HEALTH, WORKPLACE, AND ENVIRONMENT: CULTIVATING CONNECTIONS

October 17, 2013

Featured Speakers

Dr. John Howard, Director, National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health
Ms. Rosalyn Cama, President, Cama Inc.
Dr. Michele Gelfand, Professor, University of Maryland
Martin Cherniack, Professor, UConn Health Center

The afternoon speakers are grantees of the CPH-NEW Pilot Grant Program. The RFA for the request for applications can be found on the CPH-NEW website. Deadlines for letters of intent is October 15, 2013.
On the Etiology and Consequences of Conflict Cultures in Organizations

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October 17, 2013
University of Maryland
Introduction

• Integrating health, workplace design, and the environment to improve well being

• Organizational systems perspective
  – Complex, multidimensional problem
  – People and structure
  – Multilevel dynamics

• My focus: How people manage their interdependence in healthy or unhealthy ways
Conflict Cultures

• Individuals may have idiosyncratic preferences for different conflict management strategies, organizations can provide strong situations that serve to define what is a normative way to resolve conflict (Johns, 2006; O’Reilly & Chatman, 1996)

• Distinct conflict cultures in organizations
  – Shared norms that specify how conflict should be managed within organizations
  – Minimizes individual variation in conflict management styles
Gelfand at the Meeting
Gelfand at the Meeting

This a conflict avoidant culture! Why is that?

The Manager is an avoider!

Structure of the Context:
- Low turnover
- High Centralization
- Stable Industry
Conflict Cultures

• Two dimensions: Active versus passive conflict management norms and agreeable versus disagreeable conflict management norms (Axelrod, 1984; Deutsch, 1949, 1973; Pruitt & Rubin, 1986; Tjosvold, 1998; Van de Vliert & Euwema, 1994)

  – Dominating conflict cultures
    • Active and disagreeable

  – Collaborative conflict cultures
    • Active and agreeable

  – Avoidant conflict cultures
    • Passive and agreeable

  – Passive-aggressive conflict cultures
    • Passive and disagreeable
A Typology of Conflict Cultures

- Collaborative Conflict Cultures
- Dominating Conflict Cultures
- Avoidant Conflict Cultures
- Passive Aggressive Conflict Cultures
Dominating Conflict Cultures

- Norms for conflict management
  - Both *active* and *disagreeable*

- Core Assumptions and Values
  - Employees have agency and are empowered to actively deal with conflict
  - Competition and antisocial behavior is appropriate
  - There are few constraints on behavior

- *In dominating conflict cultures, truth through conflict wins.*
Dominating Conflict Cultures

• Normative behaviors for handling conflicts:
  – Direct confrontations and heated arguments in which no one is willing to give in
  – Yelling and shouting matches
  – Threats and warnings

• Characterized by shared perceptions that open confrontation is an appropriate way of managing conflict
“In those early years, I also learned about "pushback." People at Digital seemed to fight a lot with one another. Shouting matches were a frequent occurrence, and I came to conclude that Digital people didn't like one another. I was subsequently told by more senior members that it was okay to disagree with someone, because truth would ultimately prevail…After one of these exchanges, one in which I almost came to blows with one of my peers, I was called in by the manager the next morning…It was with great and pleasant surprise that I was told that my behavior the previous day had been admirable” (p. 120)
“Both male and female senior executives were expected to conform to dominant norms: brutal honesty and controlled anger—which often coalesced in the form of screaming arguments that had a scripted, playacting quality” (p.324). For example, one executive described norms for meetings as “…You said what you thought. People screamed at each other. It was quite chaotic and yet very effective” (p.3)
Dominating Conflict Cultures

Playco  (Morill, 1995)

• Employees of Playco used phrases such as "the old west," "sports," and "warfare games" to describe conflict management at the company (Morill, 1995, p. 195).

