

## INFORMATION TO USERS

This reproduction was made from a copy of a document sent to us for microfilming. While the most advanced technology has been used to photograph and reproduce this document, the quality of the reproduction is heavily dependent upon the quality of the material submitted.

The following explanation of techniques is provided to help clarify markings or notations which may appear on this reproduction.

1. The sign or "target" for pages apparently lacking from the document photographed is "Missing Page(s)". If it was possible to obtain the missing page(s) or section, they are spliced into the film along with adjacent pages. This may have necessitated cutting through an image and duplicating adjacent pages to assure complete continuity.
2. When an image on the film is obliterated with a round black mark, it is an indication of either blurred copy because of movement during exposure, duplicate copy, or copyrighted materials that should not have been filmed. For blurred pages, a good image of the page can be found in the adjacent frame. If copyrighted materials were deleted, a target note will appear listing the pages in the adjacent frame.
3. When a map, drawing or chart, etc., is part of the material being photographed, a definite method of "sectioning" the material has been followed. It is customary to begin filming at the upper left hand corner of a large sheet and to continue from left to right in equal sections with small overlaps. If necessary, sectioning is continued again—beginning below the first row and continuing on until complete.
4. For illustrations that cannot be satisfactorily reproduced by xerographic means, photographic prints can be purchased at additional cost and inserted into your xerographic copy. These prints are available upon request from the Dissertations Customer Services Department.
5. Some pages in any document may have indistinct print. In all cases the best available copy has been filmed.

**University  
Microfilms  
International**

300 N. Zeeb Road  
Ann Arbor, MI 48106



8504330

**Temkin, Terrie Charlene**

**CONFLICT MANAGEMENT IN VOLUNTARIES: AN EXPLORATORY STUDY**

*The University of Oklahoma*

PH.D. 1984

**University  
Microfilms  
International** 300 N. Zeeb Road, Ann Arbor, MI 48106



PLEASE NOTE:

In all cases this material has been filmed in the best possible way from the available copy.  
Problems encountered with this document have been identified here with a check mark ☒.

1. Glossy photographs or pages \_\_\_\_\_
2. Colored illustrations, paper or print \_\_\_\_\_
3. Photographs with dark background \_\_\_\_\_
4. Illustrations are poor copy \_\_\_\_\_
5. Pages with black marks, not original copy \_\_\_\_\_
6. Print shows through as there is text on both sides of page \_\_\_\_\_
7. Indistinct, broken or small print on several pages ☒ \_\_\_\_\_
8. Print exceeds margin requirements \_\_\_\_\_
9. Tightly bound copy with print lost in spine \_\_\_\_\_
10. Computer printout pages with indistinct print \_\_\_\_\_
11. Page(s) \_\_\_\_\_ lacking when material received, and not available from school or author.
12. Page(s) \_\_\_\_\_ seem to be missing in numbering only as text follows.
13. Two pages numbered \_\_\_\_\_. Text follows.
14. Curling and wrinkled pages \_\_\_\_\_
15. Other \_\_\_\_\_

University  
Microfilms  
International



THE UNIVERSITY OF OKLAHOMA

GRADUATE COLLEGE

CONFLICT MANAGEMENT IN VOLUNTARIES: AN EXPLORATORY STUDY

A DISSERTATION

SUBMITTED TO THE GRADUATE FACULTY

in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the

degree of

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

By

TERRIE CHARLENE TEMKIN

Norman, Oklahoma

1984

CONFLICT MANAGEMENT IN VOLUNTARIES: AN EXPLORATORY STUDY

A DISSERTATION

APPROVED FOR THE DEPARTMENT OF COMMUNICATION

By

Helen G. Ginn

Edna M. Bick

Art W. Friedrich

William Casper

Robert L. Koser



### Acknowledgments

I want to thank a number of people for their help and support on this project. First, I thank Denis Greene of the Support Center for his help in identifying voluntary organizations in the Oklahoma City area that would be appropriate participants in the study. Second, I thank the organizations that responded to my request for subjects for this study by sharing their membership lists with me. I thank fellow graduate students Mitch Javidi and Vic Vogel for teaching me to use SPSSX. I also thank Sue Allen and Robin Solberg, departmental secretaries, for the many extra miles they willingly walked to save me a few steps.

A special thank you goes to my committee members--Roger Babich, Bill Carmack, Gus Friedrich, and Lloyd Korhonen. While whatever I say will sound trite, I truly appreciate the time they devoted to me, the challenges they presented to me, their thoughtfulness in referring me to articles of interest, the comments they made on my work that helped strengthen it, and the respect I feel I had from all of them. To Lloyd I must also extend an extra thank you for his eight-year battle to get me to come to the University of Oklahoma and for his active participation on my committee during the period of his sabbatical leave.

Words can not express my deep appreciation to my major advisor, Wayland Cummings. His constant support, his friendship, his guidance, and his excellent suggestions were always there for me, even while he was on sabbatical leave. I would not have wanted to attempt the program or the dissertation without him.

On a personal level I want to say thank you to all the friends both in Norman, Oklahoma, and around the country that lived with me emotionally through not only the writing of this dissertation but the three years of my program. Without their support I could not have accomplished half of what I did. A special thank you goes to Arlie Muller Parks who convinced me to go back to school in the first place, assuring me I was not too old to do it.

Thank you to my brothers, sisters, aunts, uncles, and grandparents who provided me with love and encouragement at each step along the way. A special debt of gratitude goes to my parents for their emotional and financial support during this mammoth undertaking. Their love for me and their faith in me have given me the strength to take on challenges such as this one throughout my life.

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS.....	iii
LIST OF TABLES AND FIGURES.....	viii
ABSTRACT.....	ix
INTRODUCTION.....	1
 Chapter	
I. REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE.....	7
Voluntary Organizations.....	8
Volunteers and Staff in Voluntaries...	9
Conflict Management in Organizations.....	14
Conflict Management Styles.....	15
Selecting a Conflict Management Style.....	18
Productive, Unproductive Conflict Management.....	21
Conflict Management in Voluntaries....	22
Styles Inventories.....	25
SUMMARY AND EXPECTATIONS.....	37
II. METHODOLOGY AND DATA ANALYSIS.....	44
Subjects.....	44
Procedures.....	45
Variables.....	47
Independent Variables.....	47
One's Own Position.....	48
The Opposing Party's Position.....	49

The Content of the Conflict Situation.....	49
Dependent Variables.....	50
Nonconfrontation.....	50
Solution-Orientation.....	51
Control.....	51
Analysis of Data.....	52
III. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION.....	54
Subjects.....	54
Manipulation Checks.....	55
Expected Results.....	56
Unpredicted Results.....	63
IV. SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS.....	73
Conclusions.....	76
Limitations.....	80
SUGGESTIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH.....	85
REFERENCES.....	88
APPENDICES.....	96
Cover Letter to Subjects.....	96
Instruction Sheets to Subjects.....	97
Interpretation Problems with Staff Members.....	97
Interpretation Problems with Board Members.....	98
Interpretation Problems with Volunteers.....	99
Organizational Problems with Volunteers.....	100

Organizational Problems with Board Members.....	101
Organizational Problems with Staff Members.....	102
Personal Problems with Staff Members.....	103
Personal Problems with Board Members.....	104
Personal Problems with Volunteers.....	105
Instruments	
Handling Conflict with Staff Members.....	106
Handling Conflict with Board Members.....	109
Handling Conflict with Volunteers.....	112
Supplementary Form.....	115
Univariate Analyses of the Independent Variables.....	117
Analyses of Variance--The Effect of Sex and Tenure in the Organization.....	119
Effect of Position of Other and Content of Conflict.....	121
Effect of Own Position, Position of Other, and Content of Conflict.....	123

## LIST OF TABLES AND FIGURES

### TABLE

	Page
O - 1 Univariate Analysis--Effect of Own Position.....	118
O - 2 Univariate Analysis--Effect of Other's Position.....	118
O - 3 Univariate Analysis--Effect of Content of Conflict.....	118
P - 1 Analysis of Variance--Effect of Sex.....	120
P - 2 Analysis of Variance--Effect of Years in the Organization.....	120
Q - 1 Two-Way Interaction--Effect of Position of Other and Content of Conflict.....	122
Q - 2 Cell Means--Effect of Position of Other and Content of Conflict.....	122
R - 1 Three-Way Interaction--Effect of Own Position, Position of Other, and Content of Conflict.....	124
R - 2 Cell Means--Effect of Own Position, Position of Other, and Content of Conflict.....	124

### FIGURES

	Page
1. A Visualization of the three independent variables manipulated in this study.....	48

## Abstract

The purpose of this study was to determine whether one's own position, the position of the person with whom one is in conflict, or the content of the conflict situation significantly affects people's choice of conflict management styles (cms) in voluntary organizations. Subjects were 54 staff members, 54 board members, and 54 volunteers randomly selected from 18 organizations with a variety of missions. Subjects were sent a copy of the Organizational Communication Conflict Instrument (OCCI) which lists 30 typical behaviors for dealing with conflict and the description of a conflict situation. Subjects received one of nine situations, each specifying the content of a conflict--a misinterpreted message, an organizational concern, or a personality problem--and the position of a person with whom one was to envision being in conflict--a staff member, board member, or volunteer. Subjects' responses on the OCCI were summed on three subscales--nonconfrontation, solution-orientation, and control--to obtain a profile of their preferred cms. No significant differences in cms are attributed to position, sex, or length of tenure in an organization. The content of a conflict situation does affect the choice of cms. Nonconfrontation strategies are selected by people in volunteers significantly more often when organizational concerns rather than personality differences are the source of the conflict ( $F(2,157) = 3.46, p < .05$ ). When conflict centers on organizational concerns and one is in conflict with volunteers, solution-orientated behaviors are used significantly more often than when the conflict is with staff

members ( $t(153) = 3.13, p < .01$ ). When volunteers are in conflict with other volunteers they use significantly more controlling behaviors than do staff members ( $t(153) = 6.04, p < .01$ ) or board members ( $t(153) = 3.90, p < .01$ ) involved in similar conflicts with volunteers. These findings contradict earlier findings generated in profit-oriented organizations, suggesting that research results are not generalizeable between settings. People in voluntaries appear to put the needs of the organization before their own needs. Also, volunteers' contributions are both solicited and appreciated by others working in voluntaries.



## INTRODUCTION

Over the years, conflict has been one of the primary targets of organizational research (Dunnette, 1976). However, most of the research has centered on conflict and conflict management in profit organizations and government agencies. Little research has focused on conflict in voluntary organizations.

The purpose of this study is to explore ways conflict is managed in voluntary organizations and to determine behavioral styles which may characterize this long-neglected field of research.

Why should we study voluntary organizations? Levitt (1973) suggests voluntary organizations, or what he terms "third-sector" organizations, are a vital part of an overall taxonomy of places in which we do work in our society. He writes:

The conventional taxonomy divides society into two sectors--private and public. Private is business. Public is presumed to be all else. But "all else" is too broad; it covers so much that it means nothing. In terms of how society's work gets done, the most relevant component of "all else" is government. . . But that leaves an enormous residuum, which itself is divisible in many ways.

I have called this residuum the Third Sector. It is composed of a bewildering variety of organizations and institutions with differing degrees of visibility, power, and activeness. Although they vary in scope and specific purposes, their general purposes are broadly similar--to do things business and government are either not doing, not doing well, or not doing often enough. (Levitt, 1973, pp. 48-49)

Chartered to meet various educational, social, political, artistic, environmental, social issues, or health goals, voluntary organizations are non-profit organizations that play an essential and ongoing role in the functioning of our society. Through actions sponsored by these organizations, community values are affirmed, leaders are trained, special interest groups are represented, social change is initiated, social welfare is enhanced, and opportunities for personal growth and skill development are provided (Bolduc, 1980; Levitt, 1973).

Almost 18,000 voluntary organizations operate on a national scope, according to the 1984 Encyclopedia of Associations. Many more voluntaries exist on the community level. One estimate of the number of nonprofit voluntary organizations functioning in this country is 500,000 (Bolling, 1982). Over 40 million people, or close to 1/3 of all adults in this country, volunteer their services to one or more voluntary organizations on an ongoing basis (Gallup, 1981). Men and women contribute equally. Neither sex lets competing responsibilities prevent their involvement. Fenn (1971), conducting a study for the Center for a Voluntary Society and the Harvard Business Review, found that 83% of the executives he surveyed regularly volunteer in two, and often more, organizations. Fenn stressed, "This involvement is not of the 'letterhead' variety" (p. 28). John W. Gardner, former HEW Secretary and current director of Independent Sector, would concur. He stated that 84 billion hours of work are provided free to organizations each year through the efforts of volunteers. The dollar value of that work is estimated at \$64.5 billion (Cheatham, 1982).

Today, there is a greater demand for the services of voluntary organizations than ever before. The Reagan Administration's Economic Recovery Program significantly reduced federal funding for social services. The public is turning to voluntaries for many of the services previously provided by the government.

Despite the impact of voluntaries on society, little research has been done on the Third Sector. A search of Magazine Index, Business Index, and Current Contents: Social and Behavioral Science going back over the past 5 years, shows that most articles written on voluntary organizations are anecdotal. Only one journal is devoted to empirical research conducted in voluntary organizations, the Journal of Voluntary Action Research which is published by the Association of Voluntary Action Scholars.

Most organizational research, including organizational communication research, is done in organizations that are profit-oriented. Generalizing the results of such research to the voluntary setting may not be appropriate. While presumably there are many similarities between the two settings, there are also differences. For instance, several studies indicate that persons working in voluntary organizations differ significantly from those working in profit-oriented organizations in terms of their values, needs, and behaviors (Filley, 1978; Gatewood & Lahiff, 1977; Howell, 1981; Rawls, Ullrich, & Nelson, 1975). What effect, if any, these differences have on organizational behavior and organizational communication is currently unknown. More organizational research must be conducted in the voluntary setting if

conclusions about organizational behavior in voluntaries are to be drawn with any confidence.

One particular area of concern is how conflict is managed in voluntary organizations. Conflict seemingly tends to flourish in voluntaries. Three factors make the voluntary setting particularly susceptible to conflict. The first is that whenever people with different perspectives, viewpoints, values, and vested interests gather, there is potential for conflict (Berlew, 1980; Corwin, 1969; Thompson, 1961). Voluntary organizations commonly rely on the combined efforts of a staff, board of directors, and direct-service volunteers to achieve their goals. Typically, the perspectives, viewpoints, values, needs, and interests of the people that make up these three groups are different (Blumenthal, 1954; Kramer, 1975). For example, board members often approach their decision-making responsibilities pragmatically and with a community perspective. This contrasts with staff members who are expected to approach decision-making democratically and from an agency perspective (Blumenthal, 1954).

Also encouraging conflict in voluntary organizations is the lack of clearly recognized lines of authority. Two factors cloud the lines of authority in voluntary organizations. First, while a voluntary organization's board of directors is legally responsible for all actions taken by an organization, board members are rarely involved in its daily operations. Day-to-day decision-making is relegated to staff members. One result of such delegation is that board members tend to increasingly abdicate to the staff because they feel inadequately informed to make responsible decisions. The staff may also begin to

usurp the board's responsibility for decision-making, feeling that because they work with the various issues every day, they have more insight than the board members and will, therefore, make better decisions. After a while, the lines of authority defined by an organization's charter begin to blur, leaving both volunteers and staff unsure of the limits of their real power. Further clouding the question of control is the fact that people donate their time and effort to volunteers and can leave whenever they wish. Recognizing this, volunteer leaders and staff members alike are often hesitant to place demands on volunteers out of the fear of losing them (LaCour, 1977). But then who is controlling the organization, the volunteer leader/staff member or the volunteer? Without clearly defined limits of authority, the potential for conflict is increased (Berlew, 1980; Filley, 1975).

Conflict can often be avoided, resolved, or its negative impact reduced through the informal negotiation process that occurs naturally in most organizations as a result of daily interaction between people (Berlew, 1980). This is because daily interaction gives people the opportunity to get to know one another, to determine how best to approach a potential conflict situation involving the other. Daily interaction also permits people to discuss their concerns and to get answers to their questions as various issues present themselves. However, daily interaction is often not possible in voluntary organizations because volunteers may or may not be available to the organization, or to each other, on any given day. The inability of people working in voluntaries to get to know one another, to determine how best to deal with one another, to get answers to questions, to discuss

issues, or to share concerns is the third source of conflict in voluntary organizations.

While conflict can be beneficial, introducing innovation and growth opportunities to an organization, it can also be detrimental. How conflict is managed determines its effect on the organization. A study seeking to discover how conflict is managed in voluntary organizations seemed an appropriate undertaking for this dissertation, given the impact of voluntaries in this society, the amount of conflict that exists in voluntary organizations, and the lack of current knowledge on the subject.

The first chapter of the dissertation reviews relevant literature, offers a rationale for using a styles approach to studying conflict management, and sets forth important research questions along with the author's expectations. Chapter 2 presents the design and methodology the author used to conduct the study. The results of the study and a discussion of those results are found in Chapter 3. The final chapter contains a number of conclusions that can be drawn from the results of the study. Also included in Chapter 4 are the limitations of the study and recommendations for future research.

## CHAPTER I

### REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

This dissertation seeks to provide some insight into the conflict management process in voluntary settings. Specifically, the dissertation seeks to determine the conflict management behaviors preferred by persons at various levels of a voluntary's hierarchy when those persons are engaged in different types of conflict with someone at a similar or different level of the hierarchy. To lay the groundwork for exploring such an issue, this chapter reviews what is generally known about voluntary organizations, volunteers, conflict, and conflict management.

The chapter begins with a description of some of the characteristics of voluntary agencies and of the staff and volunteers working in them. That description is followed by a synopsis of what is known about conflict and conflict management. Much of the information in this section comes from research done in profit-oriented organizations. While specific findings, such as a preference for one strategy over another in a given situation, may not be generalizeable to volunteers due to the different nature of the two types of organizations and the people that work in them, aspects of the conflict management process should be applicable to both settings. The sources of conflict, the strategies for dealing with conflict, and, perhaps, even

the psychological reasons behind choosing one strategy over another are presumably similar in both types of organizations. A section on the various conflict management styles inventories currently available for assessing subjects' preferred conflict management behaviors is included in the chapter, since conflict management is operationalized in terms of preferred conflict management styles in this study. The chapter concludes with the author's expectations of how conflict may be managed in voluntaries and her rationale for those expectations.

### Voluntary Organizations

Voluntary organizations are operated, at least theoretically, by volunteers. While professional staffs may be hired to support volunteer efforts, policy decisions are made by all-volunteer boards of directors and the organizations' missions are furthered by direct-service volunteers.

Voluntary organizations may vary widely in their missions. However, two characteristics are commonly shared by voluntary organizations: a non-profit orientation and a dedication to meeting societal needs that "benefit the greater good of mankind."

