.

We can now define the conflict between exploiter and exploited, here referred to as topdog and underdog, or center and periphery:

Figure 1.7.



It is assumed that either party has a positive interest in exploiting and a negative one in not being exploited, although it is only the latter that is expressed in the axiom above. But to the extent that exploitation is asymmetric (which it is not, S_1 may exploit S_2 in one context and S_2 may exploit S_1 in another) six of the nine combinations above are excluded by definition. They form the incompatibility region. The question is what is acceptable to the two parties. One could imagine some cases, compatible with the axioms:

Figure 1.8.

		S ₂	S ₂
		only “exploits” acceptable	“exploits” and “equity” acceptable
S ₁	only “exploits” acceptable	conflict	conflict
S ₁	“exploits” and “equity” acceptable	conflict	no conflict

The result is obvious enough: under the axiom, if either party only accepts “exploits”, then there is conflict of interest. Only when both parties accepts “equity” is there no conflict because there is an overlap between the acceptability and compatibility regions,

the equity solution, E. One conflict history would be for a system to start in A with S_1 as the exploiter, then move to C with a revolution with S_2 as the exploiter, and then end up in E with equity.

And that ends our story so far. It all hinges on the concept of equity, not only on the negative concept of exploitation. In equity S_1 and S_2 can meet, but for that to happen much consciousness formation is needed. In both.

Meeting in equity there can still be incompatibility, but the conflict is horizontal, and according to the following axiom:

It is in everybody's interest to maximize value.

Obviously this may bring us from a marxist to an economist paradigm. But there is no assumption that values are egoistic. Cultures will define them and play the role for horizontal conflict structures play for vertical conflict. Their cultures may be altruistic, with no axiom to the effect that the sum of a zillion egoisms is one altruism.

So far conflict has been defined, like many authors do, in terms of incompatibility of goals, and two major subtypes of goals have been indicated, interests and values, giving rise to two major subtypes of conflict: conflict of interest (structural conflict) and conflict of values (actor conflict). The distinction is neither exhaustive nor mutually exclusive; many, maybe most, conflicts are mixes of the two.

This does not mean that we split the theory of conflict into two conflicts of interest and conflicts of values. On the contrary, we shall assume that there are two basic parts of the theory of conflict, but defined differently.

One is a conflict transformation theory of how conflicts of interest are transformed into conflicts of manifest values. And the other is manifest conflict theory.

In other words, it is assumed that conflict in latent form, as conflict of interest, does not have an independent life, remaining the same, but will be heading for transformation into manifest form, as conflict of values. Indeed, latent conflicts—exploitation, penetration, fragmentation— are persistent facts in social life, but that persistence is for each specific conflict in an unstable equilibrium. Consciousness-formation and organization, individual and collective, are also facts of life.

But can it not be imagined that a latent conflict is resolved without necessarily being transformed into a manifest conflict? From the axiomatic statement just given no, but this is certainly not evident.

For instance, could it not be that somebody comes from the outside, digs into the structural conditions of the conflict of interest, changes-manages the whole situation and produces a more equitable society? Yes, this can certainly be imagined, but there would

still be a conflict of interest in the division of labor between the outside conflict-managers and the conflict-managed. The conflict-managers would use the conflict of others as the raw material that they themselves would process and turn into a processed product, a conflict solution.

With the old Herr (topdog) gone, the Knecht (underdog) will wake up to find himself under a new Herr – the conflict-manager. The rule may be different, but the opportunity of self-growth, of becoming truly autonomous through one's own conflict transformation or conflict manifestation, has been lost.

1.6 Frustration and Conflict

So far we have assumed that goals are not only set but also obtained, that goal-states are reached and goals consumed. However, it is a rather trivial fact of life that it often takes time and other resources to reach goal-states, and even if the actor tries as hard as possible, the goal-state may nevertheless never be arrived at.

It is customary to refer to this as frustration, which means that the access to the goal-state has been blocked. It is also customary to talk about sources of frustration, which are the factors that must be removed to permit the access to the goal-state when the actor is said to be frustrated.

There are many difficulties with these definitions, however. To take an example: a person wants an academic degree, but has to mobilize time, money and other resources. He is frustrated because of this, but in the end gets his degree. In that case one might perhaps say that his frustration is relative to the goal-state of getting his degree easily, and that differs from the frustration of a person who fails the examination for the third and last time.

