Taking sides in a workplace conflict:

A study of the influence of conflict type, hierarchy and integrity orientation on side-taking preferences.

Author

Petra de Wolff

s1001647

Title   Taking sides in a workplace conflict: A study of the influence of conflict type, hierarchy and integrity orientation on side-taking preferences

Student   Petra de Wolff
s1001647
Faculty of Behavioral Sciences

Supervisors   Dr. H. Yang
Dr. P.R. Honnef-Runhaar

Date and place of presentation   Enschede
04-19-2011

UNIVERSITY OF TWENTE

50 YEARS OF HIGH TECH, HUMAN TOUCH

University of Twente
Drienerlolaan 5
Postbus 217
7500 AE Enschede
053 - 4899111

Preface

This thesis is to finalize the Master of Industrial and Organizational Psychology at the University of Twente. The thesis is about the relationship between different situational factors (conflict type and hierarchy) and side taking preferences of lay third parties.

After working more than a year on this project I can now say I am (finally) finished! It took a little bit longer than I first expected and wanted, but here we are. And from this point I would like to thank all the people who supported me, helped me out, offered me to help and kept me motivated to finish this project.

Huadong Yang, thank you for the criticism and feedback on all the project activities. And thank you for your patience, because it took a while before I really knew what I was working on. Sanneke for the pleasant work relation with the whole set up of the study. My parents and my sister for believing in me and for giving me the necessary feedback on my thesis. Ellen and Lieke for being the greatest actors for the films! Grandpa Hobbelink for checking my English writing skills. Niels for just being there for me and for believing in me. And Piety Runhaar to be my controller.

And thank you to all of you not mentioned here but close to my heart.

Abstract

Previous research on side-taking preferences of lay third parties are mostly concerned about the interpersonal relationships between the lay third party and the disputants, and about lay third parties' self-interest and personality. This study focuses on the situational context in which a conflict occurs: conflict type (relationship vs. task) and hierarchical relationships between disputants (hierarchical asymmetry vs. equal status) are taken into account in determining the side-taking preferences of a lay third party. I also included the lay third parties' integrity orientation (strong vs. weak) as a moderator variable. Specifically, I examined the relationship between conflict type and lay third parties' side-taking preferences, and studied the influence of hierarchy and integrity orientation on this relationship.

Lay third parties in this thesis are defined as individuals who are confronted with an interpersonal conflict and do not have any preexisting ideas of how to handle this conflict (Yang, Van de Vliert, and Shi, 2009). The participants are the lay third parties, and to get the participants involved in the conflict, I used video-footage for this study. Four conflict situations, four films, and the participants were randomly assigned to one of the films. 98 participants were confronted with a conflict situation; task conflict with equal status; relationship conflict with equal status; task conflict with hierarchical asymmetry; and relationship conflict with hierarchical asymmetry. Side-taking preferences are explained in four directions: morality (focus on facts and arguments), relational (focus on the relationship with the disputants), sanction avoiding and reward approaching based.

The results showed first that conflict type influences lay third parties' side taking preferences. Relationship conflict influences relational and reward approaching based preference for side-taking. And task conflict influences morality and sanction avoiding based preference for side-taking. Second, hierarchy influences the relationship of conflict type and side-taking preferences in such a way that hierarchy strengthens the relationship between relationship conflict and relational based preference for side-taking, and between task conflict and sanction avoiding based preference for side-taking. And third, lay third parties' integrity orientation has influence on the relationship between relationship conflict and reward approaching based preference for side-taking only when the lay third party has a weak integrity orientation.

Table of contents

Introduction: Taking sides in a workplace conflict

Conflict is everywhere. Conflicts occur in marital situations, in teams and organizations, conflicts can take place at national level or even at international level. Conflicts are not a hot research topic that has arisen in recent years. On the contrary, conflicts exist probably as long as humankind does. Van de Vliert (1997, p. 5) states that "individuals are in conflict when they are obstructed or irritated by another individual or a group, and inevitably react to it in a beneficial or costly way". Imagine the following situation:

> *Bart and Tom are working on a project, but they cannot come to an agreement about the division of the tasks. Bart insists that he did most of the preparation for the project and should therefore be less involved in the rest of the tasks. Whereas Tom argues that he has also done a lot in a previous project and should therefore be given less tasks now. When Sarah came by at their office, they both started to complain about the other's selfishness and laziness and try to win her over to strengthen their side. Sarah has now been put up with a dilemma: Should she take sides? Moreover, which side should she choose?*

This is just an example of the many conflict situations that can occur in everyday life. In this case, Bart and Tom are colleagues, with the same responsibilities and privileges. But what if one of them is the manager and the other is frontline worker? What would Sarah do then? Besides, the type of conflict can also have an impact on the reaction of Sarah. In this case, the conflict is about work, but what if the conflict is about the personal disliking? The primary focus of this study is to investigate the side-taking preferences of third parties, like Sarah in this case, and the factors influencing those preferences.

An interpersonal conflict involves at least two parties, which can be groups or teams but also can be individuals like Bart and Tom. Those two conflicting parties are called *disputants*. When disputants cannot come up with a mutual acceptable deal, a *third party* is often called in. A third party can take different roles depending on their control over the conflict process and control over the decision (Thibaut, & Walker, 1975). Decision control refers to the degree to which the third party can determine the outcome of the conflict. Process control refers to control over the development and selection of information in resolving the conflict (Ross, & Conlon, 2000). Based on this distinction of control, four types of third parties can be identified: mediator (with high process control and low decision control); arbitrator (with high decision control and

low process control); Ross and Conlon (2000) have identified the third kind of third party roles: hybrid (high control over both process and decision) and can best be described as a combination of an arbitrator and mediator; and the fourth role identified by Yang, Van de Vliert and Shi (2009) is that of *lay third party* (low control over both process and decision). The focus of this study is on lay third parties, like the role played by Sarah in the example above.

Lay third parties in this thesis are defined as individuals who are confronted with an interpersonal conflict and do not have any preexisting ideas of how to handle this conflict (Yang, *et al.*, 2009). By definition, lay third parties usually do not have experience or expertise for resolving conflicts. They even do not have the responsibility or obligation for solving the conflict (Yang, Van de Vliert, & Shi, 2007). Lay third parties then have a large set of options to intervene in the conflict (Kolb, & Sheppard, 1985). When faced with a conflict a lay third party can avoid the conflict, try to resolve it in a proper manner, or can chose to take sides with one of the disputants (Van de Vliert, 1997). The preference for side-taking is more prevalent over other possible tactics when handling a conflict (Yang, Van de Vliert, Shi, & Huang, 2008). Three assumptions to argue this: the assumption of information asymmetry, the assumption of situational pressure, and the assumption of coalition formation. The assumption of *information asymmetry* states that third parties often perceive the information coming from the disputants in a different manner, due to their relationship with the disputants. One can imagine that when a third party has a closer relationship with one of the disputants, he/she will be more sensitive to the information provided by this close party. The assumption of *situational pressure* proposes that a lay third party is often put under the force of the disputants' requests to take their side and therefore makes the side-taking action more available. The assumption of *coalition formation* suggests that forming a coalition with one of the disputants is an efficient option to intervene in the conflict due to the fact that lay third parties lack control over the conflict. Given these assumptions taking sides is expected to be the most salient response for a lay third party to handle a conflict (Van de Vliert, 1981).

Many factors can have an influence on lay third parties' side-taking preference. This study focuses on the conflict types and the hierarchical (a)symmetry between the disputants. The research question of this study thus is:

How do conflict type and hierarchical (a)symmetry have an impact on lay third parties' side-taking preference? Besides this main question, I also explore the effect the lay third parties' integrity orientation on their side-taking preferences.

The answers to these questions will contribute to the field of conflict management in at least two ways. First, in previous research lay third parties' side-taking reaction was mainly explored from the perspectives of interpersonal relationships (between lay third parties and disputants), and of lay third parties' self-interest and personality (e.g. Yang *et al.*, 2007, 2009; Yang, Van de Vliert, Shi, & Huang, 2008; Yang, Li, Wang, & Hendriks, 2010). This study focuses on the situational factors, especially highlighting the effect of conflict type and hierarchy between the disputants. The findings of this study thus will provide a new view to our understanding of lay third parties' side-taking choice in a conflict. Second, by considering lay third parties' integrity, this research identifies a new individual differences factor that shapes their side-taking reaction.