A voluntary's purpose typically affects its size and structure, as does its appeal. Organizations with well-recognized goals and/or wide appeal may be chartered on a national basis. These organizations often have large specialized staffs, significant capital assets, codified policies and procedures, and thousands of volunteers on whom



to call. An example of this kind of voluntary is the American Heart Association. With 51% of all deaths related to heart disease, the mission of the American Heart Association is salient to most everyone.

Other organizations dedicated to meeting more unique needs might claim only a handful of volunteers. They might have no professional staff, capital assets, or formal policies or procedures; they might meet only on an informal basis. A support group in the San Fernando Valley of California for parents of children with Tay Sachs is an example of this type of voluntary organization. Tay Sachs is a disease that results in an early and certain death. While not a rare disease, a test exists to determine carriers of Tay Sachs--usually Jews of Eastern European ancestry--and amniocentesis can determine the disease in a fetus. Therefore, fewer babies born today are afflicted with Tay Sachs and fewer people seek out organizations with missions related to it.

#### Volunteers and Staff in Voluntaries

Voluntary organizations are characterized by people donating time, effort, and money to ensure the organizations' success (Cull & Hardy, 1974; Levitt, 1973). The reasons people donate their services are many. Fenn (1971) found that 47% of the persons he surveyed volunteered because they felt the services provided by the organizations were vital, 44% volunteered because they felt the organizations' concerns overlapped with their own, and 36% volunteered because they felt that they had skills the organizations could use. He also found that 85% of the business persons that volunteered did so because they felt

an obligation to return something to the communities that had allowed them to prosper. Jenner (1981) found 10 years later that the percentage of people volunteering for the above reasons was relatively stable (e.g. 45% of volunteers donate their efforts because they believe in the mission of the organization). She also found that people volunteer for the association with others and as a means of self-development.

People give of their time and effort in several different ways. Some, such as the certified public accountant who manages a voluntary's general ledgers, or the nurse that draws blood for a blood bank, may donate their professional knowledge and skills. Others volunteer to be oriented and trained by the organization to provide whatever specific skills the organization needs at the time (Lenihan, & Jackson, 1984).

Volunteers may use their skills in one of two roles, that of board member or direct-service volunteer. The roles played by board members and direct-service volunteers are markedly different. Direct-service volunteers usually have very specialized roles. Few volunteer CPR instructors, for instance, are expected to stuff envelopes or to make organizational decisions. Their tasks are clearly defined and fairly limited in scope. Unfortunately, while these volunteers are fundamental to an organization achieving its mission, they are typically granted little status in the organization. Like the proverbial children that "are to be seen and not heard," direct-service volunteers are most often expected to show up, do their job in a dependable, cheerful, and discreet manner, and not "make any waves" (Adams, 1980).

Board members, on the other hand, may play many roles within the organization. Two of the more diverse roles typically expected of board members are decision-maker and fund-raiser. The tasks assigned to board members, such as "be knowledgeable about the organization," are generally loosely defined to maintain optimum role flexibility. Often, persons are asked to serve as board members on the basis of their standing in the general community and the prestige they can bring to an organization rather than on the basis of their previous contributions to that organization (Adams, 1980). However, those that agree to serve as board members must be committed to the organization because they are legally accountable for all organizational decisions.

Professional staff members working in voluntary organizations are responsible for the organization's day-to-day operations. The tasks required of staff members are diverse. The extent to which staff members take on specialized roles in order to accomplish these tasks is usually dependent on the size of the organization. Role specialization is more common in large organizations where the manpower permits it. Fund raising, programming, public relations, and administrative tasks may all be handled by different persons in a large organization. Smaller organizations, limited in personnel resources, must be flexible in their role assignments. In such an organization, a single individual may handle tasks in all of the above areas.

While accountable to an organization's board of directors and direct-service volunteers for all their actions, staff members actually have a great deal of influence over their board and their volunteers. Some of that influence may be solicited by the volunteers and

some of it may be assumed by the staff members. Representative of the first premise, Buckholz (1972) found volunteers, including board members, tend to wait for staff to initiate decisions when staff members are a part of the group. This tendency increases as the number of staff members in the group increases. Fenn (1971) found even executives, used to take-charge decision making, respond to the initiatives of the professional staff rather than offering innovations and management suggestions of their own.

Staff members do have more access to information than volunteers because of the nature of their responsibilities and the realities of their daily involvement in organizational concerns. This fact may explain why volunteers often do turn to staff for their input. However, the ability to control what information the volunteers receive is a source of power and status for staff members. Many staff members utilize it as such. According to the findings of both Rawls et al. (1975) and Walker (1975), staff members in voluntaries have a strong need to dominate situations as well as a strong need for status. Somewhat paradoxically, these needs co-exist with a strong concern for maintaining personal relationships (Rawls et al., 1975).

The roles (and role behaviors) demanded of direct-service volunteers, board members, and professional staff members may depart radically from the roles these same individuals play in other settings--a point which is exemplified in Fenn's passive executive volunteers. According to Kramer (1975), people adjust to the voluntary's role needs because of a self-generated belief that their own needs and values must be secondary to the needs of the larger society as

represented by the voluntary organization. The research of Brown, Yelsma, and Keller (1981) suggests that people's adherence to organizational roles is due to an acquiescence to organizational pressures to reflect the norms, values, and interests of the organization. Katz and Kahn's work (1966) on role theory supports both views. They suggested that people have expectations of both their own role in an organization and the role of others. These expectations represent the standards by which their own and others' performances are evaluated. People communicate their expectations of others, and receive others' expectations of them, both directly and indirectly. Consequences are often implied in the communication of these expectations to ensure conformity to them. This process--"learning the expectations of others, accepting them, and fulfilling them"--is what allows an organization to sustain itself (Katz & Kahn, 1966, p. 173).

The roles of direct-service volunteers, board members, and professional staff members alike are based on the need to perform seven basic functions: (a) planning, (b) policy making, (c) fund raising, (d) financial management, (e) public relations, (f) personnel management, and (g) volunteer recruitment and retainment (Trost & Rauner, 1983). Each of these functions plays a critical part in the ultimate achievement of a voluntary's over-all goals. Yet, typically, conflict arises as to how best to pursue each function. If this conflict is not handled productively, the organization will not optimally achieve its goals. Voluntaries, recognizing this, are increasingly interested in the subject of conflict management.

### Conflict Management in Organizations

Conflict, which manifests itself in any number of verbal and non-verbal ways (Doolittle, 1976; Putnam & Wilson, 1982a), is "the process which begins when one party perceives that the other has frustrated, or is about to frustrate, some concern of his" (Jamieson & Thomas, 1974, p. 322). Given that every individual enters every interaction situation with personal ideas, needs, values, and goals, it seems inevitable that, at some point, someone will feel his or her desires are being frustrated. For this reason, Chesler, Crowfoot, and Bryant (1978) labelled conflict an "inherent social condition."

Phillips and Cheston (1979) identified three common sources of conflict in organizations: (a) dissimilar interpretations of messages, (b) different views of organizational concerns, and (c) discordant interpersonal needs. Disagreement over a message's meaning is frequently due to message ambiguity. Different views of organizational concerns may arise over such issues as power or authority, organizational objectives, or rights to resources. Interpersonal conflicts are generally based on incompatible personality characteristics.

For a long time, conflict was seen as something strictly negative and researchers sought methods for resolving it. In recent years, however, people have recognized the potential benefits of conflict. For instance, conflict may call attention to the problems within an organization that require change (Coser, 1956; Jamieson, & Thomas, 1974; Thomas, 1976). Conflict can also prevent stagnation, stimulate interest, innovation and flexibility, or encourage problem solving,

reality testing, and personal growth (Cummings, Long, & Lewis, 1983; Deutsch, 1973; Thomas, 1971, 1976). The emphasis of researchers now is on managing conflict, rather than on resolving it.

The primary focus of conflict management research is three-directional: (a) to identify the various alternative approaches to managing conflict, (b) to determine how people choose an approach to managing conflict, and (c) to define what constitutes a productive conflict management approach. The three lines of research are closely related. Prerequisite to defining productive conflict management approaches, for instance, is the identification of alternative conflict management styles. The conflict management styles identified in the literature to-date are discussed here. Also discussed are two competing views of how people choose a conflict management style and the current thinking on what constitutes productive conflict management.

#### Conflict Management Styles

Karen Horney (1945) suggested that people embroiled in conflict have three options for dealing with that conflict. They can "move against" the other party, offensively, in an effort to win their point. They can "move toward" the other party in a gesture of compromise. Or, they can "move away" from the other party in resignation. Parsimonious and elegant, Horney's model stood unchallenged for almost 20 years.

In the mid '60's a great deal of new interest was generated in conflict and conflict management. Blake and Mouton's (1964) seminal work on conflict management styles had much to do with that resurgence

of interest. Traditional research argued conflict management was unidimensional, that people operated on a competitive-cooperative continuum. Blake and Mouton suggested a two-dimensional approach as more effective. By plotting out people's varying degrees of need for achieving a goal and maintaining a relationship, Blake and Mouton defined five distinct conflict management styles on a two-dimensional grid. The five styles they identified were forcing, confrontation, sharing, withdrawal, and smoothing.

Forcing is characterized by an attempt to move the opposing party into a position of loss so as to gain power and a "win" for oneself. Of little concern is the maintenance of any kind of interpersonal relationship between the two parties. Forcing behaviors are generally adopted by persons with a competitive attitude who wish to ensure the achievement of their goal, even at the expense of the relationship.

Confrontation is the label Blake and Mouton gave to the problem-solving behaviors associated with moving both parties toward the realization of a common goal. A "win/win" attitude, defined as a high regard for achievement of the goal and a strong desire to maintain the relationship, is necessary for implementing a confrontation style.

Sharing is the conflict management style that requires both parties to give up points in turn so that a decision can be reached that is, at least minimally, satisfactory to all. Sharing requires that both parties be concerned about goal achievement and relationship maintenance, though not to the point that either party would hesitate to make the necessary compromises.



Withdrawal is identified by Blake and Mouton as one party ignoring or denying the existence of any source of conflict so as to avoid a conflict situation. In situations where neither the goal nor the relationship are valued, this kind of behavior could be appropriate.

Smoothing is the strategy by which one party yields to the requests of another without complaint or counter-offer. The yielding is based less on agreement than on a desire to avoid disagreement. Here, as in the case of withdrawal, a person must have little concern for either the relationship or the goal.

A number of researchers have extended Blake and Mouton's work. While many developed their own terminology for the different styles, most retained the two-dimensional, five-styles concept. For instance, Thomas (1976), whose classification of conflict management styles is currently the most widely accepted, freely credits Blake and Mouton with inspiring his schema. Thomas' classification--competing, collaborating, compromising, avoiding, and accommodating--is similar to Blake and Mouton's forcing, confrontation, sharing, withdrawing, and smoothing, respectively. (Because so many researchers discuss their results in terms of Thomas' classification system, his terminology rather than Blake and Mouton's is used in this literature review.)

In the last few years, however, several scholars have submitted the five styles to factor analysis (Lawrence & Lorsch, 1967; Putnam & Wilson, 1982a; Ross, 1982; Ross & DeWine, 1982). Only three styles have consistently emerged. These styles--called competing, collaborating, and an accommodating-avoiding mix factor by Lawrence and Lorsch; control, solution-orientation, and nonconfrontation by Putnam

and Wilson; and concern for self, concern for issue, and concern for others by Ross--are defined by the behaviors previously labelled as forcing, a mix of confronting and sharing, and a mix of withdrawing and smoothing, respectively. Putnam and Wilson (1982a) mused that scholars have come full-circle in their attempts to identify conflict management styles.

### Selecting a Conflict Management Style

Two different views are evident in the literature regarding how people choose a conflict management style. The first argues that people are predisposed to respond to conflict in a specific way, given their personalities and personal value systems (Brown, Yelsma, & Keller, 1981; Donohue, 1978; Hall, 1974; Terhune, 1970). Deutsch (1960), for instance, reported that the degree of trust people generally have for others affects their choice of conflict management style. He found people that trust others easily tend to use cooperative or collaborative strategies. People who find it difficult to trust tend to be competitive when faced with conflict. Gray-Little (1974) found a correlation between people's level of dogmatism and their choice of conflict management styles. The more dogmatic an individual, the more competitive.

Thomas (1978) found certain values predictive of the conflict management styles people choose. A strong concern for self frequently results in the choice of competitive strategies. Individuals with humanistic value systems generally choose collaborative conflict management behaviors. A pragmatic view of the world leads to compromise. A

belief in traditional Christian ethics often contributes to the choice of accommodation behaviors. And, individuals who espouse what might be considered an Eastern philosophy tend to avoid conflict altogether.

Putnam and Wilson (1982a) found, however, that they could not identify a "preferred" conflict management style for 40% of their 360 subjects. They posit a second view that people, rather than being predisposed to behaving in a given way, vary their choice of conflict management style to meet the needs of a specific situation. This view is also supported in the literature. Several situational factors are found to influence the choice of a conflict management style.

One important basis for the selection of one style over another is the nature of the conflict itself (Filley, 1975; Lawrence & Lorsch, 1967; Putnam & Wilson, 1982a). Relative to this is the perception of potential for gain, juxtaposed to the assessment of risk, and the importance ascribed to achievement of the goal. Thibaut and Kelley (1959) suggested people interact to achieve the greatest possible rewards at the least possible cost. If the rewards for achieving a particular goal are seen as high, and the risks as tolerable, people are likely to adopt a competitive approach to dealing with conflict. A more conservative strategy, such as cooperation, collaboration, or accommodation, is generally preferred when the stakes are seen as low and/or the risk seems too great for the potential reward (Atthowe, 1960; Clark & Wilson, 1961). The stronger a person's identification with a particular position or goal, the greater the chance that he or she will be competitive (Hornstein & Johnson, 1966; Sereno & Mortensen, 1969).

Also affecting how people choose to handle conflict is the relationship that is shared by those involved in the conflict situation (Blake, Shepard, & Mouton, 1964; Lawrence & Lorsch, 1967; Putnam & Wilson, 1982a). On an interpersonal basis, Cosier and Ruble (1981) found that people use different conflict management styles based on the degree of intimacy they sense they share with the other party. The better people know one another, the more likely it is that they will use compromise or accommodation strategies. On an organizational level, Phillips and Cheston (1979) found that the hierarchical relationship that exists between parties affects the conflict management style chosen. Peers tend to compromise, superiors tend to use forcing behaviors, and subordinates tend to avoid conflict situations.

The last situational factor affecting people's choice of conflict management style is the reality created by the unique aspects of the organization in which the conflict is occurring. Lines of authority, distribution of resources, and organizational concerns are just three of the aspects of an organization that impact on people's conflict management behavior (Blake et al., 1964; Donohue, 1978; Lawrence & Lorsch, 1967; Phillips & Cheston, 1979; Putnam & Wilson, 1982a; Zander, Cohen, & Stotland, 1959). Michener, Vaske, Schleifer, Plazewski, and Chapman (1975) found, for example, that people select conflict management styles based on their perceptions of who has access to the most resources. Those confident of their resources tend to approach a conflict situation competitively. Those less confident tend to behave cooperatively, collaboratively, or accommodatingly, if they do not avoid the conflict situation altogether.

Renwick (1975) found that the topic of the conflict influences the conflict management styles chosen. People often choose a competitive approach to dealing with conflict when the source of conflict centers on such issues as salary, promotion, or performance appraisal. People tend to be more accommodating or compromising when the conflict centers on personality differences.

### Productive, Unproductive Conflict Management

The third line of research centers around identifying which conflict management styles are productive and which are unproductive. Here, too, two separate approaches have emerged. The first clearly labels some styles effective and some not. The second indicates that any style can be effective given the appropriate situation.

The first approach, particularly popular from the mid '60's to the mid '70's, suggests that a collaborative, "win/win" approach to conflict is the most effective. A competitive, "win/lose" approach is seen as the least effective approach, along with avoidance (Bernardin & Alvares, 1976; Blake et al., 1964; Burke, 1970; Lawrence & Lorsch, 1967; Thomas, 1971).

Other researchers challenged that view by claiming that preferences for one style over another are based more on perceptions of social desirability than on assessments of effectiveness (Cosier & Ruble, 1981; Thomas & Kilmann, 1975). Filley (1975) suggested that strategies:

. . . are not particularly good or bad except insofar as they accomplish particular objectives. . . . Proper conflict-resolving behavior is based on having the skills required for

each style and on knowing when each style can more effectively be used. (pp. 57-58)

### Conflict Management in Voluntaries

Two researchers have explored conflict management in the voluntary setting. Both were seemingly intrigued by the same issues that have intrigued researchers in the profit-oriented sector. Howell (1981) sought to identify the conflict management styles used in non-profit human services organizations. Yarbrough (1983) was interested in the effectiveness of the different behaviors used by administrators of volunteer programs to deal with conflict.

Howell (1981) administered Thomas and Kilmann's MODE instrument to 52 staff members of a large, private human services organization in California. He found that the majority of these individuals (37%) identified avoidance as their primary conflict management style. Only 12% identified competition as their first choice for dealing with conflict, making competition the least favored conflict management behavior of this group. This finding is startling because it departs radically from the results generated in profit-oriented organizations, where the same, or correlated, instruments were used to determine preferences for various conflict management styles. Phillips and Cheston (1979) found competition the most frequently utilized conflict management style in profit-oriented organizations, despite its lack of social desirability. Avoidance was found to be the least frequently utilized behavior (Cosier & Ruble, 1981). Sixty-nine percent of the human services' employees in Howell's study fell below the norm established in profit-oriented organizations for the use of competition.

In contrast, 67% of these persons scored above the norm for the use of avoidance and 62% scored above the norm for the use of compromise.

No significant difference was found between the way men and women, persons of different ages, and managers and nonsupervisory personnel selected their conflict management style. The length of a person's tenure in the organization made no significant difference, either, in terms of the person's selection of competition, collaboration, compromise, or accommodation behaviors. However, persons working in an organization three to five years expressed a preference for using more avoidance behavior than those working either less than three years or more than five. Persons who had worked in an organization less than three years indicated they used the least avoidance behavior (Howell, 1981).

Yarbrough (1983), asking a different question than Howell, found many of her results predictable from the literature generated in profit-oriented organizations. For instance, she found people generally feel conflict is managed more productively when collaborative strategies are used. This finding is supported by Bernardin and Alvares (1976), Blake et al. (1964), Burke (1970), Lawrence and Lorsch (1967), and Thomas (1971). She also found support for Putnam and Wilson's (1982a) view that there is a need to vary conflict management styles according to situational demands. While Yarbrough does not offer any explanation for the apparent contradiction in these two findings, one might hypothesize that the social desirability factor causes people to perceive collaboration as the most effective conflict management style, but does not limit them to that style when faced with

varying circumstances. She found, as did Berlew (1980) and Filley (1975), that when the lines of authority are unclear, as they are in voluntaries, the potential for conflict is increased.

