MANAGING CONFLICT ACROSS CULTURES, VALUES AND IDENTITIES

A CASE STUDY IN THE SOUTH AFRICAN AUTOMOTIVE INDUSTRY

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ABSTRACT

Over the past fifty years, interest in the field of conflict management and peace-keeping has developed worldwide. During the same time, the potential for (trans-cultural) conflict has escalated. This can mainly be attributed to the trend towards globalisation, as well as the growing complexity of societies increasingly experiencing more intercultural encounters or cultural transition situations and work-related or organisational conflicts.

Cultural transition situations occur in the South African international automotive industry where the emergence of international co-operation, such as joint ventures (driven by globalisation) and new diversity management trends, have changed the way business is conducted. Due to these changes, employees of diverse origins with different cultures, values and identities work together, experiencing work-related conflicts.

The purpose of this study was to assess managerial perspectives on conflict, identity and values, as well as on how (trans-cultural) conflict is managed in a selected international organisation in the South African automotive industry.

The contribution of this study is twofold, namely to increase the understanding of the complexities of conflict in organisations; and to provide recommendations for conflict resolution strategies to manage (trans-cultural) conflict constructively by considering the values and identity aspects of those individuals involved.

This study comprises a single explanatory case study which made use of qualitative data collection and analysis to investigate managerial perspectives on conflict, identity and values, as well as the management thereof, in the selected international organisation in the South African automotive context.

Based on the main findings from this case study, it could be concluded that managers with diverse backgrounds experience work-related conflicts which are related to value and identity concepts in the selected organisation. The conflicts experienced fell into the categories of Communication and Treatment, Position and Competition, Organisation and Race and Gender.

An overview of the occurrence frequency of value statements revealed that equality, communication and respect were the most commonly indicated values in conflicts. These value concepts include sub-concepts such as:

- for equality: race, gender and human equality;
- for communication: open, personal, free, decent, calm and proactive communication; and
- for respect: mutual respect for self and others.

With regard to value concepts and according to value domains of Schwartz (1994) and Schwartz and Bilsky (1987), the value dimensions of self-transcendence comprised the highest number of value statements. This dimension included the value domains of universalism and benevolence.

Conflict in the data material was interlinked with identity. The extracts, based on the key words of the identity factors, demonstrated that the identity factors were related to either a weakening or strengthening effect on identities. Social and identity multiplicity in managers provides creativity spaces and flexibility in cases of strong identity patterns. Particularly with weak identities, the existence of conflict potentials could lead to complex conflicts and challenges in conflict management.

Communication was most often mentioned as important to successful conflict resolution management and included examples such as round-table talks, smooth communication, face-to-face communication and room meetings. Communication was followed in frequency by strategies of internal intervention, which included the use of the formal structure of the organisation to resolve conflicts.

KEYWORDS

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<u>DECLARATION</u>

I declare that the thesis hereby submitted is my own independent work and has not previously been submitted by me for a degree at another university.

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DR CLAUDE-HÉLÈNE MAYER

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION AND ORIENTATION

1. INTRODUCTION AND PROBLEM STATEMENT

Over the past fifty years, interest in the field of conflict management and peace-keeping has developed worldwide (Galtung, 1996; Patomäki, 2001: 723; Schmidt and Trittmann, 2002). At the same time, the potential for (trans-cultural) conflict has escalated. This can mainly be attributed to the trend towards globalisation and the growing complexity of societies increasingly experiencing more intercultural encounters or cultural transition situations (Boness, 2002: 1; Dadder, 1987: 49) and work-related or organisational conflicts (Rahim, 2001).

Cultural transition situations occur in the South African automotive industry, in which the emergence of international co-operation such as joint ventures, driven by globalisation, has changed the way business is conducted. Employees of diverse origins with different cultures, values and identities work together. Consequently, the potential for conflict has escalated dramatically. In fact, many organisations are riddled by conflict (Pondy, 1992: 257) which leads to intense emotional distress and distraction from work, influencing decision-making and relationships negatively and affecting individual effectiveness, productivity and creativity (Cowan, 1995:24).

In addition, in the automotive industry, international business plays a key role in transforming post-apartheid South African society. The international business environment is influenced, *inter alia*, by globalisation and diversity.

Globalisation has become a well-accepted post-modernistic term to characterise the international economy over the last decades of the twentieth century. However, there is much debate over the concept, its meaning, and its main dimensions (Connell, 2004; Dicken, 1998; Edwards and Usher, 2000; Jaffee, 1998; Kalantzis and Cope, 2006; McMichael, 1996; Rizvi, 2006; Sklair, 1999; Zhao, Massey, Murphy and Fang, 2003) and, indeed, whether global flows of goods, foreign direct investment, finance capital and migration flows

have increased since the turn of the century (Wade, 1996). A question that is often posed is whether organisations should formulate their strategies according to global or regional corporate mindsets. Schlie and Yip (2000:343) have explored the strategic responses of multinational automotive organisations embedded in a simple framework of interdependent industry forces, globalisation barriers and competitive regionalisation advantages. They view regional strategies as alternative, potentially superior solutions *vis-a-vis* fully globally integrated or locally responsive approaches, proposing that organisations follow an eclectic course of regionalisation as well as globalisation. In the context of the automotive industry, it is suggested that an automotive producer should first become a global player, to efficiently and selectively regionalise. In turn, the regional strategies will support an organisation's global strategy (Schlie and Yip, 2000:343).

In addition to the issues of regionalisation and internationalisation in the South African context, the country's turbulent history, diversity, corporate management styles and cultures contribute to the complexity of conflict and trans-cultural conflict.

Cultural diversity encompasses differences in visible characteristics such as race, gender and ethnicity, but also includes differences that are not necessarily visible, such as religion, professional background and sexual preference (Francesco and Gold, 2005:194). The challenge for South African managers is to find creative solutions for integrating diversity characteristics, while simultaneously overcoming deeply entrenched discriminatory practices and social division by valuing people according to their cultures (Jackson, 2002). Diversity can be described as a mosaic, in which all component pieces form an image (Kandola, 1995: 131). According to Horwitz, Bowmaker-Falconer and Searll (1996: 134), human resource development (HRD) and diversity management need to be conceptually integrated to raise consciousness and awareness. This focus could help create better understanding and tolerance among staff members from different societal, cultural and economic backgrounds within an organisation.

Managing diversity can be understood as possessing an acute awareness of characteristics common to cultures, races, genders and ages, while at the same time managing staff members as individuals (Overman, 1991: 32pp). The change in diversity management and the restructuring processes in international organisations investing in South Africa also imply trans-cultural conflict experiences and new challenges for intercultural communication and diversity management.

The role of diversity management and its influence on small individual groups and management effectiveness has been well documented (Bassett-Jones, 2005; Cox, Lobel and McLeod, 1991; Pelled, Eisenhardt and Xin, 1999; Piturro and Mahoney, 1992; Thomas and Bendixen, 2000; Watson, Kumar and Michaelson, 1993; Wrench, 2005). There is evidence that diversity, if not well managed, can contribute to trans-cultural conflict (Church, 1995: 3). The management of trans-cultural conflict has emerged as a vital issue. In this study, it is argued that work-related conflicts across cultures require a comprehensive assessment of conflict, identity and values.

Conflict in the organisational context is often related to the negotiation of values, value-orientations (Berkel, 2005; Bond, 1998; Kluckhohn and Stroedbeck, 1961; Wallace, Hunt and Richards, 1999), identity aspects (Kriesberg, 2003a; 2003b), and also to (value and identity) management and organisational processes (Agle and Caldwell, 1999; Gandal, Roccas, Sagiv and Wrzesniewski, 2005; Smith, Peterson and Schwartz, 2002). The organisational culture also influences work-related conflict, always relating to the values and identity aspects involved, and can contribute constructively to the management and resolution of (trans-cultural) conflicts (Bond, 2004; Hofstede, 1998; Pool, 2000).

To better understand the relationship between (transcultural) conflict and culture, it is important to explain the concept of culture. The concept of culture has been defined ambiguously (Bower, 1966; Hagberg and Heifetz, 2000; Lundy and Cowling, 1996). According to Mayer (2000: 72) culture is "…the enduring norms, values, customs, and behavioural patterns common to a particular group of people". It is a social construct that is an emergent result of the continuing negotiations about values, meanings and proprieties between the

members of an organisation and its environment (Seel, 2000: 2). The term 'trans-cultural' indicates interaction or communication that transcends the created cultural boundaries, including value and identity aspects, of the cultural groups. It is estimated that in communication within the same culture, people understand about 70 per cent of what is said, while in cross-cultural situations, this figure is 50 per cent only (Hiebert, 1985: 166). The challenge to communicate across cultural lines often results in trans-cultural conflict (Waters, 1992: 438) with constructive or destructive consequences (Grab, 1996: 35; Johnson, 1994: 721). There is, therefore, a need for conflict management models that consider differences in cultural and value systems (Horowitz and Boardman, 1994; Wall and Callister, 1995). This study "Managing conflict across cultures, values and identities. A case study in the South African automotive industry." will attempt to reflect and understand trans-cultural conflicts by exploring issues of identity and values in the context of trans-culturality.

Conflicts are in this sense defined as episodes that lead to the recognition of the existence of multiple realities (Lederach, 1988: 39). At the same time, conflicts are connected to intra-personal processes (Rahim, 2002: 207), created by different parts of the psyche, the value system and the behaviour (Folger, Scott Poole and Stutman, 2001: 45) and affective and cognitive intra-personal dynamics (Mischel and Shoda, 1998: 251). Conflict therefore often relates to issues of identity and identity conflict, or even identity crisis (Maringer and Steinweg, 1997; Mayer, 2005a) and begins when an individual or a group perceives differences and opposition between the self and the other about interests, beliefs or needs and values (De Dreu, Harinck and Van Vianen, 1999). Identity plays a major part in the construction and management of conflict. However, it is often overlooked when managing or attempting to understand the origins of conflict (Lederach, 2003; Seymour, 2003) and trans-cultural identities becomes even more important (Burton, 1990a), particularly in a diverse environment (Williams and O'Reilly, 1998).

During recent years, post-modern constructivist approaches and theories have been introduced into the identity debate (Bekker, Leildé, Cornelisen and Horstmeier, 2000; Cobb, 2003; Craw, 1994; Kriesberg, 2003a) and have

redefined identity concepts (Sökefeld, 2001). The fundamental thoughts on post-modern identity are based on the notion of the pluralisation of the self in resonance with the growing complexity and pluralisation of society (Keupp, 1988, 1994 and 1997; Kraus, 1996). The identity is constructed of various interests, roles, attitudes and value orientations, which need to be integrated and which vary in their degree of importance, depending on the situation (Layes, 2003:17).

As does identity, cultural values, as part of identity constructs, impact on conflict experience and its management. Values and value orientations are patterns of thoughts and actions (Kluckhohn and Stroedbeck, 1961: 4) and are often unreflected and unconscious, until the parties to the conflict realise that their conflict derives from differences in personal or cultural modes and patterns of thoughts and actions. Contradictory or competing values and identity aspects can then cause intrapersonal and interpersonal conflicts (Coy and Woehrle, 200; Kriesberg, 2003a), which could also wreak havoc in the health of the conflicting parties.

On the one hand, conflict can lead to distress and distraction from work, affecting decision-making processes, relationships, and individual effectiveness, productivity and creativity (Cowan, 1995: 24). There is evidence that conflicts in organisational settings can impact negatively on productivity and costs in organisations (Burton, 1990a; Zapf, 1999: 70pp). To assist in the management of conflict, different conflict management strategies and techniques are available. On the other hand, constructive conflict can contribute positively to job satisfaction and well-being (De Dreu, Van Dierendonck and Dijkstra, 2004: 15), as well as to stress reduction (Friedman, Tidd, Currall and Tsai, 2000: 32).

There seems to be consensus between management scholars that there is not one best approach to organisational management and conflict resolution. The situational and contextual approaches have replaced the "one best approach" (Rahim, 2002: 217).

Organisational management, management styles and conflict management are concepts that are closely interrelated. Blake and Mouton (1964) suggest that

integrating and problem-solving management styles are most appropriate for the resolution and management of conflict in organisations. Rahim and Bonoma (1979), and later Rahim (2001), emphasise that one management style may be more appropriate than another, depending on the situation and the context. The phenomenon of conflicts and its management in regard to management styles will be discussed in Chapter 3, Section 3.3.3.

According to the complex phenomena of conflict, values and identity, a wide range of conflict management theories and practical tools have already been developed (Miall, Ramsbotham and Woodhouse, 2000: 2). The resolution of conflicts has been defined differently with regard to conflict management, resolution and transformation processes (Nye, 2005). However, different authors mention that conflict management should "be capable of cutting across cultures" (Burton, 1990a: 211-212), even if there are culturally defined means of dealing with conflict (Horowitz, 2000) and even if trans-cultural conflicts are often defined as deep-rooted conflicts, because of their cultural identity dimension (Burton, 1990a: 214).

A review of scientific debates on conflict, values and identity reveals a lack of research on the international organisational context in South Africa. The motivation for this research is to fill a void concerning the aspects mentioned and to also develop new ideas for the management of conflict in the selected South African organisation.

This study is not only of theoretical importance, but also has practical importance for the management of international organisations, specifically in the automotive industry.

Given the importance of this study, the problem statement can be formulated as follows: In international organisations in the South African automotive context, multiple conflicts occur at different levels, which need to be understood and managed. For implementing effective conflict management, it is necessary to reflect on the role of value and identity constructs that have often stayed unconsidered in former research studies. In this study, the focus will be on analysing value orientations and identity in response to the need of conflict

analysis across cultures, values and identities. This explanatory single-case study proposes to contribute to a better understanding of the complexity of conflict and its management in the South African international automotive organisational context.

The contribution of this study is to increase the understanding of the complexities of conflict in organisations and provide tools for management and conflict resolution strategies to manage (trans-cultural) conflict constructively, by considering the values and identity of the individuals involved. This study differs from the research previously conducted in this research area, in that it examines conflict in a selected international organisation in South Africa, with special regard to identity and values, by using inductive and deductive methodological processes within the phenomenological research paradigm. National and international data searches could not reveal a previous study with this focus and this study will therefore make an important contribution to conflict research in the mentioned setting, by focusing on the roles of identity and values (see Section 1.3.1).

1.2   OBJECTIVES AND PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

The purpose of this study is to assess managerial perspectives on conflict, identity and values and how (trans-cultural) conflict is being managed in a selected international organisation in the South African automotive industry.

This study intends to contribute to a deeper understanding of managerial perspectives with regard to conflict, values and identities through qualitative data evaluation and presentation on the selected international organisation in the South African automotive context.

In this sense, it aims to contribute to South African management research in the field of conflict, values and identity, providing "thick descriptions" (Geertz, 1987) from an *emic* perspective.

More specifically, the aim of this study is to:

- introduce theoretical research approaches on (trans-cultural) conflict, identity and values; and

- present qualitative research results from a comprehensive case study conducted in a selected international organisation in the South African automotive industry.

To achieve these aims, the following research questions have been formulated:

Research questions concerning analytically gained findings in Chapter 6; the relationship of biographical data and conflict factors in Chapter 7; and findings and conclusions linked to theoretical approaches in Chapter 8.

The research questions guide the way through the findings of data. They are therefore separated into three different kinds of research questions, as follows:

- analytical research questions aim at the analysis of keywords and content analysis, such as conflict issues, identity aspects, values, conflict resolution, management styles, improvement in management and outside intervention (Chapter 6);

- relational research questions aim at the interlinkage of biographical data and conflict factors (Chapter 7); and

- theory-oriented research questions aim at the approval of the findings and conclusions (Chapter 8) according to the theoretical approaches which are discussed in Chapter 3 and 4.

The research questions in detail are as follows:

1.2.1 Analytical research questions

1. Which work-related conflicts do managers experience in the selected international organisation?

1.1   Which categories of conflict can be developed out of the data material?

2.   Which values can be identified and clustered?

2.1   Which value domains of Schwartz and Bilsky (1987) are matched by the inductively analysed values of P1 to P45?

3.   Which identity aspects occur in experienced conflict situations?

3.1   Which identity aspects strengthen or weaken the identity?

4.   Which statements on conflict resolution and conflict management can be identified and clustered?

5.   Which management styles are exhibited by the managers?

5.1   How do the management styles relate to conflict management?

6.   Which suggestions for improvement are mentioned?

7.   How do managers comment on outside intervention?

1.2.2   Relational research questions

8.   Which interlinkages between selected biographical indicators and conflict issues are observable?

8.1   How does the indicator of male and female impact on conflict issues?

8.2   How does racial belonging influence conflict issues?

8.3   How do age groups experience conflicts?

8.4   How does national origin influence conflictual issues?

8.5   Which differences in location of work at headquarters and branches can be stated with regard to conflict issues?

9.   How do values and identity impact on conflict resolution and management styles with regard to conflict issues which are interlinked with the conflict category Organisation?

10.   What kind of trans-cultural conflicts occur in the organisation?

10.1   How, and to which extent does racial belonging influence the experiencing of conflicts?

1.2.3   Theory-oriented research questions

11.   Which theoretical approaches of conflict analysis apply to the research findings?

12.   How do value domains and dimensions of Schwartz's value theory (Chapter 4) reflect the research findings?

13.   To which extent do findings of identity aspects relate to theoretical concepts of identity (Chapter 3, Section 3.4)?

14.   Which findings of the factor of conflict resolution reflect which aspects of theoretical approaches to conflict management (Chapter 3, Section 3.3)?

15.   To which extent do aspects of management style theories (Chapter 3, Section 3.3) represent the findings of the factor management styles?

The research results will be used to create tools for consultancy and the transformation of trans-cultural conflict management in the selected organisation, which could possibly be emulated by other organisations in the South African automotive industry.

1.3   RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

Given the qualitative nature of this research, the phenomenological and interpretative paradigms are most relevant (Collis and Hussey, 2003: 47). Within these paradigms, the theoretical and methodological approaches used in this research are founded on the epistemological tradition of constructivism (Berger and Luckmann, 2000) and interpretative hermeneutics (Gadamer, 1990; Habermas, 1999).

To realise the aims of this study, the research strategy has been divided into two main components, namely the primary data analysis, and the secondary literature analysis. Triangulation of data and triangulation of theories (Collis and Hussey, 2003: 78) have also been used to gather "thick descriptions" of data.

A detailed presentation of the research design and methodology will be discussed in Chapter 5.

1.3.1   Secondary sources

For the secondary literature analysis, sources from related subject discipline, such as conflict studies, organisational management studies and intercultural communication studies, were consulted. International and national data searches at the libraries of the Rhodes and Nelson Mandela Metropolitan Universities included data search machines such as Sabinet online, UCTD,

Networked Digital Library of Thesis and Dissertations (NDLTD), ETD (Electronic Thesis and Dissertation Collection), Thesis Canada Portal, World Cat Dissertations, PhdData: The Universal Index of Doctoral Dissertations in Progress (UIDDP), Emerald, Business Link, South African Studies, International Dissertation Abstracts, Nexus, and various Internet data search machines, such as Google and Google Scholars. As far as could be ascertained from the databases, no similar research study had previously been undertaken in South Africa. The searches were conducted using the following key words: organisational conflict, conflict in organisations, cultural conflict, trans-cultural conflict, identity, value, social values, cultural values, management, business, automotive industry, South Africa, case study.

Based on this extensive literature search of South African, as well as international databases, the following theses and dissertations on conflict and its management in South Africa could be found:

- in NGOs and community level (Mayer, 2004; Snodgrass, 1999);
- in the political sector (Boss, 1999; Bradshaw, 2002);
- in the educational sector (De Vries, 2006; Doerr, 2004; Du Toit, 1990; Ngalo, 2003; Snodgrass, 2005);
- in groups of adults (De Knock, 1995); and
- in the organisational context (Bahadur, 2001; Bloch, 1982; De Klerk, 1996; Horo, 2002; Kilian, 1998; Odesnik, 1988; Oosthuizen, 1993; Steyn, 1991; Uiras, 1999);
- with special reference to the automotive industry (Burnell, 2003; Cramer , 2002).

The following South African thesis and dissertations on culture, identity, communication and values could be found:

- Organisational culture and conflict in local government bodies (Williams, 2006) and in a non-governmental organisation (Dollar, 1999).

- Identity in regard to corporate identity and management processes in organisations (Jacobsen, 2001; Van Heerden, 1994; Wernli, 1993), but not focusing on conflict and identity in organisations in the South African context. Only one thesis focuses on identity-based conflicts by examining conflict narratives using data from Israel, Palestine, Nigeria and South Africa (White, 2004).

- Intercultural communication and conflict in organisations in South Africa (Cooper, 1993).

- Values in organisational settings in South Africa (Jennings, 2002; Scholtz, 2004; Siegru̇hn, 2002; Steyn, 2002).

Based on the afore-mentioned, it is evident that most of the research pertaining to conflict and management is centred in the social, political and educational organisational context. Although previous research has been conducted on intercultural and international organisational settings in South Africa, no trace of a comprehensive study on conflict and its management in the international automotive industry, with special regard to values and identity, could be found.

Secondary sources pertaining to research design and the methodology of the study included *inter alia*:
Atteslander, 1995; Babbie and Mouton, 2006; Bennet, 1991; Best and Kahn, 1993; Cheldelin, Druckman and Fast, 2003; Collis and Hussey, 2003; Denzin, 1970; De Vos and Fouche, 1998; De Vos and Van Zyl, 1998; Fourie, 1996; Geertz, 1987; Gummesson, 2000; Habermas, 1999; Hartley, 2004; Hopf, 1978; Kayrooz and Trevitt, 2005; Kerlinger, 1994; King, 1994; Kohler Riesman, 1993; Kraus, 2000; Kromrey, 1998; Lucius-Hoene and Deppermann, 2002; Mayring, 2003; Patton, 2002; Ricoeur, 1979; Seale, 1999; Sekaran, 2003; Sprinthall, Schmutte and Sirois, 1991; Steinke, 2000; Stellrecht, 1993; Stenbacka, 2001; Winter, 2000 and Yin, 2002.

Also, the following sources, focusing on conflict, conflict management, identity and identity conflicts, value and value orientations, were *inter alia* found to be of particular importance to this research:

Allport, 1965; Augsburger, 1992; Avruch, 1998; Bar-Tal, 1998, 2004; Berger and Luckmann, 2000; Bradshaw, 2006; Burton, 1990a, 1990b; Buttner, 2001 Chaitin, 2003; Cobb, 2003; Constantino and Sickles Merchant, 1996; De Dreu et al, 2004; De Dreu and Weingart, 2003; Folger et al, 2001; Fuchs, 1992; Galtung, 1996; Gaziano, Jensen-Campbell and Hair, 1996; Hall, 1991; Keupp, 1994; Keupp, Ahbe, Gmür, Höfer, Kraus, Mitzscherlich and Straus, 2002; Kluckhohn and Stroedbeck, 1961; Kriesberg, 2003a, 2003b and 2003c; Layes, 2003; Lederarch, 1996, 2000 and 2003; Mayer, 2006; Miall et al, 2000; Montoya-Weiss, Massey and Song, 2001; Mummendey, 1993; Myers and Filner, 1994; Pondy, 1992; Rahim, 2001 and 2002; Rokeach, 1973 and 1979; Schlee, 2000; Schwartz, 1994; Schwartz and Bardi, 2001; Schwartz and Bilsky, 1987; Schwartz and Sagiv, 1995; Seymour, 2003; and Sökefeld, 2001.

1.3.2   <u>Primary sources</u>

To achieve the aims of this research and to answer the research questions mentioned in this chapter in Section 1.2, an explanatory case study approach was followed. In the frame of this approach, in-depth interviews were conducted with a sample of 45 managers working, at the time of the interview, in the selected international organisation in the South African automotive industry. The managers were identified by the Human Resource Department of the organisation concerned and were asked to avail themselves for the interviews. Altogether 45 managers were interested in participating. This sample comprised managers with diverse national, cultural, ethnic and social backgrounds.

The organisation identified and used for this case study operates world-wide in 120 countries and belongs to one of Europe's leading German engineering groups (Chapter 2). As a technical leader in the automotive industry, it is ranked among the top three suppliers in each of its world-wide markets. In South Africa, this organisation consists of a headquarters and a Parts Division in Gauteng, with a staff complement of 125 and 52 respectively. Its Chassis Assembly Plant in KwaZulu-Natal employs 203 people, while its Bus and Coach Manufacturing plant in Gauteng has 176 staff members (Organisational Paper, 2006b). The Branches I, II and III of the organisation participating in this study are not linked to the divisions to keep the confidentiality and anonymity.

This organisation was chosen for this study for the following reasons:

- its global and regional business involvement and standing, as highlighted above;
- its diversity, with reference to the different plants and offices in various regions in South Africa;
- it had diversity related and conflict handling policies in place, which were well managed;
- its international management profile;
- permissible access to the organisation; and
- pre-assumptions regarding study results.

It was pre-assumed that managers in this international organisation would have experienced work-related conflicts related to cultural differences, especially individual values and aspects of identity. It was also expected that selected managers would agree to participate in the interviews.

1.4   DEMARCATION OF THE STUDY

The study is based in the interdisciplinary field of conflict management and value and identity theories, using approaches from the humanities and social sciences, as stated in this chapter in Section 1.1 and comprehensively presented in Chapters 3 and 4.

The study will follow an explanatory case study approach and is, therefore, limited to one selected international organisation in the automotive industry located in South Africa. The study will include in-depth interviews with a sample of 45 managers working in the selected organisation, both at headquarters and in selected branches in Gauteng and KwaZulu-Natal (Branch I, II and III). The selected international South African automotive organisation will in this study be referred to as "the organisation". With regard to the research design and methodology, the study will be limited to primary and secondary source analyses and triangulation of theories and data, as stated in this chapter in Section 1.3.

The study will follow a qualitative data methodological approach, focusing on content analyses and the description of 'thick data' which are evaluated through in-depth data analyses, as shown in Chapter 5.

The focus of this research will be on assessing work-related conflicts experienced by managers at different managerial levels in the selected organisation. Key issues will be the narrated conflicts; perceptions of value- and identity-related aspects; conflict resolution; improvement of (conflict) management; and intervention from the outside.

This study will not provide data that can be generalised for international organisations operating in South Africa, but the results will provide insights and a deeper understanding of the exemplified conflicts in the described and presented setting.

Finally, it is hoped that the research results can be used to create tools for conflict management across cultures, values and identities in the selected organisation, which could possibly also be emulated by other organisations in the South African automotive industry.

1.5   STRUCTURE OF THE THESIS

This thesis is divided into eight chapters, which can be summarised as follows:

Chapter 1 serves as an introduction to the study, by reflecting the background to the study and the problem statement. It also contains the purpose, aims and research questions of the study and an overview of the research methodology followed and the context of the study. It further gives an overview of previous research pertaining to conflict, values and identity. Finally, the delimitations of the field of study are explained, followed by a summary of the structure and outline of the thesis.

The context of the study constitutes the focus of Chapter 2. Here, important information on the organisation in a global and local setting is provided. Managerial challenges in the South African context are discussed, and national and local implications for the organisation are highlighted. This chapter also

refers to the structure of the organisation, as well as to important organisational conflict resolution and affirmative action policies.

In Chapter 3, theoretical aspects of conflict, its management and identities are placed under the spotlight. The theoretical approaches in this chapter serve as the basis for the analysis and presentation of data.

Chapter 4 concentrates on theoretical approaches to values and value concepts with special regard to the theoretical approaches to value domains and value dimensions of selected authors.

Chapter 5 presents the research design and methodology. After the introduction to the methodology, the phenomenological research paradigm; the qualitative research design with special regard to case studies; the data collection process; and the process of qualitative data analysis are discussed. Finally, a summary on methodologies and research design is given.

Chapter 6 presents the first part of the data and research findings. A comprehensive data analysis is conducted on the following selected factors: conflict issues and conflict factors, value factors, identity factors, conflict resolution and management factors, management style factors, improvement of management factors and outside intervention factors.

Chapter 7 presents the second part of the results on special issues such as biographical data, conflict categories and conflict issues, conflicts of the category Organisation and trans-cultural conflicts and their management.

Finally, a conclusion and recommendations of the research are provided in Chapter 8. The findings of Chapters 6 and Chapter 7 are interlinked with the relevant theories and conclusions are given. The main contributions of this research are highlighted and recommendations for the selected organisation and for further research are exhibited.

The Appendices includes the interview questions (Appendix A) and the transcriptions of the data material (Appendix B).

CHAPTER 2

CONTEXT OF THE STUDY

2.1 IMPORTANCE OF THE CONTEXT

As already referred to in Chapter 1, Section 1.3.2, the context of the study is very important regarding the analysis and interpretation of data. Based on the fact that the case study follows a hermeneutical and interpretative research approach, which falls into the epistemological tradition of constructivism – as will be outlined by the theoretical and the methodological literature review in Chapters 3, 4 and 5 – the context of the study is seen as having a major influence on the construction of social realities, as well as on the actors and their perceptions. Conversely, actors create the context themselves by their perceptions, behaviours and social interactions. The researcher regards the actors as part of the research context; this viewpoint has an influence on the analysis, interpretation and presentation of the data in Chapters 6, 7 and 8.

The context of this study is complex and multilayered. Selected aspects of the different layers of contexts need to be considered and outlined:

- the international context of the study;
- the national context of the study;
- the organisational context of the study; and
- the local context of the study.

The international context influences the study insofar as that the research has been undertaken in an organisation that is a global player. Hence, international influences such as international policies, organisational aspects and the global economy may impact on the organisational conflict experienced and on the social realities of the staff members. Additionally, there are common global issues that affect the South African economy and the automotive industry (Chapter 2, Sections 2.2, 2.3 and 2.4) and obviously also the organisation that is the focus of this study (Chapter 2, Sections 2.5, 2.6 and 2.7).

Regarding the national contexts of the study, which possibly also shape the research study, aspects of the South African national context as well as aspects

of the German context affect the organisational system of the organisation. The South African context introduces specific policies, such as affirmative action policies (Chapter 2, Section 2.7). Additionally, the entire organisational context, which is based in South African urban agglomerations, is shaped by social, political and cultural realities that are part of the South African national context (for example, language diversity, cultural diversity, the previously high crime rate and therefore the high security needs of the organisation's compounds).

The German context is also present in the organisation, with reference to the fact that the headquarters of the entire organisation is based in Germany. This promotes an intercultural and diverse workforce, as relatively large numbers of German expatriates occupy managerial positions in South Africa in the short or longer term. It should be noted that the organisational structure is oriented towards a typically German organisational structure (for example, the hierarchies in the decision-making processes).

The organisational context of this study also demands attention. The organisation is based in the development and production section of the automotive industry which obviously draws on and benefits from the long tradition of the production of utility vehicles in Europe.

The importance of the local context on the organisation and the branches that participated in the interviews was clear. It may, therefore, be assumed that different local cultures applied in the different branches. These local aspects vary according to the type of branch (Headquarters, production side, and administration), as well as the composition of work teams in terms of gender, age, departmental belonging, culture and language background, and ethnic origin of the individuals involved.

In the following section, the selected aspects of the presented contexts that are relevant in this case study will be examined.

2.2 GLOBALISATION AND AUTOMOTIVE INDUSTRY

Globalisation has become a well-accepted post-modern term to characterise the international economy in the last decades of the twentieth century, despite the strongly held opposing views and extensive debate about the concept and the true meaning of globalisation (Dicken, 1998), its main dimensions (Connell, 2004; Edwards and Usher, 2000; Jaffee, 1998; Kalantzis and Cope, 2006; McMichael, 1996; Rizvi, 2006; Sklair, 1999: 60; Zhao et al, 2003: 74pp) and, indeed, whether global flows of goods, foreign direct investment, finance capital, and migration flows have increased since the turn of the century (Wade, 1996). However, there is a sharp divide between theorists who see globalisation as a *constraint* on the development prospects of non-core nations, and those who see the linkages implied by globalisation as posing not only constraints, but also *opportunities* for the advancement of developing countries. A question that is often posed is whether companies should formulate their strategies according to a global or regional corporate mindset.

Schlie and Yip (2000) examine the strategic responses of multinational automotive organisations embedded in a simple framework of interdependent industry forces, total globalisation barriers, and competitive regionalisation advantages. They see regional strategies as alternative, potentially superior solutions *vis-à-vis* fully globally integrated or locally responsive approaches, arguing that companies must follow an eclectic course of both regionalisation and globalisation. In the context of the automotive industry, however, the preliminary findings suggest that a car producer should first become a global organisation, to efficiently and selectively regionalise, in a second step. Overall, regional strategies could support an organisation's global strategy, at a later stage.

The automotive industry is often defined as one of the most global of all industries. Its products are distributed all over the world. The industry is dominated by a small number of organisations that enjoy worldwide recognition. However, in certain respects, the industry is more regional than global, in spite of the globalising trends evident in the 1990s, and faces specific challenges in the future (Pries 2004). The global spread of vehicle sales and production, ownership in the assembly sector, and the transformation of the component

sector are mainly regionally oriented. In developing countries, vehicle production increased markedly in the 1990s. Global vehicle production rose by nearly seven million units between 1990 and 1997, with much of the growth being concentrated in developing countries (Humphrey and Memedovic, 2003: 5).

The greater geographical spread of vehicle output and sales in developing countries has not been accompanied by a spread of ownership in the assembly sector. Globally, the automotive industry remains concentrated, with a small number of companies accounting for a significant share of production and sales. According to Humphrey and Memedovic (2003: 5), the figures speak for themselves:

> In 2001, 13 companies produced more than 1 million vehicles each. Taken together, these 13 firms accounted for around 87 per cent of the world's vehicle production. A number of leading companies have significant shareholdings in smaller vehicle producers, and over time this has led to increasing co-operation in both vehicle development and production.

A feature of the automotive industry in the 1990s was the way in which leading vehicle manufacturers extended their operations in developing countries. In part, this was driven by sales growth. For global producers, the rapidly growing markets in developing countries made it possible to spread vehicle development costs and establish cheap production sites for the production of selected vehicles and components.

The focus on developing countries promoted the development of domestic components and, therefore, the entire automotive industry. This stimulated the employment sector and reduced the effect on the balance of payments of vehicle parts imports. It also stimulated domestic technological capability through the spill-over factor. A section of the domestic components industry would be locally owned, or joint ventures would be established between local companies and transnational companies. Many countries regarded the introduction of local assembly plants as the first step in the development of a domestic automotive industry (Barnes and Lorentzen, 2003: 3).

According to Barnes and Lorentzen (2003: 2), vehicle assemblers co-design new car models in co-operation with suppliers who deliver complete systems or modules, rather than individual components. In their quest to reduce costs, car producers have begun to build a larger variety of models onto fewer vehicle platforms. In addition, the idea of a 'world car' aspires to compensate for rising development costs and shorter model turnover cycles. The model runs are therefore increased, and locally adapted versions of essentially the same model are available worldwide. It also means that selected industrial plants in developing or transitional economies deliver top-of-the-range models to high-income countries.

The changing nature of the global assembly industry in the past decade has inevitably also affected the components industries in developing countries. These changes, which were closely connected to the automotive industry's value chains, will not be further explored in this study (for further reading, consult Sugiyama and Fujimoto (2000)). A closer look at the South African context is essential.

At the beginning of the 21st century, the global automotive industry is still expanding, and characterised by the economic domination of the industrialised countries. In 2002, there were 590 million cars in the world, which is one for every ten people. There were 140 million cars in the United States, and 55 million in Japan. This was in sharp contrast with just nine million cars in China and six million cars in India. Western European territories dominate the 'Top Ten List' of the most cars per person. New Zealand heads this list, with 61 cars per hundred people (Worldmapper, 2007).

Regarding bus and truck industries, the international growth rates are also booming. Western Europe has recorded growth rates of up to 11.8 per cent (Euroforum, 2006).

However, in the next decade, the automotive industry has to meet the international challenges posed by global trends and the establishment of cost-effective production sites, posed by international and sound communication and co-operation practices. Other major challenges will be meeting the increasing

demand for professionalism, technical knowledge, and social and emotional competencies in the international workplace (Pries 2004).

In the following section, focus will turn to development in the South African automotive industry.

2.3   DEVELOPMENT OF SOUTH AFRICA'S AUTOMOTIVE INDUSTRY

South Africa's first automotive assembly plants were established in the 1920s by Ford (1924) and General Motors (1926) (Barnes and Kaplinsky, 2000: 798). According to Duncan (1997), the anticipated tariff protection measures were the major reason for the establishment of these plants. Even though some basic components were sourced locally in the 1930s, the local content remained low. This situation did not change much for several decades, because of the fact that many domestically manufactured components were destined for the after-market (Julius, 1986). Then, in the 1960s, the South African government implemented several programmes to increase the degree of local content, in effect, introducing a protectionist policy. However, in the 1980s and 1990s demand stagnated, and total vehicle sales of less than 250,000 units per year were fragmented across seven different assemblers. In 1995, a new policy, the Motor Industry Development Programme (MIDP), steered the industry towards increasing integration into the global value chains of the transnational auto companies. Tariffs on vehicle and component imports were substantially reduced, while a duty-free allowance of 27 per cent of the wholesale value of vehicles was granted to assemblers (Barnes and Kaplinsky, 2000: 800).

As a consequence of the end of international sanctions against the apartheid regime in the 1990s and the liberalisation of the trade policy regime, all seven automobile producers were incorporated into global ownership networks. By 1997, "what had largely been a locally owned and locally controlled assembly industry had been re-incorporated under global ownership" (Barnes and Kaplinsky, 2000: 298).

Since these political and trade changes, South Africa has been exposed to a new competitive environment. Hence, the South African economy is "challenged on two levels: the need to enter external markets and the need to

cope with new entrants in the domestic market" (Barnes and Kaplinsky, 2000: 297). By integrating domestic subsidiaries into the global strategic operations of their mother organisations, and because of the consequences of the adoption of the MIDP, foreign sourcing of components has increased, while the number of local component suppliers has decreased. The aim was to force the local automotive industry to become more competitive and to encourage global auto companies to export from South Africa to gain duty-free access to the domestic market (Barnes and Kaplinsky, 2000).

Barnes and Kaplinsky (2000: 800pp) emphasise that the denationalisation of the local components industry has had a positive effect, in that transnational companies are now more likely to trade between subsidiaries. The South African experience, however, shows that such trade need not be limited to the intra-organisational trade of transnational companies, because it is possible to trade export credits and to gain credits from exporting products made by other companies.

The future of the South African automotive sector is increasingly tied to the extent of global integration by the local manufacturers of vehicles and components. Contemporarily, the MIDP seeks to improve the economies of scale of local manufacturers through encouraging specialisation and allowing these more specialised producers to import more and cheaper products they no longer produce themselves. This has strengthened the drive towards greater volumes. Finally, the greater volumes result in cheaper producer prices and a more competitive automotive sector, better placed to sustain and even grow jobs. Kaplinsky and Barnes (2001) contend in a recent article that South Africa's automotive industry is well positioned to attain world-class manufacturing standards.

Referring to the connection between foreign and South African automotive industries, Barnes and Morris (2004: 789) emphasise that global automotive forces combine local institutional influences to drive, shape and restructure the trajectory of the South African automotive industry, particularly in the German case and "under the hegemony of the "German connection" (Barnes and Morris, 2004: 789). Here, political-economic dynamics, institutions and social relations

structure economic life and markets (Bernstein, 1996). Technology transfer, the macro-economic performance of the sector under the new trade regime, as well as the global and local factors of the local automotive industry exert a major influence on automotive organisations (Schoeman, 1997). The phenomenon of global interconnection between firm and the establishment of dependent relationships across territories help shape organisational culture and provide answers to key questions pertaining to competition, power, management, trust and control (Barnes and Morris, 2004: 791).

The topic of international management and management challenges in South Africa need to be considered, particularly now that South Africa has gained a key economic role in Sub-Saharan Africa's automotive industry. This can, on the one hand, be attributed to the fact that the large automotive producers incorporated into global ownership networks and stayed in the country after the political changes (Black, 2001). On the other hand, South Africa has also recorded a significant increase in investment interest since the end of apartheid. Despite the successes, structural problems remain, such as the limited rationalisation that has so far taken place (Black, 2001). However, South Africa's automotive industry faces current and future challenges regarding management on local, regional and international levels.

2.4   MANAGEMENT CHALLENGES IN SOUTH AFRICAN CONTEXT

Contemporarily, many multinational organisations see South Africa as a "springboard" to the entire Sub-Saharan Africa (Jackson, 2004; Jackson and Louw, 2004: 251). This situation demands new managerial competencies in the South African international economy. According to Jackson and Louw (2004: 251), South African managers and organisations are only now beginning to develop the fields of "multicultural teambuilding and positive discriminating towards previously disadvantaged groups". A shortage of skilled managerial human resources persists, which is diminishing development, growth and productivity in South Africa (Piliso, 1993). South Africa therefore urgently needs skilled managers who will perform well and achieve economic growth (Nieman, 2001: 446). New "management thought" must also be developed on, example the concept of *ubuntu*, which might support the development of participatory management in African countries (Prinsloo, 1998: 41pp).

The gaps between skilled labour, global and country requirements can only be addressed by developing models that support organisational strategies. For that to be achieved, South Africa needs better trained and diverse managers (Denton and Vloeberghs, 2003: 92). Successful management concepts must be adapted and hybrid systems must be developed. The value and strength of multicultural workforces in the workplace is increasingly being recognised in the South African context.