In the following paragraphs, first the hypotheses will be developed, followed by the method section, and then the results will be presented. Finally, conclusions, practical implications and possible limitations are discussed.

Theoretical framework and hypotheses development

The four types of side-taking preferences by lay third parties

When confronted with an interpersonal conflict, the lay third party's first action will be to collect information (Van de Vliert, 1981). During the collection of information the third party usually takes three criteria into account; justice, relationship with the disputants, and transaction costs when intervening in the conflict (Yang *et al.*, 2009). Based on these three criteria Yang *et al.* (2009) defined four types of side-taking preferences of the lay third party, respectively: *morality*, *relational*, and *sanction avoiding* and *reward approaching (self-interest)* based preferences for side-taking.

Morality based preference for side-taking. In justice literature there has been identified three types of justice over the last decades; *distributive* (main concern is on the fairness of the outcomes in comparison to one's own inputs and that of others), *procedural* (concern about the

fairness of the procedure of the distribution) and *interactional* justice (concern about the statements and behaviors used by disputants) (Colquitt, Conlon, Wesson, Porter &, Ng, 2001).

When a lay third party is confronted with a conflict, he/she will collect information about the issue of the conflict and is concerned about the arguments being used by the disputants to defend their position on this issue. A lay third party will consider the *justice* or *legitimacy* of those arguments and actions made by each of the disputants, and will judge whether the arguments are fair, reasonable, proper, or appropriate. Based on those judgments he/she will choose the side of the party whose arguments are, at least according to the lay third party, indeed fair, reasonable and appropriate (Yang *et al*, 2010).

Relational based preference for side-taking. When a lay third party chooses sides, it is likely that they support the side of the disputant with whom they have a close relationship (Yang, Van de Vliert & Shi, 2007). This theoretical argument is confirmed by an empirical study done by the sociologist Black (1993). In his study among different cultures, arranging from Eastern, Tribal societies to Western societies, he found that (lay) third parties will choose to support the side with whom they have a better relation and side against the other (with whom they do not hold that strong relation).

Lay third parties, unlike formal third parties (mediators, arbitrators), often have an ongoing relationship (e.g. colleague, friend) with at least one the conflicting parties. From this point of view a concern for and collecting information about the relationship held by the lay third party with the disputants becomes relevant and significant when a lay third party determines which side he/she is on.

Self-interest based preference for side-taking. Another piece of information that lay third parties will collect when faced with an interpersonal conflict is the possible consequences of their side-taking. Pro's and con's, benefits and costs are weighed against each other in order to decide which side to choose. They relate the outcome of the conflict to themselves in such a way that lay third parties will consider the positive outcome that they can receive or the negative outcome that they can avoid. This type of consideration highlights the self-interest based preference for side-taking.

Self-interests based preference for side-taking can be further explained in two directions. One is that the lay third party is focused on the possible negative costs of choosing a particular side (e.g. sanctions or punishments promised by the conflicting parties). To avoid the negative consequences, he/she will then choose the side of the disputant who has a higher possibility to give him/her punishment. This preference is referred to as *sanction avoiding based preference for side-taking*. The other direction is that lay third parties put their focus on the possible gains in their side-taking decision and will support the disputant who will provide the most benefits (e.g. a promise that the disputant will support his/her plan at the board of directors). This preference is referred to as *reward approaching based preference for side-taking*.

Types of conflict and side-taking preferences

Each conflict has its own features. For example, is the conflict about task or about personal issues, and who are having a conflict? Regarding the conflict in the introduction, Bart and Tom are having a conflict about the work that has to be done. Their relationship is that of colleagues, with the same responsibilities and privileges. As mentioned previously, in this study I am interested in the effect of *conflict type* and *hierarchical (a)symmetry between the disputants on lay third party's preference for side-taking*.

Two types of conflict have been distinguished in conflict literature, although researchers name them differently. For example, Guetzkow and Gyr (1954) distinguished 'affective' conflicts (referring to conflicts in interpersonal relations) from 'substantive' conflicts (referring to group tasks conflicts). Coser (1956) named them 'emotional' versus 'goal-oriented' conflicts. Pinkley (1990) preferred the term 'task' versus 'relationship' conflicts in her multidimensional scaling study.

Building on her empirical study and previous research, Jehn (1997) proposed a distinction between 'task-focused' and 'relationship-focused' conflicts. This distinction is by now well acknowledged in the conflict literature. De Dreu and Weingart (2003, p. 741) summarized this distinction as, "because team members contribute to the team through social inputs and task inputs, conflict in teams are concerned with relationship and task-related issues". Relationship conflicts concern interpersonal relations *(relationship conflict)* and task-related conflicts concern the tasks being performed *(task conflict)*. "This division between task and relationship leads to different predictions about the effect of conflict on group outcomes" (Jehn, 1997, p. 531).

Jehn's (1997) qualitative analyses and other empirical research (e.g. Evan, 1965; Gladstein, 1984; Wall, & Nolan, 1986; Deutsch, 1969) found that relational conflict decreased goodwill and mutual understanding, and was detrimental to satisfaction and performance. An important element of conflict is emotions. Conflict is associated with stress and threat, which increases emotional responses and negative arousal. Emotions tend to overrun and oversimplify rational and instrumental reasoning (Thomas, 1992).

With regard to the lay third party faced with an interpersonal relationship conflict, an antagonistic attitude between the disputants may also arouse emotional reactions of the disputants. This signifies that lay third parties will also take their own feelings towards the disputants into account when making their side-taking choice.

The classic social balance theory (Heider, 1958) predicts that a third party will try to maintain a balanced state by developing a less positive or even a negative attitude towards the party with whom he/she does not hold a strong relationship and a more positive attitude towards the close party. These positive feelings "impels the lay third party to process information in a conflict situation through selective perception and selective memory" (Pruitt, & Carnavale, 1993; Pruitt, & Kim, 2004, from Yang *et al.,* 2007, p.440). This selective perception and memory will lead a lay third party to interpret information given by the close party in a way that is conform the original attitude to maintain the balanced state. Therefore I assume that a relationship conflict primes lay third parties to pay attention to their relationships with the disputants, when the issue is personal they will be led more by emotions and aroused feelings (than actual facts or reasonable arguments) and will choose the side based on their relationship with the disputants.

> ***Hypothesis 1: Relationship conflict is positively related to relational based preference for side-taking.***

On the other hand, task related conflicts appear to have a more positive effect on group and organizational outcomes. Task conflicts tend to increase decision quality through incorporating devil's advocacy roles and constructive criticism (e.g. Guetzkow, & Gyr, 1954; Kabanoff, 1991; Jehn, 1995, Cosier, & Rose, 1977, Amason, 1996). Thus, individuals are more receptive for criticism and feedback and more willing to express them as well. Disputants with task related conflicts are able to go beyond the conflict and try to use each others' capabilities

and prior knowledge to resolve the conflict and learn from the situation. They pay attention to the arguments and criticism expressed by the other disputant.

With regard to the lay third party faced with an interpersonal task conflict, he/she might also collect information about the conflict issue and arguments held by the conflicting parties and will be sensitive for the quality of those arguments. In a study of interpretations of conflict, Pinkley (1990) found that, on the dimension of Intellectual (focus on the facts and thoughts involved) vs. Emotional (focus on the feelings involved, such as jealousy, hatred, anger, frustration) for conflict resolution, third parties especially mediators tend to use the intellectual dimension in framing the conflict. I believe that this may apply to lay third parties as well: A task conflict will direct lay third parties' attention to the facts and arguments being proposed by the disputants. Their judgments will be mainly based on the legitimacy and reasonability of those arguments.

Hypothesis 2: Task conflict is positively related to morality based preference of side-taking.

The moderation effect of hierarchy between disputants on the relationship between conflict type and side-taking preferences

Lay third parties also pay attention to other factors, for instance, who are having the conflict? I suppose the hierarchical relationships between disputants (e.g. Bart and Tom are colleagues or Bart is Tom's supervisor) will influence lay third parties side-taking preferences.

A hierarchical asymmetric (dyadic) relationship is based on dependence and according to Kabanoff (1991, p. 422) can be explained as: "A has power over B to the extent that B depends on A to supply B with outcomes (or resources) that B values and for which B has no alternative source or supply". Keltner, Gruenfeld, and Anderson (2003, p. 265) define an individual's power as the "relative capacity to modify others' states by providing or withholding resources or administering punishments". These resources and punishments can be material or social of nature and reflects other individuals' dependence on those recourses (Keltner *et al.*, 2003).