Yarbrough also generated some unique results. She found that people feel a conflict situation is more productive if they initiate it. She also identified a number of behaviors associated with productive and unproductive conflict in voluntary organizations. She asked people to describe different conflict situations in which they had participated and to identify the characteristics that made the situations productive or unproductive. From their responses she developed a list of 11 characteristics that tend to typify productive conflict situations and 10 characteristics that tend to typify unproductive conflict situations in voluntary organizations.

The characteristics of productive conflict are (a) an active approach, (b) the legitimization of emotions, (c) a concern for relationships, (d) a focus on interests and concerns, (e) a focus on mutual interests, (f) an assumption of good intentions, (g) the involvement of conflict parties, (h) the control of information, (i) a focus on long term goals, (j) perception checking, and (k) the generation of multiple options.

The characteristics of unproductive conflict are (a) a covert goal of happiness, (b) a non-utilization of difference, where that would help solve the problem, (c) avoidance of the conflict, (d) use of accusation, (e) a focus on positions rather than interests, (f) a focus on surface versus underlying issues, (g) encumbered goals, (h) nonspecific agreements, (i) poor timing, and (j) a focus on values.



While these two studies offer some preliminary insights into how conflict may be managed in voluntary organizations, few conclusions can be drawn from either of them. Neither study included volunteers in their subject pool. Both studies looked only at the professional staff that work with voluntaries. Earlier in this chapter it was stated that volunteers and staff members come into an organization with different perspectives. Conceivably, then, they could handle conflict differently. Until an attempt is made to see if any differences do exist between the way volunteers and professional staff members deal with conflict, no conclusions can be drawn about how conflict is managed in voluntaries.

A second question not considered in these studies also needs to be answered before any conclusions can be drawn as to how conflict is managed in voluntaries: whether the different kinds of conflict (i.e., conflict over the interpretation of messages, organizational concerns, or discordant interpersonal needs) have an effect on people's choice of conflict management styles.

### Styles Inventories

In most of the conflict management research conflict management is operationalized as the behaviors, or styles, used by individuals to deal with conflict in a given situation. A variety of instruments are available for assessing individuals' preferences for alternative conflict management styles. They may differ in their authors' definition

of the dimensions and/or characteristics of a given style, in their format, or both. The four most widely utilized inventories--those designed by Blake and Mouton (1964), Lawrence and Lorsch (1967), Hall (1969), and Thomas and Kilmann (1974)--differ primarily in their format. All four of them are conceptually based on Blake and Mouton's work which posits five distinct styles of conflict management.

Blake and Mouton's (1964) inventory for assessing conflict management style is not an unique entity but, rather, a portion of their managerial style orientation instrument. Subjects rank five statements, each representing one of the five conflict management styles, as being most typical to least typical of themselves. The style represented by the statement ranked most typical is considered the conflict management style of choice.

Lawrence and Lorsch's (1967) inventory consists of a list of 25 aphorisms. Each represents one of the five styles. (The influence of Blake and Mouton is evident here; for, even though Lawrence and Lorsch submitted their instrument to factor analysis and their items loaded on only three factors--collaboration, competition, and an accommodation-avoidance mix--they included aphorisms representing all five styles in their instrument.) For example, "might overcomes right" represents the conflict management style competition. On a 5-point, Likert-type scale, subjects rate the degree to which each aphorism describes another individual's behavior. Burke (1970) modified this instrument so that subjects rate their own behavior.

In Hall's (1969) instrument, a number of situations are listed, followed by a series of situation-typical behaviors. For example, the

situation "When you become angry. . .how do you behave?" is followed by the situation-typical behaviors "I just explode" or "I. . .fume and fuss. . .but then I try to smooth things over." Subjects indicate on a 10-point scale, from completely characteristic to completely uncharacteristic, the degree to which they feel each behavior explains their probable response in that situation. Hall presents five sample situations in each of four contexts: (a) intrapersonal, (b) interpersonal, (c) intragroup, and (d) intergroup.

Thomas and Kilmann's (1974) MODE Instrument, or Management of Difference Exercise, is a forced-choice measure consisting of 30 pairs of statements. Each pair includes two different approaches to dealing with a given conflict situation. Subjects choose the one statement in each pair that best represents the way they think they would respond to the situation. Each of the five distinct conflict management styles are paired with the other four styles an equal number of times. By summing the number of statements a subject selects under each style category, an inference can be drawn about the subject's preferred conflict management style. This instrument was designed specifically to avoid responses based on social desirability.

These four style inventories are currently facing considerable criticism on three counts. First, the reliability and validity statistics of all four inventories are low. The mean test-retest reliability scores are: Blake and Mouton, .39; Lawrence and Lorsch, .50; Hall, .55; and Thomas and Kilmann, .64. The reliability scores indicating internal consistency are: Blake and Mouton, not applicable with only one question relating to each mode; Lawrence and Lorsch,

.45; Hall, .55; and Thomas and Kilmann, .60. Convergent test validity scores for competition, collaboration, compromise, avoidance, and accommodation, respectively, are: Blake and Mouton with Lawrence and Lorsch, .34, .37,  $-.07$ , .15, .02; Blake and Mouton with Hall, .49, .37, .13, .37, .20; Blake and Mouton with Thomas and Kilmann, .59, .23, .11, .09, .16; Lawrence and Lorsch with Hall, .36, .47, .02, .40, .26; Lawrence and Lorsch with Thomas and Kilmann, .35, .21, .02, .32, .17; and Thomas and Kilmann with Hall, .41, .22, .24, .39, .27. Second, the existence of five conflict management styles has never been demonstrated, only asserted (Putnam & Wilson, 1982a). Finally, a communication orientation is lacking in all four inventories despite the fact that conflict management styles are nothing more than communicative behaviors that characterize the way people handle conflict (Frost & Wilmont, 1978; Jandt & Hare, 1976; Putnam & Wilson, 1982a; Ross, 1982; Ross & DeWine, 1982).

Several alternative conflict management style inventories are available. Developed recently by communication scholars who saw the need for a communication-orientation to conflict management, they differ from the previously mentioned inventories in terms of both definition of style and format. Two of these inventories were developed apart from the Blake and Mouton tradition. Two of them evolved from it in direct response to the three concerns expressed above. Buchholz, Lashbrook, and Wenburg (1976, as cited in Scafe, 1981) and Richmond, Wagner, and McCroskey (1983) developed their own definitions of the dimensions and characteristics of conflict. Ross (1982) and Putnam and Wilson (1982a), while ultimately departing from the

five-style concept of conflict management, credit Blake and Mouton for the initial inspiration of their instruments. The Ross and Putnam-Wilson inventories are dealt with in considerable detail here since they were the instruments considered for use in this study.

The Social Style Profile Instrument (Buchholz et al., 1976 as cited in Scafe, 1981) was designed as a general inventory of social interaction styles; yet, it could be used as a conflict management styles inventory. The instrument claims to assess people's social behavior on three dimensions: (a) assertiveness, (b) responsiveness, and (c) versatility. However, versatility is not addressed in the description of the four styles that emerge from these dimensions. The four, analytic, amiable, driver, and expressive, are represented by high achievement--high relationship, low achievement--low relationship, high achievement--low relationship, and low achievement--high relationship behaviors, respectively (Lashbrook & Lashbrook, 1979 as cited in Scafe, 1981). The mean reliability statistic for this instrument is .86. Validity is purported because the measures correctly distinguished more than 95% of the subjects surveyed.

Richmond et al. (1983) operationalized conflict management as the degree of activity or dominance people use in a conflict situation. They include in their activity dimension the behaviors that, in a five-style scheme, are commonly labeled avoidance, accommodation, collaboration, and compromise. Competitive behaviors represent the dominance dimension. Subjects indicate on a 5-point, Likert-type scale the degree to which each of 20 different communication-oriented behaviors are characteristic of themselves. Eleven of the behaviors are

related to the activity dimension and four of them to the dominance dimension. The estimated mean reliability for supervisors and subordinates on the activity dimension is .90. The estimated mean reliability on the dominance dimension is .84. No validity data is reported for this instrument.

Ross's (1982) conflict management styles instrument consists of 18 messages commonly heard during conflict situations. Each of the messages represents one of three conflict management styles: (a) concern for others, (b) concern for issues, and (c) concern for self. The behaviors commonly associated with accommodation and avoidance are descriptive of the style concern for others. Collaboration and compromise behaviors are descriptive of concern for issues. Forcing or competitive behaviors are descriptive of concern for self. Subjects indicate on a 5-point, Likert-type scale the frequency with which they would use each message. The range of the scale is from never say things like this to usually say things like this.

Ross initially developed her instrument in the Blake and Mouton tradition, designing messages that typified the five conflict management styles. Concerned that the five-styles concept had never been demonstrated, she submitted her results to factor analysis three times. In all three analyses, a principle components solution with varimax rotation was used. An eigenvalue of 1.0 was used for defining factors.

The first time Ross submitted her responses to factor analysis, she did not specify any number of factors. Testing an 83-item instrument on 602 subjects she found the items loaded on only three factors,

not on the five she expected. Accommodation and avoidance seemed to go together, as did collaborating and compromising. The second time she specified five factors and the items again loaded on only three. She revised her instrument to include the 26 messages that best typified the three styles: concern for self, concern for issue, and concern for other. Testing the revised instrument with 595 subjects, she submitted her results to factor analysis a last time. This time specifying a three-factor solution, she found that the three factors together accounted for 100% of the variance that could be explained. The breakdown was: (a) concern for self, 53.3% of the explainable variance; (b) concern for issue, 28.3% of the explainable variance, and (c) concern for other, 18.4% of the explainable variance.

Reliability was determined by administering an 18-item, 3-style version of the instrument to 123 students and computing a coefficient alpha for each subscale and the entire instrument. The coefficient alpha for the self subscale was .76; the issue subscale, .78; and the other subscale, .73. The coefficient alpha for the entire instrument was .64. Reliability over time was determined by using a test-retest design with 118 subjects. Computing Pearson product-moment correlations on the three subscales resulted in scores of: .69 for self, .65 for issue, .63 for other, and .39, total. All scores were significant at the .01 level.

Both content validity and construct validity were assessed for this instrument. Content validity was determined by analyzing the strength of the factors represented in the inventory. Two hundred and ten subjects completed the 18-item, final version of the instrument.

The items written for the self subscale loaded on the self factor with values ranging from .41 to .73. The items written for the issue subscale loaded on the issue factor with values ranging from .49 to .85. However, the items written for the other subscale loaded on two factors, not one. The first factor ranged from  $-.04$  to  $.56$  and accounted for 68.2% of the explained variance and the second factor ranged from  $-.004$  to  $.71$  and accounted for 31.8% of the explained variance.

Construct validity was determined by comparing this instrument first to Hall's instrument and then to itself. In the first analysis, the two different instruments were administered to 112 students and correlation coefficients were computed. The correlation coefficient of self to competing was  $-.08$  and non-significant. Also non-significant was the correlation coefficient of other to accommodating,  $.04$ . The correlation between issue and collaborating ( $-.19$ ) was significant at  $p < .05$ . Perhaps most important, however, is that the correlation coefficient for the total scores between both instruments was significant at  $.24$ ,  $p < .05$ .

In the second analysis, 100 students completed the instrument while a significant other for each student also completed the instrument about that student. The self-report scores were compared to the scores profiling the students that were generated by the significant others. The correlation coefficients were significant on all three subscales: (a) self,  $.35$ ,  $p < .01$ ; (b) issue,  $.34$ ,  $p < .01$ ; and (c) other  $.19$ ,  $p < .05$ .



Putnam and Wilson (1982a) used descriptive behaviors rather than messages in their 30-item Organizational Communication Conflict Instrument (OCCI). Subjects indicate on a 7-point, Likert-type scale --ranging from always to never--how often they make their "opinions known" or "downplay the importance of a disagreement." The instrument is based on the premise that there are three conflict management styles: (a) nonconfrontation, for accommodation and avoidance behaviors; (b) solution-orientation, for confrontation and compromise behaviors; and (c) control, for competitive behaviors. Twelve items represent nonconfrontation, 11 items represent solution-orientation, and 7 items represent control on the instrument.

Like Ross, Putnam and Wilson began with the view that there were five conflict management styles. They had 360 subjects complete a 35-item instrument. They submitted the obtained scores to factor analysis, using a varimax rotation and the Scree Test to determine the number of factors. Only three factors emerged. The three factors accounted for 58% of the common variance with nonconfrontation accounting for 29%, solution-orientation accounting for 17%, and control, 10%. The eigenvalues were (a) 8.00 for nonconfrontation, (b) 5.76 for solution-orientation, and (c) 2.96 for control. Eight of the items written for solution-orientation and four of the items written for control did not meet the .60--.40 rule (McCroskey & Young, 1979).

Reliability statistics were computed. The five items that did not increase reliability were discarded. The resulting Cronback alpha for the 12-item nonconfrontation subscale was .93; for the 11-item

solution-orientation subscale, .88; and for the 7-item control subscale, .82. Intercorrelations between the three scales were calculated and found to be insignificant except for a correlation of .33 between control and nonconfrontation. The hypothesis offered by Putnam and Wilson for the correlation between these conceptually different subscales was that a social desirability bias might have been responsible. However, the procedure for selecting items to represent the identified factors (a summated raw scores technique) is a more likely explanation of the correlation between the factors.

Statistics for construct validity and predictive validity were also computed. Construct validity was assessed by comparing the OCCI with Lawrence and Lorsch's (1967) Aphorism Scale and Kilmann and Thomas's (1977) MODE Instrument. Ninety-three students completed all three instruments. The correlation coefficient between the forcing subscale on Lawrence and Lorsch's instrument and the control subscale on the OCCI was .38,  $p < .001$ ; the coefficient between the forcing subscale on MODE and the control subscale, .44,  $p < .001$ . A significant negative correlation was found between control and confrontation and control and compromise, indicating distinct categories. The coefficient between confrontation on the Lawrence and Lorsch instrument and solution-orientation on the OCCI was .48,  $p < .001$ . The coefficient between compromise on the MODE and solution-orientation was .26,  $p < .01$ . The correlation coefficient between nonconfrontation on the OCCI and smoothing on the MODE was significant at .22,  $p < .01$  but non-significant between nonconfrontation and smoothing on Lawrence and

Lorsch's instrument. However, nonconfrontation correlated significantly with Lawrence and Lorsch's avoiding subscale at  $.41, p < .001$ .

Predictive validity was assessed by running three studies. The first study involved 283 employees of an insurance firm that were asked to complete either a version of the OCCI for peer-related conflicts or a version for supervisor-subordinate disagreements. The researchers were interested in whether position level and type of conflict would effect the subjects' choice of conflict management strategies. The findings related to position were significant in the directions indicated in previous literature. Subordinates selected nonconfrontation strategies more often than did managers ( $F(2,227) = 5.17, p < .01$ ). Managers selected control strategies more often than did subordinates ( $F(2,227) = 6.08, p < .01$ ). First line supervisors selected solution-orientation strategies more often than did either upper-level managers or subordinates ( $F(2,227) = 4.91, p < .01$ ). However, the interaction effect expected between position level and types of conflict was not found. People tended to select more nonconfrontation and control strategies in conflicts with peers than they did in conflicts with either superiors or subordinates (nonconfrontation,  $F(1,227) = 11.28, p < .001$ ; control  $F(1,227) = 8.67, p < .01$ ).

The second study analyzed the choice of conflict management style for upward, downward, and horizontal communication. The subjects were 49 graduate teaching assistants. This study also supported the hypotheses generated from previous literature. Teaching assistants tended to select solution-oriented strategies ( $F(2,47) = 13.21, p < .001$ ) and nonconfrontation strategies ( $F(2,47) = 11.36, p < .001$ ) while

embroiled in conflict with supervisors or peers. They tended to use control strategies with students ( $F(2,47) = 6.18, p < .01$ ).

The third study considered intradepartmental and interdepartmental conflicts. Specifically, Putnam and Wilson were interested in what conflict management style people would choose if involved in an intradepartmental conflict or an interdepartmental conflict. The subjects were 60 employees in each of 2 departments. Here again, the results were predicted by the previous literature. Control was the preferred strategy for interdepartmental disagreements ( $F(1,119) = 5.12, p < .01$ ) while nonconfrontation was preferred in intradepartmental disagreements ( $F(1,119) = 46.12, p < .001$ ).

Each of these inventories has its strengths and weaknesses. Individual researchers must determine how they are operationalizing conflict management in their studies and then choose the instrument that best fits that operationalization.

## SUMMARY AND EXPECTATIONS

As evidenced in this literature review, a great deal of research focuses on conflict management. The study of alternative conflict management styles is central to that research. Identifying the dimensions and characteristics of various conflict management behaviors, determining how people choose one conflict management style over another, and defining what constitutes a productive approach to managing conflict are three lines of inquiry intriguing researchers. The availability of instruments capable of assessing subjects' conflict management styles makes this kind of research possible.

Most of the conflict management research is conducted in organizations with profit-orientations. Little conflict management research is conducted in voluntary organizations, despite the considerable potential for conflict in voluntaries. Arguments presented earlier suggest that organizational behaviors in voluntary organizations may be different from profit-oriented organizations and that, perhaps, specific research findings generated in one setting should not be generalized to the other.

How, then, is conflict managed in voluntary organizations? All that can be said directly from the literature is that professional staff in voluntaries use more avoidance strategies than competitive ones (Howell, 1981). What about the strategies that board members and direct-service volunteers use?

- Are the strategies used by staff members, board members, and direct-service volunteers the same?

- Do those styles change as the content of the situation changes?
- Does the position of the person with whom one is in conflict affect the preferences one shows for various conflict managing styles?

These are basic questions that, if answered, could provide some critical insights into how conflict is managed in voluntary organizations.

The purpose of this study is to answer the above questions. Because of the limited research conducted to-date on conflict management in voluntary organizations, it is difficult to state hypotheses for this study with any degree of confidence. However, by extrapolating information from research that has been done in the profit-oriented setting yet fits the conditions found in voluntaries, some expectations can be offered.

In voluntary organizations, the roles played by staff members, board members, and direct-service volunteers are very different. Staff members are responsible for the daily operations of the organization. Board members are responsible for such activities as policy-making and fund-raising. Direct-service volunteers are responsible for providing a range of services vital to the organization's achieving its mission. These different roles limit the activities of the role participants to role-specific tasks, pre-defined communication networks, and behaviors deemed "role-appropriate" by the organization. Role theory suggests that persons quickly learn the organization's expectations for each role and that they adapt their behavior to meet those expectations (Katz & Kahn, 1966). Fenn's (1971) findings would

indicate this is true even in situations where the expected behavior in a specific organization is distinctly different from the behaviors expected of the same persons in other organizations.

