Psychology Press Ltd, Publishers
27 Church Road
Hove
East Sussex, BN3 2FA
UK

British Library Cataloguing in Publication Data

A catalogue record for this book is availiable from the British Library

ISBN 0-86377-716-3 (Hbk)
(Essays in Social Psychology: ISSN 1367-5826)

Typeset by Lucy Morton, London SE12
Printed and bound in the United Kingdom by TJ International Ltd, Padstow, Cornwall

Contents

Foreword

Advice about how to behave in social conflict probably reaches back to the origins of man, but systematic theory and research on this topic are virtual newcomers. This book shows that a coherent scientific discipline of conflict studies has arisen and that this discipline is capable of explaining an ever-increasing range of phenomena. The author makes order out of the past and charts a challenge for the future.

The book is unusual in its emphasis on intellectual history. It shows how the field started with a five-part taxonomy of strategies for conflict: avoiding, accommodating, compromising, problem solving, and fighting. Scholars then developed a dimensional scheme (the "X-cross" model) for efficiently describing these strategies, and they finally constructed a theory (the "L-angle" theory) that has been quite successful at explaining and predicting their occurrence.

There is, however, a distinct limitation to what has been done so far: scholars have been dealing with only one strategy at a time, while actual conflict behaviour is usually much more complex. To correct this deficiency, the author proposes the development of a theory of "conglomerated" patterns—combinations of the basic strategies—such as "firm-flexibility" (holding firm on basic interests while seeking a formula that will satisfy the other party) and "thromises" (the union of threats and promises). He provides a fascinating initial statement of such a theory.

There are theoretical insights throughout the book: for example, the observation that changes in concern for the other party's goals determine

CHAPTER ONE

Preview

Social conflicts abound. Conflict-free families, organisations, or nations do not exist. We detect conflict in people's frustrations and actions. Conflict becomes perceptible when individuals are annoyed by the actions of another person or a group. This is a phenomenon so omnipresent in social life that we too easily take it for granted. People react by choosing from well-trodden paths: they avoid a reproach, they accommodate a poor plan, they negotiate on a price or a problem, and sometimes they fight an opponent on principle. Social scientists first describe such conflict behaviour, then try to explain it. They picture behavioural outcomes and then recommend or prescribe effective methods of conflict management.

This book, written primarily for social and organisational psychologists and advanced psychology students, covers the domain of interpersonal conflict behaviour. Its six chapters challenge common typologies and models, which implicitly assume that a conflicting individual uses only one distinct mode of behaviour. Building on a decade of research, a new perspective is suggested. I assume that nearly every individual reaction to a conflict issue is complex. It consists of multiple components of behaviour rather than a single and pure mode of behaviour. That is, mixtures of avoiding, accommodating, compromising, problem solving, and fighting are the rule rather than the exception (cf. Blake & Mouton, 1964, 1970; Falbe & Yukl, 1992; Knapp, Putnam, & Davis, 1988; Rubin, Pruitt, & Kim, 1994; Van de Vliert & Euwema, 1996; Van de Vliert, Euwema, & Huismans, 1995; Williams, 1983, 1993; Yukl, Falbe, & Young Youn, 1993). For example,

"tacit coordination" is a merger of reactions in which one sticks to one's guns and withholds relevant information while revealing obligingness and real interests through nonverbal cues (e.g. Borisoff & Victor, 1989; Pruitt, 1981; Putnam, 1990). Such intertwinements of several reactions are the subject matter of the current monograph.

The introductory chapter presents my own definitions of conflict, conflict issue, conflict behaviour, and conflict outcome. The conflict definitions are followed by a brief discussion of two-, three-, four-, and five-part taxonomies of conflict handling. These taxonomies are then contrasted with the novel paradigm of complex conflict behaviour, which asks for the description and explanation of multiple behaviours rather than pure types of conflict handling. It will be argued that one particular theory, Blake and Mouton's (1964, 1970) "conflict management grid," presents the most promising descriptive and explanatory framework for future work in the area of complex conflict behaviour. As will be discussed in detail, the visual representation of the conflict management grid allows four figure–ground articulations, or faces. These differ in degree of theoretical value; that is, the extent to which they represent useful rules of correspondence between manifestations of behaviour, as well as between these behavioural manifestations and their antecedents and consequences. These grid faces serve as the basis for the design of the book in such a way that each chapter aims to add theoretical value to the preceding chapters.

CONFLICT DEFINITIONS

Conflict refers to a person's experience of discord due to a socially induced subject matter. It elicits complex, goal-directed reactions and produces benefits or costs for all people involved. This fairly extensive definition is not public property. For most people, "conflict" is just another word for fighting in the sense of attacking and defending actions. They are right, of course, in that any conflict with other people involves social behaviour. They are wrong, however, in that they conflate the issue and the reaction of fighting. Scientists working in the field of social conflict have made a sharp distinction between conflict issue and conflict behaviour. This distinction broadens one's perspective on conflict management from attacking and defending to alternative modes of conflict handling such as nonconfrontation and negotiation (Bartunek, Kolb, & Lewicki, 1992; Lax & Sebenius, 1986; Lewicki & Litterer, 1985; Rubin, Pruitt, & Kim, 1994; Wall, 1985). Here I shall use the following more specific concepts of conflict, conflict issue, conflict behaviour, and conflict outcome.

Conflict. Individuals are in conflict when they are obstructed or irritated by another individual or a group and inevitably react to it in a beneficial or costly way. If a husband is annoyed because he has wishes different from those of his wife about the desirable number of children, if a manager accuses a subordinate of laziness, or if ministers of two countries are seeking hegemony over the same piece of land with military aid, the parties have a conflict. Obviously, this concept is much too broad to be scientifically useful. It thus needs specification. Nevertheless, we can derive some preliminary insights from it. Important aspects and implications of this general definition of conflict include:

- a conflict is social because another individual or a group is involved;
- a conflict can be one-sided, when only one party experiences discord but avoids any communication about the problem;
- the existence of one-sided conflicts asks for a conceptualisation of conflict handling in terms of one-sided rather than two-sided response.

Conflict issue. A conflict issue is an experience of a subject matter of discord due to obstruction or irritation by one or more other people. In the above illustrations, the desired number of children, the laziness of the subordinate, and the ownership of the piece of land are the issues. One is taking them personally if one feels threatened, anxious, damaged, devalued, or insulted (Dallinger & Hample, 1995). Important aspects and implications of this specific definition of conflict issue include:

- a conflict issue is a subjective experience and does not necessarily have a real objective basis;
- the nature of a conflict issue may be cognitive or affective, or both (perception of blocked goals and disagreement, or feelings of repulsion, hostility, fear);
- the magnitude or intensity of a conflict issue may vary: a conflict de-escalates when the discord decreases, but it escalates when the discord increases;
- a conflict issue is not necessarily coupled with particular conflict behaviour toward the other party.

Important types of conflict issues are: incompatible beliefs about reality, disagreement about goals or actions, competition for scarce resources, and discontent bringing a person's identity into play (similar and other typologies may be found in Coombs, 1987; Deutsch, 1973; Fink, 1968; Glasl, 1980; Rahim, 1992; Walton, 1987). Deutsch (1973) called such issues veridical conflicts when they exist objectively and are perceived accurately. Additionally, he distinguished them from illusory conflicts based on misperception, misunderstanding, or displacement of the discord.

Conflict behaviour. Conflict behaviour is defined as an individual's intended or displayed outward reaction to the conflict issue experienced. As a rule, people intend or display several reactions in varying degrees, which they aggregate into a unique manifestation of components of conflict behaviour, henceforth referred to as *conglomerated conflict behaviour*. For example, a seller who sees a stalemate coming will often threaten a potential buyer with the existence of alternative buyers, which represents an interesting mixture of seeking a settlement, attacking the opponent, and possible withdrawal. Similarly, when a manager accuses a subordinate of laziness, this predominant reaction of fighting will almost always be bound up with smaller or larger, verbal or nonverbal, components of compromising or problem solving, or even accommodating.

Each component of such conglomerated conflict behaviour may be either goal-directed or an expression of one's feelings. The current text deals exclusively with goal-directed behaviour. This is not to say that all components of conflict behaviour are driven by a conscious plan to achieve certain outcomes. Reactions may be strategic or spontaneous; that is, deliberately or *not* deliberately directed at the realisation of certain outcomes. The terms conflict behaviour, conflict handling, and conflict management are used interchangeably for both strategically and spontaneously goal-directed reactions aggregated into conglomerated conflict behaviour. Moreover, unless otherwise stated, these terms will refer to both covert behavioural intentions and overt actions.

Experienced conflict issues and enacted conflict behaviour are unique
on. The *issue* represents a pre-
ereas the *behaviour* is interpersonal
he *issue* is seen as "received" from
as "sent" back to the other party.
be reacted to in roughly the same
it quite different *behaviours* from
at different times. In other words,
re basically independent phenom-
unds of issue-plus-behaviour (e.g.
as anger–avoiding and anger–
hting and distrust–fighting are
990) couples issue and behaviour
" and intractable "conflict issues"
g. role negotiation versus ethnic

nsequence of both parties' behav-
for both oneself and one's oppo-
nent. For example, the husband and wife who disagree about the desirable

number of children might end up with no offspring at all and a mutual relationship that has taken a turn for the worse. Similarly, the manager and the "lazy" subordinate might end up with a settlement about the appropriate level of work effort, and the disputed piece of land might be occupied by one country's army. Taken together, the total chain of causation consists of issue-based desired outcomes, conglomerated conflict behaviour, and ultimately resulting benefits or costs. It implies that complex conflict handling is viewed as capable of fulfilling one's own desires and/or the desires of the other party.

My definitions of issue, behaviour, and outcome relate to conflict in terms of an individual rather than a collective level of analysis. They reflect my viewpoint that *a group cannot experience discord and cannot display conflict behaviour*. Only the individual members of a family, organisation, or nation can experience conflict and can produce interactions and outcomes. Consequently, intergroup conflicts are conflicts only because they are carried by individuals who manifest conglomerated conflict behaviour vis-à-vis other individuals. Of course, this viewpoint does not ignore the fact that individual group members often act on behalf of the welfare of their group or on the basis of decisions made in their group (cf. Carnevale and Probst, 1997; Fisher, 1990, 1994; Putnam, 1997; Tajfel & Turner, 1979; Van de Vliert, 1996).

TAXONOMIES OF CONFLICT BEHAVIOUR

Conflict scholars have classified the multitude of possible reactions to conflict issues into distinct categories. There are dichotomies, trichotomies, four- and five-part typologies, and so on. The most well-known taxonomies are examined here, and are then criticised because they all undervalue behavioural complexity.

Dichotomy. Like animals, human beings as "social animals" can exhibit a "fight-or-flight" response that prepares the organism to attack or flee (Baxter, 1982; Cannon, 1929). The fight–flight bifurcation ignores behavioural alternatives such as the ones used in bargaining. A more comprehensive dichotomy sets cooperation against competition. For instance, experimental gaming studies have used cooperation and competition as mutually exclusive reactions to social conflict (e.g. Axelrod, 1984; Deutsch, 1949, 1973; Pruitt & Kimmel, 1977; Tjosvold, 1988). Cooperation is typically seen as an agreeable and constructive process that tempers the discord, while competition is usually viewed as a disagreeable and destructive process that fuels the discord. Note that several scholars have rejected the fight–flight and cooperation–competition dichotomies by demonstrating

that a single dimension is insufficient to reflect the abundance of behaviours used in handling interpersonal or small-group conflicts (e.g. Daves & Holland, 1989; Ruble & Thomas, 1976; Sternberg & Dobson, 1987; Van de Vliert & Prein, 1989).

Trichotomy. Horney (1945) initiated the taxonomy of "moving away" from people, "moving toward" people, and "moving against" people. In factor analyses of questionnaire data from employees in nonuniversity settings and students, Putnam and Wilson (1982) found essentially the same three forms of handling conflict, designating them as nonconfrontation (moving away), solution orientation (moving toward), and control (moving against). Very similar results of factor analyses have been reported by others (Bell & Blakeney, 1977; Fitzpatrick, 1988; Lawrence & Lorsch, 1967; Ross & DeWine, 1988; Schaap, Buunk, & Kerkstra, 1988; Weider-Hatfield, 1988; Wilson & Waltman, 1988).

Four-part typology. According to Rubin, Pruitt, and Kim (1994; see also Cahn, 1994), conflicting parties typically choose among four fundamentally different sorts of strategies. They can be inactive, withdrawing from the controversy either temporarily or permanently. They can yield to their opponent. They can take a problem-solving approach and try to locate a mutually acceptable or even completely satisfactory agreement. Or, finally, they can take a contentious approach, trying to impose their preferred outcomes on the adversary. However, there is no empirical evidence for this four-part classification of conflict behaviours.

Five-part typology. A still less parsimonious taxonomy is embedded in the so-called conflict management grid (Blake & Mouton, 1964, 1970; Rahim, 1992; Thomas, 1976, 1992b). As an extension of the four-part typology, this framework proposes five main ways or styles of managing conflict, which can be summarised by means of the following designations: (a) neutrality, withdrawal; (b) smooth over, peaceful coexistence; (c) compromise, bargaining; (d) problem solving, working through; and (e) suppress, win–lose power struggle (Blake & Mouton, 1970). Hall (1969) and Filley (1975) defined the above five types of conflict management as lose–leave, yield–lose, compromise, synergistic, and win–lose styles. Elsewhere, different terminological versions of essentially the same taxonomy have been proposed by Thomas (1976, 1988, 1992b), Rahim (1983b, 1992), and others.

The confusing mixture of labels of the five types of conflict management begs for an explicit nomenclature. In this book the catchwords for the five components of conflict handling mentioned above are *avoiding* (moving away from the conflict issue), *accommodating* (giving in to the opponent), *compromising* (settling through mutual concessions), *problem solving* (reconciling the parties' basic interests), and *fighting* (contending the adversary in a direct or indirect way). Although many authors, notably Blake and Mouton (1964, 1970), have referred to the five types as "styles," I prefer the term "mode," to avoid the impression of presupposed regularities in an individual's conflict behaviour.

A major problem. These and similar taxonomies of conflict behaviour have proved to be invaluable for mapping and developing the scientific field of social conflict. They provided valid insight into the nature of various reactions to conflict issues, they stimulated the construction of measuring instruments (for an overview, see Chapter 3), and they made possible the development of elegant theories about the antecedents and consequences of particular types of conflict behaviour (notably Bacharach & Lawler, 1981; Blake & Mouton, 1964, 1970; Deutsch, 1973; Johnson & Johnson, 1989; Lax & Sebenius, 1986; Leary, 1957; Neale & Bazerman, 1991; Pruitt, 1981; Rubin, Pruitt, & Kim, 1994; Tjosvold, 1991; Wall, 1985; Walton & McKersie, 1965). However, we might soon reach the point where the reliance upon taxonomies of conflict behaviour is going to decelerate rather than accelerate theoretical progress. All of the above taxonomies undervalue both the frequency of occurrence and the scientific relevance of behavioural complexity. Indeed, "it may be commonplace for disputants to express preferences for several strategies simultaneously, or at least sequentially" (Knapp, Putnam, & Davis, 1988, p. 421; see also Putnam, 1990).

If the further use of taxonomies of conflict behaviour does follow the law of diminishing returns, we have a period of crisis ahead of us, in the sense proposed by Kuhn (1970) for natural science. Kuhn has argued that when the normal problem-solving activities in a discipline have for the time being failed, the odds are that major scientific advances emerge. A crisis often leads to a paradigm shift. I have gradually become convinced that continued investments in the manifestations, determinants, and outcomes of pure types of behaviour will deadlock the field of social conflict. If I am right, this field may be in need of a paradigm shift that replaces taxonomies of conflict behaviour by another shared way of looking at and investigating conflict behaviour. The perspective of conglomerated conflict behaviour outlined in this book could probably become the novel paradigm that guides research and intervention.

As will now be elaborated, Blake and Mouton's (1964, 1970) classic "conflict management grid" offers not only a five-part typology but also an appropriate foundation to support the building of viewpoints and propositions on conglomerated conflict management.

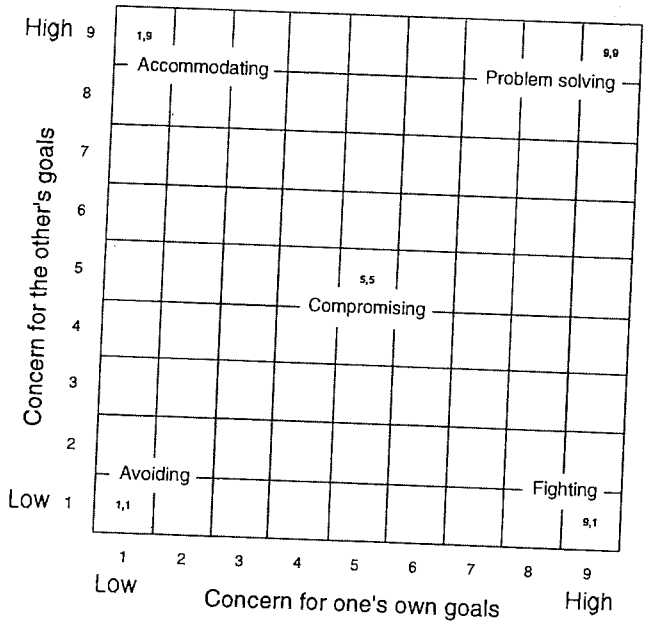


FIG. 1.1 Conflict management grid (after Blake & Mouton, 1970).

