F. I. R. E.: A COMMUNICATION-BASED APPROACH FOR UNDERSTANDING CRISIS NEGOTIATION

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Introduction

I would like to share with you some ideas about a communication-based approach for understanding the dynamic processes of crisis/hostage negotiations, derived from work that my colleague, Dr. Mitchell Hammer of The American University in Washington, DC, and I have been doing for more than eight years. This research involves analyses of the verbal communication of actual crisis/hostage negotiation incidents; the findings of which have been published in academic and practitioner journals. Our research method involves an integration of quantitative and qualitative analyses of negotiation discourse that is grounded in communication and conflict theory, and focuses on the communication of both suspects and negotiators. Our findings have been confirmed and validated by the feedback we have received from negotiators with whom we have shared our results.

I will commence with a review of traditional models/approaches to managing crisis/hostage negotiations. This will involve a discussion of the central qualities of each approach, along with a summarisation of the limitations of each method. This will be followed by an overview of our alternative approach – the F.I.R.E. model. I will then demonstrate application of the model by analyzing sample text from an actual negotiation. Following this will be a discussion of the applicability of the F.I.R.E. model for understanding cross-cultural interactions. I will conclude with some guidelines concerning crisis negotiation from a F.I.R.E. model perspective.

TRADITONAL NEGOTIATION APPROACHES

The Contending Approach

Prior to 1972, the primary law enforcement strategy for resolving hostage/crisis incidents was a contending approach; part of which involved confronting the suspect with an overwhelming show of force. Two key strategies to this approach were first, to demand that the perpetrator release the hostages and surrender, and second, to execute a planned assault if the suspect refused. Although a communication link might be established between the police and the suspect, no

real negotiation took place; no true effort was made to understand the needs and motives of the perpetrator; no attention was given to discerning the instrumental/expressive orientation of the hostage taker. Rather, communication between law enforcement and the suspect was geared primarily to convincing him to surrender, or face the consequences of an armed assault.

Visible displays of weaponry, firepower, personnel, and environmental control are basic in communicating to the perpetrator the disproportionate odds with which he/she is confronted. Often, power and utilities are disrupted, while other stimulating tactics are employed (e.g., loud music, bright lights at night, helicopter fly-overs) to harass the suspect and to produce conditions of deprivation, as well as heightened anxiety.

Within this framework, the focus is on the suspects' violation of social norms and laws as he holds hostages or barricades himself from police. In response, law enforcement engages in a process of intimidation and coercion in an effort to convince the perpetrator to surrender. Within this context, the perpetrator is presumed to be rational and his/her emotionality a variable to be manipulated by the police. Central to this approach is the belief that when presented with such an array of force, all of which serves to highlight the suspect's vulnerability, the perpetrator will be rational enough to surrender. The job of the negotiator, therefore, is to convince the suspect that if he/she surrenders peacefully, he/she will not be harmed.

Contentious tactics can be useful in forcing a reluctant adversary in to rethinking his position and getting him to the negotiation table. Not surprisingly, however, contentious tactics often fail to produce the positive results desired. The principal limitation of contending is that such behaviors by one party often prompt reciprocal actions by the other. This often leads to escalatory spirals of retaliation, resulting in a continual growth in hostility. Additional limitations include forcing parties into taking positional stances, engendering extreme competitiveness, and an apparent lack of concern for either the suspect's or negotiator's emotional needs.

Following the Attica prison riot and the Munich Olympic incidents, law enforcement began to look more closely at how they managed these incidents. What emerged was an acknowledgement of the effectiveness of negotiation as an alternative to tactical assault.

Two approaches that evolved out of this focus are the bargaining model and the psychotherapeutic model.

The Bargaining Model

One way to understand this approach is in terms of the work of Miron & Goldstein (1979) who posited that a suspect's behavioral motivation could be viewed as existing along an instrumental - expressive continuum. Briefly, instrumental issues denote the individuals' situationally related, substantive and non-substantive wants and demands. More specifically, substantive instrumental concerns represent the tangible desires/objectives of the suspect (e.g., money, goods, services) that are directly pertinent to the situation, while non-substantive issues denote those tangible wants not directly relevant to the incident (e.g., pizza, drink, cigarettes). Comparatively, expressive motivations are grounded in emotional or relational desires (e.g., power, sympathy, and attention).

