SIXTY YEARS OF CONFLICT*

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Introduction

The aim of this talk is to consider what progress, if any, has been made during the past sixty years or so in the social psychological study of conflict.

My personal bias

In this talk I have not taken the perspective of an objective "outsider"; I have been too much of an "insider" to present an overview which is not strongly colored by my personal orientation and work. From early in my career, I have thought of conflict in the context of competition and cooperation. I have viewed these latter as idealized psychological processes which are rarely found in their "pure" form in nature, but, instead, are found more typically mixed together. I have also thought that most forms of conflict could be viewed as mixtures of competitive and cooperative processes and, further, that the course of a conflict and its consequences would be heavily dependent upon the nature of the cooperative-competitive mix. These views of conflict lead me to emphasize the link between the social psychological studies of cooperation and competition and the studies of conflict in my assessment of this latter area.

At the beginning...

The writings of three intellectual giants -- Darwin, Marx, and Freud -- dominated the intellectual atmosphere during social psychology's infancy. Each of these major theorists significantly influenced the writings of the early social psychologists on conflict as well as in many other areas. All three theorists appeared -- on a superficial reading -- to emphasize the competitive, destructive aspects of conflict. Darwin stressed "the competitive struggle for existence" and "the survival of the fittest." He wrote (quoted in Hyman, 1966, p. 29): ". . . all nature is at war, one organism with another, or with external nature. Seeing the contented face of

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nature, this may at first be well doubted; but reflection will inevitably prove it is too true." Marx emphasized "class struggle," and as the struggle proceeds, "the whole society breaks up more and more into two great hostile camps, two great, directly antagonistic classes: bourgeoisie and proletariat." He ends The Communist Manifesto with a ringing call to class struggle: "The proletarians have nothing to lose but their chains. They have a world to win. Working men of all countries, unite." Freud's view of psychosexual development was largely that of constant struggle between the biologically rooted infantile id and the socially determined, internalized parental surrogate, the superego. As Schachtel (1959, p. 10) has noted:

The concepts and language used by Freud to describe the great metamorphosis from life in the womb to life in the world abound with images of war, coercion, reluctant compromise, unwelcome necessity, imposed sacrifices, uneasy truce under pressure, enforced detours and roundabout ways to return to the original peaceful state of absence of consciousness and stimulation...

Thus, the intellectual atmosphere prevalent during the period when social psychology began to emerge contributed to viewing conflict from the perspective of "competitive struggle." Social conditions too -- the intense competition among businesses and among nations, the devastation of World War I, the economic depression of the 1920s and 1930s, the rise of Nazism and other totalitarian systems -- reinforced this perspective.

The vulgarization of Darwin's ideas in the form of "social Darwinism" provided an intellectual rationale for racism, sexism, class superiority, and war. Such ideas as "survival of the fittest," "hereditary determinism," and "stages of evolution" were eagerly misapplied to the relations between different human social groups -- classes and nations as well as social races to rationalize imperialist policies. The influence of evolutionary thinking was so strong that, as a critic suggested, it gave rise to a new imperialist beatitude: "Blessed are the strong, for they shall prey upon the weak" (Banton, 1967, p. 48). The rich and powerful were biologically superior; they had achieved their positions as a result of natural selection. It would be against nature to interfere with the inequality and suffering of the poor and weak.

Social Darwinism and the mode of explaining behavior in terms of innate, evolutionary derived instincts were in retreat by the mid-1920s. The prestige of the empirical methods in the physical sciences, the point of view of social determinism advanced by Karl Marx and various sociological
theorists, and the findings of cultural anthropologists all contributed to their decline.\footnote{This is a decline, not a disappearance. The explanation of social phenomena in terms of innate factors justifies the status quo by arguing for its immutability; such justification will always be sought by those who fear change.} Since the decline of the instinctual mode of explaining such conflict phenomena as war, intergroup hostility, and human exploitation, two others have been dominant: the "psychological" and the "socio-political-economic." The "psychological" mode attempts to explain such phenomena in terms of "what goes on in the minds of men" (Klineberg, 1964) or "tensions that cause war" (Cantril, 1950); in other words, in terms of the perceptions, beliefs, values, ideology, motivations, and other psychological states and characteristics that individual men and women have acquired as a result of their experiences and as these characteristics are activated by the particular situation and role in which people are located. The "socio-political-economic" mode, in contrast, seeks an explanation in terms of such social, economic, and political factors as levels of armaments, objective conflicts in economic and political interests, and the like. Although these modes of explanation are not mutually exclusive, there is a tendency for partisans of the psychological mode to consider that the causal arrow points from psychological conditions to socio-political-economic conditions and for partisans of the latter to believe the reverse is true. In any case, much of the social psychological writing in the 1930s, 1940s, and early 1950s on the topics of war, intergroup conflict, and industrial strife was largely nonempirical, and in one vein or the other. The psychologically trained social psychologist tended to favor the psychological mode; the Marxist-oriented or sociologically trained social psychologist more often favored the other mode.

The decline of social Darwinism and the instinctivist doctrines was hastened by the development and employment of empirical methods in social psychology. This early empirical orientation to social psychology focused on the socialization of the individual; this focus was, in part, a reaction to the instinctivist doctrine. It led to a great variety of studies, including a number investigating cooperation and competition. These latter studies are, in my view, the precursors to the empirical, social psychological study of conflict.

**Early studies of cooperation and competition**

Two outstanding summaries of the then-existing research on cooperation and competition were published in 1937. One was in the volume of Murphy, Murphy, and Newcomb, *Experimental Social Psychology*; the other was in the monograph "Competition and Cooperation," by May and
Doob (1937). It is not my intention here to repeat these summaries but rather to give you my sense of the state of the research and theorizing on cooperation-competition in the 1920s and 1930s.

My impression is that practically none of the earlier research on cooperation and competition would be acceptable in current social psychological journals because of methodological flaws in the studies. Almost all of them suffer from serious deficiencies in their research designs. In addition, there is little conceptual clarity about some of the basic concepts -- "competition," "cooperation," "self-orientation," -- that are used in the studies. As a result, the operational definitions used to create the differing experimental conditions have no consistency from one study to another or even within a given study.

Further, the early studies on cooperation and competition suffered from a narrowness of scope. They focused almost exclusively on the effects of "competition" versus "cooperation" on individual task output. There was no investigation of social interaction, communication processes, problem-solving methods, interpersonal attitudes, attitudes toward self, attitudes toward work, attitudes toward the group, or the like in these early investigations of cooperation-competition. The focus was narrowly limited to work output. The simplistic assumption was made that output would be an uncomplicated function of the degree of motivation induced by competition as compared with cooperation. The purposes of most of these early investigations appeared to be to support or reject a thesis inherent in the American ideology; namely, that competition fosters greater motivation to be productive than other forms of social organization.