CONFLICT MANAGEMENT GRID

Blake and Mouton (1964, 1970) proposed two factors to describe and explain the aforementioned five basic ways of handling conflict: concern for production of results, and concern for people. To allow unequivocal operationalisation I label these two behavioural determinants *Concern for one's own goals* and *Concern for the other's goals*, respectively (cf. Rahim, 1983b, 1992; Rubin, Pruitt, & Kim, 1994; Thomas, 1992b). When the two-dimensional grid appeared, in 1964, Blake and Mouton restricted it to managerial behaviour, including managerial conflict behaviour. In 1970, when they focused on conflict management, they claimed that the concerns and the resulting modes of conflict handling also apply to actors other than managers and to conflicts other than managerial conflicts. This part of my introductory chapter presents the conflict management grid, using the terminology of avoiding, accommodating, compromising, problem solving, and fighting. It discusses the two concerns as independent variables, the five behaviours as dependent variables, the strengths and a weakness of the grid theory, and four grid manifestations.

Concerns as independent variables. Blake and Mouton (1964, 1970) diagrammatically depicted concern for one's own goals and concern for the other's goals at an angle of 90 degrees (see Fig. 1.1). They thus implicitly saw these dimensions as mutually independent. Each concern was conceptualised as a nine-point scale at an interval rather than ordinal level of measurement (1 = minimum concern; 9 = maximum concern). It is the amount and kind of emphasis one places on the two dimensions that determines which mode of conflict management one uses. Put under the microscope, the two nine-point dimensions of concern produce $9 \times 9 = 81$ locations of conflict behaviour. Each combination of dual concern results in a unique behavioural compound, in which the two concerns lose their identities like hydrogen and oxygen turning from gas into liquid form (Blake & Mouton, 1981).

Dominant behaviours as dependent variables. Blake and Mouton (1964, 1970) focused on developing their theory with regard to the following five locations of conflict behaviour: 1,1; 1,9; 5,5; 9,9; 9,1. These behavioural locations result from low (1), intermediate (5), and high (9) levels of concern for one's own goals and concern for the other's goals. In the 1,1 corner of very low concern for the goals of both self and opponent, the actor stays out of a situation that provokes controversy, turns away from an issue that promotes disagreement, or remains neutral (*avoiding*). The one-sided concern for the other's goals in the upper left corner (1,9) determines actions to maintain harmony. The actor smoothes over the conflict by cajolery, appeals to reason, or appeases the quarrel (*accommodating*). People with intermediate concerns, who apply the 5,5 theory in the centre, settle the conflict through bargaining a middle-of-the-road compromise (*compromising*). Under high concern for everyone's goals (9,9) creative problem solving results in complete satisfaction of all parties involved (*problem solving*). Lastly, an individual in the bottom right corner having a one-sided concern for his or her own goals (9,1) believes that the conflict can be controlled by overpowering it and suppressing the adversary. Winning for one's own position predominates over seeking an escape route, a way back, or a way out (*fighting*).

Because Blake and Mouton (1964) distinguished only five pure conflict behaviours (1,1; 1,9; 5,5; 9,9; 9,1), the overwhelming majority of the other 76 behavioural locations in the grid were viewed as mixtures of the five pure behaviours. Hence, by implication, the behavioural locations were seen as resulting from mixtures of low, intermediate, and high concern for one's own goals and for the other's goals, respectively (e.g. $3 = 1 + 5$; $7 = 5 + 9$). I conceptualise these behavioural mixtures as conglomerated conflict behaviours, which are the rule rather than the exception.

Additionally, Blake and Mouton (1964) devoted two chapters to a variety of what they called complex or mixed grid theories, in which two or more of the five pure modes of conflict behaviour are either simultaneously or successively used in conjunction with one another. A good example is paternalism, involving tight control in work matters, flowing from high concern for one's own goals (9,1), coupled with being generous and kind in a personal way, flowing from high concern for the other's goals (1,9). A related illustration is the "two-hat approach," in which high one-sided concern for one's own goals determines 9,1 behaviour, followed by high one-sided concern for the other's goals and 1,9 behaviour. Whereas under paternalism aspects of fighting and accommodating operate in juxtaposition, under the two-hat approach either one or the other is operating, never both together. Clearly, paternalism and the two-hat approach are examples of simultaneously and sequentially conglomerated conflict behaviour, respectively.

Strengths and a Weakness

Given my conflict definitions, and given the above taxonomies of conflict behaviour, the conflict management grid theory has several strengths. One strength is that its explanations of conflict handling are restricted to a single party's behaviour. This restriction allows the model to be applied to one-sided conflicts, in which only one party is aware of the discord. It also allows us to conceptualise two-sided conflicts in which the parties use different modes of conflict handling. Some authors claim that the grid framework is useful for conceptualising not only interpersonal conflict but also dyadic conflict between organisational groups or even nations (e.g. Fisher, 1990).

A second advantage is that the theory explains conflict behaviours rather than conflict outcomes. Behaviours are the means by which one tries to realise certain outcomes, but these attempts can and do sometimes fail. For example, problem solving can after all produce a winner and a loser, whereas fighting can result in a sudden solution.

As a third strong aspect, the theory applies to conflicts that involve all kinds of issues; that is, it does not couple a certain issue to a particular conflict behaviour toward the other party. Different issues such as a lie and a betrayal may thus lead to the same combination of concerns and associated behaviour. Conversely, the same issue may under different circumstances, such as trust or time pressure, lead to different combinations of concerns and different modes of conflict management.

The fourth strength of the theory is its recognition that disputants take the opponent's outcomes and reactions into account. The traditional model of thought that dominates behavioural research on conflict management,

including negotiation, assumes only a concern for one's own outcomes. According to Pruitt and Carnevale (1993, p. 8), this "dominant paradigm is overly simplistic. It relies too much on the assumption that negotiators are always trying to maximize self-interest. It ignores the social context of negotiation, overlooking such important phenomena as social norms, relationships between negotiators, group decision processes, and the behaviour of third parties" (for a similar view, see Greenhalgh, 1995). These authors adopted the dual concerns framework with the explicit aim of correcting for the one-sidedness of prior theory.

As a fifth merit, the theory shows that either concern has a double-edged effect. Two examples should clarify this. A high concern for one's own goals leads to problem solving in conjunction with a high concern for the other's goals, but it leads to fighting in conjunction with a low concern for the other's goals. Likewise, a low concern for the other's goals leads to avoiding in conjunction with a low concern for one's own goals, but it leads to fighting in conjunction with a high concern for one's own goals. No doubt these and similar insights implied by the grid paradigm are remarkable for their clarity, testability, and practical applicability.

The sixth strength of the theory is that it can also explain why disputants change their behaviour, and predict the direction of that change. When at least one of an actor's two concerns changes, this actor will shift from a certain conflict reaction to another. Given a change in the dual concern, Fig. 1.1 specifies what behavioural shift will occur; that is, which of the five main reactions will replace the currently active mode of conflict management. The "conflict concerns theory" in Chapter 4 will elaborate on changing concerns as crucial factors in the explanation of unfolding conglomerated conflict behaviour and (de-)escalative processes.

The virtue that stands out most in the present context is that Blake and Mouton (1964) explicitly addressed behavioural complexity. The above-mentioned examples of paternalism and the two-hat approach nicely illustrate the fact that some reactions to conflict issues cannot be explained by a single level of concern for one's own goals combined with a single level of concern for the other's goals. Neither can these reactions be placed in a single location of conflict behaviour within the grid space of 81 behavioural locations. This important feature of the theory has not been noticed by the many researchers who have based their work on the conflict management grid over the last 30 years. In an attempt to correct that neglect of behavioural complexity, this book asserts that most conflict behaviour cannot be placed in one of the five pure grid locations of avoiding, accommodating, compromising, problem solving, and fighting. Conglomerated conflict management is the rule rather than the exception.

The conflict management grid also has a weakness. It was visually represented in an ambiguous way. Fig. 1.1 gives rise to a multitude of

perceptual organisations. Mathematically and logically, an abscissa and an ordinate representing two determinants of five behaviours form a quite simple and comprehensible model. As a perceived object, however, Fig. 1.1 constitutes a rather complicated visual field of catchwords at the corners and midpoint (originally brief circumscriptions), number combinations at the corners and midpoint, concern captions indicating horizontal and vertical axes, and squares all over the diagram. We can focus on each of these parts of the differentiated visual field. However, inevitably, there is always one part that stands out in a distinctive way. Gestalt psychologists call the part that stands out the Gestalt (the German word for "form") or *figure*, and all other parts the background or just *ground*. The grid's main figure–ground manifestations deserve further exploration because, in my view, they provide different theoretical contributions. More than that, this book makes an attempt to transform the weakness of the grid's ambiguity into a strength by connecting distinct grid pictures and levels of theoretical value.

Grid Manifestations

In Fig. 1.1 the same parts of the visual field—words, numbers, and lines—may appear either as figure or as ground. Thus, on closer examination, Blake and Mouton's (1964, 1970) grid diagram is a classic example of an ambiguous visual field. It lends itself to four forms of figure–ground manifestation, to wit: the five *catchwords* at the corners and midpoint of Fig. 1.1, the symmetric (1,1; 5,5; 9,9) and asymmetric (1,9; 9,1) *pairs of numbers*, the *horizontal and vertical axes*, and the 81 *squares*. These four grid manifestations are elaborated in the remainder of this introductory chapter.

Catchwords. If one focuses on the five catchwords, the following resemblances and differences come to the fore. To the left are two variants of nonconfrontation: avoiding and accommodating. In the middle and upper right are two variants of negotiation: striving for a mutually acceptable compromise, or a totally satisfactory solution to the problem. At the bottom right is the mode of fighting. Viewed like this, Fig. 1.1 manifests itself as a classification of conflict behaviours. Standing out is a simple verbal framework for the definition and operationalisation of five qualitatively different modes of conflict handling, henceforth called the "five-part typology."

Pairs of numbers. If the number combinations hold a prominent place in the field of vision, there are three symmetric (1,1; 5,5; 9,9) and two asymmetric (1,9; 9,1) pairs of two digits. The first number denotes the actor's level of own outcomes, while the second number denotes the actor's

estimation of the counterpart's level of outcomes. The pairs of behavioural outcomes describe variable sums on the 1,1–5,5–9,9 dimension, but constant sums on the 1,9–5,5–9,1 dimension. In addition, the variable-sum dimension is at right angles to the constant-sum dimension, so that all paired numbers together form a cross. Indeed, it is easy to recognise orthogonal dimensions in the very elegant whole of an "X-cross model."

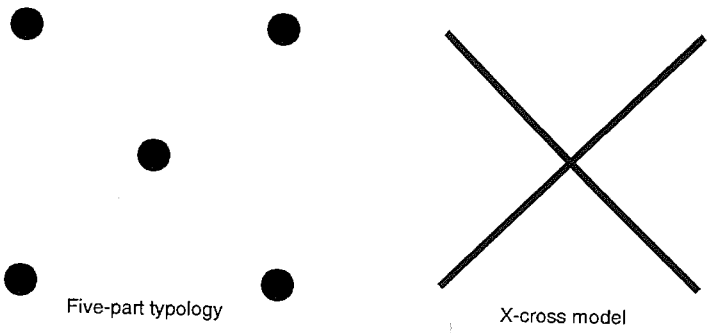
Horizontal and vertical axes. The horizontally and vertically placed concern captions, with the segmented scales to which they refer, are yet another view of the grid. Both concern for one's own goals and concern for the other's goals range from one to nine. One's low (1), intermediate (3), or high (9) position on the two concern dimensions determines which conflict behaviour one uses. Captions, scales, and low–high indications all call up the salient and good form of the grid's right-angled sides. Henceforth the two explanatory dimensions are referred to as the "L-angle of concerns."

Squares. The last manifestation of the ambiguous picture in Fig. 1.1 is based on the Gestalt of the checkerboard of squares. The nonoverlapping and mutually related squares, neatly arranged in nine columns and nine rows of concern, are from now on given the apt name of the "grate of concerns." Recall that each square indicates a unique combination of dual concern, which explains how a person operating under that dual concern is likely to handle conflict. Unlike the five-part typology and the X-cross model, the squares of the grate of concerns refer to the determinants of conflict behaviour instead of the conflict behaviour itself. Unlike the L-angle of concerns that can explain only one unsegmented conflict behaviour at a time, several "squared" concerns can explain several components of conglomerated conflict behaviour such as paternalism and the two-hat approach (for details and additional examples, see Chapter 5).

To recapitulate, the original conflict management grid can now be seen as a *five-part typology* (catchwords), then as an *X-cross model* (pairs of numbers), as an *L-angle of concerns* (horizontal and vertical axes), or as a *grate of concerns* (nonoverlapping, interrelated squares). Each of these four grid faces is represented in Fig. 1.2.

THE SUBJECTIVE GRID

The visual field is organised in such a way that one sees what one is predisposed to see at the moment of perception. Momentary predispositions may be based on past experience, wishful thinking, or current goals. As an example of the latter, interventionists and researchers will approach the



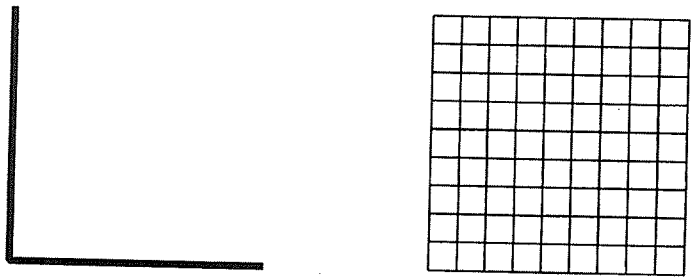


FIG. 1.2 Four faces of the conflict management grid.

conflict management grid with their own lens and filters. The interventionist wanting to change conflict behaviour will probably see the five-part typology or the X-cross model, whereas the researcher wanting to predict conflict behaviour might concentrate on the L-angle of concerns or the grate of concerns.

The following examples from the literature highlight the rather subjective use of the five-part typology, the X-cross model, the L-angle of concerns, and the grate of concerns. They illustrate my view of the grid as an ambiguous stimulus that is perceived by social scientists to fit their momentary predispositions.

Five-Part Typology

Thomas has written more on the conflict management grid than anyone else (Kilmann & Thomas, 1977; Ruble & Thomas, 1976; Thomas, 1976, 1979, 1988, 1992a, 1992b; Thomas & Pondy, 1977). He saw the grid as a five-part typology and then as an X-cross model, or as an L-angle of concerns. However, in more recent work he defined his ultimate position as being in favour of the five-part typology: "The model ... is purely a taxonomy ... It attempts to describe what the conflict modes *are*" (Thomas, 1988, pp. 432–433); "I now emphasize that the ... model is purely a classification scheme or *taxonomy* of five conflict-handling intentions" (Thomas, 1992a, p. 269). He also noted that other frameworks seek to explain the conflict modes as a function of the two concern dimensions. However, Thomas now rejects this approach because it reduces the complex causes of conflict behaviour to only two factors. His current preference is to use the descriptive five-part typology and then to construct more complex theories of the causes of these modes of conflict handling.

X-Cross Model

Several questionnaires have been created for the self-assessment of the five modes of conflict handling (see Chapter 3). In this line of research, Prein (1976) developed his own instrument and applied factor analysis to uncover the simple structure underlying the items. Unlike others, Prein (1976) predicted that factor analysis would result in the simple structure of the diagonals rather than the horizontal and vertical dimensions. That is, he recognised that the largest distances exist between avoiding and problem solving on the one hand, and between accommodating and fighting on the other. A rotation of these relatively long diagonals is necessary to find the relatively short horizontal axis (avoiding–fighting; accommodating–problem solving) and the equally short vertical axis (avoiding–accommodating; problem solving–fighting). This is a relevant insight because larger distances have more descriptive power; they discriminate better between distinct modes of conflict behaviour.

In successfully showing that his factor analyses reflected the diagonals and not the sides of the conflict management grid, Prein became one of the very first authors to recognise the real nature of the grid as a descriptive device. The grid's descriptive dimensions form an X-cross model of a variable-sum and a constant-sum dimension of potential outcomes rather than an L-angle of two concerns. Moreover, Prein was well aware of the fact that the results of his analyses did not explain the behaviours. He used the factor solution only to describe the content of

each mode of conflict management in terms of the general behavioural factors of the X-cross model.

L-Angle of Concerns

Rubin, Pruitt, and Kim (1994) were interested in the determinants of choice among the basic strategies used by parties experiencing conflict. They saw the grid as an L-angle theory with concern for one's own outcomes and concern for the other's outcomes as intermediating between many sources of each of these concerns and strategic choice. Concern was defined as the importance placed on one's own and/or the other's interests. The theory contains four predictions. A preference for withdrawal or inaction results from a low concern about both parties' outcomes. Accommodating or yielding is encouraged mainly by a high concern for the other party's outcomes. When one's concern about both parties' outcomes is high, one will prefer problem solving. Finally, contentious fighting follows mainly from a high concern for one's own outcomes.

In the original L-angle of concerns theory, compromising is conceptualised as an additional 5,5 mode amidst all other modes. Rubin, Pruitt, and Kim (1994), however, limited themselves to a two-dimensional model with four strategies of preferred conflict handling, feeling no need to postulate a fifth strategy of compromising, resulting from intermediate levels of concern for one's own and other's outcomes. Interestingly, Pruitt and Rubin (1986) saw splitting the difference or steering a middle course as arising from one of two sources—either lazy problem solving or simple yielding by both people or groups.