According to the bargaining model, crisis/hostage negotiations are primarily conceptualized as falling at the instrumental end of the instrumental - expressive continuum. The focus is on a traditional bargaining approach to negotiation in which the parties involved in the conflict are dedicated to dictating or clarifying their individual substantive instrumental wants and demands. Resolution is attempted through bargaining that is typified by a quid pro quo interaction. This approach includes such negotiating tactics as making the perpetrator work for everything he gets, using time to one's advantage, not relinquishing too much too soon to a perpetrator, and getting something for everything given. The underlying assumption to these techniques is the perpetrator's rational decision making ability. The premise of this approach is that once the suspect realizes that his costs are too high to continue in the standoff with police, he will surrender.

As evidenced by these tactics, concern for expressive needs is minimized. In fact, within a traditional bargaining framework, emotion is generally regarded as an addendum, or even a hindrance, to the primary instrumental/rational orientation of the interaction. This is perhaps the most critical limitation of the bargaining model. By focusing primarily on instrumental concerns, other relational and identity concerns are relegated to a secondary status, important only when they impact on instrumental objectives. Consequently, opposing parties are forced into conflicting positions and to negotiating over demands relative to their respective positions.

While a bargaining approach can be effective when both conflict parties are focused on their instrumental objectives and are willing to negotiate them to reach an agreement, such is not typically the case in most crisis/hostage negotiations. For example, one recent study revealed that perpetrators made no demands in one-quarter of the incidents analyzed, while in those situations in which demands were communicated, those demands went unsatisfied 57% of the time (Head, 1988). A recent survey of hostage negotiation team leaders in the United States revealed that suicides, barricaded subject, domestic disputes, and

criminal/high-risk situations account the vast majority of the incidents negotiators actually manage (Rogan, Hammer, & VanZandt, 1994). Similarly, McMains and Mullins (1996) note that 82 percent of all police negotiations deal with incidents other than actual hostage-takings. They suggest that of the 18 percent that did involve a hostage, a notable percentage were 'psuedo-hostage-takings' in which the suspect was more intent on making the hostage a victim than using him as a bargaining resource. Finally, Soskis and Van Zandt (1986) contend that most hostage negotiations are the consequence of an individual failing to effectively manage a life-stressing event and as such constitute crisis management. In sum, traditional instrumental bargaining is not the most appropriate framework for resolving most hostage negotiations. It was this realization that prompted a re-conceptualization of hostage negotiation as primarily an expressive interaction. This is the basis for the third model of negotiation.

Psychotherapeutic Model

According to Harvey Schlossberg (1979) a critical characteristic of expressive based hostage incidents is that the hostage serves no instrumental value to the perpetrator. Rather, any hostage that is taken is done so for the purpose of drawing attention to the needs or plight of the suspect himself. Similarly, in those incidents in which no hostage is taken (e.g., suicides, barricaded subject), the goal of the suspect is simply to gain attention to his/her situation. In this way, the negotiator has nothing that the suspect wants, in a material/instrumental sense. Therefore, attempts to negotiate with the suspect about substantive wants and demands will unlikely produce the desired results of a negotiated surrender. Consequently, negotiators must work to elicit the concerns and feelings of the suspect and thereby convey an empathic understanding of the perpetrator's (crisis) condition in order to achieve resolution. The objective of creating an empathic relationship with a perpetrator is ultimately to enable the negotiator to modify the suspect's behavior. In so doing, negotiators can effectively reduce the perpetrator's level of emotional arousal and facilitate rational problem solving. Contrasted with the bargaining approach, the psychotherapeutic model emphasizes the central role of emotion and relationship development to incident resolution. Managing the suspect's emotional arousal is central to successful incident resolution. In order to achieve these objectives, negotiators need to learn and practice crisis intervention techniques that include such skills as active listening, self-disclosure, paraphrasing, and question asking. Of these skills, listening is often regarded as the linchpin in helping perpetrators vent pent-up anxiety, thereby facilitating a reduction in emotional arousal and effectuating more rational problem-solving.

