

Chapter 2

International Negotiations, Evolution, and the Value of Compassion

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Introduction

Conflicts occur in all aspects of life, even genes compete for expression. Human conflicts tend to follow archetypal themes. Like other animals we battle over resources and access to resources, power and status, and sexual opportunities. Many of our human motivational systems have evolved over many millions of years and are key drivers for the emotional urgency by which we pursue conflicts, seek to gain an advantage or subdue or even destroy competitors. Around 2 million years ago a species leading to humans began to evolve capacities for high level cognitive processing which eventually gave us opportunities to pursue our motivational systems in totally new ways. Whereas animals may fight and think about getting revenge humans can use their intelligence to manipulate the minds of others, called them to war, and focus resources and scientific efforts to the building of the most destructive weapons. Humans like other animals are also a highly tribal species and intergroup and intertribal conflicts are extremely easy to stimulate. When this happens we have certain kinds of mindsets. These mindsets are mostly about seeking an advantage in some way, so that the powerful always dominate the weak. In contrast compassion focuses on the plight of the weak, with a desire to improve their life situation and facilitate justice and fairness. We can contextualise International Negotiations as part of the process by which different archetypes are playing out their dramas for competitive edge or compassionate engagement. This chapter will explore these dynamics in detail and argue that facilitating compassion in international negotiations probably requires us to recognise, the complex archetypal dramas we are trapped in, and the need for international law and third-party independent arbitration of conflicts.

There can be little doubt that while humans are capable of great compassion they are also capable of callous indifference to the injustices and suffering of others, and of perpetuating horrendous cruelty (Gilbert 2009). Part of the reason for this is the way our brains have evolved and now operate. Basically we now know that our

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brain is made up of different motive systems and processing competencies that do not always work well together (Ornstein 1986), and we can go into different states of mind where we think and feel quite differently (Carter 2008). Different patterns of brain functioning get activated as we engage with our environments. One brain pattern can make another unavailable. So, for example, it is difficult to be anxious and relaxed at the same time or vengeful and loving. It seems relatively easy to love our own children in the morning and bomb someone else's in the afternoon. It can be hard to see one's enemies, whom we see as a threat, as also human beings requiring basic justice and compassion – the current Middle East conflict shows this most tragically and clearly. It's because we have a brain that creates these states of mind, and can become so intent on pursuing its own selfish, defensive, retaliatory and group-focused goals, that negotiators, arbitrators, and other mediators are so vital for the pursuit of peace and justice in the world.

So the call to compassion must start with a reality check that not only places the brain, and the social contexts in which it operates, central to our understanding of how conflicts emerge and can be resolved, but also the enormity and urgency of the tasks before us. The reasons are not hard to articulate. While diseases and famines haunt the Earth, causing immense suffering, some of the greatest suffering is perpetrated by humans on other humans. Over the last few thousand years humans have been responsible for many billions of deaths through wars and have spent many trillions of dollars inventing and trading in weapons. Some nations have crippled their economies in a race to purchase arms. As a result of long-running tribal conflicts in various parts of the world, and particularly at present in North Africa, there are millions of displaced people, subjected to atrocities and suffering starvation. It is estimated that the USA alone has spent over \$600 billion on the Iraq war – which as one commentator noted, is over \$121,000 per person, and at that rate it would have been better just to bribe everyone! The cost in human misery is tragic with varying estimates of loss of life, but some put at over 700,000 (over 2.5% of the population) – (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lancet_surveys_of_casualties_of_the_Iraq_War). Unknown numbers have been maimed for life, losing limbs and senses, and whole sections of society have been traumatized, left with deep psychological and mental health problems, thrown into grief, not to mention resentment. In the wake of wars many anti-personnel mines are scattered like confetti waiting for children yet to be born to have limbs blown off, and whole areas can become uninhabitable.

Failure of negotiations to reduce, contain or resolve conflicts that lead to group violence (war) also sets the contextual conditions for humans (especially those actually doing the fighting) to enter into barbaric and cruel states of mind. From these flow mass raping, cutting off the limbs of children, forcing one's enemies to batter their relatives to death – to name just a few. Cruel practices such as torture, crucifixions, mass executions, and holocausts have flourished for centuries as ways to impose dominance through fear and power. Because the weak cannot easily negotiate with the powerful, or defend themselves, slavery, economic exploitation and injustice are still tragically prevalent.

In addition, because we live in a world of desperately unequal power, there are serious problems with failures in the negotiating processes that are not just related

to violent conflicts but to the whole process of how we share resources as a species (Aquilar and Galluccio 2008). For example, a casual look at Wikipedia (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Distribution_of_wealth) suggests that

A study by the World Institute for Development Economics Research at United Nations University reports that the richest 1% of adults alone owned 40% of global assets in the year 2000, and that the richest 10% of adults accounted for 85% of the world total. The bottom half of the world adult population owned barely 1% of global wealth. ...Moreover, another study found that the richest 2% own more than half of global household assets. Despite this, the distribution has been changing quite rapidly in the direction of greater concentration of wealth.

Inequalities have major effects on all health indices and crime (<http://www.equalitytrust.org.uk/>). So we live in a world of serious violence, cruelties and inequalities in trade, health and wealth, of haves, have-nots and have-lots, where children die from lack of clean water or a 50 cent vaccination, and where each year millions are vulnerable to starvation. There are many areas where failures to negotiate the settlement of conflicts, needs and trade deals are a disaster. So why can negotiated settlements be so difficult to achieve – when it is so obvious to any outside, logical person that their failure is tragic, often catastrophic and perpetrates intense injustice, from which resentment and conflict seed the next generations of wars and violence.