• “[A strong executive is] a tough son of a bitch, a guy who’s not afraid to shoot it out with someone he doesn’t agree with; who knows how to play the game; to win and lose with honor and dignity”

• “Intimidation was the name of the game. . . . They decided who the driller was by fighting. If the job came open, the one that was left standing was the driller"
Collaborative Conflict Cultures

• Norms for conflict management
  – Both active and agreeable

• Core assumptions and values
  – Employees are empowered and efficacious about their ability to actively manage conflicts
  – Cooperative behavior and resolving conflicts to serve the interests of the group is important
  – There are few constraints on behavior

• *In collaborative conflict cultures, the whole is more than the sum of its parts.*
Collaborative Conflict Cultures

• Normative behaviors for handling conflict:
  – Active listening to the opinions of others
  – Mediation of different perspectives
  – Open and honest discussion of the conflict, and demonstrations of mutual respect

• Standard response is to seek to find the best solution possible for all parties involved
Collaborative Conflict Cultures

Southwest Airlines (Gittell, 2003)

“What’s unique about Southwest is that we’re real proactive about conflict. We work hard at destroying any turf battle once one crops up and they do…” When there’s really a problem, we have a ‘Come to Jesus’ meeting and work it out. Whereas it’s warfare at other airlines, here the goal is to maintain the esteem of everybody” (p. 103).
Collaborative Conflict Cultures

Hewlett-Packard and the “HP Way” (Packard, 1995)

“The open door encourages employees, should they have problems of either a personal or job-related nature, to discuss these with an appropriate manager…It must be clearly understood by supervisors and managers that people using the open door are not to be subjected to reprisals or to any other adverse consequences” (p. 157).
Conflict Avoidant Cultures

• Norms for conflict management
  – Both passive and agreeable

• Core assumptions and values
  – Employees do not feel empowered to deal with conflict and are constrained from handling conflict in the open
  – There is a need for order and control
  – There is a concern with promoting social harmony and/or preventing the social order from being disrupted

• *In conflict avoidant cultures, conflict is the elephant in the room that no one talks about*
Conflict Avoidant Cultures

• Normative behaviors for handling conflict:
  – Accommodating or acquiescing
  – Changing the subject, smoothing over or otherwise evading open discussion of the issue
  – Working around the source of the conflict in order to maintain harmony and order

• Characterized by shared perceptions that open debate and discussion of conflict situations are not tolerated and are even dangerous
“I therefore had the privilege of listening to people speak to each other, and of knowing what they were not saying. I noticed early on that colleagues weren’t being completely frank with one another. They didn’t want to endanger the success of their venture, so they shied away from differences. They smiled when they were seething; they nodded when deep down they couldn’t have disagreed more. They pretended to accept differences for the sake of preserving their relationships and their business. And, the More people silenced themselves, the more pressure they felt to silence themselves again next time” (p.9)
Conflict Avoidant Cultures

Versity (Perlow, 2003)

“The managers and the founders willingly engaged in the effort to avoid conflict, perpetuating a norm of silence that had been set in motion in Peter’s [CEO] first days in the company and continued to gain support” (p. 133)
Passive-Aggressive Conflict Cultures

• Norms for conflict management
  – Both passive and disagreeable

• Core Assumptions and Values
  – Employees are not empowered and are cynical about their ability to actively manage conflicts
  – Competition and antisocial behavior are appropriate
  – There are many constraints on behavior

• In passive-aggressive conflict cultures, keep your friends close and your enemies closer
Passive-Aggressive Conflict Cultures

• Normative behaviors for handling conflict:
  – Refusing to participate in discussions related to the conflict
  – Giving the silent treatment
  – Failing to pass on needed information
  – Intentionally slowing down ones work to harm others
  – Withdrawing from work and interactions with others

• Acts of omission and passive resistance, passive provocativeness, and thwarting other people, without open conflict (Hoffmann, 1994)
Passive-Aggressive Conflict Cultures

The Medical System (Musiker and Norton, 1983)

The various role definitions and special needs of these components and the range of possible interaction options make confrontation or open conflict either unfruitful or inappropriate; hence passive-aggressive behavior is often a fairly useful, if not very efficient, way of expressing disagreement or a negative attitude (p.195).
Questions

• What affords the formation of Conflict Cultures?
• How are Conflict Cultures related to unit-level outcomes?
• Do Conflict Cultures have cross-level effects for teams and individuals?
Emergence of Conflict Cultures

