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Gender and Conflict Resolution: Toward a Theoretical Framework *

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Abstract

This paper presents a theoretical framework to organize disparate findings regarding women and conflict resolution. The framework accepts basic premises of theorists who emphasize gender differences and those who emphasize similarities by seeing these arguments as reflecting different levels of analysis. The framework stresses the importance of viewing conflict as an on-going process and male power as a reality that infuses this process and each level of analysis. Examples of how this framework can explain the literature are given, and epistemological issues underlying work in the area are discussed. The paper ends by calling for a transformation in research on gender and conflict resolution to counteract a masculine bias in the field.

Gender and Conflict Resolution:
Toward a Theoretical Framework

Impressionistic accounts of women's experiences in interpersonal and professional settings suggest that conflict often produces not just anger, but also guilt, second thoughts, worry about the reactions of others, and even tears. Such experiences are not noted for men, however, suggesting that conflict and its resolution is a gender-differentiated process. Even though there is some literature documenting gender differences in conflict resolution and the special experiences of women, I know of no attempt to pull these relatively disparate results together into a theoretically useful framework, let alone one that can approach the issue from a feminist viewpoint.

In the sections below I briefly review some of the work in this area and try to sketch such a theoretical framework. I then show how this framework can be used to explain some typical findings from the literature and end the paper by discussing epistemological issues that underlie work in the area and calling for a transformation in the way we study gender, conflict and its resolution.

Studies of Gender and Conflict

Most of the empirical work on conflict resolution is based on studies of college students, very few involve observations or reports of real life situations. Most use self reports of behaviors, although some work is experimental. Studies are more often quantitative than qualitative in nature. Work relevant to the topic ranges from studies of children to global assessments of interpersonal conflict styles and studies of intraorganizational conflict resolution. The vast majority of the work is atheoretical.[1]

Feminist theory, however, has addressed issues related to the topic. Two trends in this work have often been distinguished. One school of thought tends to emphasize differences between men and women, especially women's orientation toward more caring, empathetic, non-hurting relationships with others in contrast to men's orientation toward competition, power, and authority over others.[2] The other tradition tends to de-emphasize differences between men and women and to stress the importance of situational variables in influencing the ways in which men and women behave.[3] Those who emphasize differences usually do not

dismiss the importance of situational variables in influencing daily behavior. Similarly, those who emphasize the influence of situational contexts often do not dismiss the role of early experiences and personality orientations on social behavior. In later parts of this paper I suggest that this theoretical distinction obscures the complexities involved in understanding issues surrounding conflict and its resolution for women and show how they both can be incorporated into one theoretical framework. Nevertheless, the two perspectives provide contrasting orientations to gender roles and a useful framework for understanding current findings in the field.[4]

On balance, somewhat more of the work in this area appears to support the "differences" perspective than the "situational" perspective. For instance, studies of children indicate that girls are less likely than boys to employ aggressive means of conflict resolution.[5] Experimental studies often indicate that men tend to be more competitive than women and less likely to distribute rewards equally.[6] Other studies indicate that women tend to describe themselves as less argumentative than men,[7] view arguments as hostile and combative more than men do,[8] and more often report using compromising rather than competing

styles in resolving interpersonal conflicts.[9] Women managers in the United States appear less likely to employ organizational power when resolving conflicts with subordinates,[10] and women subordinates fare worse than men in mock salary negotiations.[11] While all women groups are certainly not free from conflict, the special intransigence of the conflicts observed there and the concerns which women express over them[12] also support the notion that there are differences in the way the two sex groups approach conflict and conflict resolution.

Yet, a good deal of the evidence also supports the "situational" perspective. For instance, boys' level of aggressiveness is affected by situational variables,[13] experimental conditions are a more important influence on behavior than gender,[14] women sometimes describe themselves as more verbally aggressive and critical than men,[15] women and men managers report they would behave similarly in some situations,[16] and women were found to be <u>more</u> forceful than men in mock negotiations over the price of a used car.[17]

<u>Developing a Theoretical Perspective</u>

While the "differences"-"situational" distinction may provide a useful heuristic device, I believe it is

inadequate to capture the complex processes involved in understanding the association between gender and conflict resolution. Support for both positions is apparent, and it is necessary to move to a theoretical framework that can incorporate insights from both perspectives. In the paragraphs below I attempt to do this, relying on the key concepts of levels of analysis, social processes, and male power. Distinguishing different levels of analysis can help untangle various influences on conflict situations; and viewing conflict and its resolution as a social process makes its on-going nature explicit. Yet, infusing each of these analytical approaches is the reality of male dominance, greater authority and power associated with men, which must be recognized and considered if an analysis of gender and conflict resolution is to be complete.