In conflict situations power differences are often salient, De Dreu, Giebels and Van de Vliert (1998) found superior-subordinate power differences leads superiors to a greater use of threats and sanctions. By contrast, subordinates are less likely to harm a high status co-worker or supervisor, because of the latter's retribution potential (Aquino, 2000).

As mentioned previously, side-taking reaction by a lay third party starts with information collection. Based on the information he/she has collected, the lay third party will determine his/her position in the conflict. According to coalition formation theories and role conflict theories, the third party will determine his/her choice of sides based on the expected (negative or positive) sanctions from both sides and his/her own legitimacy judgments. This legitimacy judgment is about the idea that a third party thinks one party is entitled to the lay third party's support. This has various grounds, e.g. "the legitimacy of the social position occupied by one of the parties, the legitimacy of the stand that one of the conflicting parties takes in the conflict, and the legitimacy of the party's conflict handling" (Van de Vliert, 1981, p. 504).

Based on the above I assume, a hierarchical asymmetric relationship between the conflicting parties will influence the relationship of conflict type and side-taking preferences. When a lay third party is faced with a relationship conflict between disputants with a hierarchical asymmetry, his/her preference for relational based side-taking will become weaker. This is because the lay third party will focus on the sanctions that he/she could receive from the powerful party instead of focusing on the relationship he/she holds with the disputants.

However, in a task conflict situation I expect that the morality based preference for side-taking will also become weaker when there is a hierarchical asymmetry between the disputants. Although the side-taking choice is based on both expected sanctions and legitimacy, the information collected by the third party about the positive and negative effects of the conflict and the choice of side-taking are primarily for him/herself and therefore it will be less probable to take sides based on morality preferences.

Hypothesis 3a: The relationship between relationship conflict and relational based preference for side-taking becomes weaker when there exists a hierarchical asymmetry between the disputants

Hypothesis 3b: The relationship between task conflict and morality based preference for side-taking becomes weaker when there exists a hierarchical asymmetry between the disputants.

The moderation effect of lay third parties' integrity orientation on the relationship between conflict type and side-taking preferences

In everyday life, even faced with the same side-taking dilemma, people often choose different sides. This suggests that individual differences should be taken into account in studying lay third parties side-taking preferences. In this study, I use individuals' integrity orientation to explain the side-taking variations across lay third parties.

An individual's integrity orientation refers to the degree to which an individual is sincere, fair and modest, and avoids greed. Individuals with a strong integrity orientation are not inclined to manipulate others for personal gain and violating rules, and are relatively uninterested in wealth, luxury, status, and privileges. Individuals with a weak integrity orientation put themselves first, value material things, have more difficulty to resist the temptation to break rules whenever this has a positive outcome for them, and are more likely to flatter another person or cringe as long as this helps them to achieve their personal goals (Ashton & Lee, 2001, 2005; De Vries, Ashton, & Lee 2009).

With regard to side-taking by lay third parties, I expect that individuals with a strong integrity orientation will put the focus on the conflict issue and the arguments used by the conflicting parties. By contrast, individuals who have a weak integrity orientation will put their focus on the outcome of their side-taking choice. They will calculate the extent to which the outcomes can be positive or the least negative for them. I assume that the relationships proposed in hypotheses 1 and 2 will be stronger when the lay third party has a strong integrity orientation. With regard to hypothesis 1, lay third parties with a strong integrity orientation are genuine in their interpersonal relations (Lee *et al.,* 2005), will be loyal to the ones that are close to them, and thus are more inclined to take sides based on their relational preference. With regard to hypothesis 2, task conflict already is supposed to have an influence on morality based preference for side-taking. Lay third parties who have a strong integrity orientation may especially like to focus on the conflict issue and arguments used by the conflicting parties, thus the relationship between task conflict and the moral based preference for side-taking will be strengthened.

Hypothesis 4a: A lay third party with a strong integrity orientation will strengthen the relationship between relationship conflict and relational based preference for side-taking.

Hypothesis 4b: A lay third party with a strong integrity orientation will strengthen the relationship between task conflict and morality based preference for side-taking.

Method

Participants

We approached 166 respondents who showed interest in our study. Only 104 of them returned the completed questionnaires. We removed 6 respondents because their age was above 40. A sample of 98 participants remained for further analysis. Of the 98 participants 34,7 percent was male; $M_{age} = 24,47$ with a range from 18 to 38; 74,5 percent of the participants was student, of which 58,2 percent reported to have a part-time job.

Research material

A 2x2 research design was performed with the dependent variable of *side taking preference* (STP) and the independent variables of *conflict type* (*relationship* vs. *task conflict*), and *hierarchy* (*symmetric* vs. *asymmetric*) or *integrity orientation (strong* vs. *weak)* as moderators.

To get the participants involved in the conflict, we decided to use video-footage for this study. To create such a conflict video, we first wrote two different scenario scripts based on the theoretical framework of Jehn (1997) about relationship and task conflict.

In the *relationship conflict situation,* the conflict is about personal matters. Ellen has the idea that Lieke always makes her do the "dirty" work and she is fed up with that, while Lieke thinks Ellen always behaves like a "drama queen" if she asks her to do something. Disliking makes the conflict more personal and relationship oriented.

In the *task conflict situation* Lieke and Ellen have finished the selection procedure for their team and now need to call and inform the candidates about their decision. Lieke proposes to do the calling together, but Ellen thinks that making the phone calls is Lieke's task since Ellen has already done all the preparation for the interviews. Lieke does not agree with that because she thinks working together means doing the different tasks together by splitting the tasks (in this case half of the phone calls will be done by Lieke and the other half by Ellen). Ellen on her turn does not agree with Lieke, Ellen believes that working together means sharing a goal but each team member has his/her own personal tasks. Obviously, they are having a conflict about dividing the tasks in this selection procedure, which makes it a *task* conflict.

With regard to the hierarchy, in the *hierarchical asymmetry situation*, one of the disputants (Lieke) introduced herself as the chairman of the team. In the *equal situation*, there

was no introduction of a chairman and before the video started we emphasized their equal status in the group.

We made other characteristics of the disputants (Ellen and Lieke) as equivalent as possible. They both were female, had the same major for their study, and were both in their final year at the University. With this arrangement, the only difference between the two disputants was then the hierarchical status. The environment in which the conflict occurred was quite and undisturbed. Two disputants were sitting at a table with a blank white wall in the back. The two actors are friends of mine (with a little musical acting experience) and the camera we used to tape the video was from my colleague Sanneke Verschuur. After shooting the videos we showed them to eight of our friends to make sure the purpose of our distinction between relationship and conflict was real and clear enough. Indeed they could clearly make a distinction between the relationship conflict video and the task conflict video.

After the development of the experimental materials and the questionnaire, we did a pilot study among acquaintances. The results of the pilot study showed that the questions of the manipulation check for conflict type and hierarchical status were not well understood, and therefore we could not conclude whether the manipulation in our videos worked out. So we needed to change those questions in more concrete and distinctive questions about the conflict and the disputants' relationship. Again, we conducted a pilot study with twelve participants and those results showed us the questions now were well understood, and we could include those participants in our final data as well.

Procedure

The participants were recruited via the participant pool of thesistools.nl, students from the course of 'Research within Organizations' of the department of Social Sciences from the University of Twente, and informal contacts. All participants got a brief introduction (orally or by e-mail) about the experimental task and received a link to approach the online questionnaire and a conflict video.

In the introduction, participants read that the purpose of the study was about virtual team work. They needed to complete a task with two other members, who introduced themselves through an online video. With this cover story, we try to strengthen participants' involvement to the conflict and reinforce their role as a lay third party instead of a bystander. The participants clicked on the link and then started the questionnaire. The questions consisted of demographic

information (age, gender, education, work experience etc.), and measures of their integrity and power distance orientation. After they filled in the first part of the questionnaire, the conflict video began and the respondents were randomly assigned to one of the four videos.

After watching the conflict between their 'future team members', the respondents assessed the second part of the questionnaire. They needed to answer questions about their understanding of the video, the emotions that they felt while watching the video, how they perceived the conflict (cognition part), and their preferences for taking sides with one of the disputants.

