

UNVEILING POLITICAL CONFLICTS

A Comprehensive Analysis

Muharrem Hilmi ÖZEV



UNVEILING POLITICAL CONFLICTS A COMPREHENSIVE ANALYSIS

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To my beloved father,
and all the other innocents who bear the unjust price in conflicts. . .

PREFACE

The principal aim of this publication does not entail an exhaustive exposition of the origins and ramifications of conflict, nor does it purport to proffer precise panaceas. Rather, its purpose resides in its contribution towards mitigating uncertainties within the realm of solution-seeking, amidst the ever-constricting domain of estimative conjecture and prognostic possibilities.

It is conceivable to encounter viewpoints positing that the prevention of conflicts is both unattainable and undesirable, contending that societal change and transformation can solely be engendered through conflict. Needless to say, those adhering to such a perspective cannot be anticipated to furnish any meaningful contributions to the discipline of conflict resolution.

Conflict resolution, as a scholarly domain, operates on the premise that conflicts are neither inevitable nor insurmountable, and can be forestalled through judicious precautions, or, at the very least, their deleterious implications can be minimized. By meticulously identifying potential sources of conflict, undertaking comprehensive analyses, and promptly implementing tangible measures, conflicts can be averted or ameliorated.

Nevertheless, the complete eradication of conflicts and the establishment of a universally peaceful world continue to elude us as aspirational objectives. Nonetheless, it remains imperative that endeavors towards peacebuilding occupy a central position within the realm of political pursuits. Just as medical studies do not claim to discover a panacea for mortality, yet are still deemed significant, the purpose of conflict resolution as an academic discipline lies in the development of nonviolent methodologies and tools to effectuate structural and political transformations, enhance social psychology, and curtail incidents of harm, injury, and loss of life.

The perpetration of homicide, whether it be the taking of a solitary life or the extinguishing of many lives, without any legitimate justification, is an act of profound moral transgression. Conversely, the relentless pursuit of universal peace, the prevention of gratuitous loss of life, even if confined to a single individual, and the amelioration of suffering are endeavors of utmost sanctity.

Engaging in conflict, combat, and the act of killing may be undertaken with relative ease, while the nurturing, establishment, and construction of peace is a profoundly intricate and formidable undertaking. However, it is not an insurmountable challenge. In fact, despite the traumatic and intricate nature of conflicts, periods of harmonious coexistence endure significantly longer.

The primary objective of this scholarly inquiry is to examine the origins and consequences of political conflicts through a comprehensive cause-and-effect lens. By doing so, it aims to offer insights into ways to diminish the underlying sources of conflict, prevent and contain

imminent conflicts, mitigate the severe repercussions of unavoidable conflicts without exacerbating further discord, and contribute to the realization of a more tranquil and harmonious global order.

This publication endeavors to provide an exhaustive understanding of political conflicts, their historical evolution, and the development of the discipline of conflict resolution. It delves into conceptual frameworks for conflict resolution, meticulously explores conflict analysis, including the various stages of conflict and crisis management. Moreover, it scrutinizes diverse approaches to the causes of conflict, encompassing political, geopolitical, sociological, and psychological factors.

Furthermore, this book delves into the intricate processes of negotiation, encompassing the tools, objectives, actors, and environmental factors that shape successful negotiation endeavors. It also delves into the crucial domain of third-party intervention in conflicts, the constitutional and legal intricacies inherent in conflict resolution, and the paramount importance of effective communication and problem-solving in the resolution of conflicts.

The fundamental underpinning of this literary composition is predominantly derived from my active involvement as a rapporteur in esteemed think tanks such as TASAM, NESAM, and ORSAM. Within these intellectual forums, which were convened to address a plethora of predicaments spanning from the Middle East to the Balkans, the Caucasus, Kashmir, and Central Asia, erudite scholars and statesmen of great distinction conveyed their sagacious perspectives. These scholarly deliberations have profoundly shaped the trajectory of my academic pursuits. It is with utmost reverence and appreciation that I pay homage to the departed souls of esteemed project participants, including the venerable Professor Nevzat Yalçıntaş. Furthermore, I extend my eternal gratitude to the living luminaries, exemplified by the eminent Professor Vamık D. Volkan. In numerous respects, this opus bears the indelible imprint of my decade-long tenure as an instructor, imparting erudition in Conflict Resolution and Negotiation at Istanbul University. The ardent and inquisitive dispositions exhibited by my diverse cadre of students, encompassing undergraduates, postgraduates, and doctoral candidates alike, have served as the principal impetus propelling this scholarly endeavor.