**Field theory, conflict, and cooperation-competition**

During the 1920s, 1930s, and 1940s, quite independently of the work being conducted in the United States on cooperation-competition, Kurt Lewin and his students were theorizing and conducting research which profoundly affected later work in many areas of social psychology. Lewin's field theory -- with its dynamic concepts of tension systems, "driving" and "restraining" forces, "own" and "induced" forces, valences, level of aspiration, power fields, interdependence, overlapping situations, and so on -- created a new vocabulary for thinking about conflict and cooperation-competition.

As early as 1931, employing his analysis of force fields, Lewin (1931, 1935) presented a penetrating theoretical discussion of three basic types of psychological conflict: *approach-approach* -- the individual stands between two positive valences of approximately equal strength; *avoidance-avoidance* -- the individual stands between two negative valences of approximately equal strength;
and approach-avoidance -- the individual is exposed to opposing forces deriving from a positive and a negative valence. Huil (1938) translated Lewin's analysis into the terminology of the goal gradient, and Miller (1937, 1944) elaborated and did research upon it. Numerous experimental studies supported the theoretical analysis.

My own initial theorizing on cooperation-competition (Deutsch, 1949a) was influenced by the Lewinian thinking on tension systems which was reflected in a series of brilliant experiments on the recall of interrupted activities (Zeigarnik), the resumption of interrupted activities (Ovsiankina), substitutability (Mahler) and the role of ego in cooperative work (Lewis and Franklin). But even more of my thinking was indebted to the ideas which were "in the air" at the M.I.T. Research Center for Group Dynamics. Ways of characterizing and explaining group processes and group functioning, employing the language of Lewinian theorizing, were under constant discussion among the students and faculty at the M.I.T. Center. Thus, it was quite natural that when I settled on cooperation-competition as the topic of my doctoral dissertation, I should employ the Lewinian dynamic emphasis on goals and how they are interrelated as my key theoretical wedge into this topic. Even more importantly, the preoccupation with understanding group processes at the Center pressed me to formulate my ideas about cooperation and competition so that they would be relevant to the psychological and interpersonal processes occurring within and between groups. This pressure forced my theory and research (Deutsch, 1949a, 1949b) to go considerably beyond the prior social psychological work on cooperation-competition. My theorizing and research were concerned not only with the individual and group outcomes of cooperation and competition but also with the social psychological processes which would give rise to these outcomes.

My theorizing and research have been published and widely referred to, so there is little need here for more than a brief summary of some of the theory's predictions.

1. Communication

A cooperative process is characterized by open and honest communication of relevant information between the participants. Each is interested in informing, and being informed by, the other. In contrast, a competitive process is characterized by either lack of communication or misleading communication. It also gives rise to espionage or other techniques of obtaining information about the other that the other is unwilling to communicate. In addition to obtaining such information, each party is interested in providing discouraging or misleading information to the other.
2. Perception

A cooperative process tends to increase sensitivity to similarities and common interests while minimizing the salience of differences. It stimulates a convergence and conformity of beliefs and values. A competitive process tends to increase sensitivity to differences and threats while minimizing the awareness of similarities. It stimulates the sense of complete oppositeness: "You are bad; I am good."

3. Attitudes toward one another

A cooperative process leads to a trusting, friendly attitude, and it increases the willingness to respond helpfully to the other's needs and requests. In contrast, a competitive process leads to a suspicious, hostile attitude, and it increases the readiness to exploit the other's needs and respond negatively to the other's requests.

4. Task orientation

A cooperative process leads to the defining of conflicting interests as a mutual problem to be solved by collaborative effort. It facilitates the recognition of the legitimacy of each other's interests and of the necessity of searching for a solution that is responsive to the needs of all. It tends to limit rather than expand the scope of conflicting interests. Attempts to influence the other tend to be limited to processes of persuasion. The enhancement of mutual power and resources becomes an objective.

In contrast, a competitive process stimulates the view that the solution of a conflict can only be one that is imposed by one side on the other. The enhancement of one's own power and the minimization of the legitimacy of the other side's interests in the situation become objectives. It fosters the expansion of the scope of the issues in conflict so that the conflict becomes a matter of general principle and is no longer confined to a particular issue at a given time and place. The escalation of the conflict increases its motivational significance to the participants and intensifies their emotional involvement in it; these factors, in turn, may make a limited defeat less acceptable or more humiliating than mutual disaster might be. Duplication of effort, so that the competitors become mirror-images of one another, is more likely than division of effort. Coercive processes tend to be employed in the attempt to influence the other.
The above predictions have been supported by my own research as well as by the studies of many other investigators. More recently, research done in classrooms has provided further support for the theory.

**Game theory and games**

In 1944, Von Neumann and Morgenstern published their now-classic work, *Theory of Games and Economic Behavior*. Game theory has made a major contribution to social scientists by formulating in mathematical terms the problem of conflict of interest. However, it has not been either its mathematics or its normative prescriptions for minimizing losses when facing an intelligent adversary that have made game theory of considerable value to social psychologists. Rather, it has been its core emphasis that the parties in conflict have interdependent interests, that their fates are woven together. Although the mathematical and normative development of game theory has been most successful in connection with pure competitive conflict ("zero-sum" games), game theory has also recognized that cooperative as well as competitive interests may be intertwined in conflict (as in "coalition" games or "non-zero-sum" games).

The game theory recognition of the intertwining of cooperative and competitive interests in situations of conflict (or in Schelling's [1960] useful term, the "mixed motive" nature of conflict) has had a productive impact on the social psychological study of conflict, theoretically as well as methodologically. Theoretically, as least for me, it helped buttress a viewpoint that I had developed prior to my acquaintance with game theory -- namely, that conflicts were typically mixtures of cooperative and competitive processes and that the course of conflict would be determined by the nature of the mixture. This emphasis on the cooperative elements involved in conflict ran counter to the then dominant view of conflict as a competitive struggle. Methodologically, game theory had an impact on an even larger group of psychologists. The mathematical formulations of game theory had the indirect but extremely valuable consequence of laying bare some fascinating paradoxical situations in such a way that they were highly suggestive of experimental work.