It has been estimated that the majority of incidents negotiators actually confront involve a perpetrator characterized by mental or emotional disorder. In fact, it is estimated that a majority of all negotiations are perpetrated by suspects who have clinically diagnosed mental and/or emotional disorders, including antisocial personality, depression, paranoia, and inadequate personality (Borum & Strentz, 1992; Fuselier, 1981a). Consequently, negotiators are also encouraged to gain intelligence about the personality traits of perpetrators in order to employ specific communication strategies for negotiating with these suspects.

The psychotherapeutic model of negotiation has contributed significantly to law enforcement's ability to manage crisis/hostage negotiations. Unfortunately, this perspective simply serves to reinforce a (potentially false) bifurcation of rationality (instrumentality) and emotionality (expressiveness), wherein an expressive approach to negotiation is employed only to reduce emotionality and thereby facilitate rational problem solving. This position tends to relegate emotion to being an addendum to rationality that must be dealt with only in those incidents noted as expressive and in which it directly impacts on instrumental issues. Focusing on personality and/or mental state results in a labelling of the suspect as 'crazy,' 'deranged,' and 'irrational.' Finally, a predominately expressive focus tends to diminish the importance of other conflict issues (i.e., relational concerns, and instrumental concerns).

These three traditional models of crisis negotiation have been extremely beneficial in helping us to better understand and manage crisis incidents. However, taken together, these approaches are marked by some notable limitations. First, each model implicitly informs negotiators to focus on only on one approach at a time (i.e., contending, bargaining, and counselling). Second, within each approach, all other conflict issues that are irrelevant to the specific model are minimized. Third, although expressive concerns are acknowledged, the tendency is to regard relational, face, and emotion concerns as important only to reach rational problem solving. Fourth, the negotiation process is delineated in a linear sequence of stages. And finally, rationality and emotion are unnecessarily dichotomized. As an alternative we offer the F.I.R.E. model.

THE F.I.R.E. MODEL

Contrasted with the bargaining and psychotherapeutic models, which emphasize relatively stable qualities and behaviors of the perpetrator, this communication-based approach focuses on the functional meaning of communicative symbols (i.e., words, gestures) expressed by persons during a conflict interaction. The central ingredient of this model is the way in which language functions to communicate a person's interpretation and definition of an interaction and to create shared meaning between the conflicting parties.

In part, this model is based on the proposition that human communication is a transactional phenomenon between two individuals engaged in a mutually created interaction in which messages and meaning are conjointly operationalized. The focus is on the reciprocal dynamic relationship of the communicators, rather than the structural, psychological, or motivational qualities of the individual. For crisis negotiation, this means that we focus on the communication of both the perpetrator and the negotiator, rather than solely on the psychological disposition or specific behaviors of the suspect. In this way, negotiators can attend to the full range of conflict issues manifest in an incident.

Further, this model is grounded in a theory of communication that distinguishes two levels of meaning in communication, namely a content level and a relational level. The content level denotes the precise information or data that is being discussed, while the relationship level provides information about how the content dimension should be understood in terms of the nature of the relationship between the interactants. More specifically, the relational dimension speaks to who the interactants are, how they see themselves in relation to the other person, and how they view the other person relative to themselves in this particular communicative exchange. In this way, relational level communication is metacommunication that provides information about how a person's messages should be interpreted and also provides insight into the state of the interactants' relationship. For example, a perpetrator making the statement to a negotiator: 'It's taking too long to get the food in here!' is not merely saying that there seems to be a delay in the delivery of the food, but perhaps more importantly, that he feels that he is being manipulated and not taken seriously.

Also basic to this communication-based model of crisis negotiation is the concept of communicative framing. Framing is a process by which individuals create verbal descriptions and/or representations of an issue or relationship. These representations are most notably communicated via relational level communication. Individuals in conflict tend to operate from a single dominant frame as a means to express their concerns, but may change frames as a consequence of frame satisfaction or negotiation. Negotiators can shift frames after some degree of resolution of issues within the existing discourse frame has been achieved. In contrast, attempts to shift frames too early can result in conflict escalation. Four interpersonal goals/concerns that characterize all conflict interactions constitute the four discourse frames captured in the F.I.R.E. model. These include face concerns, instrumental issues, relational issues, and emotion needs. We contend that these four frames structure and focus the negotiation discourse between negotiator and perpetrator.