As a function of their different roles staff members, board members, and direct-service volunteers gain access to different information. Staff members generally have more knowledge of the organization's over-all operations than either board members or direct-service volunteers because of the coordinating function they play. Board members often have the best sense of both how the organization is perceived in the larger community and how its programs and policies will impact on that community because most of their time is spent as decision-makers in the larger community. Direct-service volunteers are closest to the specific tasks of the organization and know the intricacies of task-accomplishment better than anyone else.

Staff members, board members, and direct-service volunteers are all awarded different degrees of status. Board members generally have the most and direct-service volunteers, the least. The status one possesses, the nature and responsibilities of one's role, and the information one is privy to are three factors that affect the conflict management style one tends to adopt (Phillips & Cheston, 1979; Zander et al., 1959). Given the differences in status, roles, and access to information between staff members, board members, and direct-service volunteers, one might expect:

EXPECTATION I: One's preference for conflict management styles will differ significantly as a function of the position one holds in the voluntary organization

(i.e., staff member, board member, or direct-service volunteer).

The roles of staff member, board member, and direct-service volunteer, with their attendant differences in status and access to information, suggest distinct levels of power. Power issues, as such, are difficult to assess in voluntary organizations because of the unclear lines of authority (Yarbrough, 1983). Still, one might intuitively expect that persons will vary their conflict management style based on their perception of whether their status and access to resources is greater or less than the persons with whom they are in conflict. Michener et al. (1975) found that at least in the profit-oriented setting, perceptions of who has the greater resources does affect people's choice of conflict management behavior. Buckholz's (1972) findings that volunteers wait for staff members to initiate ideas suggest that this may be true in voluntary organizations as well. Volunteers apparently see staff members as possessing more information than they do and adjust their behaviors accordingly.

Differences in status and access to resources are expected at different levels of an organization's hierarchy. Staff members, board members, and direct-service volunteers are on different levels of the voluntary organization's hierarchy. Phillips and Cheston (1979) found that people vary their conflict management behaviors depending on the hierarchical relationship they have with the person with whom they are in conflict. While Phillips and Cheston conducted their research in profit-oriented organizations, it seems logical to assume that



hierarchical relationships would affect people's choice of conflict management styles in voluntary organizations as well.

One reason for this is that hierarchical relationships affect people's opportunities for interaction. People working at different levels within an organization have fewer opportunities to get to know one another than do people working at similar levels. The degree to which people feel they know the person with whom they are in conflict affects their choice of conflict management style (Cosier & Ruble, 1981).

The intimacy that is shared between two people affects their choice of conflict management style in other ways. Trust levels are often low in situations where people do not know each other very well. The research of Deutsch (1960) suggests that trust is a variable that affects one's choice of conflict management style. Further, not knowing someone very well, not knowing how he or she will respond to a situation, must increase the sense of risk that people feel when entering into a conflict situation with someone at a different level in the organization's hierarchy. The perception of risk also can affect one's choice of conflict management style (Atthowe, 1960; Clark & Wilson, 1961). All these factors lead to the second expectation.

EXPECTATION II: One's preference for conflict management styles will differ significantly as a function of the position of the person with whom one is in conflict (i.e., staff member, board member, or direct-service volunteer).

Data exist to suggest that people also vary their conflict management style depending on the type of conflict in which they are involved (e.g., an organizational concern, personality issue, or communication difference). Risk again appears to be a factor. People's perceptions regarding the importance of a particular goal affects their tolerance for risks related to achievement of that goal. The more important the goal, the greater risks people take to achieve it (Atthowe, 1960; Clark & Wilson, 1961). Different conflict management behaviors involve different levels of risk. People vary their choice of behaviors based on what they are willing to risk in the given situation (Hornstein & Johnson, 1966; Sereno & Mortensen, 1969).

On a general level, the above equation is expected to be true with the different types of conflict situations since people perceive the importance of the different types of conflict situations differently. For instance, people that consider an organizational concern to be more important than a personality conflict could be expected to choose a more risk-laden conflict management style for an interaction involving an organizational concern than they would for an interaction involving a personality conflict.

On a more specific level, the relationship between the importance of a goal and people's willingness to risk different conflict management behaviors is related to the content of the conflict. Phillips and Cheston (1979) found in situations where conflict is based on a misinterpretation of a message people most often use a problem-orientation to deal with the conflict. They also found, as did Renwick (1975), that control strategies are used most often when the conflict

involves differences of opinion on organizational issues. Control strategies are occasionally used in situations where the conflict centers on personality differences (Phillips & Cheston, 1979). Most often, however, personal conflicts are handled with nonconfrontational strategies (Phillips & Cheston, 1979; Renwick, 1975). This author believes that it is premature to hypothesize various conflict management styles that might be used in given situations in the voluntary setting. However, she does not hesitate to offer a last expectation based on the more general logic that the type of conflict situation should affect people's choice of conflict management style.

EXPECTATION III: One's preference for conflict management styles will differ significantly as a function of the type of conflict situation.

In an effort to substantiate these expectations, and to provide a base for future research on conflict management in voluntary organizations, a study was undertaken by this author. The methodology for the study is presented in the next chapter of this dissertation.

## CHAPTER II

### METHODOLOGY AND DATA ANALYSIS

The review of the conflict management literature presented in the previous chapter pointed to a need for research designed to determine how conflict is managed in voluntary organizations. The study outlined in this chapter is one response to that need. Specifically, this study sought to determine if there are significant differences in the utilization of conflict management styles that may be attributed to one's position within the organization, the opposing party's position within the organization, or the content of the conflict situation. The methodologies by which the data for this study were collected and analyzed are presented in this chapter.

#### Subjects

One hundred sixty-two persons currently working with voluntary organizations in the greater Oklahoma City area were the subjects for this study. The subject pool included 54 professional staff members, 54 board members, and 54 direct-service volunteers selected from 18 organizations. The breakdown of organizations was (a) nine organizations committed to health issues, which included one mental health

agency, (b) three aging and two youth organizations, (c) three welfare agencies, and (d) one art-oriented voluntary. The rosters of the organizations showed staffs ranging in size from 2 to 12, boards from 8 to 68, and direct-service volunteers numbering 6 to 1,000. No effort was made to find an equal number of males and females since much of the current research indicates that sex does not affect a person's preference for different conflict management styles (Baxter & Shepherd, 1978; Howell, 1981; Renwick, 1977; Shockley-Zalabak, 1981).

The Support Center, an organization providing technical assistance to nonprofit organizations in Oklahoma City, helped identify agencies that would be appropriate participants for the study. The center referred the researcher to 16 local voluntary organizations, providing the names of contact persons in each agency. While six additional organizations still had to be solicited to generate a sufficient subject pool, working through the center was very beneficial.

### Procedures

Once organizations willing to participate in the study were identified, they were asked to submit the names of all their professional staff members, board members, and direct-service volunteers. Utilizing a computer-generated random numbers table and a multi-stage sampling process, the names of 100 professional staff members, 100 board members, and 100 direct-service volunteers were selected from these

lists. The 100 individuals in each group were then randomly assigned to one of nine treatment groups.

The different experimental conditions included: (a) interaction with a staff member regarding a misinterpretation of a message; (b) interaction with a staff member regarding a difference of opinion on an issue of importance to the organization; (c) interaction with a staff member regarding a personality problem; (d) interaction with a board member regarding a misinterpretation of a message; (e) interaction with a board member regarding a difference of opinion on an issue of importance to the organization; (f) interaction with a board member regarding a personality problem; (g) interaction with a direct-service volunteer regarding a misinterpretation of a message; (h) interaction with a direct-service volunteer regarding a difference of opinion on an issue of importance to the organization; and (i) interaction with a direct-service volunteer regarding a personality problem. These groups were suggested by Phillips and Cheston's (1979) work and the research questions.

A packet containing a cover letter (see Appendix A), a copy of the instruction sheet with a request for demographic information and the appropriate treatment case (see Appendices B--J), a copy of a corresponding 30-item instrument (see Appendices K--M), a copy of the form to be completed if the instrument could not be completed because the subject never interacted with someone at the specified level of the organization (see Appendix N), and a stamped, addressed return-envelope were mailed to each subject. The packets were coded to permit accurate record keeping.

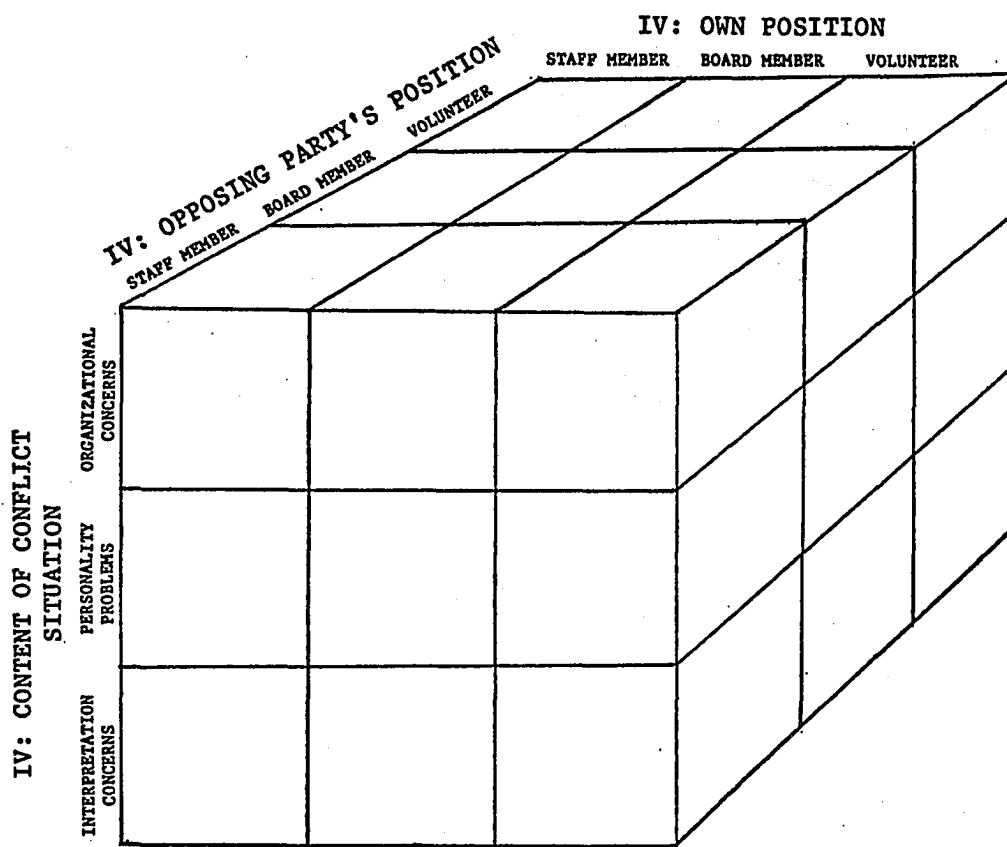
The mailing was sent to 300 people because cells of equal size--containing as close to 10 subjects per cell as possible--were desired for analysis purposes. Subjects that did not respond in the requested time frame were telephoned. Those that could not be reached by phone, or those that did not respond to the phone request, were dropped from the subject pool. Additional subjects were then randomly drawn from the original list of names.

### Variables

This study was concerned with the effect of three independent variables on conflict management style. Three levels of each of the three independent variables were tested against the three dependent variables: nonconfrontation, solution-orientation, and control. The operationalization of the three independent and three dependent variables is noted here.

#### Independent Variables

The three independent variables that were manipulated in this study are all situational factors. The three are (a) one's own position within a voluntary organization, (b) the opposing party's position within a voluntary organization, and (c) the content of the conflict situation (See Figure 1).



**Figure 1:** A visualization of the three independent variables manipulated in this study.

#### One's Own Position

One's own position within the voluntary organization refers to the role one plays in a voluntary. Three roles are typically found in voluntary organizations: (a) professional staff member, (b) board member, and (c) direct-service volunteer. Therefore, for this study one's own position was operationalized as the category (staff member, board member, or direct-service volunteer) marked by the respondent on the instruction sheet that accompanied the instrument (See Appendix B). In cases where individuals marked more than one position category, indicating service in more than one role, respondents were



assigned roles according to the organization's perception of where those persons spend the most time.

#### The Opposing Party's Position

The opposing party's position refers to the position--staff member, board member, or direct-service volunteer--held by the person with whom one is in conflict. The three levels of this variable were simulated. Subjects were asked to respond as if they were in conflict with a staff member, a board member, or a direct-service volunteer (See Appendices B--J).

#### The Content of the Conflict Situation

Phillips and Cheston (1979) identified three sources of conflict in organizations: dissimilar interpretations of messages, different views of organizational concerns, and discordant interpersonal needs. These three sources of conflict represented the three levels of the independent variable content of the conflict situation. They were operationally defined by the following descriptions:

1) Dissimilar interpretations of messages:

Many times we disagree with someone when we don't interpret a message or a concept the same way they do. We will argue over what a policy means or what it was that someone really meant.

2) Different views of organizational concerns:

Many times we disagree with someone about important organizational concerns. For instance, we might disagree about

what the organization's mission should be in a changing community. Or, we might disagree about methods for fund raising or recruiting volunteers.

3) Discordant interpersonal needs:

Many times we disagree with someone simply because we don't like them or that for which we feel they stand.

Subjects were asked to consider how they would typically respond in situations like this.

### Dependent Variables

The dependent variables in this study were the three conflict management styles of nonconfrontation, solution-orientation, and control. As in most conflict management studies, conflict management style was operationally defined in terms of scores on a conflict management styles inventory. In this study Putnam and Wilson's (1982a) OCCI was used. Subjects completed the OCCI by indicating on a 7-point, Likert-type scale how often they would use each of 30 behaviors in a conflict situation. A response of 1 indicated Always and a response of 7 indicated Never. Three scores were tabulated for each subject. According to Putnam and Wilson these scores represent the prevalence with which subjects believe they would use each of three conflict management styles in a conflict situation.

### Nonconfrontation

Nonconfrontation was operationally defined as the summation of Items 2, 5, 7, 12, 14, 15, 23, 24, 25, 27, 28, and 29 on the OCCI. Scores

may range from 12 to 84, with 12 representing the most frequent use of nonconfrontation, and 84 the most infrequent use of nonconfrontation as a conflict managing behavior.

#### Solution-orientation

Solution-orientation was operationalized as the summation of Items 1, 4, 6, 8, 9, 11, 13, 16, 19, 20, and 21 on the OCCI. Scores may range from 11 to 77, with 11 representing the most frequent use of solution-orientation behaviors, and 77 the least frequent use of these behaviors.

#### Control

Control was operationalized as the summation of Items 3, 10, 17, 18, 22, 26, and 30 on the OCCI. The scores may range from 7 to 49, with 7 representing the most frequent use of control, and 49 representing the most infrequent use.

The OCCI was selected because it met the three criteria lacking in other instruments. First, it is communication-oriented. Subjects indicate how often they would use various communication behaviors rather than identify a list of aphorisms that describe themselves. Second, the three styles' view was not just presumed; it was demonstrated using factor analysis. Third, the reliability and validity statistics are higher than on any other instrument (see pages 33-36). The OCCI was also selected for this study because it is based on the assumption that people vary their conflict management style according to the situation (Putnam & Wilson, 1982a). Ross's instrument, the only

other instrument that takes the above three factors into consideration, is based on the assumption that people have a fixed conflict management style (Ross, 1982).

The instrument was modified according to Putnam and Wilson's recommendations:

Researchers are urged to substitute appropriate targets for particular audiences in both the directions and the items of the scale, e. g., substitute "peer" for the word "supervisor." Researchers are also urged in a cover letter or in the directions to define [the conflict situation]. (Putnam & Wilson, 1982b, p. 1)

#### Analysis of Data

A three-factor, independent measures, multivariate analysis of variance (MANOVA) design was used to analyze the data collected in this study. The goal of the analysis was to determine if there were any main effects that would substantiate the three expectations of this study. Significance was based on an alpha level of .05.

This design was chosen for a number of reasons. Selection of the MANOVA is required to control for the influence of the three dependent variables on each other. The independent measures design eliminates subject fatigue. While fewer subjects would have been required if a repeated measures design was used, subject fatigue would have increased as a direct function of the number of factors which were repeated. The independent measures design also ensured statistical independence of observations.

In this chapter the author outlined the study done to answer three basic research questions. Details of how the data were collected and analyzed were presented. The number of subjects used, the procedures undertaken, and the operationalization of the independent and dependent variables were specified. The results of this study are reported in the next chapter.

### CHAPTER III

#### RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The study outlined in the previous chapter was conducted over a three-month period of time. The results of that study are reported here, along with a discussion of those results. The chapter begins with an explanation of how the final subject pool was determined. Manipulation checks made to ensure reliability of the results are enumerated. Then, the findings of the study are compared to expected results. The chapter concludes with a discussion of those findings that were unpredicted.

#### Subjects

The results of this study are based on the responses of 162 subjects. This number is significantly less than 349--the number of instruments sent out to people in an effort to get at least 10 subjects for each of 27 cells. While 240 persons responded to the survey (a return rate of 69%), many of the responses could not be used in the analysis. Forty could not be used because only the supplementary sheet had been completed. Two forms could not be used because the respondents had returned them without the cover sheet which identified

the condition to which they had been assigned. While this happened in more than two cases, reference to the follow-up code permitted the assignment of completed forms to the proper condition. In these two cases, respondents scratched out the follow-up codes. An additional 36 responses had to be deleted from the data set to equalize cell sizes. These responses were selected randomly from those cells containing more than six subjects each.

The response rate showed that direct-service volunteers and board members (who are also volunteers) responded at almost the same rate-- 56% and 57% respectively. The response rate of professional staff members was 78%.

#### Manipulation Checks

A number of tests were run on both the conflict management styles instrument and the data to ensure the reliability of the study's findings. The results of those tests are indicated here.

Cronbach's Alpha was used to check the reliability of the modified version of the OCCI used in this study (see Appendices K--M for the three versions of the OCCI used). The alpha coefficient for the 11 items on the solution-orientation subscale was .82. The alpha coefficient for the 7 items on the control subscale was .70. The alpha coefficient for the 12 items on the nonconfrontation subscale was .87. These were all less than the coefficients Putnam and Wilson (1982a) found-- .88, .82, and .93, respectively. This difference may be

attributable to sampling error. While Putnam and Wilson did not report their sampling error, the sampling error in this study was .94 on the solution-orientation subscale, 2.41 on the control subscale, and 1.48 on the nonconfrontation subscale.

