Anthropology and the study of of conflict: an introduction

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Ethnographers have long been recording instances of warfare, feuding, factionalism, and sorcery, but theoretical attention to social conflict is relatively new in anthropology. Recent theoretical work by anthropologists on this subject has been influenced primarily by the structural-functional theory of social systems and indirectly by the psychoanalytic theory of personality (including its behavioristic revision in the frustration-aggression hypothesis).

At the present writing there appear to be two schools of anthropological thought on the subject of conflict. One is that of Max Gluckman and V. W. Turner, of the University of Manchester, who see patterns of social conflict as eufunctional for the maintenance of social systems. The "silver-lining" approach of Gluckman is exemplified by the titles of some of his well-known BBC lectures (6): "The Peace in the Feud" and "The Bonds in the Colour-Bar." The theoretical position of this school of thought is that conflicts within and between small social units promote the solidarity of larger social units (particularly the society as a whole), that rebellions against occupants of political positions serve to emphasize the value of those positions to society, and that expressions of hostility in ritual serve as symbolic reaffirmations of the unchallenged moral order within

which the rituals occur. On the assumption that the study of conflict within African societies is the most direct route to the understanding of their cohesive forces, Turner (24) has devised the "social drama," a case-history approach to community conflict as a method of ethnographic recording and presentation.

The other school of thought is that of Bernard J. Siegel and Alan R. Beals of Stanford University. They have challenged the theory that patterns of continual conflict in nonliterate societies are socially eufunctional:

It is difficult to interpret conflict of this kind in terms of a crystalline model of structure and function. In fact, so dubious is the functional value of such behaviors, that it appears probable that such organizational types would have little survival value in the face of new and critical problems and stresses [21, p. 107].

Siegel and Beals are concerned primarily with the causes of conflict rather than with its functions. They view social conflict as a maladaptive outcome, produced by the interaction of strains—sensitive points of potential disruption within the social system—and stresses—alteration in pressures external to the system. The latter include acculturative pressures. They have distinguished different types of factionalism, defined as "overt, unregulated (unresolved) conflict which inter-

feres with the achievement of the goals of the group," (21, p. 108) and attempted to identify the antecedent conditions leading to different forms and intensities of factionalist dispute. Their discussion of strain shows the influence of psychoanalytic formulations concerning aggression and its inhibition and displacement, but the emphasis is on structural factors as causes of strain.

In contrast to Gluckman and Turner, who have limited themselves to analyses of conflict in particular African societies, Siegel and Beals have attempted a broadly cross-cultural formulation applicable to all human societies and testable in laboratory studies of groups as well as in the field (22). Another major difference between the two schools of thought is that Siegel and Beals study conflict as a product of culture change, while Gluckman concentrates on conflict as an aspect of stable social systems.

With this recent flurry of anthropological activity on the theory of conflict, we can reasonably expect advances of an empirical and analytic nature to be made in this problem area during the next few years on both sides of the Atlantic. Regardless of what turns anthropological approaches to conflict take, there are certain aspects of its cross-cultural variations which cannot be ignored, and an attempt has been made to summarize these in the following conceptual framework.

Structural Levels of Conflict

In any cross-cultural study of conflict, the level or levels of social structure under examination must be made explicit even if not held constant. There are, as Siegel and Beals (22) have pointed out, kinds of conflict which spread to several structural levels, and which may be thought of as "pervasive," but it is necessary to distinguish the levels before one can determine whether or not a kind of conflict is pervasive. The following structural levels can be thought of as applicable to virtually all societies.

1. *Intrafamily.* Interpersonal conflict within the domestic family group, including sibling rivalry, intergenerational conflict, husband-wife antagonism, would be found at this level.

2. *Intracommunity.* Since the small local community is an identifiable territorial unit in most nonurban societies, it is possible to make comparisons at this level. Intergroup conflict within local communities, as between factions based on neighborhood, descent, class or caste, or associational ties (or some combination of them) is included here as well as interpersonal conflict which cuts across families but does not involve groups.