Grate of Concerns

Earlier sections made it clear that Blake and Mouton (1964) addressed behavioural complexity in the form of, for instance, paternalism and the two-hat approach. Under paternalism, fighting and accommodating operate in a simultaneous aggregation, whereas under the two-hat approach they operate in a sequential aggregation. In both cases the aspects of fighting result from high concern for one's own goals and low concern for the other's goals, while the aspects of accommodating result from low concern for one's own goals and high concern for the other's goals. So, both paternalism and the two-hat approach result from a low as well as a high level of each of the two concerns. In fact, in both cases the grate of concerns is applied twice to predict both fighting and accommodating as aggregated locations of conflict management.

Blake and Mouton (1964, e.g. pp. 212, 221–222) explicitly stated that one can also be influenced by more than two combinations of the two

concerns; sometimes a manager even "operates all over the grid." Apparently, any main cell of low, intermediate, or high concern in the grate of concerns (1,1; 1,9; 5,5; 9,9; 9,1) can occur together with one or more of the other four main cells, as the 76 mixed cells indicate already. Upon closer consideration, Blake and Mouton introduced the metatheory that their L-angle of concerns theory sometimes has to be applied repeatedly to predict a number of entwined locations of conflict behaviour—that is, components of conglomerated conflict behaviour.

Clearly, in their metatheory, Blake and Mouton (1964, 1970) went beyond the views of five-part typology, X-cross model, and L-angle of concerns, which share the assumption that any conflict behaviour occupies only a single position in the behavioural space. The five-part typology and the X-cross model cannot describe, neither can the L-angle of concerns explain, conglomerated conflict behaviour reflecting several positions in the behavioural space. Henceforth explanations of conglomerated conflict behaviour based on the grate of concerns are called "complexity explanations."

Levels of Theoretical Value

The grid's figure–ground manifestations portrayed in Fig. 1.2 differ in the emphasis that is placed on the description, the two-dimensional structure, and the explanation of conflict management, respectively. As will be discussed now, the underlying factors of description, dimensions, and explanation further clarify what each subjective grid manifestation represents. They also allow a particular theoretical rank order of the four grid faces.

Description. Both five-part typology and X-cross model stress the descriptive rather than the explanatory nature of the grid. Of course, the five-part typology of conflict behaviours can be related to antecedents and consequences in a theoretical way, which has been done with great success (for recent overviews, see Rahim, 1992; Rubin, Pruitt, & Kim 1994; Thomas, 1992b; Van de Vliert, in press). But the five-part typology in and of itself does not contain any explanatory relationship that goes beyond simple description. Also, the X-cross model of a variable-sum and a constant-sum dimension has been used as a predictor of both conflict behaviour (e.g. Deutsch, 1949, 1973; Schelling, 1960) and conflict outcomes (e.g. Lax & Sebenius, 1986; Walton & McKersie, 1965). But the X-cross model is not an unequivocal predictor because, as will be elaborated from Chapter 4 onward, both the variable-sum and the constant-sum dimension mix up the potential outcomes of self and opponent. Consequently, one never knows whether a resulting conflict behaviour or outcome results from the potential outcomes for oneself, from the potential outcomes for one's opponent, or both. Rather than as a predictor, the X-cross model qualifies

as a descriptor that specifies whether a particular behaviour treats oneself and the opponent equally or differentially (for details, see Chapter 3).

Although both five-part typology and X-cross model describe the differences among avoiding, accommodating, compromising, problem solving and fighting, they do so at a different theoretical level. The five-part typology specifies the behavioural content only at a nominal level of description, whereas the X-cross model reaches at least an ordinal level of description (e.g. compromising is higher on the variable-sum dimension than avoiding, but lower than problem solving). This book is therefore based on the viewpoint that nominal behavioural descriptions such as the five-part typology have less theoretical quality than dimensional behavioural descriptions such as the X-cross model.

Dimensions. Both the X-cross model of the grid's diagonals and the L-angle of concerns of the grid's sides put forward two-dimensional frameworks. Whereas the X-cross model provides dimensional descriptors, the L-angle of concerns provides dimensional predictors. Granted, the L-angle of concerns is often used as a pair of descriptive rather than explanatory dimensions. However, because the concerns are intrapersonal and cannot be observed well by others, they are not unequivocal features of intended or displayed conflict behaviour. Moreover, predictors such as the L-angle of concerns are rarely good descriptors (Nicotera, 1993). The pair of concerns only indicates the preferred strategy of conflict behaviour. "But for a strategy actually to be adopted, it must also be seen as minimally feasible. If not, another strategy will be chosen, even if it is less consistent with the current combination of concerns" (Rubin, Pruitt, & Kim, 1994, p. 37). Overall, the common practice of using the L-angle of concerns as a pair of descriptive instead of explanatory dimensions is not to be recommended.

This book is also based on the viewpoint that descriptions in terms of the X-cross model have less theoretical quality than explanations in terms of the L-angle of concerns. The L-angle rather than the X-cross may serve as a backbone of conflict behaviour theory because explanations account for what has been described first. Chomsky (1965) told us much the same thing in his dictum that observational and descriptive adequacies are prerequisites for viable explanatory efforts.

Explanation. Both the L-angle of concerns and grate of concerns constitute determinants of conflict behaviour. As outlined already, the L-angle theory and the grate metatheory of concerns predict singular and complex modes of conflict handling, respectively. The novel paradigm of behavioural complexity to be unfolded in this book reflects my presupposition that explanations of singular conflict behaviour have less theoretical quality than explanations of conglomerated conflict behaviour. Indeed, explanations that

can account for complex conglomerations of conflict behaviour, such as trench warfare in which the parties may avoid and fight each other at the same time, have the highest level of theoretical quality.

Typology, model, theory, metatheory. The above viewpoints imply that the theoretical value increases if the grid manifestations are placed in the following order: typology, model, theory, and metatheory. The five-part *typology* is a classification or taxonomy based on the nominal characteristics and particulars of distinct conflict behaviours. The X-cross *model* is a set of leading ideas about the nature of conflict handling and the dimensional differences among distinct conflict behaviours. The L-angle of concerns *theory* is a set of rules of correspondence between distinct conflict behaviours and their determinants and consequences. A *metatheory* is an overarching rule of correspondence, or a set of such overarching rules, regarding one or more distinct theories. Thus the grate of concerns, with its implicit rule that the L-angle of concerns theory has to be applied repeatedly to predict separate components of conglomerated conflict behaviour, constitutes a metatheory.

At the bottom level of theory building we find conflict definitions, including those that were given earlier in this chapter. The increases in scientific value from that point onward can be portrayed as a four-step theoretical ladder of conflict behaviour (see Fig. 1.3). Each step includes the preceding steps. Specifically, the five-part typology of avoiding, accommodating, compromising, problem solving, and fighting provides good tools for defining and confining the distinct components of a behavioural aggregation. In addition, the more advanced X-cross model can be used to describe the interrelationships among the components in terms of a variable-sum and a constant-sum dimension of potential outcomes of the conflict. Next, each of these components separately can be explained by applying the L-angle theory of concern for one's own goals and concern for the opponent's goals. Finally, the metatheory, which explains complex conglomerations of conflict behaviour, includes the preceding steps of typology, model, and theory.

RECAPITULATION

In this book conflict refers to an individual's experience of discord due to at least one socially induced issue. It elicits complex goal-directed interaction and subsequent outcomes for all parties involved. Previous authors have classified modes of conflict handling into dichotomies, trichotomies, and four- and five-part typologies. Although these taxonomies have enriched and advanced the scientific field of social conflict, they might lead

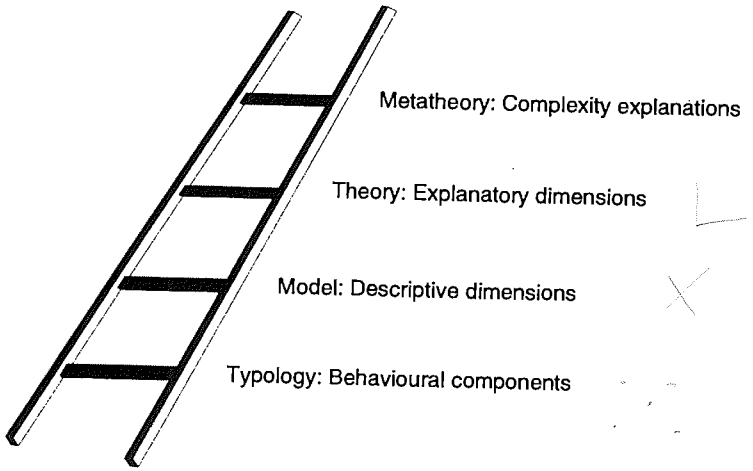


FIG. 1.3 The four-step theoretical ladder of conglomerated conflict behaviour.

to a paradigmatic crisis because they neglect behavioural complexity. Conglomerated conflict behaviours, defined as aggregations of intended or displayed reactions, could probably bring about a paradigm shift. Blake and Mouton's (1964, 1970) classic theory of the conflict management grid (see Fig. 1.1) offers some promising points of departure for further theory building about conglomerated conflict behaviour, including paternalism (simultaneous aggregation of fighting and accommodating) and the two-hat approach (sequential aggregation of fighting and accommodating).

The conflict management grid has four manifestations or faces, portrayed in Fig. 1.2, which may be used to describe and explain conglomerated conflict behaviour. First, the components of conglomerated conflict behaviour can be described by applying the manifestation of the five-part typology of avoiding, accommodating, compromising, problem solving, and fighting. Second, a more advanced description of the components in terms of their variable-sum and constant-sum character results from the application of the manifestation of the X-cross model. Third, the manifestation of the L-angle of concerns for one's own and the opponent's goals can be employed to explain a single component of conglomerated conflict behaviour (see Fig. 1.1). The fourth grid manifestation, the grate

of concerns for one's own and the opponent's goals, allows the explanation of all components of conglomerated conflict behaviour.

The manifestations of the conflict management grid may be represented as a ladder with stepwise increases in theoretical quality (see Fig. 1.3). The first step leads to the *five-part typology*, the description of five qualitatively different components of conglomerated conflict behaviour. The second step leads to the *X-cross model*, the description of a behavioural conglomeration in terms of a variable-sum and a constant-sum dimension of potential outcomes. The third step leads to the *L-angle of concerns*, the explanation of a single component of conglomerated conflict behaviour through the dimensions of concern for one's own and the other's goals. The fourth step leads to the *grate of concerns*, which can explain more than one component of a conglomeration of conflict management.

PLAN OF THE BOOK

Figures 1.2 and 1.3 are used as the cornerstones of the book. The sequence of chapters on the distinct manifestations of conglomerated conflict behaviour is designed in such a way that the theoretical value increases step by step.

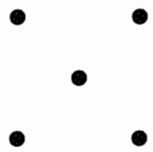
As a first step, Chapter 2 gives an overview of the five-part typology for describing behavioural components and integrates it with the aforementioned two-, three- and four-part taxonomies of conflict handling. An observational experiment in Dutch police organisations is reported to test the validity of the proposed overarching typology. At the same time the study further typifies the five generic components of conglomerated conflict behaviour.

Chapter 3 takes the second step by illuminating the X-cross model for describing behavioural components with the help of the variable-sum dimension of integration and the constant-sum dimension of distribution. The two-dimensional model clarifies how one overcomes behavioural dilemmas between integration (equal treatment of self and opponent) and distribution (differential treatment of self and opponent). The last part of the chapter tests the generalisability of the dimensions of integration and distribution across assessment instruments and a variety of components of behavioural conglomerations.

The third step is from the description to the explanation of conglomerated conflict behaviour. Chapter 4 focuses on the L-angle of explanatory dimensions of concern for one's own goals and concern for the other's goals—that is, on the social motives of individualism and altruism. The validity of this dual concern theory is examined theoretically and

CHAPTER TWO

First Step: Description of Behavioural Components



The very first result of studying the reactions of principal parties to their mutual conflict is, of course, a simple description of what each person is doing. The main behavioural components are identified, named, and their characteristics listed. People may typically react agreeably or disagreeably, passively or actively. For example, a psychologist who is at loggerheads with a social worker about the "conservative and formalistic" procedures in their mental-health-care institution can avoid the issue, accommodate the social worker's wishes, pursue a compromise, seek a resolution, and fight the social worker. These main components of conglomerated conflict behaviour are labelled the five-part typology. Their definition and confinement is a modest first move towards the development of knowledge about complex reactions to conflict issues.

Categorisations of behavioural components such as the five-part typology represent the lowest level of theory development. At this level the determinants and consequences of the reactions have a rather superficial descriptive function at most. This chapter deals with such classifications of components of conflict handling. First, the five generic behavioural

components of avoiding, accommodating, compromising, problem solving, and fighting are discussed. Next, the two-, three-, four-, and five-part taxonomies of conflict behaviour, reviewed in Chapter 1, are mutually related. An attempt is made to integrate all types of conflict handling that are part of these taxonomies on the basis of two features: agreeableness and activeness. Closing the overview of descriptions of behavioural components is a global report of an observational study undertaken to test the validity of the leading idea in the integrated taxonomy.

FIVE-PART TYPOLOGY

As outlined in Chapter 1, all intended and displayed outward reactions to social discord come under the general heading of conflict behaviour. The behavioural modes at the corners and midpoint of the conflict management grid were labelled avoiding, accommodating, compromising, problem solving, and fighting. People can be asked to describe the occurrence of these components of conflict handling. One may have them indicate to what extent each component is used by themselves (for a brief review of five instruments, see the Box "Self-Assessments Based on the Five-Part Typology"). One may also have respondents indicate to what extent each component is used by their opponents, or by other persons. The resulting descriptions originate from biased actors, biased observers, or neutral observers, respectively.

Actors will have difficulty entangling their inner frustrations or attitudes and their outer conflict behaviours. They will tend to overplay the behavioural intentions they experience. For observers, on the other hand, it will not be easy to read other people's behavioural signs because the same conflict action must be interpreted differently depending on the purpose of that action. For example, if the protagonist is silent for a while, this may predominantly reflect a form of nonconfrontation, a form of negotiation, or even a tactic that is part of a fight. In other words, outsiders can categorise conflict behaviour more easily when the actor's behavioural intention is better known or attributable with more certainty. All this should be kept in mind whenever one encounters descriptions such as the ratings of others' conflict handling in Study 1 reported at the end of this chapter.

The five-part typology can be criticised for underrepresenting relatively aggressive components of conflict behaviour. Fighting is accompanied by the four much less contentious components of avoiding, accommodating, compromising, and problem solving. In an effort to correct this skewed distribution, one may distinguish between 2 x 2 components of fighting, namely indirect versus direct fighting, by fair versus unfair fighting (cf. Van de Vliert, 1990b). Indirect or cold fighting is characterised by covertness

Self-Assessments Based on the Five-Part Typology

Hall's (1969) *Conflict Management Survey* (CMS) measures an individual's use of the five modes across personal, interpersonal, small group, and intergroup contexts. It consists of 60 items (4 contexts x 3 statements x 5 modes). The items are rated on a 10-point scale ranging from "completely characteristic" to "completely uncharacteristic." For each mode of conflict management the sum of the 12 behaviour reports becomes the respondent's overall score for that mode. Shockley-Zalabak (1988) reviewed high item–test correlations, as well as moderate to low coefficients for the internal consistency and test–retest reliability of the mode subscales. Additionally, she reported relationships between the CMS and other instruments that provide some support for the concurrent validity of the CMS.

Thomas and Kilmann's (1974) *Management Of Differences Exercise* (MODE) is a forced-choice questionnaire consisting of 30 sets of paired items, with each item describing the likelihood of one of the five modes. A person's score on each mode is the number of times that person selects statements representing that behavioural intention over other mode statements. The mode subscale measures appear to have rather low levels of homogeneity and test–retest reliability (Womack, 1988). Support for the MODE's validity includes demonstrated correlations between measures of the five modes and scores on related instruments (Brown, Yelsma, & Keller, 1981; Kilmann & Thomas, 1977). However, Kabanoff (1987), who used peer ratings of conflict behaviours as criteria, failed to find evidence of predictive validity.

The *Organisational Communication Conflict Instrument* (OCCI; Putnam & Wilson, 1982) assesses communicative tactics that individuals use. On 30 seven-point scales it is indicated how frequently one engages in each of the five modes of conflict handling. Principal components analysis indicated that avoiding and accommodating both represent nonconfrontation (mean Cronbach's α = .88), that compromising and problem solving may both be interpreted as solution orientation (mean α = .83), and that fighting reflects control (mean α = .77). Wilson and Waltman (1988) discussed validity, particularly that the OCCI converges at moderate levels with measures of similar instruments.

Rahim's Organisational Conflict Inventory (ROCI) is a series of 28 five-point Likert items ranging from "strongly agree" to "strongly disagree" with the use of a mode of conflict handling (Rahim, 1983a). It is available in three forms, which refer to conflict with a boss, peer, or subordinate, respectively. The parts of the questionnaire containing the five mode clusters are internally consistent (mean α = .74) and stable (mean retest reliability = .76; Weider-Hatfield, 1988). Evidence for ROCI's validity has been provided by the invariance of its factor model across groups, its ability to discriminate between groups known to differ in their conflict behaviour, its meaningful relations with other conflict manifestations, and its

associations with measures of organisational effectiveness and climate (Rahim, 1983a, 1983b, 1992; Rahim & Magner, 1995; Weider-Hatfield, 1988).