Game matrices as an experimental device are popular because they facilitate a precise definition of the reward structure encountered by the subjects, and hence of the way they are dependent upon one another. Partly stimulated by and partly in reaction to the research using game matrices, other research games for the study of conflict have been developed. Siegel and Fouraker (1960) developed a bilateral monopoly, "buyer-seller" negotiation game; Vinacke and Arkoff (1957) invented a three-person coalition game; Deutsch and Krauss (1960) constructed a "trucking game";
Deutsch (1973) employed an "allocation" game; and many other investigators have developed variants of these games or new ones. Pruitt and Kimmel in 1977 estimated that well over 1,000 studies had been published based on experimental games. Much of this research, as is true in other areas of science, was mindless -- being done because a convenient experimental format was readily available. Some of it, however, has, I believe, helped to develop more systematic understanding of conflict processes and conflict resolution. Fortunately, in recent years, experimental gaming has been supplemented by other experimental procedures and by field studies which have overcome some of the inherent limitations of experimental gaming.

Themes in contemporary social psychological research on conflict

Social psychological research on conflict, during the past twenty-five years or so, has been primarily addressed to five major questions: (1) *What are the conditions which give rise to a constructive or destructive process of conflict resolution?* In terms of bargaining and negotiation, the emphasis here is on determining the circumstances which enable the conflicting parties to arrive at a mutually satisfactory agreement which maximizes their joint outcomes. In a sense, this first question arises from a focus on the cooperative potential inherent in conflict; (2) *What are the circumstances, strategies, and tactics which lead one party to do better than another in a conflict situation?* The stress here is on how one can wage conflict, or bargain, so as to win or at least do better than one's adversary. This second question emerges from a focus on the competitive features of a conflict situation; (3) *What determines the nature of the agreement between conflicting parties, if they are able to reach an agreement?* Here the concern is with the cognitive and normative factors that lead people to conceive a possible agreement and to perceive it as a salient possibility for reaching a stable agreement: an agreement which each of the conflicting parties will see as "just" under the circumstances. This third question is a more recent one and has been addressed under the heading of research on the social psychology of equity and justice; (4) *How can third parties be used to prevent conflicts from becoming destructive or to help deadlocked or embittered negotiators move toward a more constructive management of their conflicts?* This fourth question has been reflected in studies of mediation and in strategies of de-escalating conflicts; and (5) *How can people be educated to manage their conflicts more constructively?* This has been a concern of consultants working with leaders in industry and government and also with those who have responsibility for educating the children in our schools. In the next section, I shall attempt to describe tentative answers which social psychological research has given the foregoing questions.
What are the conditions which give rise to a constructive or destructive process of conflict resolution?

In social psychology this question has been most directly addressed in the work of my students and myself and summarized in my book, The Resolution of Conflict: Constructive and Destructive Processes (1973). Our research started off with the assumption that if the parties involved in a conflict situation had a cooperative rather than competitive orientation toward one another, they would be more likely to engage in a constructive process of conflict resolution. In my earlier research on the effects of cooperation and competition upon group process, I had demonstrated that a cooperative process was more productive in dealing with a problem that a group faces than a competitive process. I reasoned that the same would be true in a mixed-motive situation of conflict: A conflict could be viewed as a mutual problem facing the conflicting parties. Our initial research on trust and suspicion employing the Prisoners’ Dilemma game strongly supported my reasoning, as did subsequent research employing other experimental formats. I believe that this is a very important result which has considerable theoretical and practical significance.

At a theoretical level, it enabled me to link my prior characterization of cooperation and competitive social processes to the nature of the processes of conflict resolution which would typically give rise to constructive or destructive outcomes. That is, I had found a way to characterize the central features of constructive and destructive processes of conflict resolution; doing so represented a major advance beyond the characterization of outcomes as constructive or destructive. This was not only important in itself but it also opened up a new possibility. At both the theoretical and practical level, the characterization of constructive and destructive processes of conflict created the very significant possibility that we would be able to develop insight into the conditions which initiated or stimulated the development of cooperative-constructive versus competitive-destructive processes of conflict. Much of the research of my students and myself has been addressed to developing this insight.

Much of our early research on the conditions affecting the course of conflict was done on an ad hoc basis. We selected independent variables to manipulate based on our intuitive sense of what would give rise to a cooperative or competitive process. We did experiments with quite a number of variables: motivational orientation, communication facilities, perceived similarity of opinions and beliefs, size of conflict, availability of threats and weapons, power differences, third party interventions, strategies and tactics of game playing by experimental stooges, the payoff structure of the game, personality characteristics, and so on. The results of these studies fell into a pattern which I slowly began to grasp.
All of these studies seemed explainable by the assumption, which I have labeled "Deutsch's crude law of social relations," that the characteristic processes and effects elicited by a given type of social relationship (cooperative or competitive) also tend to elicit that type of social relationship. Thus, cooperation induces and is induced by a perceived similarity in beliefs and attitudes; a readiness to be helpful; openness in communication; trusting and friendly attitudes; sensitivity to common interests and de-emphasis of opposed interests; an orientation toward enhancing mutual power rather than power differences; and so on. Similarly, competition induces and is induced by the use of tactics of coercion, threat, or deception; attempts to enhance the power differences between oneself and the other; poor communication; minimization of the awareness of similarities in values and increased sensitivity to opposed interests; suspicious and hostile attitudes; the importance, rigidity, and size of the issues in conflict; and so on.

In other words, if one has systematic knowledge of the effects of cooperative and competitive processes, one will have systematic knowledge of the conditions which typically give rise to such processes and, by extension, to the conditions which affect whether a conflict will take a constructive or destructive course. My early theory of cooperation and competition is a theory of the effects of cooperative and competitive processes. Hence, from the crude law of social relations stated earlier, it follows that this theory provides insight into the conditions which give rise to cooperative and competitive processes.

The crude law is crude. It expresses surface similarities between "effects" and "causes"; the basic relationships are genotypical rather than phenotypical. The crude law is crude, but it can be improved. Its improvement requires a linkage with other areas in social psychology, particularly social cognition and social perception. Such a linkage would enable us to view phenotypes in their social environments in such a way as to lead us to perceive correctly the underlying genotypes. We would then be able to know under what conditions "perceived similarity" or "threat" will be experienced as having an underlying genotype different from the one that is usually associated with its phenotype.

What are the circumstances, strategies, and tactics which lead one party to do better than another in a conflict situation?