3. *Intercommunity.* This covers the entire range of levels above the single local community but within one ethnolinguistic entity. The number of levels and size of the interacting units are extremely variable cross-culturally, and depend on total population size and degree of political centralization. The following are examples of levels in the category for which ethnographers have reported conflict: (a) local communities, each operating autonomously, in conflicts against one another; (b) allied clusters of local communities; (c) nonlocalized social groups, such as lineages, clans, and associations, which are mobilized for purposes of conflict from among residents of several local communities; (d) autonomous states or chiefdoms of a single ethnolinguistic group, (e) provinces or chiefdoms within a national organization, in conflict against each other or against the central state. A single ethnolinguistic group may have conflict at a number of intercommunity levels, with temporary alliances among the groups and subgroups. The Nuer as described by Evans-Pritchard (4) are a good example of this.

The great cross-cultural variability in sociopolitical organization at supracommunity

levels raises the question of what kinds of units should be used for comparison. The answers which anthropologists have given to this question are as variable as the phenomena under study. Fortes and Evans-Pritchard, while admitting that "the designation of autonomous political groups is always to some extent an arbitrary matter," (5, p. 22) insist on the total ethnolinguistic entity, as the unit of comparison. Murdock (16, p. 86) has argued for using units which are roughly similar in size and scale, regardless of which structural level is chosen. Schapera (20, p. 8) disagrees with Murdock and asserts that what should be compared is the *political community*, by which he means the autonomous self-governing group, even though this may be a tiny hunting band in one society and a great kingdom in another. Leach (10) has presented the case against treating ethnolinguistic groups as isolated units and has argued for studying the wider intercultural environment. This great range of views among anthropologists boils down to a fundamental problem which must be faced by anyone doing a systematic cross-cultural study of conflict: whether to make an arbitrary *a priori* selection of a structural unit, such as "the local community" or "the total social system," and then try to find its nearest equivalent in the societies being studied or to adjust the comparative perspective to the structure of the societies being studied. The latter can be done by using a functional unit, e.g., the permanent decision-making unit of maximal size, or by attempting to capture the entire relevant milieu internal and external to the groups being examined.

4. *Intercultural*. This level involves interaction between ethnolinguistic groups or their members. In the case of stateless societies, the ethnolinguistic group may be so loosely organized that its component segments are never involved in collective action,

but the fact that it is linguistically, culturally, and territorially distinct from other such groups justifies a distinction in levels between its internal and external relations. What is often referred to as intertribal conflict occurs at this level. It can remain a significant dimension of cleavage even when a central political authority is superimposed over several ethnolinguistic groups, and even when they lose their territorial distinctness, as in some of the new nations of Africa.

The sections that follow concern five aspects of conflict at any structural level: the culture patterns which can be viewed as indicators of conflict, their attitudinal concomitants, their sources or causes, their functional value, and the culture patterns involved in the control and resolution of conflict. One of the central problems in the cross-cultural study of conflict is the amount and kind of variation in these aspects at different structural levels within one social system. While this is still something of an open question, we can reasonably expect to find a heavier reliance on informal mechanisms for conflict control and resolution at the lowest structural levels (intrafamily and intracommunity) and a greater use of politico-legal means of conflict resolution at the higher structural levels, if there are any means at all (26). This variation in itself justifies distinguishing among structural levels in empirical studies of conflict.

Conflict-indicating Culture Patterns

What are the overt cultural manifestations of conflict? The view taken here is that universal or institutionalized forms of aggressive behavior provide the categories for comparing societies in terms of conflict. The meaning of aggression in this context is interpersonal behavior consciously directed toward injuring a person (or group) or interfering with his attainment of goals. While the psychoanalytic notion of aggression as behavior

which can be directed against the self may be a valid one, it leads into so controversial an area of interpretation of culture patterns that the omission of this aspect of aggression from comparative discussion appears operationally useful at this point. The following five categories are culturally patterned forms of aggressive behavior which can be taken as indicators of social conflict, without making any assumptions about their functional value.

1. *Physical aggression.* This would include warfare, i.e., armed combat between groups, and feuding, a highly regulated, limited form of warfare, in the case of intergroup relations. At the interpersonal level, homicide, brawls, and dueling (a socially acceptable and limited form of interpersonal combat) are indicators. Although homicide and brawls may be deviant behavior, there is reason to believe that they are culturally patterned (1) and are therefore as useful as any other type of physical aggression as conflict indicators. Property destruction, as in arson, and theft of valued goods, may be a physical expression of conflict between persons or groups. Cultures can be compared with respect to differences in frequency of a type of physical aggression and in its intensity (e.g., average seriousness of injury, number of persons killed, value of goods destroyed or stolen).