The *Dutch Test of Conflict Handling* (DUTCH; Janssen & Van de Vliert, 1996) was designed to remedy the poor ability of instruments to discriminate between avoiding and accommodating, and between compromising and problem solving. It consists of 20 seven-point items, assessing the five components of conflict behaviour on bipolar response scales from very likely to very unlikely. In police organisations and hospitals alpha coefficients of internal consistency ranged from .60 to .85 for conflicts with superiors (mean α = .74) and from .59 to .81 for conflicts with subordinates (mean α = .72). The validity of the DUTCH has been assessed by comparing the 10 correlations among the subscales of conflict handling with the 10 theoretical interrelationships predicted by the conflict management grid (for the details of this approach, see Van de Vliert & Kabanoff, 1990).

and reliance on procedures, whereas direct or hot fighting is an overt, almost explosive form of straightforward contentious behaviour (cf. Glasl, 1980; Sheppard, 1984; Volkema & Bergmann, 1989). Both fighting components are fair or unfair to the extent that the combatants do or do not follow mutually agreed-upon behavioural rules (cf. Bach & Wyden, 1969). These four subdivisions of fighting are elaborated below, after a more detailed discussion of the four noncompetitive components of conflict handling.

Avoiding

Avoidance is the prevention or termination of efforts to yield openly, to negotiate constructively, or to win completely. Prevention takes place, for example, if a person suppresses awareness of a minor controversy, or if one ignores a conflict issue by denying that it is present or by not paying any attention to it. Likewise, showing seemingly issue-independent behaviour is a very popular way of avoiding other components of conflict handling. Such "avoiding by implication" may surface as a premature topic shift or as the "fact" that more important matters are pressing. It includes coping behaviours to alleviate the discomfort created by a stressful conflict—for example, engaging in physical exercise to take one's mind off the issue, having a drink, or seeking emotional support from friends.

Deliberate prevention or termination of more active reactions may represent a kind of nonoption, a choice not to choose. For instance, a lottery approach as a device for settlement represents a conscious decision

not to take responsibility for any other component of conflict management. Some other illustrations of how people may deliberately demonstrate avoidance are: speaking about an issue in abstruse terms, making distracting or procedural remarks, and asking unfocused and conflict-irrelevant questions. Borisoff and Victor (1989) discussed the following additional ways of not really dealing with the conflict issues: making excuses, underresponsiveness, trivialisation of the problem through joking or sarcasm, silencing, using generalisations and stereotypes, and definitional side-tracking.

An interesting form of making excuses is the use of social accounts to explain one's own actions that may upset others (Bies, 1989; Sitkin & Bies, 1993; Thomas & Pondy, 1977). A social account attempts to influence the other party's perception of the unfavourability of the incident or action, one's own responsibility for what happened, or one's own intention to obstruct or irritate the other. According to Bartunek, Kolb, and Lewicki (1992), in organisational settings these and other forms of avoidance are the most commonly described type of dealing with conflict.

As a component of negotiation, avoiding often takes the shape of adopting a walk-away alternative, notably by turning to another buyer or seller. This no-agreement component is also known as the Best Alternative To a Negotiated Agreement, or BATNA (Fisher & Ury, 1981). It occurs when a bargainer's prospective outcomes do not equal or exceed this party's comparison level of alternatives (Wall, 1985). The possibility of a getaway via one's BATNA helps a negotiator "determine whether to negotiate at all, whether to continue the process, whether to accept a proposal, and whether an agreement, once reached, will be secure." (Lax & Sebenius, 1986, p. 47).

As a concept, avoiding is difficult to grasp and, for that reason, has given occasion for plenty of misconceptions. The following three considerations may further clarify the phenomenon of avoidance. First of all, the absence of a verbal reaction is a deed of avoidance only if this component is coupled with the absence of other components including nonverbal concessions, signals of a need for agreement, and expressions of aggressiveness. Second, active flight can be seen as a passive form of avoidance because there is no disagreeable interaction whatsoever with the counterpart. Similarly, an open declaration of withdrawal or neutrality is still a hardly agreeable form of nonconfrontation, because the actor is dealing with the issues and interests one-sidedly without giving in. Third, a distinction between short-term and longer-term avoidance provides additional insight. Rubin, Pruitt, and Kim (1994) defined inaction as a temporary move of doing nothing that leaves open the possibility of resuming efforts to deal with the controversy, whereas withdrawing was seen as a permanent move of leaving the conflict by terminating efforts to yield, to negotiate, or to fight.

Accommodating

Accommodation occurs when one gives in to the opponent's point of view or demand. It can be described best as open cooperation by nonconfrontation. Social psychologists concur that this type of behaviour derives its significance from different sources, including altruism, normative beliefs, the obtainment of benefits, and the prevention of costs. Some annotations may help frame these types of accommodating components more precisely.

A relevant observation is that many definitions of accommodation contain elements of self-sacrifice, thus ignoring one's own pay-offs of nonconfrontation through yielding. However, people also accommodate when that is fair, when they are wrong, and when they feel obliged to do so. Similarly, it is anything but self-sacrificing if accommodation forms a means to a further end that is more important than the immediate conflict issue. Sometimes giving in means building social credits for later interactions with the adversary or outsiders. In such cases, accommodating is setting a sprat to catch a mackerel. Sometimes acceptance of the opponent's position reflects minimising loss when one is outmatched and losing. Notice, however, that accommodation is bound up with components of negotiation if one seeks to guarantee restricted loss. Any proposal to surrender on certain conditions is a complicated attempt to safeguard certain interests in return for giving up the less important interests involved in losing the conflict. If the loser negotiates very skilfully, what seems to be accommodation at first sight may even turn into a Pyrrhic victory for the opponent in the end.

A clever complex strategy of accommodating is the involvement of a third party that paves the road for giving in without losing face. A skilful intermediary can be used to maintain one's own personal dignity and reputation. For example, a principal party may have a third party suggest proposals that help avoid the appearance of defeat on an issue, or help handle problems with a constituent. The outside helper may even be enlisted to take responsibility for particular concessions.

Compromising

Components of compromising refer to the pursuance of a mutually acceptable settlement in which each of the conflicting parties makes some concession. They cover tactics of temporary avoidance, accommodation, or contention, which are embedded in an intention to negotiate a settlement. Compromising is a ubiquitous phenomenon, occurring in all social relationships and governing much social behaviour. A typical compromise stands part way between the parties' preferred positions about each other's outcomes. Two classes of compromises, resulting from two components of

negotiation—claiming versus trading—are discussed. Claim-negotiating is primarily making decisions, whereas trade-negotiating is primarily making exchanges. One may also change the game by converting a claim-negotiation into a trade-negotiation, or vice versa.

Claim-negotiation. In the case of claiming outcomes, the intended compromise applies to an allocation of benefits or costs that nobody "owns" at present (e.g. manganese nodules at the seabed, a collective debt, a new position, part of the housekeeping money). Almost by definition compromising about incompatible claims is negotiating about the criterion or criteria on the basis of which the outcomes must be allocated. Important principles of allocative justice are those of equity, equality, and need (Deutsch, 1985; Pruitt, 1981; Folger, Sheppard, & Buttram, 1995; Zartman & Berman, 1982). A hypothesis exists "that the tendency for economically oriented groups will be to use the principle of equity, for solidarity-oriented groups to use the principle of equality, and for caring-oriented groups to use the principle of need as the basic value underlying the system of distributive justice" (Deutsch, 1985, p. 44).

Trade-negotiation. In the case of trading outcomes, the intended compromise is an exchange of benefits or costs that one party "owns" for benefits or costs that the other party "owns" (e.g. remission of debts for promises of political support, hostages for unopposed withdrawal of hijackers, money for goods). This type of settlement includes compensation, whereby a conceding conflict party is repaid in some unrelated coin. Subject to several benefits or costs being under consideration, each party may get that outcome that it deems most important. This integrative trading of concessions on each party's high-priority issues in multi-attribute negotiations, called logrolling, can also be posited as a contingent splitting of differences (Greenhalgh, 1987). In my own terminology, logrolling can be conceptualised as either a simultaneous or a sequential conglomeration of the behavioural components of accommodating and fighting.

On closer examination, trade-negotiators often attempt to agree upon a package of four issues. They negotiate about the kind of outcome that they themselves will obtain, the kind of outcome that the other party will obtain in return, the relative weight of the two sorts of outcome, and the magnitude of the transfer of material or immaterial property. In essence it is a matter of conglomerated conflict behaviour directed at three part-settlements dealing with the means, the rate, and the magnitude of exchange.

Changing the game of compromising. Because the distinction between claiming and trading is not well established in the bargaining literature, we

hardly know anything about the tactics of defining the situation as a claim- or trade-negotiation. A new line of research might concentrate on conglomerated conflict behaviour meant to convert claim-compromising into trade-compromising, or vice versa. Illustrative are actions such as denying the ownership of costs (a poor plan, a tough job, being a long way behind), appropriating benefits (a promising idea, a pleasant chore, a lead), contesting that the opponent is the owner of benefits, and labelling the opponent as the owner of costs. A particularly fruitful area for theory development might be the situation in which one party sees no owners and therefore wants to pursue a claim-negotiation by reason of justice arguments, whereas the other party does see owners and therefore wants to pursue a trade-negotiation on the basis of things to be done in return.

It is worthwhile noting also that the literature predominantly, albeit implicitly, associates claim- and trade-negotiations with compromising about profits. Insufficient light has been shed on bargaining about costs. Most authors do not satisfactorily discuss such allocation rules as the cause-of-damage principle and the ability-to-pay principle. The topic of claiming or trading protection for costs clearly warrants further consideration, however, because negotiators react differently to gains and losses. In general, potential benefits appear to tend toward compromising by making concessions, whereas potential costs encourage inflexibility (Bazerman, Magliozzi, & Neale, 1985; De Dreu, Carnevale, Emans, & Van de Vliert, 1994, 1995; De Dreu, Emans, & Van de Vliert, 1992a, 1992b; Neale & Bazerman, 1985, 1991). Therefore, other things being equal and compared with compromising about benefits, compromising about costs elicits a tougher negotiation process and is attended with a greater risk of stalemate.

A relatively complex and indirect way of compromising is enlisting the services of a third party to facilitate the attainment of a settlement. More so than the conflicting individuals or groups themselves, the intermediary will be in a position to stress public interests and the importance of an agreement, to turn a claim-negotiation into a trade-negotiation, or to reframe gains as losses or losses as gains.

Problem Solving

Resolving the conflict is a sequential conglomeration of active and creative components of conflict behaviour. It is a process of open negotiation to reconcile completely the counterparts' basic interests in the end. Claim- and trade-negotiations may both lead to resolutions. Unlike compromising, problem solving is a win/win strategy aimed at optimising rather than at satisficing for the parties. If, for instance, two managers are competing for personnel, their problem ends in a compromise if both have to share one

extra member of staff half-time during summer and winter. It is solved if they discover that one party only needs an extra member of staff during the summer whereas the other only needs one during the winter.

Usually problem solving is a more ambiguous activity than compromising. With compromising the goal is clear (a distribution or an exchange) and so is the road that leads to it (splitting the difference). With problem solving, on the other hand, both the goal and the means to achieve it are less obvious. Often both parties' seemingly incompatible goals must be redefined to reach a mutually satisfactory win/win agreement (Burton, 1990; Filley, 1975; Lax & Sebenius, 1986), sometimes termed "synergic" (e.g. Craig & Craig, 1974), or "Pareto optimal" (e.g. Luce & Raiffa, 1957). Problem solving "involves invention, and the clever thing is to recognize this, and not to let one's thinking stay within the boundaries of two alternatives which are mutually exclusive." (Follett, 1940, p. 33).

A somewhat different conceptualisation of conflict resolution has been worked out by Satir (1972). She envisioned three essential ingredients of social conflict: the issue, the self, and the other. Denying wipes out the issue, whereas placating wipes out the self (cf. accommodating); blaming wipes out the other (cf. fighting); and avoiding wipes out the issue and the other. Superrationalising wipes out all ingredients: the issue, the self, and the other. Only if one rejects wiping out any ingredient does one utilise conflict creatively by affirming the issue, the self, and the other (cf. problem solving). It may be noted in passing that Satir (1972), like Pruitt and Rubin (1986), feels no need to postulate an additional mode of compromising or splitting the difference, in which the issue, the self, and the other are all wiped out in part.

Problem-solving components are tentative and exploratory, seeking to expand rather than to control alternative courses of action. They communicate questions rather than statements. As Fisher and Ury (1981) have noted, questions generate answers, whereas statements generate resistance. Unlike statements, questions allow the other side to get standpoints and basic interests across. Consistent with this point of view, Tutzauer and Roloff (1988) demonstrated that seeking information, rather than giving information, led to insight into the opponent's priorities, which in turn resulted in integrative outcomes and subsequent satisfaction with how the conflict was handled. Furthermore, fully integrative outcomes appear to be linked to frequency of initiations, procedural suggestions, explorations, proposals, and other-supporting as well as positive affect statements (Putnam & Wilson, 1989).

Rubin, Pruitt, and Kim (1994) have identified and elaborated the following three routes for moving from opposing demands to a real solution of the conflict: *expanding the pie* by increasing the available resources such as money, time, and power, in cases where the discord hinges on a

resource shortage; *cost cutting* by eliminating the disadvantages or trouble of an agreement for the parties involved; and *bridging* by devising a new option that does not satisfy the parties' initial demands, but that does satisfy the interests underlying the parties' opposing positions. Trade-negotiating, including logrolling, may shift from compromising into problem solving by expanding the pie, cost cutting, or bridging.

To create resolutions the disputants must reach beyond themselves. They have to bring in an extra piece of information, a new relation between old pieces of information, or a novel frame. In this vein Väyrynen (1991) discussed issue transformation, rule transformation, actor transformation, and structural transformation. The principal parties can also bring in a mediating third party, who can take over that almost impossible task of excelling oneself. A mediator can successfully emphasise a superordinate goal that might otherwise become caught up in the conflict if it was initiated by one of the principal parties (Johnson & Lewicki, 1969). Or a mediator can be used to discourage the opponent's avoidance or aggression so as to bring about a more constructive level of tension, which enhances the chances of solving the conflict (Van de Vliert, 1985, 1997; Walton, 1987).

Inherent in the effective solving of small or common problems is a sequential conglomeration of conflict intensification and reconciliation. The phase of integration produces better results when preceded by a phase of detailed confrontation during which the conflict issues are defined and analysed (Fisher, 1997; Johnson, Johnson, & Smith, 1989; Turner & Pratkanis, 1997; Walton, 1987). Conflict stimulation generally enhances joint outcomes when the tension level is low rather than high, when conflict focuses on task issues rather than identity issues, and when disputants' goals are positively rather than negatively interdependent (Amason & Schweiger, 1997; Jehn, 1997; Putnam, 1997; Van de Vliert, 1997). In such cases, limited escalation facilitates differentiation, stimulates the search for new means and goals, and prevents rash pseudosolutions. Self-evidently, controlled escalation as part of a process of creating high joint benefit must not be mistaken for a win–lose battle.

Fighting

One who seeks to prevail at the expense of the adversary engages in conglomerated fighting behaviour, which has also been called a win–lose power struggle. Indeed, in order to defeat a protagonist who offers resistance one must overpower such an "enemy." Since there are many forms of power, many corresponding components of fighting exist. One may notably use positive or negative sanctions, legitimate claims, and convincing

information. Above fighting has been subdivided into indirect and direct fighting on the one hand, and fair and unfair fighting on the other. Indirect, direct, and fair fights will now be considered subsequently.

Indirect fight. People at war relatively often prefer to deal with one another as little as possible while attempting to beat the adversary with the help of procedures. The resulting covert, cold fights are an intriguing conglomeration of avoidance and enforcement by manipulating the agenda and the rules of the game to one's own advantage. An example is the statement "Let's take turns to explain why each of us thinks to have done the right thing." If at all possible, face-to-face contacts are avoided while one obstructs the other's plans, talks behind the other's back, or forms hidden alliances with third parties. Bisno (1988) clustered the following three types of indirect fighting under the heading of passive resistance or concealment: *negativism*—when persons, by body language or terse verbalisation, manifest disagreement or hurt, without overtly engaging in hostility; *noncompliance*—running the gamut from simple noncooperation to the covert sabotage of policies by inadequate implementation; and *stonewalling*—adamantly refusing to comment on something or to admit to an action or statement. Why and when people prefer such "hidden" aggressive strategies to straightforward fights are still largely unanswered questions.

Direct fight. Volkema and Bergmann (1989) investigated concrete interactions that occur during overt and hot fights between individuals at work, including: shouting at the person; trying to get even; pushing, striking, or punching the person; throwing things; and sabotaging the person's work. No less familiar are laughing at the adversary, making presumptive remarks, belittling, accusing, and using abusive language. On empirical grounds set forth by Straus (1979), all such hot fighting could be subdivided into verbal aggression, physical force, and the potentially lethal use of a knife or a gun.