One major class of sources of frustration can be referred to as scarcity of resources. Not to afford something produces a clear case of frustration; to afford it and discover that it is out of stock another; to afford it, locate it and then discover that somebody one cares for and about dislikes the object, still another. But there may also be goal-states that are blocked because no resources can ever be mobilized to reach them. He who has glued the goal perpetuum mobile on his mind is in a different kind of difficulty from he who merely wants to invent a more effective steam engine than anyone else before him. The same applies to the person some time ago who wanted to go to the moon: today that goal is more realistic.

In other cases we do not know: mathematicians often set themselves goals in terms of theorems they want to prove where they may be unable both to prove and to disprove. Politicians certainly do the same: he who works for the world government cannot say whether his goal is realistic and may become a part of empirical reality. But given the actor, his goal and the resources available we have a basis for operationalizing the degree of frustration as the amount of additional resources needed to reach the goal-state, ie, to remove the sources of frustration. As indicated, it may vary from zero in the case of no frustration to infinity in the case of unrealistic goals.

Let us now complicate the picture again, this time by introducing not only one value-dimension, but two, so that there are two different goal-states, G_1 and G_2 to refer to; for the same actor or for different actors is of no significance. We have mentioned scarcity of resources as one important source of frustration and this now brings us to the next: the situation where two goal-states exclude each other because they are incompatible. This is not the case of having insufficient resources to obtain one's goal, but of realizing that one goal stands in the way of realizing another goal. A person may find it difficult to be both rich and happy, or to be both honest and considerate; a nation may have difficulties being loyal to an international community of nations and at the same time safe-guarding its own more immediate interests. Or: two persons may find that they are in love with the same, third, person who is as monogamous as they are; two countries may find that the desire for autonomy for one conflicts with the desire for markets for the other, and so on.

It is customary to refer to this as conflict, which means that the access to one goal-state is blocked by efforts to reach an other goal-state; the goal-states are incompatible, exclude each other.

In principle this is not very different from frustration. In frustration there is one goal-state and insufficient resources to reach it; in conflict there are at least two goal-states and insufficient resources to realize them all. Thus, conflict is for two actors what frustration is for one actor, for which reason one sometimes treats conflict as a special case of frustration. We shall prefer to do it the other way, however, as will be elaborated below. At any rate, the distinction between the two is important since conflict (except when G_1 and G_2 are pursued by the same actor, the two actors are inside one) is to the social system (and to sociology) what frustration is to the personal system (and to psychology). But it is important to tie them together in a general theoretical framework to be developed in the following two parts of this book.

Life in general, and social life in particular, would now look highly different if goals were always adjusted to the possibilities of satisfying them. It is important to imagine

this state of affairs since this book is dealing with the particular conditions under which goals are not satisfied, whether this is best analyzed in terms of too high ambitions or too limited resources. Under this condition, which is hard to imagine, frustration and conflict would both be unknown since they are both special cases of limited resources. Life would consist in A-shaped wave patterns with limited amplitudes: goals are satisfied, then goals build up again, drives become intense, they are satisfied, and so on and so forth.

It is customary to associate this type of existence closely with stability, and that is probably correct: there would be few ripples on the waves that could serve as foci for the emergence of new social patterns. There would be no motivation for a pattern of change and growth.

But appetites might be growing as conditions of satisfying them develop, challenging even a stable and collectivistic social structure protected by a culture of a buddhist variety. It does not account for the circumstance that the world's richest societies also seem to be the societies that change fastest, or the possibility of having change itself as a value, even a dominant one. Such a world, with sufficient resources for all goal-states to be enjoyed, would probably rather be characterized by non-buddhist patterns of behavior and attitudes.

On the other hand there is the world with a maximum of frustration and conflict. Any grown-up person today will immediately think of the nazi concentration camp as a model, with its seemingly unlimited potential for inflicting frustration and conflict. The results in terms of behavior of the inmates are well-known; they range from animal brutishness to extreme apathy to incredible acts of compassion.

We mention this to place the study of frustration and conflict in its proper perspective, as dealing with human essentials, with matters of life and death. For somewhere on this range from zero to infinity in terms of degree of frustration and conflict every personal and social system on earth is located. The quality of the existence of the actors is a function of this condition. And, as so often is the case in human affairs: the best prescription for most individual and collective actors is in media res. Too much frustration and conflict may have a highly destructive effect, and too little may provide the actor with too low levels of stimulation, challenge, to function adequately.

Conflicts are frustrating but not all frustrations can be put on the standard conflict form with actors, goals, incompatibility and pursuit. To deal with the latter we need more conceptual tools.

1.7 The Elements of Conflict

We have defined conflict as a social system of actors with incompatibility between their goal-states. We shall show that surprisingly much can be said about conflict as such, with no reference to special types of conflicts. It is a property of social systems; then conceived of as a more or less interdependent systems of actors striving to achieve their goal-states. In the process it happens that they stand in each other's way, or so they may believe, and this is where the system becomes a conflict system. We are concerned with the general theory of such systems.