Most of the important theoretical work by social scientists in relation to this question has been done not by social psychologists but by economists, political scientists, and those concerned with collective bargaining. Some of the most notable contributions have been made by Chamberlain
(1951), Schelling (1960, 1966), Stevens (1963), Walton and McKersie (1965), Kahn (1965), Jervis (1970, 1976), and Snyder and Diesing (1977). Machiavelli (1950) and Stephen Potter (1965) earlier had described useful strategies and tactics for winning conflicts: Machiavelli's emphasis was on how to use one's power most effectively so as to intimidate or overwhelm one's adversary; Potter's on how to play upon the good will, cooperativeness, and politeness of one's opponent so as to upset him and make him lose his "cool." More recently, Alinsky (1971) has described a "jujitsu" strategy that the "have-nots" can employ against the "haves" and described various tactics of harassing and ensnaring the "haves" in their own red tape by pressuring them to live up to their own formally stated rules and procedures.

Social psychologists have just barely begun to tap and test the rich array of ideas about strategies and tactics for winning conflicts or for increasing one's bargaining power and effectiveness that exist in the common folklore as well as in the social and political science literature. This research has provided some support and qualification of preexisting ideas about bargaining strategy and tactics. I shall briefly discuss research relating to "being ignorant," "being tough," "being belligerent," and "bargaining power."

"Being ignorant"

Common sense suggests that one is better off if one is informed rather than ignorant. Schelling (1960) has, however, advanced the interesting idea that in bargaining it is sometimes advantageous to be in a position where you are or appear to be ignorant of your opponent's preferences; similarly, it may give you an edge to be in a situation where you could inform your opponent of your preferences but the other hand could not so inform you. Research (Harnett and Cummings, 1968; Harnett, Cummings and Hughes, 1968; Cummings and Harnett, 1969) provides experimental support for Schelling's idea. In several different bargaining situations it was demonstrated that a bargainer who did not have complete information about the bargaining schedule of his opponent began bargaining with higher initial bids, made fewer concessions, and earned higher profits than bargainers with complete information. Being ignorant of what the other wants, or appearing so, may justify to oneself and to the other a relative neglect of the other's interests in one's proposals; neglecting the other's interests when they are known is a more obvious and flagrant affront.

The bargaining tactic of "ignorance," as well as other tactics, such as "brinkmanship" and "appearing to be irrational," can be characterized in terms of the bargaining doctrine of "the last clear chance." The basic notion here is that a bargainer will gain an advantage if he can appear to
commit himself irrevocably so that the last clear chance of avoiding mutual disaster rests with his opponent. A child who works himself up to the point that he will have a temper tantrum if his parents refuse to let him sit where he wants in the restaurant is employing this doctrine. So is the driver who cuts in front of someone on a highway while appearing to be deaf to the insistent blasts of the other's horn. Such tactics do not always work. They seem most apt to do so when the situation is asymmetrical (you can use the tactic but your opponent cannot) and when your opponent does not have a strong need to improve or uphold his reputation for "resolve" or "toughness."

"Being tough"

"Bargaining toughness" has been defined experimentally in terms of setting a high level of aspiration, making high demands, and offering fewer concessions or smaller concessions than one's opponent. It is a widely held view, to quote the late Leo Durocher, that "nice guys finish last." The results of many experiments (see Magenau and Pruitt, 1978) support a more complex conclusion, stated by Bartos (1970, p. 62): "Toughness plays a dual role and has contradictory consequences. On the one hand, toughness decreases the likelihood of an agreement, while on the other hand, it increases the payoffs of those who survive this possibility of a failure." A relentlessly tough approach throughout bargaining appears to result in worse outcomes than a more conciliatory approach (Hamner and Baird, 1978; Harnett and Vincelette, 1978). There is, however, some evidence to suggest that initial toughness in terms of high opening demands, combined with a readiness to reciprocate concessions, may facilitate a fuller exploration of the alternative possibilities of agreement and lead to the discovery of an agreement which maximizes payoffs to the bargainers (Kelley and Schenitzki, 1972); premature tendencies to reach an agreement without full exploration of the possibilities may be prevented by tough, initial positions (Deutsch, 1973).

"Being belligerent"

Since the initial research of Deutsch and Krauss (1960) demonstrated the deleterious effects of threat upon bargaining, there has been a deluge of bargaining experiments bearing upon the use of weapons, threats, fines, punishments, rewards, promises, and the like. Tedeschi, Schlenker, and Bonoma (1973, p. 141) have summarized the results of this research as follows: "Threats seldom improve and almost always decrease a bargainer's outcomes if his adversary is similarly armed and the values are important to both parties. Yet when threats are available, bargainers are tempted to use them." Research (see Deutsch, 1973) also demonstrates that threats have considerable
reputational costs: a "threatener" as compared to a "promiser" is viewed much more negatively and is much less likely to get compliance.

Although belligerent, coercive tactics usually impair negotiation, it is evident that one is apt to yield to an adversary when there is a gun pressed against one's head. Coercion can be successful, especially when the power of the conflicting parties is unequal. Although coercion can be successful, its success is usually limited to immediate compliance; the long-term consequences of the use of such tactics are usually counterproductive.

"Bargaining power"

Common sense would suggest that a bargainer is likely to be better off if he has more power than the adversary. The results of social psychological research indicate that the situation is more complex than it first seems. Experimentally, bargaining power is sometimes defined as the relative power of each of the bargainers to inflict harm upon one another; the relative desirability of the alternatives to bargaining that are available to each of the bargainers; the relative time pressure on each bargainer to reach an agreement; and so forth. The research evidence (Magenau and Pruitt, 1978; Rubin and Brown, 1975) indicates that when bargaining power is equal, agreement is relatively easy to reach and the outcomes to the parties are high. When bargaining power is somewhat unequal, a power struggle often ensues as the bargainer with more power tries to assert superior claims and as these are resisted by the bargainer with lesser power; the result of this struggle is that the agreement is difficult to reach and the bargainers have low outcomes. When bargaining power is markedly unequal, the differences in power are more likely to be accepted as legitimate and lead to quick agreement, with the advantage going to the more powerful bargainer. However, if the differences in power are not viewed as providing a legitimization of relatively low outcomes to the low-power bargainer, he will resist what he considers to be greed and exploitation; agreement here also will be difficult, and outcomes will be low. Differences in bargaining power may lead the bargainer with greater power to make claims which he feels are legitimate but which he cannot force the other to accept; the bargainer with lesser power may resist the claims as being exploitative and illegitimate and as a way of asserting his equal status as a person. His resistance causes the low-power bargainer to suffer relatively more than the high-power bargainer, but the high-power bargainer also suffers. In essence, the bargaining research demonstrates that having higher power than one's bargaining opponent may be less advantageous than having equal power if your fellow bargainer is apt to resist any greater claims that you might make as a result of your greater power.
From this brief and very incomplete survey of some of the experimental research bearing on the strategy and tactics of waging conflict, it is evident that social psychological research has given some support for surprising tactics ("being ignorant") and has raised some doubts about common assumptions relating to the advantages to be obtained from "toughness" as a strategy, from "coercive tactics," and from "superior bargaining power."