Levels of Analysis

In analyzing conflict it seems essential to distinguish conceptually between 1) personality orientations of individuals, 2) social statuses and their associated role behaviors, and 3) culturally prescribed norms and values. Clearly, each of these levels is closely related to the other, but they are conceptually distinct, and retaining

this analytic distinction can help explain results regarding gender and conflict that have heretofore been relatively difficult to reconcile.

Personality orientations may be seen as involving individuals' motivations, trait predispositions, attitudes, values, and self concepts. As noted above, a number of theorists have suggested that men and women differ, on the personality level, in their relative orientation toward and preference for various modes of conflict resolution, with women more oriented toward promoting harmonious group relations and men less reluctant to engage in competitive and conflict relations. That is, women, more than men, tend to see themselves as oriented toward maintaining and promoting harmonious group relations, as sensitive to the needs of others, as cooperative, rather than competitive with other people.[18] These different orientations are no doubt influenced by different roles and cultural expectations for men and women, variables emphasized by those with a situational perspective. Yet, to the extent that these expectations are internalized, or accepted, by individuals they should be seen as part of individuals' personalities.

Even though personality orientations influence our day to day behavior, both men and women hold various social statuses which involve a realm of role behaviors. These role behaviors may conform to or contradict actions that we would expect from gender differences in personality orientations. For instance, a woman trained to mediate a dispute between two people would undoubtedly behave more like a man who was trained as a mediator would in that situation than like the disputants' spouses, mothers, or friends. In other words, role requirements clearly prescribe and restrict ranges of appropriate behavior.

Third, general cultural norms about the roles of men and women as well as subcultural norms that apply to smaller groups undoubtedly affect conflict and its resolution. Few would probably dispute the notion that our culture has different expectations for men and women. Men are expected to be more competitive than women, women are expected to be more oriented toward harmonious relations. Because these cultural norms often correspond with the differential personality orientations noted above, results which may be seen as illustrating this cultural level of analysis might also be taken as supporting the personality level.[19]

But norms also affect sub-cultures. Largely because of the influence of the "differences" perspective, much has been made in feminist writing of a "female culture," one that embodies and enhances cooperative and caring relations.[20] Thus, many women's groups, perhaps especially those with a feminist orientation, may embody norms and values that idealize a cooperative, conflict-free environment.

It is important to realize that these levels of analysis are conceptual or analytical categories and that they influence and interpenetrate each other. Cultural norms clearly influence the situations individuals create and their personality orientations, yet cultural norms are continually recreated and modified by the actions of individuals and groups. The statuses which we hold and the roles which we must play can eventually alter the ways we view ourselves, our personalities; but the ways in which we perform our assigned roles are influenced by our self-conceptions. Recent studies of women assuming work roles typically reserved for men illustrate this process. Even though men and women may be assigned to equivalent work roles, the manner in which they work in these situations often differs in order to conform to their self conceptions

as males and females (the personality level) and cultural norms regarding gender appropriate behavior (the cultural level).[21]

Conflict as a Process[22]

Conflict, as well as conflict resolution, is probably best viewed as a process taking place over time, and altering as a relationship grows and changes.[23] There are few, if any, conflict events that take place as isolated incidents. Even an unanticipated conflict between two strangers is influenced not only by the preferred styles and strategies of the individuals, but also by the situation and environment.[24]

Any conflict incident, whether between two actors or several people within a group, may be viewed as an on-going role relationship. In any particular interaction, conflict resolution behavior is dictated by the previous move in the process. Person A responds to person B, B interprets A's response and responds to A, and so on. This interaction process is influenced by variables on each of the levels of analysis discussed above: the ways people view themselves, the restrictions of the situation in which they find themselves, and cultural norms of the general society or

particular subcultures to which they belong. Thus, individual A may be very committed to cooperative resolution, but when attempts at cooperation are rebuffed by person B, person A's second move may be more antagonistic or competitive. Person A may still see herself as a cooperative problem solver and will claim to be one on any questionnaire or survey, yet her actions at the second move in the process may not appear to be so. Simply looking at the conflict resolution process at one time point will fail to capture all the nuances, steps, and justifications underlying behavior as well as the meanings attached by the participants to each part of the process.

Male Power

Male power infuses each of the levels of analysis discussed above as well as processes of conflict resolution. The impact of male power on conflict resolution involves at least three conceptually distinct aspects, which may be seen as paralleling the levels of analysis distinguished above.

