

# Kinetic Friction

Rethinking the Architecture  
of Organizational Conflict



Framework Series: Social Movements  
& Conflict Management (SMA 420B)

Source: Dr. Nimit Pholyiam

# The Anatomy of Conflict

$$\left[ \text{Divergent Goals} + \text{Misaligned Values} + \text{Resource Scarcity} \right] \times \text{Tension} = \text{Conflict}$$

## Divergent Goals

Differing objectives, misunderstandings, or the desire for one party to win at the expense of another.



## Misaligned Values

Competing beliefs or the rigid pursuit of specific forms of equality.



## Resource Scarcity

The zero-sum competition for limited, shared assets.

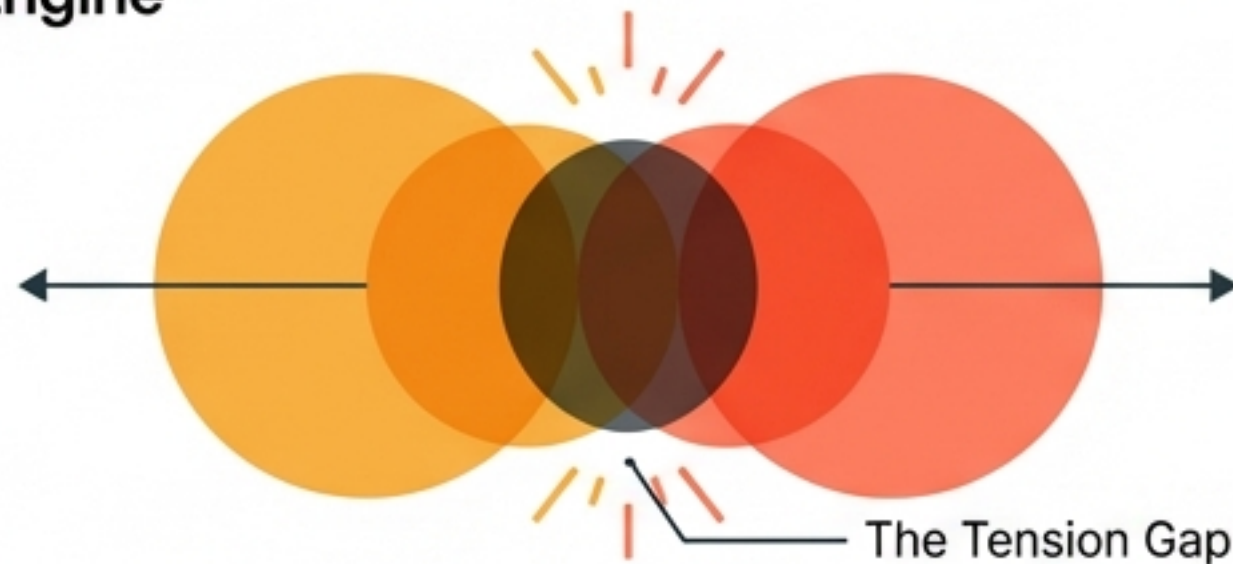


## Tension

The psychological catalyst. The precise moment disagreement transforms into active, opposing behavioral trajectories.

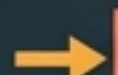
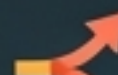


