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### Conflict Tactics in a Mediation Setting

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## Conflict Tactics in a Mediation Setting

*Linda M. Johnston and Michelle LeBaron*

### Abstract

This essay examines the results of a pilot study undertaken at George Mason University as a joint effort between the Psychology Department and the Institute for Conflict Analysis and Resolution. The authors discuss the task of behavioralizing tactics commonly used in conflict situations, defining particular conflict styles often used by participants in conflicts, and the ability of the participants in the study to identify and agree upon the tactics and styles when viewed in a film. The authors also examine the relationship of shame, guilt, and anger in the conflict setting as it relates to the tactics used.

This pilot study was designed to answer some initial questions regarding conflict styles and tactics, the practice of shame-trips and guilt-trips in a conflict setting, and the relationship between shame and anger in conflicts, with the understanding that the study would later be expanded to include more participants. These three sections of the study were accomplished on a small scale and served to inform the authors especially regarding operational definitions of conflict styles and tactics.

It has long been recognized that parties in a conflict situation use tactics to get their needs met and to convince the other party of their determination and sincerity. Some of these tactics seem to be widely understood by professionals in the field. Tactics have been defined by several authors and these definitions were used as a starting point for this study. (see, for example, Rubin, Pruitt, and Kim, 1994)<sup>[1]</sup>

Various conflict styles have also been described in the literature and these descriptions were also utilized by the researchers as a starting point for this study. Killman and Thomas, for example, developed a forced choice measure of conflict-handling behavior.<sup>[2]</sup> Other authors have viewed conflict styles from a cross-cultural perspective,<sup>[3]</sup> or looked at preferred styles of negotiation.<sup>[4]</sup>

The research on shame, guilt, and anger is fairly new to the conflict resolution field and has largely come from psychological studies. The plan of the research was to bring the study of shame and guilt into a different realm by examining the implications of shame and guilt for the process of conflict resolution. Shame-trips and guilt-trips have now been differentiated and the impact of them on conflict situations has been defined. The work of June Price Tangney and Helen Block Lewis has greatly increased the understanding of the effect of shame-trips and guilt-trips on participants in conflicts. These authors posit

that shame-trips aim to demean the global identity of the person, whereas the guilt-trips aim to demean the thing the person has done. Therefore, guilt is an emotion that stems from the negative evaluation of certain behaviors, and shame is about the self. This can be more simply stated by the following example:

Guilt-trip: "You did a bad thing."

Shame-trip: "You are a bad person."

Sometimes parties in a conflict combine guilt-trips and shame-trips. For example: "Because you didn't take out the garbage, you are a bad person."

Individuals can also be either shame-prone or guilt-prone. This proneness can be measured by a psychological instrument known as the TOSCA, which assesses both shame-proneness and guilt-proneness along with a variety of other indicators. While the discussion of this measure is outside the scope of this paper, two points are very useful for conflict resolution practitioners. Tangney and others note: "Shame-proneness was consistently correlated with anger arousal, suspiciousness, resentment, irritability, a tendency to blame others for negative events, and indirect (but not direct) expressions of hostility. Proneness to "shame-free" guilt was inversely related to externalization of blame and some indices of anger, hostility and resentment." [v][5] In other work, Tangney also states: "...findings indicate that shame-prone individuals are not only more prone to anger in general; they are also more likely to do unconstructive things with their anger, compared with their less shame-prone peers." [vi][6]

Helen Block Lewis, regarding the differences between shame and guilt, wrote: "The experience of shame is directly about the *self*, which is the focus of evaluation. In guilt, the self is not the central object of negative evaluation, but rather the *thing* done or undone is the focus. In guilt, the self is negatively evaluated in connection with something but is not itself the focus of the experience." (Lewis, 1971, page 30)[vii][7] Lewis and Tangney have both described the feeling of shame as an acutely painful experience because the entire self is being scrutinized and negatively evaluated. Drawing distinctions between shame and guilt, as Tangney has done in much of her research, is important for conflict resolution. Tangney states: "The implicit distinction between self and behavior, inherent in guilt, serves to protect the self from unwarranted global devaluation." [viii][8] The shame experience is far more painful and devastating. [ix][9]

Dr. Tangney and her students have continued to develop new measures for assessing shame and guilt. For example, one doctoral project involved studying facial expressions and gestures as a way to differentiate shame reactions from guilt reactions. These indices could be very useful for conflict resolution researchers and practitioners in understanding and working with disputants' behaviors.