On a more general level of analysis direct, contentious tactics are an assortment of odd bedfellows ranging from ingratiation, feather ruffling, and persuasive argumentation, to promises, threats, and irrevocable commitments (Rubin, Pruitt, & Kim, 1994). Yet another interesting means of expression is whistle-blowing, in which an insider chooses to take frustrations to outside authorities or to the press. One form is filing a charge, a suit, or a petition in court. According to Glasl (1980), in strongly escalating conflicts the combatants start to make each other lose face, then use all-pervasive and determined threats, and ultimately deny the other's human value, thus clearing the way for manipulation, retaliation, and elimination of the enemy. All such sequential conglomerations of reactions indicate hot fighting if they are supposedly instrumental to beating the

adversary. Yet if such behaviours are used to pursue an agreement, they indicate an escalatory component in a complex process of negotiation.

Fair fight. Though indirect and direct fights are not the pursuing of agreement between the conflicting parties, they may still be based on such an agreement. Fights are fair to the extent that the combatants follow agreed-upon rules of right and wrong behaviour to defeat each other. A sports competition, for example, is intended to be a fair fight. The family therapists Bach and Wyden (1969) were the first to teach people the conglomerated conflict behaviour of how to fight fairly (see also Brown, 1983; Deutsch 1973; Robbins, 1974; Van de Vliert, 1985). Although they did not make clear what they meant by a "fair fight," their descriptions indicated that they considered openness, honesty, equality, and reciprocity relevant criteria. The goal should be to pursue better mutual relationships through struggling instead of knockouts. The parties must learn not only to communicate better with one another but also to acquire skills in communicating about the rules laid down for fair conflict management. Rules could be: not leaving during a fight; no bluffing, generalisations, or ultimatums; no underhandedness; no aiming for the opponent's Achilles heel; no deliberate actions in the presence or the absence of certain third parties; or no physical violence. To fight fairly implies that one must learn not only to inflict fair blows but also to receive and absorb blows in a fair manner (Van de Vliert, 1985, 1990b). With regard to violent communications and treatments, Bies and Moag (1986) also identified various principles of fairness, including the propriety of questions, justification for decisions, and truthfulness (candidness and no deception).

The refined distinctions between indirect, direct, and fair fighting have not been introduced into the instruments designed to assess the use of modes of conflict behaviour. Neither are they part of taxonomies of conflict handling other than those operationalised in measuring instruments. In Chapter 5 of this book, however, indirect and direct fighting are further conceptualised and explained as components of conglomerated conflict management.

INTERRELATING FOUR TAXONOMIES

The five-part typology does not hold the monopoly on classifications of components of conglomerated conflict behaviour, as is apparent from the review of taxonomies in Chapter 1. A more parsimonious or less parsimonious categorisation of conflict management may be preferred with regard to the purposes of a research or intervention project. There simply is no "right" number of behavioural components. By clarifying commonalities

and differences, this section attempts to facilitate justified choices between the most well-known two-, three-, four-, and five-part taxonomies (Blake & Mouton, 1964, 1970; Deutsch, 1949, 1973; Horney, 1945; Rubin, Pruitt, & Kim, 1994; Putnam & Wilson, 1982; Rahim, 1983b, 1992; Thomas, 1976, 1992b; Walton, Cutcher-Gershenfeld, & McKersie, 1994). A perusal of these taxonomies and empirical research (Bales, 1950; Sternberg & Dobson, 1987) suggests that the behavioural components can be very well discriminated on the basis of their degrees of agreeableness and activeness.

Agreeableness is the extent to which a component of conglomerated conflict behaviour has pleasant and relaxed, rather than stressful, qualities. Agreeable reactions reflect agreement, tension release, and solidarity (Bales, 1950). *Activeness* is the extent to which the conflict behaviour has responsive and direct rather than inert qualities (cf. Lazarus & Launier, 1978). Active reactions provide or solicit suggestions, opinions, and orientations (Bales, 1950). Agreeableness and activeness are real, relevant, and readable features of a party's reactions, which make them suitable indeed for distinguishing among the following conflict behaviour taxonomies.

Cooperation–competition. Often conflict handling is analysed as a simple dichotomy in which cooperation and competition are seen as mutually exclusive reactions to social conflict (see Chapter 1). Some scholars view cooperation and competition as social value orientations to maximise joint outcomes or relative advantage in favour of self (e.g. Liebrand, Wilke, Vogel, & Walters, 1986; MacCrimmon & Messick, 1976; McClintock, 1972; McClintock & Liebrand, 1988). For others, who are more strongly influenced by Deutsch (1949, 1973), cooperation typically represents an agreeable activity, whereas competition constitutes a disagreeable activity.

The cooperation–competition bifurcation is a relatively undifferentiated division in which cooperation varies from hardly agreeable and hardly active noncompetition to pre-eminently agreeable and active resolution of the conflict issue. In fact, the dichotomy conceptualises cooperation as a residual category of noncompetition ranging from passive to active cooperation (Ruble & Thomas, 1976).

Nonconfrontation, negotiation, competition. Horney (1945) introduced the conceptual scheme of passively moving away or withdrawing from confrontation, actively moving towards people and towards a negotiated agreement, and moving against people through aggressive competition. Her taxonomy can be seen as a result of refining the concepts of noncompetition–competition along the lines of passive and active noncompetition or cooperation. And the same holds for Putnam and Wilson's (1982) equivalent scheme of nonconfrontation, solution orientation, and

control. Much empirical evidence supports this trichotomy (e.g. Fitzpatrick, 1988; Lawrence & Lorsch, 1967; Walton, Cutcher-Gershenfeld, & McKersie, 1994; Weider-Hatfield, 1988; Wilson & Waltman, 1988).

Four-part taxonomy. Rubin, Pruitt, and Kim's (1994) taxonomy of four available strategies—inaction, yielding, problem solving, and contending—can be understood in the light of the following conceptual refinement of the above trichotomy. It makes sense to assume that inaction and yielding are different categories by which one can move away and refrain from a proactive stance. Nonconfrontation will tend to take the form of no signals of agreement or disagreement whatsoever during avoidance, but of signals of agreement if one accommodates. In about the same vein Ruble and Thomas (1976) and Cosier and Ruble (1981; see also Ruble & Cosier, 1982) showed that an avoiding opponent is perceived as less friendly, soft, and fair, as well as more greedy and stubborn than an accommodating opponent. So, less agreeable avoidance and more agreeable accommodation can well be subsumed under passive nonconfrontation.

It is interesting to note that essentially the same breakdown of conflict management has been used for the description and prediction of mediator behaviours. The strategic choice model of mediation in particular (Carnevale, 1986, 1992; Van de Vliert, 1992) distinguishes between four fundamental third-party strategies designed to produce agreement between conflicting parties: inaction, compensation, integration, and pressing.

Five-part taxonomy. The taxonomy of avoiding, accommodating, compromising, problem solving, and fighting can be understood as a further conceptual refinement of the above trichotomy as follows. Active cooperation by negotiation can be broken down into settling for a compromise through a less agreeable process of give and take, and solving the problem through a more agreeable process of satisfying all parties' wishes completely (cf. Putnam & Wilson, 1989; Van de Vliert & Hordijk, 1989; Walton & McKersie, 1965). This further subdivision indeed results in the five-part typology, which has repeatedly been supported empirically (e.g. Janssen, 1994; Janssen, Euwema, & Van de Vliert, 1994; Kilmann & Thomas, 1977; Prein, 1976; Rahim, 1983b; Rahim & Magner, 1995; Van de Vliert & Prein, 1989).

Again, essentially the same breakdown of conflict handling has been used for the description and prediction of third-party behaviours. More specifically, the theory on siding in a conflict (Laskewitz, Van de Vliert, & De Dreu, 1994; Van de Vliert, 1981) proposes that outsiders pressured to show their colours choose one of the following behaviour alternatives: avoidance, compromise, conflict resolution, and taking sides by accommodating one party's wishes and fighting the other party's wishes.

Of course, five is an arbitrary rather than the "right" number of behavioural components. Notably, fighting also varies in activeness. Though fighting is never as passive as nonconfrontation through avoiding or accommodating, indirect fighting certainly is the most moderately active variant of contentious activity that contrasts with highly active moves of direct fighting.

In sum, classifications of components of conglomerated conflict behaviour can be integrated into a metataxonomy on the basis of agreeableness and activeness as linking concepts. Fig. 2.1 shows the main lines of thought. Agreeable cooperation can be first broken down into passively moving away by nonconfrontation, and actively moving toward by negotiating an agreement. These, in turn, have more specific conflict management components subsumed under them. Less agreeable avoiding and more agreeable accommodating are both subsumed under nonconfrontation. Similarly, compromising and problem solving represent subdivisions of negotiation. Disagreeable competition, equally called moving against, contending or fighting, can be broken down into moderately active indirect fighting and active direct fighting. The postulated degrees of agreeableness and activeness of the six components of conflict handling were tested in the following field experiment.

STUDY 1: OBSERVATIONAL SPECIFICATIONS

The integrated taxonomy of behavioural components in Fig. 2.1 can be translated into a considerable number of testable hypotheses. The first and most critical question, however, is whether agreeableness and activeness can indeed be used to discriminate between main components of conglomerated conflict behaviour. Hence the following hypotheses on the basis of the similarities and differences discussed above and represented in Fig. 2.1.

The main components of conglomerated conflict behaviour are less positively or more negatively related to agreeableness in the following order: (a) accommodating and problem solving; (b) avoiding and compromising; and (c) indirect and direct fighting (*Hypothesis 1*). At the same time the main components of conglomerated conflict behaviour are more positively or less negatively related to activeness in the following order: (a) avoiding and accommodating; (b) indirect fighting; and (c) compromising, problem solving, and direct fighting (*Hypothesis 2*).

The two hypotheses were put to the test by Martin Euwema and myself (Euwema, 1992; Van de Vliert & Euwema, 1994). We had neutral observers rate how police officers handled a standardised conflict with a subordinate or a superior.

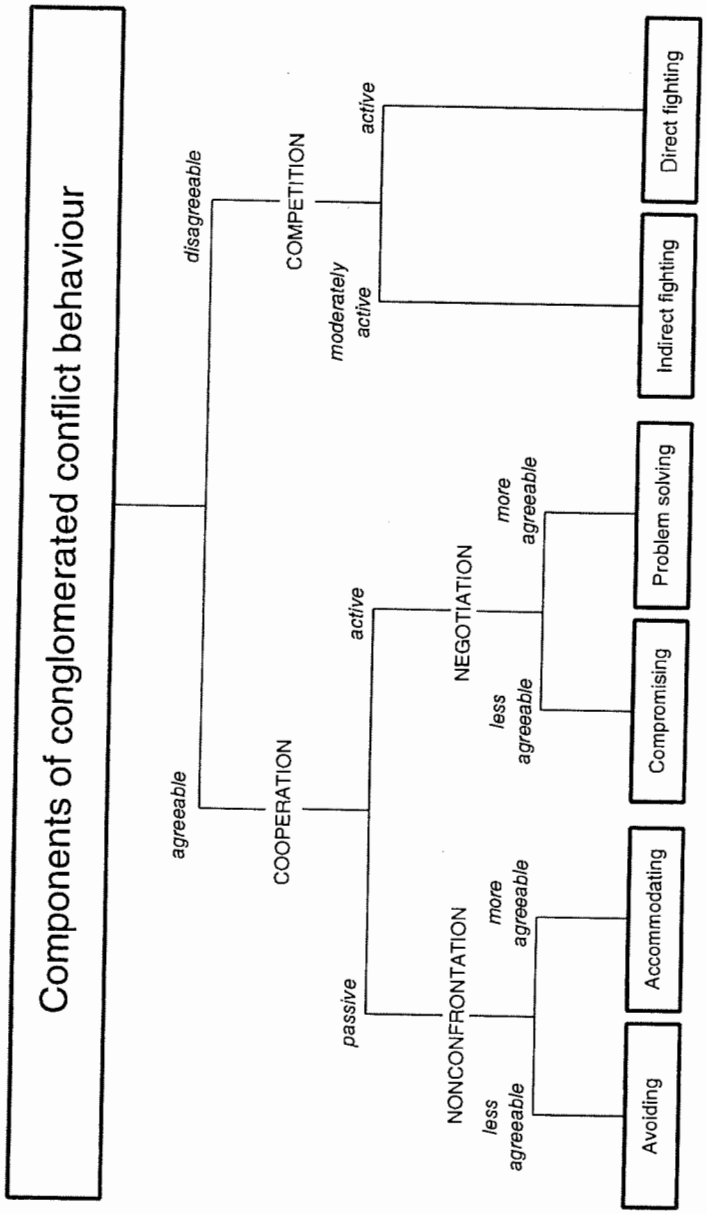


FIG. 2.1 A characterisation of components of conglomerated conflict behaviour in terms of agreeableness and activeness.

Method

Subjects. Eighty-two first-line supervisors in Dutch police organisations (hereinafter: police sergeants) were chosen as subjects because they occupy a conflict-prone position in their organisation (Kahn et al., 1964; Ritzer, 1972). The subjects were male, their age ranged from 28 to 51 (Mdn = 38 years), and their experience in the present position as supervisor ranged from less than 1 year to 10 years (Mdn = 3 years). The supervisors were randomly assigned to the condition of superior (N = 40) or subordinate (N = 42).

Conflict simulation. The police sergeants volunteered to participate in the simulation as the first part of a four-day course in conflict management. The incendiary issue was that the other person took away and used a reserved car for more than an hour without reporting this to the station sergeant responsible for all cars. Taking a car without permission was seen as a highly realistic and serious violation of the rules. All sergeants in both conditions said that they would confront the offending party (police constable or warrant officer).

Four male professional actors had been trained to start with trivialisation of the incident, to continue with discord about the underlying policy, and to end with a personal attack on the behaviour of the sergeant in this matter. Each played the role of police constable (superior condition) or warrant officer (subordinate condition) for about 15 minutes on average.

Scoring conflict behaviour. To begin with, each videotaped conflict simulation was rated twice to assess the units of analysis and the components of the sergeant's conglomerated conflict behaviour, respectively.

The subsequent stages of trivialisation, underlying policy, and personal attack were chosen as the psychologically meaningful units during which the behavioural components were described. Two women and two men independently assessed and then reached consensus about when the professional actor shifted from the first to the second and from the second to the third stage of conflict simulation.

Next, after being trained for two days, the same observers rated the use of the behavioural components mentioned in Fig. 2.1, to wit: avoiding, accommodating, compromising, problem solving, indirect fighting, and direct fighting. For each of these six components of conglomerated conflict behaviour separately, each observer independently completed a single five-point rating scale anchored by *not at all* (1) and *to a great extent* (5). This rating procedure was repeated for each of the three stages of escalation separately, after which a sergeant's average use of each of the six components of conglomerated conflict behaviour was calculated (for interobserver reliabilities and other details, see Van de Vliert & Euwema, 1994).

Scoring agreeableness and activeness. A completely independent group of two women and three men rated the videotapes once again. These judges had to apply Bales's (1950) interaction process analysis. In this observation device, six behavioural features refer to social-emotional expressions that are agreeable (show agreement, tension release, and solidarity) or disagreeable (show disagreement, tension, and antagonism). Six other features refer to the task-oriented activeness of giving information (give suggestion, opinion, and orientation) or asking for it (ask for suggestion, opinion, and orientation).

The observers independently counted the number of times the sergeant used specific actions or statements reflecting each of the 12 behavioural features. After these codings were done for each of the three stages of escalation separately, a sergeant's average scores for agreeableness, disagreeableness, activeness, and passiveness were calculated (details about the construction of these scores as well as their reliability levels can be found in Van de Vliert & Euwema, 1994).

Data analysis. In line with Fig. 2.1, the two hypotheses predict the extent to which the main components of conglomerated conflict behaviour are characterised by the features of agreeableness and activeness. The hypotheses were therefore tested by calculating (a) Pearson correlations between each of the six behavioural components and each of the four operationalisations of agreeableness and activeness, and (b) Spearman correlations between the hypothesised and the observed rank order of associations between the six behavioural components and the respective features of agreeableness, disagreeableness, passiveness, and activeness. These tests were repeated for each of the subsequent conflict stages of trivialisation, underlying policy, and personal attack, as well as for the hierarchical conditions of superior and subordinate.

Results and Discussion

Whereas Hypothesis 1 was not supported for differences in agreeableness, it could be accepted for differences in disagreeableness, regardless of the conflict stage and the relative hierarchical position. Not surprisingly, accommodating qualified as the least and direct fighting as the most disagreeable behavioural component. The complete rank order of the behavioural components in terms of their disagreeableness is as follows: accommodating, problem solving, indirect fighting, avoiding, compromising, and direct fighting. The only deviation from the picture in Fig. 2.1 lies in the position of indirect fighting as less rather than more disagreeable than avoiding and compromising. An obvious explanation for this last finding is that indirect

fighting was operationalised as controlling the process rather than undermining the opponent (cf. Euwema, 1992; Sheppard, 1984).

Likewise, whereas Hypothesis 2 was not supported for differences in passiveness, it could be accepted for differences in activeness, regardless of the conflict stage and the relative hierarchical position. Quite clearly, on a dimension of increasing activeness the behavioural components have to be ordered as follows: avoiding, accommodating, indirect fighting, direct fighting, compromising, and problem solving. It is especially interesting to note that compromising and problem solving emerge as even more active ways of responding to conflict than direct fighting.

Together, the findings imply qualified support for the integrated taxonomy in Fig. 2.1. That overarching typology is corroborated if one operationalises agreeableness in terms of unpleasantness and stressfulness, and activeness in terms of responsiveness and directness. Thus, disagreeableness and activeness may well pave the way for the integration of now-separated taxonomies of reactions to social conflicts.