First, the reality of male power and the cultural dominance of males influences interaction settings. Because the societal reality of male dominance involves an assumption (generally unspoken and unacknowledged) that

men's views and men's actions are worth more than women's, it would be expected that the easiest course of action in any conflict situation would be one which conformed to these expectations of male power. Even when men and women have relatively equal formal statuses, women often must moderate their interactive styles to offset the potential discomfort of men that arises when women assume a status that would contradict the cultural assumption of male dominance.[25] Thus, even in situations where women and men are assigned roles that require similar behavior, the reality of male dominance can alter the interaction process.

Yet, male power does not just influence interactions and behaviors. It also affects the situations in which we live and work. Institutional structures and organizations in our society are part of a male dominated world. Feminist theorists have often suggested that a female oriented world would have work situations, career patterns, and group norms that would be far less hierarchical and far less competitive than those we see in today's world. Yet all-women work groups are part of the male-defined world. Male power is an ever-present, but often unrecognized, force in all situations and it would be very difficult to define

situations that are part of this male defined world yet incorporate totally different norms and values.

Finally, the reality of male power affects people on the level of personality, our self views and our attitudes and beliefs. Feminist theorists have described the process of gender socialization as one in which men and women come to recognize and to, at least some extent, accept the reality of not just gender differentiation, but also male power. Even though individuals may believe that male power and dominance is unjust, the view of the social world as one in which men have greater power and authority undoubtedly affects how both men and women see themselves in relation to others and thus how they choose to respond to others within conflict settings.

Applying the Theoretical Perspective

I suggest that the theoretical framework that has been sketched above and acknowledges different levels of analysis, sees conflict resolution as a process, and recognizes the ever-present reality of male dominance can help explain various findings regarding gender and conflict resolution. A first example of the utility of this framework involves some of my own work.[26] My associates and

I analyzed data from two social dilemma, or n-person prisoner's dilemma, games that were not originally gathered to examine gender differences. Both experiments were designed in a manner that required individuals to choose whether they would give money to the group, allowing all participants to earn more, or keep money for themselves, maximizing their own personal gain. Results from both studies indicated a slight tendency for women to cooperate (give the money) more often than men, but experimental conditions were a more important influence on behavior than gender and there were no gender differences in intention to cooperate when asked at the end of the experiment if they would make the same decision. At the conclusion of the experiment, however, women tended to describe themselves as altruistic and group oriented more often than men did, whether or not they actually cooperated.

Why did the women's views of themselves correspond less to their behavior than men's self-views did? Why were experimental conditions a more important influence on behavior than gender, given how much the men and women differed in their views of themselves as cooperative? Issues related to male power may well have influenced the structure of the experiment itself, and I discuss that

possibility below in my treatment of epistomological issues. But other aspects of the theoretical perspective outlined above can give additional insights. Personality orientations or self-views simply provide a starting point for behavior; role expectations and situational requirements also influence actions. In addition, personality orientations and self views are probably more long-lasting than role behaviors and actions in specific situations, especially those as transient as an experiment. Thus, even though a number of women did not cooperate in this experiment and even more thought that they would not cooperate if they participated again, they still saw themselves as basically group oriented and altruistic. The experiment also illustrates the processual nature of conflict resolution. After the experiment was over even fewer women were inclined to cooperate. Perhaps only after they had ample opportunity to think about the experiment and to see the concrete results of the process they reevaluated their actions and the situation and altered their behavior.

A study of mock negotiations among college students provides another example. Womack[27] asked 29 students at a small private eastern college to participate in role plays where they were to bargain against a forceful used car

salesman. Several days in advance of the mock negotiation they were told the wholesale value of the car, the seller's asking price, and the need of both the seller and buyer to end the transaction. The sellers were experienced male actors who were instructed to be forceful and even threatening toward the buyer. Contrary to the authors' expectations and to what one would expect based on personality orientations or the "differences" theoretical perspective, males and females did not differ on expected selling price, the high price they would pay, the range of prices they would consider, or their propensity to settle. Women were less likely to show empathy, to accept the premise of the seller or to be excessively self-revealing. They were more likely to control the conversation and to be perceived as forceful. As expected, however, the women were more likely than the men to use equivocal language.

Interviews conducted with the participants helped to accunt for these unexpected results. They revealed that the women tended to approach the "situation as a 'contest' between themselves and a used car dealer who was trying to take advantage of them. They were determined to remain firm and not to give in to the dealer."[28] The men simply interpreted the seller's forcefulness as reflecting his

financial need. Even women's use of equivocal language appeared to be part of their competitive strategy. Review of the videotapes indicated that the women appeared tentative, not in their attitude toward the seller or his asking price, but on topics such as how much they could afford to pay for the car. Thus, in this case, equivocal language was connected with negotiating strength rather than weakness.

