Navigating Conflict and Power at Work:

The Effects of Power and Interdependence Asymmetries on

Conflict in Organizations

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Abstract

Many of the most difficult conflicts people face at work are up and down; with bosses, supervisors, and important clients, or with direct reports, staff, or other employees who differ from them in terms of their power and interests. However, much of the research on power and conflict tends to be piecemeal, decontextualized and focused on negative consequences. This paper presents two studies which investigate a new situated model of conflict and power at work. It builds on classic areas of research on social conflict, power and interdependence and integrates them into a coherent framework for organizational conflict research. The methods and findings of the studies are presented and their implications for research on work conflict are discussed.

Keywords: power, interdependence, conflict, employee relations, conflict orientations.

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Conflicts are as natural to organizational life as waves are to the sea. They come and go, are mild or intense, and can be either channeled into energy to move things forward or can get out of control and destroy everything in their path. Although there is a debate over whether or to what degree conflict serves positive functions in the workplace (De Dreu, 2008; De Dreu & Weingard, 2003; Jehn & Bendersky, 2003; Tjosvold & Wisse, 2009), it is clear that it is a pervasive reality in organizations and that managers and employees spend considerable time dealing with conflict and its aftermath. In fact, research suggests that managers spend 30-40% of their workday addressing workplace conflicts (Dana, 2005; Thomas & Schmidt, 1976; Watson & Hoffman, 1996), and upwards of 80% of the difficulties they face are reported to stem from strained employee relationships (Dana, 2005).

The centrality of conflict in organizations has led to a large canon of research studies, models and training programs for managing conflict at work (see De Dreu & Gelfand, 2008; Deutsch, Coleman, & Marcus, 2006; Lewicki, Barry, Saunders, & Minton, 2003; Thompson & Behfer, 2007). However, organizational research on conflicts across power differences - between parties with differing levels of authority, resources, status, etc. – is somewhat lacking (Tjosvold & Wisse, 2009), and our understanding of how power asymmetry effects other important elements of conflict such as interdependence and psychological orientations is piecemeal at best (Fiske & Berdhal, 2007). This seems extraordinary given that the majority of conflicts people face at work are typically up or down the hierarchy of power.

In recent years, there have been important advances in research on the dynamics of conflict and negotiations (for summaries see De Dreu, 2010; Deutsch et al., 2006). However,

much of this research tends to go off in different directions. Many studies have investigated the effects of different motives operating in isolation in conflict (see Beersma & De Dreu, 2002; Carnevale & Lawler, 1986; De Dreu & Van Lange, 1995; Deutsch, 1973, 2006; Johnson & Johnson, 2005), while others have explored different degrees of dependency (Gerhart & Rynes, 1991; Kim & Fragale, 2005; Mannix, Thompson, & Bazerman, 1989; Ng, 1980), asymmetrical power relations (see Blalock, 1989; Kim, Pinkley, & Fragale, 2005; Rouhana & Fiske, 1995; Rubin & Brown, 1975; Tjosvold, 1981, 1991; Tjosvold & Wisse, 2009; Van Kleef, De Dreu, Pietroni, & Manstead, 2006; Zartman & Rubin, 2002) or the effects of different conflict styles and strategies for intervention (Johnson & Johnson, 2003; Kressel, 2006; Schelling, 1960; Thomas & Schmidt, 1976; Tjosvold, 1991). Thus, the findings in these areas have been fragmentary and have resulted in a good deal of conceptual confusion (Fiske & Berdhal, 2007; Kim et al., 2005; Tjosvold & Wisse, 2009; Zartman & Rubin, 2002).

This paper presents two studies investigating a new situated model of conflict and power, which endeavors to add coherence, clarity and insight into research on conflict between disputants of unequal power (Coleman, Kugler, Bui-Wrzosinska, Nowak, & Vallacher, in press). The model builds on classic but divergent areas of scholarship on conflict, interdependence, independence and social power, and integrates them into a coherent framework for the study of social conflict. It proposes that three basic dimensions of social-organizational relationships – the type and mix of goal interdependence, the degree of total goal interdependence, and the relative distribution of power between the parties – work in concert to affect differences in conflict orientations and responses between disputants of unequal power. Thus, the model extends previous research by conceptualizing the combined effects of three basic dimensions of social relations on people's thoughts, feelings, and behaviors in work conflicts.

This article has four sections: (1) a brief overview of the limits of our current understanding of conflict and power at work, (2) an outline of the situated model of conflict, (3) the methods and findings from two studies; one conducted as an online survey and the other during organizational simulation on work conflicts, and (4) a discussion of the implications of the studies for subsequent research.

Organizational Conflict, Power and Interdependence

Although the study of conflict in organizations has a long and impressive tradition (Blake & Mouton, 1964; Coch & French, 1948; Follett, 1924/1973; Kahn & Boulding, 1964; Rahim, 1983, 2000; Thomas & Kilman, 1974; see summaries see Burke, 2006; De Dreu & Gelfand, 2008; Morgan, 1997), the study of conflict between people and groups of *unequal power* has been relatively neglected (Tjosvold & Wisse, 2009). In particular, our understanding of how power asymmetry affects workers' experiences and responses to different types and degrees of interdependence in conflict is lacking (Tjosvold & Wisse, 2009). This seems extraordinary given that the vast majority of organizations operate within hierarchical structures where most conflicts within them take place between disputants with unequal power and disparate interests.

While there have been important advances in psychological research on the dynamics of power and conflict (Blalock, 1989; De Dreu & Gelfand, 2008; Kim et al., 2005; Rouhana & Fiske, 1995; Rubin & Brown, 1975; Tjosvold, 1981, 1991; Zartman & Rubin, 2002), the findings in this area have been replete with contradictions (Fiske & Berdahl, 2007; Zartman & Rubin, 2002). For example, several studies have shown that equal power relations between disputants lead to more effective negotiations than unequal (De Dreu, 1995**;** Komorita & Barnes, 1969; Lawler, Ford, & Belgen, 1988), yet others find the opposite (Zartman & Rubin, 2002), including the tendency for equal power conflicts to be more susceptible to intractability (Bercovitch, 2005; Moul, 2003; Zartman & Rubin, 2002).

Similarly, although differences in cooperative versus competitive forms of interdependence (see Beersma & De Dreu, 2002; Carnevale & Lawler, 1986; De Dreu & Van Lange, 1995; Deutsch, 1973, 2006; Johnson & Johnson, 2005; Tjosvold, 2007) and their associated social value orientations (e.g., pro-social and pro-self orientations; De Dreu, Beersma, Steinel, & Van Kleef, 2007; Van Lange, De Cremer, Van Dijk, & Van Vugt, 2007) have shown clear effects on conflict dynamics, the impact of power asymmetry on these motives is still unclear. For example, many studies have demonstrated the critical role of cooperative interdependence in fostering more constructive power-conflict dynamics between parties with unequal-power (Coleman, 2004; Tjosvold, 1981, 1985a, 1985b; Tjosvold, Coleman, & Sun, 2003; Tjosvold, Johnson, & Johnson, 1984), while others have found contradictory evidence; reporting that under conditions of asymmetrical power conflicts, high-power parties tend to behave in a more domineering manner even when they share common goals (De Dreu, 1995; Dwyer & Walker, 1981; Lin & Germain, 1993; McAlister, Bazerman, & Fader, 1986; for summaries see Rubin & Brown, 1975; Zartman & Rubin, 2002). In addition, contemporary research on social power has been critiqued on several grounds (Fiske & Berdahl, 2007), including its tendency to atomize and decontextualize related aspects of power. Clearly, the time has come to understand how these most basic dimensions of social relations work in concert to affect conflict dynamics in organizations.

A Situated Model of Conflict Dynamics

The situated model of conflict dynamics (Coleman et al., in press) builds on Deutsch's theory of social relations and psychological orientations (Deutsch, 1982, 1985, 2007, in press), which emerged from his earlier empirical research on the fundamental dimensions of interpersonal relations (Wish, Deutsch, & Kaplan, 1976). The situated model suggests that three basic dimensions of social relations combine to constitute a *basic stimulus field* for parties in

conflict (See Figure 1). A stimulus field (Kelly, 1997) is defined as a perceiver's representation of his or her external world or environment. Kelley (1997), characterized it as "…something that is neither objective nor subjective – or is both, if you like" (p. 143). The three dimensions of the stimulus field for conflict are each specified below.