However, to make it less abstract, and to have tools of analysis, some dimensions of conflict systems will have to be introduced. The science of conflicts, conflictology, needs elements of analysis as much as any other science to arrive at hypotheses that can be tested and serve as a basis for the establishment or empirically confirmed propositions, which in turn can serve as building-bricks for theories (or vice versa). Twelve such dimensions will be presented in the next part of this book, in this chapter we shall focus on a more precise version of the definition.

For a start these are the elements in the conceptualization of conflict:

1. The actors, m of them, who may be of any kind. We assume that they are, for good or for bad, relevant to each other so that they form a system of actors.
2. The goals, n of them, also of any kind, that the actors try to achieve, forming a system of goals.

We do not assume that all m actors try to achieve all n goals, but we need information on where they stand on all of them. The system of goals combined with the system of actors form the action-system.

The movements of this system can be traced in the many-dimensional goal-space, R, where each actor can be located on each goal-dimension.

3. The acceptability-region, A, which is defined as the set of positions in the many-dimensional goal space acceptable to all actors. This point of bliss is the point where all m actors enjoying the goal-states on all n dimensions, obviously a part of A. However, often some actors may accept less, thus extending the acceptability region.
4. The incompatibility-region, I, which is defined as the set of points that cannot be realized because one or more goal-states, points on the goal-dimensions, are

incompatible with one or more others. The points not of incompatibility are points of compatibility and also form a set, the compatibility-region, \underline{C} . Clearly, $\underline{I} + \underline{C} = \underline{R}$ if we presuppose that we have sufficient information to decide for each point in \underline{R} whether it is a point of compatibility or incompatibility.

5. The conflict, which is defined as a property of the action-system which obtains when there is no overlap between acceptability-region and compatibility-region. Or, differently expressed: the acceptability-region is a subset of the incompatibility-region. Still differently expressed: when all acceptable combinations of degree of goal-consumption exclude each other, are incompatible with each other.

With the action-system and the definition of conflict, we can now define the conflict-system as the minimum set of actors and goals that does not change the conflict. If we start out with m actors and n goals it is not always the case that all of them are needed, for instance to define the East-West conflict. Thus, the conflict-system is the hard nucleus of the action-system where the conflict is located; if we reduce it further then we lose actors and-or goals that are indispensable for the understanding of the nature of the conflict.

To analyze a conflict, however, we often have to add to the conflict-system some more actors and goals, as when the East-West conflict is analyzed in its global context, adding the Pacific to the Atlantic theater, then referred to as the reference-system. Thus, conflict-system and reference-system are the minimum and maximum, respectively, needed to analyze the conflict.

We then add to the scheme so far developed:

6. Conflict attitude, which we identify with mental states of the actors, and
7. Conflict behavior, which we identify with somatic states of the actors in the action-system.

Thus attitude and behavior are used to describe completely the states of the actors in the system; using the age-old body-soul division between the somatic and the mental states.

This means that the conflict-system is looked at from two different angles: an abstract angle where goal-states are analyzed for their compatibility or incompatibility, and a concrete angle where actors are analyzed in terms of attitude and behavior. We then use "behavior" in such a way as to include verbal as well as non-verbal

behavior, not to mention behavior that consists in keeping constant the state of one's body; inactivity. And we use "attitude" so as to include cognitions as well as evaluations and emptiness; inactivity.

These are very broad concepts, but the line between them is relatively clear, which is not the same as saying that we do not believe in empirical correlations between somatic and mental states of the actors. It should perhaps be added that if the actor is a collectivity, then "behavior" refers to the behavior of its members, and "attitude" to the attitudes of the members. However coordinated and harmonized, even "masses" ultimately boil down to individuals.

We mention this because there might be an alternative definition, reserving "behavior" for collective representative behavior—which may not be representative—and attitude for collective representative attitude—which may not be representative. We reject that approach as being too reminiscent of the old "group-soul" idea, and because of difficulties in drawing the border line.

At the concrete level of behavior and attitude actors act and feel the conflict, they are the conflict. We are used to identifying this as destruction, both in behavior and attitude, an identification which is not necessary even if empirically tenable. But had it not been for the destruction, violence, that may accompany conflict the field would not have attracted so much attention as it does.

8. Conflict negation is now easily defined: it is a process that includes the disappearance of the conflict. In other words; it is a succession of states of the conflict system where the end state has one definitely characteristic: an overlap between acceptability and compatibility has been found. Conflict negation is a process where the final state may be referred to as conflict termination.