In this situation, women buyers assumed role behaviors that they believed would be most advantageous to them. An interesting element of this study was the amount of time that elapsed between the time subjects knew they would enter the situation and the actual bargaining with the car dealer. This time period may have allowed the women an opportunity to plan strategies and altered behaviors from what might have occurred in a spontaneous interaction. Supporting this speculation is a result from a study which determined that while gender differences could be observed in behaviors of untrained students assigned to be mediators, these differences did not appear among those who were trained.[29] Clearly, when a situation calls for behavior that is contrary to that which is culturally prescribed, women can successfully develop and utilize a variety of conflict

resolution tactics. In other words, role requirements and situational variables can be more important than individual personality differences and cultural norms in determining individuals' conflict related behavior.

Several results illustrate the pervasiveness of male power in influencing conflict resolution. Rossi and Todd-Mancillas[30] asked an equal number of male and female managers how they would handle two hypothetical difficulties with their subordinates. Half of the scenarios described female subordinates, half described male subordinates. Although the men and women managers did not differ in how they would handle an employee who refused to do an assigned task that was not in the job description, they did differ in how they would handle an employee who had violated a chain of command that had not previously been described. Women managers seemed to be equally divided in the types of strategies they would use with both male and female employees, but men managers indicated a strong preference for using strategies based on organizational power with female employees and communication strategies with male employees.

Not only do these results indicate how men and women managers can employ different conflict resolution behaviors

in the same setting (illustrating the influence of personality and cultural level variables), they demonstrate the impact of male power. Men managers indicated they would treat male employees in a more equalitarian manner, employing communication skills, but would more often employ tactics that utilize organizational power with women. Men would employ power-oriented tactics more often with those who were defined as subordinate to them in the society at large.

Similar results appear in a simulated pay negotiation where students assumed the roles of supervisors and subordinates, yielding both mixed sex and same sex dyads.[31] The students role-played a situation where the two participants had to reach agreement concerning a percentage pay increase for the upcoming fiscal year. While there were no gender differences in the subjects' self perceptions of success, confidence, assertiveness, or emotionality after the session, there were consistent sex differences in the pay raises offered and agreed upon. The lowest final pay raises were negotiated between male supervisors and female subordinates, again the dyad that most closely parallels the power situation in the society at large.

The final examples illustrate the importance of understanding process and cultural norms. One of the few empirical works on gender and conflict that explicitly recognizes and studies processes is that of Campbell and Muncer.[32] They explored how men and women experience anger, interviewing two groups of middle-class, same-sex friends. They found that the greatest gender differences appeared in how the men and women responded to the instigation of anger. Women tend to view anger and aggression as resulting from the breakdown of internal control, which in turn leads to a breakdown of normal social interaction. The authors suggest that this puts women in a "no-win" situation. If they control their anger and aggression the feel frustrated; if, however, they act upon their anger they fear being seen as exhibiting inappropriate behavior. In contrast, men focus on characteristics of the protagonist in the situation, especially their equality in terms of sex and age and the "likelihood of sustaining serious injury by engaging in 'foolhardy' or dangerous escapades."[33] In other words, men's decision to respond with verbal and/or physical hostility when angered is predicated on their assessment of the characteristics of the protagonist. The authors suggest that men are in a "no-lose situation in their social

representation of aggression. Whatever their action it can be defined variously as mature and gallant or as appropriate and even heroic".[34]

This analysis aptly illustrates how conflict resolution is a process, citing numerous examples of the decisions, rationalizations, and sequencing of behavior involved when individuals encounter situations which produce angry responses. It shows the way in which different levels of analysis interact in the conflict resolution process, and it also shows how male power and male dominance permeate the process of conflict resolution. The women in this study believed that they were generally cooperative, non-hostile people, but readily related numerous incidents that had angered them. Their response to these situations was clearly limited by cultural norms and their own personality orientations. If they acted upon their anger they felt they had "lost control" and felt guilty, but if they failed to act upon their anger they felt frustrated.

Men have no such restraints. Cultural norms allow them greater freedom to act on their anger, and their self-conceptions do not preclude the possibility of responding to anger-provoking situations in a wide variety of ways. Men can calculate their response to a situation by assessing the

relative power of those with whom they are interacting and find a culturally approved response in virutally all situations. Clearly men have more freedom than women to interpret and act upon situational variables. The behavior of both women and men is constrained by social situations, but women report more constraints than men, as a result of internalized guilt, the expected reactions of others to their behavior, and the reality of their diminished power relative to men.