What determines the nature of the agreement between conflicting parties if they are able to reach an agreement?

A bargain is defined in Webster's Unabridged Dictionary as "an agreement between parties settling what each shall give and receive in a transaction between them." The definition of "bargain" fits under common social science definitions of the term "social norm." What determines the agreement or social norm for settling the issues in conflict? Two compatible ideas have been advanced in answer to this question, one related to "perceptual prominence" and the other to "distributive justice."

Schelling (1960) has suggested that perceptually prominent alternatives serve a key function in permitting bargainers to come to an agreement. Research has provided some support for Schelling's idea (see Magenau and Pruitt, 1978, for a summary).

Homans (1961, 1974) has suggested that the principle of distributive justice would play a role in determining how people would decide to allocate the awards and costs to be distributed between them. Although Homans was not primarily concerned with conflict or bargaining, it is evident that his conception of distributive justice does not exclude them. In his discussion, Homans has emphasized one particular canon or rule of distributive justice, that of "proportionality" or "equity": In a just distribution, rewards will be distributed among individuals in proportion to their contributions. "Equity theorists" such as Adams (1963, 1965, 1976) and Walster, Walster, and Berscheid (1978) have continued Homans' emphasis on the rule of proportionality and have elaborated a theory and stimulated much research to support the view that psychological resistance and emotional distress will be encountered if the rule of proportionality is violated. In recent years, other social psychologists -- Lerner (1975), Leventhal (1976), Sampson (1969), and myself (Deutsch, 1974, 1975) -- have stressed that proportionality is only one of many common canons of distributive justice. We know very little about what makes a given rule of justice stand out as saliently appropriate in a given situation of conflict. However, a number of us (Deutsch, 1975, Lamm and Kayser, 1978a,b; Lerner, 1975; Leventhal, 1976; Mikula and Schwinger, 1978; Sampson, 1975) have articulated hypotheses about factors favoring the selection of one or another
rule and done related experiments. It seems evident that if a conflict is experienced as having been resolved unjustly, it is not likely that the conflict has been adequately resolved; similarly, a bargaining agreement that is viewed as unjust is not apt to be a stable one. "Justice" and "conflict" are intimately intertwined; the sense of injustice can give rise to conflict, and conflict can produce injustice.

Social psychological research on justice and conflict is too new to have led to definitive results. However, let me note the direction of my thinking in this area. I have applied and elaborated my crude hypothesis of social relations (the typical consequences of a given type of social relation tends to elicit that relation) so as to be relevant to the question of what rule of justice will predominate in a group or social system. I (Deutsch, 1975) have developed rationales to explain the tendency for economically oriented groups 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. I have then characterized typical effects of economically oriented relations, solidarity-oriented relations, and caring relations and have hypothesized that these different kinds of typical effects will elicit different principles of distributive justice.

Thus, among the typical consequences of an economic orientation (Diesing, 1962) are: (1) the development of a set of values which includes maximization, a means-end schema, neutrality or impartiality with regard to means, and competition; (2) the turning of man and everything associated with him into commodities -- including labor, time, land, capital, personality, social relations, ideas, art, and enjoyment; (3) the development of measurement procedures which enable the value of different amounts and types of commodities to be compared; and (4) the tendency for economic activities to expand in scope and size. The crude hypothesis advanced above would imply that an economic orientation and the principle of equity are likely to be dominant in a group or social system if its situation is characterized by impersonality, competition, maximization, an emphasis on comparability rather than uniqueness, largeness in size or scope, and so on. Specific experimental hypotheses could readily be elaborated: the more competitive the people are in a group, the more likely they are to use equity rather than equality or need as the principle of distributive justice; the more impersonal the relations of the members of a group are, the more likely they are to use equity; and so forth.

Results in my laboratory, as well as in the laboratories of other investigators, are consistent with my crude hypothesis. It seems likely that the reason "equity" has been the central principle of distributive justice to social psychologists is that there has been an unwitting acceptance of the view that the dominant orientation of American society, a competitive-economic orientation, is a
universally valid orientation. This is too parochial a perspective. Equity is only one of many principles of distributive justice. It is evident that questions of justice may arise in noneconomic social relations and may be decided in terms that are unrelated to input-output ratios.

How can third parties be used to prevent conflicts from becoming destructive or to help deadlocked or embittered negotiators move toward a more constructive management of their conflicts?

Kenneth Kressel and Dean Pruitt recently have edited an issue of the Journal of Social Issues (1985) and published a book (1989) on mediation research which provide a definitive review of the work being done in this area. As they point out, informal mediation is one of the oldest forms of conflict resolution and formal mediation has been practised in international and labor-management conflicts for many years. More recently, formal mediation has been increasingly applied to an ever-widening array of disputes in such areas as divorcing, small-claims cases, neighborhood feuds, landlord-tenant relations, environmental and public-resource controversies, industrial disputes, school conflicts, and civil cases. Following in the wake of the explosion of the practice of mediation (and of the proliferation of textbooks and "how-to-do-it" books on mediation), there has been important but modest growth in research and theorizing on this topic. Most of the research and theorizing has occurred in the past decade.

I shall here highlight some of the main points which emerge from the cogent summary by Kressel and Pruitt of the work in this area.

1. There is considerable evidence of user satisfaction with mediation and some evidence that the agreements reached through mediation are both less costly to the conflicting parties and more robust than traditional adjudication. However, there is strong evidence to suggest that mediation has dim prospects of being successful under adverse circumstances. As Kressel and Pruitt (1989, p. 405) have succinctly expressed it: "Intensely conflicted disputes involving parties of widely disparate power, with low motivation to settle, fighting about matters of principle, suffering from discord or ambivalence within their own camps, and negotiating over scarce resources are likely to defeat even the most adroit mediators."

