

## **Approach to social conflict**

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### **Abstract**

Around the concept of "conflict" turns our lives, of all, each of us, at one time, I was involved directly or indirectly in certain conflict situations, states that either remained at the level of perception, or have exceeded it on this and have become manifest, reaching even to different forms of violence. For this reason, it is said that the existence of conflict is as old as the world, which is an "ingredient" of everyday individuals; some of them seem to be born for the simple reason to cause conflicts, and others to address them.

Most of us are afraid of conflicts, so that when we feel we are close to this phenomenon, try, wherever possible, to avoid, to postpone any decision related to it, and for this reason, conflicting situations are put directly related stress, the psychological discomfort and other tensions that they can cause.

We have chosen to address this issue because *conflicts* have a strong impact on our society, the time which focuses much research of psychologists, sociologists, legal practitioners, etc., and from my point of view, as a specialist in communication, conflict is as important as communication is a feature of the living world, and for this reason it is important that we know how to design appropriate behavior, as a means to respond to conflict and be able to distinguish between functional and dysfunctional conflicts , the first to generate, and the latter avoid them.

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## 1 Conflict defining

Conflict is the subject for various fields, such as sociology, psychology, political science, economics, strategic management, communication or organizational behavior.

Both in literature and in the opinion of ordinary people, who have no specific training in this area, there are several successful attempts, but also the failures of definition, characterization and typology of the concept of *conflict*, which led in time to give birth to more confusion. When we refer to the *conflict*, we must try to distinguish it from other similar terms, but not synonymous such *problem*, *disagreement*, *tension*, *competition* etc.

Regarding the relationship between competition and conflict, there are different views. Some say that the first would be a subset of the conflict, others, on the contrary, support the idea that conflict is a subset of the competition and while some sources insist to put competition and conflict equivalence foot.

In Morton Deutsch view there are conflicts even without competition, the latter being regarded as a special type of conflict, which involves the incompatibility of goals, while conflict may be triggered when two people want to meet the same objectives but not put in agreement in terms of their achievement. (Deutsch 1973 cited Boncu, 2006, p. 21)

Other authors contradict the Deutsch, arguing that competition purposes not related to the incompatibility of two or more individuals, but their motivation, their desire for affirmation, despite the success of others. If we consider the definition found in the dictionary specialist, competition differs clearly from the conflict, but there are situations where it can degenerate into conflict and violent demonstrations. (Called ..., 2007, p. 31)

Unlike conflict, in a competition there are certain rules or rules to be followed by competitors, and their violation is one that can turn the competition into a conflict. However, a common behavior, which are found both to competition and if the conflict is that the parties involved in conflict or competition focuses its attention on achieving their own benefit, not the other party actions or characteristics. Another element that differentiates the competition is to raise awareness of conflict parties. The competition exists notwithstanding the perception of individuals, however, we see in what follows

that in order for there, the conflict must be first acknowledged by the parties involved in it.

From my point of view, more than obvious, the competition is not synonymous with the notion of conflict because I believe competition as a factor not found in any social group, consciously or unconsciously, with varying degrees of intensity.

For example, in family, children, unconsciously, are always competing to show who is better in front of their parents; college students are always in fierce competition in terms of getting the best results, while at work employees are competing, even if it is not manifested, it certainly is aware, to show the manager that of them is more effective.

Another term that is associated by some authors to the notion of conflict is the problem (in this case social problem). Indeed, this is a factor that has the power to harm any social group, if not resolved in time, but should not be confused in any way with the conflict itself. In light of the fact that not all problems that exist in a social group are acknowledged, they can not trigger a conflict. In order to delineate more clearly the concept of the problem, the conflict, emphasize that it is a rule that all problems occur in the system to generate a conflict, it is clear that, always, a conflict starts from a problem not timely identified and solved.

According to the Dictionary of communication, negotiation and mediation, conflict comes from the Latin "conflictus" which means "to take with force", while being perceived as a misunderstanding, dispute, clash of interests, strife, even Violent discussion and so (Called ..., 2007, p. 31)

In the same paper, the conflict is presented as an open opposition battle between individuals, groups, classes, communities and parties, countries with economic interests, religious, racial, divergent and incompatible that can have destructive effects on social structures. (Called ..., 2007, p. 31)

As highlighted above, unlike the competition, when two entities are in conflict, they do not take account of any rule or norm, they can make use of all the resources we have at hand, to exhaustion.