The Challenges of the Evolved Brain and the Evolutionary Processes

The reasons for this sad state of affairs are many. One is that conflicts and inequalities have arisen from the history of wars and conquests, suppression, oppression and exploitations of people and their resources. These may have arisen a few thousand years ago as isolated groups started to come into contact with each other, and found benefit in raiding (rather than trading) resources. This led eventually from village to tribal to nation and religious wars with efforts to steal and exploit resources – modern day imperialism (Armstrong 2006). So we are caught in cycles of modeling what previous generations have done and defending our positions – conflicts are historically and socially constructed around us. Another (not competitive) view starts from the fact that conflicts are endemic to all organic life. Indeed, conflicts of interest between individuals and between groups, and the evolution of (genetically stable) strategies to pursue and cope with them, have been one of the main driving forces of the evolution process (Buss 2003; McQuire and Troisi 1998).

One such strategy (offering evolved solutions to conflicts over resources) pertains to the development of social hierarchies based on displays of strength and controls of territory and resources (MacLean 1990). Individuals within groups can engage in various, ritualized, threat and submissive behaviors which avoid serious conflict and injury. Subordinates are vigilant to, and express submissive behaviors towards those who have more power than they do. Abilities to make the appropriate social comparisons and work out one's place/rank, what kinds of alliances to form, whom

to submit to and whom to avoid, are all part of the strategy for the navigation of “conflicts of interest” within groups (Gilbert 2000).

In contrast to individuals, when *groups* come into conflict with each other there are also evolved defensive strategies such as awareness of boundaries, scent marking and preparedness to exit the territories of other groups. For the most part such defensive strategies evolved *to reduce* aggression with avoidance. However there are various species of monkeys where inter-group violence is common and is a major source of injury and mortality. For inter-group violence there is no equivalent to submissive behaviors that turn off aggression. Indeed, one group of chimpanzees split into two and were found to actually kill members of the other (now) separate group in what looks like war-like behavior (Goodall 1990). Keep in mind that before the group split they would have known each other and may even have been allies.

The fact is that humans can pursue the same motives. We have brains that can be easily stimulated to pursue aggressive goals, can override aggression regulation strategies (e.g., fear, moral concerns, or compassion), and are more destructive, violent and cruel to our own kind than any other species. What this means is that our brains can perceive, construct, and feel relationships in quite different ways. The way we think about friends is quite different from how we think about strangers or opponents. Concerns about the well being and welfare of opponents can be inhibited or turned off as a psychological motive – especially if they are seen as a threat. This is because compassionate concerns turn off or tone down aggressive and self-focused competitive desires – and that could leave one at a disadvantage and vulnerable to injury, loss, or defeat. So the brain is constructed in such a way that compassionate goals are inhibited in competitive and threat-based contexts. This is precisely why, of course, psychologies such as Buddhism argue that we must train our minds with and for compassion and that in some sense the unenlightened mind “is insane” (Vessantara 2003, p. 150). Without awareness of the power of such evolved archetypes and strategies we are liable to repeatedly fall victim to them, and believing that we’re “in the right” with what we do – as destructive as that may be (Bandura 1999).

Social Mentalities

So one source of our difficulties lies in how and why our brains have evolved in the way they have (Gilbert 1998a, b; 2009). The human brain is the product of many millions of years of evolution and a long line of adaptations stretching back to the reptiles and beyond (Bailey 1987). The implications of this fact are only just beginning to impact on the psychological sciences (Barrett et al. 2002; Buss 2003; Dunbar and Barrett 2007). There is much debate about these implications (Li 2003; Lickliter and Honeycutt 2003) and on the way social conditions stimulate non-conscious strategies for social living (e.g., trusting vs mistrusting (Cohen 2001)). Coming to understand the implications of the fact that national and international negotiations are guided by powerful evolutionary strategies operating within them can be hard. We like to think

we know ourselves and are “in control” of our own minds, and that we’re not just automatons to underlying archetypal forces. Numerous psychotherapists from Freud, Jung and many others have seriously questioned this assumption, and recent evidence suggests that our conscious thoughts are often latter stage outputs of many non-conscious processes – our emotion systems can make decisions that our cognitive processes will then justify (Haidt 2001; Hassin et al. 2005).

Indeed, there is increasing agreement that evolved strategies and archetypes are readily observed and include such things as identifying strongly with one’s own particular group (Baumestier and Leary 1995); submissiveness to leaders (Gilbert 2000); power abuses by leaders (Keltner et al. 2003); tendencies to a variety of cognitive biases such as seeing one’s own group as special in some way, or more deserving or more threatened – called self-serving biases (Aguilar and Galluccio 2008; Tobena et al. 1999); and preparedness to obey orders in the service of one’s groups including those associated with atrocities – a process Kelman and Hamilton (1989) call “crimes of obedience.” Indeed, our human preparedness to obey and show excessive loyalty to our leaders, group, subgroups, and elites, which easily overrides concerns about fairness or even morality, remains a serious problem in human social life and specially on the international stage. Leaders can exert destructive influence because their subordinates obey.

So when we look deeper into our evolved brain we can see that we are a species capable of multiple and often contradictory behaviors and feelings (Carter 2008; Ornstein 1986). A popular undergraduate textbook on psychology attempts to stimulate the interest of potential students with the following statement (Coon 1992, p. 1).

You are a universe, a collection of worlds within worlds. Your brain is possibly the most complicated and amazing device in existence. Through its action you are capable of music, art, science, and war. Your potential for love and compassion coexists with your potential for aggression, hatred...Murder?