Thomas and Bendixen (2000) emphasise that an assessment of middle class managers in South Africa, regarding dimensions of culture, revealed similar outcomes amongst different ethnic groups. Both management culture and perceived management effectiveness were found to be independent of both race and the dimensions of culture. These findings suggest that staff diversity in the workplace should not adversely affect management performance. Since the political change to democracy in South Africa, previously excluded racial and ethnic groups are being both empowered and incorporated into management structures. The cultural diversity that characterises the South African population begs the consideration of the managerial implications of ethnicity in an emerging democracy that is striving to be globally competitive. To Thomas and Bendixen (2000: 507), key to managing cultural diversity in the workplace is the promotion of management effectiveness in an inclusive organisational culture. On this basis, international competitiveness can be developed.

However, South Africa still has to cope with the legacy of former apartheid policies (Jackson, 2004). For example, the numbers of uneducated workers are still high. Apartheid policies have not only left a large number of workers ill-equipped and uneducated along racial lines, but have also affected higher organisational management levels. On middle and top management levels, South African managers generally lack the competencies to create intercultural synergies and appropriate management styles. Many highly educated experts and managers have left the country after the 1994 elections. Therefore, South Africa has developed a huge demand for expertise, which cannot be met by South Africans only; experts from other African countries as well as overseas countries are needed to fill the void.

South Africa's contemporary policies have introduced another topic into the organisational context, namely affirmative action. The term affirmative action is subject to varying interpretations (Jain and Sloane, 1983: 16). It may be taken to mean a comprehensive process adopted by an employer to:

- identify and remove discrimination in employment policies and practices;

- remedy the effects of past discrimination; and

- ensure appropriate representation of target groups throughout the organisation (adapted from the Canadian Employment and Immigration Commission (1991)).

Thomas (1990: 107) argues that the concept of affirmative action is different from the concept of managing diversity. Affirmative action is, in Thomas's view, based on the following premises:

- firstly, White men make up the business mainstream;

- secondly, a growing economy requires skills and managerial and professional people;

- thirdly, Blacks, women and other groups should be integrated into organisations as a matter of public and ethical policy;

- fourthly, pervasive ethnic, racial and gender prejudice is at the root of social and occupational exclusion; and

- fifthly, legal and social measures are necessary to bring about institution building.

Managing diversity may, in this context, be understood to mean having an acute awareness of characteristics common to a culture, race, gender, age or sexual

preference, while at the same time managing staff members as individuals (Overman, 1991).

The South African apartheid state was constructed on the ideological basis of ethnic fragmentation, rationalised by ethnic and cultural diversity. At the same time, diversity is a social reality in building common national and organisational goals, symbols and identity (Horwitz, Bowmaker-Falconer and Searll, 1995). According to Guillebeau (1999: 443pp), South Africa has since the end of apartheid, despite several significant problems, including the neglect of Black women, achieved a highly successful national policy of fair racial representation, particularly in comparison with Brazil and the United States. However, the persistence of a complicated social stratification system based on skin colour presents a difficult conundrum for the country's policymakers, as well as for local and international organisations (see Chapter 7, Section 7.3). The task for South Africa is to find creative solutions for integrating economic growth and development in parallel with overcoming deeply entrenched discriminatory practices and social division. According to Horwitz et al (1996: 137), human resource development (HRD) and diversity management must be conceptually integrated to raise consciousness and awareness. This could help to change individual attitudes and values to create a better understanding and more tolerance among staff members from different societal, cultural and economic backgrounds in an organisation.

Horwitz et al (1996: 137pp) confirm that significant affirmative change has occurred during the years following the end of apartheid. To them, the underlying challenge is to build on these achievements. Therefore, they see the rate of change as a more important indicator of affirmative action than current staff composition in organisations. To create cultural synergies, co-operation and effectiveness, the existing institutional barriers need to be changed to opportunity and advancement, which is essential for the effective implementation of affirmative action.

Parallel to restructuring processes regarding cultural diversity and multiculturalisation in international organisations in South Africa, the organisations find themselves confronted with other challenges, such as the high crime rate and the consequent need for high security standards.

South Africa faces a high level of crime not only because of its long history of violence and oppression (Mills, Beeg and Van Nieuwkerk, 1995), but also because of complex socio-economic circumstances, such as high unemployment rates, a high illiteracy rate, difficulties in health promotion, and economic inequalities. South Africa is also facing significant demographic challenges: the population growth is high; the population is disproportionately youthful; while the rate of urbanisation is very high (Luiz, 1996). Last, but not least, South Africa is challenged by a high and rising percentage of HIV and AIDS infections which will dramatically shrink the labour workforce and the gross domestic product in the future. This situation affects the local and regional economy as well as foreign investments, even if the international automotive economy is still steadily expanding.

Figure 2.1: South Africa

Source: Fadiman, 2000: 37

In the following section, the values, history, organisation and organisational structure of the organisation will be outlined to give a clearer insight into the organisational context, before the data of the study will be presented.

2.5   THE SELECTED ORGANISATION

The selected organisation of the case study is a worldwide operating organisation which belongs to one of Europe's leading engineering groups. As a system provider, the organisation employs 58 000 people worldwide in its five core areas of Commercial Vehicles, Industrial Services, Printing Systems, Diesel Engines and Turbomachines. In 2006, the organisation's group operated in 120 countries and ranked among the top three suppliers in each of its markets. In 2005, the organisation generated sales of €14.7 billion. The organisation's blue-chip shares are listed in the DAX30 (Organisational Paper, 2006a).

The business areas are:

- Commercial Vehicles - trucks and buses are manufactured, with production facilities in Africa, Asia and Europe and activities take place on an international scale.

- Industrial Services - industrial services are supplied on a worldwide basis.

- Printing Systems - this is a globally leading manufacturer and system supplier for the graphics industry.

- Diesel Engines - globally operating and leading in two-stroke propulsion engines and a supplier of large four-stroke diesel engines.

- Turbomachines - leading manufacturer of thermal turbo machines, with production plants in Germany, Switzerland and Italy.

In 2005, the operating profit of the organisation reflected an increase of 46 per cent upon the previous year's figure and, at €469 million, was the highest in the organisation's history. The Commercial Vehicles core area celebrated its 90th birthday in 2005 (Organisational Paper, 2006a).

The organisation's history dates back to 1758 in Germany. Until 1915, the organisation was known exclusively for manufacturing bridges, cranes and railway wagons, until a Bavarian industrial pioneer "put the organisation on wheels" and produced trucks and buses (Organisational Paper, 2006a: 6). Having survived various world economic crises and two world wars, the organisation moved into the 21st century with a new heavy truck range, referred to as the 'Trucknology Generation'. The organisation has won multiple prizes and awards for both its trucks and its buses. In 2005, it introduced two new truck ranges and numerous innovations in the bus sector. It was also a record year in financial terms: order intake, sales and profit all reached new heights (Organisational Paper, 2006a: 6).

For 2006, the organisation expects further growth in the truck market in Europe. The Western European market is expected to stabilise at the high level of the previous year, while the organisation also expects substantial growth in markets outside Europe. Global attempts include a new plant in Poland and a joint venture in India. The organisation is preparing a global growth strategy, with the focus on the Asian market, Eastern Europe, and the Middle East.

The organisation values its long tradition and emphasises the value of innovations and good customer relations. With its new corporate guideline: "reliable, innovative, dynamic, open", the organisation proposes to foster a cooperative culture which integrates staff members in processes and decisions, to guarantee a high customer satisfaction rate (Organisational Paper, 2006a: 47).

As indicated in Table 2.1, the organisation employs increasing numbers of staff members in countries other than Germany. In Germany itself, the number of staff members is decreasing. In total, the organisation has employed 442 fewer employees in Germany in 2005 than in 2004 (Organisational Paper, 2006a: 48).

Table 2.1: Employees at organisation

Number of employees[1]					
Countries	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005
Germany	23,451	21,840	21,111	20,506	19,941
Other countries	12,295	12,558	12,983	13,304	13,427
Total	35,746	34,398	34,094	33,810	33,368

[1] without loan workers and apprentices

Source: Organisational Paper, 2006a: 48

In 2005, the organisation passed its 'Industrial Governance' concept which is a statement of the business and management principles for the entire Group. It established methods of co-operation between the organisation's *Aktiengesellschaft* (AG) and its operative subgroups, to ensure that best-practice solutions are identified quickly and transferred to all subgroups. A main focus of this concept is management development and leadership supply. Managerial staff and candidates with potential are systematically nurtured and developed group-wide, using management audits, assessment centres, 360 degree feedback talks, job rotation and potential analyses. The value of international exchange is clearly underlined (Organisational Paper, 2006a:56).
.
A closer look at the organisation in a global context has revealed that it needs to be explored on a local (South African) level. The sales region of Southern Africa includes South Africa, Angola, Tanzania, Mozambique, Madagascar, Uganda, Zambia, Zimbabwe, Malawi, Namibia, Botswana, Swaziland, Lesotho and Kenya. It therefore is one of the biggest sales regions of the organisation worldwide (Organisational Paper, 2006a: 7).

The South African organisation started in 1968 when the Assembly Plant was established by two German entrepreneurs, who left the organisation in Germany, to set up business in South Africa. In 1973 they took over local distributors, including the Pinetown Assembly Plant, and renamed the organisation. In 1996, the organisation was introduced to the South African heavy truck market. Two years later, the bus range was launched in South Africa. In 2001, flagship dealerships in Centurion and Pinetown were opened (Organisational Paper, 2006: 3).

In 2002, the organisation attained record results for trucks and buses, with 30.2 per cent of all heavy trucks and buses sold – 8 per cent ahead of the nearest competitor. In 2003, flagship dealerships opened in Nelspruit and Cape Town and the organisation's Financial Services was launched (Organisational Paper, 2006a).

The headquarters in South Africa is located in Johannesburg, with a staff complement of 125. Here, sales, marketing, finance and administration functions are undertaken, as well as vehicle refurbishment for used commercial vehicles. The organisation's training academy, which offers technical courses and training, is also based at headquarters. The Central Parts Depot, which includes the warehouse with a staff complement of 52, is also based at headquarters. The stockholding is R104 million, and the Central Parts Division supplies 19 000 line items to a network of 34 parts dealers (Organisational Paper, 2006a). The Chassis Assembly Plant in Pinetown, which employs 203 people, is responsible for engineering, production and technical services. The bus and coach manufacturing plant is the only manufacturer in South Africa able to supply complete bus and coach products. The facility has 176 staff members (Organisational Paper, 2006a: 2). The organisational structure in South Africa is presented in Figure 2.2.

Figure 2.2: Organisational structure
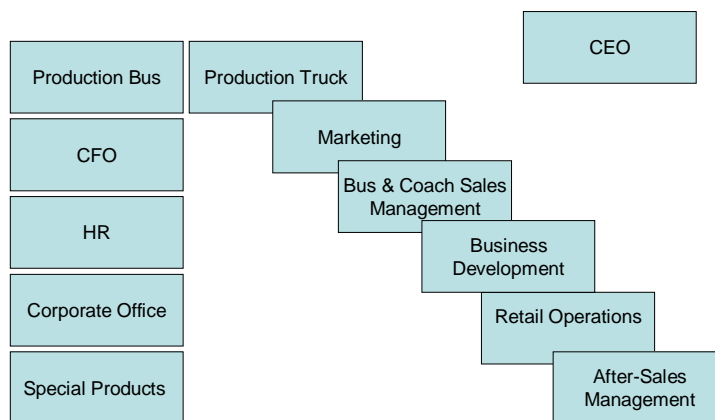
Source: author's own construction, adapted from Organisational Paper, 2006b: 5

The organisation has guiding principles regarding its customers, investors, staff members and the broader society (Organisational Paper, 2006b: 16). These principles can be defined as organisational value orientations, which are also reflected in the findings contained in Chapters 6, 7 and 8.

Table 2.2: Guiding principles

Customers	Value for customers Listen to customers and meet requirements Measurement according to customers' success with product and services
Investors	Set attractive yield targets Expand leading market position in core areas of activity Ensure tomorrow's success with today's research and development
Employees	Provide a modern management culture Promote knowledge and experience among staff members as most important source Believe in fairness, tolerance and equal opportunity
Society	Ensure social acceptance Guided by principles of sustained yield Respect dignity of human beings

Source: author's own construction, adapted from Organisational Paper, 2006b: 16

Based on these basic principles and values, the organisation devised conflict resolution and affirmative action policies, as examined in the next two sections, Sections 2.6 and 2.7 of this chapter.

2.6   ORGANISATIONAL POLICIES ON CONFLICT RESOLUTION

The organisational policies on conflict resolution (Organisational Paper, 2002a) stipulate that every staff member who has a grievance or is dissatisfied has the right to lodge a grievance with the organisation. Formal grievance procedures should be introduced at the earliest possible stage to the satisfaction of all parties. The main purpose of the grievance procedures is to prevent and resolve conflict in the workplace and to protect the interest of the management and staff members.

Several principles are attached to the grievance procedures, for example, the value of fairness; and the right of all staff members of the organisation to lodge a formal grievance. The steps for the procedure of the grievance are as follows: firstly, the grievance needs to be discussed with the immediate superior in an

informal way. If the aggrieved party and the superior do not find an acceptable solution, the grievance will be transferred to a more formal level, and a formal grievance will be lodged. The head of the relevant section and the staff member will endeavour to resolve the matter at this level. However, if the grievance cannot be resolved at this level, the head of the relevant department will try and help resolve the conflict. If the grievance cannot be settled at the third level, the fourth level will be pursued. At this level, the staff member may elect to have the matter referred to a meeting, to be attended by the dissatisfied staff member, a representative, a senior organisation official and the Human Resource representative. If the conflict is not resolved at this level, the fifth level, namely legal proceedings, may be applied (Organisational Paper, 2002a: 1).

The first four steps in the conflict resolution procedure are handled within the hierarchy of the organisation. Only on the fifth level will the conflict be taken to court. Currently, there are no regulations for formal or informal mediation procedures for conflict resolution in the organisation. A mediator, particularly a third party from the outside, is usually not appointed in conflict resolution procedures (Organisational Paper, 2002a: 2).

2.7   ORGANISATIONAL POLICIES ON AFFIRMATIVE ACTION

In terms of the Employment Equity and the Affirmative Action Policy Paper (Organisational Paper, 2002b: 1) of the organisation, affirmative action is defined as "a set of specific and result oriented measures aimed at re-dressing historically generated imbalances of the past by creating appropriate opportunities through training and development and advancing of persons, groups and categories of persons disadvantaged by unfair discrimination in the workplace". The organisation's Affirmative Action Policy is ensuring compliance with the Employment Equity Act 55/1998. The designated groups are defined as Blacks, Coloured, Indian, women, and people with disabilities. The demographics refer to the total population of different racial and gender groups within a geographical area/region. Through the removal of discrimination and the implementation of affirmative action, equality of employment and opportunity of work will be ensured. Mentoring between an experienced staff member and a newly appointed staff member, with the view to influencing the growth and development of the latter, is another focus area.

The Preamble to the Policy states that the organisation's stakeholders expect management to transform the organisation into a competitive and representative South African-based organisation, with staff members of different cultures that must all be blended into a new organisational culture. The organisation is asked to reflect the demographics of the region in which it operates and to be an organisation in which "all South Africans are welcome" (Organisational Paper, 2002b: 2).

The organisation strives to achieve world-class standards in terms of cost, quality, productivity and customer service, through the support of competencies and successful diversity management and affirmative action initiatives, to create a racially and culturally diverse workforce.

The equity objectives endeavour to have designated persons adequately represented at all levels within the organisation, as far as reasonably practicable. Factors that determine this are the national and regional demographic profile; the pool of suitably qualified people from designated groups; economic and financial factors relevant to the sector of the organisation's operation; and the number of present and planned vacancies (Organisational Paper, 2002b: 1).

The organisation aims at nurturing a culture dedicated to respecting diversity and empowerment through various means, including the identification of potential and the adoption of sound diversity values. The organisation also expresses its total commitment to the employment equity process, as far as reasonably practicable. The career development of non-designated persons will also be promoted, as they will receive recognition for their competencies, based on statutory and merit considerations (Organisational Paper, 2002b: 2).

The Managing Director is held responsible for the organisation's Employment Equity Policy, which will also be facilitated by the Human Resource Department. Special attention will be paid to the advisement of relevant parties of the development and implementation of policy and programmes; the facilitation of interaction with relevant parties; and the mediation of conflicts arising from the implementation of the Policy (Organisational Paper, 2002b:3).

According to the clause 7.10 of the Employment Equity and Affirmative Action Policy (Organisational Paper, 2002b: 6), "complaints, grievances and misconduct arising out of the policy will be addressed through the normal organisation procedures", as introduced in Chapter 2, Section 2.6.

2.8   SUMMARY

In this chapter, the context of the study has been outlined with regard to international, national, organisational and local levels respectively. The impact of globalisation and developments within the South African national automotive industry have been highlighted and referred to the organisational context of this study. Management challenges in this context with regard to national and organisational policies have been underlined, emphasising aspects of management, diversity management, employment acts, and affirmative action policies. The selected organisation in this case study has been introduced, with the focus on its business areas, structure, organisational guidelines and values. The organisational policies on conflict resolution and affirmative action were also presented. This chapter on the context of the case study, therefore, provides insight which should serve to contextualise the research findings and conclusions in Chapters 6, 7 and 8.

In the following two chapters, Chapters 3 and 4, the theoretical framework of the study will be presented.

CHAPTER 3

CONFLICT AND IDENTITY

3.1   INTRODUCTION

Over the past decades, interest in the field of conflict research has developed worldwide (Coleman, 2003; Jeong, 2000; Patomäki, 2001; Schmidt and Trittmann, 2002). Particularly since the 1970s, conflict research has often focused on constructivist approaches and theories, which view the reality as a construct created by the individual, the environment, and their interaction (Aggestan, 1999; Applefield, Huber and Moallem, 2000; Demmers, 2006; Lederach, 2000; Wallensteen and Sollenberg, 1995).

Constructivist theories have always been regarded as controversial (Fosnot, 1996; Hardy and Taylor, 1997), but contemporarily, constructivism has reached scientists interdisciplinary and has been applied in conflict management research (Jacobs and Manzi, 2000), education (Bruner, 1991; Glaserfeld, 1998), psychology (Gergen, 1985), social sciences (Berger and Luckmann, 2000) and peace and conflict theory (Galtung, 1996; Schlee, 2000).

Discourses on conflict and its management have become highly complex, due to ongoing globalisation processes and diversity growth in societies and organisations (Goodhand, 1999; McKenna, 1998; Mostert, 2003). They are embedded in disciplines such as Sociology, Philosophy, Social Sciences and the Humanities and have been applied interdisciplinary. In management sciences, conflict management theories focusing on conflict management, conflict management styles and organisational conflict have been introduced (De Dreu and Weingart, 2003; Hanson, 2003; Montoya-Weiss et al, 2001).

Based on the multi-faceted and interdisciplinary approaches to conflict and its resolution, Ross (1993: 1) points out that approaches to conflict as well as conflict management approaches are fragmentised, that means constructed through different approaches. However, Deutsch (1994: 13) identifies the connection of conflict fragments in common themes identified by different authors.

Miall et al (2000) have identified five different levels at which contemporary conflicts occur:

- the global/international level;
- the regional level;
- the societal/organisational level;
- the interpersonal level; and
- the individual/ intra-personal level.

At different levels, different kind of conflicts can be experienced. The meaning of a conflict depends on its level of occurrence, the organisational setting, the conflict situation, the persons involved, and their values and identities, as outlined in this chapter and in Chapter 4.

Even though the focus of this research is mainly on conflict at interpersonal and individual levels in a selected organisation, it is important to contextualise narrated conflicts on organisational levels so as to ensure the proper analysis and interpretation of the data to be presented in Chapters 5, 6, 7 and 8.

The purpose of this chapter is to introduce a theoretical framework with regard to conflict, conflict management and identity, aligned with the research questions (Chapter 1, Section 1.2). Firstly, the background of conflict and ways of managing conflict are presented. This includes the conceptualisation of concepts, the constructivist approach to conflict, and three different concepts of resolving conflict, namely conflict management, conflict resolution, and conflict transformation. Secondly, theoretical approaches to conflict, according to the levels of conflict, will be introduced. As mentioned previously, this includes the global/international, regional, societal/organisational, interpersonal and individual/intrapersonal levels of conflict (Miall et al, 2000). According to these levels, identity plays a key role in how conflicts are experienced and managed. Based on this assumption that identity and values exert a major influence on conflicts and its management practices, the concept of identity will be further discussed in Chapter 3, Section 3.4. Thirdly, identity as an important factor in conflict narrations with regard to the self and the other are discussed. The aspects of identity to be explored include culture, race, organisational aspects

and management styles and a link between identity and conflict will be established.

Theoretical perspectives pertaining to the values will be reviewed (Chapter 4).

Contrary to the theoretical approaches in this chapter, which present recent theory on conflict and identity to support the inductive approach of data analysis, the theoretical perspectives on values will be used to support both inductive and deductive approaches to data analysis. The logical presentation of Chapter 3 (on conflict and identity) and Chapter 4 (on theoretical value approaches) will therefore be aligned with the different methodological approaches to data analysis.

The background to conflict and conflict management approaches presented in Section 3.2 below will contextualise the subsequent sections of this chapter.

3.2   CONTEXTUALISED CONFLICT AND CONFLICT MANAGEMENT

Discourses on conflict and strategies for its management were already present in Ancient Greece (Darling and Walker, 2001; Nussbaum, 2001). Etymologically, the term *conflict* is rooted in the Latin word *confligere*, which reflects as a transitive verb the action-oriented term, translated as "to bump together" and, as an intransitive verb, a condition or structure, which can be translated as "to have an argument" or to "be at loggerheads with somebody" (Latein Wörterbuch, 2007). These basic meanings are still relevant in recent definitions of conflict (Moore, 1996).

Conflict has conventionally been described as destructive and dysfunctional; a force which should be prevented or avoided as early as possible. This avoiding approach to conflict and its management was traditionally found in many cultures (Augsburger, 1992). Only recently, since the 1950s, have views on conflict changed and gained another perspective as a potentially positive and constructive force (Daily, 1991; Ricci, 1980). Constructive conflict processes are defined by the following aspects: sharing the same interests; perceiving a similarity in goals; and relating to each other in a friendly and cooperative way so that goals and the interests of all parties involved are influenced positively.

Interpersonal relations improve through these processes and impact on the effectiveness of business growth; while personal development and higher self-esteem evolve (Deutsch, 1987; Johnson and Johnson, 1989).

Georg Simmel is generally acknowledged as the first true conflict theorist (Stark, 2005). Simmel (1992) defines conflict as a positive element in society, which could lead to positive personal and interpersonal change and growth. Bourdieu (1992) and Lyotard (1987) also consider conflict as constructive and as embodying a positive potential in society. Coser (1956: 31) views conflict as "natural and necessary for the development of a free society". He defines conflict as "… a struggle over values and claims to scarce status, power and resources in which the aims of the opponents are to neutralize, injure or eliminate their rivals". Bradshaw (2006: 23) defines conflict as "… a communication process between a number of individuals or groups, intended, through a process of give and take, or creative problem-solving, to arrive at a mutually acceptable agreement". This definition views conflict as a dynamic process that can be experienced positively or negatively, but that aims to arrive at a mutually, acceptable agreement.

Since the emergence of the change from viewing conflict as destructive to viewing it as a constructive force, conflict is scientifically commonly considered as a "normal part of human life" (Myers and Filner, 1994: 3), embedded in individual, social and organisational interaction systems.

In the Western world, the approach to, and relevance afforded conflict and its management have changed dramatically since the 1950s, following two World Wars in one century (Wallensteen, 2002). Additionally, with rapid global social changes; globalisation trends; the internationalisation of organisations; migration fluxes and the changing world climate; and intercultural conflict the need for constructive management have become increasingly important (Miall et al, 2000).

The following concepts in resolving conflict will subsequently be discussed, namely conflict management; conflict resolution; and conflict transformation.

3.2.1   Concepts of resolving conflicts

Globally, but also on a regional level, there is a high demand for new forms of reconciliation and conflict management concepts which include the in-depth analysis of identity aspects and values.

Constantino and Sickles Merchant (1996: 7) point out that:

> Organizations have a multitude of ways to respond to conflict, choosing a particular method in light of perceived importance, context, or players. Moreover, organizational response to conflict does not occur separate and apart from the organizational 'culture,' or the attitudes, practices, and beliefs of the system and its members. The 'way we do things around here' provides the collective lens thought which the organization and its key players view internal disagreement or external threat.

Three major concepts underpin conflict resolution, namely conflict management, resolution and transformation. As these conflicts have been ambiguously defined, they will now be defined and differentiated within the perspective of this research.

a.   Conflict management

Conflicts are often viewed as a consequence of differences of values and interests, which occur based on the effect of power (Francis, 2003; Nelson, Prilleltensky and MacGillivary, 2004; Pondy, 1967; Rahim, 2001). One of the greatest challenges of conflict management is to identify the source of conflict, which is mostly multi-dimensional, complex and difficult to evaluate. In their multidimensionality, the sources of conflicts are often numerous and deeply embedded in the system in which they occur. They are rooted in history and constructed through a complex pattern of relationships between individuals, departments and organisational units (Miall et al, 2000). Conflict patterns can constitute a major source in conflicts. Additionally, these patterns are often experienced and interpreted differently between the conflict partners.

Conflict management can be understood as a process that involves the identification of the source of the conflict, methods for coping with it, and an

analysis of the outcome of the conflict (Miall et al, 2000). The source of the conflict is expected to be one of the most central tasks within conflict management theory, because conflict management activities are developed on the basis of the sources and the context and types of conflict (Laine, 2002). Cultural differences have often been suggested as a cause of conflict (Gartzke and Gleditsch, 2006: 51).

Amongst conflict management scientists (Francis, 2003; Pondy, 1967; Rahim, 2001) it is *common sense* that the best way to manage conflict is a situational and contextualised approach (Rahim, 2001). Using a situational and contextual approach in conflict management means to implement interventional strategies with regard to the conflict embedding system, the context, and the situation in which the conflict occurs. Conflict management is the "art of appropriate intervention to designing appropriate organisations to guide the inevitable conflict into appropriate channels" (Miall et al, 2000: 3). Bloomfield and Reilly (1998: 18) define conflict management as follows:

> Conflict management is the positive and constructive handling of difference and divergence. Rather than advocating methods for removing conflict, [it] addresses the more realistic question of managing conflict: how to deal with it in a constructive way, how to bring opposing sides together in a cooperative process, how to design a practical, achievable, cooperative system for the constructive management of difference.

According to Rahim (2002: 208), conflict management does not necessarily imply the avoidance, reduction or termination of conflict. Moreover, it helps to design "… effective macro-level strategies to minimize the dysfunctions of conflict and enhancing the constructive functions of conflict in order to enhance learning and effectiveness in an organization.". Here, conflict management is a tool to manage power and power imbalances.

There are different practical approaches to conflict management. However, the following three concepts are often used to manage conflict:

- negotiation (Castro and Nielsen, 2001; Crump and Zartmann, 2003; Montoya-Weiss et al, 2001);

- facilitation (Hill, 2005; Wayne, Grzywacz, Carlson and Kacmar, 2007); and

- mediation (Busch, 2006; Mayer, 2005c).

Firstly, *negotiation* is a well-known method of conflict management which is employed to satisfy the mutual needs and interests of the negotiating partners (Pruit, 1983; Pruit and Carnevale, 1993; Ury, 2000). Through negotiation, goal achievement or interpersonal relationship-building can be developed. Negotiation techniques are usually used as basic conflict management techniques (Crump and Zartmann, 2003: 1).

Bradshaw (2006: 24) differentiates between two main negotiation styles: the distributive approach and the integrative approach. The distributive approach is associated with the parties choosing extreme positions and afterwards meeting somewhere between these two positions (a win-lose approach). The integrative approach tries to achieve equal gains for both parties. Information is shared openly and the negotiation is defined as a learning session (win-win approach).

The second commonly used conflict management technique is *facilitation*. Facilitation is a method of third party intervention: an independent third party facilitates constructive communication through moderating, implementing rules and non-directive communication styles. The notion of facilitation captures the positive side of conflict and tries to determine the possibility of synergy between the conflictual domains. Facilitation sees the system as the functional unit of analysis. Thus, the defining feature of facilitation is that it occurs when the transfer of gains creates an improvement in *system level* functioning (Wayne et al, 2007: 63pp).

Finally, *mediation* has recently attracted much interest as a conflict management tool in intercultural contexts (Busch 2006; Mayer, 2005c: 53, 2006). Mediation is a third party intervention method, which is based on a

defined and structured phase model, roles and settings in the negotiation process. The mediator is all-partial and empathetic towards all parties (Mayer, 2006: 102). Methods of mediation include negotiation techniques, such as active listening, reframing, and asking detailed questions.

b.   Conflict resolution

The difference between conflict management and conflict resolution is conceptual (Robbins, 1978). In contrast to conflict management theorists, conflict resolution theorists generally do not accept the power political view of conflict (Schellenberg, 1998). Instead, they argue that, in communal and identity conflicts, people cannot compromise on their fundamental needs (Miall et al, 2000). The authors (Miall et al, 2000) contend that conflicts can be transcended if parties can be helped to explore, analyse, question and reframe their positions and interests. Third parties in conflict resolution processes are expected to emphasise their skills, without using their power. The main challenge for third parties in conflict resolution lies in the fostering of new thinking and new relationships. Through a change in thinking and relationships and a new perspective on entrenched positions, the roots of conflict are identified and creative solutions are found. Conflict resolution tries to move parties from destructive patterns of conflict to positive-sum constructive outcomes. Azar and Burton (1986) also emphasise that the aim of conflict resolution is to be effective in finding an acceptable way for all involved parties to resolve the conflict.

According to Burton (1990a: 2), conflicts are deeply rooted in human needs. Their resolution, therefore, sometimes requires major environmental and policy restructuring. Resolution is here defined as the "transformation of relationships in a particular case by the solution of the problems which lead to the conflictual behaviour in the first place" (Burton 1990a: 2). Therefore, conflict resolution, according to Burton (1990: 2), focuses on the treatment of the problems that are the sources of conflict. In conflicts, the behaviour of persons, groups or nations go beyond the point of "normal disagreement or confrontations that characterize much of the usual social, economic and competitive life of societies." (Burton 1990a: 2).

c.   **Conflict transformation**

The term conflict transformation has only recently been introduced in literature and tries to re-conceptualise common concepts of conflict management and conflict resolution. Representatives of conflict transformation approaches (Lederach, 2003; Miall, 2004: 2) consider that the changing characteristics of contemporary conflicts need new concepts to deal with them effectively. These new concepts should take the following aspects of present conflicts into account (Miall et al, 2000):

- contemporary violent conflicts are often asymmetric;
- they are marked by inequalities of power and status;
- conflicts are often protracted;
- conflicts often change immediately from violence to non-violence, and then back to violence;
- they occur in cyclical models of conflict phases; and
- conflicts warp societies, economies and regions in a local and a global context.

The complexity of modern-day conflicts contrasts with the often relatively simple approaches to conflicts and their resolution, a review of concepts is, therefore, required especially with regard to the complexity of contemporary conflicts, particularly in the South African context.

Miall et al (2000: 4) argue that constructive conflict should be defined as "vital agents for change" for conflict transformation (see Chapter 3, Section 3.2). At the same time, promoters of conflict transformation argue that contemporary conflicts require more than the reframing of positions and the identification of win-win outcomes (Boege, 2006; Fischer, 2006; Lederach, 1997 and 2003; Miall, 2004; Mitchell, 2000 and 2005). Individuals, relationship patterns and conflicts are systemically embedded and need to be contextualised. Conflict transformation, therefore, uses a systemic approach of transforming relationships, interests, discourses and, if necessary, the organisation (or aspects of the organisation, such as the organisational structure) which support the continuation of conflict (Boege, 2006).

The individual as a system; the team in an organisation; the organisation itself; and the local, regional and global levels all have complementary roles to play in conflict transformation and peace building. All participants in the entire (organisational) system or in subsystems, such as departments or branches, contribute to the transformation of conflicts and conflict transformation is often a long-term process. The process supports the gradual transformation of conflicts by using a series of steps that can be adapted according to the actions of participants (Miall et al, 2000).

Lederach (1995) regards conflict transformation as the promotion, integration and envisioning of human and cultural potential and resources from within a given setting. This perspective includes the long-term aim of conflict transformation as validating and building on human beings and their resources. Lederach (2000: 52) further distinguishes four different levels of conflict transformation and the changes it brings on:

- personal level (emotional, perceptual and spiritual aspects of conflict);
- relational level (expressive, communicative and interactive aspects of conflict);
- structural level (areas related to human needs, access to resources, and institutional decision-making patterns); and
- cultural level (the way culture affects the development and handling of conflict).

According to Lederach (2000: 52pp), the levels of conflict transformation reflect the complexity of conflict transformation processes, which needs to be considered when this concept of conflict resolution is applied.

However, in this study it is assumed that conflict management, conflict resolution and conflict transformation approaches can have both positive and negative implications, always depending on the context and the situations in which they are used. This study will refer to the terms conflict management or conflict resolution, based on the following reasons:

- conflict management and conflict resolution are well known and well accepted terms in managerial and organisational contexts;

- often, the boundaries between the conflict management, resolution and transformation are not clear; and

- in this study, the term conflict management includes aspects of conflict resolution and transformation. Conflict management is defined as described in Section 3.2.1.a of this chapter and extended by the assumptions that:
  o conflict management needs a systemic and holistic approach, being influenced by all levels of conflict (Chapter 3, Section 3.2.1.c);
  o conflict management is influenced by the levels of conflict transformation (Lederach, 2000: 52) (Chapter 3, Section 3.2.1.c); and
  o conflicts can be transcended and reframed by redefining boundaries and constructing new realities (Chapter 3, Section 3.2.1.c).

Based on the contextualisation of conflict and conflict management, the levels of conflict will consequently be discussed.

3.3   LEVELS OF CONFLICT AND CONFLICT MANAGEMENT

As mentioned in Chapter 3, Section 3.1, conflicts are experienced on different levels. For this study, it is important to consider:

- the global level, which in this study includes the conflicts between the headquarters of the organisation in Germany and the headquarters and branches in South Africa (the context of this global level is described in Chapter 2 and contextualises the findings (Chapters 6 and 7) and the conclusions (Chapter 8);

- the organisational level, which is part of the societal level; and

- the interpersonal and individual/intrapersonal levels, since they are strongly connected with each other and with the identity concept of a person.

Conflict has become multi-perspective and multi-complex in nature as societies and organisations globalise (Fuchs, 1992: 8-9). Therefore, multiple approaches that are multiperspective, hypercomplex and interdisciplinary are needed to understand and manage conflicts that occur due to clashes of organisational systems, autonomous movements, multiple developments and the integration of external elements (Lederach, 2000: 52). The challenges to understand and manage conflict lies in the creation of meaning through value discourses, open discussions (Vogt, 1997: 131) and the creation of peaceful visions that are based on global systems and local conflict transformation networks (Galtung, 1996).

Conflict approaches in business management often relate to the interorganisational and the interpersonal level of conflicts (Kantanen, 2007; Settings 2004; Strassheim, 2003). Therefore, the following sections will focus on conflicts in the organisational setting (Chapter 3, Section 3.3.1), and conflict on interpersonal and intrapersonal levels (Chapter 3, Section 3.3.4). It is assumed that the inter- and intrapersonal levels are highly interlinked, therefore Chapter 3, Section 3.3.4 will address both levels simultaneously.

3.3.1   Organisational conflict

There is a large and growing body of managerial literature on organisational conflict (Kumar and Van Dissel, 1996; Putnam and Poole, 1987; Rahim, 2002; Zapf 1999). This may be in part based on the assumption that organisational conflict and its pervasive nature can be observed in any organisation (Schermerhorn, Hunt and Osborn, 1997). Organisations are inherently competitive and riddled by conflict (Pondy, 1992: 257). With strengthening autonomy, self-management, individual responsibilities, and the replacement of traditional and collective values, conflict occurs easily in an organisation. It is a social phenomenon that develops over an extended period of time (Pondy, 1967).

Diversity in terms of culture and demographic factors increases conflict in organisations (Williams and O'Reilly, 1998). Roloff (1987: 496) suggests that "organizational conflict occurs when members engage in activities that are incompatible with those of colleagues within their networks, members or other collectivities, or unaffiliated individuals who utilize the services or products of the organization". Constantino and Sickles Merchant (1996: 17) highlight that organisational conflict occurs due to factors of "internal disagreements or rivalry, the distribution of the organization's limited resources among competing priorities and components." De Dreu (1997) insists that conflicts are both task- or relationship-related and that task-related conflicts in organisations are easier to resolve than no conflict at all. When relationship conflict is absent, the positive effects of conflicts are experienced and members have high dual concern and display problem solving, constructive conflict management and communication skills (De Dreu and Weingart, 2003: 741).

Organisations experience internal and external conflict in varying degrees and with varying results. Organisational conflict influences the climate or atmosphere of the organisation (Deutsch, 1987); occurs on personal, group, and organisational levels; and manifest itself as intra- or interpersonal, inter-or intra-group, and inter- or intra-organisational conflict. The members of an organisation participating in a common business process may disagree on matters such as the group setting, organisational goals, values, allocation of resources, distribution of rewards, policies, procedures, and task assignments (Putnam and Poole, 1987). General factors that impact on the emergence of organisational conflict are independence of, or dependence on partners, differences in status and hierarchies, the relationship, the trust levels, and the parties' previous experience of conflicts (Jameson, 1999).

Besides intra-organisational conflicts, inter-organisational conflicts also occur, although the latter have not been studied to the same extent (Hellriegel, Jackson, Slocum, Staude, Amos, Klopper, Louw and Oosthuizen, 2007). This study will largely ignore inter-organisational conflict.

Cowan (1995: 24) points out that organisational conflict in general can lead to strong intrapersonal and interpersonal distress and distraction from work, as

well as impair decision-making, relationships, individual effectiveness, productivity and creativity. Conflicts in the workplace impact on the health and well-being of the parties involved (Friedman et al, 2000; Zapf, 1999) and have been defined as a stressor (Selye, 1957; Vester, 1997; Zimbardo, 1995) which might lead to an increase in health problems (El-Sheikh and Harger, 2001; Kiecolt-Glaser, Glaser, Cacioppo, Maccallum, Snyder, Smith, Kim and Malarkey, 1997; Kiecolt-Glaser, Malarkey, Chee, Newton, Cacioppo, Mao and Glaser, 1993; Michie and Williams, 2003).

Many authors (Berry, 1992; Berry and Kim, 1988; Oberg, 1960) already argued long ago that conflict and stress in trans-cultural conflict situations may contribute negatively to health. Racial, cultural or social discrimination and (racial) segregation are known to cause culture-related stress and differences in health status (De Dreu et al, 2004: 15; Newsome, 2003; Ren, Amick and Williams, 1999; Williams and Collins, 2001; Williams, Yu, Jackson and Anderson 1997). Based on the assumption that racial, cultural and social aspects in conflicts can increase stress and negative effects on health status, this study will refer extensively to trans-cultural conflict in the organisation (Chapter 7, Section 7.3).

However, dimensions influencing conflict management in organisations will now be discussed.

3.3.2   Dimensions influencing conflict management in organisations

The management of organisational conflict has become an important sub-category of conflict management since the 1950s. According to Wils, Hopp, Ropers, Vimalarajah and Zunzer (2006: 9), it involves the diagnosis and analysis of organisational conflict, as well as effective intervention techniques and methods and evokes new solutions for conflict management in organisations. Conflict and its management are, however, still often viewed as a challenge for organisations, due to the following aspects (Bradshaw, 2006: 20):

- organisations represent an important source of status and identity for individuals;
- individuals want to be seen as team players within their organisation;

- organisations are often hierarchically structured, focusing on rank and status;

- there is a high performance-orientation in organisations; and

- the organisational culture and the cultural values vitally important in conflict management.

The organisation is a highly complex social entity, including networking variables of conflict management. Bradshaw (2006: 17) indicates different reasons for the failure of organisational conflict management; one of these reasons being the fact that organisational conflict "often goes unacknowledged", because it is regarded as "inappropriate, or as a sign of personal, or institutional failure". It is therefore something to be "shielded from the public gaze", or even from fellow organisation members.

According to Rahim (2002: 206), conflict is often defined as functional for organisations; however, most conflict management recommendations still focus on conflict reduction, resolution or minimisation. Organisational conflict management strategies are seen to involve the analysis of three areas of interest (Rahim, 2002: 206):

- What conflict type is evolving?

- Is it a conflict type that has negative or positive impacts on individual and group performance? Negative impacts are often caused by negative reactions of organisational members, like personal attacks, racial disharmony or sexual harassment. Conflicts with positive effects can relate to disagreement on tasks, policies, and other organisational issues.

- How constructive is the different conflict handling styles of organisational members?