At the end of the questionnaire and after the participants submitted their answers, they received a message in which the true purpose of the study was revealed. Before participating in the study the participants were assured that their answers were handled confidentially and used for scientific purposes only.

Measures

Conflict type. Six questions were used to check the manipulation of the conflict type (relationship or task conflict). To measure the relationship conflict manipulation we asked the following two questions: "Ellen and Lieke fought about personal issues" and "Ellen and Lieke do not like each other because of non-work (social or personality) issues". To check the task conflict manipulation we asked: "Ellen and Lieke fought about work matters" and "Ellen and Lieke have task dividing disagreements". In addition to those questions we also asked whether Ellen en Lieke where having a more task related than a personal (relational) conflict and the other way around. The Cronbach's α coefficient for the three questions was for the relationship conflict .84, and for the task conflict .78.

Hierarchical (a)symmetry. Two statements, "Lieke and Ellen have the same position is this team" and "In this team Lieke is the chairman" were used to check the manipulation of the hierarchical (a)symmetry. The first statement was recoded in reverse in order to assess Cronbach's α coefficient, this was .41.

Involvement. To check whether our respondents felt involved in this conflict and feel themselves as a lay third party, we asked them to indicate the extent to which they experienced

this conflict (1 = strongly disagree to 5 = strongly agree). Three questions were asked, "I consider myself one of the disputants", "I consider myself a third party who is confronted with this conflict" and "I consider myself an outsider in their conflict".

Integrity orientation. Participants' integrity orientation was measured by using a part of the HEXACO Personality Inventory (HEXACO-PI-100) Facet Scale developed by Ashton and Lee (2001). To assess the integrity we used the items of the Honesty-Humility dimension. Ten items were adopted from the original 16 for our study. Examples of questions are "If I knew that I could never get caught, I would be willing to steal a thousand euro's", "If I want something from someone, I will laugh at that persons worst jokes" and "I'd be tempted to use counterfeit money, if I were sure I could get away with it". The Cronbach's α for the 10 questions was .66.

Side-taking preferences (STP). To determine the side-taking preferences we selected 12 items from the *Side-Taking Motive Scale* from Yang *et al.* (2010) to measure morality (3 items), relational (3 items), sanction avoiding (3 items) and reward approaching (3 items) based preference for side-taking. All items were measured on a five-point Likert scale (1 = strongly disagree, and 5 = strongly agree). Cronbach's α coefficient was .61 for the 3 items measuring STP Morality (*e.g.*, "I will support the party whose arguments sound right to me"), .85 for the 3 items measuring STP Relational (*e.g.,* "I will consider the relationship I have with Lieke and Ellen when taking sides"), .79 for the 3 items measuring STP Sanction avoiding (*e.g.,* "I will have to agree with Lieke (Ellen) if I know Lieke (or Ellen) will make a trouble to me for the consequences"), and .84 for the 3 items measuring STP Reward approaching (*e.g.,* "I will choose the party who can reward me in the future").

Results

Descriptive statistics

Table 1 shows the descriptive statistics between the variables of analyses. The results showed that STP Morality was the most preferred ($M = 3.44$) and STP Sanction avoiding the least ($M = 1.92$). The correlation results showed that age was negatively correlated to STP Morality ($r = -.20$; $p < .05$) and STP Sanction avoiding ($r = -.26$; $p < .05$), which indicates that the older the participants are, the less inclination they have to take sides based on morality or sanction avoiding. Gender is positively correlated to integrity orientation ($r = .28$; $p < .01$),

which indicates that female individuals have a stronger integrity orientation than male individuals. Integrity orientation is negatively related to STP Reward approaching ($r = -.41$; $p < .01$), which indicates that individuals with a strong integrity orientation will be less inclined to be influenced by rewards given by the disputants. The results also showed that the four types of side-taking preferences (STP's) were positively correlated to each other.

Table 1 Descriptive statistics and Correlations

	M	SD	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1. Age	24.47	3.76	-	-.17	-.04	**-.20***	-.06	-.15	**-.26***
2. Gender	1.65	.48		-	**.28****	.02	.16	.13	.02
3. Integrity orientation	3.47	.58			-	-.05	-.16	**-.41****	-.08
4. STP.Morality	3.44	.84				-	**.40****	**.26***	**.30****
5. STP.Relational	2.56	1.00					-	**.42****	**.62****
6. STP.Sanction	2.80	1.06						-	**.39****
7. STP.Reward	1.92	.75							-

$^*p<0.05$, $^{**}p<0.01$ (two tailed)

STP = Side taking preference

Manipulation check

To check whether the manipulation for conflict type and hierarchical (a)symmetry worked out I examined the means and standard deviations within each treatment (the four scenario's). As is to see in Table 2, the mean scores for the manipulation check for the relationship conflict were higher for the relationship conflict treatment (RC) than for the task conflict treatment (TC): In the relationship conflicts: $M_{RC\ equal\ status} = 3.84$ ($SD = .82$) and $M_{RC\ hierarchical\ asymmetry} = 3.55$ ($SD = .82$), and in the task conflicts: $M_{TC\ equal\ status} = 2.29$ ($SD = 1.14$) and $M_{TC\ hierarchical\ asymmetry} = 1.87$ ($SD = .55$).

The mean scores for the manipulation check for task conflict showed the other way around: In the task conflicts: $M_{TC\ equal\ status} = 3.88$ ($SD = .80$) and $M_{TC\ hierarchical\ asymmetry} = 4.37$ ($SD = .57$), and in the relationship conflicts: $M_{RC\ equal\ status} = 2.97$ ($SD = .83$) and $M_{RC\ hierarchical\ asymmetry} = 2.98$ ($SD = .99$).

The mean scores for the manipulation check on the relationship conflict showed the other way around: In the relationship conflicts: $M_{RC\ equal\ status} = 3.84$ ($SD = .82$) and $M_{RC\ hierarchical}$

asymmetry = 3.55 (SD = .82), and in the task conflicts: $M_{TC\ equal\ status}$ = 2.29 (SD = 1.14) and M_{TC} _hierarchical asymmetry_ = 1.87 (SD = .55).

Table 2 Means and Standard deviations of the Manipulation check (MC)

	1	2	**3**	**4**	F
	$n = 29$	$n = 23$	$n = 29$	$n = 17$	
Task conflict	2.97 (.83)	2.98 (.99)	3.88 (.80)	4.37 (.57)	**19.24**[*]
Relationship conflict	3.84 (.82)	3.55 (.82)	2.29 (1.14)	1.87 (.55)	**34.43**[*]
Hierarchy	3.04 (1.07)	3.16 (1.06)	2.71 (.79)	3.83 (.86)	**5.73**[*]

Treatment 1   = relationship conflict with equal status

Treatment 2   = relationship conflict with hierarchical asymmetry

Treatment 3   = task conflict with equal status

Treatment 4   = task conflict with hierarchical asymmetry

I also examined the overall means and standard deviations of the manipulation check for conflict type (relationship and task). The results were in line with the manipulation, the mean for the relational conflict significantly higher in the relationship conflict treatment (M_{RC} = 3.68) than in the task conflict treatment (M_{TC} = 2.03), $F_{(1,\ 98)}$ = 96.45, $p < .01$. For the task conflict the results showed the opposite (M_{TC} = 4.19, and M_{RC} = 2.97), and the difference was also significant $F_{(1,\ 98)}$ = 52.95, $p < .01$. For

With regard to the hierarchy manipulation the results in Table 2 suggests that it was successful as well. Participants reported that they perceived a hierarchical asymmetry between the disputants in the hierarchical asymmetry treatment (M = 3.49), in comparison with the equal status treatment (M = 2.90), with a significant result $F_{(1,\ 98)}$ = 8.38, $p < .01$.

These results above indicate that the participants' perceptions of conflict type and hierarchical (a)symmetry are in accordance with the manipulations.

To check whether the respondents felt involved in this conflict, I asked them to indicate the extent to which they experienced their role in this conflict (1 = strongly disagree to 5 = strongly agree). Three questions were asked ("I consider myself one of the disputants", "… a third party who is confronted with this conflict" and "…an outsider in their conflict") to check this manipulation. A mean comparison showed that the third party role was the highest reported

20

by the participants, $M_{third\ party} = 3.66$ ($SD = 1.34$), so the manipulation for involvement worked out as well.