Tangney has proposed ways to differentiate shame-trips from guilt-trips. This is important work for conflict resolution practitioners and theorists because the impact of shame-trips and guilt-trips in conflicts is very different. Guilt-trips can actually help build relationships. For example, if one party in a conflict tells the other that something they have done has

caused them unease, unhappiness, or some other kind of discomfort, then that person can examine what they have done, make redress, and build the relationship by demonstrating that they want to make the “thing” they did better or less discomforting. The opposite is true of shame-trips. When a person is shame-tripped, they do not attempt to go back to the person who shamed them and redress the problem. People describe their response to their shaming experiences by saying that they wanted to “hide under the rug,” “fade into the wallpaper,” or “run away.” Shaming tends to leave the victim not wanting to approach the person who did the shaming because it involved the direct attack to his or her personhood. Shaming involves a sense of worthlessness and powerlessness accompanied by a sense of being exposed. Tangney states: “Thus, shame motivates behaviors that are likely to sever interpersonal contact.” [x][10] She goes on to say: “In sharp contrast, guilt is more likely to keep people constructively engaged in the interpersonal situation at hand.” [xi][11] “Whereas guilt motivates a desire to repair, to confess, apologize, or make amends, shame motivates a desire to hide—to sink into the floor and disappear.” [xii][12] Of interest to conflict studies also is the fact that shame and guilt do not fundamentally differ in terms of the types of situations that elicit them. It seems both shame and guilt can occur in any context, by any person, and in any realm of life.

Another finding by Tangney involved the relationship between shaming and anger. She found that when someone is guilt-tripped, their anger tends to be diffuse: at the person who guilt-tripped them, at the situation, and at the context that caused the conflict. Shaming is quite different. When someone is shamed, their anger is directed back at the person who shamed them. Miller [xiii][13] identified two types of shame-anger interactions. When initially angered, one can become ashamed of the anger; this anger is directed at the self. More often however, an initial sense of shame can lead to subsequent anger toward a shaming other; this anger is directed at the other. [xiv][14] Both Lewis [xv][15] and Scheff [xvi][16] have described the “humiliated fury” of the person who has been shamed. For conflict resolution, this finding has impact for understanding and assessing the degree and the direction of anger in conflictual interactions. Tangney, et al, postulate that: “In redirecting anger outside the self, shamed individuals may be attempting to regain a sense of agency and control, which is so often impaired in the shame experience.” [xvii][17] She also states: “From the initial passive and disabling experience of shame, the individual attempts to mobilize the self and gain control through active anger and aggression.” [xviii][18] And later: “...shamed individuals may be motivated to anger because such anger is likely to provide some relief (albeit temporary) from the global, self-condemning, and debilitating experience of shame. In directing hostility outward and blaming others, the individual mobilizes the impaired self, while at the same time sparing the self from further condemnation.” [xix][19] It seems the pain of shame itself can augment aggression and anger in the shamed individual, thus escalating conflict.

In summary, Tangney, et al, state: ...[T]here is now converging theoretical, clinical, and empirical evidence to indicate that shame may motivate not only avoidant behavior but also a defensive, retaliatory anger and a tendency to project blame outward. In contrast, guilt has been associated with a tendency to accept responsibility and, if anything, with a

somewhat decreased tendency toward interpersonal anger and hostility.” [xx][20] These differences between shame and guilt are important for third parties to understand as they seek to intervene in conflict with awareness of emotional dynamics and openings for collaboration.

## **Outline of the Study**

A major component of this study consisted of arriving at and agreeing upon a set of definitions for commonly used conflict tactics and styles. This is important because the tactics and styles themselves may generate shame or guilt. As definitions of tactics and styles are generated, it becomes possible to ask observers to reliably identify behaviors and tactics that generate shame or guilt-related responses. Although conflict tactics and styles have been enumerated by several other authors, we felt it necessary to develop precise definitions for each of the tactics and styles. We then studied participants’ abilities to recognize these tactics and styles in a video-taped situation. Included in the list of tactics were shame trips and guilt trips.