The Three Dimensions of the Situated-Model

Mixture of goal interdependence. The first dimension of the situated model represents the type and mix of goal interdependence in social relationships. It constitutes the x-axis of the model, with *pure positive* forms of goal interdependence (where all goals between parties in conflict are positively linked) at the extreme left of the x-axis, *pure negative* interdependence (where all goals are negatively linked) at the extreme right of the x-axis, and *mixed-motive types* (combinations of both positively and negatively linked goals) along the middle of the x-axis. Thus, conflicts of a purely cooperative nature (such as between members of a surgical team in an operating room) are located on the far left of the dimension and those of a more competitive nature (conflicts over coveted leadership positions, optimal office space, or other scarce resources) on the far right. Along this dimension we have various forms of mixed-motive interdependence, from those weighted more positively (on the left side of the continuum) to those weighted more negatively (on the right side of the continuum), and with relatively balanced forms of positive and negative interdependence located near the middle.[1]

Relative distribution of power. The second dimension of the situated conflict model represents the relative distribution of power between parties. Power has been conceptualized in

[1] The relative weights of positive and negative interdependence are thought to be asymmetrical; with negatively-linked goals (i.e., perceived threats) having a stronger impact on behavior than positively-linked goals (see Gottman, Swanson, & Swanson, 2002). Thus, more "balanced" relations would be located to the left of center of the dimension.

myriad ways (Fiske & Berdahl, 2007), but for the specification of this model we focus on the perception of relative power and define it specifically as *the relative degree to which each party can affect the other party's goals and outcomes* (Depret & Fiske, 1993; Thibaut & Kelley, 1959). It constitutes the y-axis of the model, with pure types of *unequal distribution of power (A over B)* at the top of the y-axis, the opposite types of *unequal distribution of power (B over A)* at the bottom of the axis, and various types of relatively *equal* distribution of power along the middle of the y-axis. Thus, the top of the y-axis represents situations where A has relatively high power and therefore unilateral capacities to affect the goals and outcomes of B (e.g. most CEO-employee relations), and the bottom of the axis represents situations where A is in relatively low power and B has unilateral capacities over A (e.g. employee-CEO relations). Again, along this continuum, we have various forms of more equal, bi-directional power between A and B, with the most equal forms at the center of the dimension.

Degree of total goal interdependence – relational importance. The model's third dimension involves the degree of importance of the relationship (total goal interdependence) in conflict and the extent to which the parties' goals are linked. It constitutes the z-axis of the model, with *high degrees* of goal and outcome interdependence between the parties in conflict located at the front of the z-axis (strong goal/outcome linkages and/or high proportions of linked goals/outcomes), *low degrees* of interdependence located at the rear of the z-axis (no, few, or weak goal/outcome linkages), and *moderate degrees* of interdependence located along the middle of the z-axis. Relationships can vary in terms of the number of interdependent goals between the parties, the importance or strength of these goals, and the degree to which the links between goals are temporary or stable. This dimension represents the *total* degree of goal interdependence between the parties, both in general in the context of their relationship and in specific in relation

to the goals involved in the conflict. Higher degrees of total interdependence will lead to greater levels of relational importance than lower degrees of interdependence.

Interaction of the Three Dimensions

The regions of the stimulus field. The situated model provides a sense of the basic relational context in which people experience conflict. In other words, conflicts that appear to be similar in terms of the issues at stake (you and I seek the same job) may be experienced in fundamentally different ways depending on the settings of the three parameters in the model (our mix of cooperative or competitive goals, my high, equal or low relative power, and the high or low importance of our relationship). Differences in the three parameters may be due to situational conditions (such as objective differences in legitimate authority between disputants) and/or to individual differences in chronic psychological orientations to conflict (affecting how situations are perceived).

The current studies will focus on five extreme regions of the stimulus field: Region 1 (R1; situations of relative high-power, cooperative goals, and high-interdependence), Region 2 (R2; high-power, competitive, high-interdependence), Region 3 (R3; low-power, cooperative, high-interdependence), Region 4 (R4; low-power, competitive, high-interdependence), and Region 5 (R5; low degrees of interdependence).[2] Although we might begin our discussion of the conflict stimulus field by contrasting its eight most extreme regions (pure competitive-pure cooperative, high power-low power, high interdependence-low interdependence, 2 X 2 X 2 = 8), research has shown that under conditions of very low degrees of goal interdependence (no, few, or weak goal

[2] Other regions within the conflict stimulus field could be identified (e.g., equal-power competitive, equal-power cooperative, etc). However these five regions represent the most extreme of the 3-D field and therefore characterize some of the most distinct orientations relevant to the dimensions of the model.

linkages between parties) the importance of conflict engagement tends to dissipate (Deutsch, 1973; Kelly, 1997) and disputants' conflict orientations and behaviors become more uniform (Kugler & Coleman, 2010). Thus, the four regions of the stimulus field operating under conditions of very low interdependence tend to collapse to one (see R5 in Figure 1). This means that if our goals are unconnected and our lives independent from one another, then the relative power and type of interdependence between us loses relevance and when perturbed by conflict we will tend to continue on our separate ways.

Psychological orientations to conflict. *Psychological orientations* are a more or less consistent complex of cognitive, motivational, moral, and action orientations to a given situation that serve to guide one's behaviors and responses (Deutsch, 2007, in press). The situated model proposes that each of these five regions of the conflict stimulus field will induce distinct psychological orientations to conflict; affording particular values, emotions and behaviors that are relevant to that type of situation (see Deutsch, 1982, 1985, 2007, in press; Kelley, 1997; Van Lange et. al., 2007). In other words, the different regions of the stimulus field will tend to evoke very different psychological *orientations to conflict*, which partially determine 1) what is likely to be valued in the situation (solving problems and sharing benefits with other parties versus conquering them), 2) how it feels to be in the situation (unaffected and indifferent versus anxious and distressed), and 3) how to best go about responding to the conflict and obtaining these values and goals (through respectful dialogue and problem-solving versus forceful domination or submission to power; see Figure 2).

Thus, we hypothesize that Region 1 (high-power, cooperative, high-interdependence) will induce a *benevolence* orientation to conflict: a benign, cooperative orientation where people value enhancing and sharing mutual outcomes, feel relatively more concern for the other and surprise about the dispute, and engage in constructive behaviors such as open dialogue, pro-social

modeling, and joint problem-solving. In contrast, we expect Region 2 (high-power, competitive, high-interdependence) to induce a *dominance* orientation: a more controlling, exploitive orientation to conflict where people value winning and maximizing only their own outcomes, feel a lack of empathy for or connection with the other party, and use tactics of force, control, and deceit to achieve their aspirations. In Region 3 (low-power, cooperative, high-interdependence) we would expect an orientation of *support* to conflict, where people value the supportive leadership and expected benefits bestowed by those in higher power, feel some degree of anxiety and confusion regarding the conflict, but engage in respectful followership and assistance. We predict Region 4 (low-power, competitive, high-interdependence) will induce an orientation of *appeasement*, where people feel the most stress and resentment, value avoiding harm as much as possible, seek opportunities for escape, and engage in coercive tactics such as sabotage whenever possible. In Region 5 (*low* degrees of interdependence), we would expect to see an orientation of *autonomy*, a preference for establishing one's independence from others in conflict, feelings of indifference, and more disengaged behavioral tendencies consistent with this orientation.

In summary, we propose that three basic dimensions of social-organizational relations interact to situate parties psychologically in different regions of the basic conflict stimulus field, and that different regions of the field will tend to induce distinct psychological orientations to conflict, which are syndromes that affect parties' values, emotions and behavioral response options to the situation. This leads to the following sets of hypotheses:

Hypothesis 1: The five distinct regions of the stimulus field for conflict will induce psychological orientations (values, emotions and behaviors) that are consistent with that region.

Hypothesis 1a: Region 1 (high power, cooperative, high interdependence) will induce behaviors, emotions and values consistent with a benevolence orientation.

Hypothesis 1b: Region 2 high power, competitive, high-interdependence) will induce behaviors, emotions, and values consistent with a dominance orientation.

Hypothesis 1c: Region 3 (low-power, cooperative, high interdependence) will induce behaviors, emotions, and values consistent with a support orientation.

Hypothesis 1d: Region 4 (low-power, competitive, high interdependence) will induce behaviors, emotions, and values consistent with an appeasement orientation.

Hypothesis 1e: Region 5 (low interdependence) will induce behaviors, values and emotions consistent with an autonomy orientation.

A recent set of studies provides initial support for these distinct region-orientation associations (Coleman, Kugler, Mitchinson, Musallam & Chung, 2010). Findings from focus group and experimental research found that when participants were presented with *the same conflict* (in terms of incompatible goals and issues) they described the predicted values and behavioral intentions across the five regional conditions. Although these findings are promising, they are preliminary; the initial studies relied on focus group and experimentally induced reactions to different one-paragraph scenarios. Additional studies are critical to support the situated model, and especially to investigate the effects of different types of situations (different regions of the stimulus field) on disputants' emotional reactions to conflict, a mode of experience understudied in conflict research (Barry & Oliver, 1996; Hartling & Luchetta, 1999; Lindner, 2002). The current studies address these lapses.

Conflict Perceptions and Satisfaction. Deutsch's (1949) central theoretical finding in his early research on interdependence was that cooperative versus competitive goals affected how conflict was perceived and experienced in terms of the probabilities of goal attainment of people in conflict (Deutsch, 2006), as well as the resultant levels of satisfaction. He found that cooperative orientations *under equal-power conditions* resulted in perceptions of conflict as a

mutual problem to be solved jointly ("it's our problem") leading to higher levels of mutual satisfaction, and that competitive orientations under equal-power resulted in perceptions of conflict as a win-lose struggle ("you are the problem") resulting in less mutual satisfaction. Extending this logic, we propose that *under unequal power conditions*, conflict will be viewed and experienced differently. Under cooperative conditions, those in high-power (Region 1) may feel more obligated to solve the conflict unilaterally, albeit constructively ("it's my problem") and feel more likely to achieve their goals, and those in low-power (Region 3) may have lower aspirations, take less responsibility, and feel more entitled to a free ride ("it's your problem"). Under competitive conditions, those in high-power (Region 2) are likely to still view the problem as win-lose ("you are the problem"), with those in low-power (Region 4) either mirroring this view or accepting blame ("I am the problem"), depending on the degrees of stability and legitimacy of the system (Tajfel, 1981). However, under conditions of low degrees of interdependence (Region 5), people may view the conflict quite differently ("it's not my problem"), particularly when other alternatives are available for attaining desired outcomes.