2. Kressel and Pruitt, in characterizing the research describing what mediators do, indicate that their diverse actions can be grouped under four major headings: (1) establishing a working alliance with the parties; (2) improving the climate between them; (3) addressing the issues; and (4) applying pressure for settlement.
I have, from my theoretical perspective, expressed similar ideas, somewhat differently, to the question: *What framework can guide a third person who seeks to intervene therapeutically if negotiations are deadlocked or unproductive because of misunderstandings, faulty communications, the development of hostile attitudes, or the inability to discover a mutually satisfying solution?* I suggest that such a framework is implicit in the ideas that I have described earlier. The third-party seeks to produce a cooperative problem-solving orientation to the conflict by creating the conditions which characterize an effective cooperative problem-solving process: these conditions are the typical effects of a successful cooperative process. Helping the conflicting parties to develop a cooperative, problem-solving orientation to their conflict may be sufficient when the conflicting parties have reasonably well-developed group problem-solving and decision-making skills. Often they do not, and hence, they need tutelage in these skills if they are to deal with their problem successfully. And, often, conflicting parties do not have sufficient substantive knowledge concerning the issues in conflict to manage them constructively. Here, too, they may need tutelage by a third party if their conflict is to be resolved sensibly.

Third-parties (mediators, conciliators, process consultants, therapists, counselors, etc.) who are called upon to provide assistance in a conflict require four kinds of skills if they are to have the flexibility required to deal with the diverse situations mediators face. The *first* set of skills are those related to the third-party’s establishing an effective working relationship with each of the conflicting parties so that they will trust the third-party, communicate freely with her, and be responsive to her suggestions regarding an orderly process for negotiations. The *second* are those related to establishing a cooperative problem-solving attitude among the conflicting parties toward their conflict. Much of the earlier discussion of my theoretical work on conflict resolution focuses on this area. The *third* are the skills involved in developing a creative group process and group decision-making. Such a process clarifies the nature of the problems that the conflicting parties are confronting (reframing their conflicting positions into a joint problem to be solved), helps to expand the range of alternatives that are perceived to be available, facilitates realistic assessment of their feasibility as well as desirability, and facilitates the implementation of agreed-upon solutions. And, the *fourth*, it is often helpful for the third-party to have considerable substantive knowledge about the issues around which the conflict centers. Substantive knowledge could enable the mediator to see possible solutions that might not occur to the conflicting parties and it would permit her to help them assess proposed solutions more realistically.

It seems reasonable to assume that the diverse situations facing mediators will emphasize one or another of the four skills just described. When the conflicting parties have suspicions about
mediation, the skills involved in establishing a good working relationship with the conflicting parties are especially important; when the relationship between the conflicting parties is a poor one, the skills involved in establishing a cooperative problem-solving attitude between the parties is crucial; when the conflicting parties have inadequate techniques for solving problems and making effective joint-decisions, then the mediator needs skills related to facilitating creative group decision-making; and when the conflicting parties have little knowledge of the substantive issues they are describing, the knowledgeable mediator can be a very helpful resource person on such issues.

It seems reasonable to assume that mediators will differ in the kinds of skills they have mastered and, thus, one can expect that the effectiveness of mediation will be considerably dependent upon how well-matched the mediator's skills are with the needs of the case being mediated. There are undoubtedly some "universally competent" mediators who can be successful across a wide variety of cases but it is safe to say that they are probably rare. Research has indicated that mediators differ in their styles and skills and also in their effectiveness in particular settings. However, not enough research has been done to make definitive statements about the conditions under which different styles and approaches to mediation are most effective.

To sum up, research on mediation is in its early stages. The research has already demonstrated a high level of user satisfaction in a number of different contexts and it has also suggested that the robustness of agreements and the economy of the process is greater than in traditional methods. But there is yet insufficient understanding of how to mediate difficult conflicts in adverse circumstances or of how to make the most effective match between mediator characteristics and the characteristics of the case to be mediated.

How can people be educated to manage their conflicts more constructively?

During the past decade, there has been a rapid proliferation of training in conflict resolution -- for industry, for government, for families, and for schools -- and the publication of many textbooks and how-to-do-it manuals in this area. Unfortunately, there has been very little research to assess the effectiveness and consequences of such training. Most of the existing research has been immediate "consumer satisfaction" studies in which the participants in the training program evaluate their training and indicate how useful the training has been for them. The good news is that these studies indicate a high level of immediate consumer satisfaction; the bad news is that there has been no research on more enduring consequences of such training. I should note that we
are now in the midst of a study which might shed some light on what enduring consequences there are, if any, of such programs on such matters as self-esteem, educational achievement, vocational performance, mental health, and physical well-being.

There are many different conflict resolution programs which vary as a function of the age, occupation, and types of conflicts on which they focus. I have examined many of them and believe that there are some common elements running through them. These common elements, I believe, derive from the recognition that a constructive process of conflict resolution is similar to an effective, cooperative problem-solving process (where the conflict is perceived as the mutual problem to be solved) while a destructive process is similar to a win-lose, competitive struggle (Deutsch, 1973). In effect, most conflict resolution training programs seek to instill the attitudes, knowledge, and skills which are conducive to effective, cooperative problem-solving and to discourage the attitudes and habitual responses which give rise to win-lose struggles. Below I list the central elements which are included in many training programs but I do not have the space to describe the ingenious techniques that are employed in teaching them. The sequence in which they are taught varies as a function of the nature of the group being taught.

1. **Know what type of conflict you are involved in.** There are 3 major types: the zero-sum conflict (a pure win-lose conflict), the mixed-motive (both can win, both can lose, one can win and the other can lose), and the pure cooperative (both can win or both can lose). It is important to know what kind of conflict you are in because the different types require different types of strategies and tactics. The common tendency is for inexperienced parties to define their conflict as "win-lose" even though it is a mixed-motive conflict.

In a zero-sum conflict one seeks to amass, mobilize, and utilize the various resources of power in such a way that one can bring to bear in the conflict more effective, relevant power than one's adversary; or if this is not possible in the initial area of conflict, one seeks to transform the arena of conflict into one in which one's effective power is greater than one's adversary. Thus, if a bully challenges you to a fight because you won't "lend" him money and he is stronger than you, you might arrange to change the conflict from a physical confrontation to a legal confrontation by involving the police or other legal authority. Other strategies and tactics in win-lose conflicts involve outwitting, misleading, seducing, blackmailing, and the various forms of the black arts which have been discussed by Machiavelli, Potter, Schelling, and Alinsky, among others. The strategy and tactics of the resolution of cooperative conflicts involve primarily cooperative fact-finding and research as well as rational persuasion. The strategy and tactics involved in mixed-motive conflicts are mainly what is discussed below.
2. **Become aware of the causes and consequences of violence and of the alternatives to violence, even when one is very angry.** Become aware of what makes you very angry; learn the healthy and unhealthy ways you have of expressing anger. Learn how to actively channel your anger in ways that are not violent and are not likely to provoke violence from the other. Understand that violence begets violence and that if you "win" an argument by violence, the other will try to get even in some other way. Learn alternatives to violence in dealing with conflict.