Hypothesis testing

To test the hypotheses, I conducted a multiple regression analyses by following the procedures from Aiken and West (1991). In the first step, I controlled for gender and age, and for the fact that the four preferences for side-taking were correlated with each other. In the second step, the three predictors (conflict type, hierarchy and integrity orientation) were entered in the equations. In the third step, the two-way interactions of conflict type and hierarchy, and conflict type and integrity orientation were entered. Table 3 shows the results of these regression analyses of conflict type, hierarchy between disputants, and lay third parties' integrity orientation on the side-taking preferences.

In hypothesis 1 I assume that relationship conflict is positively related to STP Relational, and in hypothesis 2 I assume that task conflict is positively related to STP Morality. According to the results in Table 3 those two hypotheses were confirmed. Conflict type had a negative influence on STP Relational ($b_{STP\ relational} = -.25$, $p > .01$) and a positive influence on STP Morality ($b_{STP\ morality} = .36$, $p < .01$). In addition, relationship conflict also influences STP Reward approaching ($b_{STP\ reward} = -.22$, $p < .05$) and task conflict influences STP Sanction avoiding ($b_{STP\ sanction} = .26$, $p < .01$).

In hypothesis 3 I assume a moderation effect of hierarchy on the relationship of conflict type and relational and morality based preference for side-taking preference. The results did not show a significant interaction effect of conflict type and hierarchy on STP Morality, which rejects hypotheses 3b. However, the results did show an interaction effect on STP Relational ($b_{conflict\ type*hierarchy} = .14$, $p < .05$) and STP Sanction avoiding ($b_{conflict\ type*hierarchy} = .13$, $p < .10$).

I further depicted the two-way interactions (Figures 1 and 2) to refine the impact of hierarchy. The findings revealed that the influence of hierarchy on STP Relational became stronger in a relationship conflict ($b_{simple\ slope} = -.37$, $p < .01$), which is contrary to what I expected in hypotheses 3a (see Figure 1). The influence of hierarchy on STP Sanction avoiding became stronger in a task conflict (see Figure 2; $b_{simple\ slope} = .42$, $p < .01$).

Table 3 The impact of conflict type, hierarchy and moral orientation side-taking preferences

	Relational	Morality	Sanction av.	Reward ap.
Control variables				
Gender	.32[*]	-.33	-.16	.21
Age	.03[†]	-.05[*]	-.02	-.04[*]
From up to down per STP column:				
STP Mor - Rel - Rel - Rel	.29[**]	.51[**]	-.09	.15[†]
STP San - San - Mor - Mor	.52[**]	-.14	.65[**]	.09
STP Rew - Rew - Rew - San	.06	.19[†]	.25[**]	.29[*]
Predictors				
Conflict type	**-.25[**]**	**.36[**]**	**.26[**]**	**-.22[*]**
(0= relationship; 1= task)				
Hierarchy	**.21[**]**	-.08	**-.13[†]**	.02
Integrity orientation	**-.13[†]**	**.14[†]**	**.17[*]**	**-.41[**]**
2-way interaction				
Conflict type*hierarchy	**.14[*]**	-.06	**-.13[*]**	.04
Conflict type*MO	-.03	-.05	-.09	**.18[*]**
F	13.73[**]	4.09[**]	9.12[**]	7.25[**]
R^2	.61	.32	.51	.46

Note. Regression coefficients shown are unstandardized beta weights in step 3.

[†]$p<0.10$, [*]$p<0.05$, [**]$p<0.01$
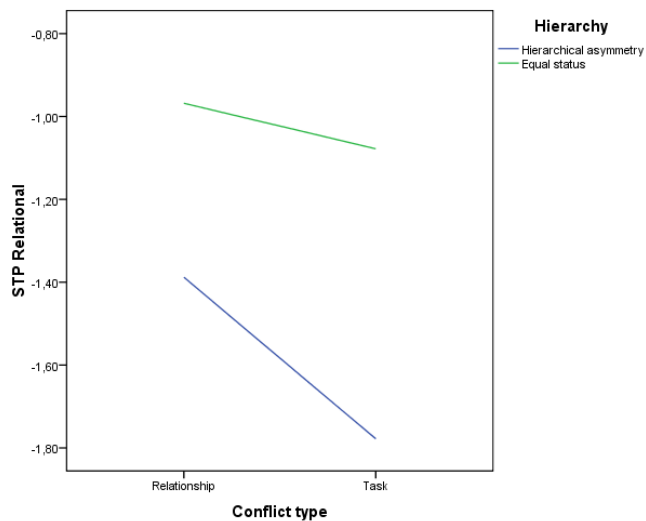
Figure 1 The moderation effect of conflict type and hierarchy on relational based preference for side-taking.
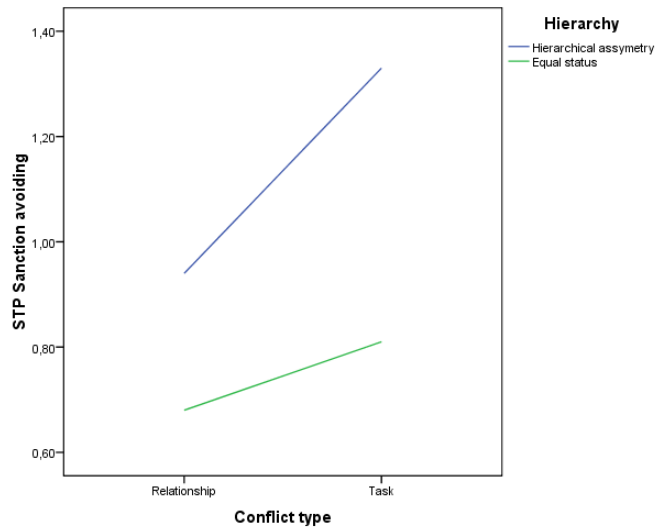
Figure 2 The moderation effect of conflict type and hierarchy on sanction avoiding based preference for side-taking.

In hypothesis 4 I assume a moderation effect of lay third party's integrity orientation on the relationship of conflict type and relational and morality based preference for side-taking. With regard to what I hypothesized, I did not find a significant interaction effect of conflict type and integrity orientation on STP Relational and Morality, which rejects hypotheses 4a and 4b. However, the results showed an interaction effect of conflict type and integrity orientation on STP Reward approaching ($b_{conflict\ type*integrity} = .18$, $p < .05$). A depiction of this interaction (Figure 3) showed that a weak integrity orientation strengthens STP Reward approaching only in the relationship conflict ($b_{simple\ slope} = -.28$, $p < .10$).

Figure 3 The moderation effect of conflict type and lay third party's integrity orientation on reward approaching based preference for side-taking.
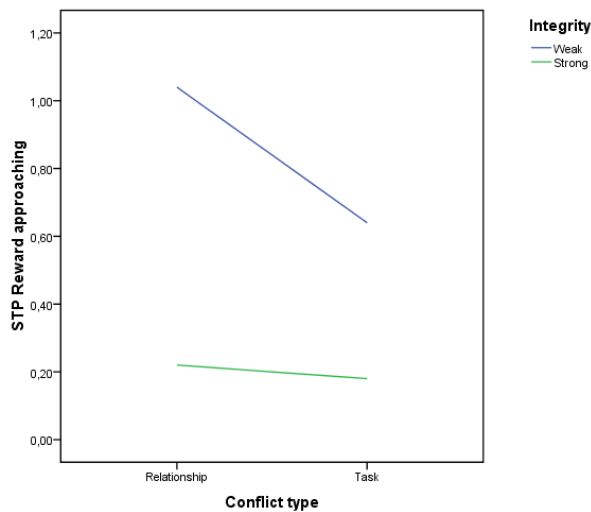
Discussion

Taking sides is one of the most salient responses for a lay third party faced with a conflict. Research on the side-taking by lay third parties are mostly concerned about the interpersonal relationships between the lay third party and the disputants, and about lay third parties' self-interest and personality (e.g. personality measured by the Five Factor Personality Inventory, by cultural differences like Individualism vs. Collectivism, and by their moral or expedient orientation). This study focuses on the situational context in which the conflict occurs: conflict type and hierarchical relationships between disputants are taken into account in determining the side-taking preferences of a lay third party. Additionally, since personality indeed has proven to have influence on the side taking preference I included the lay third parties' integrity orientation as a moderator variable.