2. *Public verbal dispute.* Public insult and accusation of wrongdoing, litigation, debate, fall into this category. The use of such behavior patterns as indicators of conflict may require an estimate by the investigator of the aggressive intent and emotional intensity of the participants. Litigation, for example, may represent a nonaggressive alternative to physical attack, but in societies with extremely high rates of litigation, the judicial process appears to be used for aggressive purposes. In one sense, any culture pattern which pits individuals against one another as adversaries with conflicting interests can be viewed as social conflict,

although it may be a highly eufunctional form of it. In the context of aggressive behavior, however, it seems desirable to have independent measures of the degree to which patterns of public verbal dispute actually do involve aggressive intent.

3. *Covert verbal aggression.* This covers malicious gossip, privately expressed suspicions of witchcraft and sorcery, and the use of malevolent magic. While magic is not entirely verbal, it involves the manipulation of verbal and nonverbal symbols, and does not ordinarily entail face-to-face combat or encounter. The frequency of these patterns of covert verbal aggression appears to be a sensitive index of conflict at the intrafamily and intracommunity levels in many nonliterate societies (18). In this issue, Scotch deals with the persistence of these patterns in an urban situation.

4. *Breach of expectation.* Failure to perform acts which are valuable to other persons or groups and which they have come to expect as the result of past performance may be a form of aggression. The refusal to participate in cooperative endeavors at the intracommunity level, described by Beals in this issue, is an example of this. Examples of other forms are refusal to obey commands in social relationships which involve obedience and withholding of goods in economic transactions. Since the expectations involved are often traditional, behavior of this kind is commonly found in situations of culture change.

5. *Avoidance and separation.* This is different from breach of expectation in that contact and communication between conflicting persons or groups are cut off to a greater degree and also in that avoidance and separation are more likely to be institutionalized in relatively stable cultures. Culture patterns in this category can be found at every structural level. They include avoidance relationships between categories of kin (e.g., the father-son avoidance described by Skin-

ner in this issue), the erection of fences or other barriers between neighbors, emigration of individuals or groups from a community or region, segregation of groups, secession of political units, and the breaking off of diplomatic relations. It must be emphasized again that the functional consequences of the culture patterns listed or the extent to which they are the least disruptive alternatives available, are not being assessed at this point. Without considering function, it seems reasonable to assume that avoidance and separation represent reactions to aggressive motivation or incompatibility of interests (which could lead to aggression) experienced by the actors in the social situation and are therefore indicators of conflict. It is in this category, however, that we confront those culture patterns which, while indicative of actual or potential conflict, may be so successful in preventing more disruptive forms from occurring that they must be considered under the heading of conflict control as well.

Attitudinal Concomitants of Conflict

Social conflict appears to be regularly accompanied by certain feelings and beliefs of individuals who are participating in the conflict or who are members of participating groups. Although these feelings and beliefs are culturally patterned, they can be measured independently of the overt manifestations of conflict discussed above and often *must* be measured independently because they are less likely to be recorded by ethnographers who do not have a specialized interest in conflict. Furthermore, there is an advantage to research in keeping overt patterns of conflict analytically distinct from individual attitudes, viz., retention of the freedom to find concomitant variations between the two sets of variables. The interview schedule presented in this issue by Campbell and LeVine has been devised with this advantage in mind.

Two types of attitudinal concomitants of conflict are conceived here: (a) Hostility, i.e., aggression in the form of a latent disposition to take aggressive action or in the form of fantasy aggression. In both forms hostility is a symbolic activity of the individual and can be measured by taking a sample of the relevant symbolic activity, as through an interview or psychological test. For example, an individual responding to such an instrument may express hatred of others, a desire to kill or injure them, and a description of how he would do it if he had the chance, even though his overt behavior does not exhibit this tendency. (b) Negative images, i.e., beliefs concerning other individuals or groups which involve an unfavorable evaluation of them. Such images are likely to be compounded of distorted perceptions of them and a selection of unfavorable traits from among their actual attributes. Where relatively stable groups are in conflict the negative images may become elaborate and well-organized stereotypes which condition intergroup behavior. This is conspicuous at the intercultural level, where cultural differences provide material for negative evaluation, but it undoubtedly goes on at other levels as well.