Co-operation has been defined as a key concept in reducing organisational conflict, particularly in business-related conflict reduction strategies (Blake and

Mouton, 1986). However, Constantino and Sickles Merchant (1996: xiii) state that:

> Typically, organizational leaders do not view the management of conflict as systematically as they do information, human resource, and financial management systems. Rather, conflict in organizations is viewed and managed in a piecemeal, ad hoc fashion, as isolated events, which are sometimes grouped by category if the risk exposure is great enough but that are rarely examined in the aggregate to reveal patterns and systemic issues.

This statement clearly underlines the importance of a systemic approach to conflict. Other approaches to conflict management, such as proposed by Blake and Mouton (1964) and Thomas (1976), try to measure the ways in which individuals typically respond to conflicts. The way in which individuals respond to conflict depends on their concern for their own outcomes and for the opposing party's outcomes (Blake and Mouton, 1964). Conflict and its management is seen as a function of high or low concern for self, combined with high or low concern for others, and has been defined by different authors using different terminologies (Blake and Mouton, 1964; Rahim and Bonoma, 1979; Thomas, 1976). The concern for the self and the other is predicted by one's personality, the context and the situation. Supporting the claim that this is at least partly dispositional, research by De Dreu and Van Lange (1995: 1178pp) show that negotiation tactics and outcomes are associated with dispositional characteristics such as social value orientations and personality traits. The assumption that conflict management strategies are influenced by values and aspects of personalities is supported in this study and further examined in Chapters 6, 7 and 8.

However, according to Guetzkow and Gyr (1954), there are also two other dimensions of conflict which might be useful for its management:

- the one dimension relates to disagreements on task issues (substantive conflict); and
- the other dimension refers to emotional or interpersonal issues (substantive and affective conflicts).

Ross and Ross (1989) refer to these two dimensions as task and emotional conflicts. Amason (1996) labels them as cognitive and affective conflicts, while Jehn (1997) defines them as task and relationship conflicts. Task conflicts generally relate to the distribution of resources, procedures and policies; and judgements and interpretation of facts. Relationship conflicts are led by personal issues, political preferences, values and interpersonal communication styles (Ross and Ross, 1989). Both these dimensions occur in organisational settings and can be managed constructively.

Regarding constructive conflict management (Burton labels it conflict resolution), Burton (1990a: 147) emphasises that the needs of a person must be balanced against the needs of the societal or organisational system. The individual, the common good of the organisational system and the degree to which people subordinate themselves to the system are essential for constructive resolution processes. At the same time, Buttner (2001: 253) emphasises that (conflict) management has individual, but also gender-related aspects, even if they are not large: female managers generally prefer interpersonal (conflict) management; while male managers would prefer task-related (conflict) management. Eagly and Johnson (1990) point out that gender appears as a variable that does not have an outstanding impact on social behaviour, even if research has established the presence rather than the absence of gender differences.

In constructive conflict management, discovering the "real person" (Burton, 1990:147) is important. The values of the individual and the system need to be respected. Burton argues (1990a: 154) that human needs always carry the "need for valued relationships which act as a self-restraining influence on human behaviour". If destructive conflicts are not addressed adequately, they may have costly social, political or personal consequences, usually causing problems in social relationships. To address conflicts adequately, Burton (1988: 71) emphasises the importance of analysing conflicts and their contexts:

> The analysis of conflict requires the study of the totality of human motivation and values that are involved, conditioned by the totality of the environment – economic, political, social and ecological – in which these relationships are enacted.

Burton concludes (1990a: 17) that conflicts and their constructive resolution require the altering of organisations and policies and the pursuance of certain values, such as social stability and harmony. At the same time, conflict management needs to aim at the resolution of conflicts without the promotion of the values or judgements of the individuals and organisations involved (Burton, 1990a: 21). Unfulfilled needs will always try to be fulfilled by any possible means in conflict management processes (Burton, 1990a: 360): if they stay unfulfilled, they cause conflict. Needs fulfilment strategies have the potential for conflictual impact, caused by uncontrolled emotions and social inacceptance. Physical needs and the need for autonomy, dignity, belonging, security, control, distributive justice and identity could cause deep-rooted conflict if unfulfilled. Racial conflict is often found at all levels within institutions and structures and does not only lie within the discretion of the individual, or the identity groups to which the individual belongs (Burton, 1990a: 147). These needs are stable and non-negotiable and can underlie the positions and interests that erupt in conflictual situations and that are often uneasy to control (Burton, 1990a: 13).

Values, needs and identity aspects play an important role in the management of organisations and particularly in conflict management. How an organisation is led influences the management of conflict in departments, branches and the entire organisation. However, it should be noted that conflict management in organisations is also based on the skills, values and identity of the manager. Section 3.3.3, therefore, discusses management styles in the organisational context.

3.3.3   <u>Management styles and organisational conflict</u>

The growing globalisation and interdependence of international markets, as well as the increase in diverse management staff (holding different identity concepts), demands a clear and comprehensive understanding of management styles in international organisations. The knowledge of similarities and differences among management behaviours is important with regard to organisational development (Hou and McKinley, 1992), especially in conflictual situations across cultures. At the same time, values, beliefs, norms, and ideals are culturally embedded and affect the leadership behavior, goals and strategies of organisations (Haire, Ghiselli and Porter, 1966). Intercultural

studies have established links between cultural (Haire et al; 1966; Hofstede, 1983) and organisational, as well as individual (Cummings, Hartnett and Stevens, 1971) variables and management styles. Hofstede (1983) points out that management styles are culturally influenced; based on informal organisations that are often culture based, psychological factors and the thought styles of managers and national history constructing institutions, as well as market systems that are culturally influenced.

The different variables and characteristics of management styles have been discussed frequently (Buttner, 2001; Van de Vliert, 2006). Numerous definitions of the term and concept of management styles and their variables exist. Management styles are often referred to as leadership styles (Eagly and Johannesen-Schmidt, 2001). The concepts of management and leadership are extensively distinguished in the literature (Keuning, 1998; Kotter, 1990). Management is, according to Smit and Cronjé (1997: 9), defined in terms of planning, organising, directing, coordinating and controlling in a relatively stable environment. Leadership is characterised by the paradigms of dynamism, change, empowerment and commitment (Louw, 1997). For the purpose of this study, the terms management and leadership are used as synonyms, because management is viewed as ensuring that leadership is interlinked with management and leadership as an important part of management.

According to Buttner (2001: 253), management styles are defined as the manner in which managers deal with the "management of relationships, tasks and structures" in an organisation. Much of the research on management (leadership) styles has been conducted in the leadership field (Bass, 1990; Haire et al, 1966; Zander, 1997) and different dimensions of management styles have been developed. The most common way to classify leaders is the authoritarian versus the democratic leadership style (Bass, 1990). This dimension includes results from a study by Lewin, Lippitt and White (1939). In terms of the authoritarian style, managers determine policy and work techniques, but are personal in their praise or criticism of group members. In terms of the democratic style, management policy matters are decided on a group basis, with only general procedures suggested by the leader. Decisions

on the organisation of work are relatively free, and the leader is objective in his or her praise and criticism.

Parallel to authoritarian and democratic management styles, there is also a differentiation between the task-oriented and relationship-oriented leadership styles of managers. Task-related leaders organise, define relationships, set goals and emphasise deadlines to ensure tasks get completed. This style is represented in many leadership models, as proposed by Blake and Mouton (1964) and Hershey and Blanchard (1967, 1982), and contains organising activities to perform assigned tasks. In contrast, the relationship-oriented style is defined by establishing rapport, trust and good communication with subordinates. This dimension is often used in many other leadership models of management and is focused on consideration, concern for people, and staff orientation (Fiedler, 1967).

Kim (2002: 231) describes the participative management style which entails effective supervisory communication and leads to high levels of job satisfaction. Participative management is understood as an empowering source that should be preferred over authoritarian styles, which use patterns of hierarchical structures (Kim, 2002).

The measure of managers' attitudes towards a participative style of management in the international context, that is most frequently used, is that of Haire et al (1966). The questionnaire used measures four dimensions: the capacity of people for leadership and initiative; the sharing of information and objectives between leaders and subordinates; the extent to which managers involve their subordinates in the decision-making process; and people's belief in internal versus external control.

Davis (2001: 122) contends that participative and consultative management styles support integration procedures in the organisation and therefore improve levels of commitment and organisational integration. Somech (2002: 341pp) emphasises that the participative management style is a highly complex style that consists of several dependent, yet distinct, aspects and that is based on democratic aspects. Other authors (Banai and Katsounotos, 1993) have

commented that participative and democrative management styles often go together. They are therefore referred to as participative-democrative management styles. Concepts of person-centered management styles can also be part of the participative management style.

The concepts of the different management styles have been extensively discussed in scientific literature. This study will, however, focus only on the main styles that have been introduced, such as the authoritarian, democratic, relationship-oriented, task-oriented and participative management styles. This is due to the fact that this case study will analyse only the management styles of managers working in the selected organisation with regard to conflictual situations in the organisation (Chapter 6, Section 6.8). The management styles that managers use are expected to be influenced by their cultural, social and individual identity aspects, and mutually impact on them.

In addition to the levels of organisational impacts on conflicts and management styles, intra- and interpersonal aspects are also relevant and will be discussed in the following section.

3.3.4   Inter- and intrapersonal conflict

Having reviewed global and organisational levels of conflict, the focus is now turned to inter- and intra-personal conflict levels. Inter- and intrapersonal conflicts are embedded in social interactions, historic, social, political, economic and cultural contexts, and are social conflicts.

According to Kriesberg (2003c: 2), the term interpersonal conflict "encompasses a wide range of interaction sequences: a conflict arises when two or more persons or groups manifest the belief that they have incompatible objectives.". These incompatible objectives are constructs, created by multiple factors, and create the conflict which becomes a multi-complex "psychosocial process" (Northrup, 1989: 18). In this psychosocial process, social and individual aspects interact with each other. Conflict becomes the construct of social interaction, individual perceptions, behaviour and social reality. This social reality is shaped by individual and collective meanings (Augsburger, 1992; Avruch, 1998; Lederach, 1988 and 1995) and the construction of "perceptions, interpretations,

expressions and intentions" (Lederach, 1996: 9). From a constructivist viewpoint, conflict is defined as follows "Conflict situations are those unique episodes when we explicitly recognize the existence of multiple realities and negotiate the creation of a common meaning." (Lederach, 1988: 39). This means that in conflict situations, people experience the relativity of realities, while they simultaneously negotiate and create their shared meaning. Within this definition, conflict is "inherent in human activties, omnipresent and foreordained" (Isard, 1992: 1) as an interactive process manifested in incompatibility, disagreement, or dissonance within or between social entities.

In earlier psychological theories intrapersonal conflict was perceived as an intrapersonal fault which lay in the person's self and as a problem of the individual (Deutsch, 1987). This opinion has changed because of the emergence of constructivist theories which regard reality as a construct created by the individual, the (social) environment and social interaction. Burton (1990a: 152) insists that intrapersonal conflict is not the result of any failure on the part of the person, but rather a systemic conflict that is interlinked with the surrounding system. Dougherty and Pfaltzgraff (1990: 187) regard social and inner processes as an "organic whole" that can create conflict. This interplay of intrapersonal and interpersonal conflict has been explored through the assumption that the human mind consists of different parts in which the psyche, the value system and the behaviour are created (Folger et al, 2001: 45).

According to Rahim (2002: 207), "an interactive process does not preclude the possibilities of intra-individual conflict, for it is known that a person often interacts with self". Intrapersonal conflicts can be referred to as "identity conflicts" and can lead to identity crises (Mayer, 2005a). Identity-based conflicts are based on the individual, the psychology, culture, basic values, shared history and beliefs (Rothman, 1997) and start when an individual or a group perceive differences and opposition between the self and the other regarding interests, beliefs, needs and values that matter to them (De Dreu et al, 1999). Augsburger (1992: 17) emphasises that conflicts point out existing differences on the one hand, and sameness on the other hand. Conflicts sensitises the consciousness of the relativity of one single reality (Augsburger, 1992: 17): "Most of the time we assume that we share a single reality with others, but we

do not. We simultaneously live in multiple realities". These multiple realities can lead to a crisis that arises through the recognition of the varieties of reality that implicitly refer to social and cultural core values. Therefore, conflict arises through differences in value constellations which are connected to identity (Maringer and Steinweg, 1997). Thus, values and identity play a major role in identity-based conflicts, also if they occur with organisations.

3.4   DISCOURSES ON IDENTITY

Discourses on identity are contemporarily *en vogue* since Lévi-Strauss (1980: 7) called identity "the latest trend", as if the crisis of identity is the new "mal du siècle". Since Erikson (1950) introduced 'identity' into Social Sciences terminology, the number of publications on identity increased instantly and the term has since been used increasingly (Brunner, 1987: 57). Regarding the broad scientific background of theoretical approaches to identity and identity definitions (Benedetti and Wiesmann, 1986; Cobb, 2003; Frey and Haußer, 1987; Keupp and Bilden, 1989; Kriesberg, 2003a; Seymour, 2003; Sökefeld, 2001; Straub, 1991), it is a challenge to give a short working definition.

The definition of identity is strongly connected to cultural norms and group identities and can be described as "the norms, beliefs, practices, and traditions with which one engages one's environment" (Seymour, 2003). Identity concepts and definitions vary according to their disciplinary provenience, but are generally defined as psychological, socio-psychological or social processes that include the individual, society and the collective (Neimeyer, 1992: 994). However, an interdisciplinary perspective is required to refer to the different aspects of identity.

Identity concepts are no longer assumed as unchangeable and enduring (Sökefeld, 2001:2). Post-modern constructivist approaches (Bekker, 1993; Cobb, 2003; Craw, 1994; Keupp, 1988, 1994 and 1997; Kraus, 1996; Kriesberg, 2003a) have created a *common sense* of international acceptance of constructivist identity approaches (Sökefeld, 2001: 2pp) and redefine traditional identity concepts.

Constructivist theorists argue that social reality is created through an interactive process of the individual and the society or organisation: "the others and the self develop through social interaction" and form collective identities (Mead, 1969: 222) through the creation of "we-groups" (Elwert, 1989:440) which imply a code of "us and them" (Elwert, 1989: 447). These creations help reduce the complexity of the world and "give alternatives to the constructs of subjective realities" (Bannister and Francella, 1981: 6). The individual is constructed through his or her social belonging to individuals, groups or organisations and is therefore a product of in-group and out-group processes that can be defined through profession, status, socialisation, gender, lifestyle, social behaviour, social and family positions, racial, ethnical background, religion, culture, language and class (Thommen, 1985: 37).

In post-modernist discussions on identity (Keupp, 1988, 1994 and 1997; Kraus, 1996), fundamental thoughts are based on the notion of the pluralisation of the self and consequently on the assumption of a "healthy" form of multiple identity. Layes (2003: 17) defines identity as made up of various interests, roles, attitudes and value orientations that need to be integrated and that change in their degree of importance depending on the situation.

According to Keupp (1994 and 1997), societal complexity is not an unreasonable demand on identity and can open "creativity spaces" which the individual can counter with a multiple identity. In the "patchwork identity" concept (Keupp, 1988), contradictions of identity aspects exist. They arise through the experience and construction of multiple realities and can cause intrapersonal and interpersonal conflicts. Hence, social and identity multiplicity provides "creativity spaces", and flexibility on the one hand (Keupp, 1994), but involves the potential for new conflict, on the other hand. This conflict potential may be the outcome of competing identities within a person or an organisation and could lead to (violent) conflicts (Coy and Woehrle, 2000; Kriesberg, 2003a). Identity aspects unify the "patchwork identity" (Keupp, 1988) which is formed by the social reality of a person and with an evaluation process that integrates, interprets and evaluates experiences. Identity aspects are developed through self-reflexive cognitive processes, as well as through actions and mutual integration. The interrelations of identity aspects then construct identity parts.

Generalisations of experiences develop the concept of multiple identities (Keupp et al, 2002:18).

Singular identity aspects intermingle with identity feelings, which represent an inner principle of individual self-regulation. Conflict threatens self esteem and the individual requires cognitive, affective and behavioural resources to cope with the situation. Negative emotions and heightened cognitive effort impact on the physiological and psychological system in a multitude of ways and can be identified through narration (Chaitin, 2003; Cobb, 2003).

3.4.1 <u>Identity and narration</u>

The anticipation of events and the subjective experiences are communicated through a common symbol system, the language. Experiences are pre-structured through the cognitive process of restructuring impressions through the language-based system of typology and relevance schemes (Berger and Luckmann, 2000: 40). Language codes and decodes experiences and is an instrument of collective knowledge. Language becomes a matrix of the individual and the social world. It constructs identity parts, gives orientation and supports the creation of belonging. Berger (1966: 111) emphasises that "Identity is always identity within a specific, socially constructed world".

The representation of identity through language and verbal interaction is bound to cultural and social norms and core identity narrations are defined as the stories of a person. Narratives are "unique stories, sagas, legends and myths in a culture" (Hellriegel et al, 2007: 360) and occur repeatedly in narrated (life) stories. The clusters of identity aspects form a network of time (past, present, future), of content (similarities and differences) and the world of living (work, spare time, gender, profession). Cobb (2003) states that all individuals are "stories we tell …. So I would say, depending on the context, which is dependent on the network of stories that people are embedded in, they are going to enact them .… And that is who they are."

Keupp (1994) defines core narrations as a part of identity. Feelings of identity, experiences and core narrations are necessary identity elements that, *inter alia,* form the ability of individuals and groups to act. They follow a continuing process of change and influence the construction of in- and out-groups and are

constructed along the in-group and out-group line, language patterns, values, socio-cultural norms and the assumed normative ideal.

In this study, the interview texts present a small and limited insight into the managers' identity core narrations, but still provide the reader with some information on the interviewees, their experiences, and the identity aspects and values involved.

3.4.2   <u>Identity: self and other</u>

As mentioned in Chapter 3, Section 3.4, identity is strongly connected to feelings of belonging (Hall, 1991; Laviziano, Mein and Sökefeld, 2001; Sökefeld, 2001), perceptions of conflict (Lederach, 1996) and conflict management processes and methods (Busch, 2006; Mayer, 2005b: 277). Identity constructions aim at creating belonging and homogeneity (Mayer, 2007).

According to Layes (2003: 118), self-image forms part of identity constructs, schema of interaction, mindset, personality and value orientations. Self-image leads to the imagination of group belonging and networks. Negative other images often serve the fact of the positive self-presentation of an individual or a group. Often other-images become more differentiated as individuals and groups became better acquainted (Tajfel, 1981). The construction and analyses of singular identity aspects can partially and temporarily lead to the redefinition cross-cutting and overlapping identity streams and homogenous identities across individuals (Laviziano et al, 2001: 40).

Tajfel (1981), who differentiates between personal identity – in the sense of personal characteristics such as psychological traits, competencies, bodily characteristics, intellectual attributes and pursuits, as well as personal tastes – and social identity, which he defines as the denotation of person's membership of formal and informal settings and social groups, such as sex, race, nationality and religion, has made an important contribution to research on intergroup conflict. He contends that social identities are created out of the need to belong, aimed at the reduction of feelings of isolation and increase in group identification. This identification is strengthened by internalised values and

objectives on individual and social levels (Mitchell, 1981: 87). This process strengthens homogenisation and self-esteem through belonging. However, Hall (1991: 48ff) emphasises "The notion that identity has to do with people that look the same, feel the same, call themselves the same, is nonsense. As a process, as a narrative, as a discourse, it is always told from the position of the other.".

Identity needs both homogeneity and heterogeneity aspects to construct itself in contrast to others. Both aspects are negotiated and reconstructed through images of self and other. Identity then becomes a form of ascriptions of self and the other in social reality and cultural and ethnic contexts (Barth, 1969). Through these ascriptions, the individual creates boundaries that are individually, socially and culturally constructed. The concepts of culture, race, ethnic origin and organisational culture need to be differentiated, with reference to the analysis and interpretation of data in Chapters 6, 7 and 8.

3.4.3   Identity aspects

Culture and society are basic conditions of humanity; individuation is impossible without socialisation. The individual identity is referred to by the scientific literate as the "I-identity", "individual identity", "personal identity", "subjective identity" or "identity of self" (Frey and Haußer, 1987: 4). Identity constructions develop through social systems, ethnic groups, cultural belonging, organisation and socialisation processes. Group belonging is often described as a form of social identity and at the same time forms part of the individual identity, such as aspects of ethnic, cultural or racial belonging.

Race as an identity-defining category is socially constructed by referring to the biological and evolutionistic backgrounds to race categorisation. Race as a social reality construct varies situationally and contextually over time and constructs the inclusion or exclusion of group members through racial characteristics such as skin colour and the shape of face or body. Generally, race is understood to define genetically determined differences among three to six major groupings of *homo sapiens,* which have been placed in race taxonomy since the beginning of evolutionary biology and thought in the eighteenth century (Witzig, 1996: 675). Nagle (1994: 152) perceives the evolutionist race taxonomy construct as problematic, because of the existence

of broad and overlapping genetic pools across human beings and unclear boundaries of race constructions in regard to gene pools. Therefore, race categories must be seen as a social category based on selected traits of race and socially and culturally constructed ascriptions.

"Ethnic and cultural identities are based on shared values, language, beliefs, or concerns, which are varyingly open to acquisition by choice" (Kriesberg, 2003b: 4). Ethnicity is largely socially constructed (Kriesberg, 2003b: 3), but "some traits of ethnicity are not easily modified by social processes. Ethnicity is an ambiguous and evaluative category focusing on the difference of self-determination and determination through others". "An ethnic group may be defined as a grouping of people who are generally recognised by themselves and/or by others as a distinct group, with such recognition occurring on the basis of social or cultural characteristics" (Farley, 1982: 6). Horowitz (2000: 18) descibes ethnicity as a "mosaic of beliefs, religions, collective memory, emotions, mythologies and language, corresponding to their common 'ethnic culture'.

According to Fisher (1998: 19ff), ethnic group identities are determined by a common language, ethical attitudes, religion and history. Cultural, ethnic and social-group identities are closely connected and determine the individual's identity and self-concept through reference to, and membership of a socio-cultural group (age groups, gender groups, religious groups). Identification with the group varies depending on the context and situation, which influences the definition of self and other. Fisher (1998: 40) emphasises that one's own identity consists of "multiple identities", which cannot be separated easily. Therefore, ethnic and cultural identities are highly inter-related and inter-mingled and often blur into each other. Overall, this multiple identity is fundamentally shaped by social and cultural aspects, often absorbed and passed on unconsciously.

Sollors (1986: 28) concludes in his discussion on relationship of race and ethnicity that race is an aspect of ethnicity. Ethnicity is an often-used term to differentiate between racial population groups, because referring to ethnic groups is not as negatively connotated as references to racial belonging

(Sollors, 1986: 28) and can help to describe intra-state processes of differentiation of population groups, even if the term ethnicity has been labelled as euphemistic and ideologically blurred (Michaeles, 1992: 655-685).

Concepts of identity are interwoven with regard to issues of culture, ethnos and race. In an organisational setting, the organisational culture also impacts on the identity of the individual, as the individual also constructs the organisational culture.

Organisational culture is a complex and well discussed phenomenon (Parker and Bradley, 2000; Sinclair 2005) and is seen as "the way we do things around here" (Lundy and Cowling, 1996). According to Bower (1966), organisational culture has already been described as a set of values and assumptions that underlie the statement "this is how we do things around here". For Brown (1995: 5) organisational culture is expressed through "diversity of opinion." Hagberg and Heifetz (2000) see organisational culture as the operating system of the organisation that strongly influences on the thought styles of staff members, their interactions and their feelings. Schein (1992: 6) defines organisational culture as follows:

> Organisational culture is the deeper level of basic assumptions and beliefs that are shared by members of an organisation, that operate unconsciously and define in a basic taken-for-granted fashion an organisation's view of itself and its environment.

Seel (2000) sees organisational culture as an emergent result of the continuing negotiations about values, meanings and proprieties between the members of an organisation and its environment. These negotiations to construct the organisational culture inherit a large conflict potential, due to the high diversity of organisations in contemporary organisations. According to Hellriegel et al (2007: 358), "Managing cultural diversity effectively has emerged as a key business issue during the past decade.". Understanding this diversity and complexity could assist in managing conflict constructively. Goals for managing cultural diversity are legal compliance; creating a positive culture; creating economic value; understanding the goals to be achieved; assessing the organisation; developing and planning change (vision, involvement, timing);

implementing targeted change efforts; and monitoring change and making adjustments (Hellriegel et al, 2007). Organisational culture forms an integral part of the organisation and its functioning. Robbins (1996) views a strong organisational culture as providing shared values that ensure that everyone in the organisation is on the same track.

Many of the definitions of organisational culture commonly refer to values and norms as underlying forces of organisational culture, which include unique patterns of shared assumptions, values, and norms that shape the socialisation activities, language, symbols, rites, and ceremonies of a group of people (Hamel, 1996; Hellriegel et al, 2007). A strong organisational culture results in predictable, well-specified behaviour patterns which are driven by the values of the organisation and which are not necessarily consciously present in the mind of the staff members (Schultz, 1994). As apparent, organisational culture is a result of many factors, some of which are the type of business the organisation is in, its products, it customers, its size and location, its values and its methods of operating (Rowe, Mason, Dickel, Mann and Mockler, 1994).

Societal and industrial cultures influence the organisational culture and its subcultures. Subcultures – for example, defined through departments, expertise or minority status – can be a major force of conflict (Goffee and Jones, 1996; Trice and Beyer, 1996) or coexist peacefully. Often structural and personal changes are made to bring subcultures to work together to pursue common goals.

The organisational culture aims to achieve internal integration and coordination (Furnham and Gunter, 1993), to provide a shared system of meaning which forms the basis of communication and mutual understanding. Martins (2000) views internal integration as a socialising factor in the organisation with regard to the integration of team members; departmental or organisational boundaries; feelings of identity and commitment to the organisation; and to create system stability. Concepts of cultural, racial and ethnic belonging often form part of the aspects negotiated in internal integration processes in an organisation (see Chapters 6, 7, and 8).

Trans-cultural conflicts occur in organisations, in internal integration processes. They are often based on inter-cultural factors and aspects, which will be discussed in the following section.

3.4.4   (Inter-)cultural factors in the construction of identity and conflict

The identity of a person is multiple and partly constructed through cultural aspects. Identity encompasses "a sense that one is safe in the world physically, psychologically, socially, even spiritually (Northrup, 1989: 64). In intercultural situations, individuals often experience their safety as being threatened by the other or the unknown. Mummendey (1993: 308) contends that negative emotional experiences occur as soon as the discrepancies between the known and the unknown grow and exceed a special (individual) degree. Racial, ethnic and cultural images and practices are not mainly built on individual experiences of discrepancy, but more on cultural, social and contextual collective racial knowledge (Terkessidis, 1998: 242).

However, intercultural encounters can easily lead to conflict, particularly when self- and other- images clash, when assumed other images (that is, the images that a person has regarding the images of the other) are misinterpreted and feelings of insecurity appear (Layes, 2003: 120). Hence, great intercultural conflict potential lies in

- the images individuals and groups construct of others;
- the assumed other images;
- the associated expectations and interpretations of images and assumed other images; and
- the emotions involved.

At the same time, Horowitz (2000) highlights that ways of dealing with conflict are, in any case, culturally defined: culture impacts on the construction of identities and on conflict experiences, conflict styles and management strategies. Therefore, culture can lead to "clashes of civilization" (Huntington, 1996). Burton (1990a: 214) underlines that deep-rooted conflicts are influenced by cultural, intercultural or interclass aspects, due to the treatment of culture as measure of incompatibility. Thus, sameness and differences in cultures need to be recognised as substantive issues and inherent parts in conflicts and its

management. But cultural aspects in conflicts can also help to "cut across cultures" (Burton, 1990a: 211-213): cultural values gain negative influence when they are linked to unfavourable economic or political conditions, but can also contribute positively to intercultural conflict management by emphasising security as a value that protects human needs.

Burton (1990a: 142) distinguishes between universal, inalienable needs, such as security, participation, cultural identity and recognition, and interests that are changeable. The purpose of societies and organisations that include diverse settings "is to cater for the needs of the person" (Burton, 1990a: 152). Only if the need for identity and recognition is satisfied by related needs – such as job opportunities, social status or other conditions that promote autonomy – do cultural issues as constructors of identity lose importance (Burton, 1990a: 211p).

3.5   IDENTITY AND CONFLICTS

Conflict and conflict management are tightly interwoven with a person's identity. The situation, the context, the conflict and its management do not exclusively relate to "just a function of external conditions" (Friedman et al, 2000). Moreover, the social world is at least part of the individual "cognitive-affective process dynamics" (Mischel and Shoda, 1998: 251). Gaziano et al (1996: 820) also emphasise that the experience of conflict is not only an external reality, but a result of how each person perceives and approaches existing problems. Lederach (2005) holds the radical position that "all conflicts are identity conflicts", because conflicts occur always in dependence to the person's identity, intra-personal conflicts and value-orientations. Rahim (2002: 212) contends that old paradigms of the understanding and management of conflicts need to change and the interlinkage with intrapersonal identity structures should be taken into account.

Kriesberg (2003a: 28) views the basis of conflict as lying in internal factors, relationships with the adversaries and the system context. Internal identity factors influence conflicts and are mainly based on socio-psychological backgrounds, such as communication or language, and on aspects of human nature, such as group homogeneity. Unfulfilled needs for recognition, security,

and identity can be defined as internal factors and can easily lead to conflict (Burton, 1990a). Relationships with adversaries often become conflictual when they are based on experienced inequalities and differences. With regard to the system context, conflicts are driven by issues of power and power distribution, cultural impacts, factors weakening consistency and stability and further implications regarding the organisational potential, which provides facets of optional identity aspects.

Conflicts related to highly significant identities have a tendency to persist (Northrup, 1989:55). Kriesberg (2003a) supports this thought by highlighting that conflicts are often caused by enduring, persisting identities, their characteristics or their ascribed characteristics. Mayer (2005a) adds that particularly conflicting images of the self and the other, which are parts of the identity, could increase the conflictual potential and the conflict. Kriesberg (2003a: 7) highlights that there are six ways in which conflicts related to identity need consideration, namely the issues in contention; the characteristics of the contending parties; the relations between the adversaries; the context in which the adversaries contend; the means used to conduct the struggle; and the outcome of the struggle. If these six points stay unconsidered, identity conflicts could lead to psychological stress, threat, pain and exhaustion, especially when the identity is threatened and the need for safety is not fulfilled (Burton, 1990a). Conflicts based on unfulfilled needs often include emotional patterns, such as fear, hatred and anger, and are bound to the collective experiences of a group (Kemper, 1990) as well as to collective identities (Halbwachs, 1992).

The influence of identity on conflict resolution and management processes can be determined. Conflict management and coping strategies require strong supportive personal conditions and emotional orientation (Bar-Tal, 1998, 2004). Ross (2000: 1015) emphasises that identity issues are crucial to the successful resolution of conflicts, while Burton (1990: 137)emphasises that this holds true particularly for multi-ethnic societies. Kriesberg (2003a: 10-11) considers that self-conception, constituencies, the social boundaries and the degree of internal organisation of the individual have implications on conflicts and their resolution. Bar-Tal (2004) supports Kriesberg (2003a), pointing out that conflict issues are often complicated by intense psychological dynamics, which

… make the conflicts even more difficult to resolve. Although these conflicts may differ in particular demands, images, or intensity, their psychological dynamics are similar. Therefore, the understanding of the psychological foundations is a crucial challenge in view of the behavioral consequences that these foundations have in situations of intractable conflict,…

Even though identity and conflict are strongly interrelated, identity and its dynamics with regard to conflict and its management are still overlooked, particularly with regard to attempts to understand the origins of conflict and the planning of conflict management (Seymour, 2003). Therefore, Kriesberg (2003a) suggests that conflicts should be studied from the perspective of identity issues. This study does not follow this suggestion in terms of studying conflict from the identity perspective, but rather tries to study conflict with regard to values – as parts of identity – and identity issues and their importance in conflict experiences and narrations of the interviewed managers in the selected international organisation.

3.6   SUMMARY

This chapter presents relevant discourses on conflicts and identity with special regard to the different approaches of conflicts, conflict resolution processes and identity on the global/international, regional, societal/organisational, interpersonal and individual/intra-personal level. Conflict and its management are contextualised in the frame of constructivist approaches. From Chapter 3, Section 3.3 onwards, conflict on global, organisational and interpersonal levels are particularly approached and interlinked with the dimensions influencing conflict management in organisations. The importance of values and identities in conflict experiences, narrations and management is clearly stated. With regard to the research questions in Chapter 1, Section 1.2, relevant literature on management styles and organisational conflict are introduced in Chapter 3, Section 3.3.3. Finally, theoretical approaches to inter- and intrapersonal conflict are presented, leading to the discourses on identity. The theoretical approaches to identity consider identity as a construct, created by narrations, images of the self and the other and various identity aspects which include cultural, social, personal, racial and organisational impacts on identity. For this study, the inter-

cultural factors of identity and conflict constructions are highlighted due to the fact that conflicts often occur in diverse work contexts. Referring to the last section (Section 3.5) of this chapter, it is clearly presented that in this study conflict is seen as a construct influenced by the identity and the values of individuals and organisations and, therefore, conflict management is also seen as requiring a systemic identity- and value-based approach and understanding.

CHAPTER 4

VALUES AND CONFLICT

4.1   INTRODUCTION

Research on values and value-orientation follows a long tradition across many disciplines: Social Psychology (Bond, 1988 and 1998; Rokeach, 1973, 1979 and 1985; Schwartz, 1994; Schwartz and Bilsky 1994; Schwartz and Inbar-Saban, 1988); Sociology (Inglehart and Abramson, 1994; Ingelhart and Flanagan, 1987; Klages and Gensicke, 2006); Political Sciences (Huntington and Harrison, 2004); Developmental Psychology (Colby and Kohlberg, 1978; Kohlberg, 1976; Piaget, 1979 and 1984); Cultural Psychology (Hofstede, 1985, 1993 and 1997; Triandis, 1995); and Organisational Psychology (Von Rosenstiel, 2003).

Research on values has gained importance in the arena of management research (Kirkman and Shapiro, 2001; Ohbuchi, Fukushima and Tedeschi, 1999; Smith, Dugan and Trompenaars, 1996); focusing on values of managers and business management (Agle and Caldwell, 1999; Smith et al, 2002), values and leadership (Van de Vliert, 2006); educational management (Schwartz and Bardi, 2001); individual (personality) self-management (Fischer, 2006; Roccas and Brewer, 2002; Roccas, Sagiv, Schwartz and Knafo, 2002); and health management (Sagiv and Schwartz, 2000).

Following the emergence of global economies and joint ventures, the demand for intercultural value research with regard to conflict management in international organisations has escalated. There is a strong interest in the Western world in value research in Asia, because of the emergent economic giants in Asia and their increasing influence in the world economy (Bond, 1998; Hofstede, 1985 and 1997; Jackson and Louw, 2004; Yu, 1996). Especially in the last years, research on cross-cultural values has intensified, with an increasingly focus on the African region (Burgess, Schwartz and Roger, 1995; Schwartz and Bardi, 2001; Schwartz, Melech, Lehmann, Burgess, Harris, and Owens, 2001). However, Sub-Saharan Africa is still underrepresented in cross-

cultural value research, and research methodologies generally suffer from a Western bias (Noorderhaven and Tidjani, 2001).

Differences in values and value concepts often play an important role in conflict (Druckman and Broom, 1991; Lustig, 1988; Moore, 1996), because differences in value orientations or competing or incompatible values can lead to conflict (Berkel, 2005). Clashing value concepts are common, particularly in diverse work situations and intercultural work settings (Hofstede, 1991; Miller, Glen, Jaspersen and Karmokolias, 1997) and are additionally interlinked with the cultural background of a person (Kitayama and Markus, 1991) and identity issues (Stewart et al, 1998; Tafarodi and Swann, 1996). With reference to the importance of values, value-orientations and conflicts, this study will focus on values in the narrated conflict experiences of managers with diverse (cultural) background in the international South African automotive industry.

This chapter introduces the background and definition of values and selected approaches to value research that lead the way to Schwartz's value theory and value concepts, value domains and dimensions. Against this theoretical background, the interlinkage between values and conflict and individual, cultural and organisational values will be established.

This chapter proposes to provide a theoretical base for the focus of the study in which values, its domains and dimensions in the conflict narrations will be analysed. The analysis of values will be inductively and deductively developed from the data material and the deductive approach will be based on the Schwartz value domains and dimension, as further explained in Chapter 5, Section 5.3.

4.2   BACKGROUND AND DEFINITION OF VALUES

A fundamental milestone in value discourses heralds back to the philosophies of Immanuel Kant (1724-1804 n. Chr.), who established the subjectivity of ethics. Kant did not refer to the morals, traditions and transcripts of values and beliefs, but emphasised the freedom and the autonomy of the individual, which he saw as the universal principle of man and which today still define the guiding principles of international value discourses and human rights movements (Dannowski, Pickerodt and Wolf, 1993: 41).

The decade after the Second World War has seen great studies made in value research and the meaning and importance attached thereto. Projects were implemented that contributed to interdisciplinary value researches (Allport, 1965 and 1968; Kluckhohn and Murray, 1948; Parsons, 1961; Parsons and Shils, 1951). According to the values researchers, it was *common sense* that the development of value research and value concepts was fundamental to the development of different scientific disciplines. In the 1960s, the social psychologist Rokeach (1973) explained that the research on value concepts was important in that it integrates the different disciplines.

From then, greater meaning was attached to the meaning of value research, particularly with the recognition of the rapid changes in values occurring in industrial countries (McClelland, 1992). Value research began to focus almost exclusively on value transformation and change (Rescher, 1969).

Today's value discourses are based on concepts from Ancient Greek philosophy referring to the question of the universality of human values (Allport and Vernon, 1931; Rokeach, 1973; Schwartz, 1994; Spranger, 1921). Therefore, Western value discourses have common roots, but do not create standardised interdisciplinary definitions (Mayton, Ball-Rokeach and Loges, 1994). The terms value or value orientation are ambiguously defined in disciplines such as Social Psychology, Intercultural Communication or Value Studies (Allport, 1965 and 1968; Kluckhohn and Stroedbeck, 1961; Maslow, 1954; Rokeach, 1973; Schwartz and Bilsky, 1987). Crane and Angrosino (1992: 54) point out: "A number of anthropologists despair at the ambiguity of the concepts "value", "attitude" and "symbol.". Thiel (1988: 519) argues that the concept of values becomes increasingly pluralistic, as do the value concepts themselves. The "global world pluralism" has promoted acknowledgement of international value discourses and value research (Koepping, 1988: 26).

Values are desirable goals that transcend a situation and become guiding principles in the life of a person or a group (Schwartz, 1994: 19ff). Values serve as a motivational factor for actions in one's life, influencing both the direction of action as well as the emotional intensity. Values express the standards of judgements. This means that they may differ on a value scale according to

culture, social group, and individual expression. The main difficulty in coining a universal definition of human values lies in existing values that bind culture, specifically on different levels of importance, and that therefore leads to individual or cultural value conflicts (Schwartz, 1992).

Values and value orientations are patterns of thoughts and actions (Kluckhohn and Stroedbeck, 1961: 4) that are often unreflected and unconscious. For example, only when a person realises in a conflict situation that the other person with whom they are experiencing conflict prefers different modes and patterns of thoughts and actions, do values become obvious and conscious. These patterns of thoughts and actions include three types of elements: cognitive, affective and directive elements. These three elements have an impact on the patterns of thought, as well as the actions and the behaviour of a person. With regard to the value concepts analysed in this study, values are generally viewed as cognitive elements, as they are specifically analysed from the conflict narrations and not from the observation of behavioural patterns.

However, Bardi and Schwartz (2003) consider that the strength and structure of values in relation to behaviour still need to be analysed, even if they have established that stimulation and traditional values relate strongly to the behaviours that express them: hedonism, power, universalism and self-direction values relate moderately; while security, conformity, achievement and benevolence values relate marginally only. Additional findings suggest that these differences in value-behaviour relations may stem from normative pressures, such as those that apply in organisational settings, to perform certain behaviours. The motivational conflicts and congruities postulated by the theory of values may account for this shared structure.

However, research by Roccas et al (2002) supports the idea that the influence of values on behaviour depends more on cognitive control than on personality traits.

4.3   APPROACHES TO VALUE RESEARCH

Spranger (1921), and one decade later Allport and Vernon (1931), constructed special types of values which they implicitly expected to be universal (Table 4.1) and to which Rokeach (1973, 1979) and Schwartz (1992) have referred to in their research.

Table 4.1: Types of values

Types of values	Examples of value types
Political values	Power, competition, struggle
Social values	Love, kindness, sympathy
Economic values	Interest in business, production, consumption, wealth
Theoretical values	Reasoning, discovering truth through observation and a critical and rational attitude
Religious and aesthetic values	Esteem for form and harmony, grace, symmetry

Source: adapted from Allport and Vernon (1931) and Spranger (1921); Mayer, (2001: 21)

These categories later became a directory for Rokeach's (1973, 1979) value studies and research conducted by Hofstede (1997: 9), Kluckhohn and Stroedbeck (1961: 11) and Schwartz (1994: 166ff).