• Top-down Processes
  – Leadership
  – Organizational structure and reward systems
  – Industry and community contexts
  – Societal culture

• Bottom-up Processes
  – Personality
  – Demographics
  – Values
Leadership and Conflict Cultures

• Leaders’ own conflict management styles will relate to conflict cultures

• Schein (1983):
  • Leaders guide organizational culture and “introduce humanistic, social service, and other non-economic assumptions into their paradigm of how an organization should look” (p. 28).
  • Leaders’ behavior is a prime determinant of:
    – Cultures for safety (Barling, et al, 2002; Zohar, 2002)
    – Unit service climate (Schneider et al, 2005)

• Leaders model what is an appropriate in the unit with respect to managing conflict
Organizational Outcomes

- **Dominating**
  - Potential for high quality decisions and efficiency, but higher stress and burnout, and lower quality customer service

- **Collaborative**
  - Increased group viability, lower stress and burnout, higher customer service, but less efficiency

- **Avoidant**
  - Higher efficiency, but lower creativity and adaptability

- **Passive Aggressive**
  - Low group viability, efficiency, and creativity
Cross-Level Moderating Effects

Organizational Conflict Culture

Low status individuals (e.g., minorities, women)

- Job Satisfaction
- Commitment
- Psychological Safety
Cross-Level Moderating Effects

- Organizational Conflict Culture
- Unit/Team Diversity
- Creativity
- Potency
Field Sample

• 743 employees and 92 managers in 92 separate branches of a large bank in the mid-Atlantic United States
• Matched Member-Leader Sample
• 65% Caucasian, 66% Female
• Employees per branch (M = 5.87, SD = 2.46)
Measures

Members Surveys
- Conflict Cultures Scale
- Leader Conflict Behaviors Scale
- Unit Viability Scale (Cohesion, Burnout, Potency)

Leader Surveys
- Branch level creativity

Archival records
- Customer service quality (mystery shop scores)

Control Variables
- Task and relationship conflict
- Leader gender
- Branch size
**Conflict Cultures**

Instructions: Please read each statement carefully and circle the number that best reflects your opinion (1 = Strongly disagree to 5 = Strongly agree). When conflict arises in this branch…

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Factor 1</th>
<th>Factor 2</th>
<th>Factor 3</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Branch members examine issues until we find a solution that satisfies everyone. [collaborative]</td>
<td>.86</td>
<td>-.25</td>
<td>-.08</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Branch members examine ideas from all sides to find a mutually optimal solution. [collaborative]</td>
<td>.83</td>
<td>-.28</td>
<td>-.09</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Branch members work out a solution that serves everyone’s interests. [collaborative]</td>
<td>.62</td>
<td>-.38</td>
<td>-.18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Branch members try to come up with creative solutions that incorporate multiple perspectives. [collaborative]</td>
<td>.56</td>
<td>-.34</td>
<td>-.19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Branch members push their own points of view. [dominating]</td>
<td>-.22</td>
<td>.46</td>
<td>-.11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Branch members each search for gains for only themselves. [dominating]</td>
<td>-.37</td>
<td>.67</td>
<td>.09</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Branch members fight for what they want personally. [dominating]</td>
<td>-.10</td>
<td>.57</td>
<td>.04</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Branch members do everything to win for themselves. [dominating]</td>
<td>-.20</td>
<td>.68</td>
<td>.15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Branch members try to force others to accept their own points of view. [dominating]</td>
<td>-.27</td>
<td>.66</td>
<td>.12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. Branch members discuss conflict in the open. [avoidant, reverse-scored]</td>
<td>-.15</td>
<td>-.05</td>
<td>.63</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. Branch members avoid openly discussing conflicts. [avoidant]</td>
<td>.08</td>
<td>.00</td>
<td>.64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12. Branch members are very reluctant to openly talk about conflict. [avoidant]</td>
<td>-.06</td>
<td>.20</td>
<td>.41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13. Conflict is dealt with openly in this branch. [avoidant, reverse-scored]</td>
<td>-.26</td>
<td>.06</td>
<td>.60</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Notes.* Table values are factor loadings that resulted from an exploratory factor analysis with maximum likelihood estimation and varimax rotation. Factor loadings above .40 are in bold.
Conflict Cultures