From a sociological perspective, conflicts are considered to be "manifestations antagonistic open between two actors (individual or collective) interests temporarily inconsistent regarding possession or management of rare goods (material or symbolic)." (Coanda & Curta, 1994, p. 34 -35) Furthermore, it should be noted that, from the same perspective, conflicts are seen as the source of warfare between states or confrontations within a company, i.e. the divergence of

different intensities of different ethnic groups, religions and so on

It is important to separate intrapersonal conflict of social. Intrapersonal or intrapsychic conflict occurs within an individual and occurs when our conditions are not in consonance state or irrelevance, but in a state of dissonance, tension or discomfort interfering factors such as psychological, that lead to interpersonal conflict. According to Stephen Boncu, the concept of "social" social conflict that forms the phrase refers to the fact that the parties who are in a conflict are social entities, i.e. individuals, groups or organizations. (Boncu, 2006, p. 19)

So, unlike the internal conflict, social conflict can occur between two or more persons; between individuals and organizations of which they are part or in contact; between two or more organizations who are interrelated, and for social conflict to go dormant state and become manifest, both parties involved in it must have a uniform conscious behavior.

In the international literature when studying organizational behavior, Robbins believes that social conflict may arise when one actor considers that one of the other actors, by its actions, has adversely affected or may affect, deliberately, something which is directly related to him. (Robbins, 1998, p. 921)

Another theorist which considers the defining issue of conflict is Adrian Petean who insist, in particular, on the view offered by a dynamic field of social sciences, namely conflict resolution -conflict resolution- that, when reporting to conflict, in addition to concepts such as those of opposition or opposing interests, plus other new terms, and that awareness of conflict. (Petean, 2006, p. 8)

It is understandable that, in fact, the conflict is primarily a problem that is directly related to individual perceptions. Thus, two or more individuals can enter into a conflict, considering that they have good reason, but in fact, these reasons are subjective and have nothing to do with reality or, conversely, even if their real reasons for entering -a conflict, if they are not aware of what happens, we can not talk about a conflicted.

However, we must not forget that this incompatibility is not always the one that is the basis for a conflict because the same author concluded that in most cases, conflicts arise when two or more individuals wishing to meet the same objectives that are impossible to achieve simultaneously, and because resources are limited, they enter into opposition.

In fact, a conflict is made up of emotional feelings, personal motivations, beliefs or values. In the context of such conflict situations, they occur often, pride,

anger and other resentments that prevent us from thinking rationally.

But, besides interests, goals, emotions or incompatible values, which are the individual's perception, a state of conflict must involve, necessarily, and inconsistent a behavior between the parties. For this reason, Bernard Mayer argues that conflict is a psychosocial phenomenon consisting of three components: a cognitive component in falling thinking, perceptions, etc., an affective component that includes emotions and feelings and a behavioral component, component entering and communication between the parties to the relationship of interdependence. (Mayer, 2000, p. 6)

Leaving aside the traditional approach, which concerned the conflict as something bad, dysfunctional, to be avoided or removed by any means, a modern vision, it is understood as being among the few ways in which man evolved. An example of this is given by wars, they are known as periods which led to progress both technically and socially.

Since 1996, the specialist in sociology, philosophy and political science, Ralph Dahrendorf associated the conflict with our freedom, going on the assumption that the absence of conflict is not changed, so there can be no freedom. (Dahrendorf, 1996, p. 23)

Moreover, in his Conflict Mediation refers to the concept of managing the conflicts, pointing out that, in essence, conflicts are even necessary, because they are the ones that lead to change, to innovation. (... Sirbu, 2013, p. 73)

According to the authors of the work mentioned above, Heraclitus regarded the conflict as the "mother of all things", Plato and Aristotle saw him as a "social disease" and Nicolo Machiavelli's vision is a symptom of political conflict and instrumental element of political order.