Hypothesis 2: The five regions of the stimulus field for conflict will afford different: 1) relative estimates of goal attainment, and 2) perceptions of relative satisfaction in conflict.

Hypothesis 2a: In Region 1 (high power, cooperative, high interdependence) disputants will assess high relative probabilities of goal attainment and relative satisfaction (higher than participants in R3, and R4 but lower then participants in R2 and R5) and view the conflict as a mutual problem but feel obligated to solve the conflict unilaterally.

Hypothesis 2b: In Region 2 (high power, competitive, high-interdependence) disputants will assess high relative probabilities of goal attainment and relative satisfaction (higher then participants in R1, R3 and R4 and similar to participants in R5) and view the problem as fundamentally win-lose.

Hypothesis 2c: In Region 3 (low-power, cooperative, high interdependence) disputants will assess lower relative probabilities of goal attainment and relative satisfaction (lower then participants in all other regions except R4) and view the conflict as a mutual problem but take less responsibility for the problem.

Hypothesis 2d: In Region 4 (low-power, competitive, high interdependence), disputants will assess the lowest relative probabilities of goal attainment and relative satisfaction and view the problem as win-lose or accept blame for the conflict.

Hypothesis 2e: In Region 5 (low interdependence) disputants will view the conflict with less importance, and perceive the highest (together with R2) relative probability of goal attainment and levels of relative satisfaction.

Relative Comfort. Finally, we predict that each region of the stimulus field will be associated with different levels of comfort with the nature of the situation. For example, it is likely that most individuals working in organizational settings who experience conflict in the context of cooperative relationships will feel generally more at ease in the conflict than those in competitive situations, which can induce higher levels of negativity and anxiety (Tjosvold, 1981). Similarly, those individuals who have more control over the situation (i.e. higher power) are also likely to feel relatively more comfortable with the conflict.

Hypothesis 3: Distinct regions of the stimulus field will significantly affect degrees of comfort with the conflict. Cooperative situations will tend to afford the most comfort in work conflicts – with those in high power (Region 1) feeling the most comfortable followed by their cooperative low-power counterparts (Region 3). Conversely, competitive situations are likely to induce the least comfort in work conflicts, with the appeasing (Region 4) individuals exhibiting the lowest comfort level (highest anxiety) of all followed by their higher-powered competitive counterparts (Region 2). Participants

with more autonomous orientations (Region 5) are likely to report more neutral levels of comfort, falling somewhere in between these two groups.

To summarize, we propose that differences between people in their relative power and the type and degree of interdependence of their goals at work, interact to significantly affect conflict on the job. Different regions of the three-dimensional conflict stimulus field will induce significantly different perceptions, aspirations, values, feelings, and behaviors in response to conflict. Past research has provided preliminary support for this model (Coleman et al., 2010). The current studies will extend this research by 1) examining the effects of different regions of the stimulus field on participants' emotional reactions, 2) testing the relative degree of comfort participants experience when experiencing conflicts across the regions, and 3) moving beyond previous lab research by testing the model in the context of a 2-day organizational simulation game.

Two studies are presented. The first study was a work scenario experiment conducted as an on-line Internet survey. The second study employed a more extensive methodology, and was administered during a weekend-long graduate course simulation on organizational power and conflict.

Study One

Method

Design and Procedure. This experimental study was administered using an online questionnaire over the Internet. Participants were invited to complete a survey on "behaviors in an organizational context" and were randomly assigned to one of five conditions where they were presented with a work-conflict scenario

written to depict the five the regions of the state space (R1, R2, R3, R4, and R5). As an incentive, participants were offered the opportunity to enter themselves into a lottery, with a prize of $250.

Participants. Two hundred and ten participants completed the online questionnaire. Thirty three % of the participants were male and 67 % were female and ages ranged from 17 to 74 years (M = 33.20 years, SD = 13.32 years) with reported ethnic backgrounds of African (1%), Asian (7%), Asian American (3%), Black American (5%), Latin American/Hispanic (6%), White (non-American) (10%), White American (65%), and other (2%) reported. Ninety-eight percent of participants reported having organizational experience; with 12% less than 1 years' experience, 19% 1 to 3 years, 19% 3 to 5 years, and 48% reporting more than 5 years' experience. Educational background was well distributed with 22% reporting having high school diplomas or GEDs, 53% associate's degrees, 19% bachelor's degrees, 2% master's degrees, and 4% doctorates. The participants were recruited through graduate courses and advertisements at a large northeastern university in the U.S., as well as through online advertisements in eighteen large U.S. cities.

Independent Variables. Participants were asked to envision themselves in

one of five conflict scenarios (N=42 participants in each condition) in order to situate their experience in different positions of relative power, type of interdependence and degree of interdependence. These five regions were selected based on the theoretical consideration that the most pronounced behavioral responses to conflict would be seen at the relative extremes of each of the three dimensions. Four scenarios were written to place individuals in situations characterized by a high degree of interdependence. These scenarios then varied in terms of the four combinations of relative power (i.e. high or low) and type of interdependence (i.e. cooperation or competition) to yield scenarios that represented Regions 1 through 4 of the state space. Only one scenario was written to characterize a low degree of interdependence between parties (Region 5) as previous research has shown that relative power and type of interdependence do not produce marked difference in reactions to conflict in such conditions (Kugler & Coleman, 2010). An example scenario (Region 1: high power, cooperative goals, and high interdependence) can be found in Appendix 1.

Manipulation Check. Participants' experiences of the different regions were assessed. They were each asked to rate their perception of the scenario along the

three dimensions of the situated model. Each dimension was assessed with two items on a 7-point Likert scale (mixture of goal interdependence: α=.71; relative degree of power: α=.74; degree of goal interdependence: α=.74). Example items, assessing relative power, type of interdependence, and degree of interdependence respectively, included: "I felt like I had relatively more influence over the outcomes than the other", "I felt that only one of us could get what he/she wanted in this situation", and "I needed to work through the conflict with the other person in this situation as our work relationship mattered to me".

Dependent Variables. After reading the scenario, participants were asked to respond to a series of 7-point Likert items in order to assess behavioral intentions, emotions, values, perceptions of relative goal attainment and relative satisfaction as well as the level of comfort.

The scales for *behavioral intentions and emotional as well as valuational reactions* to the conflict situations were created by subject matter experts and refined in previous research studies (Coleman, et al., 2010). Focus groups with individuals who had extensive organizational experience were conducted to capture a range of behaviors, emotions and values possible in the organizational context for each region of the stimulus field. This list was subsequently refined through research to capture only those items most distinct and typical for each psychological orientation (benevolent, dominant, support, appeasement, autonomous orientation). To assess *behavioral intentions*, participants were asked to rate a list of behavioral responses in terms of how likely (1=not at all likely, 7=extremely likely) they would respond in that way (see Table 2

for all items). Participants were then asked to provide similar ratings on a list of *emotional* responses (see Table 5 for items) and *valuational* responses (see Table 6 for items).

In addition to reactions to the scenarios, we assessed how participants perceived the conflict. Drawing on Deutsch (1973), the *relative perception of goal attainment* was measured as the perceived relative goal attainment of the participant in relation to the other party in the conflict. This was operationalized by subtracting the perception of the personal goal attainment ("I will achieve my goal") from the perceived goal attainment of the other party ("the other will achieve his/her goal"). Similarly, *relative satisfaction with the conflict* was measured with the perceived relative level of satisfaction in relation to the other party ("I will be satisfied with the conflict outcome" minus "the other will be satisfied with the conflict outcome"). The *level of comfort* was assessed with 3 items (I would feel comfortable being in this situation; I would like to change the situation to something I would feel more comfortable with (reverse coded); I felt comfortable with the basic terms of the situation), which had a reliability of α=.70.

Results

Preliminary analysis. In a first step we assured that the manipulation had the intended effects. Contrast analyses were employed to do the manipulation check. In a second step we looked at the dimensionality the core dependent variable: the behavioral intentions. Using multidimensional scaling we tested whether the different items represented the dimensions, which we had proposed (relative power, type of interdependence, and degree of interdependence). Further we intended to form reliable scales for each behavioral psychological orientation (benevolent, dominant, supportive, appeasement, and autonomous orientation).

Finally we tested our hypotheses employing a contrast analysis.

Contrasts allow the testing of specific predictions within complex ANOVA designs and thus allow a more focused approach than omnibus ANOVAs which can only provide evidence of general differences among group means. In the analyses, specific predictions are expressed by weights that are assigned to each group to reflect the hypothesis in question and the result of the subsequent test is provided.

Manipulation Check. Omnibus ANOVA's showed significant differences in participants' perceptions along each of the three manipulated dimensions (relative power: $F(4,205)=14.35$, $p=.00$, $\eta^2=.23$; type of interdependence $F(4,205)=14.35$, $p=.00$, $\eta^2=.23$; degree of interdependence: $F(4,205)=14.35$, $p=.00$, $\eta^2=.23$). However, we were more interested in evaluating whether the pattern of differences among the specific groups followed the pattern derived from the hypotheses (for example, R1 & R2 should be rated higher in terms of perceived power than R3 & R4 and in turn R5) stated earlier and thus planned contrast were used. These follow-up contrast tests (contrast weights chosen to reflect a-priori assumptions of between group differences) showed that each scenario was perceived in the intended way along each of the three dimensions (see Table 1).