Pearson's  $r$  was computed on the dependent variables to determine if they were, in fact, independent. They were, with the exception of a slight negative correlation between the conflict management strategies control and nonconfrontation ( $-0.17$ ,  $p = .03$ ). The correlation between the solution-orientation and control strategies was  $.07$ ,  $p = .42$ . The correlation between the strategies solution-orientation and nonconfrontation was  $.03$ ,  $p = .71$ .

Bartlett's homogeneity of variance test was run on the data to be sure that the assumptions of the various statistics were met and that any differences found were true differences. Run with the MANOVA, the Bartlett's values were:  $1.51$ ,  $p = .05$  for the nonconfrontation variable;  $1.03$ ,  $p = .42$  for the solution-orientation variable; and  $.77$ ,  $p = .79$  for the variable labelled control. Only the nonconfrontation value suggested nonorthogonality.

### Expected Results

Three expectations were tested in this study. The findings are reported and discussed here.

Expectation I: One's preference for conflict management styles will differ significantly as a function of the



position one holds in the voluntary organization (i.e., staff member, board member, or direct-service volunteer).

This expectation was not met. No significant differences were found between staff members, board members, or direct-service volunteers regarding their preferences for a solution-orientation to handling conflict ( $F(2,135) = .27, p > .05$ ), a nonconfrontational approach ( $F(2,135) = 1.53, p > .05$ ), or a controlling style ( $F(2,135) = 1.24, p > .05$ ). (See Table 0 - 1 in Appendix 0 for a breakdown of the univariate analysis generated by the MANOVA.)

While the roles of staff member, board member, and direct-service volunteer are distinctly different, there are several possible explanations for why no significant differences were apparent in the preferences each has for managing conflict. First, a great deal of research indicates that people respond to conflict in ways that are in keeping with their personalities and personal value systems (Brown, Yelsma, & Keller, 1981; Donohue, 1978; Hall, 1974; Terhune, 1970; Thomas, 1978). If this is the case, people's response to conflict would be consistent across roles.

Second, the roles of staff member, board member, or direct-service volunteer may differ in the status they are afforded or the access they are permitted to resources. However, this does not mean that they are necessarily unequal in power. Yarbrough (1983) found power issues very difficult to assess in voluntary organizations. The information the direct-service volunteer possesses regarding the daily

operations of the organization may be just as vital to the organization, if not more so, than the staff member's knowledge of current budget expenditures or the board member's awareness of policy changes. Further, the unclear lines of authority existing in voluntary organizations might make people hesitant to try power plays in the event that they do not really have the power they think they have.

A third reason this expectation was not met may be that many of the people working in more than one voluntary organization hold different roles in the different organizations. If someone were used to behaving one way as a staff member of organization X, he or she might have a difficult time responding a different way just because in organization Y he or she is a direct-service volunteer.

When the researcher was doing follow-up telephone calls, a fourth factor which may have prevented this expectation from being met became apparent. A large number of board members and direct-service volunteers in this sample were trained social workers or adult educators. This suggests their training and organizational philosophy was the same as most staff members. Therefore, one would expect that they would handle conflict in a manner similar to staff members.

Expectation II: One's preference for conflict management styles will differ significantly as a function of the position of the person with whom one is in conflict (i.e., staff member, board member, or direct-service volunteer).

This expectation was not met. The position of the person with whom one was in conflict made no significant difference on that

person's choice of solution-oriented conflict management styles ( $F(2,135) = 2.14, p > .05$ ), nonconfrontation behaviors ( $F(2,135) = 1.23, p > .05$ ), or controlling modes ( $F(2,135) = .15, p > .05$ ). (See Table 0 - 2 in Appendix 0 for a breakdown of the univariate analysis generated by the MANOVA.)

Many of the explanations offered for Expectation I are probably applicable here as well. Three additional explanations may also be offered. First, the research clearly suggests that people's preferences for different conflict management styles are affected by how well they know and trust the individual with whom they are in conflict and their perception of the risk involved in the conflict situation (Cosier & Ruble, 1981; Deutsch, 1960; Atthowe, 1960; Clark & Wilson, 1961). However, it is possible that instead of encouraging the adoption of a specific type of behavior, as is indicated in most of the literature referenced above, these conditions merely encourage people to adopt the strategy of the opposing party. Research exists to suggest that people do select their conflict management style to match what the person is using with whom they are in conflict (Cosier & Ruble, 1981; Michener et al., 1975; Thomas, 1976; Yarbrough, 1983). If this is the case, no significant differences would be apparent.

A second possible explanation is that people's concern for the organization's mission overrides not only their personal concerns, but their role concerns. Fenn (1971) and Jenner (1981) found people volunteer because they believe in the organization. They are often willing to put aside personal feelings about how things should be done in

favor of what they believe are the wishes and needs of the organization (Walker, 1975). Conceivably, they also put aside role-typical behaviors for dealing with conflict.

The last explanation is that this expectation implies an interaction, yet the analysis called for is a main effect. Re-conceptualizing the expectation as an interaction phenomenon might alter the results, demonstrating significant differences.

Expectation III: One's preference for conflict management styles will differ significantly as a function of the content of the conflict situation.

People did significantly prefer nonconfrontation as a conflict management style in some conflict situations ( $F(2,135) = 3.45, p < .05, \eta^2 = .01$ ). The content of the conflict situation did not significantly affect people's preference for solution-orientated ( $F(2,135) = .16, p > .05$ ) or controlling ( $F(2,135) = 1.68, p > .05$ ) behaviors, however. (See Table 0 - 3 in Appendix 0 for a breakdown of the univariate analysis generated by the MANOVA.)

Tukey's B was performed to determine which type of conflict situation encouraged people to choose nonconfrontation over other conflict management styles. The result was that people chose nonconfrontation as a style significantly more often in conflict situations involving organizational concerns ( $M = 59.20$ ) than they did in situations involving personality differences ( $M = 54.04; F(2,157) = 3.46, p < .05$ ).

Since an indication of nonorthogonality was found on the nonconfrontation variable with the original homogeneity of variance test, a

second Bartlett's was run when the Tukey's B was run. The Bartlett's value was .59,  $p = .56$ , indicating that the main effect was not affected by nonorthogonality.

The finding that people choose nonconfrontation strategies more frequently in situations involving organizational concerns than they do in situations involving personality differences is particularly interesting. Renwick (1975) found exactly the opposite to be the case in profit-oriented organizations. However, the finding makes sense in light of the argument presented earlier that people in voluntary organizations work for the greater good of society. Not only would they be willing to give in on organizational concerns that they perceived were in the best interests of the organization (Walker, 1975), they would probably work extra hard to compromise with (or control) the person they did not like very much if they thought it would benefit the organization.

The finding is also consistent with other research generated in voluntary organizations. Buckholz (1972) and Fenn (1971) found that volunteers sit back and let staff members initiate ideas. Rawls et al. (1975) found that staff members, despite a desire to direct, are particularly concerned about maintaining interpersonal relationships. These two findings suggest that both volunteers (direct-service and members of the board) and staff members would tend to use nonconfrontation as a conflict management style in situations involving important organization concerns.

Further, this finding is consistent with Howell's (1981). He found nonconfrontation to be the most frequently used conflict management strategy in non-profit, human service organizations.

The fact that no other preferences for a given conflict management style could be attributed to the content of the conflict situation is surprising. Such a finding seems to discount the theory that conflict management strategies are selected situationally. Instead, it seems to re-affirm the view that people respond to conflict in a manner that fits their personality and value system (Brown, Yelsma, & Keller, 1981; Donohue, 1978; Hall, 1974; Terhune, 1970; Thomas, 1978) --a view that is consistent with the significant finding above, since it involves a value-oriented issue.

The possibility also exists, however, that people respond emotionally to conflicts involving their self-concept (e.g., someone misinterprets their ideas or is antagonistic toward them personally) and rationally to conflicts involving issues. If that is the case, people might respond idiosyncratically in situations involving communication or personality differences and with culturally prescribed strategies in situations involving organizational concerns. The only distinguishable pattern on the variable content of the conflict situation would then be on the level labelled here as organizational concerns.

A third explanation for this finding is that situations are not just unidimensional (i.e., they can not be described solely by one aspect of the situation, such as the content of the conflict). If an interaction effect rather than a main effect were proposed, it is possible that the findings would be different.

Finally, the OCCI was written specifically to assess people's strategies for handling disagreements about organizational concerns (Putnam & Wilson, 1982a). The instrument may have been incapable of projecting an accurate profile of people's strategies for handling personality or communication-related conflicts. Therefore, significant differences, if they did occur, may just not be apparent.

### Unpredicted Results

A number of findings were generated that were not predicted. These are reported here, along with a discussion of their significance.

The sex of the subjects was recorded and analyzed. As suggested by the research of Baxter and Shepherd (1978), Howell (1981), Renwick (1977), and Shockley-Zalabak (1981), there was no significant difference between men and women's use of solution-orientation ( $F(1,156) = .21, p > .05$ ), nonconfrontation ( $F(1,156) = 1.75, p > .05$ ), or control behaviors ( $F(1,156) = .33, p > .05$ ). (See Table P - 1 in Appendix P for the analysis of variance.)

Shockley-Zalabak (1981) suggested that people have a management perspective for dealing with conflict, rather than a male/female perspective and that is why there are no significant differences between men and women. With the emphasis on androgyny in recent years, these findings are not surprising.

The number of years each subject had been with the voluntary organization from which his or her name had been received was also recorded and analyzed. Here, too, there were no significant differences. The length of years spent in an organization was unrelated to whether a person selects solution-orientation behaviors ( $F(2,155) = .49, p > .05$ ), nonconfrontation behaviors ( $F(2,155) = .1.77, p > .05$ ), or controlling behaviors ( $F(2,155) = 2.69, p > .05$ ). (See Table P - 2 in Appendix P for the analysis of variance.)

This finding is not totally consistent with Howell's (1981) findings. When Howell considered the impact of tenure on people's conflict management style, he found people's tenure in the organization unrelated to their use of competition, collaboration, compromise, and accommodation. However, he found that people who worked for an organization between three and five years used avoidance significantly more than those who worked for an organization more than five years or less than three ( $\chi^2 = 13.60, p < .05$ ). One should note that Howell's use of the chi square test statistic to make this assertion was improper. The chi-square makes no linear assumptions. Therefore, it is not possible to say whether avoidance was used more or less often by persons with different lengths of tenure in the organization (McNemar, 1962).

The different findings might be attributed to the fact that Howell did his research within a single organization and used only staff members as subjects. Possibly when someone works in a single organization they enter with thoughts of being able to change the world. After three years they see the limits of what they can accomplish and get discouraged, avoiding conflict situations that they feel



they can not win. Those that remain more than five years may make a decision to make the best of the situation and become involved once more.

In this study, people at all levels of the organization were solicited. Direct-service volunteers and board members have little reason to stay in an organization that they feel does not reward them in some way. Those that feel discouraged about either their role in the organization or the organization's role in society may leave before they would stop fighting for what they thought was in the best interest of the organization. While these individuals would use non-confrontation strategies when they thought those were in the best interests of the organization, they would not necessarily use them significantly more than any other strategy.

Two unpredicted interaction effects were also found. When discussing the expected results it was mentioned that an implied interaction appeared to exist between the independent variables. Given that hypothesis, it seemed appropriate to examine, on a post-hoc basis, any interaction effects that occurred. While those analyses were done, several subject-related factors existed in this study that suggest one should at least question whether the observed interactions are attributable to real differences or to Type G error (Lindquist, 1953). Type G error refers to the obtaining of significant differences when in fact one should not (Type I error). The sample-related factors which may have created a situation conducive to generating Type G error are discussed here.

The first factor concerns the response rate of direct-service volunteers. Prior to follow-up it was only 37%. To get a sufficient sampling of volunteers, this researcher had to approach people that serve dual roles in organizations, such as direct-service volunteer and board member, and ask them to put on their "volunteer hat" to answer the questions. Whether or not these people could truly separate their responses to answer as a direct-service volunteer is unknown. Most people said they definitely could. However, if they could not, the samples would not be independent, and may contribute to Type G error.

The above point is related to a second factor that may have contributed to Type G error. Many people work in more than one voluntary organization, holding different positions in each. Others, while working in only a single organization, hold more than one position within that organization. When the researcher was faced with multiple responses to the demographic question of what position a respondent held--staff member, board member, or direct-service volunteer--she made an arbitrary decision to use for coding purposes the perspective of the organization from which the individual's name was received. The problem with this is that the researcher could not know from what perspective the individual was responding to the instrument. If people responded from a different perspective than was attributed to them, the results of the study could have been affected.

Two final factors may have indicated a significant interaction where none truly exists. Both these factors resulted from the fact that the researcher had incomplete access to the total population. In

four instances, organizations consented to participate in the study only on the condition that the researcher would not have free access to membership lists. Packets were prepared with cover letters addressed to "Dear Volunteer," "Dear Staff Member," or "Dear Board Member." The packets were then taken to the organizations' offices, where a representative of the organization addressed them and sent them out according to the random sampling process specified by the researcher. The first of the two factors resulting from the limits placed on the researcher in data collection was that it was impossible to follow-up on people from these four organizations. Follow-up was critical to the randomness of the sampling procedure. Coincidentally, there were proportionally fewer responses from persons receiving letters bearing the general salutation than there were from persons receiving personalized letters. The second factor was that when the first mailing failed to generate sufficient returns and additional names had to be drawn from the subject pool, there was no opportunity to draw additional names from these four organizations. Both of these situations violate the assumption of randomness.

Proceeding on the assumption that the differences observed are real differences, the first significant interaction found was a two-way interaction on the solution-orientation variable. The interaction was between the position of the person with whom one is in conflict and the type of conflict situation involved ( $F(4,135) = 2.48$ ,  $p < .05$ ,  $\eta^2 = .01$ ). (See Table Q - 1 in Appendix Q for an analysis of the variance.)

The rationale for selecting individual comparisons to compute follows. Since the two-way interaction effect involved the position of the person with whom one was in conflict, it made sense to select comparisons for further analysis that included each of the three different positions existing in voluntary organizations. Conflict situations involving organizational concerns were selected for the comparison for three reasons. First, as indicated earlier the OCCI may provide the most valid assessment of people's preferences for different conflict management behaviors when the conflict situation involves an organizational concern, since that was the type of conflict situation the instrument was designed to assess. Second, it is the concern for organizational issues that attracts most people to voluntary organizations. Third, since much of the research recommends the use of solution-oriented strategies for successful goal achievement (Bernardin & Alvares, 1976; Blake et al., 1964; Burke, 1970; Lawrence & Lorsch, 1967), it seemed valuable to determine which groups in voluntary organizations, if any, used that approach significantly more often than others in conflicts of this sort.

Individual comparisons were made using Dunn's C (Kirk, 1968) on the three means that the post-hoc evaluation suggested were worth further study. (See Table Q - 2 in Appendix Q for cell means.) The result was that when conflict centers on organizational concerns and one is in conflict with volunteers, there is significantly more use of a solution-orientation style than when the conflict is with staff members ( $t(153) = 3.13, p < .01$ ). No significant differences were found between how volunteers and board members ( $t(153) = 2.12, p > .05$ ) or

board members and staff members ( $t(153) = 1.01, p > .05$ ) use solution-orientation strategies to deal with organizational concerns.

Based on the findings generated in profit-oriented organizations, one might assume that people would use mostly control strategies when embroiled in a conflict situation with direct-service volunteers. Volunteers have the most limited access to resources and the least status of anyone in the voluntary organization. Others would risk little by pushing for what they wanted. Based on Howell's (1981) findings, one might expect that people would use nonconfrontation strategies when in conflict with direct-service volunteers. Such strategies would allow them to virtually ignore the volunteer. Neither of these expectations were supported by the findings of this study. In instances where the issues are most vital, people try to arrive at a "win/win" solution with volunteers. Perhaps this is in recognition of the fear that LaCour (1977) expressed. An organization that does not involve and respect its volunteers might lose them. Without direct-service volunteers, organizations would have difficulty accomplishing their mission.

That this finding is significant in comparison with the way people deal with staff members on the same issues is interesting. Such a finding supports the belief that volunteers turn much of the decision-making over to staff members (Buckholz, 1972; Fenn, 1971). If having input on organizational issues was perceived as important to volunteers, perhaps they would confront staff members with more of a solution-orientation so that they could have their say too.

A significant three-way interaction on the variable indicating the use of control strategies was also found. The interaction was between one's own position in the organization, the position of the person with whom one is in conflict, and the content of the conflict ( $F(8,135) = 2.83$ ,  $p < .01$ ,  $\eta^2 = .01$ ). (See Table R - 1 in Appendix R for an analysis of the variance.)

The decision regarding which comparisons to make in the analysis of this interaction effect was based on the rationale that follows. Comparisons involving subjects from each of the three different levels of a voluntary's hierarchy were selected based on the original expectation that role differences would affect people's use of control strategies (Phillips & Cheston, 1979). Organizational concerns was again selected as the content of the conflict situation to be considered in the comparisons. As before, the focus of the OCCI provides a cogent argument for considering organizational concerns as the topic of the conflict situation. Also as before, the importance of organizational concerns to the recruitment and retention of people in voluntary organizations makes organizational concerns as the content of the conflict situation a logical choice. This is especially true if, as in profit-oriented organizations, the salience of the topic affects people's use of control strategies (Atthowe, 1960; Clark & Wilson, 1961). A third reason for selecting organizational concerns as the topic of the conflict situation to consider involves the ability to compare findings in the profit-oriented setting to the voluntary setting. Much of the conflict management research conducted

in profit-oriented organizations uses organizational concerns as the content of the conflict situation.

Dunn's C was used to do individual comparisons of the three means that seemed, according to the above analysis, to be the most likely source of the significant difference in the way control strategies are used. (See Table R - 2 in Appendix R for cell means.) The results of the Dunn's C indicate that when volunteers are in conflict with other volunteers regarding organizational concerns, they will use significantly more controlling strategies than would staff if they were the ones in conflict with volunteers ( $t(153) = 6.04, p < .01$ ). Volunteers will also be significantly more controlling in situations involving a conflict with other volunteers over organizational concerns than would board members if they were the ones involved in the conflict with direct-service volunteers ( $t(153) = 3.90, p < .01$ ). However, there is no significant difference in the degree of control either board members or staff members use when they are in conflict with volunteers over organizational concerns ( $t(153) = 2.14, p > .05$ ).

These findings re-affirm the earlier interpretation that staff members are not willing to risk losing their volunteers by trying to set up a "win/lose" situation. The fact that board members do not use a significant number of control strategies when in conflict with volunteers may be related to the fact that they generally have little interaction with volunteers and may be hesitant to risk such an approach, not knowing how the volunteers will react.