From my perspective, even though we live in a modern society than than, we should not all conflicts as beneficial because not all contribute to the progress of society, not all make a change for the better, some are even harmful, not do nothing but bring immense damage, it is important to distinguish them in time to be able to manage them in an appropriate manner. The research conducted by Adrian Petelean, the new approach to the conflict, which also called interactional, perceive the conflict as not only inevitable, but also necessary, encouraging group leaders to ensure a minimum level of conflict to stimulate creativity self-criticism, self-overcoming, etc. (Petelean, 2006, p. 23-24)

## **2 Sources of Conflict**

As if trying to define the concept of conflict, and in terms of identifying

the causes leading to the outbreak of conflict situations, opinions are divided, but, first, we must see if we are dealing with psychological causes or organizations involved and other features.

Author Bernard Mayer in his book, *The Dynamics of Conflict Resolution: a Practitioner's Guide*, when is the nature of conflict, proposes that the main sources of conflict following factors: communication, emotions, values, history, structure, and as a central factor which underlies all conflict situations outbreak, the author puts human needs. (Mayer, 2000, p. 9)

The authors suggest Communication and Conflict Management, in turn, 11 sources of conflict, namely the differences and incompatibilities between people; needs / human interests; poor communication or lack of communication; self esteem; individual values; explicit or implicit non-compliance; inappropriate behaviors; aggressiveness; social competence; the external; status, prestige, "principles" of those involved, the use and dissemination of their culture and information. (Bocoş ..., 2008, p. 13-14)

When the air, water or food, which are vital factors of life, is not enough to parties interacting inherently conflicts arise. Also on the psychological needs, as sources of conflict, love, honesty, happiness, to which we all aspire, they are essential because they depend on the peace of mind of all of us, and if these needs are violated we are triggers, what I called above, inner conflict, intrapsychic, which can lead easily to other social conflicts.

Poor communication can be a trigger of conflict when one party provides either incomplete or insufficient or erroneous, inappropriate transmission channels when using that message, when one party uses an inappropriate party in perception when the message is not formulated in a clear and concise etc.

It is also important to note that a faulty communication can be caused in turn by differences in age, culture or class. Thus, two or more individuals may have different perceptions about the same problem, especially in light of the fact that, in general, tend to solve a problem before you understand it.

The communication also can be in a state of conflict when it is lacking, individuals accumulate over time a higher voltage, and at some point I need to be discharging and it is impossible to do it in a manner and at adequate intensity.

Systems are treated as another driver of conflict aiming in general ethical aspects of individuals or organizations who believe in the values by which guides its existence. When our values are incompatible with those of people we interact when we are prone to conflict, because we feel that our integrity is compromised.

As I said above, emotions can cause the onset of conflict. As regards the role they have in the outbreak of a conflict situation, they are regarded as "fuel" that ignites conflict, especially because they are generated by our previous experiences (Mayer, 2000, p. 10).

Because emotions people can not think and behave rationally, representing a source of energy that helps the parties have the courage, strength and perseverance necessary conflict situation.

From my point of view, the most powerful trigger of conflict is limited resources here entered: time, money and other material resources, human resources, and in light of the fact that we live in information society, as well as information can enter the category of limited resources.

When Bernard Mayer tries to identify factors that impel us most often to a conflict, it focuses on the interests of our practical concerns include: temporal or permanent, conscious or unconscious, individual or group, and recommends that, when we try to understand the conflict and find solutions for it to be solved, to focus mainly on the parties. (Mayer, 2000, p. 10)

Regarding other causes that can start a conflict, Ion-Ovidiu Pânișoară takes to analyze the following: previous conditions that the individuals experienced, emotional states, such as stress, tension etc. moods and cognitive styles of individuals and existence of conflict behavior that is often hard to identify. (Pânișoară, 2004, p. 141)

Thus, if we consider these four characteristic elements of a conflict situation, a conflict may be triggered when one of the protagonists of the conflict perceive each other that said or acted in a manner frustrating against him.