The tendency of ethnolinguistic groups to develop and maintain negative images of one another is discussed at greater length in the articles by Swartz and Campbell and LeVine in this issue.

Sources of Social Conflict

What are the causes of conflict in human social systems? Whatever they are, it is safe to assume that not all of them are peculiar to *homo sapiens,* since aggressive behavior is found widely among the vertebrates and is presumably adaptive in a broad range of environments. It may also be said that

human social life inevitably entails frustra-
tions and incompatibilities between individ-
uals which engender conflict in all societies.
No matter how valid such universal proposi-
tions are, a cross-cultural perspective bids us
to pay attention to the determinants of differ-
ences in amount and kind of conflict among
human populations. While we may assume
that all societies have patterns of social con-
flict, it is the variations across societies (and
over time in particular societies) that we
want to explain and predict.

The subject of determinants of social con-
flict has been dealt with by Siegel and Beals
in their discussions of strains and stresses
(21, 22) and is treated in this issue by Gulli-
ver, Beals, and Skinner. At this point, then,
I shall simply indicate three categories of
factors which seem to be determinants of
cross-cultural variations in social conflict.

1. *Economic.* Competition for scarce re-
sources is often mentioned as a source of
conflict, and there can be no question that
the degree of scarcity of valued goods varies
greatly among societies and in the histories
of particular societies. In some groups, con-
flict arises over land, as Gulliver describes in
this issue; in others, there is competition for
employment opportunities and/or for the
prestige goods rather than subsistence re-
sources. Competition for positions of status
and authority, while not strictly economic, is
similar in form to economic competition. This
category of conflict determinant can be
found at all structural levels.

2. *Structural.* At least two types of vari-
ables are involved here. (a) Demographic
variables, such as proximity which, by in-
creasing the amount of contact between com-
petitive persons or groups, with other things
being equal, increases the amount of conflict
between them. LeVine (12) has found a
relationship between the proximity of co-wife
residence in polygynous families and the
frequency of witchcraft and sorcery accusa-

tions, and has argued that frequency of intra-
family contact of this kind influences the
level of covert, verbal aggression. (b) Role
or status ambiguity which, in potentially
competitive situations, allows competition to
become so intense that conflict results. This
appears to be the case at all structural levels,
and at the intercommunity and intercultural
levels, tends to be correlated with a lack of
authoritative means for resolving conflicts.

3. *Psychological.* Although all aggressive
behavior may be linked to individual moti-
vation, there are some cross-cultural varia-
tions in conflict which do not seem to be
adequately accounted for in terms of eco-
nomic and structural hypotheses and which
require psychological explanations. Two
types of psychological variables are relevant
here. (a) Environmental conditions in child-
hood, e.g., training by parents, which rein-
force aggressive behavior patterns or which
create intrapersonal conflicts that produce
hostile attitudes in the individual. For ex-
ample, in some societies, physical aggression
is encouraged in childhood while in others it
is discouraged, and this appears to have
important consequences for the reaction in
adulthood of individuals who have been
trained differently. (b) Adult stresses and
frustrations other than those arising from
competition for scarce resources. These in-
clude biopsychological variables which have
been hypothetically linked to increments in
the aggressive behavior of individuals, e.g.,
nutritional deficiencies such as hypoglyce-
mia, and sexual frustration. Also included
here are the phenomena of culture stress
(18) and the psychological stress resulting
from acculturation.

The Functional Value of Conflict

Are aggressive patterns of behavior and
their attitudinal concomitants adaptive (eu-
functional) or maladaptive (dysfunctional)
for the survival and operation of social sys-

tems? It is clear that no single answer can be given which will hold for all such patterns in all social systems. In some contexts, conflict is disruptive, while in others it appears to have a facilitating effect. The problem is to assess disruption and facilitation in some relatively objective fashion.