Their thought-provoking inquiries and discerning observations have indubitably fueled the maturation of this work. I shall forever remain indebted to their invaluable contributions and hold an abiding affection for them.

INTRODUCTION

Conflict resolution studies are progressing towards becoming a dynamic academic discipline with the primary objective of comprehending, preventing, and resolving conflicts. This field contributes significantly to theoretical and methodological advancements that aim to address the challenges posed by conflict through interdisciplinary research and practical applications.

The key areas of focus in conflict analysis and resolution studies are power dynamics, damage prevention or minimization, and the implementation of preventive measures. Understanding the nature of conflict and exploring avenues for cooperation are of paramount importance within this context. Conflict management and prevention serve as guiding principles towards constructive resolutions. Moreover, conflict resolution encompasses a wide range of formal and informal efforts to peacefully address conflicts and establish sustainable peace. This comprehensive approach involves identifying the root causes, implementing preventive measures, and effectively managing conflicts.

The analysis and resolution of contemporary political conflicts necessitate a thorough understanding of modern technological, economic, social, and political developments at the local, regional, and global levels. It is crucial to closely monitor the effects of these developments on factors such as nationalism and asymmetric power relations.

Approaches to conflict resolution have evolved to incorporate grassroots peacebuilding and critical perspectives, with a specific focus on cultural diversity. Needs, interests, and social identity play significant roles in this evolution. By addressing the root causes of conflicts and promoting inclusivity, peaceful resolutions can be achieved while fostering sustainable peace.

Proper conflict analysis requires an interdisciplinary approach that integrates various theoretical perspectives. Insights from realism, liberalism, constructivism, clash of civilizations, and critical/postmodern perspectives provide valuable understanding of cultural differences, power struggles, cooperation, and social interaction.

Contemporary challenges such as resource scarcity, environmental degradation, and political instability contribute to conflicts, making their resolutions demand collaborative efforts. Conflict resolution necessitates sustainable development, the promotion of human rights, and international cooperation. Achieving long-term peace requires aligning interests, effectively managing resources, and engaging stakeholders. In response to global demands for energy, water, food security, climate change, and environmental degradation, regional and global cooperation becomes imperative. Challenges such as hunger, malnutrition, natural disasters, and biofuel production call for sustainable solutions and international collaboration. Factors such as inequality in wealth distribution, identity conflicts, technological advances, and geopolitical influences increase the risk of conflict, underscoring the importance of diplomacy, multilateral institutions, sustainable development, and the promotion of peace, justice, and human rights. The influence of the state on conflicts is shaped by social structures, nation-building efforts,

and geopolitics. Conflict resolution involves striking a balance of power, addressing internal divisions, and promoting inclusive policies.

Regional integration movements have the potential to foster cooperation, while micro-nationalist movements tend to exacerbate conflicts by intensifying ethnic tensions and territorial disputes. It is crucial to comprehend the contextual factors at play. The norm of national sovereignty and the influence of geopolitics still hold sway over conflicts. Effective conflict resolution involves engaging in dialogue, accepting diverse orientations, and understanding power dynamics. Poverty, inequality, and unmet human needs contribute to conflicts, necessitating the need for addressing material and intellectual requirements. Within this context, perceptions and perception management, expectations and expectation management, interests, and scarcity play significant roles. Religion can be a source of conflict, but it also possesses the potential to be a force for peace. Complexities, therefore, must be taken into consideration.

Addressing identity issues and fulfilling human needs must be approached in an interactive manner. Political psychology aids in understanding conflicts and group dynamics. The psychology of large groups and shared identities shapes conflicts, necessitating nuanced approaches. Psychological boundaries and empathy hold importance. Resolving conflicts and achieving reconciliation involves addressing concrete issues and rectifying distorted perceptions. When examining the psychological foundations of conflicts, factors such as mirror images, deepening divisions, identification with the enemy, protection of psychological boundaries, identity issues, and mourning processes should be thoroughly explored. Effectively managing ethnic conflicts entails building a robust state while considering regional and international implications.

Early warning systems are crucial for conflict prevention. They provide timely information, analyze risk factors, and enable proactive interventions to address potential conflicts before they escalate. By enhancing situational awareness and promoting dialogue, these systems contribute to reducing violence and building sustainable peace. Furthermore, the effective utilization of early warning systems, which provide timely information and proactive interventions to prevent conflicts, synergizes with the requirements of successful negotiations. Active communication, consideration of diverse perspectives, and a willingness to compromise are integral to the negotiation process, allowing conflicting interests to be transformed into shared goals. Skilled negotiators, equipped with leadership, analysis, emotional management, and an awareness of public perception, guide stakeholders and leverage media channels to artfully resolve complex issues. The balance of interests and the search for common ground become crucial elements in achieving effective results, complementing the proactive and preventive nature of early warning systems.