This focus, on the great variation of potentials *within* an individual (in contrast to variation *between* individuals) is of course the starting point for much psychotherapy. Most clinicians are familiar with clients describing themselves as having “different parts,” or experiencing “intense inner conflicts.” And clinicians themselves also view the psyche as made up of different elements that can be labeled in different ways.

One reason for this is that the evolution of the brain has gone through various stages that can be traced back to reptilian life forms (Bailey 1987; MacLean 1990). Reptiles are concerned with dominance, spacing, territory, and mating. These are basic archetypal forms. For example, the threat display of reptiles with stiff limbs and eyes staring can still be used in humans as a threat display. With the mammals, however, came a new range of archetypes and social mentalities – new psychologies come into the world. First mammals engaged in investment in their offspring and developed caring and attachment systems. Importantly, they developed capacities for alliances. These abilities evolved partly through the process of inhibiting fight/flight tendencies when in close proximity to each other (Porges 2007). So our brain has evolved to feel, think, and “do differently” in different contexts. However, these different potentials can be in conflict – for example a negotiator might follow a line of argument but be personally very opposed to it. How they cope with that conflict could influence their negotiating style.

One way of thinking about the fact that our brain can think, feel, and do differently in different contexts and “states of mind” has been with the development of social mentality theory (Gilbert 1989, Gilbert 2005a, b). A social mentality has been described as an organizing process that brings together motives, emotions, attention, thinking, and behavior for the purpose of creating a certain type of dynamic reciprocal interaction and role. For example, the evolution of caring behavior was a solution to infant mortality. Rather than disperse at birth, mammalian infants are helpless and remain in contact with the parent. But caring has evolved with a particular psychology and brain pattern and organization – that is, the “carer” and “cared for” must form a reciprocal interacting relationship (e.g., the parent is motivated to provide care and respond to infant distress signals, and the infant responds to care and prospers rather than (say), runs away). Various psychological mechanisms could not evolve unless this reciprocal interacting process, where each is mutually influencing the mind of the other, occurs.

In regard to the organization of our minds we can see that if one has a care-giving mentality then we feel *motivated* to care for and look after another (e.g., a child, adult, or pet), to *pay attention* to their needs, to *feel* distressed by their distress, to have sympathy and empathy, and to *think* of what they might need, or of ways to relieve that distress or enable their growth.

Another form of relating that has been extremely beneficial to many mammals has been co-operative behavior where individuals coordinate their actions for mutual gain. Once again evolution has evolved this type of interaction with reciprocal relationships. With humans, cooperative behavior is complex and requires a monitoring of oneself in relationship to others. But notice how our minds are organized when we are in a cooperative mentality. We are motivated to seek others similar to us, to share and engage in reciprocal roles (e.g., playing in an orchestra, participating on a football team, working on a project). We praise and value others and feel valued by others in this cooperative dynamic. We think about our contribution, how it will be valued, and how it will link with others. Cooperative behavior tends towards more egalitarian ways of thinking and feeling, and pursuit of justice. But keep in mind that this requires one’s brain to be in a particular mentality and pattern, and it is easy to disturb that pattern with threats to the self or one’s group. It is also easy to disturb it if the competitive mentality becomes powerfully triggered.

The competitive social mentality is of course very old and has undergone various evolved adaptations by the time we get to humans. Nonetheless there are some continuities of attention, thinking and behavior that underpin competitiveness. First there has to be a *motive* to compete with others in such a way that one either avoids an inferior position or gains a superior one. Hence self-promotion (or that of one’s group), in contrast to caring or cooperation, is the primary motive. One’s attention is directed to what others are doing and thinking, and one’s thinking is linked to social comparison and working out how to gain a competitive edge. This may be strategic thinking. One enacts those behaviors that will give one the advantage.

Note how we can contrast the social mentality of caring with the social mentality of competing. In caring the focus is on the other and how to help them; the emotions of empathy and sympathy are prominent, and the focus on the self is reduced. In competing, however, the organization of mental mechanisms is quite different.

The focus is on the self, whilst empathy and sympathy are reduced (particularly if competitors are seen as enemies). Desires to seek an advantage, defend a position or even harm others are increased. The point is, then, that our minds become organized in very different ways according to the motives and mentalities that operate. This relates directly to the way we conceptualize and engage in our relationships with others. The key question then is what kinds of mentalities do your negotiators bring to their negotiations and how does this influence the reciprocal dynamic process of the negotiation? We can see that there is likely to be quite a different dynamic reciprocal process emerging if participants are in a competitive mentality, a cooperative mentality, or indeed a compassionate caring one. What influences the mentality individuals activate is itself complex and needs to be understood within a biopsychosocial framework.

Evolution, Culture and Learning: The Biopsychosocial Model

According to evolutionary psychology many of our basic motives, emotional dispositions, and cognitive competencies are the result of *distal* pressures (meaning selective pressures operating in the past and over the long term). One can think here of motives to form attachments to parents, to want to develop alliances and friendships, distinguish in-group from out-group, to take an interest in sexual relationships, to compete for position, to gain status, and so on. These are socially motivated behaviors that are observed the world over in multiple species. All species need to be able to detect threats and defend themselves, and for many of the higher mammals there are three major defensive emotions of anger, anxiety and disgust – with relatively similar triggers.

However, these evolved psychologies interact with various competencies for learning and form the *proximate* factors (factors that operate during an individual's life). We learn in a variety of ways, of course. Relatively simple organisms learn via classical and instrumental conditioning and so do we, but we also have a whole range of language and symbolic-based learning competencies. These provide for the social and cultural shapers of human psychology; they provide for us to acquire a sense of values and self-identify (Taylor 1989). Most now agree that it is *the interaction* between evolved dispositions, learning, and socio-cultural contexts that creates the complexity of the human mind. We can depict this with a simple model as shown in Fig. 2.1.