Exploratory Factor Analysis
- Maximum likelihood and varimax rotation
- Supported a three-factor solution
  - ($\lambda_1 = 4.71$, $\lambda_2 = 1.86$, $\lambda_3 = 1.28$, $\lambda_{4-13} < 1.00$; 49% variance explained)

Conflict cultures are *shared* constructs:
- Collaborative: mean $r_{wg(i)} = .80$, ICC(1) = .14, $p < .01$
- Dominating: mean $r_{wg(i)} = .81$, ICC(1) = .15, $p < .01$
- Avoidant: mean $r_{wg(i)} = .75$, ICC(1) = .04, $p < .05$
# Leadership Conflict Management Behavior

Instructions: Please read each statement carefully and circle the number that best reflects your opinion (1 = Strongly disagree to 5 = Strongly agree). When there are conflicts in the branch, my branch manager does the following:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Items</th>
<th>Factor 1</th>
<th>Factor 2</th>
<th>Factor 3</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. My branch manager encourages people to resolve conflicts through a problem solving approach. [collaborative]</td>
<td>.57</td>
<td>-.28</td>
<td>-.22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. My branch manager treats conflicts as opportunities for learning and growth. [collaborative]</td>
<td>.62</td>
<td>-.04</td>
<td>-.22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. My branch manager stresses that it is important to find a way for everyone to win when conflicts arise. [collaborative]</td>
<td>.65</td>
<td>.03</td>
<td>-.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. My branch manager encourages branch members to come up with creative solutions when conflictual issues arise. [collaborative]</td>
<td>.61</td>
<td>-.24</td>
<td>-.18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. My branch manager allows branch members to argue until someone wins. [dominating]</td>
<td>-.14</td>
<td>.65</td>
<td>.13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. My branch manager thinks it is OK when branch members push their own points of view on others. [dominating]</td>
<td>-.15</td>
<td>.68</td>
<td>.13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. My branch manager thinks highly of people who “win” conflicts. [dominating]</td>
<td>.01</td>
<td>.37</td>
<td>.22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. My branch manager will not discuss issues that may lead to conflict. [avoidant]</td>
<td>-.15</td>
<td>.06</td>
<td>.46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. My branch manager cuts off discussion as soon as conflicts arise. [avoidant]</td>
<td>-.13</td>
<td>.13</td>
<td>.51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. My branch manager does <strong>not</strong> get involved in employees’ conflicts. [avoidant]</td>
<td>-.12</td>
<td>.22</td>
<td>.72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11. My branch manager avoids getting involved in managing conflicts in the branch. [avoidant]</td>
<td>-.32</td>
<td>.33</td>
<td>.57</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Notes.* Table values are factor loadings that resulted from an exploratory factor analysis with maximum likelihood estimation and varimax rotation. Factor loadings above .40 are in bold.
Validity Measures

Psychological safety (Edmondson, 1999)

Learning climate (Dragoni, 2005)

Performance climate (Dragoni, 2005)

Distributive justice climate (Colquitt, 2001)

Procedural justice climate (Colquitt, 2001)

Interpersonal justice climate (Colquitt, 2001)
Validity Measures

• Collaborative CC positively correlated with:
  – Psychological safety ($r = .56, p < .01$)
  – Justice climates (distributive: $r = .42$; procedural: $r = .41$; interpersonal: $r = .31$, all $ps < .01$)
  – Learning climate ($r = .64, p < .01$)

• Dominating CC were negatively correlated with:
  – Psychological safety climate ($r = -.57; p < .01$)
  – Justice climates (distributive: $r = -.34, p < .01$; procedural: $r = -.33, p < .01$; interpersonal: $r = -.33, p < .05$)
  – Learning climate ($r = -.57, p < .01$)
Validity Measures