Two ways of assessing the functional value of social conflict suggest themselves. One is in the terms of the effects of conflict on the solidarity of groups at various structural levels. Behavior which reduces group solidarity is dysfunctional, that which promotes it is eufunctional. Although it might seem that conflict could never promote group solidarity, one must take into account effects at different structural levels. It has often been pointed out in sociological discussions that open conflict between groups aids the internal cohesion of the groups, and this is illustrated by Lewis in his description of interclan feuding in Morocco in this issue. The observation that hatred and unfavorable stereotypes of outgroups help maintain feelings of solidarity within the ingroup is commonplace in discussions of ethnocentrism. On the other hand, it has been a major point of Gluckman and Turner that schism and fission at the local level can promote cohesion in a wider system of social relationships. All such propositions can be formulated as cross-culturally testable hypotheses if cohesion or solidarity at a certain level is measured by the absence or lesser degree of conflict at that level. The first generalization mentioned above would become: the more frequent or intense a conflict-indicating culture pattern at the intercultural or intercommunity levels, the less frequent or intense will be a conflict-indicating culture pattern at a lower intercommunity level at one of the two intracommunity levels. A parallel formulation is possible for the attitudinal concomitants of conflict. The second generalization can be reformulated

for cross-cultural testing as: the more frequent or intense a conflict-indicating culture pattern at an intracommunity or low intercommunity level, the less frequent or intense will it be at a higher structural level. Putting the two hypotheses together, we would expect to find an inverse relationship between conflict variables at different structural levels.

A second way of assessing the functional value of social conflict is by the development of a transcultural ranking of the degree of disruptiveness of the various conflict-indicating culture patterns. If it were possible to establish in some intersubjectively plausible manner that, e.g., certain patterns of physical aggression, breach of expectation, and avoidance and separation are more disruptive than certain patterns of public verbal dispute and covert verbal aggression or that some patterns of physical aggression are more disruptive than others, then it would be possible to rank societies along a dimension of the disruptiveness of the conflict patterns which they exhibit at a given structural level. A hypothetical example would be a ranking of societies in terms of the frequency of litigation or witchcraft accusations at the intracommunity level and another ranking of the same societies with respect to the frequency of intracommunity homicide. If it were agreed that litigation and witchcraft accusations are less disruptive than homicide, then a functional hypothesis, i.e., a hypothesis which sees one form of conflict as a functional alternative to another would be that the two series of rankings are inversely related. By organizing cross-cultural data in this way, it would be possible to find out if different conflict-indicating culture patterns, varying in their disruptiveness at a given structural level, are functional substitutes for one another. If it turns out that they are, then one can compare societies in terms of the relative disruptiveness (dysfunctional-

ity) of their solution to the same functional problem.

Patterns of Conflict Control and Resolution

In societies with specialized central political structures, mechanisms for the resolution and control of internal conflicts tend to be conspicuously identified with the explicit functions of political offices. However, among the empirical contributions which anthropology has made to the study of political organization, none is of greater significance than the discovery that there are viable and stable societies which lack both central government and specialized political roles. The problem of how conflict is controlled and resolved in these stateless societies, analogous in many ways to problems of international regulation, has been the object of considerable attention from social anthropologists during the twenty years since the publication of Fortes and Evans-Pritchard's *African Political Systems* (5). The following discussion continues this concentration on stateless societies, in a review of the mechanisms for conflict resolution which have been found in anthropological research.

Most theoretical analyses of stateless political systems have been primarily concerned with intercommunity structural levels within ethnolinguistic groups; the internal authority system of the local community has received less attention than it deserves. This is unfortunate, because the available evidence suggests that the mechanisms for resolving conflicts within small, face-to-face groups are quite different from those operating between groups, just as conflict resolution within organized national states is different from that found at the uncentralized international level. In this discussion, patterns of conflict resolution within local communities will be taken up first and then those operating at intercommunity levels. It should be noted that "the local community" is an abstraction which is not approximated as a distinct, stable, and cohesive entity in a number of stateless societies. Nevertheless, if thought of as a territorial unit greater than the domestic family, e.g., a village, hamlet, or neighborhood, with not more than 1,500 persons (16) and with at least some collective activity in cases of internal or external conflict, it is applicable to the vast majority of societies under consideration here.

In such communities, internecine violence tends to be rare, and, when it does occur, is quickly terminated. Several factors—social, economic, psychological, and political—are involved in the control and resolution of physical conflict in the local community.

First, there is the economic interdependence of its residents. Since the community is often an important subsistence unit, requiring the cooperation of its members for their joint survival, they are highly motivated to get on and restrain their aggressive impulses toward one another. An hypothesis involved here is that the frequency of internecine violence will vary inversely with the need for economic cooperation.