As we have seen with the help of previously reported causes that can generate a conflict situation are multiple. From these sources originate, frequently, many conflicts, with ourselves, with our friends, at school, at work, etc. It is important that when trying to resolve a conflict, to identify, firstly, that were sources that led to the firing; thus identified and resolved, and the conflict is solved itself.

### **3 Typology options**

In most cases, ordinary people use the word conflict without taking into account how broad and ambiguous meaning may be his. Due to the complexity and diversity of conflicts, their classification is a pretty difficult test. When you are considering this issue, the authors of literature take into account factors such as: parties involved in a conflict, the location of the conflict, the way he carries his

intensity, the effects they produce etc. Thus, there are several ways the concept of conflict typology.

Depending on the location criteria or who develop, distinguish internal and external conflicts. (Constantin Stoica, 2004, p.30-41) inner conflict, as noted above, when I tried to delimit the social conflict intrapsychic, is characterized in particular by cognitive dissonance that occurs when two cognitions of the same person is in a relationship of opposition.

External conflict or what I called above social conflict, involving two or more parties (individuals, institutions, organizations, groups, etc.), which are interdependent or so are levied in different or even opposite Relations terms of values, attitudes, goals etc.

In turn, external conflicts can be: interpersonal conflicts, intra-group, intergroup, intra and inter-organizational. Interpersonal conflict is between two or more people who perceive them to be opposed in terms of goals which aim to meet, attitudes etc. These conflicts can be between spouses, between employer and employee, between two colleagues at work etc.

Intra-group conflict is the kind of conflict that occurs within a group, such as one that occurs within a political party within a department, a class of students etc. Unlike the intra-group, intergroup conflict breaks out between two different groups, such as the conflict between PDL and PSD, the conflict between two different racial groups, between union and management, etc.

Going forward, intra conflict is the conflict which locates, as the name suggests, in an organization and can take place between management and employees, between two or more departments, between an employee and his other co-workers etc. . Therefore, the conflict within an organization may take the form of a vertical conflict that takes place between boss and employees, a horizontal conflict between parties (employees or departments) which is at the same hierarchical level, a conflict linear or anui Role conflict. Interorganizational conflict is the conflict that takes place between the two organizations, corporations, national or even international is in an interdependent relationship, being either cooperative or competitive. However, this conflict may erupt between the two organizations competing government between agencies or between two types of providers.

Other criteria according to which conflicts are classified essence that distinguishes conflicts of substance and emotional conflicts; intrinsic nature of the conflict into which meet: biological conflicts generated by organic diseases,

socio-cultural and psychological conflicts and conflicts of evolution, caused by adolescence, retirement, migration etc .; or purpose criterion showing clashes that left-oriented problem by itself when it resolved the problem of conflict and conflict-oriented structure, aimed at changing the structure of the system. (Bocoș ..., p. 25-27) For example, a strike that occurs in an organization because of decreasing salaries is a problem-oriented conflict that goes off when management and union reach an agreement, and revolutions falling within conflict-oriented structure that always, is considering changing the structure.

Depending on the duration and evolution encounter clashes spontaneous, acute and chronic. Unpredictable spontaneous conflicts are the conflicts that occur suddenly, but it also ends the same; the short duration are low, but they have a higher intensity and chronic, whose causes are usually difficult to identify occult and are longer lasting and evolve slowly. (Petelean, 2006, p. 41)

It also should not be missed classification conflicts in terms of the effect they produce on average it takes place, meeting: functional conflicts that have beneficial effects on the level of which takes place systems and dysfunctional, which often produce chaos, preventing the good of society; these effects have exhibited extensively above, when I referred to the three perspectives of which is the conflict.

However, when we aim to analyze a conflict, and we must relate it to a dress form, ie if it is a latent, or, on the contrary, manifested.

#### **4 Dynamics of conflict**

Conflict situations are not static phenomena, they, on the contrary, is a very dynamic process, changing its intensity is according to their life cycle. Therefore, to understand, analyze and address a conflict, it is important to identify, first, in what stage, and depending on it to choose how, when and by what means to intervene on it.