That volunteers use control strategies with each other to a significant degree is interesting. Such a finding contradicts Cosier and

Ruble's (1981) findings that the better people know one-another, the less controlling they will be in conflict situations. Perhaps this finding can be explained in light of the unique aspects of the voluntary setting. Since power issues are so unclear in voluntary organizations, people may be uncomfortable using controlling strategies with people at different levels of the organization--not knowing how they will be accepted. However, the power is clear when people are at the same level. Possibly people see the chance to "win" in a setting that other-wise prohibits competition.

A second possible explanation is related to the fact that direct-service volunteers have very clearly defined tasks. The desire for individuals to protect what they see as their turf might be a factor that would encourage the use of controlling strategies. This interpretation might also explain Putnam and Wilson's (1982a) unexpected finding that people used more controlling strategies with peers than they do in superior-subordinate relationships.

In this chapter the researcher has presented and discussed the findings of a study on conflict management in voluntary organizations. While many of the expected results were not demonstrated, several conclusions were drawn about how conflict may be managed by staff members, board members, and direct-service volunteers in the voluntary setting. These conclusions will be reviewed in Chapter 4 along with some of the implications they raise for the people that work in voluntary organizations. Recommendations for future research in this area are also discussed in Chapter 4.



## CHAPTER IV

### SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

The purpose of this dissertation was to explore ways conflict is managed in voluntary organizations. In earlier chapters (a) the volunteerism and conflict management literature was reviewed, (b) several research questions were raised, (c) expected findings were stated, (d) a study for answering the research questions was outlined, and (e) the study's findings were reported. In this last chapter the results of the study are summarized and several conclusions are offered. Limitations of the study are presented for the reader's consideration. The chapter ends with recommendations for future research.

This study sought to answer three basic research questions related to how conflict is managed in voluntary organizations: (a) Will one's style for dealing with conflict differ significantly as a function of one's position within the organization? (b) Will one's style for dealing with conflict differ significantly as a function of the opposing party's position within the organization? (c) Will one's style for dealing with conflict differ significantly as a function of the content of the conflict situation? In the process of trying to answer these three questions several other questions were raised. The answers generated to all of the questions considered in this study are

briefly summarized here. An interpretation of the results is then offered along with some implications of the results for practitioners.

Of the three original questions asked in this study, only the content of the conflict situation appears to affect the conflict management style one chooses. The findings of this study indicate that in conflict situations involving organizational concerns people use nonconfrontation strategies significantly more often than they use solution or control-oriented strategies. This is consistent with Howell's (1981) finding that avoidance--one form of nonconfrontation--is the conflict management style used most frequently in voluntary organizations.

The fact that the other two questions could not be answered affirmatively may mean that people choose conflict management styles that are consistent with their personalities and value systems rather than strategies that are consistent with the roles they play. However, it may mean merely that people do not operate in a vacuum; that their choice of conflict management style is dependent not only on who they are, or with whom they are in conflict, but on the interaction of those two factors. Or, it may mean that the findings generated in profit-oriented settings, from which these two expectations were extrapolated, can not be transferred to voluntary settings.

Previous studies sought to answer the questions of whether one's sex or length of tenure in an organization are related to a person's preference for different conflict management styles, so this study did not focus on these questions. However, results corroborating the findings of the previous studies were produced in this study and they

are mentioned here. Neither sex nor length of tenure appear to affect one's choice of conflict management styles.

Two new questions about how conflict may be managed in voluntary organizations were raised when an original analysis of the data indicated the existence of unpredicted interaction effects. The first of these questions was: What combination of two independent variables results in a significant use of solution-oriented behaviors? The second of these was: What combination of three independent variables results in a significant use of controlling behaviors? The answer generated to the first question was that when someone was in conflict with a volunteer about an issue related to the organization he or she would use solution-oriented behaviors significantly more often than if he or she were involved in the same conflict with a staff member. The answer generated to the second question was that when volunteers are in conflict with other volunteers regarding an organizational concern they will use significantly more controlling behaviors than would staff or board members if they were the ones in conflict with the volunteers.

The results of this study differ in many cases from results generated in profit-oriented organizations. For instance, the finding that nonconfrontation is the preferred strategy in voluntary organizations for dealing with conflict involving organizational issues disputes Cosier and Ruble's (1981) finding that nonconfrontation, specifically avoidance, is the least used conflict management style in (profit-oriented) organizations. The other two significant findings of this study contradict Phillips and Cheston's (1979) finding that

people use solution-oriented strategies with peers, controlling behaviors with subordinates, and nonconfrontation with superiors. Volunteers in conflict with other volunteers tend to use controlling strategies, not solution-oriented strategies. Others in conflict with volunteers tend to use solution-oriented behaviors, not control or nonconfrontation strategies.

The results of this study are consistent, however, with suggestions in the literature regarding people's motivation for behavior in voluntary organizations. Each of the significant findings serves to reaffirm Kramer (1975) and Walker's (1975) belief that people in voluntary organizations put the needs, interests, and values of the organization ahead of their own needs, interests and values. Each of the significant findings is in keeping with Buckholz (1972) and Fenn's (1971) suggestions that volunteers tend to let staff members initiate decisions in voluntary organizations. Each of the significant findings is also consistent with the Rawls' et al. (1975) finding that staff members are hesitant to risk their interpersonal relationships with volunteers and LaCour's (1977) belief that the fear of losing their volunteers' efforts influences staff members' actions.

### Conclusions

Several conclusions may be drawn from the results of this study. The first is that people in voluntary organizations seem to be concerned more about the organization's mission than about their personal needs. This is evidenced by two findings. Instead of trying to get their way in conflict situations involving organizational concerns,

people working in voluntaries try to avoid conflict altogether, accommodate other's wishes, or work toward a compromise. They also appear to vary their strategies depending on who is involved in the conflict situation so as to increase the chances of resolving the conflict to the organization's benefit. This is in contrast to their behavior in conflict situations involving a misunderstanding or a personality difference. In those situations people appear to use whatever strategies are consistent with their personality.

A second conclusion is that people working in voluntary organizations do truly appreciate the perceptions and contributions of direct-service volunteers. While general wisdom has always stressed that without the direct-service volunteer voluntary organizations would not exist, one sometimes wonders if people are merely paying lip-service to volunteers. Such cynicism is legitimate after reading Walker's (1975) article. He indicated that staff members often try to control voluntary organizations, believing their insight and dedication is superior to volunteers' because of their day-to-day involvement in the organization. The discovery that people (other than the volunteers themselves) use solution-oriented strategies when they are in conflict with direct-service volunteers indicates that the views of the volunteers are both respected and solicited.

A question exists, however, whether volunteers feel the respect. The fact that direct-service volunteers tend to use controlling strategies with other volunteers suggests that they may feel their only power and expertise exists within the confines of their job. Perhaps if they felt that they played a significant part in the organization

as a whole they would feel less of a need to use controlling strategies with their peers. In addition, people's level of participation in an organization is typically related to the rewards they feel they receive for that participation. If the response rate to this study ( $\bar{M}$  = 56.5% for volunteers and board members and 78% for staff members) indicates the level of people's involvement in voluntary organizations, it may also say something about the degree of reward that both volunteers and staff members feel they receive from their participation. If the response rate does speak to the level of reward that each feels, volunteers do not feel the same degree of reward as staff members. Respect is a strong reward. Staff members might take several steps to better communicate their sense of respect for their volunteers.

One way staff members can demonstrate their respect is by better integrating their volunteers into the organization as suggested above. Organizations will not optimally benefit from the ideas of volunteers until they are well-integrated into the system. A special effort must be made with direct-service volunteers. Of the 40 individuals that completed only the supplementary form, 23 were direct-service volunteers, 11 were staff members, and 6 were board members. The lack of opportunities for interaction was most evident between direct-service volunteers and board members. Eighteen of the 23 direct-service volunteers returning the supplementary form indicated they had no interaction with board members. Eight of the volunteers reported having no interaction with staff members and nine volunteers indicated they lacked interaction with other volunteers.

In the process of integrating volunteers, they must be encouraged to speak up more. Katz and Kahn (1966) indicated that people quickly learn what other people expect of their role. Staff members must begin communicating to volunteers that their role involves "making waves," that keeping quiet is not necessarily in the best interest of the organization to which they are committed. Staff members must resist letting volunteers abdicate their decision-making power to them. One way to do this is to keep the ratio of staff members to volunteers low in meetings since Buckholz (1972) found the tendency for volunteers to defer to staff members will increase as the number of staff members in a meeting increases.

Finally, it would be helpful to provide opportunities for people at all levels of voluntary organizations to practice different conflict management strategies in a safe atmosphere that encourages learning. People are often uncomfortable with conflict because they lack the skills to manage it productively. They may avoid conflict rather than risk using a strategy that may not work, rationalizing that avoidance is in the best interests of the organization because the status quo is maintained. Yet, conflict can be beneficial to an organization. Without conflict, important challenges to organizational growth may not be made when they should be. With nonconfrontation strategies used so predominately in voluntary organizations, this is a major concern. People must be provided with the tools to handle different conflict situations effectively.

### Limitations

The conclusions one draws from the results of a study are always somewhat tentative, for they must be considered in light of any limitations of the study. While an effort was made in the design of this study to limit the number of factors that might cause the results of the study to be qualified, it is not possible to do away with all of them. Several factors that may have contaminated the results of this study are enumerated here.

One of the major limitations of this study may have been the instrument used. Despite the care with which it was chosen, several concerns regarding the instrument might be raised. First, it was designed specifically to assess how people handle disagreements about organizational concerns. While on face value none of the behaviors listed on the instrument seemed inappropriate for dealing with communication or personality differences, it is possible that people use different communication behaviors to deal with these types of conflict. If that is the case, the instrument prevented the researcher from finding differences in conflict management style that may in fact exist.

Second, the instrument required people to speculate on paper about how (and to what degree) they would respond to different conflict situations. While paper-pencil tests are accepted measures of people's behavior in the social sciences, the results of the study might have been different if the researcher had observed actual conflict situations and noted people's behaviors in those situations.



Third, the instrument was designed with Likert-type responses. While a number of people attached comments to their responses in an effort to qualify them, there was no way to take those comments into consideration in the analysis of the results. Most of the comments suggested that the respondents might answer the questions very differently given specific circumstances since the importance of the particular organizational concern, personality difference, or misunderstanding impacts on their behavior. However, determining the salience of issues requires the ability to operationalize attitudes. While attitudes can be operationalized, the process is complex (Scott, 1968). If salience had been considered in this study, the results that were obtained might have been different.

In order to amass a sufficient sample size it was necessary to make follow-up telephone calls to subjects that had not mailed back their responses. However, the use of the telephone to generate responses may also have created limitations in the study. For instance, over the phone people tended to provide answers on a three-point scale rather than on the seven-point scale of the instrument. Apparently they could not keep all seven alternatives in their mind. Such a situation may have affected the results of the study.

The researcher may also have inadvertently given some sort of cues to subjects over the phone which would have caused them to answer in a particular way. Such a situation would have the potential to affect the results of the study.

A third major limitation to this study was the fact that many subjects had insufficient experience interacting with people at

different levels of the organization to complete the instrument. This situation likely contributed to the fact that a large number of people did not return the survey at all and 17% of the those that did respond completed only the supplementary form. However, another concern exists here. One has to wonder how many of the people that did respond did not have any experience in dealing with conflict with someone at the specified level of the hierarchy and merely put down an answer to "help the researcher." If any did, the results of the study may be different from what they might have been.

The researcher tried to ensure the subjects' ability to simulate responses to people at the specified levels of the voluntary organization by seeking subjects only from organizations that combine the efforts of professional staff members, board members, and direct-service volunteers to achieve their goals. However, while the researcher could control the selection of organizations from which the subjects were selected, she could not control the communication networks of which the subjects were a part in the organizations (subjects were randomly selected). The fact that staff members, board members, and direct-service volunteers all worked in the subjects' organizations did not mean that the subjects had contact with people at each level.

Other possible limitations of this study were mentioned earlier when the conditions that may have contributed to Type G error were listed. For instance, a lack of independence between samples may have existed because some subjects in the study held more than one position in voluntary organizations. The inability to use true random sampling because of incomplete access to the population may have resulted in

observed differences that were artifactual and not true differences. (See Chapter 3 for a more complete discussion of the possibility of Type G error.)

An uncontrolled variable may also have affected the outcome of the study. That variable was the size of the participating organizations. While previous research does not indicate that a person's utilization of different conflict management styles is affected by the size of an organization, related literature suggested a rationale for seeking subjects from like-sized organizations. Cosier and Ruble (1981) found that people's use of different conflict management styles is based, at least in part, on the degree of intimacy they sense they share with the person with whom they are in conflict. The size of an organization could affect a person's perception of intimacy. Therefore, an attempt was made to seek subjects for this study from like-sized organizations.

However, finding organizations of like-size was not possible. One reason was that organizations with similar-sized professional staffs and boards often had widely-varying numbers of direct-service volunteers. Organizations with similar-sized volunteer and board lists typically had different-sized staffs. A second reason was that the size of an organization's roster did not necessarily reflect the true size of the organization. Some organizations' records included inactive as well as active individuals, while other organizations' lists contained only active members. Some organizations listed persons on more than one roster--in one case an individual was listed as

a staff member, a board member, and a direct-service volunteer--where other organizations listed individuals only once.

While these limitations raise some caveats about generalizing the results of this study, the results of the homogeneity of variance tests suggest that the results of the study may be generalized regardless of the limitations. The limitations of this study serve another purpose, however. They help lay out a significant research program for the future.

## SUGGESTIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

This study has just served to open the door on conflict management research in voluntary organizations. A number of future studies are called for. They might best be undertaken in four phases.

The first phase would involve replicating this basic study with a number of important differences. A new instrument, appropriate for assessing people's conflict management style in situations involving communication and personality differences, should be incorporated in any study that replicates this one. If there are still no significant differences found on either of these two independent variables one could collapse categories for future studies and look at conflict situations in general. Future replications should also offer hypotheses regarding possible interaction effects between the independent variables since interaction effects were found in this study.

Then, a series of research questions might be tested using the basic design of this study. Some of the questions that need to be answered include: Does the specific topic of the conflict affect the way people handle conflict in voluntary organizations? Do different sized organizations handle conflict differently? Does the mission of the organization (e.g., health-related, arts-oriented, welfare) affect the way conflict is handled in the organization? Does someone's age or occupation affect the way they handle conflict in voluntary organizations? Do people working in an organization with an active board handle conflict differently than people working in an organization with an inactive board? Does the time the board meets affect how

people handle conflict? (One respondent mentioned that the board he belonged to met late at night and, being an early-to-bed person, he tended to avoid conflicts because it would take too long to try to manage them and he was always anxious to quit for the evening.) Do professionals that volunteer (e.g., doctors or lawyers) handle conflict differently than others that volunteer?

The second phase of research would be to ask these same questions, but try to answer them using qualitative approaches to research. A comparison of the results could be interesting.

The need for the third phase of this research plan would be dependent on the results of the first two phases. This study indicated that people may handle conflict differently in voluntary organizations than they do in profit-oriented organizations. If future research in voluntary organizations demonstrates the same thing, it would be valuable to replicate the many studies done in profit-oriented organizations using voluntaries as the organizational setting. One question that would be of particular interest is, What constitutes productive and unproductive conflict management styles in different conflict situations occurring in voluntary organizations?

The final phase of this research would be to study the power issues existing in voluntary organizations in an effort to identify the complex factors that influence behavior in this unique setting. Some specific research questions would include: Is there a significant difference in the degree of information possessed by staff members, board members, and direct-service volunteers? Is there a difference in the degree of access each has to resources? How do people within

voluntary organizations view the power structure? How do people in the community view the power structure of voluntary organizations?

The study of conflict management in voluntary organizations is one area of research that is wide open. As stated in the introduction, voluntary organizations are vital to this society's continued functioning. In order for voluntaries to function at an optimum level it is important for us to learn as much about the workings of such organizations as we can. The study conducted here was the first of what should be many more studies aimed at providing insight into the critical Third Sector.

## References

- Adams, D. S. (1980). Elite and lower volunteers in a voluntary association: A study of an American Red Cross chapter. Journal of Voluntary Action Research, 9, (1-4), 95-108.
- Akey, D. S. (Ed.). (1984). The encyclopedia of associations (Vol. 1). Detroit: Gale Research Co.
- Atthowe, J. (1960). Types of conflict and their resolution: A reinterpretation. Journal of Experimental Psychology, 59, (1), 1-9.
- Baxter, L. A., & Shepherd, T. L. (1978). Sex role identity, sex of other, and affective relationship as determinants of interpersonal conflict-management styles. Sex Roles: A Journal of Research, 4, (6), 813-825.
- Berlew, D. E. (1980, February). Is conflict a creative force? International Management, 35, (2), 23-24.
- Bernardin, H. J., & Alvares, K. M. (1976). The managerial grid as a predictor of conflict resolution method and managerial effectiveness. Administrative Science Quarterly, 21, (1), 84-92.
- Blake, R. R., & Mouton, J. S. (1964). The managerial grid. Houston: Gulf Publishing Co.
- Blake, R. R., Shepard, H. A., & Mouton, J. S. (1964). Managing intergroup conflict in industry. Houston: Gulf Publishing Co.
- Blumenthal, L. H. (1954). How to work with your board and committees. New York: Association Press.
- Bolduc, V. L. (1980). Representation and legitimacy in neighborhood organizations: A case study. Journal of Voluntary Action Research, 9, (1-4), 165-178.
- Bolling, L. (1982, March). Helping each other. Saturday Evening Post, 254, 90-92.
- Brown, C. T., Yelsma, P., & Keller, P. W. (1981). Communication-conflict predisposition: Development of a theory and an instrument. Human Relations, 34, (12), 1103-1117.



- Buckholz, M. H. (1972, Spring). Volunteers and agency staff: Their different roles in policy-making bodies. Journal of Voluntary Action Research, 1 & 2, 19-26.
- Burke, R. J. (1970). Methods of resolving superior-subordinate conflict: The constructive use of subordinate differences and disagreements. Organizational Behavior and Human Performance, 5, 393-411.
- Cheatham, W. M. (1982, November). Voluntarism '82: A call for accountability. Vital Speeches of the Day, 49, 40-42.
- Chesler, M. A., Crowfoot, J. E., & Bryant, B. I. (1978). Power training: An alternative path to conflict management. California Management Review, 21, (2), 84-90.
- Clark, P. B., & Wilson, J. Q. (1961). Incentive systems: A theory of organizations. Administrative Science Quarterly, 6, (2), 129-166.
- Corwin, R.G. (1969). Patterns of organizational conflict. Administrative Science Quarterly, 14, (4), 507-520.
- Coser, L. (1956). The function of social conflict. Glencoe, IL: Free Press.
- Cosier, R. A., & Ruble, T. L. (1981). Research on conflict-handling behavior: An experimental approach. Academy of Management Journal, 24, (4), 816-831.
- Cull, J. G., & Hardy, R. E. (1974). Volunteerism: An emerging profession. Springfield, IL: Charles C. Thomas Publisher.
- Cummings, H. W., Long, L., & Lewis, M. (1983). Managing communication in organizations. Dubuque, IA: Gorsuch-Scarisbrick Publishers.
- Deutsch, M. (1960). The effect of motivational orientation upon trust and suspicion. Human Relations, 13, 123-139.
- Deutsch, M. (1973). The resolution of conflict: Constructive and destructive processes. New Haven: Yale University Press.