Dimensionality of the behavioral intentions. On the questionnaire, participants were asked to rate how likely they would respond with different behaviors to the conflict scenario. We expected to be able to form clusters of behaviors, which correspond to our five extreme psychological orientations to conflict: benevolence, dominance, support, appeasement, and autonomy. Multidimensional scaling was conducted to test the hypothesized grouping of behavioral intentions by region of the conflict field. Unlike the 1 (Stress1=.29) and 2 (Stress1=.10) – dimensional solutions, the 3 dimensional solution had a stress 1 value of .05. The four dimensional solution (Stress 1 = .04) did not reduce the Stress 1 value substantially. Therefore the three dimensional solution was chosen, which supported the three dimensional nature of the situated model of conflict situations. Figure 3 illustrates the location of each behavioral item along the three dimensions and provides support for our assumptions regarding the independence of the 3 dimensions described in this theory. With the exception of one item ("I would mostly look out for myself.") all items matched our predictions. As only one exception was found based on this additional analysis, scales were formed analogous the five hypothesized psychological orientations. Table 2 presents each behavioral intention subscale with the reliabilities for the five scales. The reliabilities for all five behavioral subscales were acceptable, with the exception of the scale for R4-Appeasement (.61), which was marginally low. Table 3 shows the means, standard deviations and correlations of the five subscales.

Behavioral reactions to the conflict scenarios. The subscales, described in the previous section were employed to test Hypothesis 1: whether the different regions elicited significantly different behavioral responses. This hypothesis rests on the assumption that while all behaviors were possible in response to each scenario, certain behaviors would be more likely than others depending on the nature of the situation (i.e. the region of the stimulus field in which the conflict

was located). In order to test whether or not these proposed patterns were evident, we conducted a series of ANOVA tests using sets of a priori planned contrasts.

For each test, the contrasts were defined a priori based on hypotheses 1a-1e and were designed to reflect the hypothesized likelihood of each set of behavioral responses (see Table 4). The particular region which was hypothesized to elicit the highest means for the behavioral subscale in question was assigned the highest weight (weight = 2.5). The remaining regions were assigned weights based on their theoretical similarity with the hypothesized region. All regions that shared two dimensional attributes with the hypothesized region were assigned slightly lower weights (-0.5) while the one region that shared only one similarity received the lowest weight (-1.0). For example, to test the hypothesis that participants placed in R1 (Benevolence) of the stimulus field (high power/cooperative interdependence/high goal interdependence) would be more likely to report benevolent behavioral intentions (hypothesis 1a), the hypothesized region, R1, was assigned the highest weight (2.5), R3 (low power/cooperative interdependence/high goal interdependence) and R2 (high power/competitive interdependence/high goal interdependence) were assigned -0.5 as they differed in only one aspect and R4 was assigned -1, as it differed in two aspects. R5 (low interdependence) was considered to differ only in one aspect (goal interdependence) from all other regions. Table 4 presents the results of this analysis.

The results provide strong support for Hypotheses 1a-e and the proposition that each region of the stimulus field would induce corresponding behavioral intentions. For example, it was predicted that benevolent behaviors would be most evident in Region 1, followed by Regions 3, 2 and 5 and finally least evident in Region 4. Indeed this pattern was shown to be significant with the pattern of the means matching the a priori contrast weights. Thus, participants situated in Region 1 in the experiment were most likely to evidence a benevolent orientation, with participants reporting positive behavioral intentions such as modeling constructive behaviors and

initiating cooperative discussions. Similar patterns were shown to exist for the other regions of the stimulus field, with R2 participants being most likely to display dominant behavioral intentions, Region 4 participants to display appeasing behaviors, and Region 5 participants to display autonomous behaviors. However, while the overall pattern of results for supportive behaviors was shown to be significant, the means of the Region 3 participants and Region 1 participants did not differ.

Emotional and valuational reactions to the conflict scenarios. Similar to behavioral intentions, it was proposed that distinct regions of the stimulus field would elicit particular emotional and valuational reactions in respondents that were consistent with the character of that region. Again, a pattern of results could be defined based on these hypotheses, proposing that certain reactions would be more likely in some regions than in others. To test whether the hypothesized patterns were present, the same method of analysis was utilized as previously described, with the same set of a-priori contrasts defined based on the order of these predictions. The choice of the values again reflects the hypothesized order of the means based on the theoretical propositions presented previously.

Table 5 presents the emotional reactions which were most characteristic of each of the five extreme regions (R1-R5) within the stimulus field. In all regions the hypothesized patterns of means for each emotion were found to be significant. In support of Hypothesis 1a, participants in the scenario characterized by high power, cooperative goals and high interdependence (R1) reported feeling the most *concerned for the other*. Even though participants in R1 were also more surprised about the conflict than other participants, participants in R3 showed the highest mean for this. Conversely, participants in R2 reported feeling the least *empathetic* (along with participants from Region 4) and generally *unaffected* by the conflict. R3 participants reported feeling the most *anxious* and *confused* of participants in all regions, R4 participants felt the most *stressed* and

angry, and participants in the low interdependence condition (R5) reported feeling the most *indifferent* and *ambivalent*.

The different scenario conditions also elicited distinct valuational responses from participants (see Table 6). Participants in the two cooperative conditions were most likely to value aspects of the relationship when compared to other regions, valuing *trust* and *cooperation* (in R1) and the *relationship* and *mutual understanding* (in R3, but also high means for R1 participants). Conversely, it was predicted that the competitive conditions would elicit more self-oriented values. Participants in R2 reported valuing their *own authority* and *winning* more than the other conditions. However the hypothesized valuing of *revenge* and *getting what was deserved* for R4, although present, were not found to be significantly different for participants in R4 in contrast to the other regions. Finally, participants in the R5 condition were the least likely to value *teamwork* and *justice* when compared to other conditions, reflecting the low degree of interdependence afforded by that scenario.

Goal attainment, satisfaction, and comfort. Our second and third hypotheses predicted differences between the conditions concerning the *estimation of goal attainment, perceptions of satisfaction,* and *the level of comfort with the situation*. Again, based on the hypotheses we defined a series of a priori contrasts to test the assumption that there would be significant differences in these measures across the different conflict regions.

Relative goal attainment was predicted to be highest (weight = 1) in R2 and R5 due to the level of control over outcomes each of these regions affords (i.e. individuals in R2 are able to exert their power to compete and achieve outcomes and individuals in R5 do not rely on other parties and thus control their own outcomes). Conversely, relative goal attainment was expected to be lowest in R4 due to the lack of control over outcomes this region affords (weight = -2). Means for R1 and R3 were expected to fall in between these two groups, with R1 (weight = 0.5)

being slightly higher due to higher levels of control over the outcome due to higher power than R3 (weight = -0.5). A similar pattern of results was predicted for relative satisfaction due to the fact that satisfaction and perceived goal attainment are likely to be closely linked.

Finally, level of comfort was expected to follow a similar pattern with individuals being most comfortable in cooperative regions and least comfortable in the competitive regions. Again it was thought that participants would be most comfortable in high power positions within these two groups due to the increase level of control this situational attribute affords.

Table 7 presents a series of ANOVAs testing the predefined contrasts generated from the hypotheses. The results presented above provide support for Hypotheses 2 and 3 and the a priori contrasts that were defined. Participants in the most powerful and independent regions, R2 (M=.50) and R5 (M=.24), estimated their chances of achieving their goals highest, followed by participants in R1 (M=.33), then participants in R3 (M=-.73) and finally R4 participants (M=-1.74). Relative satisfaction with the situation was shown to follow a similar pattern with participants in the more powerful/independent conditions showing higher levels of relative satisfaction with the conflict (R2: M=2.33; R5: M=2.16) than the other regions. For the level of comfort, the overall predicted pattern of results was supported; with participants in R1 (benevolence) reporting the highest comfort levels with the conflict and those in R4 (appeasement) the least. However, participants in R5 (autonomy) reported higher levels of comfort with the situation than anticipated, showing higher means than participants in R3.

Discussion of Study One

The results of this study provide additional support for the situated model and for the hypotheses outlined in this paper. Different regions of the stimulus field were shown to induce distinct conflict orientations, characterized by specific behavioral, emotional, valuational and perceptual responses.

Participants in situations of high power and cooperative interdependence (R1) were significantly more likely to respond to the scenario in a benign and cooperative way, feeling concern for the other party in the conflict, valuing trust and reporting constructive and open behavioral intentions. Conversely, participants in similar high power/high interdependence situations, but characterized by competitive goal interdependence (R2), were more likely to show a more exploitive, controlling orientation, feeling low empathy for the other, valuing winning and personal authority the most, and reporting dominant behavioral intentions. In the low power conditions, cooperative goal interdependence (R3) elicited feelings of anxiety and confusion in participants when experiencing conflict with their boss, but afforded values of mutual understanding and good relations and supportive and understanding behavioral intentions. In contrast, participants in the low power/high interdependence/competitive scenario (R4) were most likely to feel stressed and angry, and to report passive-aggressive behavioral intentions such as sabotage and work slow-downs. Finally, as expected, participants placed in a region of independence (R5) were most likely to feel indifferent and ambivalent about the conflict, valuing such things as teamwork and justice significantly less and showing behavioral intentions that reflected their autonomy.