## The Divergence Engine



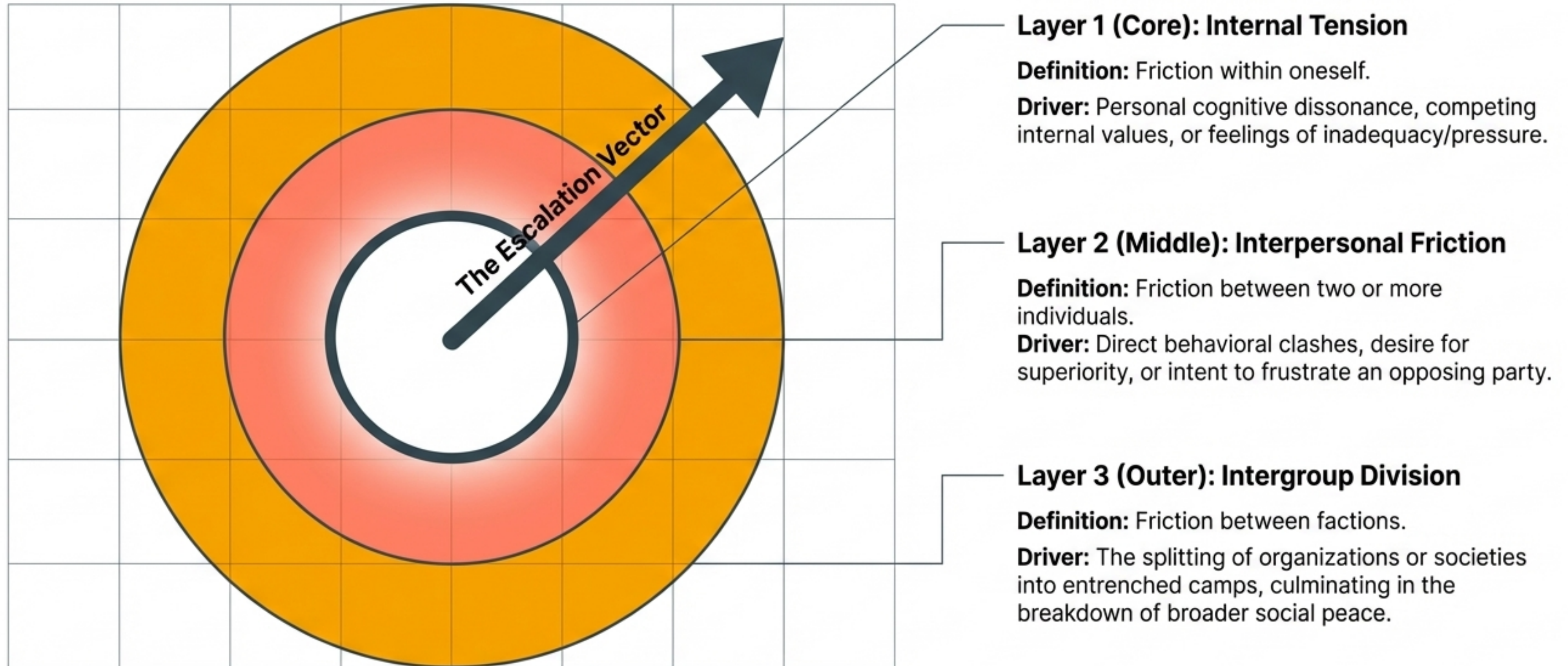
## The Dual Nature of Friction

The core concept of conflict relies on two simultaneous actions:

-  **To Oppose** [resisting or acting against an external force] and
-  **To Diverge** [moving out of alignment or counteracting]. Conflict requires both resistance and separation.

# The Spheres of Escalation

How localized tension destabilizes social peace.



# The Paradigm Shift in Conflict Management

	Traditional View (Classic)	Human Relations View	Contemporary View [TARGET PARADIGM]
<b>Core Premise</b>	Conflict is inherently destructive.	Conflict is a natural byproduct of human interaction.	Conflict is the prerequisite for progress.
<b>Management Strategy</b>	Elimination. Avoid at all costs. Deploy strict rules, rigid processes, and mandates to eradicate disagreement.	Acceptance. Acknowledge its presence. Tolerate it as an inevitable, sometimes beneficial, occurrence within groups.	<b>Cultivation.</b> Actively encourage healthy friction. Use it as an antidote to organizational apathy.
<b>Organizational Result</b>	Artificial harmony enforced by authority.	Survival and adaptation.	<b>Innovation.</b> Without conflict, peaceful teams become stagnant, passive, and entirely unresponsive to change.

# The Philosophical Roots of Friction

Historical paradigms mapping the fundamental drivers of human divergence.

## Intellectual Friction (Socrates)

**The Concept:** Conflict as a tool for truth.

**The Mechanism:** The dialectic method (Q&A/Rhetoric). Pushing an opponent to their logical limit until a superior, more rational understanding emerges.



## Internal Friction (Immanuel Kant)

**The Concept:** Conflict as human nature.

**The Mechanism:** The clash between Thesis and Antithesis. Driven by innate human selfishness and the persistent psychological tension of self-interest versus morality.



## Political Friction (Friedrich Hegel)

**The Concept:** Conflict as historical momentum.

**The Mechanism:** Macro-level domination. Rulers attempting to control and subsume other states, resulting in inevitable warfare and historical shifts.



## Material Friction (Ludwig Feuerbach)

**The Concept:** Conflict as resource competition.

**The Mechanism:** Driven by materialism. The selfish drive to possess objects; when demand outstrips the ability to possess, conflict inevitably erupts.



# SYNTHESIS: The Engine of Progress

Socratic Truth  
+  
Contemporary  
Cultivation  
=  
Constant  
Evolution

## 01.

### Friction is Inescapable

From Kant's internal tension to Feuerbach's material scarcity, conflict is the baseline condition of human interaction, not a glitch in the system.

## 02. Peace Can Be Toxic

The Contemporary View warns that unchecked harmony breeds apathy. An organization without friction is an organization without the capacity to adapt.

## 03. Conflict is the Catalyst

Just as Socrates used opposing arguments to forge higher truths, modern leaders must use divergent goals to forge organizational innovation.

**Manage the tension. Harness the energy. Drive the change.**