- Donohue, W. (1978, August). An empirical framework for examining negotiation processes and outcomes. Communication Monographs, 45, (3), 247-257.
- Doolittle, R. J. (1976). Orientations to communication and conflict. In R. Applbaum and R. Hart (Eds.), MODCOM modules in speech communication. Chicago: Science Research Associates, Inc.
- Dunnette, M. D. (Ed.). (1976). Handbook of industrial and organizational psychology. Chicago: Rand McNally College Publishing Co.
- Fenn, D. J., Jr. (1971). Executives as community volunteers. Reprints from Harvard Business Review: Management of Non-profit Organizations Series, No. 21123, 27-36.
- Filley, A. C. (1975). Interpersonal conflict resolution. Glenview, IL: Scott, Foresman and Co.
- Filley, A. C. (1978). Some normative issues in conflict management. California Management Review, 21, 61-66.
- Frost, J. H., & Wilmot, W. (1978). Interpersonal conflict. Dubuque, IA: Wm. C. Brown Co., Publishers.
- Gallup, G. H. (Ed.). (1982). The Gallup Poll (1982 ed.). Wilmington, DE: Scholarly Resources, Inc.
- Gatewood, R., & Lahiff, J. (1977). Differences in importance of job factors between managers in voluntary and profit organizations. Journal of Voluntary Action Research, 6, (3-4), 133-136.
- Gray-Little, B. (1974). Attitudes toward conflict with authority as a function of sex, I-E, and dogmatism. Psychological Reports, 34, 375-381.
- Hall, J. (1969). Conflict management survey: A survey on one's characteristic reaction to and handling of conflicts between himself and others. Conroe, TX: Teleometrics International.
- Hall, J. (1974). Personality and mode preference: A multimodal view of conflict management. Unpublished manuscript, Teleometrics International.

- Horney, K. (1945). Our inner conflicts: A constructive theory of neurosis. New York: W. W. Norton and Co.
- Hornstein, H. A., & Johnson, D. W. (1966). The effects of process analysis and ties to his group upon the negotiator's attitudes toward the outcomes of negotiations. Journal of Applied Behavioral Science, 2, 449-463.
- Howell, J. L. (1981). The identification, description and analysis of competencies focused on conflict management in a human services organization: An exploratory study (Doctoral dissertation, University of Massachusetts, 1981). Dissertation Abstracts International, 42 (3-A), 933.
- Jamieson, D. W., & Thomas, K. W. (1974). Power and conflict in the student-teacher relationship. Journal of Applied Behavioral Science, 10, (3), 321-336.
- Jandt, F. E., & Hare, M. (1976). Instruction in conflict resolution. Urbana, IL: ERIC Clearinghouse on Reading and Communication Skills.
- Jenner, J. R. (1981, Dec.) Volunteerism as an aspect of women's work. Journal of Vocational Behavior, 19, 302-314.
- Katz, D., & Kahn, R. L. (1966). The social psychology of organizations. New York: John Wiley and Sons, Inc.
- Kilmann, R. H., & Thomas, K. W. (1977). Developing a forced choice measure of conflict-handling behavior: The "Mode" instrument. Educational and Psychological Measurement, 37, 309-325.
- Kirk, R. E. (1968). Experimental design: Procedures for the behavioral sciences. Belmont, CA: Brooks/Cole Publishing.
- Kramer, R. M. (1975). Ideology, status and power in board-executive relationships. In R. M. Kramer & H. Specht (Eds.), Readings in community organization practice (2nd. ed.) (pp. 307-314). Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall.

- LaCour, J. A. (1977). Organizational structure: Implications for volunteer program outcome. Journal of Voluntary Action Research, 6, (1-2), 41-47.
- Lawrence, P. R., & Lorsch, J. W. (1967). Differentiation and integration in complex organizations. Administrative Science Quarterly, 12, 1-47.
- Lenihan, G. O., & Jackson, L. (1984, January). Social need, public response: The volunteer professional model for human services agencies and counselors. The Personnel and Guidance Journal, 62, (5), 285-289.
- Levitt, T. (1973). The third sector: New tactics for a responsive society. N. Y.: AMACOM.
- Lindquist, E. F. (1953). Design and analysis of experiments in psychology and education. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co.
- McCroskey, J., & Young, T. (1979). The use and abuse of factor analysis in communication research. Human Communication Research, 5, 375-382.
- McNemar, Q. (1962). Psychological statistics (3rd ed.). New York: John Wiley and Sons, Inc.
- Michener, H., Vaske, J., Schleifer, S., Plazewski, J., & Chapman, L. (1975). Factors affecting concession rate and threat usage in bilateral conflict. Sociometry, 38, 62-80.
- Phillips, E., & Cheston, R. (1979). Conflict resolution: What works? California Management Review, 21, (4), 76-83.
- Putnam, L. L., & Wilson, C. E. (1982a). Communicative strategies in organizational conflicts: Reliability and validity of a measurement scale. In M. Burgoon (Ed.), Communication Yearbook VI. Beverly Hills, CA: Sage Publications.
- Putnam, L. L., & Wilson, C. E. (1982b). Organizational Communication Conflict Instrument. Unpublished instrument.

- Rawls, J. R., Ullrich, R. A., & Nelson, O. T., Jr. (1975). A comparison of managers entering or reentering the profit and nonprofit sectors. Academy of Management Journal, 18, (3), 616-623.
- Renwick, P. A. (1975). Impact of topic and source of disagreement on conflict management. Organizational Behavior and Human Performance, 14, 416-425.
- Renwick, P. A. (1977). The effect of sex differences on the perception of management of superior-subordinate conflict: An exploratory study. Organizational Behavior and Human Performance, 19, (2), 403-415.
- Richmond, V. P., Wagner, J. P., & McCroskey, J. C. (1983). The impact of perceptions of leadership style, use of power, and conflict management style on organizational outcomes. Communication Quarterly, 31, (1), 27-36.
- Ross, R. G. (1982). The development and evaluation of a self-report instrument to measure conflict management styles (Doctoral dissertation, Ohio University, 1982). Dissertation Abstracts International, 43(6-A), 1747.
- Ross, R. G., & DeWine, S. (1982, November). Interpersonal conflict: Measurement and validation. Paper presented at the meeting of the Speech Communication Association, Knoxville, TN.
- Scafe, M. C. (1981). An investigation of the relationship of teacher effectiveness and teacher and student social styles (Doctoral dissertation, University of Oklahoma, 1981).
- Scott, W. A. (1968). Attitude measurement. In G. Lindzey & E. Aronson (Eds.), The handbook of social psychology (pp. 204-273). Reading, MA: Addison-Wesley Publishing Co.
- Sereno, K., & Mortensen, C. (1969). The effects of ego-involved attitudes on conflict negotiations in dyads. Speech Monographs, 36, 8-12.
- Shockley-Zalabak, P. (1981). The effects of sex differences on the preference for utilization of conflict styles of managers in a work setting: An exploratory study. Public Personnel Management Journal, 10, (3), 289-295.

- Terhune, K. (1970). The effects of personality in cooperation and conflict. In P. Swingle (Ed.), The structure of conflict. New York: Academic Press.
- Thibaut, J., & Kelley, H. (1959). The social psychology of groups. New York: John Wiley and Sons, Inc.
- Thomas, K. W. (1971). Conflict-handling modes in interdepartmental relations (Doctoral dissertation, Purdue University, 1971). Dissertation Abstracts International, 32 (2-B), 1266.
- Thomas, K. W. (1976). Conflict and conflict management. In M. Dunnette (Ed.), Handbook of industrial and organizational psychology (pp. 889-935), Chicago: Rand-McNally College Publishing Co.
- Thomas, K. W. (1978). [Introduction to special section on conflict management.] California Management Review, 21, 56-60.
- Thomas, K. W., & Kilmann, R. H. (1974). Thomas-Kilman conflict mode instrument. New York: XICOM, Inc.
- Thomas, K. W., & Kilmann, R. H. (1975). The social desirability variable in organizational research: An alternative explanation for reported findings. Academy of Management Journal, 18, 741-752.
- Thomas, K. W., & Kilmann, R. H. (1978). Comparison of four instruments in measuring conflict behavior. Psychological Reports, 42, 1139-1145.
- Thompson, V. A. (1961). Hierarchy, specialization, and organizational conflict. Administrative Science Quarterly, 5, (4), 485-521.
- Trost, A., & Rauner, J. (1983). Gaining Momentum For Board Action. San Diego: Marlborough Publications.
- Walker, J. M. (1975). Organizational change, citizen participation, and voluntary action. Journal of Voluntary Action, 4, (1 & 2), 4-23.

Yarbrough, A. E. (1983, November). Conflict management in the human services. Paper presented at the meeting of the Speech Communication Association, Washington D. C.

Zander, A., Cohen, A. R., & Stotland, E. (1959). Power and the relations among professions. In D. Cartwright (Ed.), Studies in Social Power, pp. 15-35. Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Press.

## Appendix A

Cover Letter to Subjects

Date \_\_\_\_\_

Dear \_\_\_\_\_,

I am conducting a study on how conflict is managed in voluntary organizations. I need your help. Enclosed is a survey. The survey is being conducted with the approval of (subject's organization). Filling it out will only take you about 5 minutes. Your answers, which will remain confidential, could, however, contribute significantly to our knowledge about conflict management in voluntary organizations.

Please read the instruction sheet and provide the few pieces of demographic information that are requested. Then, proceed to the questionnaire itself. If, after reading the instruction sheet, you feel you can not answer the questionnaire because you never have any interaction with persons from the specified level of the organizational hierarchy and you are not sure how you would behave, complete the last page of this packet only. When you have responded to all 30 items of the questionnaire (or the last page of this packet), fold the packet up, place it in the addressed, stamped envelope provided, and drop it in a mailbox.

Because the process is so simple, I would appreciate it if you would take the time right now to complete the survey. If you can not send the completed survey in the return mail, please send it back no later than September 4, 1984. Your response is vital.

As soon as I have heard from all the individuals I have sent surveys to, I will share my findings with your organization.

Thank you for your prompt attention to this request.

Sincerely,

Terrie Temkin  
Department of Communication  
University of Oklahoma



## Appendix B

Instruction Sheet: Interpretation Problems with Staff Members

## Position

☐ Staff member☐ Board member☐ Direct-service  
volunteerSex ☐ M ☐ F

Years with organization

☐ 1 - 2☐ 3 - 5☐ more than 5

Please indicate your position in the voluntary organization, the number of years you have worked with the organization, and your sex by checking the appropriate categories above.

Many times, we disagree with someone when we don't interpret a message or a concept the same way they do. We will argue over what a policy means or what it was that someone really meant. Think of disagreements of this sort that you have encountered while working with staff members in voluntary organizations. Then, on the next few pages, indicate how frequently you engage in each of the described behaviors. DO NOT respond to the items with a particular disagreement in mind. Instead, keep in mind your general experiences with these kinds of disagreements with staff members. For each item, select the number that represents the behavior you are MOST LIKELY to exhibit. There are no right or wrong answers. Please respond to all items on the scale. The alternative responses are:

1 = Always

2 = Very Often

3 = Often

4 = Sometimes

5 = Seldom

6 = Very Seldom

7 = Never

## Appendix C

Instruction Sheet: Interpretation Problems with Board Members

Position  
     \_\_\_ Staff member  
     \_\_\_ Board member  
     \_\_\_ Direct-service  
        volunteer  
 Sex \_\_\_ M \_\_\_ F  
 Years with organization  
     \_\_\_ 1 - 2  
     \_\_\_ 3 - 5  
     \_\_\_ more than 5

Please indicate your position in the voluntary organization, the number of years you have worked with the organization, and your sex by checking the appropriate categories above.

Many times, we disagree with someone when we don't interpret a message or a concept the same way they do. We will argue over what a policy means or what it was that someone really meant. Think of disagreements of this sort that you have encountered while working with board members in voluntary organizations. Then, on the next few pages, indicate how frequently you engage in each of the described behaviors. DO NOT respond to the items with a particular disagreement in mind. Instead, keep in mind your general experiences with these kinds of disagreements with board members. For each item, select the number that represents the behavior you are MOST LIKELY to exhibit. There are no right or wrong answers. Please respond to all items on the scale. The alternative responses are:

- 1 = Always
- 2 = Very Often
- 3 = Often
- 4 = Sometimes
- 5 = Seldom
- 6 = Very Seldom
- 7 = Never

## Appendix D

Instruction Sheet: Interpretation Problems with Volunteers

## Position

☐ Staff member☐ Board member☐ Direct-service  
volunteerSex ☐ M ☐ F

Years with organization

☐ 1 - 2☐ 3 - 5☐ more than 5

Please indicate your position in the voluntary organization, the number of years you have worked with the organization, and your sex by checking the appropriate categories above.

Many times, we disagree with someone when we don't interpret a message or a concept the same way they do. We will argue over what a policy means or what it was that someone really meant. Think of disagreements of this sort that you have encountered while working with direct-service volunteers in voluntary organizations. Then on the next few pages indicate how frequently you engage in each of the described behaviors. DO NOT respond to the items with a particular disagreement in mind. Instead, keep in mind your general experiences with these kinds of disagreements with direct-service volunteers. For each item select the number that represents the behavior you are MOST LIKELY to exhibit. There are no right or wrong answers. Please respond to all items on the scale. The alternative responses are:

1 = Always

2 = Very Often

3 = Often

4 = Sometimes

5 = Seldom

6 = Very Seldom

7 = Never

## Appendix E

Instruction Sheet: Organizational Problems with Volunteers

Position  
\_\_\_\_ Staff member  
\_\_\_\_ Board member  
\_\_\_\_ Direct-service  
    volunteer  
Sex \_\_\_\_ M \_\_\_\_ F  
Years with organization  
\_\_\_\_ 1 - 2  
\_\_\_\_ 3 - 5  
\_\_\_\_ more than 5

Please indicate your position in the voluntary organization, the number of years you have worked with the organization, and your sex by checking the appropriate categories above.

Many times we disagree with someone about important organization-al concerns. For instance, we might disagree about what the organization's mission should be in a changing community. Or, we might disagree about methods for fund raising or recruiting volunteers. Think of disagreements of this sort that you have encountered while working with direct-service volunteers in voluntary organizations. Then on the next few pages indicate how frequently you engage in each of the described behaviors. DO NOT respond to the items with a particular disagreement in mind. Instead, keep in mind your general experiences with these kinds of disagreements with direct-service volunteers. For each item select the number that represents the behavior you are MOST LIKELY to exhibit. There are no right or wrong answers. Please respond to all items on the scale. The alternative responses are:

- 1 = Always
- 2 = Very Often
- 3 = Often
- 4 = Sometimes
- 5 = Seldom
- 6 = Very Seldom
- 7 = Never

## Appendix F

Instruction Sheet: Organizational Problems with Board Members

Position

☐ Staff member☐ Board member☐ Direct-service  
volunteerSex ☐ M ☐ F

Years with organization

☐ 1 - 2☐ 3 - 5☐ more than 5

Please indicate your position in the voluntary organization, the number of years you have worked with the organization, and your sex by checking the appropriate categories above.

Many times we disagree with someone about important organization-  
al concerns. For instance, we might disagree about what the organiza-  
tion's mission should be in a changing community. Or, we might disa-  
gree about methods for fund raising or recruiting volunteers. Think  
of disagreements of this sort that you have encountered while working  
with board members in voluntary organizations. Then on the next few  
pages indicate how frequently you engage in each of the described be-  
haviors. DO NOT respond to the items with a particular disagreement  
in mind. Instead, keep in mind your general experiences with these  
kinds of disagreements with board members. For each item select the  
number that represents the behavior you are MOST LIKELY to exhibit.  
There are no right or wrong answers. Please respond to all items on  
the scale. The alternative responses are:

- 1 = Always
- 2 = Very Often
- 3 = Often
- 4 = Sometimes
- 5 = Seldom
- 6 = Very Seldom
- 7 = Never

## Appendix G

Instruction Sheet: Organizational Problems with Staff Members

Position

☐ Staff member☐ Board member☐ Direct-service  
volunteerSex ☐ M ☐ F

Years with organization

☐ 1 - 2☐ 3 - 5☐ more than 5

Please indicate your position in the voluntary organization, the number of years you have worked with the organization, and your sex by checking the appropriate categories above.

Many times we disagree with someone about important organization-al concerns. For instance, we might disagree about what the organization's mission should be in a changing community. Or, we might disagree about methods for fund raising or recruiting volunteers. Think of disagreements of this sort that you have encountered while working with staff members in voluntary organizations. Then on the next few pages indicate how frequently you engage in each of the described behaviors. DO NOT respond to the items with a particular disagreement in mind. Instead, keep in mind your general experiences with these kinds of disagreements with staff members. For each item select the number that represents the behavior you are MOST LIKELY to exhibit. There are no right or wrong answers. Please respond to all items on the scale. The alternative responses are:

1 = Always

2 = Very Often

3 = Often

4 = Sometimes

5 = Seldom

6 = Very Seldom

7 = Never

## Appendix H

Instruction Sheet: Personal Problems with Staff Members

Position  
\_\_\_\_ Staff member  
\_\_\_\_ Board member  
\_\_\_\_ Direct-service  
\_\_\_\_ volunteer  
Sex \_\_\_\_ M \_\_\_\_ F  
Years with organization  
\_\_\_\_ 1 - 2  
\_\_\_\_ 3 - 5  
\_\_\_\_ more than 5

Please indicate your position in the voluntary organization, the number of years you have worked with the organization, and your sex by checking the appropriate categories above.

Many times we disagree with someone simply because we don't like them or that for which we feel they stand. Think of disagreements of this sort that you have encountered while working with staff members in voluntary organizations. Then on the next few pages indicate how frequently you engage in each of the described behaviors. DO NOT respond to the items with a particular disagreement in mind. Instead, keep in mind your general experiences with these kinds of disagreements with staff members. For each item select the number that represents the behavior you are MOST LIKELY to exhibit. There are no right or wrong answers. Please respond to all items on the scale. The alternative responses are:

- 1 = Always
- 2 = Very Often
- 3 = Often
- 4 = Sometimes
- 5 = Seldom
- 6 = Very Seldom
- 7 = Never

## Appendix I

Instruction Sheet: Personal Problems with Board Members

Position  
\_\_\_\_ Staff member  
\_\_\_\_ Board member  
\_\_\_\_ Direct-service  
\_\_\_\_ volunteer  
Sex \_\_\_\_ M \_\_\_\_ F  
Years with organization  
\_\_\_\_ 1 - 2  
\_\_\_\_ 3 - 5  
\_\_\_\_ more than 5

Please indicate your position in the voluntary organization, the number of years you have worked with the organization, and your sex by checking the appropriate categories above.