Work that documents conflicts among women also illustrates the utility of my proposed model. As noted above, much has been made in feminist writing of a "female culture," one that embodies and enhances cooperative and caring relations. Woolsey and McBain[35] report their analysis of conflicts that arose in five work groups composed only of women counselors and counselors-in-training. Although the groups were all originally characterized by warmth, trust, and good feelings, all faced incidents of "unexpected and seemingly unprovoked verbal confrontation[s] of one group member,"[36] a very competent woman, by another woman who felt considerably less powerful. There had been consistent efforts by the recipient to be warm and supportive toward the woman who had confronted her,

and members of the groups were reported to be "baffled by the sudden hostile outburst[s]." The conflicts remained "intransigent despite the use of strong counseling interventions that are normally very effective in conflict resolution."[37] Similarly, Keller and Moglen[38] write in a reflective style about conflicts between academic women that revolve around competition.

These authors suggest that women's expectations of cohesive group relationships without conflict and competition are unrealistic. In other words, expectations regarding the norms of female culture -- a hypothetical conflict free, cooperative group -- are unrealistic within a real world that embodies status differentials, work hierarchies and differential rewards. The very fact of male power makes the development of any other type of work setting unlikely. Some feminist writers have suggested that it is unrealistic to expect that highly industrialized societies can ever revert to a situation that embodies a total lack of stratification.[39] Whether or not this is ultimately true, work situations today certainly exist within a larger, male-dominated structure that assumes competition and hierarchies will and should exist.

Both because of cultural expectations, and perhaps their personality orientations and self-views, women seem much more likely than men to want to engage in cooperative and relatively conflict-free interactions, to focus on affiliations and attachments. A great deal of feminist writing has promoted this notion, and expectations of idyllic sisterly relations may be even greater among all women groups and those with feminist beliefs. At the same time, women participate in male-defined situations, such as the work world, where competition with others is essential for survival and conflict over scarce resources and recognition inevitably appears. Given these views of individual women and the reality of their day-to-day situation, it is no wonder that conflict can be more difficult, even devastating, for women than for men. At some, perhaps unacknowledged, level, women believe they have failed as women and often as feminists when they cannot maintain their image of themselves as cooperative, group enhancing individuals. At the same time situations which are seen as unjust or unfair will naturally anger them, but cultural restrictions and their own self views limit the ways in which they can respond to these situations, both because they fear the reactions of others and because of

guilt that stems from violating their self conceptions as cooperative, non-conflict oriented people.

Epistemological Issues and Research

The discussion above has not addressed philosophical or epistemological assumptions that often underlie work on conflict resolution. Such assumptions can be seen in the manner in which results are reported as well as in theoretical arguments and the actual design of research. Given the reality of male power, it is not surprising that these assumptions can be interpreted as reflecting a masculine bias.[40]

For instance, Peirce and Edwards analyzed conflict resolution strategies that boys and girls used in fantasies created for a writing exercise. Even though the girls in their study used a greater variety of conflict resolution strategies than the boys, they describe the girls and their typical use of nonviolent resolution tactics as "passive" and boys and their use of violent and aggressive tactics as "active." They imply that greater opportunities will become available to girls only if they become less willing to be "passive and cooperative."[41]

If Peirce and Edwards had substituted "violent" for "active" and "versatile" for "passive" the discussion of their results would undoubtedly have had a different tone. Cooperativeness is conceptually and empirically distinct from passivity, and theories that ignore this distinction are not only suspect on logical grounds, but, in my opinion, do women a disservice by distorting and devaluing their more typical orientation toward others.[42]

Although studying adults, Rancer and Dierks-Stewart's[43] work on argumentation also may be seen as showing a masculine bias. They justify their research by suggesting that arguing is "functional" in society and that people who are good at arguing do better in many social situations, advocating remedial cognitive restructuring for those with negative attitudes about arguing. Denise Lach[44] has suggested that while arguing may be "functional" (Rancer and Dierks-Stewart's research does not address this issue), what they interpret as the benefits of arguing may be better attributed to the benefits of conflict resolution skills in general, which include many modes of communication beyond arguing. In addition, women may often find themselves in situations where they are rewarded for non-argumentative behavior.[45] Cultural norms certainly proscribe

argumentation as a preferred form of conflict resolution for women, but in addition women may have learned through their day-to-day interactions that argumentativeness is dysfunctional, if not destructive, in obtaining their goals.