Second, there is the acceptance by community residents of an internal system for the making of community decisions regarding economic, judicial, military, and religious affairs. Among the decisions arrived at by this socially accepted process are those involving the application of sanctions to individuals who break the peace of the group. Sanctions include: the inflicting of injury, banishment, permitted retaliation, payment of compensation, ridicule, expression of disapproval, and supernatural cursing. The agencies which may legitimately apply sanctions may be formal, e.g., a council, hereditary headman, or magico-religious practitioner, or they may be informal, e.g., an assembly of elders or adult males or even the unassembled community in its entirety.

The degree to which the power to sanction is concentrated in the hands of a few wealthy, wise or aged individuals or diffused among the mass of residents of the community is also variable from one society to another. Regardless of its particular structure, this system of sanctions tends to maintain order in the group by stimulating in group members anticipation of painful or anxiety-arousing consequences for serious aggressive acts.

Third, there is often a related set of supernatural sanctions against violent conflict within the community. Particularly when the community is coterminous with a localized descent group, there is likely to be a belief in ancestor spirits or ghosts who automatically punish murderers through disease regardless of whether community agencies take any action. Under such circumstances, the use of classificatory kinship categories equates murder of a member of the local descent group with fratricide or parricide, which is believed to deserve supernatural intervention. The belief in supernatural punishment for intracommunity homicide, insofar as it relieves human agents of the task of applying sanctions, helps to avoid the perpetuation of conflict that may occur when community residents pronounce the verdict and perform the punishment themselves. In many societies supernatural belief systems play an important role in the maintenance of community order.

Fourth, there is the individual inhibition of aggression and the conformity to cultural rules which result from the socialization of the child. This is what Radcliffe-Brown referred to in his Preface to *African Political Systems* (5, pp. 15–16) when he stated, "Within small communities there may be little or no need for penal sanctions. Good behavior may be to a great extent the result of habit, of the conditioning of the individual by his early up-bringing."

Fifth, there is emigration from the local community as an alternative to violent conflict within it. In nomadic societies and agricultural groups with abundant land, local communities often shed their dissident members, who simply join another community of the same society. This solution is usually satisfactory to all concerned while it is possible, but should a land shortage develop and emigration become impossible, the community might not have adequately developed internal mechanisms for conflict resolution, with a resultant rise in internecine violence. Such a process is underway in many societies with rapidly increasing population densities.

These, then, are the factors which act to prevent disruptive violence within the local communities of stateless societies: economic interdependence, a legitimate decision system capable of applying sanctions, supernatural sanctions, effective socialization, and the emigration of dissidents. Not all of the factors are found in all societies and they are combined and relied upon in varying degrees in different parts of the world, but some of them will be found to be operating in any particular situation.

The maintenance of intercommunity order in stateless societies, involving as it does the interaction of politically integrated units, presents a different set of problems from the maintenance of internal order in local communities. On the intercommunity level there is a much greater cross-cultural range of variation in the amount of order actually achieved. At one end of the continuum there are contiguous local communities which have a common military-judicial decision system under a single chief or council where the probability of organized intercommunity violence is virtually nil. They constitute what Deutsch (3) calls a *politically amalgamated security community.* At the other end of the continuum are local communities which engage in sporadic violence and prolonged feuds against one another and which exist in

a condition of mutual hostility and tension. Under such conditions the most unity ever achieved is in the form of temporary military alliances to fight clusters of villages in another area. In between these two types there are many intermediate forms of interaction with varying probabilities of intercommunity violence.

In outlining some patterns of conflict control among local communities, I shall give primary attention to the factors which community decision-makers must take into consideration when tempted to involve their group in military activity against other local communities. The control patterns and decision factors are as follows:

1. *Mutual military deterrence.* This has been stressed by Fortes and Evans-Pritchard (5) who see certain African stateless systems as being in a state of equilibrium which serves to maintain a modicum of order ("ordered anarchy") in the absence of a central government. Equilibrium is achieved by a balance of power between territorial segments of the same order, and by temporary military alliances between such segments for battles against segments of the next highest order. These alliances have been referred to as "fusion" but it must be understood that the fusion is military and does not involve political amalgamation of the temporarily allied segments. In this "balanced opposition of segments" military retaliation is a primary mechanism for the control of overt conflict. Although the effectiveness of this mechanism may have been exaggerated, there can be no doubt that mutual military deterrence does operate between local groups in stateless societies, particularly in the absence of strong integrating mechanisms. Where communities are roughly equivalent in size and power, decision-makers have to consider the possibility that their attack will bring on counter-attacks by forces of equal or slightly superior strength and create a sit-

uation of prolonged and indecisive tension between the communities.