Rokeach (1973) is considered as the pioneer of intercultural value research, building on the basic assumptions of Allport, Vernon and Lindzey (1969); Feather (1975); Kluckhohn (1951); and Kluckhohn and Stroedbeck (1961). Rokeach (1973, 1979) poses the question of the relation between norms of beliefs and behaviours, of "terminal and instrumental values" in trans-cultural settings. Schwartz (1992), like Rokeach, gives great credence to the universal and culture-specific aspects of values.

Rokeach (1973, 1979) emphasises the universality of value categories, their trans-situational function and their hierarchical order, reflecting value hierarchies in the individual and social contexts of a person. Rokeach draws a strong link between the hierarchies of values in a strong relationship, the self-sustainability of a person, and the concept of self-esteem. The value system of a person becomes a "map or architect's blueprint" (Rokeach, 1973: 14). The value aspects only became activated contextually, situationally and only through necessity. Additionally, Rokeach (1979: 48ff) differentiates between individual and institutional values, which are subdivided into terminal and instrumental values.

Instrumental values are "broad modes of conduct" that situationally and contextually lead a person in a very direct and concrete way (Lustig, 1988: 57). Values such as honesty, love, obedience, ambitiousness and independence are instrumental values that can be subdivided into moral values such as "being cheerful, helpful loving and honest with others" and which reflect and influence interpersonal communication and competence values that refer to the individual personality, such as "being ambitious, imaginative, logical, and self-controlled" (Lustig, 1988: 57).

In comparison to instrumental values, terminal values express "end-states of existence" and include "freedom, a comfortable life, wisdom, a world at peace, and true friendship". They are divided into values with a personal focus, such as "freedom, happiness and salvation", and a social focus, such as "world at peace, social recognition, and true friendship" (Rokeach 1973).

In the 1990s, Schwartz (1994) and Schwartz and Bilsky (1990) revised the Rokeach value concepts. They developed value dimensions and value domains from a social psychology perspective, which will be introduced in the following Section 4.4.

4.4   SCHWARTZ'S VALUE THEORY

Are there universal aspects in human values? Which values may be universal, and which culture-specific? To answer these questions, Schwartz redefined concept and definitions of values, as presented in the following section, Section 4.4.1 of this chapter.

4.4.1   <u>Schwartz's value concept</u>

Schwartz and Bilsky (1987: 551) divide values in five main categories: "According to the literature, values are concepts or beliefs about desirable end states or behaviors (terminal and instrumental values), which transcend specific situations; guide the selection or evaluation of behavior; or order events according to relative importance."

Values are cognitive representations, as defined by Kluckhohn and Stroedbeck (1961), which basically comprise three forms of universal human sources of values. These sources of values are either conscious or subconscious and influence human behaviour and the aims of human beings which are as follows:

- needs of individuals as biological organisms;

- requisites of coordinated, social and interpersonal interaction; and

- security of functions concerning the well-being and the survival of groups.

The natural cognitive and verbal requirements of values are transformed into cultural values and goals, constructed and defined by the members of a group. Through socialisation, values then become a socio-cultural concept of individuals, groups or societies, defined by Schwartz (1994: 24) as follows:

> Values are desirable trans-situational goals, varying in importance that serves as guiding principles in life of a person or other social entity. Implicit in this definition of values as goals is that (1) they serve the interests as some social entity; (2) they can motivate action- giving it direction and emotional intensity; (3) they function as standards for judging and justifying action, and (4) they are acquired both through socialization to dominant group values and through the unique learning experience of individuals.

Furthermore, there are biases of values that lie in-between the following three main domains of interests: terminal versus instrumental value interests; individualistic versus collectivistic interests; and motivational domains of interest. Values as individualistic concepts are presented as follows (Schwartz and Bilsky 1987: 553):

> A value is an individual's concept of a transsitual goal (terminal or instrumental) that expresses interests (indviidualistic, collectivistic or both) concerned with a motivational domain (enjoyment, security etc.), evaluated on a range of importance from range (very important to important) as a guiding principle in his life.

This study uses the definition of values and their presentation according to the statements of Schwartz presented in this section.

4.4.2   Value domains and value dimensions

Schwartz and Bilsky (1987: 551ff) have defined ten value domains through their intercultural and empirical studies, based on the concept of Rokeach's (1973) seven universal value domains. The motivational domains of power, benevolence, universalism, achievement, as well as hedonism, self-direction, tradition and universalism present definitions with values of Allport and Vernon (1931) and Spranger (1921). These domains are regarded as universal value concepts and are expected to carry cultural implications and variations (Schwartz, 1994: 19pp).

The following table, Table 4.2, shows the motivational domains of values by Schwartz (1994: 22) in regard to definition and aim, exemplifying values and sources of values.

Table 4.2: Motivational domains of values

Definition and aim of values	Exemplary values	Sources of values
Power: Social status and prestige, control or dominance over people and resources	Social power, authority and wealth	Interaction, group
Achievement: Personal success through demonstrating competence according to social standards	Successful, capable, ambitious	Interaction, group
Hedonism: Pleasure and sensuous gratification for oneself	Pleasure, enjoying life	Organism
Stimulation: Excitement, novelty, and challenge in life	Daring, varied life, exciting life	Organism
Self-direction: Independent thought and action-choosing, creating, exploring	Creativity, curious, freedom	Organism, interaction
Universalism: Understanding, appreciation, tolerance and protection for the welfare of all people and for nature	Broad minded, social justice, equality	Group, organism
Benevolence: Preservation and enhancement of the welfare of people with whom one is in frequent personal contact	Helpful, honest, forgiving	Organism, interaction, group
Tradition: Respect, commitment and acceptance of the customs and ideas that traditional culture or religion provide	Humble, devout, accepting my "portion in life"	
Conformity: Restraint of actions, inclinations, and impulses likely to upset or harm others and violate social expectations or norms	Politeness, obedience Honouring parents and elders	Interaction, group
Security: Safety, harmony and stability of society, of relationships and of self.	National security Social order, cleanliness	Organism interaction, group

Source: Schwartz (1994: 22)

These value domains have been validated by different research teams (Oishi, Schimmack, Diener and Suh, 1998; Schwartz and Bardi, 2001; Schwartz and Sagiv, 1995; Spini, 2003).

Oishi et al (1998) provide support for the findings of Schwartz's conception of values as higher order goals. These values serve individualistic (achievement, enjoyment, self-direction) or collectivistic goals (prosocial, conformity), which can be entangled. The value of security, for example, may be defined as a collectivistic value, but also contains, through the value of inner harmony,

individualistic value orientations. Using data from 88 samples from 40 countries, Schwartz and Sagiv (1995) have re-evaluated the propositions of the values theory and provided criteria for identifying what is culture-specific in value meanings and structure. They confirm the widespread presence of ten value types, arrayed on a motivational continuum, and organised on the following virtually universal, orthogonal dimensions:

- openness to change versus conservation; and
- self-transcendence versus self-enhancement.

Figure 4.1: Model of motivational value domains and dimensions
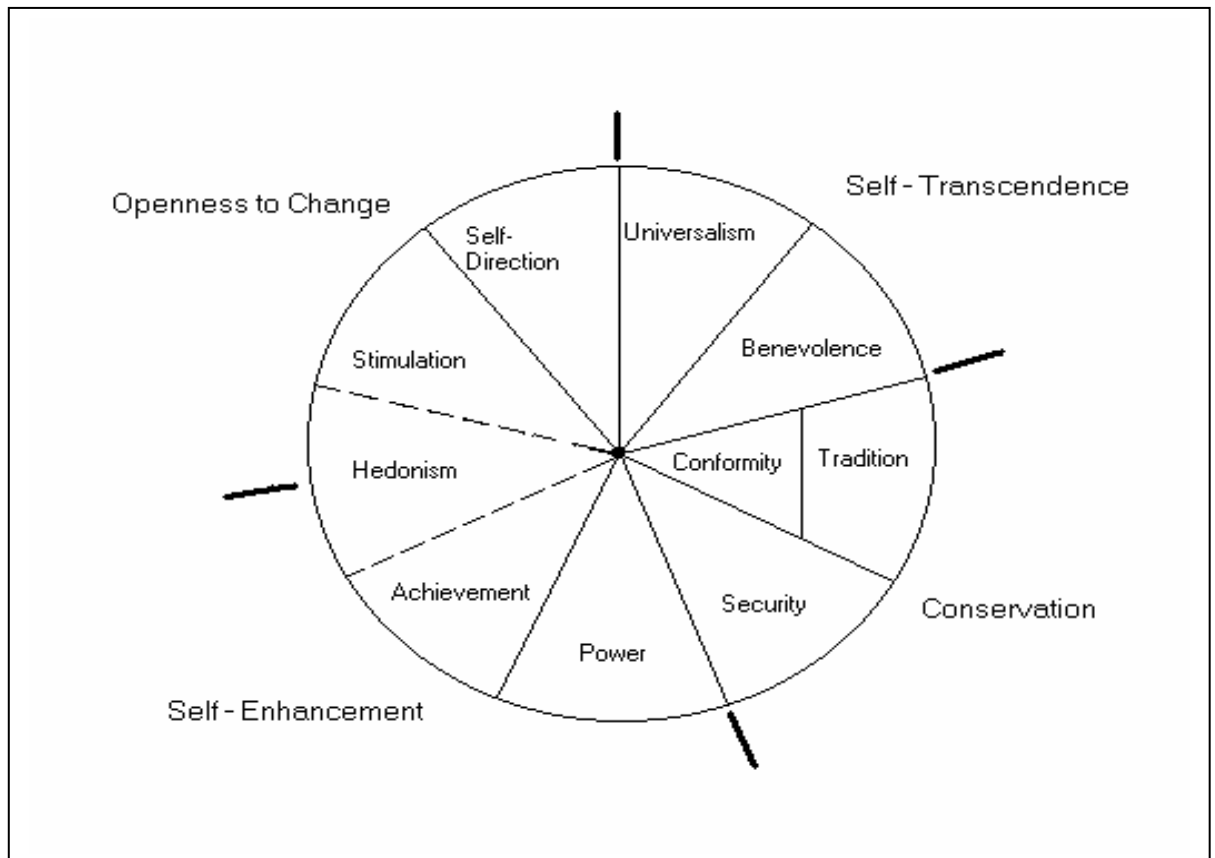
Source: Mayer (2001: 29), adapted from Schwartz (1994: 24-25)

Values define themselves in dynamic interactions and dependencies on each other. Every action strives to fulfil the value requirements. Bordering value domains are more transparent than value domains that are in opposition. The relationship patterns of conflict and compatibilies between values and value priorities present Schwartz (1994: 24-25) as follows:

- *openness to change*: independent thoughts and actions, as well as change, self-direction, stimulation, hedonism;

- *conservation:* self-restrictions, maintenance of traditional practices, protection of stability, security, conformity, tradition;

- *self-enhancement:* sense and purpose of success and dominance over others: power and achievement, hedonism; and

- *self-transcendence:* acceptance of others as equals and caring for the well-being of others: universalism and benevolence.

Schwartz and Bardi (2001) have found out that there is a widespread consensus regarding the hierarchical order of values, even beyond striking value differences in the value priorities of various groups. Average value hierarchies of representative and near representative samples from 13 nations exhibit a similar pattern that replicates itself with school teachers in 56 nations and college students in 54 nations. The authors have analysed that the values of benevolence, self-direction, and universalism are consistently most important to school teachers in 56 nations and college students in 54 nations; while the values of power, tradition, and stimulation are least important; and the values of security, conformity, achievement and hedonism lie in between.

Boness (2002) emphasises that spirituality, particularly religion, is an important value domain and must therefore be considered, particularly in the African context. Tarakeshwar, Stanton and Pargament (2003) also insist that religion as a value needs to be integrated into cross-cultural value research, for the following four reasons:

- religion, by itself, occupies a substantial role in people's lives across different cultures;
- religion has been found to be a strong predictor of important life domains among individuals all over the world;
- religion has a strong influence on cross-cultural dimensions; and
- culture also influences and shapes religious beliefs and practices.

Mbiti (1990: 15-16) underlines "the importance of spiritual values of Bantu-speaking cultures". Schwartz (1994: 23) points out that although spirituality may be the eleventh value domain, its universal existence has not yet been empirically validated. In a later article, Roccas and Schwartz (1997) contend that past research has shown that individual religiosity relates positively to valuing conformity, security, tradition, and benevolence toward close others. At the same time, individual religiosity contributes negatively to valuing stimulation, self-direction, universalism, power, and achievement. These findings were replicated in four different religions in five countries in which church-state relations were cordial (Roccas and Schwartz, 1997).

4.5 VALUES, IDENTITIES AND CONFLICT

In Social Psychology, human, socio-cultural and individual values are psycho-social multidisciplinary constructs that are hierarchically ordered and stand in relationship to behaviour and conflict experiences (Bond 1998). Conflicts are often based on differences in value orientations and are then referred to as value conflicts (Moore, 1996). Differences in cultural orientations and value priorities and systems could lead to clashes in intercultural encounters (Lustig, 1988: 60-61). Competing or incompatible values could result in destructive conflict (Berkel, 2005).

An important theme in international business studies is that problematic misunderstandings arise as a result of differences in the styles of communication, negotiation and conflict handling (Adler, 1986; Hofstede, 1991). Negotiation carries culture-specific implications, which can easily be misunderstood internationally (Pye, 1982). Cultural and value differences present a challenge in everyday conflict and managers need to resolve everyday conflicts with colleagues from other cultures (Baird, Lyles and Wharton, 1990; Miller et al, 1997).

Differences in cultural and value orientations lead to value conflicts in regard to personality, self-esteem, self-understanding and self-liking (Tafarodi et al, 1996). These concepts are culture-specific, individualistic and present in the

explanation of the feelings and behaviour of self and others (Stewart, Danielian and Foster 1998: 157).

Kitayama and Markus (1991: 227) reflect values as culture-relativistic: self-esteem is a Western construct, which is of minor importance only in collectively orientated societies. Concepts and implications of emotions and cognition are closely linked to motivations and values that are related to culture and personality styles. For Heine and Lehmann (1997: 3), these styles are strongly connected, but do not necessarily reflect cultural expectations or reflections of thoughts, attitudes or behaviour. Value concepts are, according to Stewart et al (1998: 157), mainly expressed through explanations of the feelings and behaviour of self and others.

Druckmann and Broom (1991) observe that the importance of values as a source of conflict is emphasised in a large literature on conflict resolution, in which the focus is on improved communication and understanding (Chapter 3, Section 3.2.1.b). In another study, Druckmann, Broom and Korper (1988) emphasise that parties are more willing to move further from their initial position and also more cooperative when they have talked about value orientations before negotiation is initiated.

Value conflicts can be solved through value-self-confrontation methods and change from the unconsciousness to the consciousness (Bond, 1998).

4.6   INDIVIDUAL, CULTURAL AND ORGANISATIONAL VALUES

Values and the motivational value domains are central components of personalities and identities. Therefore, the stability of and changes in a person's values and hierarchy of values are tightly connected to his or her personality. Values are often deeply rooted concepts of a person that were gained during childhood and on which basis new value schemes are developed. Hence, values are enduring concepts that stabilise a person's personality, but are changeable at any time of life (Rokeach, 1985: 162pp).

Roccas and Brewer (2002: 88pp) contend that every person creates a concept of social identity complexity that refers to his/her subjective representation of the interrelationships among multiple group identities. This complexity of social identities reflects the degree of overlap perceived to exist between groups to which a person simultaneously belongs. When the overlap of multiple in-groups is perceived to be high, the individual maintains a relatively simplified identity structure, whereby memberships in different groups converge to form a single in-group identification. When a person acknowledges, and accepts, that memberships of multiple in-groups are not fully convergent or overlapping, the associated identity structure is both more inclusive and more complex. The social identity complexity relates to personal value priorities and in-group and out-group memberships. Agle and Caldwell (1999) emphasise that in management, experts have discussed the important role of values as personal and organisational phenomena.

Fisher (2006) poses the question of the congruence and functions of personal and cultural group values and if personal values reflect cultural group values. He finds a strong correlation between self- and culture-referenced values at a culture level. At the same time, culture-referenced values are seen to correlate with behaviours attached to social norms, whereas self-rated values are found to correlate with behaviours that are norm-governed. A potential conflict could lie in the experienced differences between self- and culture-referenced values.

In organisational contexts, culture-referenced values and individual values may clash. Gandal et al (2005: 1227pp) mention that value preferences and their importance vary in different social and organisational areas. To them, the values of economists are of particular interest, based on the fact that economists often impact strongly on designing and implementing policies in the private and public sectors; therefore, it is important to understand the values that underlie their decisions. The authors have found in a five-country study that students of economics attribute more importance to self-enhancement values and less importance to universalism values than students in other fields. Already at the beginning of the first year of study this profile is apparent. The profile tends to persist throughout subsequent study years of students of economical

subjects. These values and the priorities truly influence work-related perceptions and attitudes and hence may impact on policy decisions and recommendations in the economical field.

Research conducted by Smith et al (2002) presents reports by middle managers in 47 countries on how they handle eight specific work events. The data are used to test the ability of cultural value dimensions derived to predict specific sources of guidance on which managers rely. Values are strongly predictive of reliance on those sources of guidance. Those influence particularly vertical relationships within organisations. At the same time, the aspects of organisational processes require a great sensitivity towards cultural contexts in which they occur.

Schwartz (1999) presents validated data from 49 comparable nations, in which seven types of values are identified, structured along three polar dimensions: Conservatism versus Intellectual and Affective Autonomy; Hierarchy versus Egalitarianism; and Mastery versus Harmony. Based on their cultural value priorities, cultural values for differences in meaning of work are explicated.

In a study by Ros, Schwartz and Surkiss (1999), values in terms of work goals are seen as expressions of basic values in the work setting. These values imply four types of work values: intrinsic, extrinsic, social, and prestige. The authors have established that, for teachers, work serves to attain social stability and close social relations, but for students, work is associated with promoting personal interests, independence and excitement. In conclusion, the authors identify the potential advantages of applying the theory of basic values to further studies on work. Also, this study sees advantages in value research in the context of theoretical approaches with regard to the organisational and the work context.

This study focuses on:

- inductively analysing values and developing value categories from the data material; and

- deductively proving the values and their importance in the context of the experienced conflicts of managers in the described environment and relating them to the Schwartz value domains.

The value domains and dimensions of Schwartz have been chosen, based on the following criteria:

- the Schwartz value research is based on international empirical research and provides a model that has been acknowledged interdisciplinary and internationally;

- the categorisation of value domains and dimensions is expected to be a useful research tool in the context of studies that follow a deductive approach to values in the management discipline;

- the categories have already been validated and can now be tested in the South African organisational context; and

- the domains also need to be tested, not only by implementing a questionnaire, but by validating them in the context of narrations.

4.7   SUMMARY

In conclusion, much research has been conducted on values, but rather less on values and conflict in organisational contexts, with special regard to managers and their experienced conflicts in South Africa.

For this study, the theory and concept of Schwartz will serve as fundamentals regarding the research on managerial values in the context of conflict and identities in the organisational setting, with particular reference to the Schwartz value concepts, value domains and dimensions (Chapter 4, Sections 4.4.1 and 4.4.2).

After the theoretical frame of this study has been outlined according to the research questions, and with regard to the theoretical aspects of conflict, identity and values, Chapter 5 will focus on the research design and the methodology.

CHAPTER 5

RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

5.1   INTRODUCTION

Research can be described as a systematic and methodical process of enquiry and investigation that increases knowledge (Collis and Hussey, 2003: 1) and that tries to find solutions for specific problems (Sekaran, 2003). Cheldelin, Druckman and Fast (2003) submit that there are two fundamental reasons for scientific research: On the one hand, research is an attempt to better understand the world in its complexity and, on the other hand, it helps to solve practical problems. The main aim of business research can, according to these reasons, be defined as a contribution to the improvement of the practice of management (Bennett, 1991).

As introduced in Chapter 1, Section 1.3, the described theoretical and methodological approaches are linked to the so-called phenomenological research paradigm and interpretative research paradigm. The purpose of this chapter is to link the selected aspects or research methodology to theoretical approaches and to outline the research design and research instruments.

This chapter considers the following aspects:
- the phenomenological research paradigm;
- the main assumptions of the paradigm;
- the methodological assumptions and interpretative hermeneutics; and
- the qualitative research methodology and the case study.

The following issues will also be examined:
- data collection;
- triangulation, reliability and validity;
- ethical issues in this study; and
- data analysis.

5.1.1   <u>The phenomenological research paradigm</u>

In research two main research paradigms can be distinguished: the positivistic and the phenomenological research paradigm. There are alternative terms for the phenomenological paradigm, such as the qualitative, subjectivist, humanistic or interpretivist paradigm (Collis and Hussey, 2003: 47). This study is based on the phenomenological research paradigm, using mainly qualitative research methods.

In the phenomenological research paradigm, different assumptions, such as ontological, epistemological and methodological assumptions, deal with the questions of the nature of reality, the relationship between the researcher and the researched, and the research processes (Collis and Hussey, 2003: 49).

Regarding the ontological question, this study will assume that reality is subjective and multiple and constructs itself through the eyes of the participants. In a post-modernist discussion, this approach has been further developed to constructivist assumptions of reality (von Glaserfeld, 1998), which is referred to as constructivism (Chapter 3, Section 3.1).

For the purpose of this research, constructivist assumptions are reflected in the theoretical and methodological framework. Selected representatives of the constructivist approach postulate an objective world, constructed through the individual's view as well as through social interaction (Berger and Luckmann, 2000).

Authors such as Berger and Luckmann (2000); Keupp et al (2002); Kriesberg (2003a); Lederach (2003) and Watzlawick (1998) have contributed greatly to constructivist theories of reality, conflict and identity through applying constructivist and partly post-modernist explanations, as referred to in Chapter 3.

At the same time, the theories on values referred to in this study (Allport and Vernon, 1931; Hofstede 1998; Kluckhohn and Stroedbeck, 1961; Rokeach, 1979; Schwartz, 1996 and 1999) follow constructivist approaches regarding values, value domains and dimensions, as being constructed in socio-cultural

settings and therefore carrying culture-specific meaning, as explained in Chapter 4.

With regard to the representatives of constructivism, constructivism falls under the phenomenological paradigm and addresses ontological as well as epistemological assumptions. Referring to this paradigm, it can be stated that the epistemological assumption in this study is that the researcher interacts with the people being researched. As epistemologies represent important philosophical and scientific-theoretical fundamentals, they provide different ways to understand the world and acquire knowledge: objectivistic approaches, which are mainly based in positivistic research paradigms, aim to verify an objective truth, whereas subjectivism assesses "infinite interpretations of events, none of them superior to another" (Kayrooz and Trevitt, 2005: 115-116).

In addition to the ontological and epistemological assumptions, the methodological assumption also gains importance in this study, which is built on a phenomenological research paradigm. With reference to the methodological assumptions, the question of the process of research is answered. In a phenomenological research paradigm, inductive processes are mainly used, categories are identified, and content analysis is conducted (Collis and Hussey, 2003: 49).

Additionally, according to Collis and Hussey (2003: 60), there are different methodological assumptions in the phenomenological research paradigm, which are associated with the methodologies of the case study and hermeneutics that are also fundamental for this study. Hermeneutics is a phenomenological methodology (Collis and Hussey, 2003: 74) which pays special attention to the historical and social contexts surrounding an action when interpreting a text.

From the viewpoint of the phenomenological research paradigm and particularly of interpretative hermeneutics (Geertz, 1987; Habermas 1999; Ricoeur, 1979), reality is subjective, because it is constructed through the attribution of meaning. The attribution of meaning is created by human beings that are at the same time social, cultural and individual beings. Contexts of interaction and

communication contribute to the construction of meaning, as Stellrecht (1993: 36) points out:

> Diese Bedeutungen sind den in der Welt gegebenen Gegenständen (...) nicht äußerlich, sondern konstituieren sie überhaupt erst über einen Handlungs- und Kommunikationskontext. Diese Welt der bedeutungsvollen Gegenstände steht als eine Realität für sich da und wird vom Ethnologen nicht gegen einen von außen herangetragenen Maßstab - ein wissenschaftliches Modell oder Kategorien der Wissenschaftssprache - gehalten oder durch objektive Analyseverfahren erschlossen.

Ricoeur (1979) gained prominence in the hermeneutic sciences through his theory by understanding that hermeneutics constitute the interpretation of cultural situations in terms of written texts (Ricoeur, 1979: 253). These situations may be *read* by any person. They are open for different interpretations and ways of understanding, depending on the acting person as well as the *reader*.

Since interpretation and culture are public and *readable*, the researcher can decode foreign or inter-cultural text segments and sense their context of meaning by describing and paying attention to texts and actions. The construction of the *readability* of texts - that is the process of constructing meaning and *VERSTEHEN* (Chapter 5, Section 5.2) - is understood as the core process of the negotiation of meaning and reality between the interviewee and the interviewer. This study emphasises the interpretative hermeneutical viewpoint of interpretation by seeing the researcher and interviewee as constructions of reality and interpreting the texts through the analysis of inter-personal, inter-cultural, inter-disciplinary and inter-social processes.

The phenomenological paradigm will be linked to qualitative research in the following section.

5.1.2   <u>Qualitative research</u>

In research methodology, two major approaches to scientific research can be differentiated and distinguished: the qualitative and the quantitative research paradigm, whereby this study is mainly based on qualitative methodology aspects. Qualitative research usually follows a phenomenological research paradigm. In contrast to quantitative research, which is philosophically often based on analytical empiricism, positivism and post-positivism and refers to an objective reality, qualitative research refers to naturalism or constructivism (Kayrooz and Trevitt, 2005: 114) and finds its strengths in deep data collection and analysis and the interpretation of "thick descriptions" (Geertz, 1987).

The phenomenological paradigm gathers descriptive data and seeks to discover how individuals experience and interpret their worlds. Therefore, qualitative research often follows an inductive approach, which is process-oriented: "inductive analysis enables the researcher to explore the data without prior hypothesis (Best and Kahn, 1993: 186). Moreover, qualitative research is holistic and humanistic in its approach (Sprinthall et al, 1991: 102). It is holistic in that descriptions of behaviour encompass the context; and humanistic in that it refers to the purpose, which is to gain greater understanding of a specific issue through the perspectives of the interviewees.

Over many decades, qualitative research has become increasingly popular in the social sciences, such as social anthropology, sociology and political sciences. Only in recent years has qualitative research methodology also been introduced to business research and has a combination of qualitative and quantitative research methodologies gained popularity (Fourie, 1996). In the last decade particularly, qualitative research has been established as a well-accepted method in business management research (Gummesson, 2000).

A number of key principles are important in business research regarding qualitative research methodology, such as the following (Cassel and Symon, 1994; Fourie, 1996: 248):

- understanding the objective of research;
- viewing the researcher as the main research instrument;
- focusing on interpretation rather than on quantification;

- focusing on subjectivity rather than on objectivity;

- focusing on process-orientation rather than on outcome orientation;

- flexibility in the process of conducting the research; and

- emphasising the contextualisation of the research study.

Qualitative methods are most appropriate to meet the objectives and answer the research questions of this study, because it proposes to gain a deeper understanding of the complexity of experienced conflict, values and identity. At the same time, this study emphasises the process rather than the measurable outcome. Gaining greater understanding of the emic perspective of managers is the focus of this study; the main aim being to understand and explain the data from the interviewees' frame of reference and context. The current state of knowledge on the emic perspective of managers asks for further qualitative research, which illuminates the relation of conflict, values and identity in a diverse organisation. Qualitative data analysis provides the appropriate approaches to the objectives and research questions of this study, based in the phenomenological research paradigm.

The research conclusions will be generalised only with regard to the context in which it has been conducted. Recommendations will be provided, which could feasibly serve as guiding principles for other international automotive industry organisations in South Africa.

5.1.3 The case study approach

In regard to qualitative research methodology and the phenomenological paradigm, the focus of this study is on a single case study, using an explanatory case study approach. The explanatory case study approach is often used "where existing research theory is used to understand and explain what is happening" (Collis and Hussey, 2003: 68). The explanatory case study is a special form of qualitative research, which is receiving growing recognition among management researchers in Europe (Yin, 2002: 77). Gummesson (2000) emphasises that the number of doctoral theses dealing with marketing, strategy and organisation is increasingly based on case studies.

As this study will investigate one selected organisation only, it is a single case study, aimed at creating understanding and rich descriptions. Single case studies can be very illuminating (Radder 1997: 46), because each case is chosen critically and provides unique and selected data. In single case studies, different research techniques and methods may be followed, varying from different forms of interviews, observation and questionnaires to the triangulation of data and theories (Hartley, 1994, 2004; Yin, 2002), which can provide valuable insights.

The value of case studies is that it provides rich data and rich descriptions of the researched phenomena. The need for case study research stems from the desire to understand the complexities of social phenomena. According to Yin (2002), the value of case studies lies not only in the exploration of certain phenomena, but also in the understanding and interpretation thereof. The case study allows an investigation to "retain holistic and meaningful characteristics of real-life events, such as organizational and managerial processes" (Yin 2002: 3). In this study, it provides important data that establishes greater understanding of the complexities of the narrated and experienced conflict situations with regard to values and identity.

Effective tools for conflict resolution may therefore be developed.

To fulfill their purpose and aims, case studies undertake:
• document analyses (Chapter 5, Section 5.2.2);
• in-depth interviews (Chapter 5, Section 5.2.2.b); and
• triangulation of data and theories (Chapter 5, Section 5.2.2.c).

This combination of research methods provides an optimal insight into the field of study. However, case studies have also been criticized (Babbie and Mouton, 2006); they are sometimes based on a small amount of data or a single case and are, therefore, not overall generalisable. Significant regularities and probabilities can therefore not be drawn from the research findings. For this study, a fairy large amount of data has been collected and analysed which provides a deep insight into 'rich descriptions' and enables a deeper understanding of the phenomenon of conflict in the described setting. At the

same time, it is assumed that the conclusions may, to an extent, be transferable to other organisations in the international automotive sector in South Africa.

According to Collis and Hussey (2003: 69), case studies follow special stages before and during data collection and data analysis, which include the following:

- selection of case (Chapter 5, Section 5.2.1);

- preliminary investigations (Chapter 5, Section 5.2.1);

- the data stage (Chapter 5, Section 5.2.1);

- the analysis stage (Chapter 5, Section 5.3); and

- the report stage (Chapter 5, Section 5.3).

The following section in this chapter, Section 5.2, will present the data collection process with regard to the selection of cases and samples, as well as the sampling procedures, preliminary investigations and the data stage. The analysis and report stages will be reviewed in Section 5.3 of this chapter, which deals with the analysis of data.

5.2   DATA COLLECTION

In the phenomenological research paradigm of this study, the process of data collection is linked to the epistemological assumption that the process is created by the researcher and the researched and their interpersonal relationship, as introduced in the beginning of this chapter (Section 5.1.1). Through their relationship, the issue of research (*Untersuchungsgegenstand*) as well as the process of research (*Untersuchungsprozess*) is interlinked in an inter-dependent relationship (Stellrecht, 1993: 36).

Against this assumption, the systematic, hermeneutical understanding (verstehen) of a text, which is collected by the researcher and created by both the researcher and the researched, contributes towards a new level of understanding: the meta-level of interpretation. In this sense, Patton (2002: 56) points out that "*Verstehen* … refers to the unique human capacity to make sense of the world."

The following sections examine selection of the case and sample during the data collection process, with the emphasis on sampling procedures, preliminary

investigations and the data stage (including data collection methods). Issues of validity (Section 5.2.3.a) and reliability (Section 5.2.3.b) as well as ethical considerations (Section 5.2.4) will be introduced in this chapter and linked to this study.

5.2.1   Sample and sampling procedure

The initial step was to select a case. Based on the researcher's interests and previous experience, the automotive industry in South Africa was selected as the sector of research. Five automotive organisations operating in the South African context were approached and asked if they were interested in participating in the research study. Only one of the five organisations approached agreed to participate.

Secondly, preliminary investigations were conducted regarding the automotive industry operating in South Africa and the particular organisation, through a secondary literature and document analysis (Chapter 5, Section 5.2.2), to familiarise the researcher with the context.

Thirdly, the data stage was conducted. During this stage, it is established how, where and when data will be collected. Together with the Human Resource Department, at the headquarters of the organisation in Germany and in South Africa, it was decided that the collection of data could be implemented from June to September 2006 in the headquarters and three branches of the organisation in South Africa. It was agreed that the data collection methods used in the organisational setting would be based on document analysis and in-depth interviews.

Regarding the sampling process of this study, natural sampling procedures were used. According to Collis and Hussey (2003: 158), natural sampling is commonly used in business research and mainly occurs when the researcher has little influence on the composition of the sample. In this case, the natural sample was implemented through the Human Resource Department at the headquarters of the organisation in South Africa, who encouraged the managers to participate in this study. Altogether 45 managers of the organisation agreed to participate in the study.

The sample was recruited exclusively from middle and top managerial level officials at headquarters and the three branches. Altogether 73.3 per cent (33 interviewees) of the sample worked in different departments at headquarters; 13.3 per cent (six interviewees) worked at Branch I; 6.7 per cent (three interviewees) worked at Branch II; and 6.7 per cent (three interviewees) worked at Branch III.

Regarding all 45 managers, the distribution of sex indicated a ratio of 82 per cent (37 interviewees) males and 18 per cent (8 interviewees) females.

In Chapter 6, Section 6.2, a more detailed overview of the biographical data of the sample, indicating ratios of sex, race, age, national origin, marital status, service time at organisation, work at headquarters/branches, departmental belonging, position in organisation and education will be presented.

5.2.2   Data collection methods

Data collection methods comprised document analyses, in-depth interviews and triangulation of data were used.

Documents of, and on the organisation were analysed, focusing on key words and important information on the organisation with regard to internal and external documents. These internal and external documents provide information that is presented in Chapter 2.

a.   In-depth interviews

The main research instrument of the case study is in-depth interviews, which are a form of qualitative interviews.

King (1994: 33) mentions various advantages of qualitative interviews, such as the option to address focused questions; examining different levels of meaning; and a high level of acceptance among interviewees. Kromrey (1998: 337) points out that in-depth interviews provide a thread of questions along which conversations may loosely develop and interviewees may freely verbalise. Thus, interviews serve as acoustic data storage devices, offering suitable

material for the ensuing transcription and analysis methods (Chapter 5, Section 5.3). The questioning does not intend to grasp the qualities of facts, but only expose statements about the qualities of facts.

The individual in-depth interviews are focused, but not standardised, and therefore help to clarify and structure the main questions in an explorative way. In-depth interviews contribute to gaining deeper and more personal insights (Rae and Carswell, 2001: 150) into the interviewees' perceptions and interpretation of reality constructions. It offers space for the self-construction of individual and culture-specific aspects, through narration.

The interviewees can themselves decide what they wish to tell the interviewer. This is especially important when the topics of conflict and identity are relevant, as these are sensitive and emotional issues, which are also therefore often perceived as personal.

In-depth interviews open up space for the interviewees to structure their thoughts and give enough space to develop the person's identity construction. The interviewee is asked to reconstruct an experienced episode (Chapter 5, Section 5.2.2.b). This is a brick in the reconstruction of the interviewee's identity. Also, the technique is culturally adaptable, for the interviewees can decide for themselves how they wish to answer. Additionally, it encourages the interviewee to speak freely. The narration then serves the social embedding or disembedding of the interacting partners in a social context (Kraus, 2000; Lucius-Hoene and Deppermann, 2002). Based on all these reasons, the case study research method of using in-depth interviews as the main research method, was chosen as the adequate research approach for this study.

However, there are also limitations and disadvantages connected to the use of qualitative interviews which can, according to King (1994: 33-35), be summarised as follows: this form of interviewing is highly time-consuming; demands high concentration on all sides; and often generates an "overload of data" that must be categorised and which may not be accepted as an adequate method of research by the interviewee. In this study, however, the in-depth interviews at the different branches were conducted over a period of altogether

three months, which is reasonable for the amount of gained data from the 45 interviews. Regarding the collected data of this study, there is an "overload of data" which requests intensive categorisation and key word analyses. These procedures lead to a proper reduction of data through analytical processes, which at the same time provide the study with a "thickness of data" which is necessary in qualitative research to represent the complexity of the issue researched. Therefore, the putative "overload of data" is a necessary aspect of this study and not at all regarded as a disadvantage or limitation.

b.   Interview structure and intention

The organisation and structure of the in-depth interview is as follows: At the start of the interviews, personal data were inquired: sex, age, nationality, level of education, duration of work time for the company, current position in the organisation, department and branch in which the interviewee worked. The interview developed along the following seven research questions:

i.   <u>Question 1</u>

Thinking about your time at this company, could you please describe a specific incident of interpersonal or intergroup conflict that you have experienced personally? (Please describe exactly what happened in the situation: who was involved, where did it take place and which inner attitudes and personal values were involved in the situation?).

This paramount question served the function of introducing the topic of the interview. In addition, the interviewee was informed of the expectations of the interviewer, namely that both the external and internal factors of the selected conflict should be considered. Finally, it was expected that the respondent would develop different aspects of the conflict.

ii.   <u>Question 2</u>

What do you think: why did the conflict take place? What were the reasons and causes of conflict in your opinion?

The interviewee was expected to identify the reasons for the conflict, in his or her own opinion, and to provide some categorical statements.

iii.   <u>Question 3</u>

Now let us think about the actions towards conflict resolution. What did you do to resolve it? What did the other parties do?

This item refers to actions of managing. The interviewee was simply asked to just describe what s/he and the other parties had done.

iv.   <u>Question 4</u>

After we have looked at the conflict and its resolution, I would like to ask you if you could please refer to your personal involvement in this conflict. Please describe which issues of your identity impacted on the situation.

With this question, the interviewee was requested to reflect on identity aspects that related to the conflict and its experience. The interviewee was free to present beneficial and non-beneficial aspects of his/her identity in regard to the situation and its management. As far as possible, no examples of identity aspects were provided, so that the interviewees were not influenced regarding their individual definition of their identity concepts.

v.   <u>Question 5</u>

Please describe your management style and how it impacts on your way of perceiving and managing conflict situations.

The interviewee was asked to describe his/her management style and to relate it to his/her way of managing conflicts.

vi.   <u>Question 6</u>

Where do you see the need for improvement in management and conflict resolution processes in the company?

In this item, respondents were requested to suggest ideas for improvement regarding conflict and its management in the company in general.

vii.   <u>Question 7</u>

In conclusion, I would like to ask you how you see the need for outside intervention, like outside consultancy, mediation or conflict management processes in the company?

In this item, respondents were asked for their opinions regarding the option of outside intervention as a form of organisational conflict management. In this study, the in-depth interview is one of the main research instruments, subsequently transcribed, categorised and analysed through content analyses. The work develops adequate measuring procedures and acquires valid results with respect to "content analysis" (Komrey, 1998: 179), which become manifest in the building of categories.

c.   Triangulation

The triangulation of data is used as a method of data collection with regard to

- triangulation of data;
- triangulation of methods; and
- triangulation of theories.

The following three outlined definitions of triangulation have been presented by Collis and Hussey (2003: 78).

- Triangulation of data is explained as a process in which data are collected from different sources.

In this study the triangulation of data is used; data were collected from different sources, such as documents and in-depth interviews. The documents and in-

depth interviews were analysed and interpreted as presented in this chapter in Sections 5.2 and 5.3 respectively.

- Triangulation of methods can be defined as a process through which qualitative and quantitative methods of data collection or analysis are used.

Denzin (1970: 297) also defines triangulation as the combination of methodologies in a study of the same phenomenon. In this study, qualitative data collection methods (document analysis and in-depth interviews) were mainly used. For data analysis, qualitative and mainly inductive processes of data analyses were used regarding issues of conflict and identity (refer Chapter 6, Section 6.4 and 6.6). However, with regard to the aspect of values, inductive and deductive data analysis processes were used simultaneously (Chapter 6, Section 6.5). In the data analysis, quantitative data analysis was used which also included quantitative aspects, as explained in this chapter in Section 5.3.3.

- Triangulation of theories means that theories are taken from different disciplines to understand and explain a phenomenon in another discipline.

In case studies, the triangulation of theories is often used, because complex phenomena are best approached through the use of theories derived from different disciplines. The theories used in this study are taken from disciplines such as social psychology, social anthropology, sociology and management.

Referring to data collection and analysis, the concepts of validity and reliability will be illuminated in the following section.

5.2.3   Validation and reliability

In qualitative research, two concepts need to be considered from a methodological viewpoint in the context of data collection and data analysis: reliability and validity. These two concepts are important in quantitative, but also in qualitative research, to gain meaningful, credible, valid, reliable, accurate and confirmable findings (Patton, 2002: 55).

a.   Validity

Particularly in qualitative studies, the concept of validity is described by a wide range of terms (see for example Aguinaldo, 2004; Best and Kahn, 1993; Creswell and Miller, 2000; Patton, 2002). According to Winter (2000: 1), this concept is not a single, fixed or universal one, but "rather a contingent construct, inescapably grounded in the processes and intentions of particular research methodologies and projects.".

Validity in methodology refers to the question whether the data collection instruments measure the chosen concept, and whether the concept has been measured accurately or not (De Vos and Fouche, 1998: 83). With regard to this study, the data collection instruments have measured the chosen concepts and served as instruments to answer the research questions (Chapter 1, Section 1.2) except the research question 5.1 (see Chapter 6, Section 6.8).