Methods and theories which are commonly used to examine conflict resolution, especially work in the rational-choice and exchange theory traditions, may also be criticized for utilizing structures that are more oriented toward masculine oriented personality characteristics and cultural norms. By assuming individuals act in selfish, rational ways, such models give greater weight to a model of behavior that feminist theoriests with a "difference" orientation associate with males more than females.[46] Studies on prisoner's dilemma games, a popular method, indicate that men enjoy the games more than women[47] and women participants are more concerned with the interpersonal situation in the game than with winning.[48]

It is, of course, unrealistic to expect that researchers' philosophical and epistemological assumptions will not affect their writings. Certainly my own appreciation of certain aspects of feminist theory has influenced this paper. I believe, however, that the majority of studies of conflict resolution and gender have

underlying assumptions that reflect a masculine paradigm and thus may fail to adequately explain the complex relationship between gender and conflict resolution.[49]

As a first step toward correcting male bias it seems essential for future research to try to incorporate assumptions regarding males and females that do not ignore one-half of the population. This implies that researchers must explore the possibility that conflict and the process of its resolution is approached and interpreted differently by men and women participants. Resarch has demonstrated that women and men have different views regarding the utility of argumentativeness[50] and experience different constraints on their conflict resolution behaviors.[51] Yet most research on conflict resolution proceeds without examining these differences and incorporating the possibility of these different views of the self, the situation, and interactional potentials into either research designs or theories. A good deal of research, some of which was noted above, indicates that situational variables often influence men and women to act in similar ways. Yet, the research also indicates that men and women may interpret these situations and their behaviors in different ways. Only when our research can begin to incorporate an

understanding of the interpretations women and men associate with conflict resolution will we have a better understanding of the impact of gender on this behavior.

If we are to understand more about the subjective reality of conflict resolution for women it is also essential that we examine conflict resolution as a process. Using the theoretical framework developed above, I would suggest that future researchers examine the influences on conflict resolution related to personalities, social situations, and cultural norms, but that, as formulated earlier, we also see conflict as a process that develops and alters over the course of interactions. Such analyses should explore interactions not just from the viewpoint of one participant, but incorporate the perspectives of all involved parties. Analyses of real-life settings are extremely rare and undoubtedly difficult to accomplish, but are essential if we are to learn more about these processes.

Finally, future research needs to acknowledge the reality of male power and its influence on conflict resolution, not only in interactions that involve both male and female participants, but also within the situations in which only women work. Hierarchies appear not just across the sex groups, but also within sex groups, and it is

important to recognize these as well as see how they influence conflict resolution and its relation to gender.

Summary

In this paper I have proposed a theoretical framework to help make sense of many disparate findings regarding women and conflict resolution. It accepts basic premises of theorists who emphasize gender differences and those who emphasize similarities by seeing these arguments as reflecting emphases on different levels of analysis. The framework stresses the importance of viewing conflict as an on-going process and male power as a reality that infuses this process and each level of analysis. Using this framework, the guilt, frustration, and tension regarding conflict and its resolution, which appears to more often affect women than men, may be seen as arising from cultural definitions of women's roles, women's beliefs and internalized views of themselves, as well as the situations in which they interact. The fact that men have greater power than women results in greater restrictions on women's self-definitions and culturally prescribed roles, as well as situations that are likely to be defined in a manner that reflects and preserves male power. While I suggest that

this model can be used in interpreting previous literature, I also propose that it help guide future reserch. Future work on conflict resolution should recognize the possibility that men and women may interpret settings, including experimental ones, in different ways. It should also examine conflict as a process, utilizing qualitative measures and methods that can capture the multitude of steps involved in conflict resolution and the emotions, meanings, and interpretations of participants at each stage in that process.

FOOTNOTES

1. See Jean Stockard and Denise Lach, "Conflict Resolution and Sex and Gender Roles," in The Annual Review of Conflict Knowledge and Conflict Resolution, Volume 1, ed. J. B. Gittler (New York: Garland, forthcoming), for a review of recent literature. Unfortunately, there is virtually no literature in the area which addresses variations in the association of gender and conflict resolution by race/ethnicity and/or social class, and this paper cannot address this important area.

2. See, for example, David Bakan, The Duality of Human Existance (Rand McNally, 1966); Jessie Bernard, The Female World (Free Press, 1981); Carol Gilligan, In A Different Voice: Psychological Theory and Women's Development (Harvard University Press, 1982); Goldberger, et. al., 1986, 1987; Jean Baker Miller, Toward a New Psychology of Women (Boston:Beacon Press, 1976); Miriam M. Johnson, Strong Mothers, Weak Wives (University of California Press, 1988).

3. Kay Deaux and Brenda Major, "Putting Gender into Context: An Interactive Model of Gender-Related Behavior," Psychological Review 94 (1987): 369-389; Cynthia Fuchs

Epstein, Deceptive Distinctions: Sex, Gender, and the Social Order (Yale University Press, 1988); Rosabeth Moss Kanter, "The Impact of Hierarchical Structures on the Work Behavior of Women and Men," Social Problems 23 (1976): 415-430; Barbara J. Risman and Pepper Schwartz, Gender in Intimate Relationships: A Microstructural Approach (Belmont, California: Wadsworth, 1989).