2. *The inclusion of other communities in the primary descent group.* Where local communities are coterminous with localized descent groups, particularly patrilineages, it is often the case that the male members of contiguous communities recognize a common ancestor and apply classificatory kinship terms to one another. This involves an extension of integrating mechanisms within the community to other communities, but in diluted form. Since persons in other communities are close lineage-mates, killing of one of them is equivalent to fratricide or parricide and is punishable by the ancestor spirits if reparations are not paid. Judicial agencies internal to each community may function jointly on occasion to enforce the payment of compensation. The greater the distance between the communities, the less likely this is to occur. Organized but attenuated violence may occur among communities whose members are so linked, e.g., the participants may recognize a rule of using clubs rather than spears. In the African societies which have this type of system, a number of communities may be linked by this extension of localized lineage regulations. Beyond the perimeter of the cluster of communities recognizing such bonds are other such clusters connected with the first in a similar but even more tenuous fashion. Genealogical connections among the clusters may be traced, but kinship terms are not used and supernatural sanctions not operative. Conflict with spears between clusters is quite possible and occurs fairly frequently. Within this territorial unit, however, it is recognized that violent conflict may be terminated by the payment of compensation for homicide. In actuality, compensations may be rarely paid, but it is recognized as the proper procedure for handling homicide and conflict between the clusters. Middleton and Tait (14, p. 9) call this max-

imal unit within which compensation can be paid the *jural community,* and refer to the armed hostilities which are carried on within it as the *feud* as distinguished from *warfare,* which cannot be terminated by compensation and is carried on *between* jural communities. The jural community is not always a territorial unit, but it tends to be in those societies which have the feud. In such societies it may be a territorial unit encompassing as many as 65,000 residents. Beyond its boundaries no permanent integrative ties exist.

Where a system like the one described above exists, community decision-makers, before committing themselves to military action in response to provocation by another community, must consider (a) the lineage relationship between the two groups, (b) supernatural sanctions which might result from the action, and (c) the spatial distance between the two groups. Such considerations most often act to mitigate hostilities between local groups which are closer in either space or descent, or both, and to perpetuate open conflict with groups which are more distant. In this situation, integration and the maintenance of order on the inter-community level tends to be a reflection or extension of the internal system of the community itself, and its effectiveness falls off sharply as distance from the community increases.

3. *Loyalties to descent and other groups outside the local community.* In contrast to the balance of power position, Colson (2, p. 210) suggested that divided loyalties of individuals between territorial and kinship groups might be a factor in the maintenance of order in segmentary lineage societies; Gluckman (6, pp. 10–20) has elaborated this point and analyzed Nuer social control in terms of it. The latter emphasizes the pacifying effects of dispersal of the patrilineal kin group.

Now if the vengeance group is scattered it may mean, especially in the smaller districts, that the demand for community solidarity requires that a man mobilize with the enemies of his agnates. And in the opposite situation such an emigrant member of the group which has killed may be living among the avengers, and be liable to have vengeance executed upon him. I suggest . . . that his exposure to killing exerts some pressure on his kin to compromise the affair. . . . Conversely, if a man of the group demanding vengeance resides among the killers, he has an interest in securing that his kin accept compensation instead of insisting on blood for blood [1955: pp. 11–12].

It should be noted that both Fortes and Evans-Pritchard recognized the potentially pacifying ties of kin group dispersal and cognatic relationships occasioned by exogamy, but considered them less important than segmental opposition for the maintenance of order. Regardless of which view has greater empirical validity, the Colson-Gluckman concept of divided loyalties must take its place beside the Fortes-Evans-Pritchard balance of power notion as a theoretical position on the resolution of conflict in "ordered anarchies."