Many times we disagree with someone simply because we don't like them or that for which we feel they stand. Think of disagreements of this sort that you have encountered while working with board members in voluntary organizations. Then on the next few pages indicate how frequently you engage in each of the described behaviors. DO NOT respond to the items with a particular disagreement in mind. Instead, keep in mind your general experiences with these kinds of disagreements with board members. For each item select the number that represents the behavior you are MOST LIKELY to exhibit. There are no right or wrong answers. Please respond to all items on the scale. The alternative responses are:

- 1 = Always
- 2 = Very Often
- 3 = Often
- 4 = Sometimes
- 5 = Seldom
- 6 = Very Seldom
- 7 = Never



## Appendix J

Instruction Sheet: Personal Problems with Volunteers

## Position

☐ Staff member  
☐ Board member  
☐ Direct-service  
volunteer

Sex ☐ M ☐ F

Years with organization

☐ 1 - 2☐ 3 - 5☐ more than 5

Please indicate your position in the voluntary organization, the number of years you have worked with the organization, and your sex by checking the appropriate categories above.

Many times we disagree with someone simply because we don't like them or that for which we feel they stand. Think of disagreements of this sort that you have encountered while working with direct-service volunteers in voluntary organizations. Then on the next few pages indicate how frequently you engage in each of the described behaviors. DO NOT respond to the items with a particular disagreement in mind. Instead, keep in mind your general experiences with these kinds of disagreements with direct-service volunteers. For each item select the number that represents the behavior you are MOST LIKELY to exhibit. There are no right or wrong answers. Please respond to all items on the scale. The alternative responses are:

- 1 = Always
- 2 = Very Often
- 3 = Often
- 4 = Sometimes
- 5 = Seldom
- 6 = Very Seldom
- 7 = Never

## Appendix K

Handling Conflict with Staff Members

1 = Always  
2 = Very Often  
3 = Often

4 = Sometimes

5 = Seldom  
6 = Very Seldom  
7 = Never

- \*\*1. I blend my ideas with staff members' to create new alternatives for resolving a disagreement of this sort.  
1 2 3 4 5 6 7
- \*2. I shy away from topics which are sources of dispute for staff members.  
1 2 3 4 5 6 7
- \*\*\*3. I make my opinion known in a disagreement with a staff member.  
1 2 3 4 5 6 7
- \*\*4. I suggest solutions which combine a variety of viewpoints.  
1 2 3 4 5 6 7
- \*5. I steer clear of disagreeable situations.  
1 2 3 4 5 6 7
- \*\*6. I give in a little on my ideas when a staff member also gives in.  
1 2 3 4 5 6 7
- \*7. I avoid a staff member when I suspect that he or she wants to discuss a disagreement.  
1 2 3 4 5 6 7
- \*\*8. I integrate arguments into a new solution from the issues raised in a dispute of this sort.  
1 2 3 4 5 6 7
- \*\*9. I will go 50-50 to reach a settlement with a staff member.  
1 2 3 4 5 6 7
- \*\*\*10. I raise my voice when I'm trying to get a staff member to accept my position.  
1 2 3 4 5 6 7
- \*\*11. I offer creative solutions in discussions of disagreements.  
1 2 3 4 5 6 7

1 = Always  
2 = Very Often  
3 = Often

4 = Sometimes

5 = Seldom  
6 = Very Seldom  
7 = Never

- \*12. I keep quiet about my views in order to avoid disagreements.  
1 2 3 4 5 6 7
- \*\*13. I give in if a staff member will meet me half way.  
1 2 3 4 5 6 7
- \*14. I downplay the importance of a disagreement of this sort.  
1 2 3 4 5 6 7
- \*15. I reduce disagreements by making them seem insignificant.  
1 2 3 4 5 6 7
- \*\*16. I meet a staff member at a mid-point of our differences.  
1 2 3 4 5 6 7
- \*\*\*17. I assert my opinion forcefully.  
1 2 3 4 5 6 7
- \*\*\*18. I dominate arguments until the staff member understands my position.  
1 2 3 4 5 6 7
- \*\*19. I suggest we work together to create solutions to disagreements.  
1 2 3 4 5 6 7
- \*\*20. I try to use staff member's ideas to generate solutions to these kinds of problems.  
1 2 3 4 5 6 7
- \*\*21. I offer trade-offs to reach solutions in disagreements of this sort.  
1 2 3 4 5 6 7
- \*\*\*22. I argue insistently for my stance.  
1 2 3 4 5 6 7
- \*23. I withdraw when a staff member confronts me about a controversial issue.  
1 2 3 4 5 6 7
- \*24. I side-step disagreements of this sort when they arise.  
1 2 3 4 5 6 7

1 = Always

2 = Very Often

3 = Often

4 = Sometimes

5 = Seldom

6 = Very Seldom

7 = Never

\*25. I try to smooth over disagreements of this sort by making them appear unimportant.

1      2      3      4      5      6      7

\*\*\*26. I insist my position be accepted during a disagreement of this sort with a staff member.

1      2      3      4      5      6      7

\*27. I make our differences seem less serious.

1      2      3      4      5      6      7

\*28. I hold my tongue rather than argue with a staff member.

1      2      3      4      5      6      7

\*29. I ease conflict by claiming our differences are trivial.

1      2      3      4      5      6      7

\*\*\*30. I stand firm in expressing my view points during a disagreement with a staff member.

1      2      3      4      5      6      7

---

\* Nonconfrontation item

\*\* Solution-orientation item

\*\*\* Control item

## Appendix L

Handling Conflict with Board Members

1 = Always  
2 = Very Often  
3 = Often

4 = Sometimes

5 = Seldom  
6 = Very Seldom  
7 = Never

- \*\*1. I blend my ideas with board members' to create new alternatives for resolving a disagreement of this sort.  
1 2 3 4 5 6 7
- \*2. I shy away from topics which are sources of dispute for board members.  
1 2 3 4 5 6 7
- \*\*\*3. I make my opinion known in a disagreement with a board member.  
1 2 3 4 5 6 7
- \*\*4. I suggest solutions which combine a variety of viewpoints.  
1 2 3 4 5 6 7
- \*5. I steer clear of disagreeable situations.  
1 2 3 4 5 6 7
- \*\*6. I give in a little on my ideas when a board member also gives in.  
1 2 3 4 5 6 7
- \*7. I avoid a board member when I suspect that he or she wants to discuss a disagreement.  
1 2 3 4 5 6 7
- \*\*8. I integrate arguments into a new solution from the issues raised in a dispute of this sort.  
1 2 3 4 5 6 7
- \*\*9. I will go 50-50 to reach a settlement with a board member.  
1 2 3 4 5 6 7
- \*\*\*10. I raise my voice when I'm trying to get a board member to accept my position.  
1 2 3 4 5 6 7
- \*\*11. I offer creative solutions in discussions of disagreements.  
1 2 3 4 5 6 7

1 = Always  
2 = Very Often  
3 = Often

4 = Sometimes

5 = Seldom  
6 = Very Seldom  
7 = Never

- \*12. I keep quiet about my views in order to avoid disagreements.  
1 2 3 4 5 6 7
- \*\*13. I give in if a board member will meet me half way.  
1 2 3 4 5 6 7
- \*14. I downplay the importance of a disagreement of this sort.  
1 2 3 4 5 6 7
- \*15. I reduce disagreements by making them seem insignificant.  
1 2 3 4 5 6 7
- \*\*16. I meet a board member at a mid-point of our differences.  
1 2 3 4 5 6 7
- \*\*\*17. I assert my opinion forcefully.  
1 2 3 4 5 6 7
- \*\*\*18. I dominate arguments until the board member understands my position.  
1 2 3 4 5 6 7
- \*\*19. I suggest we work together to create solutions to disagreements.  
1 2 3 4 5 6 7
- \*\*20. I try to use board member's ideas to generate solutions to these kinds of problems.  
1 2 3 4 5 6 7
- \*\*21. I offer trade-offs to reach solutions in disagreements of this sort.  
1 2 3 4 5 6 7
- \*\*\*22. I argue insistently for my stance.  
1 2 3 4 5 6 7
- \*23. I withdraw when a board member confronts me about a controversial issue.  
1 2 3 4 5 6 7
- \*24. I side-step disagreements of this sort when they arise.  
1 2 3 4 5 6 7

1 = Always  
 2 = Very Often  
 3 = Often  
 4 = Sometimes  
 5 = Seldom  
 6 = Very Seldom  
 7 = Never

- \*25. I try to smooth over disagreements of this sort by making them appear unimportant.  
 1 2 3 4 5 6 7
- \*\*\*26. I insist my position be accepted during a disagreement of this sort with a board member.  
 1 2 3 4 5 6 7
- \*27. I make our differences seem less serious.  
 1 2 3 4 5 6 7
- \*28. I hold my tongue rather than argue with a board member.  
 1 2 3 4 5 6 7
- \*29. I ease conflict by claiming our differences are trivial.  
 1 2 3 4 5 6 7
- \*\*\*30. I stand firm in expressing my view points during a disagreement with a board member.  
 1 2 3 4 5 6 7

---

\* Nonconfrontation item  
 \*\* Solution-orientation item  
 \*\*\* Control item

## Appendix M

Handling Conflict with Direct-Service Volunteers

1 = Always  
2 = Very Often  
3 = Often

4 = Sometimes

5 = Seldom  
6 = Very Seldom  
7 = Never

- \*\*1. I blend my ideas with direct-service volunteers' to create new alternatives for resolving a disagreement of this sort.  
1 2 3 4 5 6 7
- \*2. I shy away from topics which are sources of dispute for direct-service volunteers.  
1 2 3 4 5 6 7
- \*\*\*3. I make my opinion known in a disagreement with a direct-service volunteer.  
1 2 3 4 5 6 7
- \*\*4. I suggest solutions which combine a variety of viewpoints.  
1 2 3 4 5 6 7
- \*5. I steer clear of disagreeable situations.  
1 2 3 4 5 6 7
- \*\*6. I give in a little on my ideas when a direct-service volunteer also gives in.  
1 2 3 4 5 6 7
- \*7. I avoid a direct-service volunteer when I suspect that he or she wants to discuss a disagreement.  
1 2 3 4 5 6 7
- \*\*8. I integrate arguments into a new solution from the issues raised in a dispute of this sort.  
1 2 3 4 5 6 7
- \*\*9. I will go 50-50 to reach a settlement with a direct-service volunteer.  
1 2 3 4 5 6 7
- \*\*\*10. I raise my voice when I'm trying to get a direct-service volunteer to accept my position.  
1 2 3 4 5 6 7
- \*\*11. I offer creative solutions in discussions of disagreements.  
1 2 3 4 5 6 7



1 = Always  
2 = Very Often  
3 = Often

4 = Sometimes

5 = Seldom  
6 = Very Seldom  
7 = Never

- \*12. I keep quiet about my views in order to avoid disagreements.  
1 2 3 4 5 6 7
- \*\*13. I give in if a direct-service volunteer will meet me half way.  
1 2 3 4 5 6 7
- \*14. I downplay the importance of a disagreement of this sort.  
1 2 3 4 5 6 7
- \*15. I reduce disagreements by making them seem insignificant.  
1 2 3 4 5 6 7
- \*\*16. I meet a direct-service volunteer at a mid-point of our differences.  
1 2 3 4 5 6 7
- \*\*\*17. I assert my opinion forcefully.  
1 2 3 4 5 6 7
- \*\*\*18. I dominate arguments until the direct-service volunteer understands my position.  
1 2 3 4 5 6 7
- \*\*19. I suggest we work together to create solutions to disagreements.  
1 2 3 4 5 6 7
- \*\*20. I try to use direct-service volunteer's ideas to generate solutions to these kinds of problems.  
1 2 3 4 5 6 7
- \*\*21. I offer trade-offs to reach solutions in disagreements of this sort.  
1 2 3 4 5 6 7
- \*\*\*22. I argue insistently for my stance.  
1 2 3 4 5 6 7
- \*23. I withdraw when a direct-service volunteer confronts me about a controversial issue.  
1 2 3 4 5 6 7
- \*24. I side-step disagreements of this sort when they arise.

1      2      3      4      5      6      7

1 = Always  
2 = Very Often  
3 = Often

4 = Sometimes

5 = Seldom  
6 = Very Seldom  
7 = Never

\*25. I try to smooth over disagreements of this sort by making them appear unimportant.

1      2      3      4      5      6      7

\*\*\*26. I insist my position be accepted during a disagreement of this sort with a direct-service volunteer.

1      2      3      4      5      6      7

\*27. I make our differences seem less serious.

1      2      3      4      5      6      7

\*28. I hold my tongue rather than argue with a direct-service volunteer.

1      2      3      4      5      6      7

\*29. I ease conflict by claiming our differences are trivial.

1      2      3      4      5      6      7

\*\*\*30. I stand firm in expressing my view points during a disagreement with a direct-service volunteer.

1      2      3      4      5      6      7

---

\* Nonconfrontation item

\*\* Solution-orientation item

\*\*\* Control item

## Appendix N

Supplementary Form

Please complete the following questions only if you were unable to complete the preceding survey because, in your work with voluntary organizations, you do not interact with persons at the level of the organizational hierarchy specified on the instruction sheet and you do not know how you would handle conflict with a person at that level.

1. Your position:  
☐ staff member  
☐ board member  
☐ direct-service volunteer
2. Years with the organization:  
☐ 1 - 2 years  
☐ 3 - 5 years  
☐ more than 5 years
3. Sex:  
☐ male  
☐ female
4. The position of the individual with whom you were asked on the instruction sheet to consider yourself in conflict:  
☐ staff member  
☐ board member  
☐ direct-service volunteer
5. The position of others in your voluntary organization's hierarchy with whom you generally do not have any interaction: (check as many as are applicable)  
☐ staff members  
☐ board members  
☐ direct-service volunteers  
☐ clients
6. Do you feel this lack of interaction with others in your organization:  
☐ has little impact on how much a part of the organization you feel  
☐ helps you feel more a part of the organization  
☐ keeps you from feeling as much a part of the organization as would like to feel

7. Do you feel this lack of interaction with others in your organization:
- ☐ has little impact on the effectiveness of the organization
  - ☐ is a positive influence on the effectiveness of the organization
  - ☐ hinders the effectiveness of the organization

Appendix O

Univariate Analyses of the Independent Variables

Table O - 1: Univariate Analysis--Effect of Own Position

Table O - 2: Univariate Analysis--Effect of Other's Position

Table O - 3: Univariate Analysis--Effect of Content of Conflict

## APPENDIX O

Table O - 1

Univariate Analysis--Effect of Own Position in Organization

Variable	SS	MSb	MSw	df	F	Sig. of F	$\eta^2$
Solution-Orientation	5097.65	10.24	37.61	2,135	.27	.76	--
Nonconfrontation	13978.38	154.53	101.25	2,135	1.53	.22	--
Control	3625.86	32.77	26.37	2,135	1.24	.29	--

Table O - 2

Univariate Analysis--Effect of Other's Position

Variable	SS	MSb	MSw	df	F	Sig. of F	$\eta^2$
Solution-Orientation	5237.76	80.30	37.61	2,135	2.14	.12	--
Nonconfrontation	13918.31	124.49	101.25	2,135	1.23	.30	--
Control	3568.71	4.19	26.37	2,135	.16	.85	--

Table O - 3

Univariate Analysis--Effect of Content of Conflict

Variable	SS	MSb	MSw	df	F	Sig. of F	$\eta^2$
Solution-Orientation	5089.28	6.06	37.61	2,135	.16	.85	--
Nonconfrontation	14366.90	348.78	101.25	2,135	3.45	.04	.01
Control	3648.68	44.17	26.37	2,135	1.68	.19	--

Appendix P

Analyses of Variance--The Effect of Sex and Tenure in the Organization

Table P - 1: Analysis of Variance--Effect of Sex

Table P - 2: Analysis of Variance--Effect of Years  
in the Organization

## APPENDIX P

Table P - 1

Analysis of Variance--Effect of Sex

Variable	SS	df	MS	F	Sig. of F	$\eta^2$
Solution-Orientation	8.33	1	8.33	.21	.65	—
Nonconfrontation	186.59	1	186.59	1.75	.19	—
Control	9.30	1	9.30	.33	.57	—

Table P - 2

Analysis of Variance--Effect of Years in the Organization

Variable	SS	df	MS	F	Sig. of F	$\eta^2$
Solution-Orientation	38.90	2	19.45	.49	.62	—
Nonconfrontation	377.29	2	188.64	1.77	.17	—
Control	150.95	2	75.48	2.69	.07	—



## Appendix Q

Effect of Position of Other and Content of Conflict

Table Q - 1: Two-Way Interaction

Table Q - 2: Cell Means

## APPENDIX Q

Table Q - 1

Two-Way Interaction--Effect of Position of Other and Content of Conflict

Variable	SS	MSb	MSw	df	F	Sig. of F	$\eta^2$
Solution-Orientation	5450.91	93.44	37.61	4,135	2.48	.047	.01

Table Q - 2

Cell Means--Effect of Position of Other and Content of Conflict

		<u>Content of Conflict</u>		
Position of Other		Interpretation Problem	Personality Problem	Organizational Issue
	Board Member	42.39 (18)	43.83 (18)	43.61 (18)
	Staff Member	45.89 (18)	42.61 (18)	41.56 (18)
	Volunteer	43.71 (17)	44.67 (18)	47.94 (18)

## Appendix R

Effect of Own Position, Position of Other, and Content of Conflict

Table R - 1: Three-Way Interaction

Table R - 2: Cell Means

## APPENDIX R

Table R - 1

Three-Way Interaction--Effect of Own Position, Position of Other,  
and Content of Conflict

Variable	SS	MSb	MSw	df	F	Sig. of F	$\eta^2$
Control	946.31	74.50	26.37	8,135	2.83	.006	.01

Table R - 2

Cell Means--Effect of Own Position, Position of Other,  
and Content of Conflict

Own Position	Other's Position	Content of Conflict		
		Interpretation Problem	Personality Problem	Organizational Issue
Staff	Staff	31.83	35.67	32.00
Staff	Board	33.67	27.00	29.83
Staff	Volunteer	31.00	34.17	26.17
Board	Staff	34.00	29.33	31.17
Board	Board	30.67	31.50	32.17
Board	Volunteer	35.50	33.50	29.83
Volunteer	Staff	30.33	35.67	30.50
Volunteer	Board	34.00	35.83	30.83
Volunteer	Volunteer	29.67	32.00	36.50