A problem arose in arriving at definitions of styles and tactics that would fit precedents from psychological research and be useful to the field of conflict resolution. For example, several commonly used conflict tactics rely on the action of one party in the conflict and subsequent reaction of the other party in the conflict. “Gamemanship,” which is best typified by the game of “chicken,” is an example of the actions of two people toward each other. Psychological colleagues suggested it would be much easier, clearer, and more accurate to only define and isolate the behaviors of one person, and therefore not rely on the interaction between the two parties for the conflict tactic to develop. Therefore, unidirectional tactics were the only ones included in this present study. Tactics like “gamemanship,” which relies on action/reaction, was not included in the study.

When the initial definitions of the conflict tactics and styles were completed, the authors mailed copies of the definitions to twenty professional practicing mediators for their comments and critique. In this first phase of the study, the authors asked the professional mediators to offer feedback as to the accuracy, completeness, and usefulness of these two inventories of styles and tactics. In particular, the mediators were asked to comment on three questions regarding conflict tactics:

- 1) Does the conceptual definition of the Tactic match with the Possible Behaviors?
- 2) If you saw a video-taped simulation of a conflict situation, do you think that you could identify each of the Tactics given the list of Possible Behaviors for that Tactic?
- 3) Are there any other Possible Behaviors that could describe any of the Tactics more accurately?

The same was done for the inventory of conflict styles, in that the mediators were asked to review the match between the style and the description of that style.

Based on the feedback received from these professional mediators, the authors revised the descriptions of tactics and styles accordingly. We also sought feedback from psychology colleagues on these descriptions. When all persons involved were satisfied

with the accuracy of the tactics and styles, we proceeded with selecting study participants.

Twenty participants, all graduate-level conflict resolution students or recent graduates of George Mason University's Institute for Conflict Analysis and Resolution, volunteered for and participated in the study. The number of study participants was kept small for two reasons: first to test the accuracy and clarity of the tactics and styles described, and secondly, to allow for extensive feedback from the knowledgeable participants in the study prior to expanding to a larger number of participants. Because these participants were aware of conflict tactics and styles published in the literature, we thought that they could provide more thorough feedback than other participants.

Participants in the study were given copies of the descriptions of the conflict tactics and styles to be examined three to five days prior to their participation. They were asked to familiarize themselves with the descriptions before attending the study session. The conflict styles they were asked to review were: avoiding, competing, accommodating, compromising, and collaborating. The conflict tactics they were asked to review were: ingratiation, sarcasm, guilt-trips, shame-trips, persuasive argumentation, treats, and irrevocable commitments. These styles and tactics are described in detail below.

When they attended their appointment, participants were asked to watch a forty-minute video, note the conflict tactics and predominant conflict styles of the parties in the video, and fill out several evaluation forms at the conclusion of the film. The video was produced by Haynes Mediation Associates of Huntington, New York, entitled "Moving 100 Miles Apart." It depicted a simulated conflict involving two divorcing parents over the care and custody of their diabetic daughter.

The process took approximately one and one-quarter hours per participant and each participant viewed the video and completed the forms separately. After watching the video and noting the conflict tactics they saw, participants in the study were asked to answer these questions:

- 1) Which conflict style best described both the male and female disputant?
- 2) Rate the anger level of each of the disputants were based on a 1-5 Likert scale with 1 being "not angry" and 5 being "very angry,"
- 3) Describe how certain they felt in recognizing each of the conflict tactics, again on a 1-5 Likert scale with 1 being "not certain" and 5 being "very certain," and,
- 4) Provide basic demographic data about themselves in terms of gender, age, whether a Masters or Doctoral student, marital status, and whether or not they had ever been a party in a mediation setting.

Following these steps, the participants were asked to complete a TOSCA form that assesses, among other things, the shame-proneness and guilt-proneness of the participant themselves. The TOSCA assesses shame- and guilt-proneness by asking the participants to identify their likely reactions to everyday situations. The information gathered from this part of the research will be discussed in other work.

The demographics of the twenty participants in the study were:

14 women and 6 men

8 Masters students and 12 Doctoral students

The ages ranged from 23 to 64 with an average age of 39.

9 were single, 8 were married, 0 were widowed, 2 were divorced, and 1 defined their marital status as "other."

The following is a summary of the tactic and style definitions used in the study:

### **1) Ingratiation**

**Conceptual Definition:** Ingratiation is the art of relationship building in order to accomplish a certain end. Its success depends on the lack of knowledge of the Other to the Party's plan. The process of ingratiation prepares the Other for subsequent exploitation or manipulation. It preys on the Other's weaknesses. In order to accomplish ingratiation, the Party must both appear credible and not seem to be the kind of person who readily hands out compliments or agrees with everyone. Ingratiation is easiest to achieve when it is least expected and when it is needed the least.