Thus, intermarriage between local communities and the dispersal of kin groups among them may, under certain circumstances, establish enduring connections which tend to prevent conflict between them. In general, such cross-cutting ties seem to be more effectively pacifying in situations where men have shifted their residence (in uxorilocal or neolocal marriage, nonmarital emigration) away from the localities in which their kin groups predominate, than they are when women are uprooted by virilocal marriage.

Murphy has formulated this in general terms:

I would propose as a statistically testable hypothesis that matrilocal societies must repress open aggression in order to insure cohesion and continuity. If we take any matrilocal and matrilineal or bilateral society as our model, the system of residence tends to disperse males at least throughout the local community. Thus, any male

will have close ties of kinship and economic inter-
dependence with his housemates, his natal house-
hold, the households of his maternal uncles, and
the households of his brothers. The same is true
of patrilocal societies from the viewpoint of the
women, but males are the principal political
role-players in all human societies. Any conflict
involving men therefore becomes a matter of
deep community concern. . . . In short, when the
residence and kin groups of the male do not
coincide, he acquires multiple commitments that
may come into conflict [17, p. 1033].

Murphy reports that among the Munduru-
cú of Brazil, men are members of patrilineal
descent groups but marriage is matrilocal so
that they leave their home communities and
take up residence in those of their wives.
Under these conditions, the married warriors
of any village are faced with the fact that an
attack on another village would bring them
into armed conflict with men of the same
patrilineal affiliation. These extracommunity
ties are so dispersed that the Mundurucú are
able to maintain what Deutsch (3, p. 41)
would call a "pluralistic security community"
in which stable expectations of interunit
peace are maintained in the absence of politi-
cal amalgamation. In contrast, other Brazil-
ian tribes practicing *patrilocal* descent are
reported by Murphy to have considerable
internecine violence.

Other examples of cross-cutting ties in
stateless societies resulting from the scatter-
ing of kin group members are given by
Goody (7) for the LoDagaba, Morgan (15)
for the Iroquois, Warner (25) for the Mum-
gin, and Colson (2) for the Plateau Tonga,
to mention but a few. Evans-Pritchard (19,
pp. 27–28) has pointed out the pacifying
effects of regiments, clans, and age-sets
which cross-cut localities and each other
among the Kipsigis. The unifying conse-
quences of cross-pressures and multiple group
affiliations have been recognized by numer-
ous sociologists and political scientists in
their analyses of complex societies (13, 23).

These three patterns of intercommunity
control of violence are merely a sampling
from among the many which exist in state-
less societies. Extracommunity loyalties of
males may be based on age-group organiza-
tions and military regiments as well as on
descent groups and may form pacifying net-
works of cross-cutting ties. Ritual connec-
tions and trade relations between local com-
munities or clusters of communities may also
serve to reduce the probability of internecine
violence in the total social structure. In this
issue, Kopytoff describes an unusual pattern
of intercommunity conflict resolution which
is new in the ethnographic literature on the
subject, and we can expect other patterns, as
yet unknown to anthropology, to turn up as
empirical investigations in this area progress.

More comparative analysis is necessary
before we understand the relative effective-
ness of various mechanisms for controlling
intercommunity conflict in the absence of
political amalgamation. It may prove valu-
able to think in terms of "security communi-
ties" and to bear in mind the parallel between
internation relations and the interaction of
politically integrated units at any level. Hoe-
bel (8, p. 331) recognized this parallel in
stating, "International law, so-called, is but
primitive law on the world level." Keesing
(9, p. 18) has used the concept of "security
community," developed by Deutsch (3) for
the study of international relations, in his
analysis of the unstable central political or-
ganization of Samoa. Applications of such
concepts to stateless societies may also be
useful in future comparative analysis.

This issue of *The Journal of Conflict Res-
olution,* and this article which serves to intro-
duce it, are intended to present the range of
approaches and empirical materials which
anthropologists bring to bear on the study of
social conflict and ethnocentrism. No uni-
fied theoretical or methodological orientation
emerges; e.g., some of the articles are critical

of Gluckman's theoretical position, while others are in wholehearted agreement with it. This diversity represents the expansion of activity in a relatively new theoretical area. Despite the diversity of approaches, the study of conflict is a subject matter on which social anthropologists of different orientations and interests are converging. This introduction and the proposal at the end of the issue are addressed to the future of this convergence, in the hope that more systematic cross-cultural investigations of conflict will be carried out.

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