The interaction of the three circles simply suggests that our internal physiological states, how we behave within our relationships and our beliefs and values, are all mutually influencing each other. For example, we physiologically operate in different ways if we are in conflict situations or in loving supportive situations – cortisol is higher in the former; oxytocin is higher the latter (Carter 1998). Even genetic expression can be influenced via relationships (Harper 2005). Similarly our states of mind give rise to behaviors which impact on relationships. Our thoughts, beliefs and values influence our behaviors and affect our relationships and our physiological states.

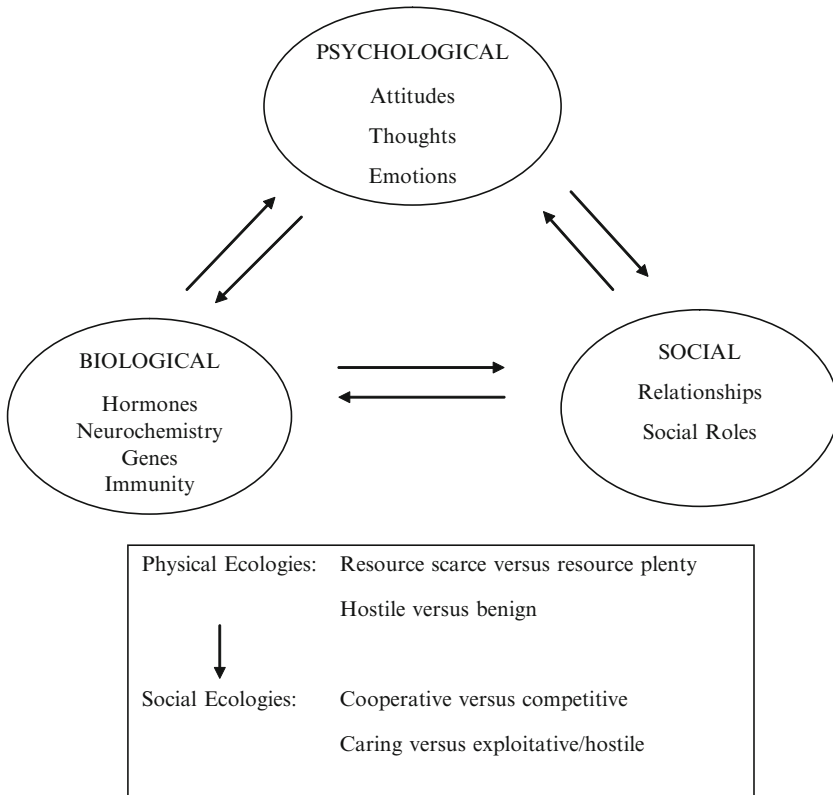


Fig. 2.1 Biopsychosocial and ecological interactions

This is also related to *genotype–phenotype* interactions (Barrett et al. 2002). Phenotypes are the way traits (genotypes and potentials) are expressed by virtue of how they have been shaped by experience. For example, we have genotypes for learning an aural language, but how well we learn, what we learn, and the actual way we use language is the phenotype and is dependent on experience. Recent work has shown that environments can influence the expression of genes and in some cases may actually turn genes “on and off.” This is partly because different genes underpin the development and operation of different strategies and competencies to fit different niches. All of these interactions influence the prototypical social mentalities people will use in their social relationships.

Cultures, cultural discourse, and narratives also play huge roles in the way in which people construct their self-identities, create conflicts, activate social mentalities, and influence various strategies played out between participants. For example, in some cultures the use of violence as a solution to conflict and insults is regarded as honorable whereas in others it is regarded as showing lack of self-restraint (Gilmore 1990). As outlined by Cohen et al. (1998), there are variations within the USA (a single country) as to the acceptance of the use of violence in defense of honor;

southern states are far more accepting of aggression if seen as defensive, than northern states. So while aggression is an evolved strategy for dealing with conflicts, culture and group pressure play a major role in how much people seek to develop this strategy within themselves, feel socially valued in doing so, observe others engaging in these behaviors, and submit to the social norm. This raises the importance of contextualising the interactions, beliefs, and values within ecological parameters. As depicted in Fig. 2.1 these can be social and physical and impact on three interacting processes in dynamic reciprocal ways.

These kinds of models open us to complex ways for thinking about international negotiations, negotiators, and the kinds of processes that are likely to be played out in that process.

The Cognitive World

The human mind is equipped with a whole range of motives and emotions that go back many millions of years. However, about 2 million years ago there was a rapid expansion in a range of cognitive abilities. It was around this time that early humanoids known as *Homo habilis* first appeared on Earth with a brain capacity of 650–700 cc. They walked upright, lived in family groups, developed simple tool use, followed a hunter–gatherer way of life, and may have built shelters. After them evolution came up with *Homo erectus*, Neanderthals, and *Homo sapiens* (us), and today our brain capacity is around 1,500 cc. So in just two million years the expansion of the brain, and especially the cortex, has been rapid and dramatic. The ratio of cortex to total brain size is estimated to be 67% in monkeys, 75% in apes, and 80% in humans (Bailey 1987).

This new brain has opened us to a whole range of capacities for thinking, imagining, planning and ruminating. The expansion of the frontal cortex has given us the capacities for empathy, mentalizing, theory of mind, and the ability to have a sense of self and self-identity (Goldberg 2002). All these have proved fantastically valuable in the struggle for survival and reproduction. Along with them, of course, are language and symbol use, which have created completely new ways of thinking and communicating. These abilities give rise to science, culture, the communication of ideas across generations, and more besides.