#### **Possible Behavioral Tactics:**

The Party compliments the Other, particularly the attractiveness of the Other's personal or professional qualities.

The Party's compliments are plausible.

The Party maintains credibility by not offering anything too outlandish or bizarre.

The Party's compliments are mixed with possible negatives or insults.

The Party's compliments involve the giving of favors.

The Party seems to be offering a special favor or showing a unique consideration for the Other.

### **2) Sarcasm**

**Conceptual Definition:** Sarcasm is the offering of a jibe that is intended to mock, sneer, or taunt the Other. Sarcasm is often ironical, satirical, or humorous, but usually contemptuous. Its intention is to upset, intimidate, gain power over, or even embitter the Other toward the Party. It is most effective when the Other is already sensitive to comments made by the Party, is already sensitive to the issues raised by the Party, is insecure about their relationship to the Party, or when the Party has power and/or control over the Other.

#### **Possible Behavioral Tactics:**

The Party mocks, sneers, or taunts the Other.

The Party uses issues that the Other is already sensitive about.

The Party emphasizes the jibe by using or alluding to their power and control over the Other.

The Party jibes the Other repeatedly.

The Party directs misplaced or insensitive humor toward the Other.

### **3) Guilt Trips**

**Conceptual Definition:** Guilt trips are an effort by the Party to point out a transgression or mistake done by the Other. This transgression or mistake may be a very small one but the Party makes it seem disproportionately large by societal norms. The purpose of a guilt trip is to make the Other more uncomfortable or unsettled in regards to the transgression or mistake while possibly easing the feelings of the Party. Guilt trips are easiest to achieve when the Other already feels badly about what they have done, when the Other has already admitted their wrong and apologized to the Party, or when the Party has power over the Other.

#### **Possible Behavioral Tactics:**

The Party wraps untruths or exaggerations about transgressions or mistakes within innocuous observations about “reality.”

The Party continually talks about an old wrong done by the Other.

The Party raises the discomfort level in Other by bringing up an old wrongdoing.

The Party takes Other’s small transgressions and makes them seem larger than societal norms would normally allow.

The Party shifts blame away from themselves.

### **4) Shame Trips**

**Conceptual Definition:** Shame trips are an effort by the Party to make the Other feel worse about themselves globally as a person in regards to a transgression, mistake, or personal characteristic. This transgression or mistake may be a very small one but the Party makes it seem disproportionately large according to societal norms. The purpose of a shame trip is to make the Other feel bad about him/herself *and* about the transgression, mistake, or personal characteristic. Shame trips are easiest to achieve when the Other already has a poor self image, when the Other already feels badly about what they have done or who they are, when the Other has already admitted their wrong, or when the Party has power over the Other to reinforce the feelings of shame.

#### **Possible Behavioral Tactics:**

The Party reminds the Other of repeated past sins, implying negative attributes about the Other as a person.

The Party reminds the Other of the Other’s negative character traits.

The Party makes the Other feel personally responsible for a problem, blaming the problem on the other person’s negative traits (character, abilities, intelligence, lack of



empathy, etc.)

The Party attempts to make the Other have a poorer self image or disgrace the Other.

The Party categorizes the Other's behavior as repetitive and negative. "You always do that" or "You never do this."

The Party attempts to embarrass the Other.

## **5) Persuasive Argumentation**

**Conceptual Definition:** Persuasive Argumentation is the art of using logic or reason to get the Other to comply with the Party's wishes. The process involves the Party getting the Other to lower his/her aspirations. The Party convinces the Other that the Party has the logical, legitimate, and/or moral right to a favorable outcome. The Party also convinces the Other that lowering their aspirations is actually in their own best interest. Persuasive Argumentation is most effective when the Party has greater verbal skills, factual knowledge, or authority than the Other; when the Other is weakened by outside forces; or when the Party catches the Other off guard and the Other is unable to reflect on the information adequately.

### **Possible Behavioral Tactics:**

The Party encourages the Other to lower his/her aspirations through a series of logical or seemingly reasonable appeals.

The Party persuades the Other to do things that are in the Party's best interest.

The Party persuades the Other that the Party has a legitimate right to a favorable outcome in the controversy.

The Party convinces the Other that lower aspirations are in the latter's best interest.

The Party lowers the Other's resistance to yielding by imposing strong verbal logic or reasoning, or imposing unrealistic time restraints and pressures.