The conclusion that disagreeableness discriminates between components of conflict behaviour better than agreeableness is an intriguing one. It might simply be a consequence of the fact that disagreeableness appeared to overlap activeness. More disagreeable actions might be more salient and distinctive because they are also more active actions. An alternative or supplementary explanation of the descriptive power of disagreeableness might lie in the escalating nature of the conflict. It is conceivable that agreeableness is a better descriptor in de-escalatory conflicts, whereas disagreeableness is a better descriptor in escalatory conflicts. Another reason why the extent of disagreeableness tells us so much about distinct behavioural components might be the presence of a negativity effect (e.g. Fiske, 1980; Martijn, Spears, Van der Pligt, & Jakobs, 1992; Skowronski & Carlston, 1987). In comparison with agreeableness, our judges may have overemphasised disagreeableness because it contains negative information about the police sergeant's conflict handling.

As for the limitations, our study used an all-male sample, and it was restricted to a particular simulation of a conflict in a formal organisational setting: a police sergeant having a fight with his subordinate or superior about the latter's deviant role behaviour. Disagreeable or active behaviour that might be common between men may be exceptional between man and woman or between women. Similarly, behaviour that might occur frequently between police officers within a naturally confrontational profession may be a rarity between members of other groups. Also, behaviour that might be seen as only mildly disagreeable or moderately active between equals may be seen as very disagreeable or active when displayed by a lower-status person to a higher-status person, or vice versa. Lastly, the conflict interaction was a videotaped simulation rather than a naturally

occurring event. So, all in all, replications of the study would be most welcome.

Conclusion. The behavioural components of avoiding, accommodating, compromising, problem solving, indirect fighting, and direct fighting differ from each other in terms of disagreeableness and activeness. Systematic observations of videotaped simulations by male police sergeants handling a standardised hierarchical conflict showed that the differences are in line with the integration of several taxonomies in Fig. 2.1.

PROPOSITIONS

2a. Components of conglomerated conflict behaviour can be categorised more easily as avoiding, accommodating, compromising, problem solving, and indirect or direct fighting if the actor's behavioural intention is known better (p. 30).

2b. Two kinds of compromising components exist: claim-negotiating resulting in an allocation of something nobody owns, and trade-negotiating resulting in an exchange of belongings (pp. 35–36).

2c. A component of fighting is direct to the extent that it is overt and straightforward, and fair to the extent that it follows mutually agreed-upon behavioural rules to defeat the other party (pp. 30, 32, 39–40).

2d. A fair-fighting component is different from a negotiating component in that it is based on an agreement about right and wrong behaviour, but is not directed at a further agreement in the form of a compromise or a resolution (pp. 34–35, 40).

2e. The dichotomy of cooperative and competitive components, the trichotomy of moving away–toward–against, and the typology of avoiding, accommodating, compromising, problem solving, and indirect or direct fighting, are interrelated in terms of the agreeableness and activeness of the postulated components (pp. 41–48).

CHAPTER THREE

Second Step: Descriptive Dimensions

A shop assistant who catches a small child in the act of stealing typically mixes integrative and distributive moves to handle that conflict. Predominantly integrative components of a person's salient reaction to a conflict issue are avoiding, compromising and problem solving. Predominantly distributive behavioural components are accommodating and fighting. In Chapter 2 it has been shown that these behavioural components can also be characterised in terms of agreeableness and activeness. However, agreeableness and activeness were introduced especially to integrate two-, three-, four-, and five-part taxonomies of conflict management. Other features may constitute equally or more relevant characteristics for description.

The question of which factors discriminate best between components of conflict behaviour goes beyond simple classification. To ask this question is to move from the lowest to the next level of theoretical quality, from typology to model. Whereas a typology provides us with nominally distinct behavioural descriptions, a model provides us with behavioural descriptions that are mutually related in terms of inlaying dimensions. As will be

elucidated, the grid's X-cross of diagonal dimensions discriminates best between components of conflict management.

This chapter first addresses the two generic X-cross dimensions in depth. They are viewed as very different, independent factors dealing with integrative and distributive outcome allocations. Behavioural dilemmas are also discussed. Two reports of empirical investigations to further test and advance the model follow on from there (numbered Studies 2 and 3, subsequent to Study 1 in Chapter 2). Study 2 tested whether the model is the backbone of measuring instruments because their measurements reflect the interrelations among the conflict management components as predicted by the X-cross. Study 3 was concerned with the generalisability of these descriptive dimensions of integration and distribution across a variety of behavioural components.

X-CROSS MODEL

Given a two-dimensional space of components of conflict behaviour such as the one represented in the grid in Fig. 1.1, what dimensions best describe the salient behavioural locations in this space? Theories and methods of factor analysis and multidimensional scaling suggest two criteria. First, the two dimensions should especially capture the smallest and largest distances between the behavioural components to be described. Second, the two dimensions should capture totally different subsets of the smallest and largest distances between the behavioural components to be described. That is, the two dimensions should be independent, or at least as close to orthogonality as possible.

The conflict management grid was designed as a two-dimensional space in the form of a square with a centre. The smallest distances are between the middle point and the four corners. The largest distances are between the two pairs of opposite corners. Hence the requisite of smallest and largest distances points to the diagonals as the most appropriate descriptors of behavioural locations in the grid. The diagonals, forming an X-cross, also meet the criterion of independence. So, the grid's diagonal dimensions rather than the dimensions of the grid's sides describe the components of conflict behaviour best (cf. proposition 1.e).

In Figs 1.1 and 1.2 the X-cross dimensions run from avoiding at the bottom left hand to problem solving at the top right hand, and from accommodating at the top left hand to fighting at the bottom right hand. According to Thomas (1976, 1992b), this X-cross indicates that an integrative and a distributive way of allocating benefits and costs to the parties can be taken. His point of view is discussed further to see what conflict management is all about. The integrative and distributive dimensions are

portrayed as basic features of any component of conflict handling, which are unequal and mutually independent.

Integrative and Distributive Dimension

Irrespective of what others expect to achieve, each conflicting individual can anticipate positive or negative outcomes for him- or herself on the one hand, and positive or negative outcomes for the opponent on the other. By implication, one can treat oneself and the other party equally or differentially. Again relying on the conflict management grid in Fig. 1.1, equal treatment or integration, and differential treatment or distribution will now be set alongside each other.

Integrative dimension. The 1,1–2,2–3,3–4,4–5,5–6,6–7,7–8,8–9,9 or integrative dimension represents the extent to which a conflicting party minimises or maximises outcomes for the conflicting parties together. In other words, the size of a joint pie is at stake. The variable sum of the pie ranges from sum 2 to 18. In this range the total absence of integrative activity (0,0) is omitted because it can only occur when there is no conflict at all. The anticipated result is a less or more satisfying agreement in which both parties are treated equally. This 1,1–9,9 scale has been labelled variously as cooperation (Deutsch, 1949, 1973), integrative dimension (Thomas, 1976, 1992b), relationship dimension (Hocker & Wilmot, 1985), and the principle of creating value for all (Lax & Sebenius, 1986). The adjective "integrative" is used here as it is a widely accepted term.

Distributive dimension. The 1,9–2,8–3,7–4,6–5,5–6,4–7,3–8,2–9,1 or distributive dimension (Thomas, 1976, 1992b) represents the extent to which the conflicting party minimises or maximises its relative gain or loss of outcomes vis-à-vis the other party. The size of each party's proportion of a fixed pie is at stake. That is, wholly or partly, the prospective end state is one of a loser and a winner, or of an equal split. Note that the constant sum is 10, and that the 100% winner versus 100% loser divisions are omitted because total defeat and total victory are inconceivable. This second diagonal of the conflict management grid is also known as competition (Deutsch, 1949, 1973), zero-sum dimension (Bacharach & Lawler, 1981; Zartman, 1976), and the principle of claiming value for each (Lax & Sebenius, 1986).

Unequal Diagonals

A more systematic exploration of the nature of integrative and distributive components reveals several differences. Integrative behaviour refers to a unipolar dimension of anticipated variable-sum outcomes that portrays

compromising as suboptimal for the conflicting parties. In contrast, distributive behaviour refers to a bipolar dimension of anticipated constant-sum outcomes that portrays compromising as optimal for both parties together. Those differences between the arms of the X-cross will now be elaborated to build a common platform between the hitherto divergent literature on general conflict management and negotiation. The 5,5 component of compromising gets special attention because the differences between the two dimensions are most clearly expressed at their 5,5 intersection.

Unipolar versus bipolar dimensions. First of all, the integrative dimension is a unipolar scale ranging in only one direction, from 1,1 to 9,9. As a consequence, avoiding must be associated with the absence rather than with the opposite of problem solving; it is not the active sabotage of problem solving. The distributive dimension, on the other hand, is a bipolar scale ranging in two directions, from 5,5 to 1,9 and from 5,5 to 9,1. Therefore accommodating must be associated with the presence of anti-fighting rather than with the absence of fighting, and vice versa.

Variable-sum versus constant-sum dimensions. As for the anticipated benefits and costs, the integrative 1,1 $\rightarrow$ 9,9 dimension refers to variable-sum outcomes for the two conflicting parties, hypothetically ranging from 2 to 18. The distributive 1,9 $\longleftrightarrow$ 9,1 dimension, on the other hand, refers to anticipated constant-sum outcomes for the parties involved, hypothetically set at 10. Since some conflict issues are bound up with variable-sum outcomes, whereas other issues are confined to constant-sum outcomes, the suitability of each descriptive dimension also depends on the subject matter of the discord.

The chameleonic identity of compromising. The above differences are most salient at the 5,5 intersection of the two dimensions. Take, for example, two politicians who use the 5,5 option of compromising in addition to other reactions to a policy matter. The unipolar integrative dimension frames that component of compromising as a mixture of avoiding and problem solving. The bipolar distributive dimension, on the other hand, frames precisely the same behaviour of compromising as a point of balance between accommodating and fighting. The position of 5,5 between avoiding (1,1) and problem solving (9,9) is clear, but the distributive framework of 5,5 is indistinct. The midpoint between 1,9 and 9,1 could stand for neither accommodating nor fighting, a mixture of both accommodating and fighting (simultaneous conglomeration), or an alternation of accommodating and fighting (sequential conglomeration).

Compromising might even represent an overall conglomeration of avoiding, accommodating, compromising, problem solving, and fighting. Blake and Mouton (1964, pp. 221–222) described this mammoth conglomeration as a "mixed grid theory": "The 'statistical' 5,5 manager employs all five styles in his daily supervision.... In other words, the 'statistical' 5,5 manager operates all over the grid. His managerial styles average out to 5,5." Such an alternative interpretation of compromising does justice to the fact that compromising exhibits a mutable character and fits wonderfully well into both more integrative and more distributive environments. Compromising has a chameleonic identity. The same ultimate compromise may result from quite different behavioural configurations. Some scholars, probably misled by this variety of appearances, see no need to postulate a mode of compromising. Others thinly portray compromising as satisficing; still others colourfully paint it as optimising.

Suboptimal versus optimal compromising. Compromising is viewed as the realisation of a halfway resolution of conflict about a variable-sum issue if one wants an agreement and focuses on the integrative dimension (e.g. Pruitt, 1983). Seen like this, the opponents are settling on a satisfactory alternative that meets or exceeds their ultimate fall-back positions rather than an alternative that they prefer to all other agreements. To paraphrase March and Simon (1958, p. 141), compromising is like searching a haystack to find a needle sharp enough to sew with, rather than searching the haystack to find the sharpest needle in it.

In contrast, compromising is viewed as the realisation of an attractive equilibrium between winning and losing a conflict about a constant-sum issue if one wants an agreement and focuses on the distributive dimension (e.g. Lewicki & Litterer, 1985). In negotiations about really scarce means such as money or manpower, compromising can achieve such a positive identity between the more negative anchor points of stalemate and surrender. The same holds true when people, due to a so-called fixed pie bias, erroneously expect the counterpart's interests to be opposed to their own (Bazerman & Neale, 1983; Neale & Bazerman, 1991; Thompson & Hastie, 1990).

It is no coincidence, of course, that the intersection of compromising provides most information about the main directions of conflict handling. On the same route from 1,1 via 5,5 to 9,9 the intersection will be perceived as a point on the road rather than the destination: compromising will be seen as suboptimal. However, on the different routes from 1,9 to 5,5 and from 5,5 to 9,1 the crossing of 5,5 will mark an end and a new beginning at the same time. Within the latter, distributive framework, the fifty–fifty split may be adopted more easily as the destination rather than just a point along the road, thus experiencing compromising as optimal. As a case in point, Loewenstein, Thompson, and Bazerman (1989) showed that in a dispute context most disputants prefer equal pay-offs to either advantageous

or disadvantageous inequality (see also De Dreu, Emans, & Van de Vliert, 1991; Messick & Sentis, 1985).

Ample evidence exists that scientists conceptualise compromising on different dimensions of the X-cross. The fact that some authors view compromising as less socially desirable than problem solving attests to the use of the integrative 1,1–5,5–9,9 frame (e.g. Kilmann & Thomas, 1977; Prein, 1976; Rahim, 1983b). On the other hand, the 1,9–5,5–9,1 dimensional view is adopted by scholars who consider the fifty–fifty settlement fairer than less equal distributions of outcomes or concessions (Deutsch, 1985; Pruitt, 1981). Against this background, the different manifestations and effects of the above conglomerations of compromising could become a rich research topic in itself.

Mutually Independent Diagonals

The grid conceptualises the integrative and distributive dimensions as principal axes with an orthogonal interrelationship. That is, manifestations of integration and distribution are seen as two independent factors. Consequently, various degrees of integrative treatment and various degrees of distributive treatment may or may not occur simultaneously (cf. Bartos, 1995; Donohue & Roberto, 1996; Lewicki, Weiss, & Lewin, 1992; Putnam, 1990; Raiffa, 1982; Thomas, 1992b). However, some scholars, in some of their papers, tend to view integrative and distributive conflict behaviour as the two poles of one and the same dimension rather than two separate dimensions. I am not thinking of Deutsch (1949, 1973) and Schelling (1960), who conceptualise integration and distribution as antecedents rather than manifestations of conflict behaviour. Instead, as will now be discussed, I am primarily thinking of Walton and McKersie (1965), Pruitt (1981), and Lax and Sebenius (1986), who tend to conceptualise integration and distribution as opposite poles of a behavioural dimension.

Hints in the direction of uni-dimensionality. Walton and McKersie (1965), who did not relate their concepts of integration and distribution to the grid, were the very first to disseminate implicit suggestions of bipolarity. They described *integrative bargaining* as a system of activities directed at problem solving, and *distributive bargaining* as a system of activities primarily concerned with one's own gains and losses as a function of the adversary's gains and losses. The implementing techniques for these classes of conflict behaviours were supposed to stand in an antithetical relationship: "While the integrative and distributive processes are related and are sometimes difficult to separate ... the techniques for fostering the integrative process are generally the reverse of the techniques for implementing the distributive process" (Walton & McKersie, 1965, p. 144).

They later discussed mixed integrative and distributive bargaining as a choice between mutually exclusive allocative behaviours: "the alternate strategies ... are an integrative, increasing-sum strategy (I) and a distributive strategy (D), which treats the situation as a fixed-sum issue." (Walton & McKersie, 1965, p. 163). "Parties engage in mixed bargaining in order to achieve the most from each of the two processes. Generally speaking, the tactics appropriate for pure distributive bargaining conflict with those appropriate for pure integrative bargaining." (Walton & McKersie, 1965, p. 182). Apparently, these authors tended to assume a negative interrelationship rather than a relationship of coexistence of integrative and distributive conflict handling at one point in time (cf. Bartos, 1995; Donohue & Roberto, 1996; Putnam, 1990; Tracy & Peterson, 1986).

Pruitt (1981, p. 15) followed Walton and McKersie. He used the terms coordinative and competitive strategies to refer to integrative and distributive behaviour, respectively, and stated that they "can be combined, but [that] this does not ordinarily happen because of various psychological and practical contradictions among the strategies." As a consequence, Pruitt employed the following two principles throughout his monograph: (a) the choice of integrative behaviour makes the choice of distributive behaviour less likely, and vice versa, and (b) conditions that enhance/diminish the probability of adopting integrative behaviour diminish/enhance the probability of adopting distributive behaviour, and vice versa. Apparently, Pruitt also tended to assume a negative rather than a neutral relationship between integrative and distributive conflict management.

Similarly, throughout their book on negotiation, Lax and Sebenius (1986) set creating value against claiming value. Integratively *creating value* was described as: being open; sharing information about preferences and beliefs; and being honest about minimum requirements. The opposite, distributively *claiming value*, was described as: being cagey and misleading about preferences, beliefs, and minimum requirements; making commitments; and using threats. In addition, the stand was taken that value creating and value claiming are not independent reactions: "In tactical choices, each negotiator thus has reasons not to be open and cooperative. Each also has apparent incentives to try to claim value. Moves to claim value thus tend to drive out moves to create it." (Lax & Sebenius, 1986, p. 35).