Let me now turn our attention to a brief review of the four frames of the F.I.R.E. Model.

Face Concerns

We define face as the positive social image a person desires to claim for himself during a social interaction. In other words, individual concern for face is grounded in a desire to maintain a positive social expression of one-self. As such, face (identity) is an abiding sense of self and who one is in relation to the world. In this way, face is inherently interwoven into, and dependent upon, the communicative dynamics of a specific interaction. Within the context of conflict interaction in general, and crisis negotiation specifically, face is a critical concern for both perpetrators and negotiators. Given the publicly visible and confrontational nature of crisis negotiation, face is a constant concern throughout the duration of a crisis incident. Therefore, negotiators have the challenging task of attempting to manage their own face concerns as well as those of the perpetrator.

Two types of face that are particularly central to crisis negotiation include social/group face and personal/individual face. Personal face/identity is based on an individual's unique perceptions of his/her own attributes (e.g., strong, weak, intelligent) while social identity consists of those characteristics and their emotional significance that is attached to one's membership in a social group. The importance of these two types of face can vary from incident to incident, within an incident, and by culture. For example, personal identity concern is most salient for those negotiations involving a suicidal person and is most important for Euro-Americans.[1] Comparatively, social identity seems to be of greatest concern in negotiations with members of social groups, cults, or particular national organizations, and of greatest concern to South Asians. Nonetheless, regardless of the specific face focus, communication that attacks or threatens another's face concern escalates conflict, while communication that honors another's face results in conflict de-escalation. The role of the negotiator is to identify the suspect's key identity frame and to manage his specific face needs.

Instrumental Concerns

An instrumental behavioral orientation denotes individual concern for objective and generally tangible wants and demands. Within the context of crisis negotiation, two fundamental types of instrumental objectives have been identified: substantive wants and demands and non-substantive wants/demands. Substantive demands deal with situationally related wants while non-substantive

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[1] Note: I use the term Euro-American to denote Caucasian United States Americans of European descent.

demands attend to wants that are not directly dependent upon the specific situation. For example, a perpetrator who requests a car to flee the scene of an attempted bank robbery with hostages is communicating a substantive demand. On the other hand, if this same suspect was to request a pizza and some coke, he would be communicating a non-substantive instrumental demand as food and drink are not situationally related objectives. In fact, it would behoove the suspect not to request pizza during a negotiation as it will typically arrive cold and without the desired toppings. The suspect could do better with a pizza delivery service. Our research has shown that an increased expression of non-substantive demands and greater expressed commitment to previously communicated substantive demands tends to be associated with conflict escalation and relational conflict issues involving power and trust. Comparatively, increased flexibility toward substantive wants and a reduction in the number of non-substantive demands is related to conflict de-escalation.

Relational Concerns

Relational message behavior denotes an individual's concern for the nature of the relationship with another person. Trust, power, and affiliation are three core facets of all personal relationships. Within the context of crisis negotiation these qualities are of critical importance to negotiators as they strive to develop an empathic relationship with the suspect. Understanding each of these dimensions and how they become manifest in a person's verbal communication is essential for incident resolution.

To begin, relational power issues concern the degree of agreement between conflict interactants along a dominance/non-dominance dimension. Dominance is manifest in language that reflects control and authority, while non-dominance is noted by submissiveness and compliance. For example, statements such as 'Get my wife, now!' or 'I'll do it my way or no way' are reflective of relational dominance. Comparatively, the statements: 'I don't know what to do', and 'Help me, I don't understand what's going on' communicate non-dominance and low relational power. Relational trust is concerned with believability in the word and future action of another person. For example, in attempting to establish trust negotiators must sometimes overcome the suspect's distrust of the police when the verbal communication of the negotiator conflicts with the non-verbal actions of the tactical team. Finally, affiliation refers to the level of interpersonal closeness established between perpetrator and negotiator, as communicated via expressions of empathy, liking, and respect for the other. Such information and knowledge is important to the relationship because it helps interactants make decisions about how much and the kind of information to share, how to formally structure the relationship, and whether or not to continue the relationship. Given the centrality

of relational development to crisis management, it is not surprising that negotiators are instructed to work diligently to create a trusting and empathic relationship with the suspect.