Although the findings from this study provided additional support for the model, and in particular for the emotional implications of the different regions, it was conducted as a survey study via the internet and is therefore limited in terms of its generalizability. Accordingly, we designed and conducted a second study to test the hypotheses, which involved a more elaborate and engaging methodology – a two-day simulation on power and conflict in an organization.

Study Two

Method

Design and procedure. This study was conducted during two separate organizational simulations that form an existing component of a graduate-level course on organizational conflict at a large northeastern university. The simulation is part of the course curriculum and requires students to form a hypothetical organization in order to perform a set of predetermined tasks. As part of the simulation, each student is randomly assigned to a different power role (called "tops", "middles", and "bottoms") which are intended to reflect the hierarchical structure of the organization. In addition to these names, relative power within the organization is also manipulated through different status symbols, rules, decision making power and access to others in the simulation. These basic rules are issued and enforced by the instructor of the class to create an environment in which participants are compelled to operate from different power bases.

In order to complete the tasks of the simulation, every participant was required to interact with various other participants of differing power statuses. Invariably, conflicts arose between participants during these interactions and these conflicts were the primary source of data for this study. After each simulation, a questionnaire was administered to measure the participants' experiences of these conflicts. The questionnaires served two purposes: first, to assess participant's perceptions of each conflict (along the 3-dimensions of the stimulus field) and second, to assess their behavioral reactions to the situation, their level of satisfaction with the conflict outcome, and estimations of goal attainment. Each participant filled out two questionnaires (one questionnaire after each of two successive simulations) and typically reported on more than one conflict per questionnaire (therefore the number of conflicts encountered in each simulation varied from participant to participant).

Participants. Eighty-seven graduate students at a large university in the northeastern United States volunteered to participate in this study as part of an organizational psychology graduate course in which they were enrolled. Participants (23% male, 77% female) ranged in age

from 22 to 57 years (M = 27.85 years, SD = 7.43 years), with diverse ethnic and educational backgrounds. The number of years worked in organizations varied between zero (3%), less than one year (15%), one to three years (29%), three to five years (19%), and more than five years (34%). No significant effects for demographics were found in our analyses.

Independent variables. Participants' perceptions were used to categorize each conflict in the simulation to its corresponding region of the stimulus field. As discussed, degree of power was manipulated in the simulation (i.e. through the assignment of an organizational role). In addition to this manipulated variable, it was assumed that each of the conflicts encountered by participants in the simulation would naturally vary in terms of the degree and type of interdependence between parties. Perceptions along all three dimensions were captured in the post simulation questionnaire: (using a 7 point Likert scale with 1= I strongly disagree and 7 = I strongly agree): *relative power* was measured with two items ("I felt like I had relatively more influence over my outcomes than the other in this conflict" and "It was easy to force the other to do as I wished without serious consequences"; $\alpha = .69$); *type of interdependence* with two items ("I felt that only one of us could get what he/she wanted in this situation" and "There was no possibility that we both could really be satisfied with the outcome" $\alpha = .73$; and *degree of interdependence* was measured with one item ("I needed to work together with the other as our goals were mutually linked.").

The perceived power of the participants matched the power as assigned in the simulation. Planned contrasts were again used to test if the means differed in the predicted directions and they were shown to be significant (t=26.30, p=.00). Specifically, participants who were placed in a high power position and experienced conflict with someone in a lower position perceived themselves as having a more power (M=5.77) than those participants who found themselves in

conflict with someone at the same hierarchical level (M=3.42), and in turn those who experienced conflict with someone at a higher hierarchical level (M=1.67).

In total, 245 conflict events were reported by the students. Only conflicts which represented the extreme regions of the situated conflict model (R1, R2, R3, R4, and R5, see also Figure 1) were included in the analysis. Basis for the inclusion or exclusion of the scenarios were the perceptions of the events by participants along the three dimensions of the situated conflict model. The conflict events perceived as mixed motive and/or equal power and/or medium interdependence were excluded from the analysis. In total 186 conflict events were included in the analysis, which were distributed in the extreme regions as follows: R1, N = 30; R2, N = 32; R3, N = 47; R4, N = 45; R5, N = 32; total N=186.

Dependent variables. A series of 7-point Likert items (1 = not at all and 7 = extremely) were used to assess participant responses to each conflict experienced in the following areas: behavioral responses, perceived goal attainment, and as perceived satisfaction with the situation. Behavioral responses were rated with one item per psychological orientation: benevolence, dominance, support, appeasement, autonomy (items are listed in Table 8). Level of relative goal attainment and satisfaction were assessed in the same ways as in Study 1. Level of comfort was assessed with one item: “To what extent did you feel comfortable in this situation?”

Results

To test our hypotheses we again utilized a series of ANOVAs with sets of planned a priori contrasts defined based on the hypotheses presented previously. The contrast weights utilized in the following analyses mirror those presented previously in Study 1.

The first analysis sought to determine if certain regions of the stimulus field elicited coherent behavioral intentions. Table 8 presents the results of this analysis. Support for Hypotheses 1a-d was provided by this analysis. For all regions, except R5, the pattern defined by the contrast weights was found to be significant. Participants in R1 were most likely to report benevolent behaviors than participants in R2, R3, and R5 who in turn were more likely than participants in R4. A similar corresponding relationship was found for dominant behaviors (R2 participants being most likely to report these responses), and appeasement behaviors (R4 most likely). Even though the results were significant for supportive behaviors (R3 most likely), this mean was slightly lower than the mean for R1 participants. No clear support was found for the hypothesis that participants in R5 would be more likely to report independent behaviors than any other region in this study. This will be addressed in the discussion.

The same method of analysis was employed to test Hypotheses 2 and 3. Table 9 presents the results of this analysis, which provide support for Hypothesis 2 and 3. The overall predicted pattern of results for relative goal attainment was shown to be significant with participants in R2 estimating their chances of achieving their goals highest and those in R4 the lowest. However, participants in R1 (benevolence) also rated their goal attainment high, even slightly exceeding those in R5 (autonomy). Relative satisfaction with the situation was shown to follow a similar pattern; again with participants in R2 showing by far the highest levels of satisfaction and those in R4 the lowest. However, participants in R1 (benevolence) also reported high levels of satisfaction. As predicted, participants in the cooperative conditions also reported higher levels of comfort with the conflict when compared to those in competitive conditions who reported much

lower comfort levels, although the pattern was not precisely as predicted, with R3 participants showing higher levels of comfort than R1.

Discussion of Study Two

The results of Study 2 provide additional support for the hypotheses outlined in this paper. Unlike Study 1, which was an experiment conducted with different scenarios through an on-line survey, Study 2 engaged participants in a messy, high-impact 2-day organizational simulation and then assessed the relationship between different perceptions of conflict situated in the distinct regions of the stimulus field (R1-R5), and the participants' behavioral reactions. Although this method offered less control over the manipulation of the different regional conditions than Study 1, it offered a more realistic and engaging environment in which to test our model. It found that differences in the perceptions of the conflicts encountered in the simulation, characterized along the three main dimensions of the conflict stimulus field, induced the predicted differences in conflict orientations in the participants, and resulted in significantly different reported behaviors in the various conflicts. Further, the results provide evidence to suggest that these orientations also impacted participant's initial framing of the conflicts, affecting estimates of goal attainment and level of overall comfort with the situation.

General Discussion and Conclusion

This article suggests that, despite the prevalence and importance of asymmetrical-power conflicts in organizations, we still know relatively little about how they are navigated effectively at work or the conditions and processes that render them a positive as opposed to a negative force. In an attempt to add coherence and insight into these dynamics, we presented two studies investigating a new situated model of power and conflict. The model builds on three basic dimensions of social-organizational relationships – the type and mix of goal interdependence, the relative distribution of power between the parties, and the degree of total goal interdependence

(relational importance) – and suggests that they work in concert to affect differences in conflict orientations and dynamics between organizational disputants of unequal power.

The findings from these two studies – an experimental survey study conducted online and a quasi-experimental simulation study conducted during a weekend workshop – provide strong support for the propositions derived from the model. Participants in situations of high power and cooperative interdependence (R1) were significantly more likely to respond to the scenario and to conflicts that arose in the weekend simulation in a benign and cooperative way, feeling more concern for the other party in the conflict, valuing trust, and reporting constructive and open behavioral intentions. In contrast, participants in similar high power/high interdependence situations, but characterized by competitive goal interdependence (R2), were much more likely to show a controlling orientation, feeling less empathy for the other, valuing winning and personal authority the most, and reporting dominant behavioral intentions and reactions. In the lower-power conditions, cooperative goal interdependence (R3) elicited feelings of anxiety and confusion when people found themselves in conflict with their superiors, but afforded the valuing of mutual understanding and good relations and supportive and understanding behavioral intentions. In contrast, participants in the low power/high interdependence/competitive scenario (R4) were most likely to feel stressed and angry and to report passive-coercive behavioral intentions such as sabotage and work slow-downs. Finally, as expected, participants placed in a region of independence (R5) were most likely to feel indifferent and ambivalent about the conflict, valuing such things as teamwork and justice significantly less and showing behavioral intentions that reflect their more autonomous orientation.