However, evolution can never go back to the drawing board and push a delete button, so complex and important cognitive abilities sit on top of much more primitive motivational and emotional systems. Indeed, this is perhaps our biggest threat to our species. Our primitive motivational and emotional brains, which run many of the archetypes and strategies, can simply hijack our cognitive abilities and direct them to the fulfillment of their own programs. So, for example, humans don't just live in the moment, responding to signals around them, submitting or fighting if threatened. Rather humans can lay plans to achieve status, to work out how over the long-term one might outperform competitors or even undermine them, to avoid inferiority, and to only create alliances that advance one's goal. Or consider how the

archetypal processes that lead us to be very group orientated and defensive, submissive to dubious leaders, can recruit our intelligence and motivate us to design and create weapons of destruction. Through a process of symbols and values and the way our self-identities form within our social groups, we can associate with others we have never met and have no personal relationship with whatsoever – we may not even like them – and yet can link up and form allies and go to war with them because they seem to have the same values or religion, etc. Chomsky (1992) has repeatedly pointed out how Western countries have supported all kinds of unpleasant dictatorships, undermining indigenous resistances, because they see them as conducive to their own interests and having similar values.

Inter-group Conflicts

Over a number of years Sidanius and Pratto and their colleagues have been developing an important theory and research base on what they call Social Dominance Theory. This is based on the fact that groups in conflict for resources will compete and try to win advantage over each other and exploit that advantage. Sidanius and Pratto (2004) argue,

Most forms of group conflict and oppression (e.g., racism, ethnocentrism, sexism, nationalism, classism and regionalism) can be regarded as different manifestations of the same basic human predisposition to form group-based social hierarchy (p. 319).

Social dominance theory blends evolutionary dispositions with socially constructed belief systems that make certain behaviors acceptable. These can be offset by spiritual religious beliefs, but very often those belief systems themselves can become another means for ascribing dominance and specialness (Gay 1995) – religious wars. Indeed, one of the important roles that group-focused social identities and communication networks can do is provide narratives to legitimize inequalities (e.g., to see others are less deserving or inferior in some way) and create fears and terrors around differences. Gay (1995), for example, suggests that the political rhetoric can easily stimulate audiences into fear, and from fear a hatred of the outsider. So for all kinds of reasons there can be socially constructed values and beliefs or what Pratto et al. (1994) call hierarchy-legitimizing myths – ways of justifying our special positions and the subjugation of others.

Competitions and Conflicts: Negotiating to Get the Best Deal for Oneself

We are living in a world of increasing expansion of population, desires for more resources, rising expectations linked to the internet, sharing of values and display of lifestyles of the rich around the world, and an environment that is slowly choking itself to death. Negotiations to create fair trading between the developed and less

developed countries, limit the exploitation of resources (destruction of rainforests), control CO₂ emissions, or resolve conflicts in major areas such as Palestine, Afghanistan and Sudan are failing tragically. The problem and reasons why are well known. Leaving aside corruption of course, currently most groups negotiate with other groups with the motives of seeking the best deal for the home team. They come to the table in a competitive (seeking a superior advantage), protective (avoiding giving up any advantage or privilege), defensive (a preparedness to be intransigent), or even a vengeful frame of mind. Not only may they be unaware of the archetypal forces playing through them, but the reciprocal dynamic interplay stirs emotions linked to different mentalities they may struggle with too. As Galluccio (this volume and Galluccio 2007) points out, negotiators are subject to the same motives and emotions as all humans, and their ability to understand and regulate their emotions during what can be arousing conflict situations will play an important role in their interpersonal style, their ability to create the experience of safeness and trust, and how they handle their negotiations.

There are serious problems with the competitive mentality being the primary organizing process by which individuals engage in negotiations. Such outcomes are often influenced by differences in power of the parties and the compromises one party can enforce on another. “Gaining the competitive edge” *is seen as a virtue* no matter how unfair or exploitative that outcome may be. Is it a “good deal for us?” is the primary judgment, and this is true for international business (Bakan 2004) and nation states negotiating with other nation states (Aquilar and Galluccio 2008). Politicians all over the world endorse these sentiments quite happily, ignoring that what might be “good for us” may be a disaster for other countries, especially those with little power – e.g., Western trade agreements with the developing countries, or forcing arms sales (Keegan 1993). The tendency for the powerful to subjugate or subordinate the less powerful is well known.

In conflict situations people have various (not mutually exclusive) choices. They can threaten and fight, seek out helpful support from others, back down and acquiesce, run away, or try to negotiate. In the latter, compromises may be resentfully accepted (mostly if people feel in a submissive position), or compromises might be seen as offering mutually beneficial positions. Agreements that seem to be mutually beneficial are associated with positive emotion for both sides, and that builds relationships (De Dreu et al. 2006). Resentful compromise can create the conditions for cheating, revenge, and the next conflict.

The Problem of Leaders

It is very important to recognize that most negotiators are not free agents, but operate as a directed arm of government and leaders (Aquilar and Galluccio 2008). This presents us with major problems. It is now well known that leaders can inspire us to compassion, reconciliation, and peacemaking or violence and cruelties (Crook 1986; Lindholm 1993). Although we often put great emphasis on the importance of personal freedom, we often fail to recognize just how much of our behavior is

directed at seeking approval, fitting in with our social groups, and *subordinating* ourselves to various individuals, doctrines, traditions, and values (Cohen 2003). In a fascinating study, Green et al. (1998) looked at the historical records for the link between unfavorable economic conditions (e.g., high unemployment) and hate crimes (lynching and beatings) directed at minorities. Current wisdom had it that with increases in relative poverty, envy and frustration build up, leading to increases in hate crime. But this link proved weak. Green et al. believe that an important factor in the rise of hate crimes is the emergence of leaders, or power elites that direct and orchestrate violence for their own ends or reasons. Their work is important because we can certainly see the same psychologies at work all over the world – not least in the Palestinian Israeli context.