Regarding to the impact of the situational factors and integrity orientation, the findings suggest an influence of those factors on side-taking preferences. Namely, conflict type does have an influence on relational and morality based preference for side taking, which confirms my hypotheses. Though not in line with my hypotheses, hierarchy does have a moderating effect on the relationship between conflict type and side-taking preferences. The same goes for the lay third parties' integrity orientation. Relying on this results and in combination with the purpose of this study, I would like to highlight three points for discussion.

First, the negative influence of conflict type on relational based preference for side-taking implies that relationship conflicts direct lay third parties to take sides based on relational preferences. The positive effect of conflict type on morality based preference for side-taking implies that task conflicts make lay third parties to be inclined to take sides based on morality preferences. Those two are in line with the hypotheses. Besides the hypothesis testing, the results also demonstrate that conflict type has an impact on reward approaching and sanction avoiding based preference for side-taking. That is, relationship conflict tends to lead to reward approaching based preference for side-taking, and task conflict to sanction avoiding based preference for side-taking. In conclusion, I theoretically and empirically substantiated the

relationship between conflict type and side taking preferences and therefore identified a situational factor influencing the side-taking preferences of lay third parties.

Second, hierarchy was hypothesized to have a moderating effect on the relationship between conflict type and relational and morality based preference for side taking. Though the results were contrary to what I hypothesized, they did indicate that the situational factor of hierarchy indeed influences a lay third party's side-taking preferences. The results showed that hierarchy has an influence on relational and sanction avoiding based preference for side-taking. More importantly, hierarchy moderates the effect of conflict type on the side-taking preferences. In such a way that hierarchy strengthens the relationship between relationship conflict and relational based preference for side-taking. This indicates that lay third parties who are faced with a relationship conflict are even more inclined to take sides based on relational preferences when there exists a hierarchical asymmetry between the disputants. An explanation could be that since relationship conflict inclines individuals to put their focus on their relationship with the disputants, those individuals do not want to be influence by the external factor of hierarchy, and will after noting the hierarchical asymmetry be even more focused on their relationship with the disputants.

Conflict type also works together with hierarchy on sanction avoiding based preference for side-taking. In such a way that hierarchy especially inclines lay third parties to take sides based on sanction avoiding preferences when faced with a task conflict. Task conflict is theorized and empirically proven to influence morality based preference for side-taking. It could be that morality and sanction avoiding based preferences are related to each other. Lay third parties choosing sides based on morality preferences focus on the facts and arguments of the disputants and will judge whether these are fair, reasonable and appropriate (Yang *et al.*, 2010). According to coalition formation theories and role conflict theories, the third party will choose sides based on the expected (negative or positive) sanctions from the disputants and his/her own legitimacy (and therefore moral) judgments. (Van de Vliert, 1981). In case of hierarchical asymmetry between the disputants, one of them is entitled to punish or give sanctions. A lay third party therefore might argue that it is morally right, legit and appropriate to choose the side of the person higher in hierarchy.

Third, with regard to a lay third party's integrity orientation the results show that lay third parties with a weak integrity orientation tend to take sides based on reward approaching

preferences especially when faced with a relationship conflict. This is an interesting outcome, because relationship conflict is theorized and empirically proven to incline relational based preference for side-taking. Apparently, lay third parties with a weak integrity orientation put themselves first, value material things, and are more likely to cringe as long as this helps them to achieve their personal goals (Ashton & Lee, 2001, 2005; De Vries, Ashton, & Lee 2009) and in that sense do not feel the need to be loyal. Instead, faced with a relationship conflict in which emotions are aroused, lay third parties tend to focus even more on material things and personal gains, and prefer to take sides based on reward approaching preferences.

In this study I hypothesized moderating effects of hierarchy and lay third parties' integrity orientation on the relationship between conflict type and relational and morality based preferences for side-taking. Although I did not get the expected results, I did find the main effects of those variables, in this sense, I identified three new variables influencing side-taking preferences, namely, conflict type, hierarchy, and lay third party's integrity orientation. These variables should be taking in to account in future research. The findings of this study show that these three variables sometimes influence lay third parties' side-taking preferences independently and other times work together in the two-way interaction (although not like what I expected). It is therefore recommendable that future research needs to further refine the joint effect of conflict type, hierarchy and lay third parties' integrity orientation on the side-taking preferences.

Limitations

I would like to note three limitations when interpreting the results of this study. The first limitation concerns conflict type. Although, relationship conflict and task conflict are theorized as distinct from each other, in everyday life one conflict type often leads to the other type, even without the notice of the people involved (Janssen, Van de Vliert, & Veenstra, 1999). A comment from one of the participants in the relationship conflict situation was: *It was just as if the conflict about dividing the tasks turned into a relationship conflict.* This shows that future research should be very careful on how to control for the distinction between the different conflict types.

The second limitation concerns the hierarchy manipulation. I found a relatively low Cronbach's α coefficient on this manipulation check. This may be due to the fact that in the equal status situation one of the disputants is very talkative and overruling the other by walking

out of the conversation. Although the emphasis was on their equal status, the participants could think that he/she has a difference in status. That is not in the same way that they officially have a role difference (one is chairman), but one apparently outweighed the other. Therefore, future research should take into account the amount of talking time each of the disputants should have in order to control for equal status.

A third limitation of this study concerns lay third parties' integrity orientation. As mentioned previously, integrity orientation was measured by using a part of the HEXACO Personality Inventory (HEXACO-PI-100) Facet Scales developed by Ashton and Lee (2001). This is a six dimension personality scale. To assess the integrity orientation I used items from the Honesty-Humility dimension and selected 10 questions of the original 16 for this study. The fact is that the construct of Honesty-Humility is divided into four sub-constructs (Sincerity, Fairness, Greed-Avoidance and Modesty). The original HEXACO-PI consists of 100 items of which 16 items to measure the Honesty-Humility construct, but Ashton and Lee also developed a shorter version (HEXACO-60) which consist of 60 items of which 10 items (α = .77) to measure Honesty-Humility. In this study I did not use exactly those ten items, but selected ten items by myself to use for the questionnaire. It may be that these selected questions are not in balance for the four sub constructs and in that way not representative for the construct in total. In addition, those 10 items were hustled with items for the construct of power distance orientation in the questionnaire. In that way the participants were constantly going 'back and forth' in answering these questions and no clear distribution came out of their answers.

The above mentioned limitations can be improved in future research. Although participants did identify the distinction between conflict type and hierarchy, apparently the variables need to be more controlled in order to improve the current questionnaire and therefore to be better able to assess the influence of these variables on lay third parties' side-taking preferences. In addition, to correctly assess the lay third parties' integrity orientation it may be wise to use the original 16 items of the HEXACO-PI or otherwise the 10 items suggested by Ashton and Lee (2001). With these improvements it would be interesting again to study the influence of conflict type, hierarchy and integrity orientation and even take it to the level of a three-way interaction to see how they work together on the side-taking preferences.

Practical implications

Two practical implications are suggested to conclude this thesis. The first is concerning the disputants who are in a conflict. They should not only take the situation into account but also the personality of the lay third party in order to form an effective coalition. Lay third parties with a weak integrity orientation are self-interest based, and are motivated by expected rewards. In order to get their support, disputants do not come up with immaterial promises, like your friendship or help, but reward them instantly with tangible goods, especially when you are in a conflict about personal disliking.

The second advice goes to the practitioners working in the conflict field (e.g. arbitrators, mediators) whose primary goals are to resolve or settle conflicts. By knowing the influence of the situational factors and the personal factor of integrity orientation, professionals should relate this to themselves as well because this can influence their way of handling the conflict. The most important and at the same time the most difficult part of their job is to stay neutral. By being aware of the influence of these factors professionals probably will better be able to decide or direct the outcome and know why they do so.

References

Aiken, L. S., & West, S. G. (1991). *Multiple regression: Testing and Interpreting Interactions*. Newbury Park, CA: Sage.

Amason, A.C. (1996). *Distinguishing the effects of functional and dysfunctional conflict on strategic decision making: Resolving a paradox for top management teams.* Academy of Management Journal, 5, 123-148.

Ashton, M.C. & Lee, K. (2001). A theoretical basis for the major dimensions of personality. *European Journal of Personality, 15*, 327-353.

Ashton, M.C. & Lee, K. (2005). Honesty-humility, the Big Five, and the Five-Factor Model. *Journal of Personality, 73*, 1321-1353.

Aquino, K. (2000). Structural and individual determinants of workplace victimization: The effects of hierarchical status and conflict management style. *Journal of Management*, 26, 171-193.