3. **Face conflict rather than avoid it.** Recognize that conflict may make you anxious and that you may try to avoid it. Learn the typical defenses you employ to evade conflict -- e.g., denial, suppression, becoming overly agreeable, rationalization, postponement, premature conflict resolution. Become aware of the negative consequences of evading a conflict -- irritability, tension, persistence of the problem, etc. Learn what kinds of conflicts are best avoided rather than confronted -- e.g., conflicts that will evaporate shortly, those that are inherently unresolvable, win-lose conflicts which you are unlikely to win.

4. **Respect yourself and your interests, respect the other and his or her interests.** Personal insecurity and the sense of vulnerability often lead people to define conflicts as "life and death," win-lose struggles even when they are relatively minor, mixed-motive conflicts, and this definition may lead to "conflict avoidance," "premature conflict resolution," or "obsessive involvement in the conflict." Helping people to develop a respect for themselves and their interests enables them to see their conflicts in reasonable proportion and facilitates their constructive confrontation. Helping people to learn to respect the other and the other's interests inhibits the use of competitive tactics of power, coercion, deprecation, and deception which commonly escalate the issues in conflict and often lead to violence.

5. **Distinguish clearly between "interests" and "positions."** Positions may be opposed but interests may not be (Fisher and Ury, 1981). Often when conflicting parties reveal the interests underlying their positions, it is possible to find a solution which suits them both.

6. **Explore your interests and the other's interests to identify the common and compatible interests that you both share.** Identifying shared interests makes it easier to deal constructively with the interests that you perceive as being opposed. A full exploration of one another's interests increases empathy and facilitates subsequent problem-solving.
7. Define the conflicting interests between oneself and the other as a mutual problem to be solved cooperatively. Define the conflict in the smallest terms possible, as a "here-now-this" conflict rather than as a conflict between personalities or general principles -- e.g., as a conflict about a specific behavior rather than about who is a better person. Diagnose the problem clearly and then creatively seek new options for dealing with the conflict that lead to mutual gain. If no option for mutual gain can be discovered, seek to agree upon a fair rule or procedure for deciding how the conflict will be resolved.

8. In communicating with the other, listen attentively and speak so as to be understood; this requires the active attempt to take the perspective of the other and to check continually one's success in doing so. One should listen to the other's meaning and emotion in such a way that the other feels understood as well as is understood. Similarly, you want to communicate to the other one's thoughts and feelings in such a way that you have good evidence that he or she understands the way you think and feel. The feeling of being understood, as well as effective communication, enormously facilitates constructive resolution.

Skills in taking the perspective of others and in obtaining feedback about the effectiveness of one's communications are important. Role reversal seems to be helpful in developing an understanding of the perspective of the other and in providing checks on how effective the communication process has been.

9. Be alert to the natural tendencies to bias, misperceptions, misjudgments, and stereotyped thinking that commonly occur in oneself as well as the other during heated conflict. These errors in perception and thought interfere with communication, make empathy difficult, and impair problem-solving. Psychologists can provide a check list of the common forms of misperception and misjudgment occurring during intense conflict. These include black-white thinking, demonizing the other, shortening of one's time-perspective, narrowing of one's range of perceived options, and the fundamental attribution error. The fundamental attribution error is illustrated in the tendency to attribute the aggressive actions of the other to the other's personality while attributing one's own aggressive actions to external circumstances (such as the other's hostile actions). The ability to recognize and admit one's misperceptions and misjudgments clears the air and facilitates similar acknowledgment by the other.

10. Develop skills for dealing with difficult conflicts so that one is not helpless nor hopeless when confronting those who are more powerful, those who don't want to engage in constructive conflict resolution, or those who use dirty tricks. Fisher and Ury (1981) have discussed these
matters very helpfully in the final three chapters of their well-known book, Getting to Yes. I shall not summarize their discussion but rather emphasize several basic principles. First, it is important to recognize that one becomes less vulnerable to intimidation by a more powerful other, to someone who refuses to cooperate except on his or her terms, or to someone who plays dirty tricks (deceives, welshes on an agreement, personally attacks you, etc.) if you realize that you usually have a choice: you don't have to stay in the relationship with the other. The alternative may not be great but it may be better than staying in the relationship. The freedom to choose prevents the other, if he or she benefits from the relationship, from making the relationship unacceptable to you.

Second, it is useful to be open and explicit to the other about what he or she is doing that is upsetting you and to indicate the effects that these actions are having on you.

Third, it is wise to avoid reciprocating the other's noxious behavior and to avoid attacking the other personally for his behavior (i.e., criticize the behavior and not the person); doing so often leads to an escalating vicious spiral.

A phrase that I have found useful in characterizing the stance one should take in difficult (as well as easy) conflicts is to be "firm, fair, and friendly." Firm in resisting intimidation, exploitation, and dirty tricks; fair in holding to one's moral principles and not reciprocating the other's immoral behavior despite his or her provocations; and friendly in the sense that one is willing to initiate and reciprocate cooperation.

11. Know oneself and how one typically responds in different sorts of conflict situations. As I have suggested earlier, conflict frequently evokes anxiety. In clinical work, I have found that the anxiety is often based upon unconscious fantasies of being overwhelmed and helpless in the face of the other's aggression or of being so angry and aggressive oneself that one will destroy the other. Different people deal with their anxieties about conflict in different ways. I have found it useful to emphasize six different dimensions of dealing with conflict which can be used to characterize a person's predispositions to respond to conflict. Being aware of one's predispositions may allow one to modify them when they are inappropriate in a given conflict.

(a) Conflict avoidance -- excessive involvement in conflict. Conflict avoidance is expressed in denial, repression, suppression, avoidance, and continuing postponement of facing the conflict. Excessive involvement in conflict is sometimes expressed in a "masculine" attitude, a chip on one's shoulder, a tendency to seek out conflict to demonstrate that one is not afraid of conflict.
(b) **Hard -- soft.** Some people are prone to take a tough, aggressive, dominating, unyielding response to conflict fearing that otherwise they will be taken advantage of and be considered soft. Others are afraid that they will be considered to be mean, hostile, or presumptuous, and as a consequence, they are excessively gentle and unassertive. They often expect the other to "read their minds" and know what they want even though they are not open in expressing their interests.

(c) **Rigid -- loose.** Some people immediately seek to organize and to control the situation by setting the agenda, defining the rules, etc. They feel anxious if things threaten to get out of control and feel threatened by the unexpected. As a consequence, they are apt to push for rigid arrangements and rules and get upset by even minor deviations. At the other extreme, there are some people who are aversive to anything that seems formal, limiting, controlling, or constricting.

