

Online Appendix

Additional Study Details

Interpersonal conflict, like intragroup conflict (Jehn, 1995), includes both relational and task components (De Dreu, & Weingart, 2003; de Wit, Greer, & Jehn, 2012). In the present paper, we focus on the relational aspect and seek to further illuminate the origins of interpersonal conflict by investigating its hierarchical antecedents.

Study 1

Status. Participants indicated the degree to which their positions afforded them status by answering four items (“To what extent does your position at work give you high status in the eyes of others?”, “To what extent does your position at work make people look down on you?”—reverse scored, “To what extent do people admire you because of your position at work?”, “To what extent do you have a low-status position at work?”—reverse scored). Responses were made on 7-point scales (1 = “not at all”, 7 = “very much”; $\alpha = .68$).

Interpersonal conflict. Drawing from Jehn (1995), we used a three-item measure of conflict to assess participants’ tendency to engage in conflict at work (“I often have personal disagreements with others at my place of work”, “Emotional conflicts between me and others at work are common”, “It is often difficult to interact peacefully with others at work”; $\alpha = .92$).

Study 2a

The length of the layoff notifications written by those in the low-status/high-power condition ($M = 67.07$ words, $SD = 33.27$) did not differ from the length of the layoff notifications by participants in the other three conditions (combined $M = 76.70$ words, $SD = 43.17$), $t(111) = 1.09$, $p = .28$.

The eight items were: “How much tension would there be between you and the other person?,” “How much friction would there be between you and the other person?,” “How much personality conflict would there be between you and the other person?,” “How much emotional conflict would there be between you and the other person?,” “How often would you and the other person disagree about opinions regarding the work being done?,” “How frequently would there be conflicts about ideas between you and

the other person?,” “How much conflict would there be about the work you do between you and the other person?,” and “To what extent would there be differences of opinion between you and the other person?” (responses were recorded on 5-point scale ranging from 1 = ”None” to 5 = ”A lot”). The items were designed to tap into relationship and task conflict, but consistent with a recent meta-analysis by De Wit et al., (2012), exploratory factor analysis results strongly indicated a single-factor solution. We therefore treated the items as a single source of conflict (i.e. interpersonal conflict). Explained variance (77.39%), eigenvalues (6.19), and the scree plot all indicated a single factor.

Study 2b

The length of responses by low-status/high-power participants ($M = 39.69$ words, $SD = 19.42$) did not differ from those in the other three conditions ($M = 41.70$ words, $SD = 21.03$), $t(201) = .62$, $p = .54$.

Interpersonal Conflict. Participants were presented with and responded to only the four relationship conflict items (no other conflict items were included) developed by Jehn (1995) as opposed to the full 8-item conflict measure employed in Study 2a (“How much tension would there be between you and the other person?,” “How much friction would there be between you and the other person?,” “How much personality conflict would there be between you and the other person?,” and “How much emotional conflict would there be between you and the other person?”; 5-point scale ranging from 1 = ”None” to 5 = ”A lot”, $\alpha = .96$).

Study 3

Interpersonal Conflict. Participants completed an 8-item measure of interpersonal conflict adapted from conflict measures used by Jehn (1995) and Cox (1998). The eight items (1 = “not at all/strongly disagree,” 7 = “very much/strongly agree” $\alpha = .96$) were: “How much tension is there between you and this person?”, “How much emotional conflict is there between you and this person?”, “How much conflict about the work is there between you and this person?”, “One party frequently undermines the other,” “There are often feelings of hostility between parties”, “How often does this person do nasty things to you?”, “It is often difficult to interact peacefully with this person at work”, and “I often have personal disagreements with this person at my place of work.” Most of these items represent

relationship conflict except for the task conflict item about work. We conducted an exploratory factor analysis on these 8 items. Results indicated a single-factor solution, justifying our treatment of the conflict items as representing a single measure of interpersonal conflict. Explained variance (76.60%), eigenvalues (6.13), and the scree plot all indicated a single factor.

Study 4

Interpersonal conflict. We measured interpersonal conflict with coworkers on a 7-point scale ranging from “strongly disagree”/”Never”/”None” (1) to “strongly agree”/”Very often”/”A lot” (7) using four items (“How frequently are there conflicts about ideas among people you work with?” “To what extent are there differences of opinion among those you work with?” “One party frequently undermines another,” “There are often feelings of hostility among parties,”; $\alpha = .87$). It is possible that some participants in the current study reported on conflict that they had only observed, but did not participate in themselves, at work. To rule out this alternative, we tested whether the general conflict items used in the current study correlate with the amount of conflict that employees actually engage in themselves. We asked 98 employed individuals on Mechanical Turk to answer eight questions about their experiences in the workplace: the same four items used in the current study ($\alpha = .83$) in addition to the following self-focused versions of those questions ($\alpha = .77$; e.g., How frequently do you have conflicts about ideas with people you work with?” on the same 7-point scale. As predicted, the general conflict and self-focused conflict measures were highly correlated, $r = .73$, $p < .001$. These results suggest that the measure used in the current study likely captured the amount of conflict that participants actually engaged in as opposed to conflict that they merely observed in the workplace. The items were included as part of a larger agency survey and given that participants were answering various questions about their work, and in order to avoid signaling the purpose of our items, we did not label the scale or provide instructions before the items. Exploratory factor analysis results indicated a single-factor solution in our sample that justifies our treatment of the conflict measure as tapping into a single source of conflict (i.e. interpersonal conflict). Explained variance (72.53%), eigenvalues (2.90), and the scree plot all indicated a single factor.

We also controlled for organizational commitment using the following four items from the Organizational Commitment Questionnaire ($\alpha = .61$; Mowday, Steers, & Porter, 1979): “I feel very little loyalty to this organization” (reverse coded), “I find that my values and the organization’s values are very similar,” “Often, I find it difficult to agree with this organization’s policies on important matters relating to its employees,” (reverse coded), and “I really care about the fate of this organization”.