Black, D. (1993). *The social structure of right and wrong*. San Diego, CA: Academic Press.

Colquitt, J. A., Conlon, D. E.,Wesson, M. J., Porter, C., & Ng., K. Y. (2001). Justice at the millennium: A meta-analytic review of 25 years of organizational justice research. *Journal of Applied Psychology, 86,* 425–445.

Coser, K. (1956) *The Functions of Social Conflict.* Glencoe, IL: Free Press.

Cosier, R., & Rose, G. (1977) Cognitive conflict and goal conflict effects on task. O*rganizational Behavior and Human Performance*, 19, 378-391.

De Dreu, C. K. W., Giebels, E., & Van de Vliert, E. (1998). Social Motives and Trust in Integrative Negotiation: The Disruptive Effects of Punitive Capability. Journal of Applied Psychology, 83 (3), 408-422.

De Dreu, C. K. W., & Weingart, L. R. (2003). Task Versus Relationship Conflict, Team Performance, and Team Member Satisfaction: A Meta-Analysis. *Journal of Applied Psychology, 88(4),* 741-749.

De Vries, R.E., Ashton, M.C., & Lee, K. (2009) De zes belangrijkste persoonlijkheidsdimensies en de HEXACO Persoonlijkheidsvragenlijst[1]. Gedrag & Organisatie, 3, 232-274

Deutsch, M. (1969). Conflicts: Productive and destructive. *Journal of Social Issues*, 25, 7-41.

Evan, W. (1965). Conflict and performance in R&D organizations. *Industrial Management Review*, 7, 37-46.

Gladstein, D. (1984). A model of task group effectiveness. *Administrative Science Quarterly*, 29, 499-517.

Guetzkow, H., & Gyr J. (1954). An analysis of conflict in decision-making groups. *Human Relations*, 7, 367-381.

Heider, F. (1958). *The psychology of interpersonal relations.* New York: Wiley.

Jehn, K.A. (1995). A multimethod examination of the benefits and detriments of intragroup conflict. *Administrative Science Quarterly, 40(2),* 256-282.

Jehn, K.A. (1997). A Qualitative Analysis of Conflict Types and Dimensions in Organizational Groups. *Administrative Science Quarterly*, 42, 530-557.

Kabanoff, B. (1991). Equity, equality, power, and conflict. *Academy of Management Review*, 16, 416-441.

Keltner, D., Gruenfeld, D.H., & Anderson, C. (2003). Power, approach, and inhibition. *Psychologicql Review*, 110, 265-284.

Kolb, D. M., & Sheppard, B. H. (1985). Do managers mediate or even arbitrate? *Negotiation Journal,*1, 379-388.

Pinkley, R. L. (1990). Dimensions of conflict frame; Disputant interpretations of conflict. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 75, 117-126.

Pruitt, D.G., & Carnevale, P.J. (1993). *Negotiation in social conflict*. Buckingham: Open University Press.

Pruitt, D. G., & Kim, S. H. (2004). *Social conflict: Escalation, stalemate, and settlement* (3rd ed.). New York: McGraw Hill.

Ross, W.H., & Conlon, D.E. (2000). Hybrid forms of third-party dispute resolution: theoretical implications of combining mediation and arbitration. *The Academy of Management   Review*, 25(2), pp. 416-427.

Thibaut, J., & Walker, L. (1975). *Procedural Justice: A Psychological Analysis*. Hillsdale, N.J.: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, Publishers.

Thomas, K. W. (1992). *Conflict and negotiation processes in organizations." In M. Dunnette and L. Hough (eds.). Handbook of Industrial and Organizational Psychology*: 651-718. Palo   Alto, CA: Consulting Psychologists Press.

Van de Vliert, E. (1981). Siding and other reactions to a conflict: A theory of escalation toward outsiders. *The Journal of Conflict Resolution*, 25(3), pp. 495-520.

Van de Vliert, E. (1997). *Complex interpersonal conflict behavior*. East Sussex: Psychology Press.

Wall, V., & Nolan. L. (1986). Perceptions of inequity, satisfaction, and conflict in task oriented groups. *Human Relations*, 39: 1033-1052.

Yang, H., Li, C., Wang, Q., & Hendriks A.A.J. (2010). What Motivates Lay Third Parties to Take Sides in a Conflict? Examining the Relationships between the Big Five Personality Traits and Side-taking Motives. *European Journal of Personality, Eur. J. Pers*. Published online 27 March 2009 (www.interscience.wiley.com) DOI: 10.1002/per.776

Yang, H., Van de Vliert, E., & Shi, K. (2007). Interpersonal relationship and lay third parties' side-taking preference: a cross-cultural study among Chinese and Dutch. *Journal of Cross-Cultural Psychology*, 38, pp. 438-457.

Yang, H., Van de Vliert, E., & Shi, K. (2009). How lay third parties weigh legitimacy and sanctions in a side-taking dilemma: a study among Chinese and Dutch employees. *Applied Psychology: An International Review*, 58(2), pp. 214-232.

Yang, H., Van de Vliert, E., Shi, K. & Huang, X. (2008). Whose side are you on? Relational Orientations and their impacts on side-taking among Dutch and Chinese employees. *Journal of Occupational and Organizational Psychology*, 81, pp. 713-731.

Picture on title page: White, C., & Liddle, D. (2005). One day 'Eye-opener' course on mediation. Subtracted on 3th of April 2011,
http://oxcheps.new.ox.ac.uk/MediationCourseWeb/MediationCourse.htm.

APPENDIX: Questionnaire

Dear participant,

The purpose of this study is to investigate virtual teamwork. A team including three members has to conduct a task together in this study. You are a part of the team and you will meet two of your team members during a virtual video conference. This means, you can't see your team members in real life, but you will see them live at a online screen. In present time there a lots of global oriented organizations that spend a lot of time & money to make business by travelling. By using video conference, we like to investigate if it's sufficient for global oriented organizations to complete a task by not seeing each other live.

Before you and your team go to work we first need some background information of you and your personality. After that you will see a video in which your teammates will introduce themselves, which will be followed by some last questions.

This will only take about 10 minutes.

Then a link will pop up on your screen, click on the link and you will get a quick introduction of the case and your virtual teamwork may begin. This will maximum take about 15 minutes.

Good luck and thank you for participating in our research!

Background questions

1. Gender   M / F

2. Your age (in years):   ….

3. What is your education?

    a. HBO

    b. WO

    c. Other…

4. What did/do you study?

    a. Social science

    b. Business and Management

    c. Technical science

    d. Medical Science

    e. Other…

5. Are you student or employee (fulltime)?

    a. Student

    b. Employee (go to question 9)

6. In which year of your study are you in? …

7. Do you occupy a part time job a side your study?

    a. Yes

    b. No (go to question 11)

8. If yes, how many hours a week?

    a. < 5

    b. 5-10

c. 10-15

d. 15-20

e. >20

9. In which branch/sector are you working at the moment?

   a. Government

   b. Education

   c. Recruitment/Personnel

   d. Health sector

   e. Financial

   f. Tourism/Horeca

   g. Communication/media/PR

   h. Sales

   i. Other….

10. How many years work experience do you have? …….years

11. *In the following you will find a series of statements about you and how you feel about certain topics. Please read each statement carefully and decide to what extent you agree with that statement. (Please note: with these statements, there are no right answers! Please stay close to yourself while grading the statements)*

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither disagree Nor agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
1	2	3	4	5

Statement	1	2	3	4	5
I wouldn't use flattery to get a raise or promotion at work, even if I thought it would succeed.	1	2	3	4	5
If I knew that I could never get caught, I would be willing to steal a thousand euros.	1	2	3	4	5
Having a lot of money is not especially important to me.	1	2	3	4	5
I think that I am entitled to more respect than the average person is.	1	2	3	4	5
If I want something from someone, I will laugh at that person's worst jokes.	1	2	3	4	5
I would never accept a bribe, even if it were very large.	1	2	3	4	5
I would get a lot of pleasure from owning expensive luxury goods.	1	2	3	4	5
I want people to know that I am an important person of high status.	1	2	3	4	5
I wouldn't pretend to like someone just to get that person to do favors for me.	1	2	3	4	5
I'd be tempted to use counterfeit money, if I were sure I could get away with it.	1	2	3	4	5

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither disagree Nor agree	Agree	Strongly Agree		
	1	2	3	4	5		

		1	2	3	4	5
	It is acceptable for a chairman to ask a team member to support someone else's questionable viewpoint.	1	2	3	4	5
	There is nothing wrong with a chairman asking a team member to alter a document.	1	2	3	4	5
	Sometimes, it is acceptable for a chairman/manager to lie to a team member to protect the company.	1	2	3	4	5
	In work-related matters, managers have a right to expect obedience from their subordinates.	1	2	3	4	5
	Team members should not express disagreements with their managers.	1	2	3	4	5
	Team members should highly respect their chairman.	1	2	3	4	5
	A chairman should make most decisions without consulting team members.	1	2	3	4	5
	A chairman should seldom ask for the opinions of team members.	1	2	3	4	5
	Team members should not disagree with the decisions which a chairman makes.	1	2	3	4	5
	A chairman should not delegate important tasks to team members.	1	2	3	4	5

This is the end of Part 1.