In literature there are two models for analyzing the structure of conflicts, namely: Johan Galtung's model and that of Bernard Mayer. (Constantin Stoica, 2004, p. 15)

The model proposed by J. Galtung regarded conflict as a triangle whose three sides are: the contradiction, attitudes and behavior, the latter representing how the parties wish to address this situation: through cooperation, by coercion, by hostility or, extreme cases, violent. Mayer's model, like that of Galtung, look at conflict as a structure made up of three components: cognitive perceptions pertaining to the parties in conflict, emotional and behavioral element

component.

Addressing conflict by using violence is that which gives individuals pay only negative connotations of this process and generate various emotional states such as anxiety, hostility, aggression open or undertaking various actions that they seek at all costs to avoid to enter into a conflict.

In general, in an attempt to describe the life cycle of a conflict, the theorists have identified the following steps: disagreement; confrontation; escalation; de-escalation and resolution (Botezat..., 2007, p. 59)

The first phase disagreement occurs when misunderstandings occur or insignificant differences that can be justified or not, but if not kept under control, may turn into actual conflicts.

In the next step, confrontation, conflict actors uphold their every position, usually on the basis of an ideology, the phase in which each side is convinced that it is what is right and tries to prove his opponent to give up his position. This may degenerate into violence, coercion, etc., and the emotional side dominating the rational, logical arguments is fewer. In this new stage jam occurs at communication and encounter stress, tense atmosphere, frustrations, fighting for pride, suspicion etc.

When conflict becomes intensely takes place next step escalation stage where all the good intentions disappear, and the parties in this process no longer have any consideration to each other. Therefore, when conflict is at this stage can be raised theory snowball that rolls and becomes very difficult to stop speed, communication relations between the protagonists is practically blocked and hard to resume. In time it was noticeable that tensions and actions of the parties get out of control, reaching "the point Cumin" or "peak" which has the power to physically and mentally destroy parts if action is not taken quickly.

Clearly, after the escalation of escalation occurs and it is the stage where the parties need to focus and find solutions to the subject matter of the conflict, finding a solution themselves, without involving a third party, or, Instead, through the intervention of a third party such as the mediator, expert, arbitrator, judge, etc.

Finally, if the parties reach a compromise and find a mutually acceptable solution, or, on the contrary, it imposed on them by an authority, the conflict is resolved and returns to normality.

We must also consider the situation in which one of the two parties involved in the conflict situation is canceled out the other side. Also on this issue,

there are specialists who consider the conflict as a series with multiple episodes, concluding that there are five milestones of the conflict, namely latent; Step charged; stage felt; show stage and final stage of the conflict, the conflict resolution, which is also known as assume the consequences of the conflict phase. (Bertocci, 2009, p. 77)

When you are in the first stage, the conflict can not be charged, the participants are not yet aware, and because of this there is the possibility that this situation does not lead to a manifest conflict, remaining latent.

The second stage begins when one party considers that the other Party may hinder or prevent them achieve their goals, which is the phase where you start escalating the conflict, both sides trying to discover the "origins" of the conflict, perceiving it in a different way.

In the next stage of the conflict, stress and anxiety appears, and scale and gains conflict rages.

At this stage it is already in a state manifested one party begins to take vindictive attitude towards the other hand, there is the stage where discussions can take place aggressive or even violent. Finally, the last step occurs resolve or dissolves conflict and when it establishes peace.

If the conflict is not resolved in an appropriate manner that satisfies both sides, there is a possibility that he might take again a latent form

That said, we can say that essentially triggers conflict between those who may consist of individuals, groups or organizations who are in a relationship of interdependence (mutual dependence), which implies either that the two have different goals, whether they have the same objective, but resources are limited.

For this reason, due to the context in which the conflict occurs, it may remain in the first stage or, alternatively, they may traverse all of them.

## **5 Conclusions**

Whatever type of conflict and its life cycle, one thing is certain: the conflicts can not be permanent; at a time, as they arose, they must also disappear because, if they would last forever, would lead to depletion and even destruction from occurring levels. It is therefore important to understand in what stage is the conflict that we want to analyze it or fix it to see if we are in a situation of conflict prevention, management (management's) a settlement of the conflict or situation conflict, which is applicable to the life cycle of conflict.

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