Although fear and hatred of the outsider is an all-too-familiar aspect of our behavior, such feelings are typically mixed in cauldrons of social values that literally cultivate it, as Gay (1995) had so fully described, and Nelson Mandela demonstrated by his refusal to endorse such. Is it possible that the human race has been burdened and scared in the way it has (and is still being) partly because there are certain types of personality (enacting certain strategies) who seek and get power and then are able to inflame people to violence because of our compliant and submissive tendencies, need for belonging and tribal identity, and fear of shame by “breaking ranks?” Can leaders inflame violent strategies to outsiders for political ends to impress others and/or to deflect attention from their failed leadership and internal economies? Many political commentators believe so. Grabsky (1993) offers many examples of how leaders have manipulated situations for their own ends. One wonders what would’ve happened had the Middle East or Zimbabwe found a Gandhi or a Nelson Mandela.

A major problem is that leaders require certain personalities in order to navigate the stages of acquiring leadership positions. They in turn need to be supported by various financial backers and power groups. These are not necessarily individuals who facilitate the best or fairest negotiations. Indeed Western governments have been more intent on using other nations to support their fight against communism or support selfish trade agreements, often keeping unpleasant regimes in place (Chomsky 1992).

In a recent review of Patrick Tyler’s book *A World in Trouble*, Martin Woollacott (2009) notes how successive leaders have dealt with the Israeli–Palestinian conflict and comments: “It is the most dismal chronicle of incompetence, ignorance, ineffectiveness, indecision and inefficiency imaginable....” (p 6). He goes on to make the shocking revelation that in 1973 Kissinger was entrusted to give a message from Nixon to Brezhnev for joint superpower action to end the Arab–Israeli war and to try for a just settlement in the region. Apparently Kissinger decided mid-flight simply not to deliver it. He later encouraged Israel to violate the cease-fire (p 6). Group and tribal loyalties cross nations, but such behavior shows just how serious the consequences are, and are paid for in the suffering and lives of the many.

Although subordinates can defy leaders, it is much more usual that they are willing to enact policies – be they just or not. In pursuit of their own self-interest leaders can be rather contemptuous and lose interest in the concerns of the subordinates; their main concern is that subordinates do as they are asked (Keltner et al. 2003). Leaders can play their subordinates off against each other (as Adolf Hitler and

Saddam Hussain were well known to do) making each insecure and more ready to do the bidding of the leader. Leaders can also lack abilities for self-reflection – as in the case of Margret Thatcher, who always believed her downfall was due to treachery and not her own behaviors. And of course leaders can simply lie and manipulate for their own ends.

Leaders can also be mentally ill and seriously disturbed – but subordinates (including negotiators) may still enact their orders (Freeman 1991; Green 2005; Owen 2007, 2008). Indeed subordinates can still follow and obey leaders even when *they know* they are incompetent, fakes, bad, or even mentally ill – because if the leader falls so does the group and the sense of belonging protection and identity (Lindholm 1993). The submissive process is complex and involves a range of motives to try to please those higher in power than oneself, to seek security under their wing (Kelman and Hamilton 1989) and because, as Lindholm (1993) suggests, the subordinates have linked their sense of identity and future prospects to that of the leader – so if she/he goes down, so do they. In addition they operate in sub-groups whose narratives seek to maintain biased and self-justifying views of themselves and their world (Lindholm 1993). Any analysis of negotiator behavior and the negotiation process must therefore be set in social contexts of real life and reflect both the present and distal pressures that operate at the negotiation table.

The Pressures on Negotiators

Negotiators who come from the “home team” are not free agents and should not be regarded as such, so we need to recognize that individuals engaging in (international) negotiations are under a range of pressures (Aquilar and Galluccio 2008). Some examples of these can be depicted in Fig. 2.2.

First is the negotiator’s primary motivation or social mentality. Two major ones are (1) the cooperative social mentality, involving seeking mutual benefit, recognizing

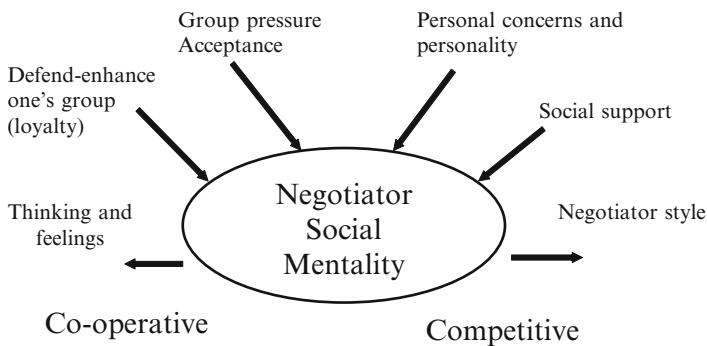


Fig. 2.2 An interactive model of some of the pressures on negotiators

a need to work together to achieve a common goal. In contrast is (2) the competitive social mentality, which will orientate negotiators in a completely different way – as noted above – for some advantage or defense of a position. Occasionally the social mentality could be one of care seeking where one group is seeking help and support from another. It's also possible that negotiators could be in a caring frame of mind, where they are sympathetic to the complexity of the task or the distress of participants. This is more likely in the minds of the third party mediators.

We can then move around the circle (of Fig. 2.2) and note that the negotiators' ability to think and reflect, to be able to recognize and regulate their own emotions as they arise moment by moment, to have "theory of mind" and mentalize, to be empathic in their thinking and feeling – all of these will influence the process of negotiation (Aquilar and Galluccio 2008).