4. This distinction may be seen in political and legal thought as well, from the earliest days of the Women's Movement in the U.S. to the present. See Joan Hoff-Wilson, "The Unfinished Resolution: Changing Legal Status of U.S. Women," Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society 13 (1988): 7-36; and Nancy F. Cott, The Grounding of Modern Feminism (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1987) for discussions of the long history of this philosophical tradition in feminist thought.

5. David Jorgenson, "Transmitting Methods of Conflict Resolution from Parents to Children: A Replication and Comparison of Blacks and White, Males and Females," Social Behavior and Personality 13 (1985): 109-117; Kate Peirce and Emily D. Edwards, "Children's Construction of Fantasy Stories: Gender Differences in Conflict Resolution Strategies," Sex Roles 18 (1988): 393-404; Liisa

Keltikangas-Jarvinen and Paula Kangas, "Problem-Solving Strategies in Aggressive and Non-Aggressive Children," Aggressive Behavior 14 (1988): 255-264.

6. Linda A. Jackson, "Gender and Distributive Justice: The Influence of Gender-Related Characteristics on Allocations," Sex Roles 17 (1987): 73-91; Brenda Major, "Gender, Justice, and the Psychology of Entitlement," in Sex and Gender, ed. Philip Shaver and Clyde Hendrick (Sage, 1987), 124-148; Jean Stockard, Alphons Van De Kragt, and Patricia J. Dodge, "Gender Roles and Behavior in Social Dilemmas: Are There Sex Differences in Cooperation and in its Justification?" Social Psychology Quarterly 51 (1988): 154-163; Birgit Brock-Utne, "Gender and Cooperation in the Laboratory," Journal of Peace Research 26 (1989): 47-56.

7. Andrew Rancer and Kathi Dierks-Stewart, "Biological and Psychological Gender Differences in Trait Argumentativeness," in Communication, Gender, and Sex Roles in Diverse Interaction Contexts, ed. Lea P. Stewart and Stella Ting-Toomey (Ablex, 1987), 18-30; Stockard and Lach, forthcoming.

8. Andrew Rancer and Robert Bankes, "Discriminating Males and Females on Belief Structures About Arguing," in Advances in Gender and Communication Research, ed. Lawrence

B. Nadler, Marjorie Keeshan Nadler, and William R. Todd-Mancillas (University Press of America, 1987), 155-173.

9. Cynthia Berryman-Fink and Clair Brunner, "The Effect of Sex of Source and Target on Interpersonal Conflict Management Styles," The Southern Speech Communication Journal 53 (1987): 38-48.

10. Ana Maria Rossi and William Todd-Mancillas, "Differences Between Brazilian Men and Women Managers in the Managing of Conflicts with Employees," in Advances in Gender and Communication Research, ed. Lawrence B. Nadler, Marjorie Keeshan Nadler, and William R. Todd-Mancillas (University Press of America, 1987a), 23-41; Ana Maria Rossi and William Todd-Mancillas, "Male/Female Differences in Managing Conflicts," in Communication, Gender, and Sex Roles in Diverse Interaction Contexts, ed. Lea P. Stewart and Stella Ting-Toomey (Ablex, 1987b), 96-104.

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12. Lorette K. Woolsey and Laura-Lynne McBain, "Issues of Power and Powerlessness in All-Woman Groups," Women's Studies International Forum 10 (1987): 579-588; Evelyn Fox Keller and Helene Moglen, "Competition and Feminism: Conflicts for Academic Women," Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society 12 (1987): 493-511; see also Phyllis Palmer, "Comment on Keller and Moglen's 'Competition and Feminism: Conflicts for Academic Women,'" Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society 13 (1988): 384-386.

13. Alice H. Eagly and Valerie J. Steffen, "Gender and Aggressive Behavior: A Meta-Analytic Review of the Social Psychological Literature," Psychological Bulletin 100 (1986): 309-330; Janet Shibley-Hyde and Marcia C. Linn, The Psychology of Gender: Advances through Meta-Analysis (The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1986); Jacquelyn Weygandt White, "Sex and Gender Issues in Aggression Research," in Aggression: Theoretical and Empirical Reviews, Volume 2, Issues in Research, ed. Russell G. Green and Edward I. Donnerstein (Academic Press, 1983), 1-26; David Jorgenson, Liisa Keltikangas-Jarvinen and Paula Kangas, 1988.