Some aspects of the current studies provide additional support for findings from previous research (Coleman et al., 2010). However, the current studies broke new ground by employing methods with enhanced experimental and mundane realism (Berkowitz & Donnerstein, 1982),

thus bolstering the generalizability of the research. In addition, these studies examined critical components of how emotions operate in the context of the conflict stimulus field. Researchers have traditionally paid little attention to the role that emotions play in conflict (Barry & Oliver, 1996). However, oftentimes emotions play *the* central role in conflict dynamics. Particularly when relations between conflicting parties are ongoing (as in most workplace disputes), positive and negative emotions resulting from these encounters will accumulate overtime (with some degree of dissipation), establishing tendencies for generally constructive (positive) or destructive (negative) relations between the parties (Coleman, Vallacher, Nowak, & Bui-Wrzosinska, 2007; Coleman, Goldman, & Kugler, 2009; Gottman, Swanson, & Swanson, 2002; Kugler, Coleman, & Fuchs, 2011; Losada & Heaphy, 2004). Research has shown that unless disputants are able to sustain a relatively high ratio of positivity-to-negativity in their social relations (approaching 5:1, assuming high degrees of interdependence), they will tend to be pulled into more destructive conflict dynamics. These tendencies help to establish the emotional context for future encounters between the parties, influencing the parties' chronic orientations in the relationship, and increasing the probabilities for destructive conflict to unfold.

Despite the convergent support offered by both these studies, they do have their limitations. First, both studies were conducted with scenarios or simulations which, although compelling and effective in their capacity to induce a sense of "experimental realism" (Berkowitz & Donnerstein, 1982), are still lacking in terms of their ecological validity. Field research on actual conflicts in organizations will need to be conducted to address this limitation of the research.

Second, the conceptual framework for these studies presents some new methodological and data-analytic challenges. For instance, the orientations outlined in the model (induced by Regions R1-R5) represent different constellations or clusters of similar behaviors, values, and

emotions that are both prevalent in a particular region (e.g., *dominance* behaviors are exhibited most in Region 2), *but* that may also be found in dimensionally-similar regions (e.g., some high-power behaviors are also likely to be found in R1 and some competitive behaviors in R4). This challenge was addressed analytically by identifying a-priori contrasts for each of the regional comparisons that specified the most and least different regions for each contrast. However, this also resulted in lower reliabilities for some of the subscales created to characterize each power-conflict orientation as well as in some lack of precision in the order of the contrasts found *between* the highest and lowest comparisons.

Third, it is notable that conflicts perceived as being of low-interdependence (R5) in Study 2, did not appear to induce significantly more autonomous behaviors (exit the conflict, find alternative solutions, etc.) than those perceived as situated in other regions. Nevertheless, more autonomous tactics are quite common in many conflicts (see for example Kim, et al, 2005; Salacuse, 1999, 2002; Zartman & Rubin, 2002), and were in fact induced in Region 5 in Study 1. We suggest that the particular nature of the class-based organizational simulation in Study 2 established a high-baseline for degrees of interdependence between the participants, and that this may account for the absence of independent, autonomous behaviors.

Nevertheless, despite the limitations of the research, the model presented herein and the findings from the two studies move our understanding of the often tumultuous seas of asymmetrical power and conflict dynamics at work forward. The model provides an important integration of three basic dimensions of work situations, previously studied in a more piecemeal or divergent manner (Fiske & Berdahl, 2007; Kim et al., 2005; Zartman & Rubin, 2002), and offers a new platform for exploring how person-situation interactions in the stimulus field influence conflict dynamics at work. Thus, the model presents a promising arena for future study.

Subsequent research should investigate how more chronic preferences for orientations to work conflicts (person-level measures of dominance versus support preferences, etc.) interact with situational differences such as those explored in the current studies (Coleman & Kugler, 2011). In addition, it will be important to explore how various pairs of chronic orientations between people (dominance-appeasement, benevolence-support, benevolence-autonomous, etc.) affect stable, predictable dynamics within dyads over time, versus unstable and more uncomfortable conflict dynamics. It would also be fruitful to test how other basic dimensions of social-organizational dynamics (task versus social orientations, formal versus informal roles, etc.; see Deutsch, 1985) may moderate the effects of the current model. For example, pure task-based conflicts might tend to orient employees towards more efficient, utilitarian orientations (dominance, appeasement and autonomy), while more social-emotionally relevant conflicts in contrast move them towards orientations that are conducive to harmonious social relations (benevolence and support).

Now that the basic integrative framework for organizational conflict has been established, the next steps should be to deepen our understanding of the basic dynamics of the model as well as to broaden its explanatory scope. In other words, there remains much uncharted sea in the tumultuous ocean of organizational power and conflict.

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Table 1. Participant perceptions of the dimensional characteristics of each scenario and manipulation check using ANOVA contrast analysis.

		Experimental condition (Independent Variables)					**Contrast analysis**	
Manipulation Check		R1	R2	R3	R4	R5	t (205)	p
Relative Power (1=low power; 7=high power)	M	4.31	4.67	3.30	2.67	3.30	6.80	0.00*
	SD	1.33	1.56	1.38	1.57	1.31		
	Contrast	1.00	1.00	-1.00	-1.00	0.00		
Type of goal interdependence (1=cooperation; 7=competition)	M	3.78	5.31	3.54	5.67	3.95	7.99	0.00*
	SD	1.67	1.37	1.37	1.52	1.45		
	Contrast	1.00	-1.00	1.00	-1.00	0.00		
Degree if interdependence (1=low interdependence; 7=high interdependence)	M	5.19	4.42	5.19	5.07	2.94	8.20	0.00*
	SD	1.25	1.55	1.27	1.28	1.74		
	Contrast	1.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	-4.00		

Note. * the results are significant when the alpha-level is adjusted using the Bonferroni-Holm-Method (Holm, 1979)

Table 2. Behavioral response items for the five orientations and reliabilities (Cronbach's Alpha) for each of the subscales.

Conflict Orientation	**Items in scale**	**Reliability (alpha)**
Benevolence (R1)	I would try to model how to behave constructively in such situations. I would pull the other person aside and try to communicate my understanding of the situation and of their responsibilities in a cooperative way. I would invite the other person to discuss the matter with me in a cooperative way.	.72
Dominance (R2)	I would use my authority to get the other person to behave as I believe they should. I would threaten the other person with consequences. I would warn the other person strongly about the consequences of their actions.	.74
Support (R3)	I would try to attend more carefully to the other person to figure out what's going on with them. I would ask the other person for their support to make the situation better. I would listen to the other person and try to understand their situation in order to initiate a fair solution.	.78
Appeasement (R4)	I would mostly look out for myself. I would try to quietly sabotage the other person's outcomes. I would work slower and cooperate less with them.	.61
Autonomy (R5)	I would tolerate the immediate situation - I would do nothing. I would ignore the conflict as it doesn't matter much to me .	.82

Table 3. Correlations between the 5 behavioral subscales

		M	SD	1	2	3	4
1	Benevolent behaviors	4.85	1.23				
2	Dominant behaviors	2.93	1.24	.04			
3	Supportive behaviors	4.36	1.11	.55***	.04		
4	Appeasing behaviors	2.35	1.23	-.20**	.55**	.01	
5	Autonomous behaviors	3.68	1.32	-.50**	.03	-.30**	.25**

Note. *p<.05. **p<.01. ***p<.001

Table 4. Behavioral reactions to the scenario by region (means & standard deviation) and ANOVA test of a-priori contrasts.

Behavioral subscales (Dependent variable)		**Experimental condition (Independent variables)**					**Contrast analysis**	
		R1	R2	R3	R4	R5	t (205)	p
Benevolent orientation								
	M	**5.38**	5.12	5.14	4.40	4.54		
Benevolent behaviors	SD	1.06	1.09	1.12	1.19	1.40	3.18	0.00*
	Contrast	2.50	-0.50	-0.50	-1.00	-0.50		
Dominant orientation								
	M	3.09	**3.91**	2.67	2.85	2.46		
Dominant behaviors	SD	1.16	1.34	1.09	1.00	1.08	5.71	0.00*
	Contrast	-0.50	2.50	-1.00	-0.50	-0.50		
Supportive orientation								
	M	**4.80**	4.48	**4.80**	3.91	4.01		
Supportive behaviors	SD	0.76	0.96	0.99	1.12	1.25	2.56	0.01*
	Contrast	-0.50	-1.00	2.50	-0.50	-0.50		
Appeasement Orientation								
	M	2.50	3.08	2.76	**3.35**	2.94		
Appeasement behaviors	SD	1.14	1.36	1.29	1.27	0.96	2.75	0.01*
	Contrast	-1.00	-0.50	-0.50	2.50	-0.50		
Autonomous orientation								
	M	2.96	3.68	3.24	3.88	**4.41**		
Autonomous behaviors	SD	1.20	1.34	1.10	1.28	1.44	4.41	0.00*
	Contrast	-0.50	-0.50	-0.50	-0.50	2.00		

Note. * the results are significant when the alpha-level is adjusted using the Bonferroni-Holm-Method (Holm, 1979) Highest means of each row are in **bold**.

Table 5. Emotional reactions to the scenario by region (means & standard deviation) and ANOVA test of a-priori contrasts.