At the same time, Creswell and Miller (2000) insist that validity is influenced by the researcher's perception and definition of validity. Thus, validity as a concept is affected by the researcher's choice of the methodological paradigm and the leading theoretical and methodological assumptions which are part of the researcher's own construction. Validity, in this study, is therefore viewed as a social construct that is situational and changeable according to the interactions of human beings and their environment (Crotty, 1998). Johnson (1997) supports the approach that constructivism may facilitate the aim of qualitative research - which is fundamental for this research (Chapte 5, Section 5.1.2) - to create a deeper understanding of the research objective with regard to the changing multiple reality constructions (Hipps, 1993).

To acquire valid and reliable multiple and diverse realities, triangulation in qualitative research is necessary. Johnson (1997) argues that the triangulation of method and data are appropriate in qualitative research to record the construction of reality. Patton (2002) insists that triangulation in qualitative research strengthens validity. Engaging multiple methods, as described in this chapter, Section 5.2.2.c, leads to a more valid, reliable and diverse constructions of realities.

Best and Kahn (1993) argue that the term validity is not applicable to qualitative research. However, in parallel they realise the need for some kind of qualifying measure. Many researchers (for example Lincoln and Guba, 1985; Seale, 1999; Stenbacka, 2001) have constructed their own concepts and definitions of validity and have often adopted terms which they consider as more appropriate, such as, quality, rigor and trustworthiness. Other authors argue for the redefinition of validity for qualitative research (Stenbacka, 2001).

Lincoln and Guba (1985) define trustworthiness of a research report as the main aspect of validity and reliability. According to these authors, trustworthiness establishes confidence in the findings. Johnson (1997: 282) supports the idea that trustworthiness is tenable. Trustworthiness in this study is established through a transparent structure and a case selection that provides the possibility of generalising the results to a certain extent, which according to Stenbacka (2001), is one criterion for high quality case study research. Riege (2003) also avers that concepts of validity and reliability in qualitative research are fundamental to determine the quality and stability of qualitative data, particularly in case study research.

It is obvious that qualitative data analysis is always a subjective process that creates itself between the interviewee, the data and the researcher, as described in the four levels in this chapter, Section 5.3.1. This subjective process constructs the 'objectivity' in the sense that, according to regularities, every researcher should be able to achieve similar results. Only if this is the case can the coding of the text and its analysis and re-categorisation be defined as objective. However, validity and reliability seem to correlate with the researcher's methodological skill, competence, experience and dedication (Gay, 1996: 217; Patton, 2002: 11). That means that validity follows the biases the researcher possesses (Borg, Gall and Gall, 1993: 215).

In this study, the researcher's bias – which influences the categorisation process – is minimised through the linkage of analysis and interpretation of data to the theoretical background and former experiences, which are created through categorical schemata (Chapter 8). The process of categorisation also

includes the substance of the text data, to ensure precise content analysis (Chapter 5). Eisner and Peshkin (1990: 97) conclude this examination of the concept of validity by stating that "…efforts to describe the world become increasingly valid as descriptions correspond to the world described.".

b.   Reliability

Apart from validity, reliability is an important concept in qualitative research with regard to the design, the quality of the study, and the analysis of results (Patton, 2002). Qualitative research aims at understanding and clarifying a situation (Eisner, 1991) and thus "generating understanding" (Stenbacka, 2001: 551).

In everyday English, reliability means dependability or trustworthiness (Gay, 1996: 144). If independent administrations produce similar results, an instrument in qualitative methodology is defined as reliable (De Vos and Fouché, 1998: 85). According to Sprinthall, Schmutte and Sirois (1991: 101), to establish or control reliability is a challenge, because of bias on the part of the researcher. Other authors, such as Best and Kahn (1993: 203), state radically that reliability and validity in qualitative data research could even be rejected, that the thought of the researcher cannot be replicated.

While the terms reliability and validity are essential criteria for quality in quantitative paradigms, in qualitative paradigms the terms credibility, neutrality or confirmability, consistency or dependability, and applicability or transferability are essential criteria for quality (Lincoln and Guba, 1985). To be more specific with the term "reliability" in qualitative research, Lincoln and Guba (1985: 300) use the term "dependability" in qualitative research, which corresponds closely to the notion of "reliability" in quantitative research.

However, for this study, reliability needs to be defined relating to the four major concepts of:

- confirmability;
- credibility;
- transferability; and
- trustworthiness (see Chapter 5, Section 5.2.3.a).

Reliability is evaluated in terms of different criteria; structured qualitative research is required to develop a kind of "confirmability" (Tuckman, 1999: 400). Confirmability implies that other researchers, using the same procedures in the same setting, would note similar contents, keywords, patterns and conclusions. General methodological procedures, such as data collection and the transcription, the analysis and interpretation of data need to be outlined and explained throughout the study, to achieve confirmability and reliability in qualitative research (Tuckman, 1999: 400), as has been done for this study.

Referring to Lincoln and Guba (1985), Poggenpoel (1998: 348) suggests that, in addition to confirmability, the worth of qualitative research can also be measured through the concepts of credibility, transferability and dependability. Riege (2003) refers to these concepts as core concepts of reliability in qualitative research.

Confirmability is interlinked with neutrality and objectivity (Riege, 2003; Seale, 2002), which is already established in reporting the research findings and through the focus on the evaluation of data and the question whether or not the results of the study could be confirmed by another researcher (Poggenpoel, 1998: 351). For this study, confirmability is established through data transcription (see Appendix), explicit content analysis, and the coding and categorisation procedures which can be confirmed in Chapter 5, Section 5.3.

Reliability can further be defined in terms of credibility and transferability (Golafshani, 2003). Credibility involves the process of establishing whether the results are credible or believable. Research gains credibility through the research design, the interviewees, the researcher and the context (Poggenpoel, 1998: 349). Credibility can be gained through the careful handling of data and

the accurate planning of the research and its design (Doerr, 2004: 49). As it has in this study, credibility is also gained through the credibility of the researcher in the field; the establishment of a trustful relationship between the researcher and the interviewee; and the trust of the interviewees that narrate conflicts experienced in the organisation.

Transferability includes the possibility to transfer results to other contexts or environments. Particularly Lincoln and Guba (1985) substitute generalisability with the idea of transferability. This concept of transferability or applicability refers to the possibility of generalising the results of the study to another group or in another setting (Golafshani, 2003; Poggenpoel, 1998). Thick descriptions, provided by the researcher, enable the reader to determine the value of the findings. Thus, thick descriptions are the main tool for transferability (Blanchard and Horan, 1998). The readers can then decide for themselves the value that the descriptive vignettes provide for their situation.

Finally, dependability is referred to as reliability in quantitative studies (Flick, 2006), meaning especially the stability and consistency of the study (Lincoln and Guba, 1985). The concept of dependability includes that the study – being repeated in a similar setup and with the same interviewees – would produce consistent results (Poggenpoel, 1998: 350). Particularly, following the constructivist approach, the criterion of dependability is a challenge to establish due to the multiplicity and complexity of assumed realities, as introduced in this chapter in Section 5.2.3.a.

5.2.4   The role of researcher and ethical considerations

Regarding the described paradigm and background of this study, the role of the researcher with regard to ethical considerations requires examination (Babbie and Mouton, 2006: 520).

In qualitative research methodology, the researcher is the channel through which data is collected. Fouché and De Vos (1998: 57) indicate that the qualitative researcher usually chooses a field of study that is of personal interest to him or her. This interlinkage of personal interest in the research topic and the researcher is important for the methodological process of qualitative research and could contribute to the establishment of trust between the

researcher and the interviewee. However, the relationship between the researcher and the researched is also influenced by the *error of leniency* (Kerlinger, 1994: 517) which impacts on the mutual expectations and (implicit) ascription or stereotypes linked to gender, nationality, race, social class, age, culture or religion. The interviewees could potentially shape their responses according to their behaviour, perceptions or thoughts and communications, beliefs in and assumption of what the interviewer expects. Perceptions of personality and context inevitably influence individuals, the questioning process, the responses, and the way of responding. Parsons (1968) argues that human beings in interviews always act according to the following four special factors, which he defines as the "Handlungstheorie" (theory of human action)*:*

- the social relationship of interacting human beings;

- the goal-directedness;

- the interview situation itself; and

- the normative orientation of the interview.

In Parsons's (1968) "Handlungstheorie" the interplay between social, psychological and individual interactions is one of the basic fundamentals. Since the interview situation is part of human interaction, it is influenced by the social relationship of the interviewee and the interviewer and by the goal-directedness of the interviewer in gaining data on conflict, values and identity in the selected organisation. Also, the interview situation itself is acknowledged as an influencing factor, as well as the normative orientation of the interview as will be explained in the following.

With regard to four special factors mentioned, the following points are relevant for this study (Atteslander, 1995: 151):

- Pre-assumptions, perceptions, expectations and the social interaction of researcher and interviewee influence the interview.

For this study, it was initially assumed that there might be difficulties in motivating the managers to participate in the study and to talk about conflicts, because conflicts can be highly sensitive issues and are often kept private.

However, in contrast to this pre-assumption, the interviewees were very open and willing to talk about their experience of conflict.

- The achievement of the research aims is important; the aims of the study were presented to the interviewee to make the aims transparent, build trust, and motivate the interviewees.

The researcher introduced herself, the study and the aims and objectives of the study at the outset of each interview. The managers could ask questions and were assured of the confidentiality of the study.

- The context of the study in regard to location and time of interview, organisation of interview, structure and atmosphere need consideration and influence the interpretations on levels 2, 3 and 4 of data analyses according to Ricoeur (1979), as introduced in this chapter in Section 5.3.1.

The context of study is acknowledged in the data analysis and interpretation of data in Chapters 6, 7 and 8.

- The normative orientation, such as the construction of interview questions and the researcher's orientation impact on the individual involved and the interview.

The interview questions were constructed with regard to the target group. Therefore, it may be expected that abstract questions were asked that needed high levels of self-reflection and openness. The questions led the interviewees through the research questions and the interlinkage of conflict, values and identities and other associated topics.

Interlinking the role of the researcher and ethical considerations, once the interview begins, the individuals involved start building a relationship with the interviewer, ideally supported by social unity and trust (Babbie and Mouton, 2006: 521). While the interviewer takes on a rather active-questioning role, the interviewee has a response-giving role; both create an "interpersonal drama"

with certain content, conversation behavior, climate and role-playing. The interviewer opens the "stage of the conversation" (Denzin, 2000). In this way, the distance between the researcher and the interviewee can be overcome (Wolff, 2000b: 340), even though the interview situation as such is to a certain degree artificial, since the interviewer and the interviewee meet for the purpose of the interview only (Kromrey, 1998: 337).

Regarding the interviewer and the interviewee, the following points are important to mention with regard to ethical research considerations:

- the respect accorded to, and the rights of the interviewee;
- the creation of informed consent;
- confidentiality and anonymity; and
- transparency.

The researcher has the right to conduct research, but not at the expense of the rights of the interviewees (Babbie and Mouton, 2006: 520). Therefore, this study needs to be implemented sensitively: a major tenet of this research is that participation in in-depth interviews is entirely voluntary. The ethical norm of voluntary participation is accepted throughout the study. Accordingly, the researcher is responsible for informing the interviewees about the nature of the research project and its purpose and objectives, and to assure an "informed consent" (Patton, 2002; Strydom, 1998): the interviewee needs to agree to participate in the study while knowing the conditions and circumstances.

Additionally, the ethical norm of imposing no harm to interviewees is to be observed. Viewing the research sample, which in this study comprises managers in an international organisation, the researcher has to take care and be sensitive of the interviewee's right to personal privacy throughout the research process (Schurink, 1998). This is particularly relevant as the study deals with the highly sensitive and personal issues of conflict, values and identity in an organisational setting.

The right to personal privacy is of major importance and is interlinked with the rights of confidentiality and anonymity. Further, anonymity and confidentiality have to be guaranteed. Confidentiality refers to the way in which information is

handled (Strydom, 1998: 28) and goes together with trust, dignity, privacy and anonymity (Flick, 2006). In this regard, the interviewees were asked for permission to record the interviews on a tape recorder and edit the data obtained. The interviewees were encouraged not to mention the names of colleagues during the interviews.

The face-to-face interview conducted in this study guaranteed the highest possible degree of privacy and confidentiality between the researcher and the interviewee, as well as a direct and open approach. The maximisation of trust and confidence and the minimisation of insecurity, possible loss of face and impact on organisational pattern – which may occur through group interviews, the presence of colleagues, subordinates or superiors – was guaranteed by the researcher. Therefore, group interviews were not considered an option in this study.

The data of this study were handled confidentially by the researcher and, at the same time, anonymity was confirmed: that means that no collected information can be associated with an individual or the individual's department in the selected organisation. Anonymity has been ensured through anonymised transcriptions. That means that names are not mentioned and biographical data are not linked to the interview texts. Anonymity is also safeguarded through the use of code names (for example, P23 means interviewee number 23) and the organisation is only mentioned as the 'selected organisation'.

Regarding the issue of transparency; the data gathering, analysis and evaluation processes, and the presentation and purpose of the research findings are indicated. The interviewees were informed that positive and negative valued contents would be presented in a way that would ensure that interviewees would not lose face. Positive and negative aspects are balanced through the analysis, evaluation and presentation of research. Results are presented and need to be understood outside the context and limits of the technical, methodological and subjective aspects of the study.

As this study focuses on conflict, management, values and identity, it is especially important that the participants are pre-informed about the topic and

the potential impact that the interview may have, such as changes in the perception of conflict, negative feelings, and new insights and perspectives.

Having provided insight into the data collection processes and related issues, the topic of data analysis will now be discussed.

5.3 QUALITATIVE DATA ANALYSIS

Having discussed the different stages of case studies in regard to data collection in this chapter in Section 5.2.1 (selection of case, preliminary investigations, and data stage), it is now important to focus on the analysis stage and the report stage within the analysis of data (Collis and Hussey, 2003: 70).

In the analysis stage, the data are analysed in terms of the qualitative data analysis process, which will be explained in this chapter in Section 5.3.3. Further, in the report stage the findings will be presented (Chapters 6 and 7), and linked to the theories (Chapter 8). Finally, conclusions will be drawn (Chapter 8) and recommendations presented (Chapter 8, Sections 8.11 and 8.12).

In the following section, Section 5.3.1, the levels of data analysis will be introduced, followed by a description of the transcription procedures (Section 5.3.2) and the data analysis process (Section 5.3.3), focusing on categorisation and content and key word analysis.

5.3.1 Levels of data analysis

According to the theory of Ricoeur (1979), there are different interpretation levels which are important for data analysis.

Level 1:

The interviewee experiences a trans-cultural conflict situation (for example, in May 2003 in the selected organisation in Gauteng).

Level 2:

The interviewee narrates the conflict during the interview (for example, in July 2006 in the selected organisation in KwaZulu-Natal).

Level 3:

The researcher transcribes and categorises the transcribed text through analysing key words (which forms part of content analysis) (for example, in September 2006 in Port Elizabeth, Eastern Cape). The transcripts are viewed as selective constructions that reproduce aspects of the conversation and that are transcribed according to Steinke (2000: 327) in a "manageable" way which is "simple to write, easy to read, easy to learn and to interpret.". The transcription procedure focuses on the verbal aspects of the communication, in the interest of an analysis and evaluation that is controlled by the factual words. After the transcription of texts, the analytical data evaluation is implemented (*Level 4*).

Level 4:

The researcher interprets the categorised text (for example, in August 2007 in Grahamstown, Eastern Cape) through content analysis (according to Mayring, (2003), which is based on a systematic approach to accidental perceptions. Therefore, key terms are defined as words that occupy key positions in the text through their important content, their significance in the text structure and conception, or through repetition or other emphasis, which culminates in the construction of categories. Hence, the content analysis serves as a research technique that leads to conclusions that can be generalised (Kromrey, 1998: 298).

Between *Level 1* and *Level 2* the interconnection is mainly created by the interviewee; however, between levels 2 to 4 the interconnection is mainly created by the researcher. The interviewee constructs the text at the first level and reconstructs it at the second level. The researcher is responsible for the re-re-(re-)construction through the transcription and re-writing. This process is influenced by individuals with both differences and similarities regarding cultural, social, economic and academic backgrounds.

To this study, the data were constructed and reconstructed by the researched and the researcher, who were of different national, professional, social and cultural backgrounds. That means that the process of data analysis is interculturally and inter-nationally influenced.

Additionally to the processing of the different levels, it can be guaranteed that the researcher as a social and cultural person is in a position to understand hetero-cultural texts in the context of hetero-cultural possibilities of meaning. Geertz states (1979: 222): "The culture of a person is an ensemble of texts, themselves ensembles, which the anthropologist strains to read over the shoulders of those to whom they properly belong". Referring to Wolff (2000a: 86ff), the starting point of the "ethnological understanding of Geertz" is firstly the importance of access to the interviewee and, secondly, a new perspective to understand "the native's point of view". Thus, by acquiring cultural patterns of behaviour and understanding by reading, re-writing and interpreting the commonly constructed text, the researcher constructs a *thick description* of cultural behaviour patterns (Geertz, 1987).

Principally, "thick descriptions" are (re-)constructions of what the researcher and the interviewee construct as reality on the spot (Wolff, 2000a: 87). The problem is that the understanding of hetero-cultural texts also includes hetero-perspective attempts at interpretation; this could deviate from intra-cultural, emic interpretation. Nevertheless, Geertz (1973: 10) insists that the social action and its underlying meaning are open and accessible for each person and the public:

> Doing ethnography is like trying to read (in the sense of "construct a reading" of) a manuscript – foreign, faded, full of ellipses, incoherencies, suspicious emendations, and tendentious commentaries, but written not in conventionalized graphs of sound but in the transient examples of shaped behavior.

5.3.2   The transcription procedures

Only a few generally applicable standards exist for the transcription procedure, since at most they generally need to be adapted to the specific research aims and can therefore hardly be standardised. Transcription can be defined as the

graphic presentation of selected behaviour aspects that play a role in a conversation, such as an interview (Kowal and O'Connell, 2000: 438). An appropriate transcription should be, according to Steinke (2000: 327), "manageable," ie. "simple to write, easy to read, easy to learn and to interpret". Steinke (2000) defines transcripts as selective constructions that reproduce aspects of the conversation behaviour in a written, visual form, while neglecting others.

Every interview has been recorded full length to ensure a precise transcription. The transcribed interviews exist in segments and in the complete form of a written text (see Appendix). The following decisions were made:

- passages that completely digress from the topic were not transcribed;

- behavioural aspects of the conversation were basically not mentioned in the analysis and interpretation of text;

- the transcription style employed orients itself at the standard orthography, that means, according to the norms of written language; deviations of the spoken language, such as the omission of sounds or the blending of sounds, were mostly ignored;

- pauses and speech accompanying behaviours, such as laughter are mentioned in the transcriptions;

- prosodic (for example, tone, pitch and volume) and para-linguistic characteristics (for example gestures and glances) are not central and are therefore not mentioned; and

- the non-verbal conversation aspects have been indicated as follows: (1) (short) speaking pauses: …; (2) omission of sentences or passages: (…); (3) speech accompanying behaviours, for example, laughter: (laughs); (4) direct speech inside a quoted text passage is emphasised with common quotation marks.

The transcription procedure is mainly aimed at the verbal aspects of communication, in the interest of an analysis and evaluation that is controlled by the factual words and the content. After the transcription of texts, the procedure of analytical data evaluation starts. The data are analysed through:

- key word analysis;
- the construction of categories; and
- content analysis.

These methods of analysis will be explained in the following section.

5.3.3   Procedures of analysis

Qualitative research requires that data analysis is an ongoing process (Flick, 2006). That means that the researcher thoughtfully selects the data collection and analyses procedure (Gay 1996:219). The analysis procedure is woven through the interview phase, through the coding and categorisation processes, and finally the interpretation. Thus, the researcher seeks to define themes and topics from the data material, which lead to a 'coherent synthesis of the data' (Gay, 1996: 227).

In the following section, the analytical procedure with regard to key word analysis, the building of categories, and content analysis will be described.

a.   Key words, categorisations and content analysis

Key terms are defined as words that occupy key positions in the text through their important content, as well as through their significance in text structure and conception. Key terms may also be often repeated or otherwise emphasised in the text. They are of central importance to the text interpretation analysis. They are defined as words that occupy key positions in the text through:

- their important content;
- the significance in the text;
- the significance in text structure; and
- the significance of conception of narration.

The distillation of key terms and concepts of values, identity and conflict leads to categorisation. Through these criteria, the data material is reduced to selected aspects (Kohler Riesman, 1993: 60). This process of reduction includes the data extraction process and the codifying and breaking down of data to their *core elements* (Miles and Huberman, 1994). After this *de-contextualization* (Tesch, 1990), the data are clustered and categorised according to their common or similarly defined meanings, as determined by the researcher. These categories serve the re-construction of information in the form of a conscious re-arrangement of data.

Coding can be defined as the systemic way of key word analysis, categorising and data interpretation (De Vos and Van Zyl, 1998: 271). Data analysis, which includes key word analysis and coding, categorisation and interpretation, is seen as the most critical process in qualitative data research (Gay, 1996: 228) and is referred to as "content analysis" (Mayring, 2003). Content analysis is based on the systematic approach of accidental perceptions. Hence, the "empirical content analysis" serves as a research technique that leads to conclusions that can be generalised (Kromrey, 1998: 298). This study uses content analysis, which is generalisable in the context.

The following factors were coded in this analytical process with regard to the levels of data analysis of Ricoeur (1979) in this chapter in Section 5.3.1:

- Conflict: C
- Values: V
- Identity: I
- Conflict Management/Resolution: CR
- Management Styles: MS
- Improvement: IMP
- Outside Intervention: OI

All approaches to analyse data find that the qualitative contents of meaning are interlinked with quantitative elements. The debate and discussion in the social sciences regarding the respective merits of quantitative and qualitative research is still ongoing. Kromrey (1998: 369) states that:

> Selbst wenn auf rein 'qualitativer' Ebene die analysierten Texte entsprechend ihren Aussageinhalten lediglich in Gruppen oder Klassen, qualitativ unterscheidbarer Aussagen' eingeteilt werden, so wird damit doch zumindest bereits eine einfache Klassifikation von Textelementen vorgenommen, d.h. es wird auf Nominalskalenniveau, gemessen'. Damit ist bereits die Basis für eine quantitative Auswertung gelegt.

This citation means that even if the analysed texts are distributed on a pure 'qualitative' level according to their contents, only clustered in groups or classes of qualitatively distinct statements, text elements are basically classified quantitatively, due to their nominal scales. Therefore, this study includes qualitative and quantitative data analysis aspects, which are referred to as the triangulation of data in this chapter in Section 5.2.2.a.

Regarding the interpretation of results, the researcher considers the context of data collection with regard to social, historical and temporal aspects (Best and Kahn, 1993: 186), as done in this study in Chapter 8. At the same time, the researcher needs to reflect his/her personal bias (Strydom, 1998: 30). However, in analysing and interpreting the data, the researcher is expected to include his/her own thoughts, impressions and emotions into the data (see Ricoeur's (1979) level of data analysis, Chapter 5, Section 5.3.1) and then reflect the data through reflection (Patton, 2002: 11). This process is based on the researcher's experiences, and his/her background, knowledge and skills (Best and Kahn, 1993: 204).

Frequently, statements can be interpreted and understood only through structural implicit and latent statements in the text. The 'read-between-the lines' is in that sense consequently bound to the knowledge of text-critical procedures of conjecture, as well as to a culture-specific and organisational-specific knowledge that supports the cultural and organisational hermeneutic understanding and interpretation.

In conclusion: each isolation of a content statement with subsequent categorisation through the coding researcher is already an act of hermeneutic

interpretation. The above-mentioned definition of an empirical content analysis states that not only the text imminent data of a study and its conclusions need to be drawn. Transcribed data can also include indicators for facts and assumptions that are external to the text and need highlighting and interpretation through the researcher to become visible for the reader (Gay, 1996: 229).

b.   Examples of data analysis

For transparency, the following excerpt shows the procedure of data analysis of P5. P5 was chosen through a random process. The transcribed text, which presents one of the shorter interview texts, is analysed with regard to content analysis. The identified key words are in bold typeface. Afterwards, the analysed key words are identified and clustered according to the aspects of conflict, values, identity, conflict resolution, management styles, improvement and outside intervention. Finally, the data are interpreted.

c.   Text transcription and key word identification

i.   Question 1

Certainly, uhm … only … on … ah … one **occasion**, really, and that would **be with a … colleague (C1)**. Well … **I think it originated by mismanagement,** uhm … he had a head of department in the past, **the lady was away because of maternity leave (C2)**, uhm … **at the time** … and when **she … came back** … and she … whether she asked to come into the department or whether she was transferred … I am not quite sure … she … had a management status at that time and … I did not … and … **she was not made aware of the fact that she were actually reporting to … myself (C3)** … and that was the reason for causing conflict and that conflict has always remained …. it still is there … it's an underlined … ja. … you know, I think it stands clearly from the fact that … communication did not take place … uhm … it certainly wasn't a battle … but it, it, it became a … terrific situation. And it is a great pity, because I have high regards for her work and uhm … I think that it was just very unfortunate how things were happening. (…)

ii.   Question 2

It was not only mismanagement, rather miscommunication, or better a total lack of communication that took place at this time (C4). Both, the managers who were responsible are no longer with MAN. It has nothing to do with gender, and it has nothing to do with cultural issues. The only thing which I can mention which has something to do with is personality.

I think my feelings are … great annoyance towards the management for not having communicated. There would have been actually no conflict if the situation had been clear and the position had been clear for the colleague who came into the department. Uhm ... I think from her side there was a lot of … uhm … I would imagine, I would put myself in her shoes … disappointment for the fact that **she does not have a management position … uhm … she thought I would be reporting to her … and then she was reporting to me (C5)** … uhm … a very strong sort of character … uhm … which lend itself to total conflict … uhm … and I find it sad that it continued all along. Whenever I talk to her it is still seen as a challenge to her … and … it is treated in such a way.

iii.   Question 3

There was no intervention as such, but there is an awareness of it. Uhm … the ability to see where it stems from is certainly there and there is co-operation from the Board members to smooth that out. But, but it is inevitable that certain of our functions cross and I think her view is that I perform and she would also like to perform. It is a really difficult one. We are in the same department and I would like this animosity disappear and I think I have made the right efforts and I am not sure why there are still lots of conflicts.

What I try to do and even more recently also…is…if there is anything what I see where she could be benefiting from uhm … I … I share that meeting with her. Ahm…I call her into the meeting and the rest of the colleagues, although it is not full part of her portfolio. (…). I try and take her in as much as possible. But even there, I don't think she sees it as me doing it for her. She maybe feels I have to do it. I honestly feel that there is distrust from her side and also from her personality. I think a totally clear-cut between mine and in … our tasks. I think two personalities like ours … well … from a work perspective I could so benefit from having her co-operation in the workplace. And I am not getting that co-operation but rather a blocking. The minute she blocks me, I get blocked. So, unfortunately I have to work around her. And she has the ability to do it. To me, we could benefit so much by working together, because as I have mentioned, she is a very talented lady. And the ability to work with computer programs and work presentations, I also have … but I haven't always got the time to do it. So, I have an understanding of the kind of work that needs to be done and she has the ability to do it. But perhaps…the true solution would be that one gets out of the department. That would be the true solution.

iv.   Question 4

I think the personality comes very much in. I am a strong personality … uhm … and I am not sure if she doesn't trust me … or my intentions … or … sees my … communication … there was a time she came to me and was talking about her personal problems … that … I have always been very sympathetic towards … uhm … and then **she will** turn around the next day and **feel threatened by the tasks that were allocated to her from my side (C6)**. I'm not quite sure why … and until today, if there is something happening, I do make a point and say: "Well … will you travel with me … shall we do this next?". But there is always a heavy atmosphere; **you can cut the atmosphere with a knife when it comes to … the distribution of tasks (C7).**

Her personality, I can only say that from a work perspective, she is a very talented lady. She has the ability to, to a lot of uh … work that … all in all, I think she is a well-rounded person who has the ability to be of benefit to the company and I think that it is just very unfortunate that … she has never ever given really herself the chance to understand me. Now, I think I have tried to befriend her … but to see it from her side it is very difficult and I tried to see it from her side. From my side, you know, I am in the very lucky position that I am in and that it is not me. If I had been demoted at a point in time during the restructuring process … I don't know. And … I was not a colleague of her before she left. So, when she came back after maternity leave there was I, who had been doing the presentations during her absence. I had been doing the tasks that she had been doing prior to her leaving. So … we also compete on the same level. The type of work that I do, is the type of work she'd like to do. We … currently have a … one of our Board members reported … who in his wisdom has separated as much of our tasks as possible.

v.   Question 5

Very participative and integrative, like I have described before: I take her in where I can.

vi.   Question 6

More communication from top -down, and vice versa.

vii.   Question 7

Look, we are not at each others' throats all the time, and I think that is the reason why there is no disciplinary … and we are separated already a bit and I think there will always be. I don't see need for outside intervention. I don't think it will solve the problem. Not in this particular issue. You know, if there was a gender or a cultural problem, certainly there could be an explanation why certain cultures work in a certain way and what areas need to be respected and what areas you can't overstep. But I think this is a very different type of situation.

d.   Key word presentation and factors

Key words with regard to identified factors of conflict (C), values (V), identity (I), conflict resolution (CR), management styles (MS), improvement (IMP) and outside intervention (OI) are analysed. The key words have been identified with regard to the theoretical approaches and definitions of conflict, values and identities in Chapters 3 and 4.

i.   <u>Conflict</u>

C1   "Occasion … with a … colleague …"

C2   "I think its originated by mismanagement…the lady was away because of maternity leave"

C3   "… at the time … she came back, she was not made aware of the fact that she were actually reporting to … myself."

C4   "It was not only mismanagement, rather miscommunication, or better, a total lack of communication that took place at that time."

C5   "… she does not have the management position … she thought I would be reporting to her … and then she was reporting to me … a very strong sort of character …"

C6   "… she … will … feel threatened by the tasks that were allocated to her from my side …"

C7   "… you can cut the atmosphere with a knife when it comes to … the distribution of tasks."

ii.   <u>Values</u>

V1   "I think my feelings are…great annoyance towards the management for not having communicated …"

V2   "I would put myself in her shoes … disappointment …"

V3   "I honestly feel that there is distrust from her side …"

V4   "I am not getting that co-operation, but rather a blocking."

iii.   <u>Identity</u>

I1   "I am a strong personality"

I2   "I have always been very sympathetic …"

iv.   <u>Conflict management/ resolution</u>

CR1   "… awareness of it …"

CR2   "I call her into the meeting … I try and take her in as much as possible."

CR3   "… the true solution would be that one gets out of the Department …"

CR4   "… one of our Board members … who in his wisdom has separated as much of our tasks as possible."

v.   Management styles

MS1   "Very participative and integrative …"

vi.   Improvement

IMP1   "More communication from top-down and vice versa"

vii.   Outside intervention

OI   "I don't see need for outside intervention"

After the key words have been analysed according to the factors, the interpretation is formulated.

e.   Interpretation example

The **conflict**: P5 was concerned about a female colleague who had just returned from maternity leave. Management had completely neglected to inform this returning colleague of the change in her position in the Department after her return. The colleague expected to return to a managerial position and to be P5's boss. But the contrary applied. In consequence, P5 perceived that the colleague felt threatened by the tasks that are allocated by P5 to her. The atmosphere between the two conflicting colleagues had become very uncomfortable, to such a degree that 'one can cut the atmosphere with a knife'.

P5 was annoyed by the fact that management had not communicated openly in this top-down communication situation. Her need for co-operation was not being fulfilled: P5 experienced resistance. Regarding the values and feeling of her colleague, P5 presented herself as sensitive: if she was in the same position as her colleague, she would also be disappointed. Therefore, she expected distrust from her colleague.

Concerning her **identity**, P5 states that she has a strong personality. This trait she regarded as very important regarding leadership competencies, as well as empathetic understanding in a conflictual situation.

Regarding **conflict resolution,** P5 was convinced that, to her, a high level of awareness was most important. Co-operation in work situations was important

chiefly to resolve conflicts. In the conflict she was experiencing, however, she regarded the separation of tasks by the Board member, or even the transfer of one colleague to another department, as the best solution.

Her own **management style** was very participative and integrative, underlines P5.

As an **improvement** measure, P5 recommended more communication from top-down and *vice versa*.

P5 did not see any need for **outside intervention**.

Looking at the **key words C1** to **C7**, the interviewee evidently talked about a communication mismanagement concerning the management status of a lady returning from maternity leave. P5 herself was also a manager in the same department. The P5 core topic and the main issue of this conflict is called '**Competition for position**'.

5.4   SUMMARY

The phenomenological and constructivist research methodology was chosen for this study to explore the conflict experiences of managers in a selected organisation in South Africa.

In this chapter the research design and methodology was introduced with special regard to the phenomenological research paradigm and the main assumptions of this paradigm. In addition, methodological assumptions of interpretative hermeneutics were presented and the qualitative research methodology focussing on case study approaches were critically discussed.

With regard to this study, the process of data collection was presented, referring to concepts of triangulation, reliability and validity in qualitative research, the ethical considerations of this case study research and the process of qualitative data analysis. The approaches to qualitative data analysis considered the following aspects: the level of data analysis, transcription procedures and the procedures of analysis. Examples of data analysis were provided, referring to

text transcriptions and content and key word analysis to ensure transparency of data analysis.

This chapter builds the methodological foundation for this study and is interlinked with the theoretical approaches in Chapters 3 and 4 and the context of the study (Chapter 2). The following chapters, Chapters 6, 7 and 8, use the methodological approaches discussed in Chapter 5 to analyse and interpret the data and to finally present conclusions and recommendations.

CHAPTER 6

RESEARCH FINDINGS – PART 1

6.1   INTRODUCTION

After the presentation of the theoretical and methodological approaches of this study, the research findings will be presented in two parts, in Chapter 6 and Chapter 7 respectively.

In Chapter 6 (Research Findings - Part 1) the focus lies on the exhibition of research findings, following the entire biographical record and the items of the interview questions (Chapter 5, Section 5.2.2i-iv.). However, the statements contributing to the conflict factors are not limited to the interview questions, but partly rather integrated across the different interview questions. The key words that contribute to the assessment of the conflict factors are also partly spread over different interview questions. The research questions 1-7, Chapter 1, Section 1.2.1, will be answered.

In Chapter 6, Section 6.2, an overview on biographical data will be presented. The biographical data presentation serves to establish a profile of the 45 participating managers and an insight to their statements. Section 6.2 therefore presents the entire range of biographical data that was gathered. In Chapter 7 a selection of biographical indicators only will be used (aligned to the research questions 8-10.1 in Chapter 1, Section 1.2.2), to construe a relationship between such biographical indicators and selected conflict factors.

In Chapter 6, Section 6.3.1, conflict categories will be constructed with regard to clustering procedures and key word analysis. Conflict factors will be assessed through filtering procedures (Chapter 6, Section 6.3.2). Three examples of these procedures will be presented (Chapter 6, Sections 6.3.2.a, 6.3.2.b and 6.3.2.c).

An analysis of factors will be conducted in Chapter 6, focusing on:

- conflict issues (Chapter 6, Section 6.4, Research question 1 and 1.1);

- values (Chapter 6, Section 6.5, Research question 2 and 2.1);

- identity (Chapter 6, Section 6.6, Research question 3 and 3.1);

- conflict resolution(Chapter 6, Section 6.7, Research question 4);

- management styles (Chapter 6, Section 6.8, Research question 5 and 5.1);

- improvement in management and conflict resolution processes (Chapter 6, Section 6.9, Research question 6); and

- outside intervention (Chapter 6, Section 6.10, Research question 7).

Chapter 7 (Research Findings – Part II) contains research findings on more complex interlinkages of conflict factors and the relation between selected biographical indicators to conflict factors.

6.2   BIOGRAPHICAL DATA INDICATORS

The biographical data comprise the indices sex, race, age, national origin, marital status, service time at organisation, work at headquarters/branches, departmental belonging, position in organisation and education. In order to keep the confidentiality and anonymity of the interviewees, the biographical data will not be integrated.

6.2.1   Distribution of sex

The distribution of sex indicates a ratio of 82.2 per cent (37 interviewees) males and 17.8 per cent (eight interviewees) females. The ratio of sexual belonging is important with regard to experienced conflicts (Chapter 7, Section 7.1).

6.2.2 Distribution of race

Racial affiliation shows 8.9 per cent Indians (four interviewees); 4.4 per cent Black (two interviewees); 2.2 per cent Coloured (one interviewee); and 84.4 per cent White (38 interviewees).

6.2.3 Distribution of age

The distribution of age is aggregated in groups:

- 6.7 per cent (three interviewees) belonged to the age group 20 to 29 years (1);

- 31.1 per cent (fourteen interviewees) belonged to the age group 30 to 39 years (2);

- 31.1 per cent (fourteen interviewees) belonged to the age group 40 to 49 years (3);

- 20 per cent (nine interviewees) belonged to the age group 50 to 59 years (4); and

- 8.9 per cent (four interviewees) belonged to the age group over 60 years (5).

Only 2.2 per cent (one interviewee) did not give any information. Age groups 2 and 3 comprised the majority of managers with 62.2 per cent (28 interviewees). The mean value of age of the interviewed managers was 44.2 years.

6.2.4 Distribution of national origin

Regarding the national belonging of the interviewees: 82.2 per cent (37 out of 45 interviewees) were South African citizens from South African origin; 6.7 per cent (three interviewees) were German citizens, while 2.2 per cent (one interviewee) originated from the Netherlands, but obtained South African citizenship; one originated from Zimbabwe, but obtained South African citizenship; one originated from England, but obtained South African citizenship; and one interviewee had no record.

6.2.5   Distribution of marital status

With regard to marital status: 73.3 per cent (33 interviewees) were married; 13.3 per cent (six interviewees) were divorced; 4.4 per cent (two interviewees) were widowed and/or divorced; 4.4 per cent (two interviewees) were single; while 2.2 per cent (one interviewee) was not married. There was no record for 2.2 per cent (one interviewee).

6.2.6   Distribution of duration of service

With regard to the duration of service at the organisation, the following percentages reflected the distribution:

- 13.3 per cent (six interviewees) had worked at the organisation from two months to one year;

- 24.4 per cent (eleven interviewees) had worked at the organisation between two to five years;

- 22.2 per cent (ten interviewees) had worked at the organisation between six to ten years;

- 22.2 per cent (ten interviewees) had worked at the organisation between 11 to 20 years;

- 15.6 per cent (seven interviewees) had worked at the organisation for more than 20 years; and

- 2.2 per cent (one interviewee) did not indicate the duration of service.

The mean value of duration of service of the interviewed managers was 10.3 years.

6.2.7   Distribution of work location

Altogether 73.3 per cent (33 interviewees) of the interviewed managers worked at the headquarters of the organisation in Gauteng; 13.3 per cent (six interviewees) worked at Branch I; 6.7 per cent (three interviewees) worked at Branch II; and 6.7 per cent (three interviewees) worked at Branch III.

6.2.8   <u>**Distribution of departments**</u>

At the headquarters of the organisation the distribution of interviewed managers with regard to departmental belonging was as follows:

a.   **Headquarters**

73.3 per cent (33 interviewees) worked at headquarters and were distributed in the following departments:

- 27.3 per cent (9 interviewees) worked in the Parts Division;

- 24.2 per cent (8 interviewees) worked in the Finance Division;

- 12.1 per cent (4 interviewees) worked in the Group Marketing Division;

- 9.1 per cent (3 interviewees) worked in the Retail Operations Division;

- 9.1 per cent (3 interviewees) worked in the After Market Division;

- 6.1 per cent (2 interviewees) worked in the Human Resource Management Division;

- 3.0 per cent (1 interviewee) worked in the Corporate Office Division;

- 3.0 per cent (1 interviewee) worked in the Bus Sales Division;

- 3.0 per cent (1 interviewee) worked in the Marketing Division; and

- 3.0 per cent (1 interviewee) worked in the Workshop.

b.   **Branch I**

13.3 per cent (six interviewees) worked at Branch I:

- 11.1 per cent (5 interviewees) worked in the Assembly Plant; and

- 2.2 per cent (1 interviewee) worked in the Dealership.

c.   **Branch II**

6.7 per cent (3 interviewees) worked at Branch II:

- 6.7 per cent (three interviewees) worked at Branch II (no departments recorded).

d.   Branch III

6.7 per cent (3 interviewees) worked at Branch III:

- 6.7 per cent (three interviewees) worked at Branch III (no departments recorded).

The distribution of interviewed managers, across ten departments at the headquarters and the three branches, guarantees a broad picture of conflict experiences in the entire organisation.