14. Stockard, Van De Kragt, and Dodge, 1988.

15. Robert Billingham and Allan Sack, "Conflict Tactics and the Level of Emotional Commitment Among Unmarrieds,"

Human Relations 40 (1987): 59-74; Daniel Canary, Ellen Cunningham, and Michael Cody, "Goal Types, Gender, and Locus of Control in Managing Interpersonal Conflict," Communication Research 15 (1988): 426-446.

16. Rossi and Todd-Mancillas, 1987a and 1987b.

17. Deanna Womack, "Cooperative Behavior by Female Negotiators: Experts or Masochists?" in Advances in Gender and Communication Research, ed. Lawrence B. Nadler, Marjorie Keeshan Nadler, and William R. Todd-Mancillas (University Press of America, 1987), 219-241.

18. Miriam Johnson, Jean Stockard, Joan Acker, and Claudeen Noffziger, "Expressiveness Re-evaluated," School Review 83 (1975): 617-644; Sandra Gill, Jean Stockard, Miriam M. Johnson, and Suzanne Williams, "Measuring Gender Differences: The Expressive Dimension and Critique of Androgeny Scales," Sex Roles 17 (1987): 375-400; Johnson, 1988.

19. Two major exceptions to the correspondence between the cultural and personality level should be noted. One involves dependency. Even though cultural norms generally dictate that women should be dependent to men, numerous studies indicate that women do not see themselves as more psychologically dependent than men (Johnson, Stockard,

Acker, and Noffziger, 1975; Gill, Stockard, Johnson, and Williams, 1987; Johnson, 1988). The other involves guilt, which is clearly a psychological reaction. We may feel guilty when we violate cultural norms or when we act in ways that violate owr own personality orientations or internalized norms and values, but the guilt is produced on a psychological level.

20. Gilligan, 1982; Bernard, 1981.

21. e.g., Christine L. Williams, Gender Differences at Work: Women and Men in Nontraditional Occupations (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1989).

22. I am grateful to Denise Lach for her development of some of the ideas presented in this section.

23. cf. Linda Putnam and Joseph Folger, "Communication, Conflict, and Dispute Resolution," Communication Research 15 (1988): 349-359.

24. cf. Stella Ting-Toomey, "Introduction: The Pragmatics of Gender-Related Communication," in Communication, Gender, and Sex Roles in Diverse Interaction Contexts, ed. Lea P. Stewart and Stella Ting-Toomey (Ablex, 1987), 1-8.

25. See Jean Stockard and Miriam M. Johnson, Sex Roles: Sex Inequality and Sex Role Development (Prentice Hall, 1980), 13-18.

26. Stockard, Van De Kragt, and Dodge, 1988.

27. Womack, 1987.

28. Womack, 1987, 231.

29. Nancy Burrell, William Donohue, and Michael Allen, "Gender-Based perceptual Biases in Mediation," Communication Research 15 (1988): 447-469.

30. Rossi and Todd-Mancillas, 1987b.

31. Nadler and Nadler, 1987b.

32. Anne Campbell and Steven Muncer, "Moderls of Anger and Aggression in the Social Talk of Women and Men," Journal for the Theory of Social Behavior 17 (1987): 489-511.

33. Campbell and Muncer, 1987, 502.

34. Campbell and Muncer, 1987, 505.

35. Woolsey and McBain, 1987.

36. Woolsey and McBain, 1987, 580.

37. Woolsey and McBain, 1987, 580.

38. Keller and Moglen, 1987; see also Palmer, 1988.

39. Janet Saltzman Chafetz, Gender Equity: An Integrated Theory of Stability and Change, (Newbury Park: Sage, 1990), 227-228.

40. Stockard and Johnson, 1980; Johnson, 1988.

41. Peirce and Edwards, 1988, p. 403.

42. cf. Johnson, Stockard, Acker, and Noffziger, 1975; Gill, Stockard, Johnson, and Williams, 1987; Johnson, 1988.

43. Rancer and Dierks-Stewart, 1987.

44. Personal communication, 1989.

45. cf. Campbell and Muncer, 1987.

46. Paula England, "A Feminist Critique of Rational-Choice Theories: Implications for Sociology," The American Sociologist 24 (1989): 14-28.

47. Joseph Hottes and Arnold Kahn, "Sex Differences in a Mixed-Motive Conflict Situation," Journal of Personality 42 (1974): 260-275; cited by Brock-Utne, 1989.

48. Brock-Utne, 1989, 51-52.

49. See England, 1989, for an excellent discussion of this area in relation to exchange theory and marital power.

50. e.g. Rancer and Bankes, 1987.

51. e.g. Campbell and Muncer, 1987.