Emotional reaction (Dependent variable)		**Experimental condition (Independent variables)**					**Contrast analysis**	
		R1	R2	R3	R4	R5	t (205)	p
Benevolent orientation								
	M	**4.60**	3.12	4.07	2.44	3.26		
Concerned for the other	SD	1.45	1.78	1.83	1.47	1.75	5.25	0.00*
	Contrast	2.50	-0.50	-0.50	-1.00	-0.50		
	M	4.55	3.55	**5.12**	3.45	3.74		
Surprised	SD	1.50	1.66	1.71	1.76	1.70	2.36	0.02
	Contrast	2.50	-0.50	-0.50	-1.00	-0.50		
Dominant orientation								
	M	4.31	**5.36**	4.33	5.43	4.98		
Unempathetic	SD	1.44	1.28	1.59	1.50	1.54	2.65	0.01*
	Contrast	-0.50	2.50	-1.00	-0.50	-0.50		
	M	3.12	**3.90**	3.24	3.29	3.64		
Unaffected	SD	1.50	1.81	1.80	1.76	1.61	2.01	0.05
	Contrast	-0.50	2.50	-1.00	-0.50	-0.50		
Supportive orientation								
	M	4.45	4.48	**5.10**	4.98	4.00		
Axious	SD	1.61	1.73	1.43	1.65	1.79	2.15	0.03
	Contrast	-0.50	-1.00	2.50	-0.50	-0.50		
	M	4.24	3.67	**4.93**	3.74	3.79		
Confused	SD	1.75	1.68	1.60	1.95	1.76	3.63	0.00*
	Contrast	-0.50	-1.00	2.50	-0.50	-0.50		
Appeasement orientation								
	M	5.05	4.76	5.34	**5.60**	4.46		
Stressed	SD	1.57	1.66	1.42	1.58	1.61	2.40	0.02
	Contrast	-1.00	-0.50	-0.50	2.50	-0.50		
	M	4.38	4.81	4.71	**5.21**	4.17		
Angry	SD	1.50	1.84	1.60	1.49	1.79	2.51	0.01*
	Contrast	-1.00	-0.50	-0.50	2.50	-0.50		
Autonomous orientation								
	M	2.55	2.55	2.62	2.69	**3.60**		
Indifferent	SD	1.21	1.52	1.48	1.62	1.71	3.80	0.00*
	Contrast	-0.50	-0.50	-0.50	-0.50	2.00		
	M	3.00	2.95	2.98	3.24	**3.52**		
Ambivalent	SD	1.36	1.71	1.49	1.62	1.49	1.82	0.07
	Contrast	-0.50	-0.50	-0.50	-0.50	2.00		

Note. * the results are significant when the alpha-level is adjusted using the Bonferroni-Holm-Method (Holm, 1979)
Highest means of each row are in **bold**.

Table 6. Valuational reactions to the scenario by region (means & standard deviation) and ANOVA test of a-priori contrasts.

Emotional reaction (Dependent variable)		**Experimental condition (Independent variables)**					**Contrast analysis**	
		R1	R2	R3	R4	R5	t (205)	p
Benevolent orientation								
	M	**6.00**	5.63	5.66	5.52	4.59		
Trust	SD	1.06	1.35	1.17	1.45	1.70	2.58	0.01*
	Contrast	2.50	-0.50	-0.50	-1.00	-0.50		
	M	**5.86**	5.64	5.57	5.02	4.68		
Cooperation	SD	1.05	1.14	1.38	1.39	1.95	2.70	0.01*
	Contrast	2.50	-0.50	-0.50	-1.00	-0.50		
Dominant orientation								
	M	4.19	**4.90**	3.95	3.95	3.49		
Authority	SD	1.76	1.23	1.55	1.46	1.66	3.70	0.00*
	Contrast	-0.50	2.50	-1.00	-0.50	-0.50		
	M	4.74	**5.40**	4.14	4.55	4.10		
Winning	SD	1.73	1.55	1.63	1.71	1.70	3.68	0.00*
	Contrast	-0.50	2.50	-1.00	-0.50	-0.50		
Supportive orientation								
	M	5.26	4.76	**5.29**	4.65	3.58		
Relationship	SD	1.58	1.74	1.27	1.39	1.81	2.49	0.01*
	Contrast	-0.50	-1.00	2.50	-0.50	-0.50		
	M	**5.83**	4.74	5.38	4.81	4.15		
Mutual Understanding	SD	1.10	1.55	1.23	1.69	1.70	2.05	0.04
	Contrast	-0.50	-1.00	2.50	-0.50	-0.50		
Appeasement orientation								
	M	4.90	**5.67**	5.29	5.57	5.17		
Getting what I deserve	SD	1.39	1.12	1.53	1.13	1.41	1.66	0.10
	Contrast	-1.00	-0.50	-0.50	2.50	-0.50		
	M	1.98	**2.79**	1.86	2.36	1.83		
Revenge	SD	1.30	1.89	1.24	1.68	1.39	1.02	0.31
	Contrast	-1.00	-0.50	-0.50	2.50	-0.50		
Autonomous orientation								
	M	5.95	5.74	5.50	5.05	**4.55**		
Teamwork	SD	1.21	1.31	1.22	1.41	1.89	4.10	0.00*
	Contrast	0.50	0.50	0.50	0.50	-2.00		
	M	5.07	5.57	4.74	5.43	**4.65**		
Justice	SD	1.47	1.17	1.85	1.31	1.72	2.06	0.04
	Contrast	0.50	0.50	0.50	0.50	-2.00		

Note. * the results are significant when the alpha-level is adjusted using the Bonferroni-Holm-Method (Holm, 1979).
For benevolent, dominant, supportive and appeasement orientation: highest means of each row are in **bold**.
For autonomous orientation: lowest means of the row are in **bold**.

Table 7. Relative goal attainment, satisfaction, and level of comfort by region (means & standard deviation) and ANOVA test of a-priori contrasts.

Perceptions (Dependent Variables)		**Experimental condition (Independent Variables)**					**Contrast analysis**	
		R1	R2	R3	R4	R5	t (205)	p
Relative Goal Attainment	M	0.33	**0.50**	-0.73	-1.74	0.24	5.40	0.00*
	SD	1.71	2.48	1.67	3.12	1.79		
	Contrast	0.50	1.00	-0.50	-2.00	1.00		
Relative Satisfaction	M	-0.40	**0.07**	-0.83	-1.95	-0.73	4.13	0.00*
	SD	1.82	2.33	1.46	2.66	2.16		
	Contrast	0.50	1.00	-0.50	-2.00	1.00		
Level of Comfort	M	**3.32**	2.96	2.96	2.61	3.15	2.07	0.04*
	SD	1.27	1.31	1.18	1.28	1.08		
	Contrast	2.00	-1.00	1.00	-1.50	-0.50		

Note. * the results are significant when the alpha-level is adjusted using the Bonferroni-Holm-Method (Holm, 1979). Highest means of each row are in **bold.**

Table 8. Behavioral responses by region (means & standard deviation) and ANOVA test of a-priori contrasts.

Behaviors (Dependent Variables)		**Quasi-experimental condition (Independent Variables)**					**Contrast analysis**	
		R1	R2	R3	R4	R5	t (181)	p
Benevolence								
I tried to use my power responsibly to resolve the situation in a fair manner.	M	**5.47**	5.38	4.93	4.02	4.22		
	SD	1.31	1.54	2.03	1.96	1.70	2.68	0.01*
	Contrast	2.50	-0.50	-0.50	-1.00	-0.50		
Dominance								
I confronted the other in a rather unfriendly way.	M	1.20	**2.13**	1.11	2.09	1.72		
	SD	0.41	1.52	0.48	1.49	1.44	2.96	0.00*
	Contrast	-0.50	2.50	-1.00	-0.50	-0.50		
Support								
I talked to the other in a respectful way and / or offered my support.	M	**6.10**	5.19	5.96	4.44	4.59		
	SD	1.18	1.08	1.49	1.91	1.58	3.21	0.00*
	Contrast	-0.50	-1.00	2.50	-0.50	-0.50		
Appeasement								
I tolerated the immediate situation and / or later talked to others or collaborated less.	M	2.40	3.81	2.41	**4.04**	3.31		
	SD	1.69	1.65	1.88	2.06	1.94	3.58	0.00*
	Contrast	-1.00	-0.50	-0.50	2.50	-0.50		
Autonomy								
I tried to find an independent way to get what I wanted and / or I did not engage in this conflict.	M	4.00	**4.66**	2.72	4.31	4.00		
	SD	2.13	1.84	1.68	1.83	2.03	0.21	0.83
	Contrast	-0.50	-0.50	-0.50	-0.50	2.00		

Note. * the results are significant when the alpha-level is adjusted using the Bonferroni-Holm-Method (Holm, 1979). Highest means of each row are in **bold.**

Table 9. Perceptions goal attainment, satisfaction & comfort by region (means & standard deviation) and ANOVA test of a-priori contrasts.

Perceptions (Dependent variables)		**Quasi-experimental condition (Independent variables)**					**Contrast analysis**	
		R1	R2	R3	R4	R5	t (181)	p
Relative Goal Attainment	M	0.13	**1.71**	-0.28	-1.42	0.10	6.31	0.00*
	SD	1.83	2.05	1.09	2.02	2.41		
	Contrast	0.50	1.00	-0.50	-2.00	1.00		
Relative Satisfaction	M	0.33	**1.16**	-0.04	-0.84	-0.25	4.03	0.00*
	SD	1.18	1.83	0.98	2.03	2.21		
	Contrast	0.50	1.00	-0.50	-2.00	1.00		
Levlel of Comfort	M	5.24	4.50	**5.43**	3.04	3.94	5.64	0.00*
	SD	1.70	1.74	1.79	1.58	1.87		
	Contrast	2.00	-1.00	1.00	-1.50	-0.50		

Note. * the results are significant when the alpha-level is adjusted using the Bonferroni-Holm-Method (Holm, 1979). Highest means of each row are in **bold.**

Figure 1. The conflict stimulus field for 3 basic dimensions of social-organizational relations.