Emotion Concerns

As noted in the preceding discussions about the contending and bargaining approaches to negotiation, emotion was initially of little direct concern to incident resolution efforts. However, with the advancement of the psychotherapeutic approach, the centrality of emotion to crisis negotiation was more clearly articulated. With increased attention devoted to the expressive motivation of the perpetrator, the suspect's emotional state became a crucial ingredient in determining the success or failure of a negotiated outcome. As discussed previously, the psychotherapeutic model requires that negotiators learn appropriate effective listening and interaction skills in order to deal with perpetrator emotion as a means for reducing the potential for negative and violent (fight/flight) reactions on the part of the perpetrator. The premise of this approach is that by reducing suspect emotion the negotiator will facilitate increased rationality and normative bargaining into the interaction.

From a communication standpoint, emotion can be understood in terms of three expressive dimensions: valence, intensity, and expressiveness. Briefly, valence denotes the positive/negative feelings associated with an emotional expression, intensity refers to the strength of the communicator's felt emotional expression, and expressiveness denotes how visibly an individual communicates his/her emotions. The suspect's verbal communication is a primary source by which each of these dimensions are made manifest and as such, constitute the means by which the negotiator can gauge the perpetrator's emotional condition. Unlike previous models that advocate reducing emotion to achieve rationality, we propose that negotiators need to reduce the suspect's level of emotional arousal (excitation) and transform the emotional experience from negative to positive (e.g., from hopelessness to hopefulness in the future). To realize this objective, the negotiator must strive to understand the perpetrator's core emotional reality as manifest in his/her verbal and non-verbal communication. In this way, the suspect's surrender decision is based in feelings of trust, support, understanding, and hope, (not wanting to die) as opposed to logic and rationality.

In sum, the F.I.R.E model is an analytic tool that can be used for understanding the dynamics of a crisis negotiation incident as manifest in the relational dimension of perpetrator and negotiator communication. Its focus is inclusive of instrumental and expressive concerns. Surrender of the suspect is achieved through the negotiator's convergence and resolution of the perpetrator's dominant communicative frame. Finally, it is critical to note that the negotiator works not to

eliminate the suspect's emotionality, but rather, to transform it from negative to positive.

DEMONSTRATED APPLICATION OF THE F.I.R.E. MODEL

At his point, I'd like to demonstrate the applicability of the F.I.R.E. model by analyzing some dialogue from an actual crisis negotiation incident. Rather than attempting to critique the incident for all four of the F.I.R.E. dimensions, I will focus principally on face concerns. Please note that the names in this incident have been changed in an effort to mask the actual identities. Also note that we believe that the negotiator involved in this incident did an extremely professional job of managing this crisis event.

Text 1

Utterance	Speaker	Message
001	Perp.	Hello
002	Neg.	Hi Bill?
003	Perp.	Yes,
004	Neg.	Rich again. How's it going?
005	Perp.	S'alright.
006	Neg.	Okay, we got a call out for Larry...Um...He's in the field someplace, we're trying to get a hold of him ...Um...,We checked on Joe...He's in the city here but we're not sure exactly where right now but I expect to hear back... well... probably within the next half hour or so exactly where he is.
007	Perp.	That's a long time.
008	Neg.	Well, it's not that long. *(pause)*. Where do we stand now? What do you...Where do we go from here?
009	Perp.	I have...I have to go out...I have to terminate myself. I induce no other way out.
010	Neg.	Well...As I said before, I think you're selling yourself short on that.

As can be seen from this dialogue the negotiator is re-establishing contact with the suspect and updating him regarding progress in contacting a person with whom the suspect wants to talk. This instrumental focus dominates the interchange and is reinforced in line 008 in which the negotiator asks the perpetrator 'Where do we go from here?' At this point, the suspect states that he must kill himself as he perceives no other way of dealing with his present situation (line 009). In line 010

the negotiator transitions into a personal face supportive mode as he attempts to convince the suspect that he is limiting his options.