Related to the competitive mentality are issues related to the degree to which negotiators start from the premise of trying to defend a position or enhance a position and out of a sense of loyalty to a position. The negotiator's personal identification with the arguments is important. Conflicts, where negotiators believe their group is pursuing an unfair position that they are not fully behind, can create difficulties for negotiators and the process.

Pressures to conform to the dictates of their leaders and political parties, be these Democratic or other forms, can be intense. Negotiators can feel quite stuck if distal power groups, who have a fragile understanding of the issues or no real interest in "a fair settlement," put pressure on negotiators. They may be caught between the degree to which they wish to express their personal preferences versus simply being a mouthpiece for power groups behind them. In these contexts the negotiator may have to face both ways, working with groups at the table but also negotiating and trying to persuade power groups back home (Aquilar and Galluccio 2008). In democratic societies power groups back home may have little interest in a fair deal but simply in how the deal will play to their electorate (Cohen 2003). In this sense neither the power group nor the negotiator has a free hand because they must balance and be cautious of how their own group will respond to any loss of advantage.

The state of mind of negotiators; the degree to which they handle pressure, if they are slightly depressed or anxious, worried about maintaining their position and careers; the degree to which they are narcissistic or affiliative, a shallow or complex thinker, have good social skills, especially non-verbal skills, are patient and able play a "long game" versus impatient – will influence the reciprocal dynamic nature of the negotiation process.

Negotiations can of course be stressful, and a key issue then is the degree of social support and opportunities for debriefing and reflection that are provided outside of these forums themselves. Opportunities to explore one's own thoughts and feelings may be crucial to working them through. This is to use a psychotherapeutic model. Individuals operating in these mental support roles would ideally be skilled in psychological support.

Finally there is the negotiator's style, which really is the outcome of all the above. Some individuals can create a sense of trust and safety whereas others portray a sense of closed-off-ness, distrust and wariness. In all social encounters humans automatically respond to non-verbal communication, more powerfully at

times than verbal communication. Problems in setting a tone that creates a possibility for openness, frankness, and safety can lead to parties focusing primarily on defensive positions. Negotiators can look and sound anxious, frightening, contemptuous, or angry – or open, friendly, and patient. Even listening to them on radio interviews can indicate which they seem to be.

Solutions

The chapter has focused mostly on conflicts. However within in-group psychology there are also evolved advantages for egalitarianism and sharing (Ridley 1997). Buddhists believe that our basic nature is compassionate – in part because compassion creates the greatest chances of us flourishing and calms our easily disturbed minds. There are therefore key research question as to how these mentalities and ways of thinking can be harnessed.

Socio-political

Given the complexities and clear importance of modern-day negotiations there have been a number of solutions to these problems, especially those of negotiators operating from the home team. Now *within* countries and individual societies the way the powerful will try to exploit their position over the weak is well known – and in conflict situations people will have their own personal self-serving biases. It is precisely to put limits around the abilities of the powerful to exploit the less powerful, and get around self-serving biases, that humans have also developed the concept of *law and arbitration by independent third parties*, be these juries or judges (Grady and McGuire 1999; Lewis 2003). Of course cynics can sometimes suggest that the law and policing can be used to punish the crimes of the poor and hide the crimes of the rich. Be that as it may, the profession of the law operates as a way to take decisions about conflicts out of the hands of the participants. Law provides for independent, third-party decisions and legislation, which are binding on the parties involved. For indigenous laws this works fairly well.

Unfortunately despite efforts of the United Nations, we are a long way from developing an *international* constitution and being able to utilize “third-party independent” legal systems. This is partly because democratic states believe that democracies would not accept “giving up power to such systems.” Nation states still believe they can and should negotiate for and on behalf of themselves. However nation states can simply refuse to obey the dictates of international United Nations mandates and resolutions, and there’s no evidence that arbitration would have any greater enforcement potential. This is clearly the case in the current Palestinian–Israeli dispute. As a result, international negotiators operate from a background of not having an independent, third-party legal system that can enforce compliance to agreements. Clearly, however, one can make powerful arguments as to why this will be necessary in the decades to come.

Training

Another solution is much better training in the psychology of negotiations. For example, all over the world there is a growing awareness that our evolved human brain is very difficult to regulate and understand, and that we need to train our minds carefully. It's an old view stretching back over 3,000 years now, notably within the Buddhist tradition. Learning how to be reflective and mindful provides many benefits in the ability to regulate one's emotions and keep "a calm mind." From this position one can use one's intelligence and is much more likely to be able to spot the operation of different archetypes and mentalities within oneself (Didonna 2009).

We can also take the view that we need a complete change in the dominant social mentality (competitive) that has come to percolate through all aspects of our lives (Gilbert 2009). Currently we are dominated by self-focused competitive edge psychology – that is causing increasing difficulties and creating rather than resolving them (Gilbert 2009). Over 3,000 years ago Buddha argued that only through a process of developing and practicing compassion would we be able to transform our minds and regulate our relationships. Compassionate mind training is now seen as a way in which we can move forward on these issues. It is unclear what introducing "compassion focused negotiations" would achieve but this is potentially a helpful research area (Gilbert 2009). When our minds are orientated for compassion, we can more easily recognize that all of us simply find ourselves on this Earth, with these lives, and not of our choosing. From there we may be able to see beyond our differences, identify with our common humanity, and more easily reconcile our conflicts. We may tire of acting out, over and over, old archetypal dramas like unpaid actors.