6.2.9   Distribution of position

The position index shows a broad distribution of positions (41 different positions) held by the interviewees at the above-mentioned headquarters and branches. In order to keep the confidentiality of the interviewed managers, the index of positions in the organisation was disconnected from all other biographical data. The positions kept by the interviewed managers are reflected in alphabetical order, as follows:

Acting Financial Manager; Administrator Business Analyst Manager; After Test Manager; Business Analyst; Chief Financial Officer; Communication Manager; Dealer Principle; Deputy Dealer Principle; Distribution Manager (two interviewees); Engineering Manager (two interviewees); Enterprise Resource Manager; Financial Group Manager; General Manager (Information Technology); General Manager (Parts); Group Internal Audit Manager; Group Marketing Manager; Group Treasurer; Human Resource Manager; Marketing Information Coordinator; National Bus Sales Product Manager; National Service Manager; Parts Manager; Planning/Controlling Manager; Process Control Manager; Procurement Group Manager; Procurement Manager; Product Costing Manager; Product Manager; Product Specialist Manager (two interviewees); Product Testing Manager; Production Manager (two interviewees); Quality Assurance Manager; Regional Dealer; Regional Manager (Parts); Regional Marketing Manager; Sealer Support Manager; Special Vehicles Executive; Supply Manager; Training Manager; Warehouse Manager (Parts); Workshop Manager.

The positions held by the interviewees were in middle and upper management and therefore represented the management of the organisation, particularly on these two levels. Managers in these positions are the decision-makers and leading forces of organisations.

6.2.10 Distribution of education

The educational backgrounds of the selected managers were highly diverse, due to the fact that the qualifications (BA, Diploma, Masters) had been gained in different countries and at different institutions. Altogether 27.3 per cent (12 interviewees out of 44) had obtained more than one degree.

The interviewees were required to indicate their degrees and levels of education. One interviewee did not comply.

Table 6.1: Education of interviewees

Number of interviewees	Degrees
12 interviewees with more than one degree	Two BA
	BBA and MPlus
	B.Com, Honours
	Two Honours, three National Diploma
	Honours, one National Diploma
	Matric and National Diploma 3 (four interviewees)
	National Diploma 3 and 4 (three interviewees)

Table 6.1: Education of interviewees (continued)

Number of interviewees	Degrees
32 interviewees with one degree	BA Engineering (two interviewees)
	B.Com (four interviewees)
	College
	Standard 8
	O-Level
	Diploma (three interviewees)
	IT Programming
	Junior Certificate Mechanic
	MA (two interviewees)
	MA Business
	MA Computer
	MA Engineering
	Matric (nine interviewees)
	MBA
	Mechanic
	Mechanical Engineering

Source: author's own construction

Table 6.1 reflects a high educational standard in the middle and top management of the organisation.

After the biographical indicators have been presented the content of the interview findings will be systematically exhibited in the next section, aligned to the research questions (Chapter 1, Section 1.2.1).

6.3 PRESENTATION OF FINDINGS

This chapter includes the presentation of findings of the interviews P1 to P45 (the full extent of transcribed interviews is attached in the Appendix B). It is important to note that eleven interviewees contributed more than one conflict narration in one interview session, as shown in Table 6.2. Altogether 59 conflict narrations from 45 interviews could be identified and analysed.

Table 6.2: Interviewees contributing more than 1 conflict

Number of interviewee	P2	P3	P4	P6	P7	P9	P12	P13	P14	P33	P39
Number of narrated conflicts	2	2	3	3	2	3	2	2	2	3	2

Source: author's own construction

Chapter 6 and its sections are aligned to the analytical research questions, as introduced in Chapter 1, Section 1.2.1, which refer to inductively gained findings.

The following section presents findings by referring to the analytical research questions:

1.   *Which work-related conflicts do managers experience in the selected international organisation?*

1.1   *Which categories of conflict can be developed out of the data material?*

6.3.1   Issues and categories of conflict

Managers experienced work-related conflicts in the selected organisation. These conflicts were highly diverse and comprised a broad variety of conflict experiences. Through content analysis (Chapter 5, Section 5.3.3.a), the various conflict issues experienced by P1 to P45 can be identified and are shown in Table 6.3 below.

Table 6.3: Issues of conflict

Interviews P1 to P45	Issue of conflict
P1	No conflict
P2	Worst customer
P3:1	Warranty
P3:2	Need of support from Board
P4:1	Training in workshops
P4:2	Lack of information
P4:3	Disciplining a Black lady
P5	Competition for position
P6:1	Miscommunication with boss
P6:2	Rudest e-mail
P6:3	Hiccup with Black colleague
P7:1	Shouting manager
P7:2	Departmental conflict
P8	Position overtaken
P9:1	Mentality of mistrust
P9:2	Black harassment
P9:3	Exploding staff member
P10	Subordinate's performance
P11	Workshop competition
P12:1	High level conflict part 1
P12:2	High level conflict part 2
P13:1	Managing Director – tense situation
P13:2	Conflict with union
P14:1	Falsely accused of theft
P14:2	Militant Black
P15	General Manager loses temper
P16	No conflict
P17	Afrikaans and English
P18	Share knowledge
P19	Operational conflict with staff members
P20	Conflict with a branch
P21	Decision-making in the field
P22	Racism towards a Black staff member
P23	Female accountants without ability
P24	First Black position
P25	Competition for position
P26	No record
P27	E-mail to the boss
P28	Uses vehicles' price reduction
P29	Arbitration only from superior
P30	Paperwork not in order
P31	No conflict
P32	Work time company rules
P33:1	Disagreement with senior
P33:2	Mistrust from German superior
P33:3	'Boss does not listen to me'
P34	Position as Quality Manager
P35	Autocratic manager and customers

Table 6.3: Issues of conflict (continued)

Interviews P1 to P45	Issue of conflict
P36	Childish e-mail
P37	Competition for position
P38	Male power
P39:1	Suspicion by previous Managing Director
P39:2	No conflict
P40	Dealership and gender
P41	Germany or local contract in RSA
P42	Rumours and mobbing
P43	New chairman
P44	Ways to do your job
P45	Belittling

Source: author's own construction

The conflict issues give an impression of what kind of conflicts the selected interviewees experienced. On the basis of the entire process of content analysis and interpretation procedures, as discussed in Chapter 5, categories of conflicts have been constructed.

Table 6.3 gives on overview of the conflict issues identified in the 59 conflict narrations. These conflict issues will be linked to the inductively developed conflict categories.

As posed in Research question 1.1 – *Which categories of conflict can be developed out of the data material?* – it can be stated that five conflict categories emerged from the data material. The conflict categories are the following:

- Communication and Treatment (includes conflicts that deal with all aspects of communication and interpersonal treatment and behaviour in conflict situations).

- Position and Competition (includes conflicts that deal with competitive behaviour and the relationship between superiors and subordinates).

- Organisation (includes structural and functional conflicts in the organisation and with other organisations).

- Race and Gender (includes conflicts that deal with racial and gender-related issues).

- Composite (includes narrations that negate conflict experiences in the organisation. P26 contains no record).

Table 6.4 below shows the interlinkage of conflict issues and conflict categories.

Table 6.4: Categories and issues

Category	Issues of P1 to P45
Communication and Treatment	P2 – Worst customer P4:2 – Lack of information P6:1 – Miscommunication with boss P6:2 – Rudest e-mail P7:1 – Shouting manager P9:3 – Exploding staff member P14:1 – Falsely accused of theft P15 – General Manager loses temper P17 – Afrikaans and English P18 – Share knowledge P21 – Decision-making in the field P27 – E-mail to the boss P28 – Uses vehicles price reduction P33:3 – 'Boss does not listen to me' P36 – Childish e-mail P39:1 – Suspicion by previous Managing Director P42 – Rumours and mobbing P44 – Ways to do your job P45 – Belittling

Table 6.4: Categories and issues (continued)

Category	Issues of P1 to P45
Position and Competition	P5 – Competition for position P8 – Position overtaken P10 – Subordinate's performance P11 – Workshop competition P12:1 – High level conflict part 1 P12:2 – High level conflict part 2 P13:1 – Managing Director - tense situation P25 – Competition for position P29 – Arbitration only from superior P30 – Paper work not in order P33:1 – Disagreement with senior P33:2 – Mistrust from German superior P34 – Position as Quality Manager P35 – Autocratic manager and customers P37 – Competition for position P43 – New chairman
Organisation	P3:1 – Warranty P3:2 – Need of support from Board P4:1 – Training in workshops P7:2 – Departmental conflict P9:1 – Mentality of mistrust P13:2 – Conflict with union P19 – Operational conflict with staff members P20 – Conflict with a branch P32 – Work time company rules P41 – Germany or local contract in RSA
Race and Gender	P4:3 – Disciplining a Black lady P6:3 – Hiccup with Black colleague P9:2 – Black harassment P14:2 – Militant Black P22 – Racism toward a Black staff member P23 – Female accountants without ability P24 – First Black position P38 – Male power P40 – Dealership and gender
Composite	P1 – No conflict P16 – No conflict P26 – No record P31 – No conflict P39:2 – No conflict

Source: author's own construction

The 59 conflict issues are linked to five conflict categories.

- *Conflict category 1:* Communication and Treatment comprises 19 conflict issues, equivalent to 32.2 per cent of the total.

- *Conflict category 2*: Position and Competition comprises 16 issues, equivalent to 27.1 per cent of the total.

- *Conflict category 3*: Organisation comprises ten issues, equivalent to 17 per cent of the total.

- *Conflict category 4*: Race and Gender comprises nine issues, equivalent to 15.3 per cent of the total.

- *Conflict category 5*: Composite comprises five conflict issues, equivalent to 8.5 per cent of the total.

Now that the research questions concerning the conflict issues and the conflict categories have been addressed, the conflict issues will be assessed in the following section.

6.3.2 Conflict issues assessment

An assessment of conflict issues includes the process of filtering the frequency of occurring factors (see Chapter 5.3.3.a) in P1 to P45 with regard to the content analysis. The filtering process only assesses the frequency of conflict key words, values, identity and conflict resolution. In this filtering process the focus mainly lies on extracting the conflict factor (C) which includes the content of the respective conflict. The following factors are excluded from the filtering process: management style; improvement; and outside intervention, because the focus of the paramount analysis lies on conflict, values, identity and conflict resolution. Nevertheless, these factors excluded from the filtering process will still be addressed in the responses to the research questions. The following Table 6.5 shows the filter, the factors and the degree of usefulness.

Table 6.5: Filter and usefulness

Filter	Function	Factors: Conflict (C),Values (V), Identity (I), Conflict Resolution (CR)	Degree of usefulness for analysis
F 1	Select	0-3 C	Not useful
F 2	Analyse	4-9 C (+V+I+CR)	Useful
F 3	Analyse	>10 C (+V+I+CR)	Very useful

Source: author's own construction

All 59 conflicts are filtered. The conflict narrations that contain 0-3 C, which means key words contributing to the conflict, are defined as not useful for further analysis (F1). Those conflicts that contain four to nine key words to conflict plus keywords on values, identity and conflict resolution, are useful for further analysis. Conflict narrations containing more than ten keywords of conflict factors, as well as value, identity and conflict resolution factors, are indicated as very useful for the analytical process.

The three conflict narrations that are defined as very useful (F3) will be analysed and interpreted in Chapter 6, Sections 6.3.2.a, 6.3.2.b and 6.3.2.c.

Table 6.6 below gives an overview of the distribution of the factors conflict, value, identity and conflict resolution; linked to the issues of conflict for all interviews (P1 to P45). Table 6.6 also contains the number of key words of each factor (C, V, I and CR), the filter and the degree of usefulness for analysis. The Filter column indicates which interview can be defined as 'Very useful' (F3); 'Useful' (F2); and 'Not useful' (F1).

Table 6.6: Conflict issues, factors and filter

P1 to P45	Conflict issue	C	V	I	CR	Filter
P1	No conflict	3	3	3	0	F1
P2	Worst customer	10	5	3	5	F3
P3:1	Warranty	5	3	4	3	F2
P3:2	Need of support from Board	3	3	0	1	F1
P4:1	Training in workshops	4	1	0	1	F2
P4:2	Lack of information	5	1	0	2	F2
P4:3	Disciplining a Black lady	5	2	3	5	F2
P5	Competition for position	7	4	2	4	F2
P6:1	Miscommunication with the boss	3	0	0	1	F1
P6:2	Rudest e-mail	11	3	4	2	F3
P6:3	Hiccup with Black colleague	4	4	4	3	F2
P7:1	Shouting manager	10	2	3	2	F3
P7:2	Departmental conflict	5	3	0	2	F2
P8	Position overtaken	5	2	3	1	F2
P9:1	Mentality of mistrust	6	0	0	2	F2
P9:2	Black harassment	2	1	3	1	F1
P9:3	Exploding staff member	2	0	0	1	F1
P10	Subordinate's performance	4	5	3	5	F2
P11	Workshop competition	2	1	4	4	F1
P12:1	High level conflict part 1	3	0	0	1	F1
P12:2	High level conflict part 2	2	0	2	3	F1
P13:1	Managing Director - tense situation	5	2	0	1	F2
P13:2	Conflict with union	5	5	2	3	F2
P14:1	Falsely accused of theft	4	3	2	1	F2
P14:2	Militant Black	4	1	0	1	F2
P15	General Manager loses temper	4	2	2	2	F2
P16	No conflict	1	1	1	1	F1
P17	Afrikaans and English	6	1	0	3	F2
P18	Share knowledge	5	11	3	2	F2
P19	Operational conflict with staff members	4	1	2	3	F2
P20	Conflict with a branch	7	4	2	3	F2
P21	Decision-making in the field	6	1	1	2	F2
P22	Racism towards a Black staff member	3	4	0	4	F1
P23	Female accountants without ability	4	3	5	1	F2
P24	First Black position	5	1	3	4	F2
P25	Competition for position	6	2	8	3	F2
P26	No record	Nil				F1
P27	E-mail to the boss	7	2	2	2	F2
P28	Uses vehicles' price reduction	3	0	2	2	F1
P29	Arbitration only from superior	4	2	0	2	F2
P30	Paper work not in order	6	0	4	2	F2
P31	No conflict	1	1	3	0	F1
P32	Work time company rules	5	2	1	1	F2
P33:1	Disagreement with senior	6	1	0	0	F2
P33:2	Mistrust from German superior	5	1	0	1	F2
P33:3	'Boss does not listen to me'	4	1	1	3	F2
P34	Position as Quality Manager	7	0	4	1	F2

Table 6.6: Conflict issues, factors and filter (continued)

P1 to P45	Conflict issue	C	V	I	CR	Filter
P35	Autocratic manager and customers	5	2	1	1	F2
P36	Childish e-mail	5	2	1	3	F2
P37	Competition for position	4	4	2	2	F2
P38	Male power	4	4	2	3	F2
P39:1	Suspicion by previous Managing Director	7	5	0	1	F2
P39:2	No conflict	0	0	0	0	F1
P40	Dealership and gender	7	8	6	2	F2
P41	Germany or local contract in RSA	6	1	1	0	F2
P42	Rumours and mobbing	9	5	5	6	F2
P43	New chairman	4	1	3	1	F2
P44	Ways to do your job	3	7	1	3	F1
P45	Belittling	5	1	0	3	F2

Source: author's own construction

The findings in Table 6.6 show that, according to the filtering procedures, 15 conflict narrations are not useful with regard to the number of key words of the conflict factor (C) (Table 6.6); 41 conflict narrations are defined as useful, while three conflict narrations are defined as very useful for analysis of conflict narrations (C).

The following tables (Table 6.7, 6.8 and 6.9) show the findings of F1, F.2 and F3 and indicate the usefulness of the conflict issues.

Table 6.7: Findings of F1

F1	Conflict Issue	C
P1	No conflict	3
P3:2	Need of support from Board	3
P6:1	Miscommunication with boss	3
P9:2	Black harassment	2
P9:3	Exploding staff member	2
P11	Workshop competition	2
P12:1	High level conflict part 1	3
P12:2	High level conflict part 2	2
P16	No conflict	1
P22	Racism towards a Black staff member	3
P26	No record	Nil
P28	Uses vehicles' price reduction	3
P31	No conflict	1
P39:2	No conflict	0
P44	Ways to do your job	3

Source: author's own construction

Table 6.8: Findings of F2

F2	Conflict Issue	C
P3:1	Warranty	5
P4:1	Training in workshops	4
P4:2	Lack of information	5
P4:3	Disciplining a Black lady	5
P5	Competition for position	7
P6:3	Hiccup with Black colleague	4
P7:2	Departmental conflict	5
P8	Position overtaken	5
P9:1	Mentality of mistrust	6
P10	Subordinate's performance	4
P13:1	Managing Director - tense situation	5
P13:2	Conflict with union	5
P14:1	Falsely accused of theft	4
P14:2	Militant Black	4
P15	General Manager loses temper	4
P17	Afrikaans and English	6
P18	Share knowledge	5
P19	Operational conflict with staff members	4
P20	Conflict with a branch	7
P21	Decision-making in the field	6
P23	Female accountants without ability	4
P24	First Black position	5
P25	Competition for position	6
P27	E-mail to the boss	7
P29	Arbitration only from superior	4
P30	Paperwork not in order	6
P32	Work time company rules	5
P33:1	Disagreement with senior	6
P33:2	Mistrust from German superior	5
P33:3	'Boss does not listen to me'	4
P34	Position as Quality Manager	7
P35	Autocratic manager and customers	5
P36	Childish e-mail	5
P37	Competition for position	4
P38	Male power	4
P39:1	Suspicion by previous Managing Director	7
P40	Dealership and gender	7
P41	Germany or local contract in RSA	6
P42	Rumours and mobbing	9
P43	New chairman	4
P45	Belittling	5

Source: author's own construction

Table 6.9: Findings of F3

F3	Conflict Issue	C
P2	Worst customer	10
P6:2	Rudest e-mail	11
P7:1	Shouting manager	10

Source: author's own construction

The filtering procedures have been assessed in this section. In the following section an interpretation of the three very useful conflict narrations (P2; P6:2; P7:1), as shown in Table 6.9, will be presented to give an insight into the profile of complex conflict narrations.

The pure transcribed interviews are attached (Appendix B). Transcriptions of the three conflict narrations that have been defined as very useful for analysis; the key word analysis; and the interpretations of these narrations will now be presented. All three conflict narrations that have been defined as very useful for analysis and are associated are linked to the conflict category Communication and Treatment, as shown in Table 6.4.

a.   Example one: P2: Worst customer

Example one comprises a conflict that occurred between an interviewee and his customer.

P2 experienced a deep-rooted **conflict (C)** between himself and two other groups of actors: the customers and his fellow salesmen. P2 reported that a Johannesburg customer who, incidentally, was a major bus operating entrepreneur, always got what he wanted and could do and say as he pleased.

This clashed with P2's **values (V)**. Even if the customer was king, he should not be allowed to indulge in bad behaviour, such as shouting. The customers seemed to P2 to be regarded as more important than himself. The fact that P2's fellow-salesmen in the company did not support him, but bent over backwards to foster customers, hurt P2 deeply. Several times he had experienced a humiliating retreat or a loss of face, such as being shouted at in front of others.

His **identity (I)** had been weakened. Being acquainted with the (alleged) illegal activities of the bus operating customer, P2 was totally disillusioned and did not feel any interest in continuing to work under such circumstances.

P2's **conflict resolution (CR)** ideas were manifold: knock the customer out; complain to management; go for a hearing; shut up; or calm down.

According to P2, the **management style (MS)** should be stricter and the policy towards customers should be changed: regular check-ups should be introduced, in case the company's guidelines were not followed. A clear message should be given to the customers.

P2 remarked that any **improvement (IMP)** in the company would be closely related to management policy.

P2 was convinced that trying to gain so-called 'happy customers', at any cost, was projecting the wrong image of the company. The company wanted to sell and be the best, but not by running after the worst customers.

P2 stated that one mediator was employed in the company. He recognised the need for **outside intervention (OI)**.

This interpretation of conflict narration of P2 is based on the following key word analysis with regard to the factors C, V, I, CR, MS, IMP and OI (Chapter 5, Section 5.3.3.d). The key words have originally been extracted from the interview transcription (see Appendix).

- **Conflict factor C**

The conflict factor C in this case contains ten quotations that have contributed to the identification of factor C:

C1   "… I had a big case with a customer of us …"
C2   "… He is one of our worst customers. He starts shouting immediately, whatever happens…"
C3   "His own people call him Hitler."
C4   "… and I saw him and when he saw me he said "oh shit, oh shit!" "

C5 "We had one case where we fixes his car in the evening … Something went wrong this evening and the truck had a breakdown and went back to Jo'burg and he phoned me the next morning and he shouted me out …"

C6 "The management wants to keep the customer …"

C7 "Here is the conflict again …. for the salesman, the customer is always right."

C8 "We had meetings, ja, in front of the customers and with the salesmen and he shouted me out in front of the customer. He told me that I wouldn't do my work"

C9 "He is one of the biggest bus operators here in Jo'burg."

C10 "Every week, one of the buses was confiscated by the Police, because the drivers were killing people driving too fast … what the driver always does – they blame the vehicle … the brakes …"

- **Value factor V**

V1 "… to solve his problem and to help him."

V2/CR "I should have knocked him out, but the customer is the king …"

V3 "… the customer is more important than us."

V4 "… the customer is always right."

V5 "And we are paying and paying. Just to keep the customer happy …"

- **Identity factor I**

I1 "He should be on our side. "

I2 "But shouting, shouting, that's a South African habit. Ja, especially South African."

I3 "I'm getting fed up."

I3 "I have got no more interest."

- **Identity factor CR**

CR1 "I want to get out of it."

CR2 "… I also complained to our management…they went to a hearing."

CR3 "He should tell the customer: 'Dear customer, this is wrong, this is your fault.'"

CR4 "You just have to shut up."

CR5 "You have got to … just to calm down. I let him calm down and then I will go back into the situation."

- **Management style factor MS**

MS1 "We should be stricter and … check our customers … follow up our guidelines …"

- **Improvement factor IMP**

IMP1/MS1 "We should be stricter and we should check our customers regularly and we should ask them to follow our guidelines."

IMP2 "… tell them: 'sorry that is your fault … otherwise you have to pay for it! …"

IMP3 "We need to be clear about the communication towards the customer."

IMP4 "And in the management, the attitude "happy customer" has to change … We want to sell. We want to be the best."

- **Outside intervention factor OI**

OI1   "Of course, in the company, between ourselves, we need some interventions from the outside."

OI2   "… we got one mediator here …"

The methodological procedures followed ensure the assessment of the conflict factors and lead to reliable and valid findings and results, which is particularly important in qualitative research (Chapter 5). For transparency and reliability and validity reasons, two further examples will be given.

b.   Example two: P6:2: Rudest e-mail

Example two presents a conflict based on e-mail communication.

P6 became entangled in a severe **conflict (C)** situation simply by following the instruction of her boss to send out a specific e-mail, copying him in the process. Somebody whom she did not know saw the e-mail accidentally and responded, very rudely, that P6 was an unnecessary expense for the company and should find herself another job. This rude mail was copied to other people not involved in the situation. Highly distressed by these e-mails, P6 looked for support from her boss.

Her boss fortunately **resolved the conflict (CR)** by arranging P6's transfer to another department. However, the conflict was still lingering on, because the regional manager (an old friend of the 'bullying' person) was refusing to give her the required back-up. So she felt victimised twice over. Moreover, P6 met with an antagonistic attitude whenever she met the e-mailing colleague. She was convinced that this conflict was linked to a gender bias.

P6 had been told by her bosses to stick to the **value (V)** of remaining open minded for herself, for the 'bullying' person and for the future of the company. But she could not easily follow this value because she was convinced of a special gender arrogance which was expressed in the bullying person calling her "girly". For a conscious woman of 33 years it sounded offensive and was actually very annoying.

Even P6's **identity (I)** was touched severely. She perceived the e-mail action as a hostile act; attacking her from behind; leaving no means of defence to her; abusing her personality; and misusing her as a woman. In this context, she even declines the apologising of that 'bullying' person. But, generally said, P6 likes everybody.

Towards **resolving the conflict (CR),** P6 proposed to taking disciplinary steps. But a better outcome for all involved persons was a transfer of P6 to another department.

As to her **management style (MS),** P6 prefers not to blow things up and to forget about them soon so that they don't eat away all of her personality.

No statement on **improvement (IMP)** has been made by P6.

P6 finds that **outside intervention (OI)** is clearly needed, also if reflecting her own conflict case.

This interpretation of the conflict narration of P6:2 is based on the following key word analysis with regard to the factors C, V, I, CR, MS, IMP and OI. These key words were originally extracted from the interview transcription (see Appendix).

- **Conflict factors C**
C1 "My boss gave me instruction to send out an e-mail to ask people please to not credit the deal as a deal"
C2 "… so that they could resolve payments and stuff …
C3 "I e-mailed it CC to him … somebody … saw the e-mail … and sent the rudest, rudest e-mail that I ever received in my life."
C4 "… told me that I am an unnecessary expense for the company …"
C5 "that I must please move on and find another job … I was really upset …"
C6 "So I forwarded it to my boss … and I said to him that I do not appreciate this and that it's unacceptable …"
C7 "… it got a CC to other people..."
C8 "Every time I see that person I go like "*brrr*"…"
C9/V2 "… there was gender involved …"
C10 "… unfortunately, the regional manager knew this person very well …"
C11 "… it was a push flat in my face … I have got no back-up here …"

- **Value factor V**
V1 "Be open-minded, for you and for the future of the company … and for the person's future …"

V2   "… there was gender involved …"

V3   "I was so angry … I wanted to get that person what he deserved."

- **Identity factor I**

I1   "it was hostility in the back of me …"

I2   "… but I was just victimised more … and abused more … and, well, he said to me: "Ja, well, I am sorry, my girlie" … and this is no apology for me …"

I3   "Girlie … it is … I am nobody's girlie."

I4   "You see, I generally like everybody …"

- **Conflict resolution factor CR**

CR 1   "… this time I am gonna lay a disciplinary…"

CR2   "… he (my boss) arranged for me to go to that specific branch and be there."

- **Management style factor MS**

MS1   "… that is also part of my personality. I don't blow up things … I forget about them also so that they don't eat away all of you …"

- **Outside intervention factor OI**

OI1   "I think outside intervention could have helped."

OI2   "Clearly, outside intervention is needed to have third parties who are objective and help that people don't get victimised."

The final example below deals with a conflict issue involving a shouting manager.

c.   Example three: P7:1: Shouting manager

Example three presents a conflict based on the question of adequate communication styles and treatment.

P7 had identified a **conflict (C)** between two directors of two different departments. She pointed out that there was consequently neither co-operation nor any sharing of information between the two. P7 felt controlled and had experienced negative comments from top management. A concrete issue was the poor relationship between her and a junior manager. P7 perceived his conduct as unethical, because he was playing a double game: when in her company he listened and was nice, but behind her back he spoke of P7. So she experienced him as discriminative and racist. The other manager she was working with seemed to her to be indecisive and also discriminative, following a very conservative management style. P7 judged it as unfair that the manager was pressuring her so that she had to work until 10 pm daily, whereas the

manager would leave for home at 5 pm. In conclusion, P7 estimates this complex conflict as gender specific.

As for P7, core **values (V)** were involved. Firstly, the unequal treatment of the sexes. As a woman, she felt discriminated against. On a 'racial' basis, she felt also that she was not being treated fairly. She desired all managers to stick to ethical guidelines. In her view, this was obviously not happening.

As for P7's **identity (I)**, she felt very weak and scared. She worked in an environment in which she felt permanently threatened. As a result, she had lost her courage to open her mouth and frankly say how she felt.

There was no **conflict resolution (CR)** inside the company, because the rest of management, including the Board, did not back her in any respect. So the only solution P7 could see was to leave the company as soon as possible.

Regarding her **management style (MS)**, P7 emphasised more in a negative way that there should be no shouting, no badmouthing or autocratic dictates from the top. Regarding personality issues, P7 preferred to manage around that.

Improvement (IMP) in management, for P7, apparently lay in a more lose and free approach.

P7 appealed for **outside intervention (OI)**, stating that getting more managers involved would not solve the problem.

This interpretation of conflict narration of P7:2 is based on the following key word analysis with regard to the factors C, V, I, CR, MS, IMP and OI. These key words were originally extracted from the interview transcription (Appendix B).

- **Conflict factor C**
C1   "There is a lot of conflict between the different departments … the conflict is between Financial and Finance – the two finance departments and the directors."
C2   "There is no working together."
C3   "There is no sharing information …"

C4 "… a very high sense in the Finance of … control every thing what is happening in the company …"

C5 "negative talk from the top …"

C6/V1 "One of the managers in Finance is a … junior manager and I don't think he has the correct ethical guidance … he will be very nice and lend you an ear and in the next moment he talks to someone else and then you are the biggest asshole."

C7 "The other (manager) is very … impartial, indecisive … a very conservative management style … I would get the two of them trained …"

C8 "… he put very high pressure on my work … he goes normally home at 5 o'clock."

C9 "I work until ten or eleven."

C10 "There is also gender coming in … The one is the most … discriminative, racist manager, the other one is just a discriminative manager. So, there is a big issue of gender."

- **Identity factor I**

I1 "… and that is for me very bad …"

I2 "… you are afraid of the next moment he can shout …"

I3 "… I don't dare to open my mouth and tell him …"

- **Conflict resolution factor CR**

CR1 "… the rest of the management, they didn't do anything to resolve the situation."

CR2 "… as soon as I can get out … I will be out."

- **Management style factor MS**

MS1 "… personality issues … you can manage around that …"

MS2 "… no mannerism"

MS3 "… no shouting at people"

MS4 "… no talking bad about people"

- **Improvement factor IMP**

IMP "… too much ruled from the top …."

- **Outside Intervention OI**

OI "… please give me outside intervention, not another manager …"

The above-mentioned three examples clarify how the work-related conflicts were experienced and narrated and how the content analysis was implemented to construct the conflict categories. In the following section, the conflict categories will be linked to the conflict factors.

6.4   LINKING CONFLICT CATEGORIES AND CONFLICT FACTORS

As described in Chapter 6, Section 6.3.1, the conflict issues are linked to selected categories of conflict. In this chapter, the conflict narrations of all

interviews (P1 to P45) are associated with the conflict categories, while the content of the conflict narrations is briefly described with regard to Factor C under the associated categories.

This section gives an overview of the experienced and narrated conflicts and their classification into the following conflict categories as indicated in Table 6.4:

- Communication and Treatment;
- Position and Competition;
- Organisation;
- Race and Gender; and
- Composite (not analysed, due to lack of information or usefulness).

This section therefore contributes to the in-depth canvassing of research questions 1 and 1.1 (Chapter 1, Section 1.2.1).

6.4.1 Communication and Treatment

The category Communication and Treatment presents a special profile of conflict issues. This category comprises less than 19 conflict issues. Of these 19 conflict issues, three issues will not be presented in this study due to lack of key word information which contribute to the conflict factor (C) (P6:1; P9:3; P28).

Of the remaining 16 conflict issues, only one dealt with the conflict party 'customer' (P2) and is therefore indicated as an inter-organisational conflict. P2 perceived himself as being in a weaker position than the customer. All the other conflict issues (15 altogether) were experienced intra-organisational. Ten of of the 15 conflicts were experienced as being conflicts occurring between parties on an equal hierarchical level. In the cases presented below, the conflicts were experienced between interviewees and their colleagues, mainly on the same managerial levels. Only five of the 15 conflict issues (P15; P17; P21; P27; P33) explicitly indicated that top managers were involved in the conflict.

Below, a very brief insight will be given into the conflicts resorting under this important conflict category, to provide a deeper insight into the work-related

conflict experienced involving Communication and Treatment (Research question 1, Chapter 1, Section 1.2.1).

- **P2: Worst customer**

P2 had evidently experienced a deep-rooted conflict between himself and two other groups of actors: the customers and the salesmen. P2 recounted his experience with a customer from Johannesburg, a major bus operating entrepreneur. This customer always got what he wanted, and was allowed to behave as he liked. P2 saw himself as in a weak position, because he had to do what the customer wanted him to do.

- **P4:2: Lack of information**

P4 reported a conflict between him and a person who had recently become responsible for training. This person attempted to obtain information from the previous incumbent, but to no avail. Embarrassed, he blamed his predecessor for holding back vital information. However, P4 knew where all the information was stored on the computer and helped to resolve the conflict.

- **P6:2: Rudest e-mail**

P6 experienced a severe conflict when she sends out a specific e-mail on the instruction of her boss, who also sent a copy of this e-mail. One of the e-mail recipients responded to this e-mail in a very rude way. This recipient wrote that P6 was an unnecessary expense for the company and should find herself another job. This rude e-mail was posted via cc to many other colleagues who were actually not involved in the matter. P6 then approached her boss for assistance in solving the matter.

- **P7:1: Shouting manager**

A conflict was identified in the narrative of P7. P7 had a verbally abusive manager, who constantly shouted at her. She would have liked to improve her working environment, but the verbally abusive manager also constantly discussed her with other colleagues, and her perception was that her work environment could not be improved.

- **P14:1: Falsely accused of theft**

P14 reported an incident where he had been falsely accused of conspiracy with a criminal gang who organised the stealing of parts from the company. P14 perceived this conflict as a personal attack on him, a scheme to get rid of him. The person who headed this 'intrigue' against him was a non-White co-director who was involved in cooperation with government institutions.

- **P15: General Manager loses temper**

P15 reported a conflict with a General Manager (GM), who used to attack and criticise him in discussions in front of other people. This General Manager was

known for his fiery temper. P15 concluded that conflicts were created through differences in expressions and perceptions.

- **P17: Afrikaans and English**

P17 reported a conflict which he had observed, involving the use of language. He judged the conflict as a minor one. A colleague was suspected of work negligence and was asked to write a report about the incident. As an Afrikaans mother-tongue speaker, he wrote the report in Afrikaans and forwarded it to an English-speaking colleague, who did not understand Afrikaans. As a result of submitting this Afrikaans report, the matter was subjected to strong harassment.

- **P18: Share knowledge**

P18 reported a conflict titled 'Share knowledge'. This Indian started his career in the organisation in a newly-created position. He was the only Indian staff member amongst White managers, and his White colleagues were uncertain about what was expected of the incumbent in that new position. At the same time, P18 was experienced as being superior and higher qualified – or too qualified? – in comparison to his colleagues. The Indian interviewee consequently felt victimised and started to hold back information.

- **P21: Decision-making in the field**

P21 became involved in a conflict with his superior manager, because he was asked to make a decision in the field which he did not discuss with his boss. He was subsequently called a liar by his boss, although the boss did not have any concrete information about the situation.

- **P27: E-mail to the boss**

P27 reported a conflict he had experienced with one of the dealers about 'stock availability'. An e-mail had evidently been sent to the boss, stating that P27 was holding back vehicles and quoting incorrect figures to conceal other goings-on. P27 felt victimised, because this e-mail had not only been sent to his boss, but also copied to many colleagues. The conflict was discussed through e-mail communication and P27 was scared that the e-mail scenario would escalate the conflict.

- **P33:3: 'Boss does not listen to me'**

P33 experienced a conflict with his boss, because he felt that his boss was not listening to him properly. P33 assumed that his boss had preconceived opinions about creating a permanent disagreement. In his perspective, his boss was a typical German, doing things in a typically German way. At the same time, he felt that the conflict was based on the two personalities involved, both strong-willed and argumentative.

- **P36: Childish e-mail**

P36 reported a conflict with regard to an e-mail. An older salesman was reluctant to accept young managers and their work methods. He questioned

P36's experience and behaviour in an e-mail, particularly with reference to his selection of products for the market.

- ### P39:2: Suspicion by previous Managing Director

P39 reported a serious conflict with a former Managing Director (MD) who was suspected of irregularities during a huge tendering process. The son of the MD benefited from of a sponsorship by one of the suppliers involved in the tender process. When the corruption was recounted in a letter to the organisation's headquarters in Germany, the MD responded by insisting on measures such as psychological lie-detector testing and computer searches of South African headquarters.

- ### P42: Rumours and mobbing

P42 reported a confidential conflict about 'mobbing', which originated in a new management structure. P42 felt excluded from various activities in the company and experienced that rumours involving him were circulating. When a delegation from headquarters in Germany arrived at the branch he felt excluded, because he was not introduced to the delegation, although he managed to introduce himself. P42 declared this conflict as a personal, not work-related conflict and perceived a lack of communication. This conflict happened in special circumstances when P42 served as chairman in a disciplinary hearing and the lady who was the subject of the hearing was dismissed temporarily.

- ### P44: Ways to do your job

P44 narrated a conflict titled 'Ways to do your job'. This conflict involves miscommunication between two female colleagues. P44 sent her work to a colleague in another branch. Her colleague did not understand the work and did not agree with it. Finally, the conflict escalated, at which stage the colleague shouted at P44 and told her to shut up and listen.

- ### P45: Belittling

P45 reported a personal conflict, which he defined as a racial conflict. One manager, a so-called Coloured person, abused the internal radio to speak poorly of P45. P45 experienced this behaviour as belittling.

Having presented a brief overview on the conflicts narrated in the interviews that can be grouped under the category of Communication and Treatment, the following may be stated: In the category Communication and Treatment, two sub-groupings of conflict narrations can be identified:

Sub-grouping Communication:

- exchange of information (P4:2; P18; P21);
- misuse of e-mail communication (P6:2; P27; P36); and
- language (P2; P17).

With regard to conflict narrations and inter-personal treatment, two sub-groupings of conflicts need to be mentioned:

Sub-grouping Treatment:

- intrigues, including 'mobbing' (P14:1; P39:2; P42); and

- managerial behaviour, especially shouting and arrogance (P7:2; P15; P33:3; P44; P45).

The next conflict category to be presented is the category of Position and Competition.

6.4.2 **Position and Competition**

The category Position and Competition comprises 16 conflict issues and has a significant profile. Of these 16 conflict issues, three issues (P11; P12:1; P12:2) fall into the filter F1 which contains the issues that are not useful for further analysis (Chapter 6, Section 6.3.2) and are excluded from this analysis.

'Position' and 'competition' can further be divided into two sub-groups:

- nine conflicts were linked to 'position'; and

- four conflicts referred to 'competition' (P25; P34; P5; P37).

The conflict parties involved in the conflicts were mostly colleagues experiencing conflicts inter-departmentally and internationally. Nine included narrations of conflicts between different departments (P5; P8; P10; P25; P29; P33:1; P34; P37; P43). Four conflicts described events that occurred between the headquarters of the organisation in Germany and its different departments in South Africa (P13.1; P30; P33.2; P35).

- **P5: Competition for position**

The conflict P5 recounted revolved around a female colleague who had just returned from maternity leave. Management had failed completely to inform this returning colleague of the change in her position in the department on her return. The colleague expected to return to her managerial position and serve as P5's boss, but the reverse applied. In consequence, P5 expected that the colleague felt threatened by the tasks that P5 allocated to her. The atmosphere between the two conflicting colleagues had become very uncomfortable, to such an extent that "one can cut the atmosphere with a knife".

- **P8: Position overtaken**

P8 experienced an intra-personal conflict, which also related to his team. He felt pressurised due to his short time of service with the company. At the same time, he was worried about the fact that his boss had offered the job to the team, before top management decided that P8 should get the job. P8 perceived the climate as difficult and felt that he was being watched constantly. He felt irritated, but determined to focus on his work.

- **P10: Subordinate's performance**

P10 narrated one conflict involving a subordinate who had failed to achieve the targets, but at the same time did not accept his failing. P10 tried to convince him that standards apply in the company that had to be met. The colleague judged P10's assessment as being unfair.

- **P13:1: Managing Director – tense situation**

P13 experienced a harsh conflict, triggered by the German headquarters. In this conflict, two managers on Board level had intimidated other managers who were supposed to report to the Board. Therefore, the latter managers were unsure whom to report to, because they feared that they may be manipulated by either one of the Board members and be drawn into a power struggle. In this conflict, phone calls were tapped and e-mails confiscated.

- **P25: Competition for position**

P25 reported a conflict about his competition for a position. He and another manager were appointed to the same management position at the same time. A disagreement about roles and responsibilities ensued. P12 had also been prohibited to attend conferences where he thought his attendance was vital to enable him to perform well in his position.

- **P29: Arbitration only from superior**

P29 reported on a conflict between a division and a supplier. The conflict was not debated, but strictly managed by P29, who sets one condition: If you don't act like I say, the issue will be taken to the next level.

- **P30: Paperwork not in order**

P30 identified one conflict with another department regarding paperwork. There was a constant exchange of vouchers. If a payment was done, a voucher should be received, but the vouchers did not always come back to P30. Thus, when a sudden German audit was conducted, P30 would carry the responsibility for any disorder regarding vouchers.

- **P33:1: Disagreement with senior**

P33 was engaged in a conflict with a senior manager in the form of a disagreement regarding a service to a client. The senior lost his temper and threatened P33 that he would lose his job.

- ### P33:2: Mistrust from German superior

P33 experienced a conflict with a German superior who argued a lot. The German seemed not to have gained enough knowledge in the South African work environment of P33. The interests of the two counterparts were quite contrary: the German wanted to be respected in this superior position, while P33 wanted to be respected for his special knowledge and experience in his work field.

- ### P34: Position as Quality Manager

P34 reported a conflict with regard to his position. In this position, he had built up a special part of the department he worked in, although he had never been trained in that field. He would like to be trained and would like to show his competencies. However, the new General Manager changed the job descriptions and combined his position with two other positions, telling P34 that he could not apply for this new position. P34 experienced the conflict as competitive and reflected on his approach to problem solving. P34 saw this conflict as a personal attack, not as task-related.