Text 2

Utterance	Speaker	Message
011	Perp.	Nobody sells themselves short if they have to pick between the two.
012	Neg.	But you're making assumptions that you only have a few choices, and I don't think that's necessarily the case.
013	Perp.	Well it isn't fair. I have to join Mary.
014	Neg.	Well, as I said before...I'm still trying to check on that situation too.
015	Perp.	No, she's gone, I have to join her.
016	Neg.	Well, we don't know that for a fact yet, Bill...You're making an assumption.
017	Perp.	No, I know she's gone.
018	Neg.	Then again, the people that you're trying to help, they need you.
019	Perp.	They don't need me!
020	Neg.	Who have they got?
021	Perp.	They'll...They'll do it for themselves now.
022	Neg.	Who's going to do it for them?
023	Perp.	They will do it.

In this second set of text, the suspect and negotiator continue their discussion about the perpetrator's options, with a clear focus on his personal face needs (lines 011 through 012). At line 013 the suspect re-emphasizes his need to kill himself because he has killed his girlfriend. At his point, the negotiator shifts into an instrumental mode as he attempts to minimize the girlfriend's death (line 014). The perpetrator rebuts the negotiators' claim, stating emphatically that she is dead (line 015). Again, the negotiator attempts to refute the suspect's claim (line 016). This results in an emphatic reassertion by the suspect that she is in fact dead (line 017). This short exchange results in a disconnect between the negotiator and suspect as they ostensibly argue over a fact the suspect knows to be true. Realizing that he is not making progress with the suspect, the negotiator quickly shifts to an appeal to the perpetrator's sense of group identity (line 018). However, the suspect flatly denies any sense of group face concern (line 019). Nonetheless, the negotiator continues to engage the suspect in a discussion focusing on the social face dimension through line 032.

Text 3

Utterance	Speaker	Message
032	Neg.	Do you belong to a...group? Do you have an organization of your own?
033	Perp.	You'll find that out...I've messed things up.
034	Neg.	Well I'd just like to know...It's...You know again...I'm trying to point out to you that you're a strong person...You're an extremely strong person...And you've got a lotta...A lot of room to move and you've=
035	Perp.	I've
036	Neg.	=got a lot of things for people that you have a strong feeling for.
037	Perp.	I've fouled it up.
038	Neg.	Nothing...There's nothing that can't be corrected...Nothing...
039	Perp.	I did something that cannot be corrected.
040	Neg.	Well again, that's just an assumption and you're selling yourself short.

In line 033 the suspect dismisses the negotiator's attempts to focus on group face concerns and redirects the emphasis to his individual face. The negotiator deftly responds to this shift and attends to the suspect's personal face (line 034). The two parties continue this interaction (lines 035 through 040), with the suspect attacking his own personal face and the negotiator communicating primarily other personal face support. The one exception is the negotiator's reference to group face in line 036.

Text 4

Utterance	Speaker	Message
043	Perp.	I have no alternative, you have lots of alternatives.
044	Neg.	Do you think the drugs are the whole problem? Its just...Kinda should deal without...Deal without...Deal with people without using medication?
045	Perp.	No, I believe that Valium was fine...I was very concerned that they'd take Valium off the market. Once you become hooked on it, ya know I get into this whole thing in San Francisco to raise money...(sigh)...for the...and then it...In order to get into it you have to take the Valium. You've gotta do something so you look like you need disability. And then all of the sudden I realize you're hooked on it. I didn't know that you would become hooked on it.
046	Neg.	Did you ever take anything else?
047	Perp.	I took Acid in '68 and couldn't do anything else I was hallucinating so bad. I took Angel Dust in San Francisco unbeknownst to myself twice...people...sneaked it on me.
048	Neg.	How'd that affect ya?
049	Perp.	Bad'Very bad.
050	Neg.	Still get flashbacks from that?
051	Perp.	I don't think so. I...You know it's....I know you people wanna write me off as crazy but=

The suspect continues his principal self face focus on line 043. However, beginning at line 044, the negotiator shifts the conversational focus to an instrumental orientation. The suspect responds to this theme and follows the lead of the negotiator until line 051. At this point, the perpetrator suspects that the negotiator is attacking his personal face needs and re-introduces this focus (line 051).