The Party uses "limpmanship," which is the use of minor injury or setback, to get sympathy from and distract the Other.

The Party calls upon a higher authority or moral superiority to substantiate their comments.

## **6) Threats**

**Conceptual Definition:** Threats are strong messages on intention to behave in the future in ways that will be harmful to the Other. The purpose of threats is to elicit conditional compliance from the Other. Threats often involve the use of force, the removal of a privilege, or the need for an approval. Threats induce a state of upset in the Other, which allows the Party to achieve his/her goals. Threats are most effective when they are believable, when the Party has the capability to actually carry them out, and when the Other will be directly injured by the actions.

### **Possible Behavioral Tactics:**

The Party gives messages of intention to behave in ways that are detrimental or frightening to the Other.

The Party provides information to the Other on how the Party will behave negatively toward the Other in the future.

The Party attempts to elicit compliance from the Other by threatening negative consequences.

The Party's statements often involve the use of proposed force (effective because the Other will often avoid a possible loss to get a possible reward or avoid a possible negative outcome).

The Party gives unilateral messages of negative consequences.

## **7) Irrevocable Commitments**

**Conceptual Definition:** The presentation of Irrevocable Commitments to the Other is like the Party saying, "I have started doing something that requires adjustment from you and will continue doing it despite your efforts to stop me." The purpose of Irrevocable Commitments is to shift the focus or responsibility or what is already happening to the shoulders of the Other. The outcome is often that it forces the Other to take actions that they probably would not have taken otherwise. It also forces the Other to work hard at bringing about an agreement or at least satisfying the conditions of the commitment. The Party often uses a public forum to issue the commitment in order for the rest of society to witness the commitment and hopefully to put outside pressures on the Other. The Party does not have to hold equal power to the Other in order to carry out the commitment. The tactic may be powerful because it does not require the Party to witness the commitment's ultimate consequences; i.e., they can essentially watch from the sidelines. It also allows the Party to be removed from harm's way as a result of any damage done to the Other. Irrevocable Commitments are most effective when they are public, plausible, and the Party has a history of keeping such commitments.

### **Possible Behavioral Tactics:**

The Party shifts the focus of anything negative that is happening onto the shoulders of the Other.

The Party forces the Other to take action, go along with, or work at bringing about agreement even though this may not be in the best interest of the Other at the time or in this situation.

The Party may use non-violent resistance or a passive form of aggressiveness to carry out the commitment.

The Party often chooses a public rather than private forum to issue the commitment for the apparent sake of binding both the Party and the Other to the process.

The Party commits themselves to a particular course of action.

### **Conflict Style Definitions Used in the Study:**

### **1) Avoiding may involve:**

not addressing or responding to the conflict

not pursuing personal interests at this time or in this situation.

withdrawing, side-stepping, or postponing.

being absent from conversations.

withdrawing from the relationship.

employing indirect actions.

acting unassertively and submissively.

engaging the Other in distracting conversations or activities.

### **2) Competing may be:**

adversarial.

looking for a win-lose outcome.

orientated toward taking power over the Other or purposefully putting oneself in a lower or lesser position.

controlling the discourse.

using only "I" language to express needs or insisting that the Other fulfill certain needs.

assertive, aggressive, and/or uncooperative.

using whatever power available to prevail.

### **3) Accommodating may involve:**

being unassertive in this situation.

yielding to the Other in this situation.

being willing to drop personal interests for the sake of harmony or preserving the relationship.

being willing to acknowledge that an issue is not of primary importance.

acting in ways that are self-sacrificing, overly charitable or generous, or obeisant to the will of the Other.

### **4) Compromising may involve:**

sacrificing some personal needs, but getting some personal needs met.

being willing to settle for and be happy with a portion of their original needs and interests.

giving some, taking some.

looking for expedient, mutually acceptable solutions.

## **5) Collaborating may involve:**

looking for a Win-Win outcome.

working with the other party, not against.

educating the Other on their interests and vice versa.

exploring creative solutions and options for mutual gains.

using inclusive, rather than exclusive, language.

listening to and being receptive to the Other.