- ### P35: Autocratic manager and customers

The main conflict that P35 experienced lay between himself and his former boss. When there was a dispute, the boss would always call Germany to receive his instructions. He would then confront P35 with the results of his phone calls. P35 was irritated by this and expected another way of communication by the superior, because he would like to exchange ideas and debate issues. He regarded his boss as very incompetent.

- ### P37: Competition for position

P37 introduced herself as uneducated and engaged in a conflict with a female colleague. Her colleague had received promotion, which she had not, and she was very angry about the situation.

- ### P43: New chairman

P43 narrated a conflict due to changing management structures. His new superior was female and he expected difficult times in the future, because she did not possess enough technical knowledge and he could therefore not expect any support or help from her side.

In conclusion, different conflicts connected to Position and Competition were experienced in the organisation. These experienced conflicts crossed the personal, departmental, branch and international lines and boundaries of the organisation and provided a broad picture. In the following section, particular conflicts with regard to Organisation are presented.

6.4.3 <u>Organisation</u>

The category Organisation comprises ten conflict issues and shows a special profile of conflicts with regard to the organisation and its structure. One (P3:2) of the ten conflict issues falls into filter F1 and is, therefore, not useful and not presented below.

Regarding the conflict parties: four conflicts were linked to managerial parties (P3:1; P4:1; P7:2; P9:1); two conflicts took place between staff and management (P19; P32); one conflict between management and the union (P13.2); one conflict between the headquarters and a branch (P20); and finally, one conflict occurred due to changes in contracts (P41).

- **P3:1: Warranty**

P3 experienced the issue of warranties as very conflictual. He came from a financial background and in his position had to decide on the validity of warranties. This could be difficult, especially if colleagues had given the customers information about the warranty which was not right and then P3 had to say 'no'. He would then often be accused of dishonesty, even if the warranty conditions were set by the company and not by him personally. Conflicts on warranties therefore often entailed conflicts with customers on the one hand, but also entailing a deeper conflictual aspect, namely the corporate identity of the company (and giving out the same information).

- **P4:1 Training in workshops**

P4 wanted to offer training at training centres, but experienced a conflict in that regard, because the workshop managers wanted the training to be conducted in their workshops, mainly to save money and time.

- **P7:2: Departmental conflict**

P7 identified an inter-departmental conflict between two departments. P7 pointed out that there was neither co-operation nor sharing of information. She felt controlled and had experienced negative comment from top management. She experienced a concrete conflict involving her poor relationship with her junior manager. She felt that her junior manager did not follow ethical guidelines, because he was very friendly to her, but at the same time, talked negatively about her behind her back. She described him as discriminative and racist. Another colleague she also saw as indecisive and discriminative and displaying a very conservative management style. P7 felt unfairly treated, due to the high pressure put on her: she worked daily until 10 pm, whereas her superior left for home at 5 pm. She defined her experienced conflicts as gender based.

- **P9:1: Mentality of mistrust**

P9 had experienced many instances of conflict, stretching from a conflict with the Managing Director to conflicts based on the organisation's mentality that he described as mistrustful and overcontrolled.

- **P13:2: Conflict with union**

The core conflict presented by P13 dealt with union activities and the company. He described the staff as politically active in a certain trade union and polarising themselves and the managers. The blue-collar workers were claiming higher wages and benefits and emphasising their demands with 'go slow' methods. This irritated P13 deeply. He believed that cultural issues and a fight over distribution between White management and Black workers underpinned the strikes.

- **P19: Operational conflict with staff members**

P19 described the situation as an operational conflict that had emerged between staff and management. In general terms, P19 reported that staff members were refusing to carry out orders to work, based on lack of commitment or work pressure.

- **P20: Conflict with a branch**

P20 experienced a severe conflict when he made a mistake with the pricing of some spare parts. Immediately, salesmen at another branch sold the parts at these very low prices, although they should have perceived that a mistake in pricing had been made. P20 felt abused by these colleagues.

- **P32: Work time company rules**

The conflict reported by P32 involved a staff member who refused to follow the company rules and regulations regarding working hours. It was common practice in the company that, if a public holiday fell on a Monday, the working hours would be prolonged for one hour on that Friday. One staff member applied for overtime payment for this hour on a Friday and striked against the rules. P32 tried to solve the conflict through discussions, but was severely offended in the process. The staff member complained of being exploited by that capitalistic company.

- **P41: Germany or local contract in RSA**

P41 reported an intra-personal conflict. He had moved from Germany to South Africa, got married to a South African citizen and had to decide whether he wanted to stay on in the South African company and receive a local contract, or return to Germany. He decided to stay, but felt angry about being forced to make his decision quickly. He also complained about changing management structures and the lack of 'right' people. Finally, he was very unhappy to receive a 'South African' salary.

In analysing the structure of conflicts attributed to the organisation, the following may be stated:

Conflicts on the same managerial level deal with:
- warranty requests and responsibilities (P3:1);
- prestige of hosting in-house training (P4:1);
- political struggling with a trade union (P13:2); and
- non-cooperative departmental competition (P20).

Conflicts across the managerial levels deal with:
- negative talks from the top (P7:2);
- mistrust and an over-controlling mentality (P9:1); and
- disobedience and non-compliance of staff members (P19; P32).

The following category deals with the issue of Race and Gender in conflict narrations.

6.4.4 **Race and Gender**

The conflict category Race and Gender comprises nine conflict issues and also displays a significant profile of conflict issues.

A group of five out of these nine conflicts combined at least the aspects of race and politics (P4:3; P6:3; P9:2; P14:2; P24). Other conflicts were more gender-specific (P23; P38) or race oriented (P22). Finally, P40 started with a strong feminist approach regarding the experienced conflict, but her narrative subsequently developed into a kind of departmental conflict description.

Seven out of nine conflicts were conflicts between colleagues; one conflict entailed an event between the interviewee and a representative of a Black liberation movement (P14:2); and the final conflict includes management and staff as the conflicting parties.

- **P4:3: Disciplining a Black lady**

The conflict was titled 'Disciplining a Black lady', and was recounted by P4. He described a conflict with a Black female colleague whom he had begun to discipline, because she used to arrive late for work. The colleague would emphasise that she was a 'Black lady' and P4 interpreted this insistence as if the lady would wanted to emphasise a strong self-consciousness.

- **P6:3: Hiccup with Black colleague**

P6 referred to a 'Hiccup with Black colleague', which escalated into a conflict. She feared that it may almost be politically incorrect to talk about the incident and insisted on confidentiality. She referred to 'affirmative action' and admitted that she experienced the new work circumstances and the inclusion of previously disadvantaged people into the workforce as extremely difficult. These colleagues might take on new responsibilities and implement work properly, but had in the final analysis been given employment through governmental legislation. She remembered a situation involving a government tender in which a Black colleague had to render assistance and the 'hiccup' that occurred between the two of them.

- **P9:2: Black harassment**

P9 reported a conflict about 'Black harassment'. A Black colleague, 51 years old with three children, had complained that he was not being empowered through Black Economic Empowerment (BEE). P9 experienced this inquiry as a sort of Black harassment.

- **P14:2: Militant Black**

P14 reported a conflict with a militant Black that happened in the 'old' South Africa. In those times, there were many militant Black fighters, fighting for equality and anti-racial discrimination. There were two sides: 'you and us'. Which side were you on?

- **P22: Racism towards a Black staff member**

P22 reported a conflict involving an Indian staff member who had allegedly used racist language to one of his Black staff members. The Indian was reported to have used racially abusive language.

- **P23: Female accountants without ability**

P23 was engaged in a permanent conflict with a senior manager and female colleagues in another department with which he had to work. He insisted that all staff members should stick to their own work and their job descriptions. In his position he saw himself as being in the front line engaging with the customers. The enduring conflict had resulted in offences from both parties.

- **P24: First Black position**

P24 reported a conflict regarding his struggle as a Black person to be appointed in the company. He perceived the conflict explicitly as a cultural conflict. He found the new political change in the company difficult, because the person who was supposed to be his 'caretaker' had the same job description. P24 felt limited in his job and emphasised that he had been a senior manager in his former workplace. He expected enhancement in his new position, but saw himself degraded to a trainee level. He suspected that his White colleagues might not even have looked at his CV, because he came from a 'disadvantaged and vulnerable group of the homeless people' and therefore required special treatment.

- **P38: Male power**

P38 described her conflict with a senior male manager regarding the use of a telephone. P38 made a phone call, while her colleague insisted that the device belonged to him only. He screamed at her that she was not allowed to use his equipment.

- **P40: Dealership and gender**

P40 reported a conflict that was both intra-personal and intra-organisational in nature. A colleague was asked for support, refused to give it, whereupon the conflict spread from the colleague to the customer. That created a loss of image for the various staff members involved, but in the opinion of P40 the wrong colleagues had been blamed. P40 concluded that some colleagues acted as dictators with regard to the ones on other levels, the 'back end of the company'.

Viewing the structure of conflicts attributed to the category organisation, it can be stated that:

- conflicts on the same level – three out of nine – dealt with the race aspect only (P6:3; P9:2; P22); and

- from six conflicts on different levels, three were gender-based and three race-oriented.

Having addressed Research questions 1 and 1.1, the following section on value factors in conflict narrations approaches Research question 2: *Which values can be identified and clustered?*

6.5   VALUE FACTORS

In this section, the value factor in the narratives of P1 to P45 will be presented. Only 37 managers narrate conflicts that contain statements on values, as defined according to Bardi and Schwartz (2003) and Kluckhohn and Stroedbeck (1961) (Chapter 4, Sections 4.3 and 4.4), were analysed. Kluckhohn and Stroedbeck (1961) define values as patterns of thoughts and actions, whereas Bardi and Schwartz (2003) emphasise the strength and structure of values in relation to behaviour. In this study, values are addressed as patterns of thoughts and actions and are at the same time seen as influencing behaviour. In terms of this definition, the narratives of P12, P16, P19, P26, P28, P31 and P34 do not include any value statements and will be excluded from the analysis in this section.

The value statements shown below are often interlinked to identity statements and can therefore be found in this chapter in Section 6.5, as well as in Section 6.6.

- The values mentioned by P1 reflected many positive connotated values, such as pleasure in coming to work; enjoying people and work; being open and honest.

- P2 experienced values clashes: from the perspective of the company, the 'customer is king', because the customers could behave as they wished, even indulging in bad behaviour, such as shouting. P2 got the impression that the customer was more important to the company than himself. He felt hurt by the fact that other colleagues were only intent on fostering the customers and had failed to support him. Therefore, he often experienced a loss of face when customers shouted at him in front of others.

- For P3, warranty documents had a high value. The document is very transparent and explains the whole company's regulations. He saw the document as showing 'the truth'; all people involved should follow the written regulations and the truthfulness of the document. The people who did not follow the warranty conditions needed to be corrected.

- P4 saw the value of flexibility as very important, particularly in conflict situations. He stated that people should prove everything before they made incorrect statements; otherwise they would descend into a war, something that he did not appreciate.

- In P4's value system, the industrial virtue of punctuality was rated highly, which contrasted with the value priorities of a female colleague.

He emphasised that the conflict was about 'coming late' to work, not about gender, race or colour.

- P5 was annoyed by top management, because he would like to experience open, top-down communication. He would also like to experience the value of sound co-operation which, in his opinion, was not given in the workplace. P5 experienced a kind of 'blocking' from a female colleague. However, P5 was still trying to be empathetic and to understand her female colleague. However, she admitted to feeling a deep distrust towards her colleague.

- P6 was told by her superior to be open-minded towards other colleagues and her future in the company. However, she found it difficult to apply this, because she felt hurt by the colleague calling her 'girlie'. To her, this was an offence, because it indicated a lack of respect.

- P6's value orientations were not matched and in her hurt she screamed at her colleague, who criticised her for her emotional behaviour and lack of communication skills. She experienced it as unfair that Blacks were receiving special protection in their jobs, simply because of their race. The values she missed were equality and lack of discrimination. Her experiences at work had caused a negative attitude towards work She observed that the Blacks were standing back, relaxing and letting others take care of the situation. The values of pride in one's work and doing one's work properly were important to her.

- P7 perceived her colleague shouting at her as being disrespectful and that the Board members had backed this disrespectful behaviour of the colleague. She did not experience any support in the conflict and the value of open and direct communication stayed unsatisfied. She felt that there was inequality of gender in the company and felt discriminated against in terms of not only gender, but also in terms of race. She asked for the introduction of ethical guidelines, which in her opinion were completely missing.

- P8 expanded values such as open-mindedness and honesty, as these traits were essential for his identity. He valued communication in general, as well as feedback from his colleagues and subordinates.

- P9 was in a conflict with a colleague; despite this conflict, the colleague chatted to him in a friendly manner in break-time. Therefore, P9 valued South African people as very open and friendly.

- P10 underlined the value of sticking to deadlines and punctuality. If these values were not met, he would become very upset. He preferred working with independently-thinking colleagues and 'suffered' when colleagues who were reactive and dependent were promoted.

- P11 valued competition, disruptions in communication and a break-down in confidence as negative in conflict situations.

- P13 referred to the conflict situation as harsh and disastrous. He liked being valued by others, while valuing others at the same time. To him valuing was shown by honesty. He strived for open and harmonious co-operation between staff members and management.

- Some core values of P14 had been hurt: his good reputation in the company had been damaged and he did not experience the necessary mutual respect with regard to race or individuality. He appealed for true racial equality.

- P15 emphasised his preference for communicating calmly and for 'making things clear'. He generally resolved conflicts in one-on-one talks, to prevent humiliating, or damaging anyone's pride.

- P17 missed the value of mutual respect in the conflict situation.

- P18 valued working hard and being successful at work. He believed in teamwork, encouraging people and mutual co-operation to achieve optimum results. He confessed that he liked to be happy, because he believed that 'happy people can achieve happy results'. But his reality perception was different: he felt disrespected and unappreciated. Conclusively, he saw the conflict not as a racial one, although he repeatedly emphasised that he was the only Indian manager among many Whites. However, he tried to keep thinking positively, because 'there is always light at the end of the tunnel'.

- P20 stated that, while he had no problem with admitting mistakes or asking for forgiveness, he became very angry when his weaknesses were abused by others. This he experienced as a break of confidence and lack of co-operation.

- P21 values straightforwardness and rejected the allegations that he was a liar.

- P22 emphasised that he experienced good teamwork and understanding in the company in general, but not 'bad language' in the workplace. He preferred to deal with conflicts on an interpersonal level and emphasised his concern about Black and White issues.

- Referring to his values, P23 felt reprimanded and not valued: his outspokenness, his emphasis on strong discipline and his commitment to the company were not accorded the necessary respect.

- The main value that P24 needed and missed was acceptance as a Black colleague. For him, appreciation in his job was very important.

- Concerning the values prevailing in the company, P25 identified a high level of intolerance, especially racial intolerance. To him it seems as if in this company a person's race ranked higher than his or her qualities.

- P27 judged e-mail-communication as 'unhealthy, time consuming and loaded with unimportant information'. He felt that e-mail communication weakened the clearness of direct communication.

- As for P29, two important values were at stake: do everything for the benefit of the shareholders; even if you do not like to do it, do it anyway.

- P30 felt that he was being blamed for everyone's inadequacies. He asked for self-responsibility on the part of his colleagues, because he was often criticised from German headquarters, even if he was not the person in charge.

- P32 felt disrespected by a colleague, although they both agreed that the value of co-operation in good spirit and mutual understanding was key.

- P33 complained that his core values had not been met. He wanted to treat, and communicate with colleagues in a professional way. Because this was not possible, he stepped back. His values of freedom of speech, honesty and free debate were unfulfilled. He sometimes experienced an intra-personal value conflict when he had to decide between open communication and not letting a colleague lose face.

- P35 preferred flexible and calm communication in which everybody's opinions were respected. He felt restricted by the autocratic management style of his superior, commenting that it limited free communication with his colleagues.

- P36 felt belittled, because he perceived that he was not being treated equally. He observed that the older generation of managers was treating the younger generation unequally and disrespectfully. P36 dismissed e-mail disputes as 'childish communication'.

- P37 wanted to establish a career. She was very angry that colleagues other than her were being promoted. She felt that she was being overlooked. She was disappointed and her value of equal chances was unfulfilled.

- P38 required more freedom in her work environment, complaining that she experienced too much control from a senior manager. She saw herself involved in a gender conflict, which reflected the value of fight for power. She thought that unconditional equality in terms of gender and race was important. She also regarded it as important that managerial communication should be in decent, proper wording.

- The activities initialised by the Managing Director had created a very bad climate of mistrust in P39's department. Several values had been hurt: P39 felt like wild game on a hunting safari; exposed and unprotected.

- P40 experienced a harsh 'men's world loaded with challenges' in her department. She observed a lot of arrogant behaviour that she did not like and felt that she was being treated inadequately. She stated that people in the Department were consequently frustrated and unhappy, due to unfulfilled expectations, missing support and missing reciprocity.

- According to P41, well-paid work and a good work contract would make him feel as if though he was accepted.

- P42 felt victimised, hurt and ignored since he served as a member of a hearing. He expected more respect from top management, so that he could also pass on the respect to his subordinates.

- The value of mutual respect helped P43 to minimise the conflict experienced.

- P44 rated the value of patience very high, but complained that her colleague was impatient, upset, complaining and rude. She valued tolerance, calmness and the values she experienced in her family, such as 'holding close relationships to each other'. In case of disagreements, she valued a calm nature that could bring conflicting parties together.

- P45 had been hurt, not only by the arrogance of one manager, who had spoken poorly of P45 over the internal radio, but also by the fact that his colleagues had listened to the radio speech. He felt victimised and helpless, because he could not react adequately and did not get any support.

Having presented the extractions of value statements in this section, it is now possible to take a closer look at the leading values and attitudes of all interviewees who commented on this topic to further illustrate Research question 2, namely *Which values can be identified and clustered?*
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6.5.1   Leading values and attitudes

The key words from P1 to P45 contribute to the value factor V. In the following, negatively connoted values will be transformed into positively connoted values through a 'reframing procedure'. If, for example, P2 spoke of 'bad behaviour like shouting', this statement will be reframed into the value of 'politeness'. Table 6.10 below lists the positive values mentioned by the interviewed managers and the reframed value statements.

Table 6.10: Values and reframed values

P1 to P45	Values and reframed values
P1	Pleasure, enjoyment, helpfulness, honesty
P2	Politeness, commitment to company
P3	Transparency, truth, clear orders
P4	Flexibility, prove properly, punctuality, equality of man
P5	Transparency, open communication, sensitivity
P6	Openmindedness, equality of race and gender, pride in work
P7	Respectful behaviour, equality of race and gender, ethical principles
P8	Openmindedness, honesty, acceptance through feedback, friendliness
P10	Punctuality, independence
P11	Competition
P13	Confidence, appreciation, openness, harmony, co-operation
P14	Equality of race
P15	Politeness, calmness
P17	Respect
P18	Working hard, success, teamwork, achievement, appreciation, equality, optimism
P20	Forgiveness, co-operation
P21	Straightforwardness, truthfulness
P22	Teamwork, politeness
P23	Acceptance, discipline, straightforwardness, commitment to company
P24	Equality of race, appreciation
P25	Racial tolerance, humanity
P27	Personal communication, time value
P29	Benefit of shareholders, clear hierarchy
P30	Self-responsibility
P32	Respect, co-operation, mutual understanding
P33	Freedom of speech, open communication, respect, honesty
P35	Calm communication, free communication
P36	Respect, equality
P37	Equal treatment
P38	Freedom of work, equality of race and gender, decent communication
P39	Trust, peaceful social environment
P40	Equality of gender, giving and taking, human equality
P41	Acceptance through adequate salary
P42	Respect, recognition
P43	Mutual respect
P44	Family values, respect for parents, calm communication
P44	open and proactive communication, mutual respect

Source: author's own construction

The values and reframed values have been incorporated into the following value frequency profile in Table 6.11 in which, for example, the value equality includes race; gender and human equality; and communication, for example, includes open, personal, free, decent, calm and proactive communication. The interviewees, for example, emphasised the importance of open communication three times, and of calm communication twice. Other attributes to communication identified were 'free', 'decent' and 'proactive'. Calmness and politeness were also very important for the interviewees, while honesty and truth were mentioned in five conflict narrations.

In the narrated conflicts, the values mentioned in Table 6.10 were experienced as being unfulfilled and therefore lead to conflict (as described by Burton, 1990a, Chapter 3, Section 3.4.4.

Table 6.11: Values and frequencies

VALUE	FREQUENCY
Equality	11
Communication	08
Respect	08
Openmindedness	03
Honesty/Truth	03
Calmness	03
Appreciation	03
Politeness	03
Co-operation	03
Teamwork	02
Punctuality	02

Source: author's own construction

Having stated the values and their frequency, the Research question 2.1 concerning which value domains of Schwartz and Bilsky (1987:550pp) are matched, will be answered in the following section.

6.5.2   Values attached to value domains

In this section, the Research question 2.1 will be answered:

Which value domains of Schwartz and Bilsky (1987) are matched by the inductively analysed values of P1 to P45?

Each mentioned value is marked in Table 6.12 with regard to the value domain of Schwartz and Bilsky (1987:550pp).

If more than one value was mentioned, by any one interviewee, that matches one value domain, this will be indicated with one **x** only. The sign **(x)** means that the attribution of the value to this value domain is ambiguous and can not explicitly be attributed to the domain.

Table 6.12: Values in value domains

P1 to P45	Power	Achieve-ment	Hedonism	Stimu-lation	Self-direction	Univer-salisms	Bene-volence	Tradi-tion	Confor-mity	Secu-rity
1			x				x			
2									x	
3					x			X		
4						x			x	
5						x				
6		x				x				
7						x				x
8			x			x	x			
10					x				x	
11		x								
13						x				x
14						x				
15									x	x
17						x				
18		x			x	x				
20							x		x	
21					x	x				
22									x	
23						x	x		x	
24						x				
25						x				
27	(x)									
29							x			x
30					x					
32						x			x	
33					x	x	x			
35						x			x	
36						x				
37						x				
38					x	x			x	
39									(x)	x
40						x		x		
41	x									
42						x				
43						x				
44									x	x
45					x	x				
Total	2	3	2	0	8	23	6	2	12	6

Source: author's own construction

The matching procedure, as shown in Table 6.12, revealed the following:

The value domain of universalism is highly scored: 23 out of 37 managers mentioned values attached to this domain. This leads to the assumption that

universalistic values such as respect, transparency, openmindedness, tolerance, understanding and appreciation are highly vulnerable in conflicts.

The value domain of conformity scored the second highest with twelve marks. This domain includes values such as obedience, politeness, honouring parents, sticking to norms and orders, and restraining of emotional impulses like shouting. These findings lead to the assumption that interviewees value conflict partners with a calm and polite demeanour.

The value domain of self-direction is also appreciated, with a score of eight marks. This domain attaches to singular values, such as independent thought, exploring the truth, freedom, and the direct expression of the personality.

The value domain of benevolence scored six marks. It contains values that serve the enhancement and welfare of people with whom one is in frequent personal contact, for example, to be helpful, honest, forgiving, and mutually giving and taking. Obviously, these kinds of values were not respected in many of the conflicts recounted and, therefore, need to be re-established to guarantee effective co-operation in the company.

The value domain of security, which includes values such as harmony, trust in the social order and a peaceful social environment, scored six marks. It is evident that the work of individuals and teams in a company are more giving and satisfying if social parameters are accepted and the commitment of the interviewees involved are secured.

Power is another important value domain, even if it is not marked very often. Many conflicts that belong to another value domain are at the same time also attached to power issues, like the conflicts reported in the category of Position and Competition (Chapter 6, Section 6.4.2). Examining the factor of Identity (Chapter 6, Section 6.6), several statements indicated that power was involved.

The domain of stimulation is not represented at all. This finding may be influenced through the fact that the work values of these interviewees did not necessarily coincide with stimulation values.

The value of personal communication was very important for the participating interviewees in the selected company. This became obvious through the conflicts that erupted through virtual communication, as well as the strong emphasis on communication in general. Several interviewees complained that the collateral effects of digital information exchange had resulted in an abstract communication structure that was dismantled from any analogue, live human contact.

Having discussed Research questions 2 and 2.1, the following Section 6.6 will address Research questions 3 and 3.1, as stated in Chapter 1, Section 1.2.1.

6.6   IDENTITY FACTORS

This section refers to the identity factor in the narratives of P1 to P45 by addressing the following two Research questions:

3.   Which identity aspects occur in experienced conflict situations?

3.1   Which identity aspects strengthen or weaken the identity?

With reference to these research questions, it is important to note that 37 out of the 45 interviewees commented on identity issues. Eight interviewees did not comment on identity issues (P16; P17; P22; P26; P29; P30; P33; P41).

After the presentation of the identity factor, aspects that weakened and strengthened identity in the context of the narrated conflicts will be presented.

In the following section, extracts of content analysis with regard to identity key words are presented:

- In terms of his identity, P1 displayed an ambitious personality with high family values. He saw himself as a family person who wanted to guarantee a superior lifestyle for his family.

- P2 experienced a weakened identity, because he learnt of the illegal activities in which customers were involved. He was disillusioned, fed up and did not have any interest in working under the prevailing circumstances anymore.

- P3 expressed that he was well aligned in terms of his identity and his job. He defined himself as strong minded and believing in the truth and transparency of systems. As a result of his strong identity, he was not personally irritated by the warranty conflicts experienced.

- P4's identity concept was based on conservative values, 'I am still from the old school…', which stand for an authoritarian management style and directive leadership to reduce the daily chaos.

- P5 defined himself as a strong personality, which he saw as very important for leadership purposes. He saw himself as sympathetic and able to share the feelings of colleagues who were in a conflict with him.

- P6's identity had been shattered by negative e-mail communication which she judged as a personal attack. She found it difficult to defend herself and felt abused and misused, particularly with regard to her gender. In the relevant conflict she had even refused to accept the apology from her counterpart, but she stated that she generally loved everybody. She was frustrated and aggravated with the conflict, which had evolved into a nightmare, and she was particularly afraid of being labelled a racist.

- P7 felt very weak and scared, because she worked in a situation of permanent threat, which had eroded her courage to say what she wanted to say and stand up for herself.

- P8 described himself as open-minded and honest, values which contributed essentially to his identity. He is a 'communicating type of person', expecting more feedback from his team than he was receiving.

- The conflict recounted by P9 had shaken his identity. For him, the direct communication approach, truth and straightforwardness were of high importance.

- P10 referred to the fact that other people judged him as being pedantic, but he believed in not forcing others to adopt one's way of thinking.

- P11 too, believed that one should not force one's ideas on other people. He preferred lateral thinking and liked to listen to other people's ideas. P11 confessed that he, in his identity, was only as strong as the people who worked for him.

- In terms of identity, P12 described himself as a strong character who was convinced that his position on issues was correct.

- P13's identity seemed to be very strong; he understood his colleagues and had many reliable colleagues around him. He was diplomatic and resorted to negotiation in conflict situations.

- P14 was open and truthful and respected any form of possession. His identity had been injured through the various intrigues in the experienced conflict. He was very sensitive.

- P15 described himself as familiar with intercultural perceptions. He was able to see and understand the differences between the European culture and the African culture, because he usually implemented a change of perspective.

- P18 felt unwanted and victimised. He questioned his own identity; he had lost confidence and faith in others; and did not have reliable relationships.

- P19 described himself as strict, disciplined and limiting. He would like to be a participative manager but, at the same time, he was proud of being able to control and being strict.

- P20's identity was based on truth and the acceptance of balance instead of resorting to a fight.

- P21 admitted to possessing a very strong identity, sometimes maybe too strong. He likes to deal, and interact with other people.

- P23 declared that he had a small tolerance towards incapability and incompetence. He emphasised his own discipline and dedication to the job, feeling that this legitimised his right to openly criticise others. At the same time, he did not like to be offended by others. He also felt offended by things such as a colleague's neglect to shave in the morning.

- P24 defined himself as Black and experiencing a minority-majority conflict. He perceived that he became a 'yes-man' in an environment where he was a member of a minority group or others would destroy him. Therefore, he had to appear strong and hard.

- P25 felt that the corporate identity of the company was still immature. The staff members were not able to manage the diversity among themselves and, instead, constantly fought about personal issues. P25 was hurt by the narrated conflict: he had become extremely belligerent and aggressive, because he felt himself robbed of opportunities. He felt ostracized; in consequence he had become depressed; undergoing a change of identity. He felt that his identity was spoiled and he only stayed on in the company to 'clean name'.

- P27 had a defensive communication style and therefore took the experienced conflict personally. He felt that his identity was being questioned

- P28 confessed that his identity was strong, as was evident from his expressive body language.

- P31 felt frustrated and his identity was shaken. His identity was built on three principles: work promptly, efficiently and do not let customers wait. P31 desired more responsibility and options to make his own decisions and take more risks.

- P32 wanted to enhance the ability of being direct and clear.

- P34 was suffering from an identity crisis: he was worried about the conflict and irritated about its escalation. In order to stabilise his shaken identity he asks for opportunities to compete with others. He would like to get a more challenging job.

- P35's identity was unbalanced, because he could not negotiate his interests and had, therefore, become very frustrated.

- P36 wanted to foster his personal development and free enhancement, but he felt limited by the conflict. The 'belittling' he experienced from a colleague was interpreted as minimising his personality and his dignity.

- P37 defined her identity as helpful and benevolent. She had a forgiving and forgetting attitude. At the same time, she acknowledged her own weakness in not being able to say 'no'. She did not like to give any semblance of being a jealous person.

- P38 experienced a loss of integrity due to the deep conflict she had experienced.

- P39 missed freedom of speech and freedom in the job and therefore felt restricted in identity.

- P40 defined herself indirectly in terms of gender, with special regard to the experienced conflict. P40 prides herself in being straightforward and direct. She liked to show her emotions, which she interpreted as being passionate. She did not like to keep quiet in any conflict, but at the same time she was frustrated that she could not always change the conditions and structures. Therefore she did not always feel integrity within herself.

- P41 felt that his identity had been shaken. He did not feel dedicated to his job, but concentrated on his work. The intra-personal conflict had impacted on his identity concept.

- P42's identity was stable and optimistic. He was an open person with outgoing nature. He saw everybody as equals. For him, the future was positive, because he thought positively. He was prepared to deal with long-term difficulties in his job.

- P43 felt self-motivated. However, considering massive changes in top management, he was doubtful of how he would manage future challenges.

- P44 was self-reliant and self-confident, thanks to her happy and nurturing childhood years. Family values and a sense of meaningfulness strengthened her identity.

- P45 wanted to experience equal treatment and also treat others equally. He also wanted his privacy protected and not be exposed by radiocast to this colleagues.

Having presented the identity factor according to Research question 3, an overview of aspects contributing to identity factor (I) will be given. The Research question 3.1 – *Which identity aspects strengthen or weaken the identity?* – will be addressed below.

Table 6.13 shows the aspects from the narratives of P1 to P45 that contribute to the factor of identity (I). The narratives which do not include aspects of identity are omitted (P16, P17, P22, P26, P29, P30, P33, P41). Determined aspects such as 'ambitious, strong leadership, truth orientation, being stable or optimistic' contribute to the definition of a strong identity (indicated in Table 6.13 with **+**). Key words such as 'intimidated, lost courage, victimise' lead to the definition of a weak identity (indicated in Table 6.13 with **-**).

Key words that combine positive and negative statements, such as

- 'cannot refuse' plus 'being partially frustrated', as well as

- 'doubts of future' plus 'self-motivating'

are defined as being neutral (**+-**) and lead to an identity which is in a middle position between strong and weak.

Table 6.13: Identity aspects

P	Aspects that contribute to the factor of identity	Identity
1	Ambitious, supporting family,	+
2	Limited due to company philosophy	-
3	Strongminded, likes transparency	+
4	Strong leadership, conservative values	+
5	Sympathetic	+
6	Personally hurt through bullying	-
7	Intimidated, lost courage	-
8	Needs feedback, optimistic	+
9	Truth-oriented, direct approach	+
10	Pedantic, but fair	+
11	Communicative and permissive personality	+
12	Self-convinced	+

Table 6.13: Identity aspects (continued)

P	Aspects that contribute to the factor of identity	Identity
13	Social networking	+
14	Sensitive, truth-oriented, facing intrigue	+-
15	Multiple identity, strong coping strategies	+
18	Victimised, losing trust	-
19	Strict, power, controlling	+
20	Truth-oriented, avoiding conflict	+
21	Friendly, networking by dealing with people	+
23	Short tolerance, high control level	+
24	Conscious Black, fighting for rights	+
25	Optimistic for education, but ostracised	-
27	Defensive, takes conflict personally	-
28	Conscious of effective body language	+
31	Feels limited, disappointed	-
32	Optimist, works on his competence to be clear	+
34	Identity crisis, disoriented, irritated	-
35	Feels sandwiched, deeply frustrated	-
36	Feels hurt in his dignity and put down	-
37	Benevolent, cannot refuse	+-
38	Integrity injured	-
39	Integrity injured, no freedom of mind	-
40	Straight, but partially frustrated	+-
42	Stable, optimistic, outgoing nature	+
43	Self-motivating, doubts for future	+-
44	Family-oriented, strong belief in meaning of life	+
45	Privacy of person not respected, confronting	+-

Source: author's own construction

The main findings from Table 6.13 can be summarised as follows:

The findings show that 12 out of 37 (32.4 per cent) identity statements lead to the assumption that they tend to weaken the identity of the interviewees in the narrated conflict.

Five out of 37 (13.5 per cent) interviewees' statements on identity are assumed to have had a rather neutral impact on their identities. That means that positive and negative statements with regard to identity are balanced.

Altogether 20 out of 37 (54.1 per cent) statements on interviewees' identities are assumed to have impacted positively on their identities and to, therefore, rather have strengthened their identities in the context of the conflict narrative.

Further analysis of the data in Table 6.12 confirms that both external and internal aspects had influenced the interviewees' concept of identity and, therefore, either weakening and strengthening aspects of identity.

The interviewees experienced external aspects, which influenced their identities negatively and weakening, such as:

- philosophy of company, which was not considered sound;

- e-mail-culture facilitated intrigues and bullying;

- intimidation and ostracising by colleagues;

- race-related treatment;

- inadequate managerial behaviour; and

- personal privacy not respected.

These mentioned external aspects indicate that interviewees experienced environmental aspects related to ways of communication, behaviour and treatment and organisational aspects as particularly weakening.

Apart from the external aspects, interviewees also experienced internal aspects that impacted negatively on their identity concept. These internal aspects, as listed below, refer mainly to the intra-personal aspects of identity:

- loss of face;

- lack of courage;

- lack of trust;

- defensive or volative approach;

- taking conflicts personally; and

- injured integrity.

These aspects refer mainly to the intra-personal aspects of identity.

Apart from the negatively experienced internal and external aspects, there were also positively experienced aspects that seemed to strengthen the identities of the interviewees and their identity concepts. The following positive external aspects of identity were particularly singled out:

- family support;
- social network; and
- a positive attitude towards the corporate identity of the organisation.

This shows that positive relationships inside and outside of the organisation tended to strengthen the identity aspects of interviewees who found themselves in work-related conflict.

Besides the external aspects, numerous internal aspects were identified that impacted positively on interviewees' identities and identity concepts:

- self-motivation;
- strong-mindedness;
- strong leadership;
- sympathy;
- optimism;
- truth orientation;
- direct approach;
- controlling;
- coping strategies; and
- conscious of his or her own identity.

Obviously, in work-related conflicts, the internal aspects impacting positively on identity were more frequently represented in the statements of interviewees whilst they experience work-related conflicts, rather than the external aspects. That leads to the conclusion that a positive intra-personal attitude in conflicts of interviewees – which is built on a positive self-image (strong-mindedness, sympathetic, optimistic) and clear guidelines, such as truth-orientation, controlling and coping strategies – supports their ability to cope with conflict situations.

Interviewees with strong identity aspects found it easier to manage the described conflict situations than interviewees with weak identity aspects. This assumption is supported by the findings in Table 6.13 that conflicts linked to rather negative identity aspects also showed conflict resolution strategies that did not aim at win-win-solutions, such as, for example, in P2, P7 and P18.

Weakened identity aspects, such as feeling limitations, intimidation or lost courage, loss of trust or victimisation, lead to conflict resolution processes such as complaining, calming down, knocking out, resigning or transferring. In contrast, strengthening identity aspects, such as those experienced in P3, P5 and P14 (including strongmindedness, sympathy, sensitivity and truth orientation) lead to conflict resolution strategies that aimed at win-win-solutions, such as mediation, integration, intervention, co-operation and hearing.

Having addressed research question 3 and 3.1, Section 6.7 will address Research question 4 (as defined in Chapter 1, Section 1.2.1): *Which statements on conflict resolution and conflict management can be identified and clustered?*

6.7   CONFLICT RESOLUTION FACTORS

This section views the interviewees' statements on conflict resolution and management. The conflict resolution factor of the narratives of P1 to P45 will be presented. Altogether 41 out of the 45 participating interviewees commented on the question of conflict management procedures. Four interviewees (P16; P26; P31; P41) did not respond to this question. The findings are as follows:

- P1 preferred the avoidance of conflicts or direct confrontations for conflict resolution.

- P2 wanted to resolve the conflict he experienced by 'knocking the customer out'; by complaining to management; by going for a hearing; by shutting up; or by calming down.

- P3 preferred to mediate until the conflicting parties accepted the results.

- Five conflict resolution options were given by P4: 'stick to the things';'don't get involved in a sort of argument';'avoid the conflict to prevent chaos', but also 'talk again' about the conflict and if the conflict cannot be resolved by talking, he recommended, 'take the necessary disciplinary steps'.

- Regarding conflict resolution, P5 was convinced that one necessary attribute was a steady awareness of what was happening. The integration of colleagues into co-operative work was also a necessary measure, but tasks could also be separated by Board members or staff members could be transferred to another department.

- P6 had been transferred to another department to resolve the conflict, but the conflict was still ongoing because her new superior was somehow involved in the conflict. P6 felt victimised and was convinced that the conflict was gender-related. In order to resolve the conflict P6 wanted to take disciplinary steps, but felt that the transfer was the better option.

- P6 stated that the finalising of the tender project had ended the conflict, but that sitting together and talking could have been an option.

- For P7, the only option to resolve the conflict was to leave the company, because the Board did not help her to resolve the conflict.

- P8 asked for more feedback to prevent conflicts.

- P9 regarded dismissal as the only solution in the described conflict situation.

- P10 recommended quarterly reviews of subordinates to avoid conflicting situations regarding the achievement of certain standards. P10 negotiated in conflicts, compromised and agreed and convinced proposals so that all parties were happy.

- P11 suggested: identify the real problem; collect all knowledge available in the team; and use 'lateral' thinking, mediating and advising for conflict management.

- P12 contended that communication was the best strategy for conflict resolution, if linked to the overall goal of benefiting the company.

- Conflict management is a team issue and mediation should be restricted to one's own department (P13).

- P14 cleared his sullied reputation by conflict resolution via a successful hearing, but was not fully satisfied. Other ways of conflict resolution are: working hand in hand; being co-operative; and not looking at race or other differences.

- P15 calmed down ruffled feathers in conflict situations and mediated between parties.

- Three options for conflict resolution were given by P17: intervention by the manager by means of giving an order that, during working hours, all communication and correspondence had to be in English; secondly, a general solution that one should talk in a language known by the other person; thirdly, creating more transparency to diminish the opportunities for failure and conflict. And, importantly, always brief the top level.

- In order to regain satisfaction and respect, P18 reflected conflict resolution only in terms of leaving the company or moving to another division.

- P19 saw companies' rules and procedures as useful tools for conflict resolution.

- P20 preferred a strategic, standing pricing system to hold prices constant and thus avoid market rippling. On the level of communication, P20 preferred the truth and desired open and free discussions.

- P21 suggested that by talking through the problem on relationship level and subsequent mutual apologising, a satisfying conflict resolution was possible for both parties.

- P22 developed four options of conflict resolution: exploring the problem; simply talking about the issue internally; apologising to each other; and mediating. Intercultural conflict management – in this case a White mediator mediating an Indian and a Black – seemed to resolve the problem best.

- P23's recommendation to conflict resolution entailed the following action: taking the parties involved from their job to his job, so that they could see and understand the respective rankings of importance of his and their work fields. His field should come first.

- Conflict resolution: Be hard and use hard language to make the others understand. Fight for your rights. But besides this, P24 desired top management to help resolve the problems or to make use of external consultancy.

- P25 preferred to follow the disciplinary hearing process or take juridical steps and employ lawyers. Finally, the mutual interchange of facts and figures seemed to P25 be the best way of conflict prevention.

- P27 emphasised that conflicts needed to be resolved on a one-on-one basis, as this would ensure that the conflict was resolved quicker and not become a big issue.

- For P28, negotiations, where every person got the chance to give his or her own views, were the best way of resolving conflicts.

- P29 preferred the avoidance of conflict or forwarding it to a higher level. He stated that any arbitration should come from the top-down, and not from the same level.

- Conflicts could best be solved if there was improved communication between the managers. P30 recommended room meetings, where issues could be discussed and people felt more comfortable.

- The narrated conflict could be successfully resolved by a disciplinary hearing, according to P32.

- P33 solved his problem by stepping back and remaining silent, but he identified four ways of professional conflict resolution: to provide clear explanations; adopt a diplomatic style; avoid a public broadcast of the conflict; and refuse official complaints. In the case of serious conflicts, ask for help from the Human Resources Department.