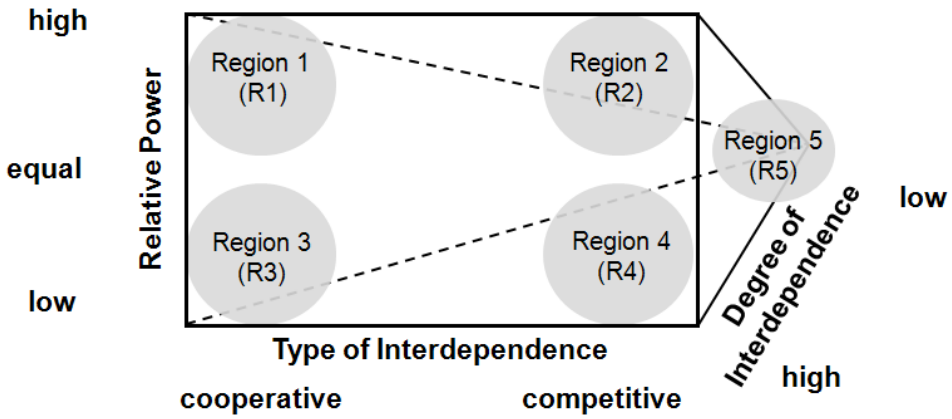


Figure 2. Psychological orientations located in their corresponding regions of the basic conflict stimulus field.

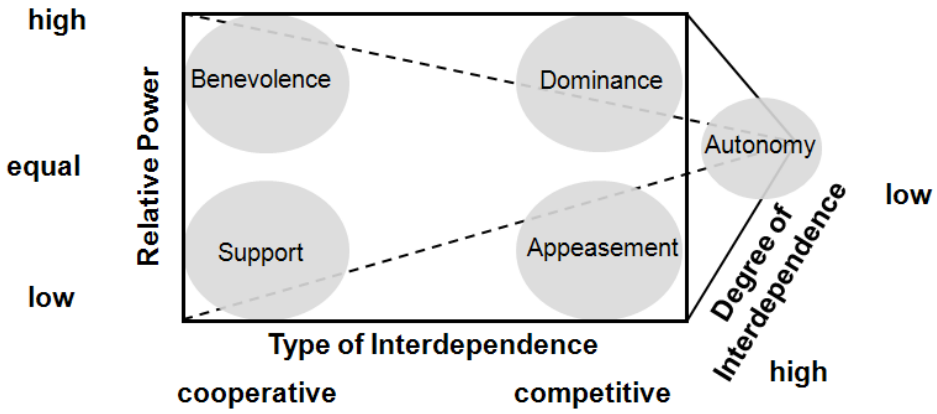
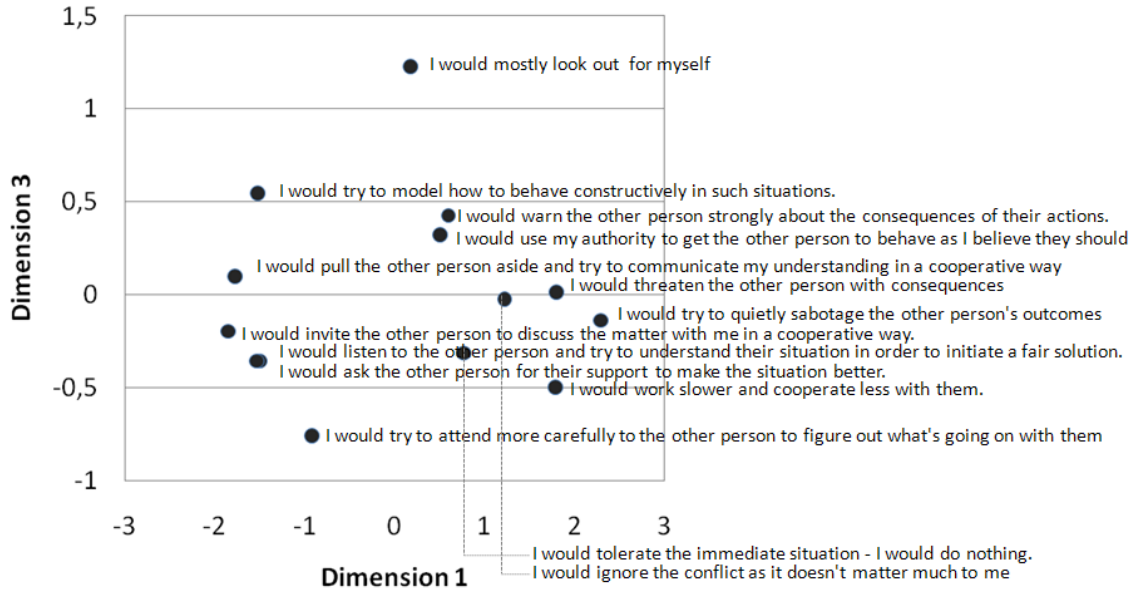
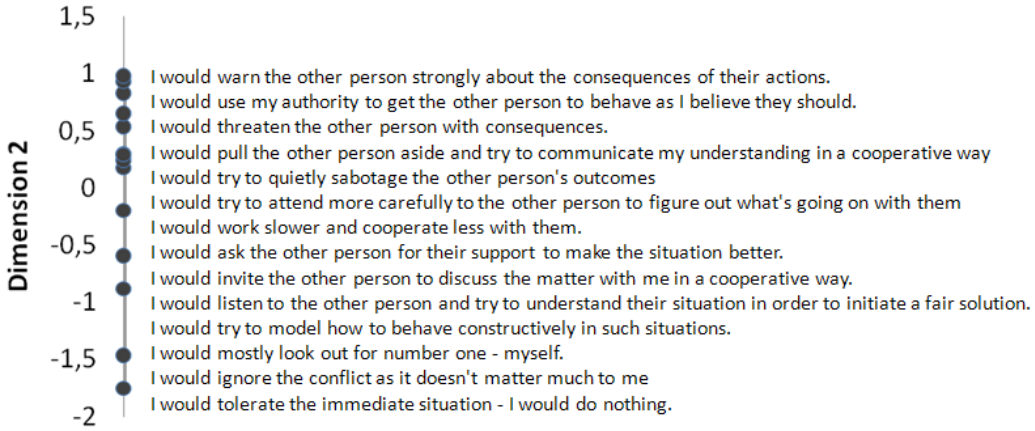


Figure 3. Location of the items according to a MDS-analysis with 3 dimensions. In the upper graph the order along dimension 2 is illustrated (degree of interdependence). The lower graph shows the location along dimension 3 (relative power) and dimension 1 (type of interdependence).





APPENDIX I

Example Scenario (Region 1: high power, cooperative goal, and high interdependence):

"You are the manager of the marketing department of *Hollywood Film Productions,* a prestigious film production company in LA. Your job with this company is very important to you.

You have been manager of this department for several years now and have invested a lot in this career. You have had a very strong working relationship with one particular employee who is a very cooperative person; he goes out of his way to help others whenever he can. Whenever you and this employee get into a conflict over something he does whatever he can to work things out in a mutually satisfying way.

You and your employee have been told to sell as many tickets as possible for an upcoming promotional event. As usual, your company is offering a reward of $10 for every ticket sold. At the end of the contest, the executives will disperse the money. They will split the total amount of the reward: ½ for you and ½ for your employee. You expect to sell 2000 tickets together, which means you will each get around $10,000 if you both work hard to sell the tickets.

You are very interested in this, as your car just broke down and you really need the money. The ticket sales rewards procedure is as follows:

- You will both try to sell as many tickets as you can.
- Only you will have access to the summary of how many tickets were sold by whom. You will report the final sales numbers to the company executives.
- Depending on those numbers the executives will pay the reward to both of you – you will both get the same amount.
- Your subordinate will not have access to the numbers nor will he know how many tickets were sold in total. You have complete control over how the winner will be determined.

Your job with this company is extremely important to you and you really need the $ 10,000 right now."

Each scenario was created around this same basic story, varying only the relative power, type of interdependence, and relative degree of interdependence. For example, the low power scenarios presented the participant as the subordinate who had no control over how the winner was determined, and the competitive scenarios presented the reward structure as being available to only the most prolific seller. In order to introduce conflict into the situation, participants in all scenarios read the same paragraphs:

"You schedule meetings with your subordinate in order to discuss a sales strategy and to inform each other about how many tickets you have sold. The meetings are supposed to enhance your sales strategies so that both of you can sell as many tickets as possible. You are a bit tired though, because you worked all night selling tickets and preparing for this first meeting. Your subordinate shows up with nothing done and, on top of that, doesn't even acknowledge what you've accomplished by yourself.

With the deadline approaching you plan to meet again, but your subordinate calls in sick and the meeting gets canceled. You work on your own in the meantime and continue trying to sell tickets. Your subordinate comes into work the next day, but doesn't appear sick.

There is one last meeting scheduled before the deadline, this time with some members of the company's executive board. Again, your subordinate calls you and says they have a family emergency. The meeting gets canceled and you miss your only chance to talk with the board before the deadline.

In addition, you begin to hear rumors where people are saying your subordinate has sold a huge amount of tickets …"