## **Findings**

This pilot study aimed to develop and test a set of behavioralized definitions for conflict styles and conflict tactics. By showing participants a conflict video, we tested whether they were able to reliably identify styles and tactics according to operational definitions. We also asked them to fill out an instrument so that we could correlate their shame and guilt tendencies to their responses. Since the number of participants was purposely kept very small and the participants were all involved in a particular program of conflict resolution studies, the study needs to be expanded upon in order to test its overall validity and reliability. Our findings do point to some useful ideas for practitioners and researchers. Some of the most interesting findings were what we did not see in the results; for example, the lack of contrast between men's and women's responses. The results are summarized below.

### **Findings about Anger**

Mann-Whitney tests were used to look at possible differences between how male and female study participants view levels of anger in the man and woman in the videotape. Male and female study participants did not rate the anger of the man and the woman differently. However, the Mann-Whitney tests did reveal a significant difference between how the Masters and Doctoral students rated the anger in the couple, with the doctoral students more likely to rate the female anger levels higher (mean rank 7.00 vs. 12.18 respectively; with  $P=.041$ ). No other differences in the results appeared in ratings of anger and gender.

Using Pearson correlations to compare levels of anger with the conflict tactics of the disputing couple, it was found that, in female study participants, anger and ingratiation were negatively correlated (correlation at  $-.560$ ,  $P=.010$ ).

### **Findings about Conflict Styles**

Chi-Square analysis was run looking for differences between the sex of the study participant and identification of the seven conflict tactics. No significant differences were found in any of these categories. One interesting difference in terms of style was noted, however. Female study participants categorized the conflict styles of the disputing parties in only two categories: compromising and competing. Male study participants, however, noted a broader range of conflict styles among the disputing parties: avoiding,

accommodating, compromising, and competing.

### **Findings about Conflict Tactics**

After the study participants watched the video, they were asked to rate how certain they were in recognizing the conflict tactics that were described in the study. Pearson correlations were run comparing these certainties between tactics. Two significant correlations were found here. The first was between threats and sarcasm. In other words, if the study participant was certain he or she recognized a threat, then he or she was also sure that they recognized sarcasm as conflict tactics (these were positively correlated at .458;  $P=.049$ ). The second was between threats and shame trips. If they recognized threats, then they also recognized shame trips (these were positively correlated at .496;  $P=.031$ ).

When looking at persuasive argumentation, female study participants were more likely to give a higher score on the certainty scale than male participants (.036).

When asked about their levels of certainty when identifying various conflict tactics of the man and the woman, Masters students were more certain that they were able to recognize threats than Doctoral students.

### **Implications**

Overall, there were limited significant findings in these comparisons. Because this study was designed to be a pilot study, several findings are worth noting at this point. These findings will be taken into account in designing the larger study.

Threats seemed to be the conflict tactic most easily recognized, and with the most certainty. Interestingly enough, there was very little certainty among the study participants as to recognition of most tactics. Even though these conflict tactics are often stated and utilized in the conflict literature, this pilot study suggests that these tactics may not be clearly understood and recognized by conflict scholars even when very exact behavioral descriptions are offered to them. The fact that all participants were graduate students of conflict resolution makes this finding even more relevant. If people being trained at high levels of conflict studies are not certain of tactics in a film, work needs to be done to more precisely operationalize terminology and fine-tune training in the field. The same is true of the conflict styles described in the study. There seemed to be no agreement on the conflict styles of the man and woman in the video. This was partly due to the study design. When expanding this study, we will ask future participants to identify all the conflict styles they perceive instead of asking them to decide on one. One of the comments study participants offered to the researchers was that they saw the man and woman use several conflict styles during the course of the video and couldn't decide which one they thought predominated.

We had predicted gender differences between how our participants viewed conflict tactics used by the man and woman in the video. There were no significant differences in these findings. Of course, all participants were students of conflict resolution and had been trained to screen out gender bias. It would be an interesting for future study to offer this same video to students who were not in the field of conflict resolution to see if there were

gender differences in their responses.

The same can be said of the certainty participants expressed regarding their abilities to identify conflict tactics. Perhaps because study participants were all conflict resolution students, they over-identified with some of the tactics and styles and so were less certain of their responses. Another possibility is that the student participants learned the lesson of resisting assumptions well, and this yielded more tentative assessments of their conclusions. This can be examined in greater depth when the larger project is undertaken.

This study lays the groundwork for future research. The behavioralization of the conflict styles and tactics will be useful in our future research, and that of colleagues. Comparisons could be run looking at differences between conflict resolution students and students of other disciplines, male and female study participants, and Masters and Doctoral students. This pilot study offers a starting point from which to continue the work in this area.

## Footnotes

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