Text 5

Utterance	Speaker	Message
052	Neg.	You know...
053	Perp.	=I'm not that crazy, I may be slightly warped who knows everybody's warped to a degree, but I am not that crazy.
054	Neg.	But those are the exact things...That...are...really your strong suit. If you could deal with...Ya know convince people that you've had some bad trips with Acid and Angel Dust...The far-reaching effects of that still aren't known. But it...The flashbacks and the problems that occur from that are horrendous. Now–
055	Perp	What's that got to do with anything? I don't understand what you mean.
056	Neg.	But that's=You know if that's having an affect on you now hopefully they can deal with that and any problems you've had up to this point you can attribute directly to that. Ya know, so write that off...It's not a problem.
057	Perp.	Are you...Are you trying to tell me the bullshit that I should try to say that the things that happened to Mary can be attributed to drugs? It's bullshit. I will not...I will not cop that.

At line 054 the negotiator attempts to support the perpetrator's personal face, yet he does so by maintaining the instrumental theme initiated in line 044. The suspect continues to rebuff the negotiator and his attempts to address personal face concerns via an instrumental tact. Finally, this results in an aggressive outburst by the suspect in line 057 as he communicatively disconnects from the negotiator.

Through this exercise I have attempted to provide a cursory demonstration of the applicability of the F.I.R.E. model as an analytic tool for dissecting the negotiation discourse of both the suspect and negotiator. As shown in this demonstration, we can identify the suspect's primary concern for personal face needs, as opposed to social face and instrumental issues. Such interpretative ability can enable a negotiator to more effectively match the dominant needs of the perpetrator and thereby communicate an empathic understanding for his/her problem as the negotiator works toward incident resolution. In other words, the four F.I.R.E. dimensions are a means for interpreting the dominant communicative themes of a

suspect, and as such, provide insight into the perpetrators' perception and definition of the interaction.

CULTURAL APPLICATION OF THE F.I.R.E. MODEL

At this point, I would like to briefly shift our attention to the cross-cultural application of the F.I.R.E. model. More specifically, I want to show how the four dimensions of the F.I.R.E. model can be useful for understanding the communicative framing of persons from differing cultures. For demonstration purposes I will compare Euro-Americans with Southeast Asians. This discussion is based in part on research that Dr. Hammer and I have recently conducted.

Face Concerns

Regarding face concerns, Euro-Americans are primarily motivated by an individual and self focused orientation. The are principally concerned for individual face needs and as such, their communication reflects an emphasis on self-face defense and protection. This does not mean that Euro-Americans are not concerned about group or social face. On the contrary, group face is critical for members of particular groups (e.g., cults) that provide the predominant sense of identity and definition to the individual.
By comparison, Southeast Asians are principally motivated by a concern for a social/group face. Politeness and attention to the face needs of the other is of paramount importance in most all social interactions. It is this presumption of collective respect and consideration for both the social and other's face that enables successful and appropriate communication. Concern for social face is extremely strong as Southeast Asians rely on their group identity to provide a sense of self-definition. For example, in one incident a young Asian man stated that his father was dead, even though he was quite alive, because he had lost face in immigrating to the United States where he was essentially stripped of his social status. This does not preclude a concern for individual face for the Southeast Asian, but rather that each culture has a dominant frame for defining the self and for negotiating identity during social interaction.

Instrumental Concerns

One way to understand how different cultures address instrumental concerns is the manner in which people talk about issues and attempt to persuade another to accept their position. Euro-Americans characteristically engage in clear and direct language and expect the issue or problem to be forthrightly articulated. The expectation of Euro-Americans is that any discussion or debate over an issue

should be couched within well-developed reasoned argument. Verbal meaning is of paramount importance, such that one should always 'Say what you mean.' Comparatively, Southeast Asians communicate their concern about an issue indirectly, using vague and seemingly obtuse language (from a Euro-American point of view). The problem is not clearly stated, as Euro-Americans might prefer, but rather is implied to be understood by the nature of the situation and the parties involved. In this way, much of the definition for the event is linked to the context and the nature of the relationship between the individuals involved, not the verbal message. Attempts at persuasion are grounded in concerns for maintenance of social face and respect for each other's individual face. Finally, adherence to social norms is strongly emphasized as a means to facilitate behavioral compliance.