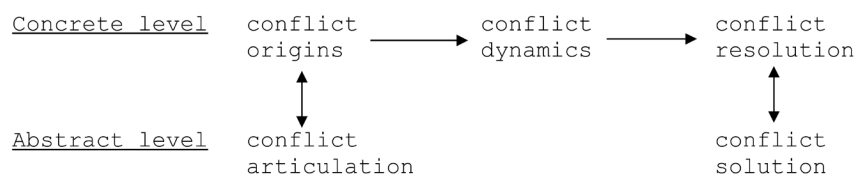
Nothing is implied about the quality of the negation: it need not be just, good or lasting; the negation just is in the sense that the conflict is not: acceptability- and compatibility-regions overlap. Thus, a negation may involve killing one actor or suppressing one goal, just as well as it may involve the fusion of two actors into a integrated whole or the dissolution of the incompatibility through the mobilization of reservoirs of time, energy, money etc. All elements we have listed to arrive at the definition of conflict become keys to conflict negation in as much as they are elements in the conflict situation, and constitute in themselves approaches, both in theory and in practice, to the negation and termination of any conflict.

There is only one distinction which should be made here: just as we distinguished between conflict in the sense of contradiction on the one hand and conflict attitude-behavior on the other, we may distinguish between conflict resolution on the one hand and conflict repression as defined above on the other. Conflict repression, then, is the negation of any aspect of conflict, particularly patterns of behavior and attitudes arising from the conflict, that makes the conflict disappear as factual phenomenon. Usually, one will conceive of conflict repression as the cessation of hostilities, a “back to normal” where destructive attitude-behavior is built down, and the conflict as incompatibility may be frozen and enter a stage of latency. This distinction is important for political and ethical debates, since conflict repression is a more modest goal than conflict resolution and these two levels are often confused.

1.8 The Phases of Conflict

We can now conclude this part of the book with a brief note on the phases of conflict. It seems useful, in general, to distinguish between these phases:

Figure 1.9. The Phases of Conflict



The conflict originates somewhere and becomes articulated. Then it develops until a resolution phase can be said to emerge and the conflict dissolves as the system finally reaches the solution state where there no longer is any conflict. The resolution phase is certainly part of the dynamics (and vice versa), and the solution part of the resolution, just as much as the origin is part of the dynamics. Nevertheless the diagram is fruitful as a paradigm since the life history of so many conflicts seems to be that the conflict almost imperceptibly evolves, then there is a process of often destructive behavior and-or attitude until some regulatory forces are called into operation from within or without to start the phase of resolution which then finally leads to some kind of solution. These phases seem to be so relatively easily discernible in the life-history of conflicts that we have used this simple paradigm as organizing axis.

Paradoxically it seems more easy to arrive at a theory for the resolution than for the origin or genesis of conflicts. Much can also be said about the dynamics of conflicts, but it looks as if knowledge of the dynamics and resolution phases of conflicts sheds more light on the phase of origin than vice versa. A conflict system is a succession of states; the more similar these states the more static the system, the more dissimilar the more dynamic, by definition.

Knowledge of the nature of the conflict itself at all points in the history of the system is indispensable, particularly since the conflict will change and generally aggravate by an admixture stemming from the escalation in the dynamics phase. But given the way conflict has been defined most of the relevant properties of the system are already included in the definition of the conflict: the description of the actors, the description of the goals, sufficient knowledge about either to establish acceptability and incompatibility regions and their relation to each other. It is claimed that with this knowledge it should be possible to proceed on the basis of general conflict theory, and that the shadows thrown by the prehistory are of minor significance relative to the impact of the factors already included in the definition of the successive conflicts in which the system is found. History is already absorbed in actors and goals.

1.9 Conflict Theory and Game Theory

We have now presented the building-blocs for a conflict theory: actors, their goals (values, interests) imputed to them by analysis of their interests and studies of their behavior to uncover what they seem to pursue, and on interview methods to get verbal declarations about value-orientations and other attitudes. Acceptability- and incompatibility-regions are defined and compared. The more detailed knowledge about all these factors or aspects of a conflict, the more can be said about the conflict dynamics and possible resolution.