Negotiation requires active communication, consideration of diverse perspectives, and a willingness to compromise. It facilitates the transformation of conflicting interests into

shared goals. Skilled negotiators take the lead in guiding stakeholders and leveraging media channels to artfully resolve complex issues. Successful negotiations rely on leadership, analysis, emotional management, and an awareness of public perception. Balancing interests and finding common ground are essential for achieving effective results.

For successful negotiations, it is necessary to separate positions from underlying interests, address power imbalances, and tailor initial positions to meet fundamental needs. Creating a fair negotiation environment fosters competition, respect, and active participation. During negotiations, effective communication takes into account cultural differences.

Third-party interventions, such as UN peacekeeping and mediation, contribute to conflict resolution. Skilled negotiators play a crucial role in mediating disputes between stakeholders, requiring consent, impartiality, transparency, and coordination. Constitutional frameworks and international law ensure lasting peace and justice. Human rights and international law are indispensable in the realm of conflict resolution. Ethical considerations provide guidance, albeit encountering challenges in the realm of international relations. A comprehensive approach to conflict resolution integrates psychology, history, and collaborative problem-solving.

The book aims to comprehensively address all of the abovementioned issues through its three distinct parts. The first part delves into the conceptual basis and historical background of conflict transformation, tracing the evolution of conflicts and the emergence of conflict resolution as an academic discipline. This section provides a solid foundation for understanding the theoretical underpinnings and development of conflict resolution as a field of study. In the second part, the book explores the various stages of conflicts, analyzing their sociological, political, and psychological reasons. By employing analytical models, this section offers valuable insights into comprehending the complex elements involved in conflicts. It provides readers with a deeper understanding of the causes and dynamics of conflicts, enabling them to better grasp the underlying factors and contributing factors at play.

Lastly, the third part of the book focuses on the diplomatic negotiation process and highlights the significance of legal and humanitarian frameworks in effectively managing conflicts. It delves into the intricacies of negotiation, emphasizing the importance of skilled negotiators who can navigate the complexities of conflicts and guide stakeholders towards mutually acceptable solutions. Additionally, it explores the role of legal and humanitarian frameworks in conflict resolution, underscoring the importance of international law, human rights, and ethical considerations in achieving sustainable peace.

By systematically addressing these three essential aspects—conceptual basis and historical background, conflict stages and analytical models, and diplomatic negotiation and legal frameworks—the book provides readers with a comprehensive understanding of political conflicts and equips them with valuable tools and knowledge to effectively analyze, manage,

and resolve conflicts in diverse contexts.

PART ONE: CONCEPTUAL AND HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

The study of conflict resolution is rooted in the historical transformation of the nature of conflict and the development of a discipline dedicated to understanding and addressing its complexities. This part of the book provides an overview of the historical progression of conflict and the evolution of conflict resolution as a field of study.

Chapter 1 introduces the conceptual framework for conflict resolution. Exploring the conceptual framework in conflict resolution studies lays the foundation for understanding the underlying principles and theories. Basic concepts in conflict resolution are explored to provide a comprehensive understanding of the field. Conflict prevention, civil war, protracted conflict and conflict transformation, and the concept of peace and related concepts further enrich the conceptual framework, offering insights into the dynamics and complexities of conflicts and their resolutions.

Chapter 2 delves into the historical transformation of the nature of conflict, beginning with the period following the Treaty of Vienna and culminating in the World Wars. This exploration highlights the changing dynamics of warfare and its impact on global conflicts.

Moving into Chapter 3, the history of the conflict resolution discipline is traced, beginning with the preparatory phase from 1918 to 1945. This period laid the groundwork for the establishment of conflict resolution as a distinct field of study. The subsequent phase, from 1945 to 1970, witnessed the formalization and recognition of conflict resolution as a discipline. The growth and expansion period from 1970 to 1990 saw significant advancements in theory and practice. The dissemination period from 1990 to 2020 highlights the increasing recognition and application of conflict resolution approaches worldwide. Scholarly evaluations provide critical insights into the shortcomings and challenges faced by the field, encouraging further refinement and improvement.

In this part, current developments are examined to anticipate future transformations in the nature of conflict, while contemporary challenges are explored to understand the complexities faced in conflict resolution today. By studying the historical transformation of the nature of conflict and the development of the conflict resolution discipline, as well as delving into the conceptual framework for conflict resolution, this part aims to provide a comprehensive understanding of conflicts and their potential resolutions.