Relational Concerns

For Euro-Americans, when issues of contention arise, the expectation is to communicate in a problem-solving manner. In other words, if there is a problem, then we need to deal with it. And, in order to deal with the problem, we have to know the facts. As such, problem management dictates that each person involved clearly articulate his/her concerns. Consequently, communication in such interactions tends to be sender-focused as each person vies for personal power and respect for individual face needs. However, first names are often used, rather than each person's formal title, in an effort to emphasize the equalitarian nature of the interaction. The desire is to deal with the issues directly so that they might be resolved in a timely fashion. As a result, third parties are rarely employed to mediate the process as they reduce direct contact among conflicting parties, and tend to denote an individual weakness in being able to manage the situation. When dealing with a conflict, Southeast Asians, by comparison, tend to be more concerned about the maintenance of relational harmony than specifically dealing with the problem. In fact, concern for positive social relations prompts each individual involved in the situation to communicate in a manner that demonstrates a concern for the other person (a receiver-focused communication style) and less for self. Because relationships are the central component of all interactions, Southeast Asians tend to minimize the nature of the problem, and will even yield to the other person so as to reduce tensions and achieve relational calm. As Dr. Hammer and I discovered during a focus group discussion with several Southeast Asian, the older of the two persons may yield first in order to minimize possible conflict escalation. Among Southeast Asians relationships are hierarchically structured with an inherent inequality in power and social status. As such, individual titles and special language may be used depending upon the context and the status of the parties involved. Further, conflicts tend to be managed indirectly and formally, based on the nature of the interactants' relationship.

Consequently, third parties are frequently used as a means to ensure formal resolution procedures and to allow both parties to save face.

Emotion Concerns

When dealing with emotions, Euro-Americans are generally expressive of individual feelings. Whether it be anger or joy, happiness or sadness, love or hate, Euro-Americans tend to wear their emotions on their sleeves. Ironically, one way to keep strong emotions in check during a conflict is to vent extremely negatively intense emotions. For once venting has occurred – all feelings have been aired – then the two parties can get down to the business of solving the problem in an emotionally controlled manner. Additionally, venting allows each party the opportunity to express his/her true feelings. In order to achieve resolution, both parties must actively engage in dialogue. In fact, as long as both parties are talking, then there is a sense that they are making progress toward incident resolution. It is when conversation ends that Euro-Americans are concerned about potentially violent behavior.

Southeast Asians principally refrain from significant emotional expression in comparison with Euro-Americans. The general norm is one of emotional restraint. Briefly, individual emotional experiences should be contained and venting avoided as such behavior is regarded as impulsive and might result in an escalation of the problem. In this vein, when situations become highly charged it is often the case that conversation is curtailed to allow time for the respective parties to cool off. Continued talking may simply result in an escalation, or one party saying something that he/she will later regret. As Mitch and I discovered during our focus group sessions, taking a tea break is one way that parties can honorably take a break from negotiations and get their emotions in check.

As this discussion has demonstrated, the four elements of the F.I.R.E. model have cross-cultural application. Using the four dimensions as an analytic template can help inform negotiators about differences that exist between cultural groups. Such an understanding can help negotiators structure the negotiation process when faced with an intercultural encounter.

GENERAL GUIDELINES

In concluding, I want to offer several guidelines for negotiation that are based in the F.I.R.E. model. These guidelines derive from the analyses of actual incidents that Mitch Hammer and I have been doing for the past eight years. These are offered as analytic observations that we believe have implications for incident management.

- Conflict de-escalates when the negotiator's 'framing' of issues matches that of the perpetrator.
- Conflict de-escalates when the negotiator shifts 'frame' after achieving resolution of issues within the existing frame.
- One role of the second negotiator is to identify the perpetrator's 'frame' and monitor progress in addressing F.I.R.E. issues.
- An increase in non-substantive 'instrumental' demands reflects increasing conflict around relational issues.
- Substantive instrumental demands become more negotiable when trust is established between perpetrator and negotiator.
- Surrender is more likely when trust and affiliation increases.
- Surrender is more likely when the perpetrator's face issues are met.
- The role of the negotiator is to alter the perpetrator's emotional state from negative to positive.
- Unresolved power issues will increase the likelihood that the perpetrator will 'act out' aggressive impulses.

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