- Avoidant CC were negatively correlated with:
  - Psychological safety climate ($r = -.20, p < .05$)
  - Distributive justice climate ($r = -.20, p < .05$)
  - Learning climate ($r = -.32; p < .01$)
  - Avoidant cultures were unrelated to procedural ($r = -.07, p > .05$) and interpersonal ($r = -.06, p > .05$) justice climates
Leadership and Conflict Cultures

• Collaborative leader behaviors
  – Positively related to collaborative conflict cultures \((b = .24, t = 2.90, p < .01)\)
  – Negatively related to avoidant conflict cultures \((b = -.24, t = -2.22, p < .05)\) and dominating conflict cultures \((b = -.22, t = -2.78, p < .01)\)

• Avoidant leader behaviors
  – Positively related to avoidant cultures \((b = .24, t = 2.07, p < .05)\)

• Dominating leader behaviors
  – Unrelated to dominating cultures \((b = -.02, t = -.22, p > .05)\)
  – Collaborative leader behaviors were negatively related to dominating cultures \((b = -.22, t = -2.78, p < .01)\)
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Collaborative conflict cultures</th>
<th>Dominating conflict cultures</th>
<th>Avoidant conflict cultures</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>β</td>
<td>t</td>
<td>β</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Step 1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Branch size</td>
<td>.09</td>
<td>1.31</td>
<td>.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leader gender (1 = Male, 2 = Female)</td>
<td>.03</td>
<td>0.36</td>
<td>-.11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Task conflict</td>
<td>-.06</td>
<td>-0.52</td>
<td>.20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relationship conflict</td>
<td>-.70</td>
<td>-6.35*</td>
<td>.59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Step 2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leader collaborative conflict behaviors</td>
<td>.24</td>
<td>2.90*</td>
<td>-.22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leader dominating conflict behaviors</td>
<td>-.04</td>
<td>-0.48</td>
<td>-.02</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leader avoidant conflict behaviors</td>
<td>-.03</td>
<td>-0.35</td>
<td>-.01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R^2 Step 1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ΔR^2 Step 1-Step 2</td>
<td>.07**</td>
<td></td>
<td>.03*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>R^2_model</td>
<td>.63**</td>
<td></td>
<td>.65**</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. N = 92 branches.

* p < .05. ** p < .01 (one-tailed).
Conflict Cultures and Unit Viability

- Collaborative CC were positively related to:
  - Cohesion ($b = .24, t = 2.39, p < .01$)
  - Potency ($b = .46, t = 3.01, p < .01$)
    - negatively related to
  - Burnout ($b = -.33, t = -2.29, p < .05$)

- Dominating CC were negatively related to:
  - Cohesion ($b = -.29, t = -2.74, p < .01$),

- Avoidant CC were unrelated to unit viability (potency, cohesion, and burnout)
Conflict Cultures and Creativity/Customer Service

• Branches with avoidant conflict cultures have low levels of creativity \( (b = -.23, t = -1.99, p < .05) \)

• Dominating conflict cultures have low-quality customer service; were negatively related to customer service mystery shop scores \( (b = -.41, t = -1.90, p < .05) \)
### Table 5

**The Relationship Between Conflict Cultures and Branch-Level Outcomes**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Step 1</th>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Branch cohesion (N = 92)</th>
<th>Branch potency (N = 92)</th>
<th>Branch burnout (N = 92)</th>
<th>Branch creativity (N = 92)</th>
<th>Branch customer service (N = 54)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>β</td>
<td>t</td>
<td>β</td>
<td>t</td>
<td>β</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Branch size</td>
<td>-.04</td>
<td>-0.56</td>
<td>.17</td>
<td>1.75*</td>
<td>-.04</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Leader gender</td>
<td>-.13</td>
<td>-1.86*</td>
<td>.13</td>
<td>1.24</td>
<td>-.16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Task conflict</td>
<td>-.04</td>
<td>-0.41</td>
<td>-.12</td>
<td>-0.83</td>
<td>-.01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Relationship conflict</td>
<td>-.76</td>
<td>-7.28**</td>
<td>-.22</td>
<td>-1.46</td>
<td>.51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Collaborative conflict cultures</td>
<td>.24</td>
<td>2.39**</td>
<td>.46</td>
<td>3.01**</td>
<td>-.33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Dominating conflict cultures</td>
<td>-.29</td>
<td>-2.74**</td>
<td>.09</td>
<td>0.56</td>
<td>.17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Avoidant conflict cultures</td>
<td>-.07</td>
<td>-0.96</td>
<td>-.11</td>
<td>-1.07</td>
<td>-.05</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| R² | Step 1 | .60** | .16** | .32** | .08 | .00 |
| ΔR² | Step 1-Step 2 | .09** | .12** | .07* | .05 | .09 |
| R² | Model | .69** | .28** | .39** | .13* | .09 |