Implicit assumptions of bipolarity are embedded in the fabric of Western scientific thinking (Bobko, 1985). It is either flight or fight, either cooperate or compete, either 1,9 or 9,1 distributive behaviour. And if the authors in the last paragraphs are right, handling conflict is choosing either integrative or distributive enactments. The transformation of such assumptions of bipolarity into a two-dimensional perspective can enhance both the quality of behavioural descriptions and the progress of theory construction. Seen like this, the X-cross has to be preferred to a simpler image of

opposition between integrative and distributive components of conflict management.

Two-dimensionality. If the diagonals do indeed represent independent higher-order constructs, these concepts can be used well to describe acts of conflict management. That is, each component of conflict handling is identifiable by means of its degrees of integration and distribution. Consider the examples in the X-cross space of components of conflict behaviour in Fig. 3.1. Nonconfrontation (1,4) and hard consolidation (4,1) are hardly integrative, whereas soft negotiation (6,9) and hard negotiation (9,6) are predominantly integrative. At the same time, nonconfrontation and soft negotiation are distributive in favour of the other party, whereas hard consolidation and hard negotiation are distributive in favour of oneself.

Though a behavioural component's degrees of integration and distribution are distinguishable, they are not separable. A component of handling conflict is a unique and unsplittable phenomenon. To put it metaphorically once more, if the X-cross does reflect reality, any component of conflict behaviour can be thought of as having an integrative and a distributive arm. Even extreme forms of accommodating (1,9) and fighting (9,1) have a very small amount of integrative content indicated as "1." Even extreme forms of avoiding (1,1) and problem solving (9,9) reflect distribution in the form of an equal split.

As a consequence, each component of conflict behaviour is conceptually related to each other component of conflict behaviour in terms of the common factors of integration and distribution. The X-cross is thus a model not only for describing but also for interrelating components of conflict handling. The inlaying integrative and distributive dimensions structure the abundance of acts into a system of interrelated, though distinct, behavioural components. Two components of conflict behaviour are conceptually distant if they have a contradictory integrative and distributive content (e.g. problem solving and direct fighting). Conversely, two components of conflict behaviour are conceptually close if they have a compatible integrative and distributive content (e.g. compromising and problem solving)

Behavioural Dilemmas

The integrative and distributive dimensions make very relevant contributions to the field of complex social behaviour. Not only do they represent statements full of insight on components of conflict handling as being directed at the minimisation or maximisation of outcomes for oneself and for one or more others. They also highlight the fact that a conflicting party faces an approach-avoidance choice between integrative and distributive

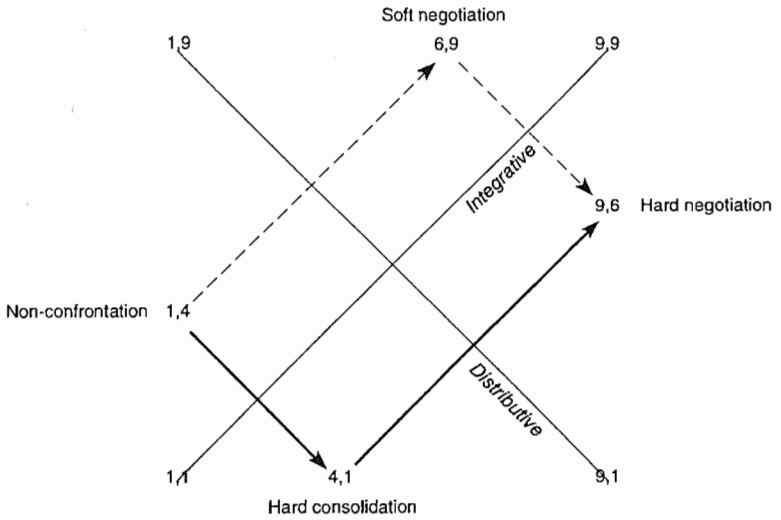


FIG. 3.1 Locations of non-confrontation, soft negotiation, hard consolidation, and hard negotiation in the X-cross space of components of conglomerated conflict behaviour, and two routes from 1,4 non-confrontation to 9,6 hard negotiation.

behavioural alternatives. This dilemma presents itself in two shapes: regardless of and with regard to the subsequent reaction of the opponent. These two manifestations of essentially the same dubiety are discussed here as the intrapersonal and the interpersonal behavioural dilemma.

Intrapersonal behavioural dilemma. By its very nature, managing social conflict is the facing of choices between either joint pie or fixed pie definitions of the situation, and between either equal or differential treatment of oneself and the opponent. Each option is attractive for some reasons and unattractive for others. For example, integrating may produce a better relationship but worse commodity outcomes than fighting. In Lax and Sebenius's (1986, p. 30) words: "There is a central, inescapable tension between cooperative moves to create value jointly and competitive moves to gain individual advantage. This tension affects virtually all tactical and strategic choice ... Neither denial nor discomfort will make it disappear."

So, in the terminology of the current chapter, there is an inescapable dilemma between the integrative and the distributive content of conflict behaviour. Taking integrative action may build mutual trust but runs the

risk of undermining one's position and competitive advantage. Or, as Pruitt (1981, p. 92) would put it: integrative moves are risky because they entail the possibility of four kinds of loss—image loss, position loss, information loss, and loss of opportunity for distributive behaviour. Taking distributive action, on the other hand, may result in competitive advantage but runs the risk of undermining potential agreements and a good mutual relationship in the future.

An inescapable behavioural dilemma is not necessarily an insoluble dilemma. The two horns of equal versus differential treatment of oneself and the other may exhibit an apparently contradictory nature. Indeed, if integrative and distributive reactions are mutually independent dimensions, as stated above, the intrapersonal dilemma constitutes a paradox. The contradiction evaporates like snow in summer as soon as a party adopts a perspective wherein low–low and high–high combinations of integration and distribution are possible. Putnam (1990) reviewed that perspective as "the interdependence model of integrative and distributive bargaining." Quite correctly, I think, she concluded that negotiating tactics represent a unique paradoxical role by contributing to both integrative and distributive functions simultaneously. In my own words: the intrapersonal behavioural dilemma is overcome by the simultaneous conglomeration of more and less integrative and distributive components of conflict behaviour. The grid's X-cross represents that paradoxical role of negotiations in an elegant way. The X-cross model even implies that Putnam's conclusion is not restricted to negotiations. All conflict behaviours serve integrative as well as distributive functions.

Interpersonal behavioural dilemma. Self-evidently, the opponent has an important part to play in the process of shaping a party's reactions to the conflict. Usually the opponent's past actions and future reactions both have an impact on a person's present integrative and distributive initiatives. However, the experience of the dilemma is especially elicited by uncertainty about the opponent's future reactions. The following considerations and illustration may clarify this.

Whereas moving in the direction of an anticipated outcome allocation is solely in the hands of each individual actor, actually realising that outcome allocation needs an appropriate response from the opponent. Specifically, one cannot successfully avoid, compromise, or solve the problem if the other party does not avoid, compromise, or solve the problem as well. In other words, realisation of *variable-sum outcomes* on the integrative dimension needs *behavioural symmetry* on the part of the opponent. Similarly, one cannot successfully accommodate if the other party does not want to win, and one cannot successfully fight either if the other party does not want to lose (unless the opponent is eliminated once and for all).

So, realisation of *constant-sum outcomes* on the distributive dimension needs *behavioural complementarity* on the part of the opponent.

There is much empirical support for those behavioural regularities. For example, Weingart et al. (1990) showed that highly efficient dyads differed from less efficient dyads in their reciprocation of integrative behaviours and complementarity of distributive behaviours (see also Kabanoff & Van de Vliert, 1993; Nauta, 1996; Putnam & Jones, 1982). Likewise, Leng (1993) convincingly demonstrated that national leaders who effectively managed a militarised interstate crisis realised better joint outcomes by acting symmetrically on the integrative dimension. In contrast, when the parties' interests and military capabilities were skewed, the crisis managers tended to act complementarily on the distributive dimension by creating a winner and a loser.

These different forms of behavioural interdependency make it important to note next that the opponent's reaction is never completely beyond doubt. There are always possibilities that the other party does not react symmetrically on the integrative dimension and complementarily on the distributive dimension. As a consequence one can be, and often is, in two minds about the opponent's response to one's own integrative and distributive actions. This uncertainty about the occurrence of the adversary's necessary reaction lies at the root of the interpersonal behavioural dilemma (for an analogous dubiety, see the Box "The Prisoner's Dilemma in the Grid").

The dilemma can be illustrated by reproducing the possible thoughts of someone who is facing a choice between maximum integration to everybody's advantage and maximum distribution to one's own advantage: "If I share information and help create a solution, and he does the same, I shall be better off than if I fight him until I win. In particular, we will get along better after reaching a satisfactory agreement than after my victory. However, if I open up and try to resolve our problem, whereas he appears to fight to the finish, I will be worse off than if I fight back. He will most probably take undue advantage of my confessions, concessions, and constructive proposals." This difficult choice between integrative and distributive moves is overcome, as indicated above, by blending more and less integrative and distributive moves into a conglomeration of components of conflict management. One may use more integrative and more distributive components at the same time (simultaneous aggregation) or in succession (sequential conglomeration).

Alternation as a way out. One may adopt an integrative stance without permanently giving up a distributive stance, or the other way round. This change from a predominantly integrative to a predominantly distributive phase, or vice versa, is worked out in stage models of spontaneous escalation (e.g. Folger & Poole, 1984; Glasl, 1980) and strategic negotiation

The Prisoner's Dilemma in the Grid

The conflict management grid's spatial structure of allocating benefits and costs is basically the same as that of the typical 2 x 2 outcome matrix used in the well-known prisoner's dilemma game (e.g. Axelrod, 1984; Deutsch, 1973; Kelley & Thibaut, 1978; Pruitt & Kimmel, 1977). In this game each player can make either a competitive choice with a relatively low or high pay-off, or a cooperative choice with a relatively low or high pay-off, whereby the pay-off always depends on the opponent's competitive or cooperative choice. If both players choose to compete, both will lose (e.g. both get only 1), but if both players make a cooperative choice, both will win (e.g. both get 9). This first pair of opposite cells in the outcome matrix closely corresponds to the integrative grid corners of avoiding (1,1) and problem solving (9,9). If the players of the prisoner's dilemma game make different behavioural choices, the competitor will win while the cooperator will lose (e.g. they get 9 versus 1). This second pair of opposite cells in the outcome matrix closely corresponds to the distributive grid corners of accommodating (1,9) and fighting (9,1).

(e.g. Donohue & Roberto, 1996; Douglas, 1962; Gulliver, 1979; Morley & Stephenson, 1977; Putnam, 1990). Escalative processes typically proceed down the integrative dimension, from 9,9 problem solving towards 1,1 avoiding, and/or across the distributive dimension, from 1,9 accommodating towards 9,1 fighting. In contrast, processes of de-escalative negotiation typically progress up the integrative dimension and/or towards the middle of the distributive dimension.

All such alterations of conflict management are transitions from one location to another in the two-dimensional X-cross space of conflict behaviours. A salient route is to change the magnitude of the integrative content first, followed by changing the magnitude of the distributive content (e.g. from 1,4 nonconfrontation via 6,9 soft negotiation to 9,6 hard negotiation; see Fig. 3.1). A salient alternative route is to change the magnitude of the distributive content first, followed by changing the magnitude of the integrative content (e.g. from 1,4 nonconfrontation via 4,1 hard consolidation to 9,6 hard negotiation; see Fig. 3.1). Many other routes are possible, not only from 1,4 to 9,6, but from any location in the behavioural space to any other. Indeed, the principle of equifinality applies, as one can attain the same location proceeding from initially different locations, passing a variety of still other locations. There are always various behavioural sequences that can overcome the dilemma between integrative and distributive reactions.

Overall recapitulation. The X-cross of the diagonals of the conflict management grid can be conceptualised as consisting of an integrative and a distributive dimension. The unipolar integrative dimension represents variations in anticipated variable-sum outcomes and portrays compromising as suboptimal for the conflicting parties. Effectuation of integration requires behavioural symmetry on the part of the opponent with both parties avoiding or negotiating. In contrast, the bipolar distributive dimension represents variations in anticipated constant-sum outcomes and portrays compromising as optimal for the conflicting parties together. Effectuation of distribution requires behavioural complementarity on the part of the opponent with one party accommodating and the other party fighting.

Though the X-cross dimensions are mutually independent, they elicit intra- and interpersonal dilemmas between either equal or differential treatment of oneself and the opponent. The behavioural dilemmas are handled by adopting conglomerated conflict behaviour; that is, by blending, and sometimes also alternating, behavioural components consisting of predominantly integrative and distributive moves. Therefore the X-cross makes an elegant model for describing and interrelating components of conflict behaviour in terms of the magnitude of their integrative and distributive content.

STUDY 2: DIMENSIONS INLAYING MEASURES

If components of conflict behaviour are indeed pre-eminently interrelated in terms of an integrative and a distributive dimension, measures of conflict behaviours should contain this information. Specifically, any questionnaire instrument designed to assess avoiding, accommodating, compromising, problem solving, and fighting should be characterised by inlaying factors of integration and distribution. Moreover, across instruments, different sets of 10 empirical correlations among the five subscales of conflict management should have much in common because they share the same higher-order constructs of integration and distribution. In operational terms, all instruments' sets of 10 correlations among the five subscales of conflict handling should reflect the modes' conceptual distances specified by the two independent factors.

Larger conceptual distances between components of conflict behaviour in the two-dimensional space should produce lower positive (or higher negative) values of correlations. Thus, the X-cross model can be broken down into three main hypotheses. *Hypothesis 1* primarily refers to the integrative dimension: avoiding is less positively related to problem solving than both avoiding and problem solving are related to accommodating and

fighting. *Hypothesis 2* primarily refers to the distributive dimension: accommodating is less positively related to fighting than both accommodating and fighting are related to avoiding and problem solving. The next, twofold, hypothesis refers primarily to the intersection of compromising. *Hypothesis 3a*: avoiding is less positively related to problem solving than both avoiding and problem solving are related to compromising. *Hypothesis 3b*: accommodating is less positively related to fighting than both accommodating and fighting are related to compromising.

Method

Measures. Self-report sets of the 10 correlations among the five subscales of avoiding, accommodating, compromising, problem solving, and fighting have been used to test the above hypotheses. Single-item assessments of the five modes of conflict handling (Baron, 1984, 1989; Blake & Mouton, 1964; Renwick, 1975a, 1975b, 1977; Van de Vliert & Hordijk, 1989) were left aside because there is insufficient guarantee that they can be considered adequate. Also excluded were instruments that do not provide separate scores for avoiding and accommodating, or for compromising and problem solving (Lawrence & Lorsch, 1967; Ross & DeWine, 1988). These restrictions left the following questionnaire measures for further consideration: Conflict Management Survey (CMS), Management Of Differences Exercise (MODE), Organisational Communication Conflict Instrument (OCCI), Rahim's Organisational Conflict Inventory (ROCI), and Dutch Test of Conflict Handling (DUTCH). These instruments were briefly reviewed in the Box "Self-Assessments Based on the Five-Part Typology" in Chapter 2.

Re-analysis. A secondary analysis of the sets of correlations was carried out. It involved four steps. The first was the selection of 12 studies that gathered data through CMS, MODE, OCCI, ROCI, or DUTCH. Second, sets of the 10 correlations among the five types of conflict behaviour were formed for each instrument. Third, the hypotheses were tested through systematic comparisons of correlation coefficients. Though the tests were done for the 12 studies together, special attention was paid to differences between the five measuring instruments.

By way of illustration, and to explore the mutual independence of the integrative and distributive dimension, some research results were visually represented in a fourth and final step. Using the nonmetric distance-scaling programme MINISSA designed by Lingoes and Roskam (1973), a set of 10 correlations was reproduced spatially by portraying each mode's subscale of conflict handling as a point in a plane. The purpose of the MINISSA procedure is to find a configuration of points whose Euclidian

output distances reflect the rank order of the input dissimilarities as closely as possible. A stress index ranging between 0 (perfect fit) and 1 (no fit) indicates how well a one-dimensional, a two-dimensional, or a multidimensional picture represents the configuration of associations within the data.

Results and Discussion

How the first operations were effected is accounted for in the Box "Data on Five Instruments." It concerned the selection of empirical data and the reduction into one set of 10 intercorrelations for each of the instruments.

Tests of hypotheses. In point of fact, Hypothesis 1 predicted that the correlation coefficients between avoiding and problem solving (third column in the Box "Data on Five Instruments") have a less positive or more negative value than the correlation coefficients between avoiding and accommodating (first column), avoiding and fighting (fourth column), accommodating and problem solving (sixth column), and problem solving and fighting (last column). Indeed, 43 of those 48 paired comparisons were in the predicted direction ($z = 5.34$, $p \leq .001$); Hypothesis 1 held for CMS, ROCI, and DUTCH, in particular. Similarly, in support of Hypothesis 2, accommodating and fighting were less positively or more negatively related to each other than each of them was related to avoiding and problem solving (first, fourth, sixth, seventh, and last column). Forty-two of the 48 paired comparisons were in the predicted direction ($z = 5.05$, $p \leq .001$), notably due to CMS, MODE, and OCCI.

The third hypothesis sets column 3 alongside columns 2 and 8 (Hypothesis 3a) and column 7 alongside columns 5 and 9 (Hypothesis 3b). Again, both parts of the hypothesis were supported. Avoiding and problem solving did have less in common than each of them had in common with compromising (24 paired comparisons, 22 correct predictions; $z = 3.88$, $p \leq .001$), and accommodating and fighting did have less in common than each of them had in common with compromising (24 paired comparisons, 21 correct predictions; $z = 3.47$, $p \leq .001$). Clearly, compromising had a position between avoiding and problem solving and between accommodating and fighting, most perfectly in CMS and DUTCH. Compromising is a mixed behavioural component indeed, which can be conceptualised as integrative, distributive, or both.