As to how one trains negotiators, much depends on what you want them to do. Clearly, if you want your negotiators to be tough and maximize the benefits flowing to your own group, this is a very different remit and with different required skills than if you want your negotiators to focus on fairness and justice. Although empathy training can be recommended, wherein the negotiator learns to be sensitive to the feelings and aspirations of others, there is no guarantee (without a compassion focus) that these enhanced qualities will be used for good. Indeed, on the Internet one can find many advertised programmes in empathy training that are specifically designed to enable you to be better at selling and marketing. Empathy without a sense of caring for the other person(s) one is interacting with can be used exploitatively.

However, if we wish to pursue justice and fairness then empathy training is certainly a key skill. There are various ways to do it. One is for negotiators to be trained by spending some time negotiating from the other person's point of view. For example, in an Israeli–Palestinian conflict the Palestinians would take on an Israeli position and vice versa. Learning how to see the world through the eyes of the other requires time and formal and structured practice. But once again the motive determines what is learnt. People could do this exercise simply to gain insight into the weak points of their participants, so as to exploit that weakness, rather than to facilitate the fairer compassionate understanding and approach.

Compassion focused empathy also requires one to think carefully about the impact of one's behavior on "the other": to think about the impact of what one does – not just for those present but for those on whom the outcome will have a major impact – and not just today or tomorrow, but for the future. To understand the impact on children growing up in a society that may have been significantly influenced by the outcome of negotiations, training programmes also need to consider how individuals deal with issues of vengeance and forgiveness because these can play a major role in the success or failure of negotiations.

It is possible (although more research is required) that there are actually different types of personalities here. It is to the genius of Nelson Mandela that he anticipated these issues and set his country on course for proper confrontation with the tragedies and abuses of the past with a focus on reconciliation, not vengeance. It is difficult to know what would happen in, say, the Israeli–Palestinian conflict if the international community decided to push for *reconciliation processes*, perhaps modeled on the South African system, for this conflict – or maybe we are too far away from that stage. However negotiation processes and skills to cope with histories of violence and vengeance are clearly desperately needed. Even if one keeps a cease-fire or peace, the future may perhaps only be secured in negotiating longer-term reconciliation and trade.

It is very unclear if the negotiators who have been trained to be tough and resistant could easily become more compassion focused – even assuming that their leaders would allow it – unless of course that was their directive. It is possible compassionate individuals may not make the best new negotiators. It is possible that one needs different types of negotiators for different phases in the negotiation.

Short Term Versus Long Term

More consideration could be given to training in mutual benefit as opposed to maximizing one's own advantage. This is because an advantage can be short-lived. For example, the advantages extracted by the Allies at the end of the First World War in terms of German remunerations and occupation of the Rhine coal-fields are believed to have sown the seeds for the Second World War. Selling arms to third world countries (for short term gains of employment in one's own country) can result in great human tragedy as well as floods of refugees and immigrants – and these arms can come flooding back against one. Had Kissinger put pressure on Israel in 1973 then it is possible (no more than possible) that both countries would have got into a more sustainable settlement and thus both sides would have been saved much pain and tragedy. Looking only to the short-term interests can be a disaster. It is sometimes said that political careers are relatively short, and so are their vision and concerns. There are questions as to how we can move beyond this situation.

Indeed there are so many areas where negotiators need to make distinctions between long-term and short-term benefits. In the world of economics, for example,

the recent banking crisis has shown the stupidity of deregulating markets – aided by right-wing politicians interested in pursuing the short term self-interest of the wealthy. Also note in these days of climate change that we see that businesses are still allowed to prosper despite the costs they are passing to future generations. One obvious example is that when governments negotiate with logging businesses as they deforest the world, they do not take account of the costs “to the world” of climate change 10 or more years down the line. Logging companies are allowed to get away with only addressing short-term, local problems associated with logging. Indeed, one could ask how negotiators would factor in such long-term economic costs. Currently they are simply ignored.

We are a long way from establishing what the core skills of negotiators should be, how they should be acquired and how they should be enacted. As noted above, much depends upon the goals that they are pursuing, and many of these goals are not fairness- and justice-focused, but seek the greatest advantage for oneself. It is also clear that they operate in wider political systems and with political wheeler-dealers who have their own agendas. Only when we, as a world, move beyond these circumstances and set up appropriate independent international law for the regulation of international conflicts and business ethics are we likely to see much progress. Our human psychology is too complex and powerful to rely on self-interest.

Conclusions

Increasingly today we are coming to terms with the fact that we did not arrive on this planet “de novo,” but we are an evolved species, with an evolved brain, guided by certain motives that had developed to achieve certain goals, such as acquiring resources conducive to survival and reproduction. I have focused on the evolutionary dimensions here because it is from the potentials lurking in our evolved brain that our disposition for wars, cruelties, and the creation of inequalities arise. It is partly understanding the challenges of our evolved brain with which national and international negotiators will need to grapple if they are to move our world forward with decisions based on fair and moral principles. However, to make negotiators, and the elites that guide them, operate with fair and moral principles is itself a major challenge (Aquilar and Galluccio 2008).

Evolutionary psychology has revealed many important problems that we need to face as a result of our evolutionary history (Gilbert 2009). One of the key messages of this chapter, therefore, is that negotiators and all of us who support them need to understand the pull of the archetypes within ourselves and that they can hijack our cognitive processes. We like to think that we run the show, but actually it's mostly our motivational systems that utilize our cognitive competencies – and cause us problems. If we reflect and train our minds for compassion and fairness, we might find ways to make more conscious choices about the world we want to create. But we must also bear in mind that good negotiators might be relatively easy to select and train but they are not free agents. Rather they are often negotiating on behalf of their groups and leaders, and it is here that most of the problems lie.

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