Now you will meet your team members!
Since Lieke (with shawl) and Ellen (blond) now know a little about you, it is time that they tell something about themselves to you and about the fourth person who will be joining your team. These two already know each other for a while and have done some projects together before and did their best to find a suitable team member.

NOTE: Lieke and Ellen have an equal status in this team! *(Controlling for the movies without the chairman)*

Please pay careful attention to their introduction and remember you need to work with them later on!

Dear participant,

Welcome to part back to our research. You just saw a video of two of your teammates for the virtual teamwork later on. In the following you will answer questions about the situation you just saw between Lieke and Ellen.

12. *The following questions are about your understanding of this virtual team presented in the video.*

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither disagree Nor agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
1	2	3	4	5

I can clearly see that Lieke and Ellen is having a conflict.	1	2	3	4	5
Lieke and Ellen have the same position in this team, they're equivalent.	1	2	3	4	5
Ellen and Lieke fought about personal issues.	1	2	3	4	5
Ellen and Lieke don't like each other because of non-work (social or personality things) issues.	1	2	3	4	5
Ellen and Lieke fought about work matters.	1	2	3	4	5
Ellen and Lieke have task dividing disagreements.	1	2	3	4	5
Do you think this is a real conflict situation?	1	2	3	4	5
In this team Ellen is chairman.	1	2	3	4	5
In this team Lieke is chairman.	1	2	3	4	5

13. What is your role in their conflict? To what extent do you agree with each other of following statements?

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither disagree Nor agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
1	2	3	4	5

I consider myself one of the disputants.	1	2	3	4	5
I consider myself a third party who is confronted with this conflict.	1	2	3	4	5
I consider myself an outsider in their conflict.	1	2	3	4	5

14. Have you ever experienced such a conflict before?

1	Never	2	Seldom	3	Sometimes	4	Often	5	Every day

15. Overall I think their conflict is:

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither disagree Nor agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
1	2	3	4	5

This conflict is more task-related than of personal matters.	1	2	3	4	5
This conflict is more relational-related (personal) than task-related	1	2	3	4	5
It wasn't clear what the conflict was about.	1	2	3	4	5

16. *Please tell us how do you feel when faced with this situation between Lieke and Ellen? Please indicate to what extent you agree with each of the following statements about your feelings and emotions:*

Not experienced it at all	A little	Moderately	Strongly	Experienced it very strongly
1	2	3	4	5

Sadness	1	2	3	4	5
Fear	1	2	3	4	5
Sorrow	1	2	3	4	5
Anxiety	1	2	3	4	5
Guilt	1	2	3	4	5
Shame	1	2	3	4	5
Afraid of causing trouble to another	1	2	3	4	5
Sulky feelings	1	2	3	4	5
Frustration	1	2	3	4	5
Anger	1	2	3	4	5
Close feelings to one side	1	2	3	4	5
Sympathy	1	2	3	4	5
Superior feelings	1	2	3	4	5

	Not experienced it at all	A little	Moderately	Strongly	Experienced it very strongly			
	1	2	3	4	5			

		1	2	3	4	5
	Happiness	1	2	3	4	5
	Calmness	1	2	3	4	5

17. *When faced with this dilemma, how do you perceive the disagreement between Lieke and Ellen? In other words, how do you make sense of this dilemma? Do you agree with the following statements?*

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neither disagree Nor agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
1	2	3	4	5

		1	2	3	4	5
	The dilemma is about who is right and who is wrong.	1	2	3	4	5
	A proper way to manage work is a key concern to me in this dilemma.	1	2	3	4	5
	I concern about whether Ellen and Lieke treated each other in a respectful way.	1	2	3	4	5
	I concern about whose opinion is more applicable.	1	2	3	4	5
	I concern about the relationship between Lieke and Ellen in the dilemma.	1	2	3	4	5
	The relationship between Lieke and Ellen will influence my view of the situation.	1	2	3	4	5
	In this dilemma, the factual concerns (e.g., who is more in the right) is more important than the relational concern (e.g., who is close to me).	1	2	3	4	5
	One of the parties (Lieke or Ellen) could lose face in this dilemma.	1	2	3	4	5
	I could imagine that one party will harm the other in the future.	1	2	3	4	5
	I have a feeling that one party is threatened by the other.	1	2	3	4	5
	In my opinion the two disputants (Lieke and Ellen) argue their points based on factual concerns.	1	2	3	4	5
	In my opinion this disagreement in nature is about relationship.	1	2	3	4	5
	I am concerned what I can gain or lose from this disagreement.	1	2	3	4	5
	I wonder whether my interests will be harmed in this dilemma.	1	2	3	4	5
	I concern whether as a team, our future interests will be harmed by this dilemma.	1	2	3	4	5

18. If Lieke and Ellen both want you to take their sides, to what extent the following statements influence your judgment?

Very unimportant	Unimportant	Neither unimportant nor important	Important	Very important	
1	2	3	4	5	

	1	2	3	4	5
I will support the party whose arguments sound right to me.	1	2	3	4	5
I will feel regret if I have to agree with the party whose arguments I think are not in right.	1	2	3	4	5
Right or wrong is the most important consideration for my side-taking decision.	1	2	3	4	5
I will take side with the party who is closer to me.	1	2	3	4	5
I will support Lieke (or Ellen) based on with whom I want to have a good relationship.	1	2	3	4	5
I will consider the relationship I have with Lieke and Ellen when taking sides.	1	2	3	4	5
I will consider what benefit I can get from taking sides with Lieke or Ellen.	1	2	3	4	5
I will choose the party who can reward me in the future.	1	2	3	4	5
What I can gain is one of the important considerations for me to choose sides.	1	2	3	4	5
I will have to agree with Lieke (Ellen) if I know Lieke (or Ellen) will make a trouble to me for the consequences.	1	2	3	4	5
I choose Lieke's (or Ellen's) side because I´m afraid to offend Lieke (or Ellen).	1	2	3	4	5
If Lieke or (Ellen) puts pressure on me, I will have to agree with her.	1	2	3	4	5

19. When you make up your mind, could you please indicate to what extend would you like to take sides with Lieke and Ellen.

Not at all	Probably not	Don't know	Probably	Totally
1	2	3	4	5

		1	2	3	4	5
1	Support Lieke (with shawl)	1	2	3	4	5
2	Support Ellen (blond)	1	2	3	4	5

20. Apart from taking sides, if there are other possibilities for you to handle the disagreement between Lieke and Ellen, to what extent would you like to use them?

Not at all	Probebly not	Don't know	Probebly	Totally
1	2	3	4	5

1	I try to help them out even if it is not in my best interest.	1	2	3	4	5
2	I would discuss the problem with Lieke and Ellen together.	1	2	3	4	5
3	I try to avoid their conflict if possible.	1	2	3	4	5
4	I don't want to join their team anymore.	1	2	3	4	5

This is the end of the questionnaire. Thank you again for participating!

End note:

We would like to give you some information about the real purpose of this study. During your participating we could investigate conflict situations. You may have been in a conflict situation where two people are in conflict and want to gain your support. As a third party, you can make the difference in how the conflict will develop or end. On the basis of what information will the third party take sides? In our research we liked to investigate how you made your decision to take side as a third party. We made up this virtual teamwork to create some involvement. Involvement with your team members and therefore in their conflict.
So fortunately for you, no more virtual teamwork to be done! You are finished with the questionnaire. Thank you very much for your participation!

Kind regards,

Petra and Sanneke