The fact that all hypotheses could be accepted is rather convincing evidence for the soundness of the descriptive X-cross model. Apparently, very different data sets on conflict behaviour are characterised by an integrative dimension ranging from avoiding to problem solving, a distributive dimension ranging from accommodating to fighting, and a location of compromising between the poles of both dimensions.

Data on Five Instruments

Data were gathered regarding each of the instruments reviewed in the Box "Self-Assessments Based on the Five-Part Typology" in Chapter 2 (CMS, MODE, OCCI, ROCI, DUTCH). The data consisted of correlations between the five modes of conflict behaviour. Eleven sets of correlations, which were published or placed at my disposal, satisfied two requirements for inclusion in a secondary analysis.

The 11 sets of correlations used different samples of respondents; that is, parallel studies and retest studies were discarded. Furthermore, to guarantee comparability of the results for different instruments, they assessed how managers or other organisation members handle conflict at work. A 12th study, using only students as respondents, was included to add a second set of CMS correlations for reasons of reliability. The nature and sources of the sets of correlations between conflict behaviours will now be listed in the order in which the measuring instruments are mentioned above:

1. *CMS*: 59 board of education members (Nichols, 1984).
2. *CMS*: 86 graduate students (Kilmann & Thomas, 1977).
3. *MODE*: 96 managers from a law enforcement agency (Kravitz, 1987).
4. *MODE*: 158 deans of baccalaureate programmes in nursing (Woodtli, 1982).
5. *MODE*: 140 first-line supervisors in a large retail store chain (O'Reilly & Weitz, 1980).
6. *MODE*: 199 project managers working in a matrix organisation or two-boss system (Mills, Robey, & Smith, 1985).
7. *OCCI*: 217 members from a newspaper company, an insurance firm, and a metropolitan bank, as well as 143 students (Putnam & Wilson, 1982).
8. *ROCI*: 1219 managers from a national random sample (Rahim, 1983a).
9. *DUTCH*: 128 police-sergeants in the role of subordinate (Euwema & Van de Vliert, 1990).
10. *DUTCH*: 135 police-sergeants in the role of superior (Euwema & Van de Vliert, 1990).
11. *DUTCH*: 239 head-nurses in the role of subordinate (Euwema & Van de Vliert, 1994b).
12. *DUTCH*: 215 head-nurses in the role of superior (Euwema & Van de Vliert, 1994a).

The details of the 12 sets of 10 correlations between avoiding (*1,1*), accommodating (*1,9*), compromising (*5,5*), problem solving (*9,9*), and fighting (*9,1*) are as follows:

Pair of modes	1,1 1,9	1,1 5,5	1,1 9,9	1,1 9,1	1,9 5,5	1,9 9,9	1,9 9,1	5,5 9,9	5,5 9,1	9,9 9,1
1. *CMS*	.52	−.03	−.73	−.54	.38	−.47	−.79	.03	−.61	.31
2. *CMS*	.32	.05	−.17	−.01	.22	.03	−.26	.33	.12	−.07
Mean	**.43**	**.01**	**−.50**	**−.30**	**.30**	**−.24**	**−.58**	**.18**	**−.29**	**.12**
3. *MODE*	.11	−.13	−.35	−.48	−.17	−.28	−.34	−.31	−.41	−.06
4. *MODE*	.19	−.21	−.09	−.22	−.12	−.11	−.29	−.09	−.14	−.02
5. *MODE*	.17	−.20	−.36	−.47	−.15	−.25	−.53	−.34	−.27	.00
6. *MODE*	.05	−.35	−.41	−.24	−.09	−.38	−.53	−.03	−.28	−.12
Mean	**.13**	**−.22**	**−.31**	**−.36**	**−.13**	**−.26**	**−.43**	**−.20**	**−.28**	**−.05**
7. ***OCCI***	**.26**	**.18**	**.12**	**−.11**	**.43**	**.36**	**−.27**	**.53**	**−.28**	**−.22**
8. ***ROCI***	**.33**	**.16**	**−.08**	**.01**	**.26**	**.14**	**.11**	**.23**	**.07**	**−.04**
9. *DUTCH*	.56	−.05	−.58	−.38	.15	−.22	−.30	.42	.02	.16
10. *DUTCH*	.60	−.39	−.78	−.41	−.16	−.49	−.48	.57	.27	.37
11. *DUTCH*	.64	−.01	−.45	−.16	.10	−.24	−.19	.25	.03	.00
12. *DUTCH*	.61	.05	−.25	−.05	.20	−.16	−.24	.35	−.20	.10
Mean	**.60**	**−.11**	**−.55**	**−.26**	**.07**	**−.28**	**−.31**	**.40**	**.03**	**.16**

The CMS sets 1 and 2 correlate .68 ($p \leq .02$), which justifies their combination into a mean set. Therefore, using Fisher's r to Z transformation, a mean CMS measure was computed and reproduced in bold type. The same procedure was followed for the four MODE measures with mutual correlations ranging from .56 to .91 ($M = .75$, $p \leq .01$), and for the four DUTCH measures with mutual correlations ranging from .74 to .94 ($M = .88$, $p \leq .01$). This results in one set of 10 correlations for each of the five instruments.

Explorations. The only questionnaire that supported all three hypotheses was CMS. To gain a better insight into this "ideal" instrument, it was visually reproduced through the multidimensional scaling technique MINISSA. The one-dimensional representation of the CMS set of 10 conflict behaviour correlations did not fit the data satisfactorily (stress .10, n.s.). However, a two-dimensional representation of the interrelations between avoiding, accommodating, compromising, problem solving, and fighting had a perfect fit because all variance could be predicted (stress $\leq .001$, $p \leq .001$; for acceptability of MINISSA solutions, see Wagenaar & Padmos, 1971). To facilitate comparison of this two-dimensional CMS configuration to the X-cross model, the two largest distances in Fig. 3.2

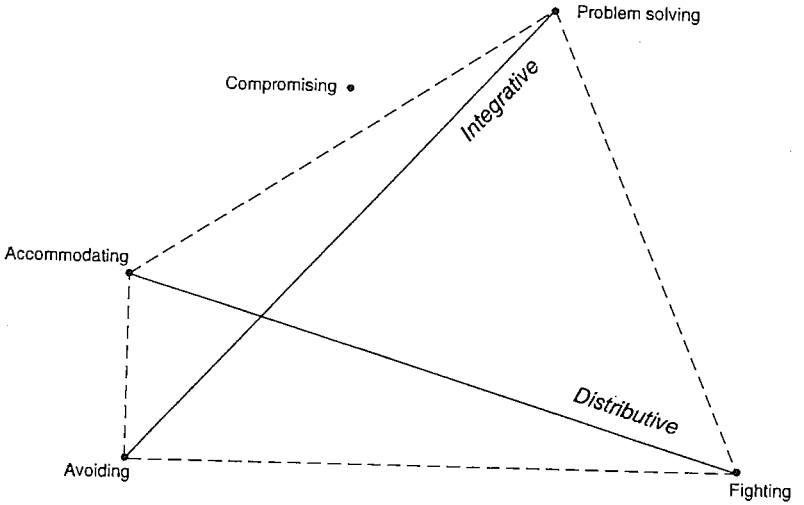


FIG. 3.2 The X-cross space of an integrative and a distributive dimension in Hall's Conflict Management Survey.

were accentuated by drawing them as the diagonals of a quadrangle. The quadrangle was then rotated until the axis of "avoiding–fighting" was in a horizontal position at the bottom of Fig. 3.2. Finally, the diagonals were labelled *integrative* and *distributive*.

Although the empirical data of the CMS appeared to produce an X-cross, compromising did not figure as the midpoint of conflict behaviours, located at the intersection of the integrative and distributive dimension. Relying on Fig. 3.2, compromising is both a strongly integrative and a strongly accommodation-directed distributive component of conflict behaviour. Other researchers have also reported that compromising refers to the realisation of mutual agreement rather than to less cooperative and less constructive reactions such as withdrawal and aggressive competition (Cosier & Ruble, 1981; Kabanoff, 1987; Ruble & Thomas, 1976; Van de Vliert & Hordijk, 1989). Consequently, despite the above acceptance of Hypothesis 3, a slight revision of the X-cross model seems in order, removing compromising from the centre and placing this mode in between accommodating and problem solving.

Interestingly, the arms of the X-cross in Fig. 3.2 are not mutually independent dimensions that are at right angles to one another. An unexpected positive relationship exists between the integrative dimension and the distributive dimension, reflected in supplementary angles of 67 and 113 degrees ($r = \cos 67° = .39$, $N = 145$, $p \leq .001$). A similar secondary analysis

of Van de Vliert and Kabanoff's (1990) visual representations of the measures of MODE and ROCI underscored the fact that a significant positive correlation between the integrative and the distributive dimension exists. All this contradicts the model's assumption of orthogonality, let alone that there would be a negative relationship between integrative and distributive reactions to conflict issues.

Interpreting the acute angle between the arms of the X-cross as a positive conceptual association between the two descriptive dimensions is not the only possible explanation. The most superficial reason for the positive relationship between integration and distribution in Fig. 3.2 is the significant overlap between the subscales of avoiding and accommodating ($r = .43$, $p \leq .01$). That overlap in its turn might indicate the CMS instrument's failure to discriminate sufficiently between avoiding and accommodating (for a further interpretation of the findings in terms of measurement, see the Box "Measurement Validity"). Or it might reflect the respondents' tendency to frame avoiding and accommodating as corresponding variants of nonconfrontation (cf. Fig. 2.1).

Finally, it is worthwhile to signal that the above behavioural structure of obliquely crossed integrative and distributive dimensions was remarkably stable over different conditions. The high correlations between the MODE data sets in the Box "Data on Five Instruments" imply that the X-cross model is generalisable over completely different organisational contexts (cf. Mintzberg, 1979). At the one extreme, the data dealt with Kravitz's (1987) law enforcement agency, which is characterised by environmental stability, much formalisation, little decentralisation, and standardisation of work processes as coordinating mechanism. At the other extreme, there were data from Mills, Robey, and Smith's (1985) project-management personnel working in "adhocracies" characterised by environmental complexity, little formalisation, much decentralisation, and mutual adjustment as coordinating mechanism. The high correlations between the DUTCH data sets imply furthermore that the inlaying behavioural structure is also generalisable over the different roles of superior and subordinate.

STUDY 3: GENERALISABILITY ACROSS BEHAVIOURAL COMPONENTS

The central idea in the X-cross model is that all components of conflict handling are interrelated in terms of the magnitude of their integrative and distributive behavioural content. Because this postulate applies to the universe of behavioural components, a remaining question is whether avoiding, accommodating, compromising, problem solving and fighting constitute a representative sample of all possible methods of conflict handling. Does

Sternberg and Dobson (1987) had 40 Yale students—equally divided between men and women—describe four significant conflicts and the methods that they had applied to handle these conflicts with a parent, a teacher, a roommate, and a romantic partner, respectively. After subjects had completed these descriptions, they were asked to provide nine-point ratings regarding the extent to which each of 16 ways of dealing with conflict characterised these real and recent conflict interactions. So, viewed from the perspective of conglomerated conflict behaviour, Sternberg and Dobson (1987) included 16 behavioural components in their experiment. A matrix resulted of 120 correlations among each person's mean occurrence of each of the 16 components of conflict handling.

Once more using the multidimensional scaling programme MINISSA described above, the correlations were represented spatially in such a way that the distances between the methods of conflict handling reproduced the numerical value of the correlation coefficients. Repeated application of MINISSA to the set of 120 correlations resulted in one- and two-dimensional representations of the 120 conceptual distances between the 16 components of conflict behaviour (stress .38 and .16, respectively). The two-dimensional solution was certainly acceptable, since 84% of the variance could be predicted ($p \leq .05$, again relying on significance levels developed by Wagenaar & Padmos, 1971).

Results and Discussion

The statistical acceptability of the picture shown in Fig. 3.3 implied that it was not necessary to introduce more than two dimensions to describe conflict behaviour satisfactorily. Apparently, adhering to a two-dimensional structure for our research and intervention is not as "myopic and reductionistic" as Nicotera (1993, p. 286) believed.

Furthermore, the empirical configuration of components of conflict behaviour appeared to reflect the conflict management grid. To facilitate interpretation of the results, the two largest conceptual distances, drawn as solid lines, were rotated until they figured as the diagonals of an imaginary quadrangle extending from avoidance in the lower left corner (see quadrangle of broken lines in Fig. 3.3). As can be ascertained at a single glance the two descriptive dimensions, like the grid diagonals, were equally large. Clearly, the diagonal that connected avoidance and mutual discussion reflects an integrative dimension. Just as clearly, the other diagonal that ran from accept to physical force reflects a distributive dimension. The two dimensions, intersecting at supplementary angles of 71 and 109 rather than 90 degrees, support the X-cross model underlying Hypothesis 4 ($r = \cos 71° = .33$, $N = 40$, $p \leq .05$). Again, the integrative and the distributive behavioural content correlated significantly positive because of the overlap

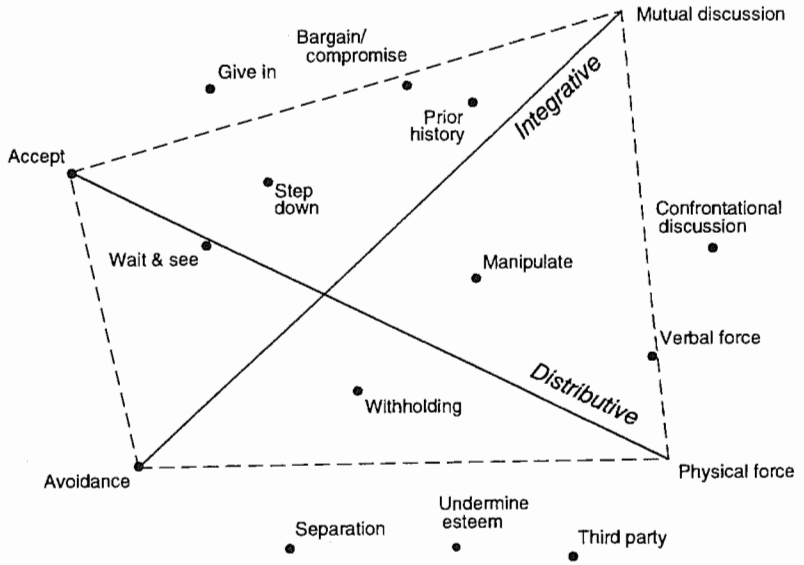


FIG. 3.3 The X-cross of an integrative and a distributive dimension in Sternberg's components of conglomerated conflict behaviour.

between the nonconfronting components of conflict behaviour (see discussion of Study 2).

If acceptance is replaced by accommodation, mutual discussion by problem solving, and physical force by fighting, Fig. 3.3 appears to have much in common with Fig. 3.2. Sternberg's data reflect the same basic structure as the data gathered through established questionnaires. Here, too, the reanalysed interrelations among distinct components of conflict management are supportive of Hypotheses 1 through 3. Again, compromising did not represent the intersection of the integrative and distributive dimensions as the original X-cross model stipulates. Once again, compromising may support another feature of the conflict management grid. Bargain/compromise had a relatively high projection on the integrative dimension, in addition to a projection on the accommodating part of the distributive dimension. The findings seem to support the corollary that, for both parties together, compromising tends to be suboptimal in relation to fully integrative conflict resolution, whereas it tends to be optimal in relation to fully distributive victory and defeat.

Summary and conclusion. Although Study 2 and Study 3 investigated different conflict reactions using different research methodologies, the results were quite consistent. Taken together, the findings strongly suggest that the X-cross of an integrative and a distributive dimension is a sound descriptive model that holds true for widely divergent components of conflict behaviour. However, the two dimensions are positively rather than negatively related, and compromising is a predominantly integrative and accommodation-directed component of conflict management.

PROPOSITIONS

3a. The integrative dimension ranging from the component of avoiding to the component of problem solving, and the distributive dimension ranging from the component of accommodating to the component of fighting, have a positive or neutral rather than a negative relationship of co-occurrence (pp. 54–56, 66–67, 70).

3b. The integrative dimension represents variations in anticipated variable-sum outcomes, whereas the distributive dimension represents variations in anticipated constant-sum outcomes for the conflicting parties (pp. 51–53).

3c. Effectuation of variable-sum outcomes on the integrative dimension requires behavioural symmetry on the part of the opponent with both parties avoiding or negotiating, whereas effectuation of constant-sum outcomes on the distributive dimension requires behavioural complementarity on the part of the opponent with one party accommodating and the other party fighting (pp. 58–59, 61).

3d. Conflicting parties handle behavioural dilemmas between equal and differential treatment of oneself and the opponent by conglomerating more and less integrative and distributive components of conflict behaviour (pp. 56–61).

3e. Distinct components of conflict handling are interrelated in terms of the magnitude of their integrative and distributive behavioural content (pp. 56, 61, 69–70).

3f. For the conflicting parties together, on the integrative dimension compromising is suboptimal in relation to conflict resolution, but on the distributive dimension compromising is optimal in relation to victory and defeat (pp. 52–54, 63, 71).

PART THREE

Explanation