(d) **Intellectual -- emotional.** At one extreme, emotion is repressed, controlled, or isolated so that no relevant emotion is felt or expressed as one communicates one's thoughts. The lack of appropriate emotional expressiveness may seriously impair communication: the other may take your lack of emotion as an indicator that you have no real commitment to your interests and that you lack genuine concern for the other's interests. At the other extreme, there are some people who believe that only feelings are real and that words and ideas are not to be taken seriously unless they are thoroughly soaked in emotion. Their emotional extravagance impedes the ability to mutually explore ideas and to develop creative solutions to impasses; it also makes it difficult to differentiate the significant from the insignificant, if even the trivial is accompanied with intense emotion.

(e) **Escalating versus minimizing.** At one extreme, there are some people who tend to experience any given conflict in the largest possible terms. The issues are cast so that what is at stake involves one's self, one's family, one's ethnic group, precedence for all-time, or the like. The specifics of the conflict get lost as it escalates along the various dimensions of conflict: the size and number of the immediate issues involved; the number of motives and participants implicated on each side of the issue; the size and number of the principles and precedents that are perceived to be at stake; the cost that the participants are willing to bear in relation to the conflict; the number of norms of moral conduct from which behavior toward the other side is exempted; and the intensity of negative attitudes toward the other side. Escalation of the conflict makes the conflict more difficult to resolve constructively except when the escalation proceeds so rapidly that its absurdity even becomes self-apparent. At the other extreme, there are people who tend to minimize their conflicts. They are similar to the conflict avoiders but, unlike the avoiders, they do recognize the existence of the conflict. However, by minimizing the seriousness of the differences between self
and other, by not recognizing how important the matter is to self and to other, one can produce serious misunderstandings. One may also restrict the effort and work that one may need to devote to the conflict in order to resolve it constructively.

(f) **Compulsively revealing versus compulsively concealing.** At one extreme there are people who feel a compulsion to reveal whatever they think and feel about the other and their suspicions, hostilities, and fears - in the most blunt, unrationalized and unmodulated manner. Or they may feel they have to communicate every doubt, sense of inadequacy, or weakness they have about themselves. At the other extreme, there are people who feel that they cannot reveal any of their feelings or thoughts without seriously damaging their relationship to the other. Either extreme can impair the development of a constructive relationship. One, in effect, should be open and honest in communication but, appropriately so, taking into account realistically the consequences of what one says or does not say and the current state of the relationship.

12. **Finally, throughout conflict, one should remain a moral person - i.e., a person who is caring and just - and should consider the other as a member of one's moral community - i.e., as someone who is entitled to care and justice.** In the heat of conflict, there is often the tendency to shrink one's moral community and to exclude the other from it: this permits behavior toward the other which one would otherwise consider morally reprehensible. Such behavior escalates conflict and turns it in the direction of violence and destruction.

**Evaluation of progress in the social psychological study of conflict**

I now return to the question posed at the beginning of the talk: What progress, if any, has occurred during the past sixty years or so in the social psychological study of conflict? I am a biased observer, but, even taking my bias into account, I am strongly inclined to believe that significant scientific progress has been made and that important contributions to society are being derived from the scientific study of conflict. Let me briefly characterize the nature of the progress in the methodological, conceptual, empirical, and technological domains.

**Methodological**

There have been major methodological advances during the past sixty years in the study of cooperation-competition, conflict, bargaining, and negotiation. New and better techniques for studying these phenomena in the laboratory and also in the field have emerged.
Conceptual

In the course of this paper, I have outlined some of the conceptual developments that have taken place in work on cooperation and competition; on understanding the nature and determinants of constructive and destructive processes of conflict resolution; and on understanding some of the determinants and consequences of different systems of distributive justice. This represents significant theoretical progress and a more systematic integration of our knowledge of the social psychological aspects of conflict and distributive justice.

Empirical

We know a great deal more, with considerable more certainty, about the empirical regularities associated with conflict. Thus, we know how such psychological processes as “autistic hostility,” “self-fulfilling prophecies,” “unwitting commitments,” and “biased perceptions” operate to produce an escalation of conflict. We know the social psychological correlates of intensifying conflict and de-escalating conflict. Thus, as conflict escalates there is an increased reliance upon a strategy of power and upon the tactics of threat, coercion, and deception. Also, there is increased pressure for uniformity of opinion and for leadership and control to be taken over by those elements organized for waging conflict. Deescalation of conflict is characterized by graduated reciprocation in tension reduction; tactics of conciliation; accentuation of similarities; and enhancement of mutual understanding and goodwill. We are increasingly aware of the social psychological regularities associated with benign and malevolent conflict. We are reasonably sure of the typical effects of certain forms of bargaining strategies and tactics and can reliably conclude that many commonsense beliefs about bargaining are much too simply part-truths.

Technological

There have been many significant social consequences of the scientific study of conflict; not all of these can be attributed to the work of social psychologists. Social psychologists have been important contributors to some changes in thinking about conflict at the national level — as exemplified in Kennedy’s American University speech and in the Kerner Commission reports. Also, in recent years, many of the ideas generated in the social psychological study of conflict have been employed in training administrators and negotiators, in schools, labor unions, industry, government, and community organizations how to deal with conflict more effectively. “Conflict,” “negotiation skills,” and “mediation skills” workshops are now common features of training for
work in organizations in the United States, Europe, and Japan. Osgood’s strategy for deescalating conflict -- “graduated and reciprocated initiatives in tension reduction” (GRIT) -- has received considerable experimental support, has been widely discussed in international and national meetings, and appears to have been the basis for the “Kennedy experiment” to end the cold war. Key participants in the round-table negotiations in Poland between the Communist government and Solidarity have told me that our work on conflict resolution was consciously employed to facilitate successful negotiations.

Let me conclude by stating that although there has been significant progress in the study of conflict, the progress does not yet begin to match the social need for understanding conflict. We live in a period of history when the pervasiveness and intensity of competitive conflict over natural resources are likely to increase markedly. And currently ethnic and national conflicts pose great danger to peace in many areas of the world. We also live in a period when hydrogen bombs and other weapons of mass destruction can destroy civilized life. The social need for better ways of managing conflict is urgent. In relation to this need, it is my view that too few of us are working on the scientific issues which are likely to provide the knowledge that will lead to more constructive conflict resolution of the many intensive conflicts which await us all.
REFERENCES