*Note.* The analysis sample size differs across models due to varying degrees of available data for the dependent variables.

* p < .05. ** p < .01 (one-tailed).
Cross-Level Outcomes

• Conflict cultures’ cross level Influence on individual and team outcomes
  – Dominating conflict cultures = highly competitive norms; may be very stressful for low status groups

• Findings
  – Individual level
    • Dominating conflict cultures decreased commitment and job satisfaction for minorities but not for Caucasians
    • Dominating conflict cultures decreased psychological safety for women and but not for men
  – Team level
    • Dominating cultures decreased potency and creativity in ethnically diverse groups, but increased potency and creativity in ethnically homogenous groups
Theoretical Implications

• Conflict management beyond the individual level
  – Complement the basic processes perspective that is afforded by the micro focus in conflict management research with a macro perspective that is richly tied to the organization context
  – Can be a socially learned and socially reinforced phenomenon

• A multilevel approach to conflict management provides a better position to understand conflict in organizations
  – Connects the literature on conflict management with the broader organizational behavior literature
Top-Down Processes
Dominating Conflict Cultures

Leadership
• Competitive conflict management styles
• Masculine / performance oriented leaders (Van de Walle, 1997)
• Laissez-faire leadership (Judge & Piccolo, 2004)

Organizational Structure and Reward Systems
• Low centralization, Low formalization
• Competitive or individualistic reward structures

Industry and Community Context
• Highly competitive industries
• Communities with higher aggression
• Communities that value competition and individualism
• Vertical individualism, cultural masculinity, societal looseness (Gelfand, Nishii, & Raver, 2006; Pelto, 1968)
Top-Down Processes
Collaborative Conflict Cultures

Leadership
• Cooperative/integrative conflict management styles
• Charismatic leadership (Bass & Avolio, 1985; Conger & Kanungo, 1987)

Organizational structure and rewards
• Low centralization and low formalization
• Cooperative reward structures

Industry and Community Context
• High growth, dynamic industries
• Communities and industries characterized with economic affluence and low threat
• Horizontal collectivism, cultural femininity, societal looseness
Top-Down Processes
Conflict Avoidant Cultures

Leadership
• Conflict avoidant conflict management styles
• High need for closure (Kruglanski & Weber, 1996)
• Extreme relational orientation (Gelfand et al., 2006)

Organizational Structure and Reward Systems
• High centralization, high formalization
• High interdependence, cooperative reward structures

Industry and Community Context
• Low growth and stable industries or highly unstable industries
• Geographic regions or communities that emphasize conservatism and social order
• High uncertainty avoidance, vertical collectivism, tightness
Top-Down Processes
Passive-Aggressive Conflict Cultures

Leadership
• Highly authoritarian (Bass, 1981) or abusive leaders
• Insecure leaders

Organizational Structure and Reward Systems
• High centralization, high formalization and bureaucratic
  Competitive or individualistic reward structures

Industry and Community Context
• Closed systems
• Stable, low growth industries
• High power distance, cultural tightness
Practical Implications

• Begins to provide a diagnostic toolkit
• Identifies levers for culture change
  – Leadership, structure, rewards, personality
• Conflict cultures are not static
  – Can be actively challenged and contested
  – Can be changed if not serving strategic goals
  – Systems approach is needed
• Applying this perspective to health settings; errors, patient welfare, satisfaction
Thank you