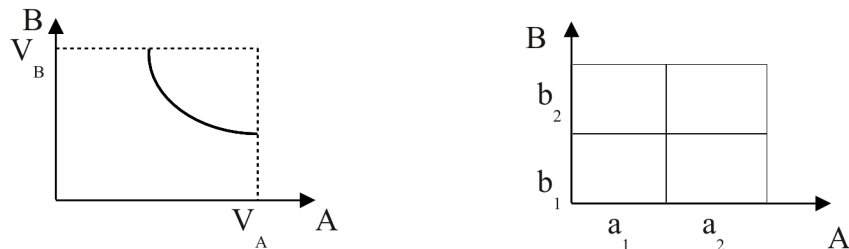
In game theory the same elements appear, but in a somewhat different order so that the emphasis becomes different. There are actors, but usually only two. There are goals but they are usually projected onto a generalized utility-dimension so that for all practical purposes the theory is handling only one goal. This means that game theory in its simple, very common, case is studying (2,1)-conflicts, known as two-person games, but more general formulations of the theory are certainly available.

For some mathematical theorems to apply there is the condition that the goal-dimension (utility-dimension) is additive, even limited to the structure of an interval scale. There is

of course no such assumption in general conflict theory, and the game theory paradigm can be developed without this assumption as long as ordinal scale for the goal-dimensions can be assumed.

The two paradigms can be presented as follows:

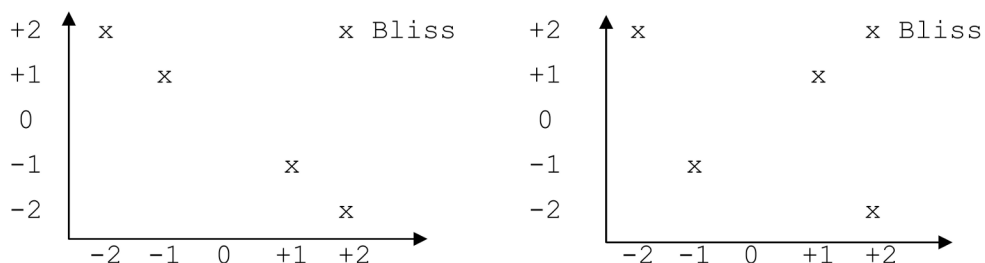
Figure 1.10. Two Paradigms Compared



In both paradigms each party, referred to by the euphemism "player" in game theory—an unfortunate term disguising that these are often paradigms for matters of life and death—has one axis. In the conflict theory paradigm the axis stand for the goal-dimension of the party, in the game theory paradigm for a dimension of action-choices. In the conflict theory paradigm the action choices are implicit, they come out as points in the goal-space indicating where the actors are located in the compatibility-region. Similarly, in the game theory paradigm the goals come out as utilities accruing to the actors according to which action-choices they make.

However, since the same elements are used in the two paradigms they should be convertible to each other. Below are two examples of converted game matrices, pay-off matrices, one zero-sum and one non zero-sum, taken from Diagram 1.8:

Figure 1.11. Pay-off Matrices on Conflict Paradigm Form



Similarities and dissimilarities can now be made more clear.

In the first case, the zero-sum game, the combinations of action-choices given in the pay-off matrix yield utility-pairs on a straight line, reminiscent of the straight

incompatibility-line in Diagram 1. In the second case the situation is more complex, the utility-pairs are more scattered. Two of them are located on the zero-sum line, two of them on the line of equal utility. If these lines are identified as the lines of “pure conflict” and “pure cooperation” respectively, then games can be seen as composed of these basic elements, depending on how the parties or actors are coupled together in the system they are components of.

This can be well expressed by means of correlation, or better, agreement, coefficients: if the coefficient is negative, then the conflict element is predominant, if it is positive then the cooperation element is predominant, and if the correlation is zero then there is a mixture of equal magnitudes present in the system.

In the game theory paradigm the points represent possible outcomes: given a certain combination of action-choices certain combinations of utilities emerge. Hence, these are possibilities or compatible combinations, and they span a space that can be filled with compatible combinations if mixed strategies are made use of.

In the conflict theory paradigm the two regions of compatibility and incompatibility usually come out as contiguous regions. But this is no built-in necessity. The sets of points of compatibility can have any structure, and the distinctions in terms of correlation can be equally well made for the conflict theory paradigm. Usually the compatibility curve is much more interesting than the region, for it stands to reason that the parties will at least try to obtain positions on the curve and not be content with an inferior position inside the region from where both can move without harming the other.

In conflict theory the emphasis is on position on the goal dimension; in game theory on action-choice. Thus game theory appears as more concrete, relating directly to concrete actions, whereas conflict theory is more general, not asking how the party arrived at a certain point in the diagram, it only maps their joint position. The advantage is that trajectories can be traced and regions defined with great accuracy, in game theory they come out as points only.

But the two are essentially translatable to each other and should both be used depending on the type of information that is available: positions on goal-dimensions, or action-choices.