- For P34, conflicts could be resolved if everybody calmed down.

- P35 negotiated to achieve conflict resolution.

- P36 suggested two options of conflict resolution: straight communication and direct discussion with the conflicting party; or resolution at top management level.

- In terms of conflict resolution, P37 preferred avoidance through staying in the background or keeping away from the conflicting party. She also preferred to forgive a person who had wronged her.

- P38 offered several options for conflict resolution: if there was no other way, she would lodge a formal grievance with her manager to solve the conflict on a professional basis. She would also like to prevent conflicts through communication or round-table talks, where every voice received equal value.

- P39 saw no conflict resolution option, except to remove the person serving in the Managing Director's position.

- P40 saw only one option for conflict resolution, namely separating the two branches involved in the conflict.

- P42 offered several conflict resolution options: conflict avoidance; compromise; round-table talks; win-win solutions; dismissal; and the official external way to the labour court.

- For P43, conflict resolution meant to withdraw from any critical situation.

- P44 resolved the conflict by sending an e-mail to top management to informing them of the issue and demand a proper apology.

- For P45, conflict resolution consisted in contacting the General Manager (GM).

From these statements contributing to the conflict resolution factor (CR), the following aspects have been extracted, as shown in Table 6.14:

Table 6.14: Conflict resolution aspects

P1 to P45	Conflict resolution aspects
P1	Avoidance, direct confrontation
P2	Complaining, calm down, knock out
P3	Mediation
P4	Talks, avoidance, disciplinary steps
P5	Integration, intervention
P6	Talks, intervention
P7	Resignation
P8	Talks
P9	Dismissal
P10	Negotiation, compromise
P11	Advising, mediation
P12	Talks
P13	Mediation, team building
P14	Co-operation, hearings
P15	Mediation, calming down
P17	Transparency, intervention
P18	Transfer
P19	Rules and procedures
P20	Open communication
P21	Talks, apologise
P22	Mediation (intercultural mediation), talks, apologise
P23	Roleplay, change of perspective
P24	Consultation, intervention
P25	Communication, hearing, lawyer
P27	Talk face to face
P28	Negotiations
P30	Discussion at room meetings
P32	Hearings
P33	Diplomatic style, step back
P34	Calming down
P35	Negotiation
P36	Straight communication, intervention
P37	Avoidance, forgiveness
P38	Round-table talks, grievance
P39	Dismissal
P40	Structural change in company
P42	Dismissal, compromise, round table, avoidance, external lawyers
P43	Avoidance
P44	Apologise, intervention
P45	Contact GM

Source: author's own construction

The extracted aspects in Table 6.14 can be grouped into nine different conflict resolution clusters, to provide an overview of conflict resolution strategies in the selected organisation:

- avoidance (conflict prevention);
- apologise (forgiveness);
- mediation;
- negotiation (advice and consultation);
- communication (face-to-face communication);
- internal intervention (grievance, hearing, complaint);
- transfer (resign, dismissal);
- external intervention (lawyer, trial); and
- other resolution measures.

Table 6.15, shows the distribution of frequencies of aspects belonging to the nine conflict resolution clusters.

Table 6.15: Conflict resolution clusters

P1 to P45	Avoid-ance	Apolo-gise	Medi-ation	Negotia-tion	Communi-cation	Internal inter-vention	Trans fer	External interven-tion	Other
1	x				x				
2						x			x
3			x						
4	x				x	x			
5									x
6					x				
7					x		x		
8						x			
9							x		
10				x					
11			x	x					
12					x				
13			x						x
14						x			x
15		x							x
17					x	x			
18							x		
19									x
20					x				
21		x			x				
22		x	x		x				
23									x
24				x		x			
25					x	x		x	
27					x				
28				x					
29	x					x			
30					x				
32						x			
33	x			x					
34									x
35				x					
36					x	x			
37	x	x							
38					x	x			
39							x		

Table 6.15: Conflict resolution clusters (continued)

P1 to P45	Avoid-ance	Apolo-gise	Medi-ation	Negotia-tion	Communi-cation	Internal inter-vention	Trans fer	External interven-tion	Other
40									x
42	x			X			x	x	
43	x								
44		x				x			
45						x			
P1 to P45	7	5	4	7	14	13	5	2	9

Source: author's own construction

In summary, the findings regarding the statements of P1 to 45, regarding the factor conflict resolution (CR), revealed that conflict resolution is linked to conflict preventive measures such as communication, internal intervention, avoidance or negotiation to resolve conflicts.

The main findings pertaining to Table 6.15 can be summarised as follows:

- Regarding the communication cluster, 14 out of 41 interviewees (34.2 per cent) preferred measures such as talking, round table talks, smooth communication and room meetings.

- Popular also was the measure of internal intervention (31.7 per cent); no less than 13 interviewees preferred the formalised structure provided by the organisation in order to appease the internal conflicts.

- A cluster of other measures was proposed by nine interviewees (22 per cent). This cluster contained the following conflict resolution options, such as:
  - restructuring the interdepartmental relationship in the company (P40);
  - roleplay ('change the workbench') to facilitate altering the perspective of the conflicting parties (P23);
  - knock out the conflicting party (P2);
  - hold up the rules and procedures of the company (P19);
  - integration (P5);
  - team building and co-operation (P13; P14); and calm down (P15).

- Seven interviewees (17.1 per cent) preferred negotiation, advice and consultancy as adequate conflict resolution strategies.

- The same ratio of interviewees (17.1 per cent) preferred to precede an open conflict through avoiding behaviour, such as stepping back or withdrawal.

- Only five interviewees (12.2 per cent) appreciated a personal apology and forgiveness. For them, an apology played an important role in a good work climate.

- However, in that company conflicts were mainly resolved through internal intervention, for 13 managers (31.7 per cent); apologies played only a minimal role.

- Another five interviewees (12.2 per cent) preferred dismissal, transfer or resignation as the optimal solutions in conflict situations.

- Four interviewees (9.8 per cent) mentioned mediation as an adequate tool for conflict management. These interviewees defined mediation differently, but all referred to the benefit of win-win solutions, in contrast to other formal procedures. Only one interviewee showed any competence in intercultural mediation (P22).

- Two interviewees (4.9 per cent) only proposed external solutions through lawyers and labour court trials.

Based on a review of the findings, research question 4 – *Which statements on conflict resolution and conflict management can be identified and clustered?* – could be answered successfully.

Therefore, Research question 5 (Chapter 1, Section 1.2.1) will be addressed in Section 6.8.

6.8 MANAGEMENT STYLE FACTORS

This section provides an insight into management styles in the context of experienced and narrated conflicts. The following will refer to the two Research questions:

5. *Which management styles are exhibited by the managers?*

5.1 *How do the management styles relate to conflict management?*

Management styles are strongly connected to conflict resolution strategies, discussed in Chapter 3, Section 3.3.3. The management styles factor of the narratives of P1 to P45 will be presented. Altogether 42 out of the 45 interviewees commented on their own management styles. Three interviewees (P16; P26; P31) did not respond to Research question 5, as stated previously.

- P1's management style indicated smooth and sound co-operation with his counterparts in Germany. P1 knew how to construct and maintain a cooperative partnership on both sides, mainly through small talk, such as talking about common issues of mutual interest, like football. This kind of communication made people feel comfortable. In conflict situations, P1 tried to calm down everybody and he preferred to adapt in any way.

- P2 suggested that the management style should help to enforce rules and regularities and change the policy with regard to customers: a regular check-up with the customer; and referring to the company's guidelines would be helpful. Clear messages needed to be send to the customer if he did not accept company guidelines.

- P3 was proud of his management style, because it was very successful: first of all, he tried to make the company system transparent to anyone. Then, he introduced the concept of warranty and maintenance contracts. A hundred per cent support from his subordinates was a guiding motivational rule for P3. He 'would go to war with his followers', because he knew that success 'lies in the people themselves'. However, he cautioned a manager should not be too close to some persons, to avoid allegations of unequal treatment.

- P4 had experienced a recent change in his management style: it had become more interactive, and he tried to listen to others' opinions. He also tried to communicate in conflict situations.

- Her management style is very participative and integrative, underlined P5.

- P6 described her management style as not blowing things up and forgetting about them soon, so that they 'don't eat away all of her personality'.

- Looking at her own management style, P7 emphasised that: management styles should include 'no mannerism, no shouting at people, no talking bad about people, no strict ruling from the top'. P7 tried to avoid these negative aspects in management.

- Regarding managing styles, P8 was clear about what should be done: 'analysing people, looking at communication modes, transferring responsibility to team colleagues'. This would ensure that his colleagues 'feel appreciated and important and won't go beyond limits'.

- P9 basically followed an open-door policy, which served to build trust. He also avoided hidden agendas. Building trust included tools such as: 'share information with the involved people and making files transparent'.

- P10's management style was to stick to basic rules, which he called 'old fashioned'. He also tried to convince his staff members to follow these rules, such as being punctual and attaining given standards. His goal was to empower people and let them work for him in a proactive way and to teach them responsibility. He liked to cooperate with people who had their own ideas. P10 was convinced that the company needed more leaders – managers there were many of.

- P11 displayed an interesting approach to management styles. He saw himself as a buyer and his colleagues as sellers of work abilities. According to him, this approach guaranteed the enjoyment of work activities and also led to a more open and relaxed situation.

- P12 approved of the basic management styles followed during his long career with the company. His democratic style was connected with participative management, including the encouragement of people and of feedback. However, based on the fact that P12 had final responsibility, he admitted to being 'a bit autocratic'.

- Reflecting on his management style, P13 stated that he was 'easy going': he gives his subordinates time, space and freedom to achieve the targets. But in terms of obligations, P13 insisted that deadlines be honoured. He encouraged his colleagues and helped them whenever necessary.

- P14 persisted on basic rules of behaviour: 'no lies, no theft, no bullshit'. He expects mutual respect from everybody he works with. P14 kept his 'father's golden rule' in mind: only speak if you have got something to say. Otherwise, keep calm.

- P15 was people-oriented and focused on fairness, especially with African people. He listened and tried to understand other people by listening to both private and work-related stories. P15 was convinced that people generally performed better when they were happy. However, sometimes, discipline and warning is needed.

- P17 believes in an open-door policy whereby everybody can express his or her ideas. When it comes to assessments, it is better to encourage and motivate people than to reprimand them. He is pro open forums, so that everything is open and transparent and there is little space left for 'under cover talks'. This minimises conflict.

- P18 reflected that he motivates and inspires people with his management style. That makes them feel good. He knows that encouraging his subordinates creates a fair atmosphere for enhanced work: 'they even would go for you an extra mile'. However, in the beginning of a management job, P18 recommends a strong hand in order to 'wake up people'. P18 knows for sure: 'You need a long breath to succeed'.

- P19 emphasised that he is a participative manager, who maintains strict control. This kind of style impacts positively on conflict in his opinion.

- P20 drew a distinction between the German management style, which he said was very rigid, and described the South African kind of 'relationship society' that is built on personal networks and teamwork.

- In terms of management styles, P21 saw himself as a soft manager who was not autocratic and who dealt with people on a friendship basis. Whenever possible, P21 refrained from using telephone calls or e-mails to talk to the people. He preferred face-to-face communication. 21 years of communication experience at the company let him be assured that 90 per cent of the 'red alert issues' could be resolved through good personal communication.

- P22 insisted on mutual trust and confidence in management. On this basis he gave his subordinates 'free way in their work sphere'. But there were also limitations that needed to be considered. Beyond these limitations, that he did not explain, he practiced a 'nice and light communication style and an easy-going way of working'.

- P23's agenda was customer-oriented. He was committed to deadlines and thus 'one of the most reliable persons in the company'. Managing a group of subordinates he assisted them, wherever necessary. He was also benevolent in sharing some benefits from sales with his colleagues.

- P24 saw himself as a 'people's person', whose relationship-building techniques promoted mutual understanding. He also motivated and inspired his subordinates, but he was aware of his limits to satisfy all their needs. His basic communication pattern consisted of listening to his colleagues and advising them what to do. P24 preferred a transparent and informative management style.

- P25 believed in a management style that focused on objectives. He liked to communicate actively with his subordinates in order to assist them to achieve the company's objectives. Every individual was allowed to work in his or her own parameters to achieve goals. He tried to make sure that every subordinate receive an opportunity for adequate training.

- P27 was organised. His participative management style was based on flat hierarchies. He treated his colleagues 'as adults', expecting them to carry responsibility for their own work. He involved the whole staff, and not only management, in discussions.

- P28 exercised an open-door policy. He 'lends an ear to his colleagues' and gave them space to perform. However, he insisted that deadlines were not negotiable.

- P29 had changed his management style from a more autocratic to a less autocratic style. To his autocracy, he had added participative and alternative management style aspects: 20 per cent of his style was autocratic, and 80 per cent participative.

- P30 described his style as positive and open. He assessed his staff and motivated them accordingly.

- P32 emphasised that maintaining a 'medium distance' from subordinates was important. He had a helping and supportive attitude and 'lifts up' and trained his subordinates, wherever possible. In consequence, his subordinates were happy and relied on him.

- P33 liked to give his subordinates choices, but evaluated the end results of his subordinates. He refrained from using force and accompanied and guided his staff through persuasion.

- P34 was participative and a 'people's person'. He appreciated the inputs from lower levels, because subordinates could make a major contribution to sound decisions. P34 evidently preferred two-way communication between all levels in the company. He knew that people were just as strong as the people to whom they reported.

- P35 allowed his subordinates freedom to do their job, confident that the best and surprising results would emerge. If there were obstacles, his subordinates were welcome to approach him. P35 was dedicated to help them until a final resolution was reached.

- P36 emphasised that all parties should always be treated fairly and diplomatically so they would not feel their dignity affected. Everybody should be allowed to make mistakes and feel free to admit them as well.

- P37's management style was primarily person-oriented: P37 liked to listen to her colleagues, not to dominate them. She exercises an open and transparent management style: If she would leave the company, anyone could easily fill in the gap and do her job.

- P38 basically followed a democratic and participative style: she convinced people without forcing them, giving people a chance to express their opinions openly and ensuring two-way communication. She admitted her feelings and emotions in conversations. She saw herself as a leader, not a manager.

- P39 greatly admired the management style of the Managing Director, stating that he had a broad vision and did not choose personal favourites. P39 lead from the top, preferring team-oriented leadership and open-door policies and encouraging subordinates to improve their qualifications. In his opinion, nobody should be forced. If staff members were happy, that would reflect in improved results. As the previous audit had confirmed, his division's results were very good.

- P40 preferred an open-door policy, and a combination of formal and informal talks that needed to be highly confidential. She was team-oriented and defined herself as being 'captain of a ship' heading for the achievement of the company's goals and leading her team through 'smart command'.

- P41 freely acknowledged his 'German 100 per cent perfectionist' management style. He admitted to influence his subordinates to follow his preferred style. If his subordinates submitted good ideas, he would implement these.

- P42 introduced himself as non-autocratic. He believes in long-term motivation. His colleagues were free to manage their own challenges with the aid of the tools, skills and knowledge at their disposal. P42 was convinced that his subordinates could think properly for themselves, so that there was no need for him to dictate anything.

- P43 introduced himself as an 'analyst and helpful to others'. Based on his training, he knew how important it was to empower subordinates and train them in problem-solving, to help them 'stand on their own feet'.

- P44 emphasised the diversity in her staff regarding religion, socialisation and social class. She realised that diversity management was important. She preferred to relate to her subordinates and their individual capacities.

- P45 worked both for, and with his subordinates. In his opinion, this was the way to gain respect from staff members. P45 proceeded sensitively

and did not force things on colleagues or subordinates. He greatly valued input from his colleagues.

From these statements regarding the management style factor, aspects pertaining to management style can be extracted, as illustrated in Table 6.16 below.

Table 6.16: Aspects of management style factor

P1 to P45	Aspects of management style factor
P1	Co-operation with Germany, calm, seeks common interests
P2	Strict control over customers
P3	Co-operative, supports his subordinates
P4	More interactive
P5	Participative, integrative
P6	Does not blow things up
P7	Not ruling from top, democratic
P8	Transfers responsibilities to subordinates
P9	Open-door, share information with the staff members involved
P10	Leadership, basic rules, empower people
P11	Open and relaxed style, 'buys' subordinates' services
P12	Participative, democratic, encouraging
P13	Relaxed, integrative, encouraging, sticking to deadlines
P14	Stick to rules of behaviour
P15	Integrative, fairness to Blacks
P17	Open-door, participative, transparent
P18	Relaxed, integrative
P19	Participative, strict control
P20	Integrative, networking, teamworking
P21	Personal integration solves 90 per cent of red alerts
P22	Relaxed, participative
P23	Co-operative, deadline committed
P24	Relationship building, listening and advising
P25	Target-oriented, encouraging
P27	Participative, flat hierarchy
P28	Open-door, leaves space for performing
P29	Autocratic 20 per cent, participative 80 per cent
P30	Open style, motivating
P32	Leadership, support for subordinates, medium distance
P33	Convincing, give choices to subordinates
P34	Participative, a people's person
P35	Participative, supporting subordinates
P36	Integrative
P37	Open, transparent, democratic
P38	Participative, democratic
P39	Open-door leadership, vision, supportive, team oriented
P40	Open-door, team oriented
P41	Autocratic, perfectionist, following 'German style'

Table 6.16: Aspects of management style factor (continued)

P1 to P45	Aspects of management style factor
P42	Participative, free hand for colleagues
P43	Analyst, empowering colleagues
P44	Diversity management, participative
P45	Supporting subordinates, cooperative, appreciates inputs

Source: author's own construction

The extracted aspects can be clustered into the following six different management styles that were preferred by the sample of the selected organisation:

- Autocratic (for example, controlling);
- Participative (for example, supportive);
- Integrative (for example, cooperative);
- Democratic (for example, liberal);
- Transparent (for example, open-door policy); and
- Others.

Table 6.17 below shows the frequencies of aspects belonging to the six management styles. These styles contribute to transforming tensions and conflictive situations in the organisation.

Table 6.17: Management styles

P	Autocratic	Participative	Integrative	Democratic	Transparent	Other
1			x			Moderating
2	x					Control customers
3		x	x			
4						Interactive
5		x	x			
6						Moderating
7				x		
8				x		
9					x	
10	x	x				
11				x	x	Relaxed
12		x		x		

Table 6.17: Management styles (continued)

P	Autocratic	Participative	Integrative	Democratic	Transparent	Other
13	x	x	x			Relaxed
14	x					
15			x			Fairness to Blacks
17					x	
18		x			x	
19			x			Relaxed
20			x			Networking, teamwork
21			x			
22		x				Relaxed
23	x		x			
24			x			Networking
25	x	x				
27		x				Flat hierarchy
28				x	x	
29	x	x				
30		x			x	
32	x	x				
33				x		Convincing
34		x				Interactive
35		x				
36			x			
37					x	
38		x		x		
39	x				x	Teamwork, visionary
40					x	Teamwork
41	x					Perfectionist, 'German style'
42		x		x		
43		x				Analyst
44		x				Diversity management
45		x	x			
P1 to 45	10	19	12	8	9	19

Source: author's own construction

The managers interviewed admitted that they used a variety of management styles. Some interviewees stated that they combine the following styles:

- controlling deadlines, behaviour and achievement; and
- a supportive and/or liberal approach towards their subordinates.

This reveals that the interviewees resorted to different management styles according to the challenges of the situation. However, the following conflict style preferences, as shown in Table 6.17, can be presented:

- Nineteen out of 42 interviewees (45.2 per cent) preferred a participative management style that supported their subordinates.

- Twelve out of 42 interviewees (28.6 per cent) relied on an integrative management style, which was connected to co-operation.

- Ten interviewees (23.8 per cent) maintained an autocratic style, comprising controlling functions and activities.

- Nine interviewees (21.4 per cent) exercised a transparent management style, which relied on the open-door policy.

- Democratic management styles were shared by eight interviewees (19.1 per cent), who partly defined their styles as liberal.

- Altogether nineteen interviewees (45.2 per cent) presented other aspects of management styles:
  - four of these interviewees preferred a relaxed style;
  - two preferred interactive, moderating and team-oriented styles;
  - one interviewee emphasised a diversity management style;
  - one interviewee wanted to control the customers of the company;
  - one interviewee referred to his style as a 'German management style', and to himself as perfectionist;
  - one interviewee called himself an analyst; and
  - one interviewee underlined the fairness in his style, particularly with regard to Blacks.

Summarising, Research question 5.1 of *Which management styles are exhibited by the managers?* could be systematically answered. However, research question 5.1 *How do the management styles relate to conflict management?* could not be analysed from the data material, because the content analysis showed scarcity of information that related conflict management styles to conflict management strategies.

In the following section, Research question 6 *Which suggestions for improvement are mentioned?* will be addressed.

6.9   IMPROVEMENT FACTORS

This section provides insight into the need for improvement in management and conflict resolution within the organisation, as presented below. Altogether 36 out of 45 interviewees referred to the question of improvement. Nine interviewees (25 per cent) did not respond to this question (P1; P6; P12; P13; P16; P18; P26; P31; P41).

- P2 remarked that improvement needed to be linked to management policy. He was convinced that it was wrong to pursue only the happiness and satisfaction of customers. The company needed to sell and be the best, but did not need to run after the worst customers.

- Regarding improvements in the company, P3 recommended that the same language be spoken and that a corporate identity be developed. Then the customers would be secure in the knowledge that they were dealing with a 'honest company'.

- P4 recommended an improvement in management in terms of communication.

- P5 saw the need for the improvement of communication between all management levels.

- P7 saw the need for improvement in more loose and free leadership from the top.

- P8 required more and better feedback.

- The 'trust issue' within the company and between Germany and South Africa needed to be improved (P9).

- P10 identified a need for the improvement of team building exercises, for example, in so-called 'action rooms'.

- P11 recommended more education with regard to the development of goals and teamwork.

- In terms of improvements, no specific statements were made by P13.

- P14 emphasised a need for more training to prevent conflicts and hearings; especially training on how to behave during hearings.

- P15 suggested that conflict resolution procedures be improved by dealing with them much quicker.

- P17 asked for more transparency.

- P19 identified the need for improvement investments in the technical upgrading of devices.

- Improvement in management was an important issue for P20; he recommended 'structured meetings' to solve communication problems.

- P21 identified a need for the improvement of personal, direct communication.

- Better communication was needed, according to P22, especially with headquarters. He contended that the branches were too far from headquarters and that headquarters was too aloof. A restructuring process should lead to improved satisfaction among staff members.

- For P23, communication was a major problem He desired a direct and quick change to the company's communications strategy.

- His 'Black' background made P24 react very sensitively to the activities of his White management colleagues. He was convinced that the struggle against any form of racial discrimination had to be intensified, because discriminatory practices were still ruling the company.

- In terms of improvement P25 preferred a flat hierarchy, like the hierarchy followed by American managers, in contrast to the so-called German 'steep hierarchy in management'.

- P27's main suggestion for improvement was to reduce e-mail pollution and abuse to improve direct, personal communication. Teamwork needed to be improved through teambuilding exercises for management and to motivate them to pursue improved co-operation.

- P28 was in favour of more transparent top-down communication. He recommended regular meetings and improved communication channels.

- P29 identified a need for improvement in the field of communications; his concern was that some decisions were not being communicated to lower levels.

- P30 desired enhanced communication processes.

- Systems of production facility, communication and co-operation needed improvement (P32).

- Conflict resolution should be empowered through more meetings (P33).

- P34 desired improved relationships between junior and senior managers.

- P35's recommendation for improvement was unambiguous: introduce more flexibility in management and avoid the autocratic German style of leadership.

- For improvement in management, P36 recommended that staff members should comment not only about business issues, but also about private issues.

- An improvement in the policies and procedures surrounding the promotion of staff and the selection of staff for promotion was needed (P37).

- In terms of improvement, P38 emphasised communication, an open-door policy and honesty. She was convinced that training should focus on leadership skills, rather than managerial competencies.

- P39 was in favour of 'action rooms' when it came to improvement: everybody could speak out and thus diminish tensions and conflicts. Of course, the customer's satisfaction rate had to increase to 92 per cent.

- As for improvement in the company, P40 emphasised that perceptions had to change regarding the relationship between dealers and other branches, to reduce the intimidation of the dead-end people from the dealerships. A reward system should be introduced for staff who made the money for the company.

- P41 saw no need for improvement.

- P42 suggested that rumours be reduced and that transparency be highlighted on all levels.

- According to P43, the new management needed to learn about the real work processes of their subordinates to better understand them and make wise decisions.

- Management needed to move closer and become more open and transparent towards the staff members, to provide mutual understanding (P44).

- Top-down communication needed to be improved, in order to improve the flow of information to the working staff. That could achieve greater

transparency and satisfaction. Regular monthly meetings for the entire staff should be introduced.

In summary, improvements suggested by the interviewees are strongly connected to the narrated conflicts and, obviously, to communication. Table 6.18, therefore, differentiates between improvement referring to communication on the one hand, and improvement of all other aspects on the other hand.

The improvement suggestions comprise a broad variety of improvement ideas, as Table 6.18 indicates:

Table 6.18: Improvements

P1 to P45	Improvement referring to communication only	Improvement referring to other conflicts and other aspects
2		Policy towards customers
3		Corporate identity towards customers
4	Communication in general	
5	Communication top-down and bottom-up	
7		Top management should manage more freely
8	Communication in general	
9		Trust between Germany and SA headquarters
10		Team building and interface through interdepart-mental 'action rooms'
11		Education, teamwork
14		Trainings for conflict prevention
15		Internal structure of conflict resolution in the organisation
17	Transparent communication	
19		Technical upgrading
20	Communication through 'structured meetings'	
21	Communication in general	
22	Communication between branches and headquarters in SA	
23	Communication in general	
24		Fight racial discrimination

Table 6.18: Improvements (continued)

P1 to P45	Improvement referring to communication only	Improvement referring to other conflicts and other aspects
25		Build flat hierarchy, like in the United States
27	Direct communication (reduce e-mail pollution)	Teamwork
28	Communication in general	
29	Communication in general	
30	Communication in general	
32	Communication in general	
33		Conflict resolution empowerment through more meetings
34		Relationship between junior and senior management
35		Flexibility in management
36	Communication in general	
37		Promote managers
38		Real leadership, open-door policy
39	Communication through 'action rooms'	
40		Restructure equality between branches
42	Transparent communication	
43		New management must learn about company processes
44	Communication top-down, transparent communication	Management too distant from staff members
45	Communication top-down, install plenary meetings for more information, transparent communication	
1 to 45	18	20

Source: author's own construction

Based on the improvement suggestions indicated in Table 6.18, the following main pointer with regard to communication can be summarised:

- The main issue identified for improvement was communication: 18 (50 per cent) out of 36 interviewees emphasised this need.

- Seven out of these 18 interviewees suggested that communication in general should be ameliorated (38.9 per cent).

- Five interviewees (27.8 per cent) desired an improvement in top-down communication.

- Four interviewees (22.2 per cent) desired transparency to be improved.

- Two interviewees (11.1 per cent) proposed concrete measures to make communication more effective: plenary meetings; structured meetings; and 'action rooms'.

The statements regarding the improvement of other aspects in the organisation were highly diverse:

- three interviewees referred to improvement in teamwork;
- three interviewees suggested that conflict resolution processes should be improved; and
- two interviewees wanted to alter the relationships with customers.

Two unique statements reflected other improvement needs: communication via e-mail needed to be improved (e-mail pollution), since the increase in e-mail was creating problems in terms of personal communication and conflict resolution. The second statement relates to racial discrimination. With reference to the racial conflicts and the political framework, improvement was needed, one interviewee contended.

Research question 6 could be answered clearly and serves as an important indication for the recommendations presented in Chapter 8, Section 8.11. The following Section 6.10 refers to the the topic of outside intervention.

6.10   OUTSIDE INTERVENTION FACTORS

Finally, the last analytical Research question 7 deals with the question *How do managers comment on outside intervention?*

This section provides an overview of statements pertaining to the outside intervention factor in the organisation, as presented below. Altogether 41 out of 45 interviewees referred to the question of outside intervention. Four interviewees did not respond to this question (P16; P26; P28; P31; P41).

- P1 perceived a need for outside intervention and mediation if conflicting persons had 'attitude problems'.

- P2 stated the company had employed one mediator. However, he still saw the need for outside interventions.

- Outside intervention was not appreciated by P3 who preferred internal conflict management.

- P4 did not see any need for outside intervention.

- P5 did not see any need for outside intervention.

- P6 stated that outside intervention was clearly needed, also with regard to her narrated conflict situation.

- P7 appealed for outside intervention in problem-solving, rather than using internal managers.

- For P8, there was no need for outside intervention, because in his perception, conflicts could be solved internally.

- Regarding outside intervention, P9 was convinced that the company did not need mediation or outside intervention, because there were enough trained internal managers to cope with conflicts. The only outside intervention he was aware of, was the court.

- P10 stated that outside intervention was very important. He himself had a psychological consultant, who served as his mentor. This seemed to have strengthened P10's management competencies.

- Outside intervention was valued by P11, primarily to reduce the internal tunnel vision effect and to generate new ideas in conflict resolution.

- P12 stated that he had never been in a situation where he needed outside intervention or external mediation.

- P13 perceived a need for outside intervention in the form of consultants or specialists who engaged with management.

- P14 thought that conflicts needed to be resolved in and kept inside a company.

- In terms of outside intervention, P15 concluded that most of the conflicts were managed internally.

- The choice of inside or outside intervention depended on the nature of the conflict, stated P17.

- P18 was convinced that outside intervention introduced new perspectives that were more independent. P18 presented two allegories.

- P19 perceived a need for outside intervention with regard to unions and negotiation processes.

- P20 was in favour of outside intervention, provided it was linked to proper implementation with a long-term perspective.

- P21 stated his belief in the value of effective outside intervention, but commented that proper internal communication would solve most problems.

- P22 displayed a critical attitude towards outside intervention, based on his opinion that many external consultants who introduced new policies and procedures did not have adequate knowledge of the internal business.

- P23 did not value outside intervention, because in his opinion external experts would not understand the internal culture of the company.

- P24 feared that external experts would adopt the perspectives of those who signed their cheques and would therefore be biased.

- P25 regarded outside intervention as not desirable, but admitted that an objective, neutral outside view could be beneficial.

- P27 appreciated team-building exercises as a kind of outside intervention.

- P29 rejected the use of votes against outside intervention, as people from the outside might not understand the company's culture.

- Outside intervention was good for diversity management and new thought implementation. Everybody would gain something from outside intervention (P30).

- P32 perceived internals as biased and therefore voted for outside intervention. He had employed an outside expert to control the work at his branch.

- P33 considered that workers in the company might trust an outside person more than their own management in conflict management. For him, external mediation was a real option.

- Outside intervention was not needed, stated P34.

- P35 was in favour of outside intervention, provided the experts were qualified.

- As for outside intervention, P36 proposed the idea of introducing outsiders only in extreme cases – that is, not more than 1 per cent. Experts in team-building processes from the outside were also welcome.

- P37 valued the objectivity of outside intervention.

- Outside intervention was not accepted; P38 wanted managers to be able to resolve problems. If they were not, they required training in mediation skills.

- P39 did not have any definite opinion on outside intervention.

- P40's opinion on outside intervention was clear; he had experienced outside intervention, with negative results only.

- P41 says that the headquarters in Germany should gain more influence to resolve conflicts and impact on the company policies in South Africa.

- P42 did not see the need for any outside intervention.

- P43 saw no need for outside intervention, because problems could be resolved internally.

- P44 was not convinced of the value of outside intervention, because managers usually had the strength to resolve problems internally.

- P45 preferred internal intervention to outside intervention.

Having presented the statements on outside intervention from P1 to P45, it may be concluded that there were three variants of response, namely:

- pro outside intervention;

- contra outside intervention; and

- pro outside intervention only under certain conditions.

The reasons why the respondents were pro; contra; or pro outside interventions under certain conditions, are presented in Table 6.19.

Table 6.19: Outside intervention

P1 to P45	Pro OI	Contra OI	Pro OI under certain conditions	Reasons for decision
1			x	In case of attitude problems
2	x			Only one mediator available
3		x		
4		x		
5		x		
6	x			
7	x			Experience due to own conflict
8		x		
9		x		Enough training facilities

Table 6.19: Outside intervention (continued)

P1 to P45	Pro OI	Contra OI	Pro OI under certain conditions	Reasons for decision
10	x			Positive, based on use of external psychologist
11	x			Fresh ideas are introduced
12		x		
13	x			Consultants and experts
14		x		Keep issues inside
15		x		
17			x	Anything is reliable
18	x			Other perspective and independence
19	x			See trade unions
20			x	If implemented properly
21			x	Anything goes
22		x		Consultancy did not work
23		x		Outsiders do not understand
24		x		Externals would follow the cheque
25			x	Not desirable, but neutral
27			x	If teambuilding, with external experts
29		x		Externals do not understand company's culture
30	x			Good for diversity, new thinking culture
32	x			Blindness of internal staff
33	x			Externals are more trustful
34		x		
35	x			Externals are qualified
36			x	1 per cent only; 99 per cent of conflicts must stay inside
37	x			More objectivity
38		x		It's the job of managers
39		x		
40		x		Experiences with externals failed
41		x		
42		x		
43		x		Emic resolutions preferred
44		x		It's the job of managers
45		x		
1 to 45	13	21	7	

Source: author's own construction

From Table 6.19 it is evident that outside intervention was not appreciated by a majority (21 out of 41) of the interviewees interviewed (51.2 per cent). Altogether thirteen interviewees accepted outside intervention as a conflict resolution option in the organisation (31.7 per cent). A group of seven interviewees was pro outside intervention under certain conditions only (17.1 per cent).

Reasons for a positive attitude towards outside intervention were based on the following:

- avoid the tunnel thinking and blindness of internal management;
- be open for new ideas;
- have more trust;
- expect greater objectivity;
- other perspectives; and
- diversity management.

Reasons for a contra decision towards outside intervention were underpinned by the following convictions:

- the job of a manager includes conflict resolution competences;
- enough in-house training exists;
- former negative experience; and
- outsiders will not understand the company's culture.

Responses to the Research question 7 concerning how managers comment on outside intervention provides an in-depth insight in experiences of external interventions in the organisation and ideas how external intervention could lead to improvement in the organisation. This section provides direction for further recommendations in Chapter 8, Section 8.12.

6.11   SUMMARY

This chapter assesses the findings regarding research questions 1 to 7 on the folio of the biographical data and the content of P1 to P45.

The findings show that all the research questions could be answered, except question 5.1.

With reference to research questions 1 and 1.1, it can be stated that a broad spectrum of work-related conflicts had been experienced and narrated in the selected organisation. Out of the conflict issues conflict categories could be developed, including: Communication and Treatment; Position and Competition; Organisation; Race and Gender; and Composite.

With regard to research question 2, leading values and attitudes that played an important role in the conflicts could be assessed inductively. The findings show that the three leading values were: equality; communication; and respect. These values had not been fulfilled in the experienced conflict situations.

Additionally, the inductively gained values could be deductively interlinked with the value domains and value dimensions of Schwartz (1994:19pp), Schwartz and Bilsky (1987:550pp) and Kluckhohn and Stroedbeck (1961). The findings show that the three most important value domains for this sample of interviewees are: universalism; conformity; and self-direction. This leads to the following findings, namely that the managers in this organisation had a bias towards the following value dimensions: self-transcendence and conservation.

Regarding the research question on identity (research question 3), a broad spectrum of identity aspects were influenced by internal (intra-personal) and external (environmental) aspects, which impacted on conflict situations and the behaviour of managers. This finding leads to the research question regarding strengthening and weakening identity aspects. Strengthening and weakening identity aspects could be evaluated. In conclusion, interviewees who emphasised the negative external aspects of their identity had presumably developed a weakened identity. Interviewees, who emphasised the positive internal aspects of their identity, experienced themselves as strengthened and empowered to deal with conflict resolution.

Regarding conflict resolution and research question 4, it may be stated that interviewees generally preferred communication and internal intervention as conflict resolving modes. Altogether nine conflict resolution clusters could be identified and rated: communication; internal intervention; others; negotiation; avoidance; apologise; transfer; mediation; and external intervention.

In the assessment of management style (research question 5), six different management styles were identified, preferred and ranked as follows: participative; others; integrative; autocratic; transparent; and democratic. These interviewees did not relate their management styles to particular conflict management strategies, as asked for in research question 5.1.

The interviewees emphasised that the organisation needed to enhance and improve its communication and other aspects, such as teamwork, conflict resolution processes, and relationships with customers. The communication improvements related, inter alia, to: communication in general; communication between the different managerial levels (particularly top-down communication); communication in meetings; transparency of communication; and e-mail communication.

Finally, referring to research question 7, the participating interviewees generally preferred internal intervention to outside intervention. Outside intervention was not appreciated by the majority of interviewees; a minority only was pro outside intervention. The reasons offered by the interviewees of why they were in favour of outside intervention included: avoiding tunnel thinking; openness to new ideas; higher objectivity; and diversity management. Reasons for contra outside intervention consisted of, inter alia: former negative experiences; the limitations in outsiders' understanding the organisation; and the expectation that managers should be competent enough to resolve their own conflicts.

The analytical research questions having been answered, Chapter 7 will address the relational research questions 8 to 10.1, as introduced in Chapter 1, Section 1.2.2.

CHAPTER 7

RESEARCH FINDINGS – PART II

7.1   INTRODUCTION: BIOGRAPHICAL DATA, CONFLICT CATEGORIES AND CONFLICT ISSUES

Since the analytical research questions 1 to 7 were answered in Chapter 6, Chapter 7 will address the relational research questions 8 to 10.1, as previously introduced in Chapter 1, Section 1.2.2. The research questions addressed will be mentioned in the respective section in this Chapter in which they will be answered.

In the data analysis process it appears that relationships can be established between selected biographical data on the one hand, and conflict issues and conflict categories on the other hand. Therefore, research question 8 *Which interlinkages between selected biographical indicators and conflict issues are observable?* will serve to clarify the interlinkages between selected biographical indicators and conflict issues and conflict categories in Sections 7.1.1 to 7.1.5. Linkages referring to conflict issues and conflict categories (Research questions 8, 8.1-8.5) can be stated with regard to:

- gender (Chapter 7, Section 7.1.1, Research question 8.1);
- race (Chapter 7, Section 7.1.2, Research question 8.2);
- age (Chapter 7, Section 7.1.3, Research question 8.3);
- national origin (Chapter 7, Section 7.1.4, Research question 8.4); and
- location of work at headquarters and branches (Chapter 7, Section 7.1.5, Research question 8.5).

The other biographical indicators that have been gathered (marital status, duration of service, departmental belonging, position of managers and education) are not considered in the following section, because no evidence and relationship was indicated.

In the following sections, the biographical data, as mentioned below, are linked to the conflict issues and categories and will be discussed.

7.1.1   Gender, conflict issues and conflict categories

This section responds to research question 8.1: *How does the indicator of male and female impact on conflict issues?* To answer this question, Table 7.1 shows eleven conflict issues among eight female interviewees and their linkage to conflict categories which were shown in Chapter 6, Section 6.3.1, Table 6.4.

Table 7.1: Conflict category and issues of female interviewees

Conflict category	Conflict issues of female interviewees
Communication and Treatment	P6:1 – Miscommunication with boss P6:2 – Rudest e-mail P7:1 – Shouting manager P44 – Ways to do your job
Position and Competition	P5 – Competition for position P37 – Competition for position
Organisation	P7:2 – Departmental conflict
Race and Gender	P6:3 – Hiccup with Black colleague P38 – Male power P40 – Dealership and gender
Composite	P16 – No conflict

Source: author's own construction

Four conflicts linked to the conflict category of Communication and Treatment were experienced by female interviewees. Two conflicts were attached to the conflict category of Position and Competition and, finally, one conflict belonged under the conflict category of Organisation. Three conflicts were linked to the conflict category of Race and Gender. One female interviewee had not experienced any conflict.

These findings, as shown in Table 7.1, indicate that most of the conflicts were experienced in the conflict category of Communication and Treatment, followed by that of Race and Gender. This finding leads to the assumption that female interviewees were highly sensitive to communication within the organisation, particularly with regard to cross-gender communication (P6:1; P6:2; P7:1) and

intra-gender communication (P44) in the organisation. At the same time, the conflict issues of the category of Race and Gender often included aspects of communication and behaviour referring to issues of race and gender.

In comparison to the conflict narrations of female interviewees, male interviewees experienced the following conflict issues, as listed in Table 7.2. Table 7.2 shows 48 conflict issues are linked to conflict categories as experienced by 37 male interviewees.

Table 7.2: Conflict category and issues of male interviewees

Conflict category	Conflict issues of male interviewees
Communication and Treatment	P2 – Worst customer P4:2 – Lack of information P9:3 – Exploding employee P14:1 – Falsely accused of theft P15 – General Manager loses temper P17 – Afrikaans and English P18 – Share knowledge P21 – Decision-making in the field P27 – E-mail to the boss P28 – Uses vehicles' price reduction P33:3 – 'Boss does not listen to me' P36 – Childish e-mail P39:2 – Suspicion by previous Managing Director P42 – Rumours and mobbing P45 – Belittling
Position and Competition	P8 – Position overtaken P10 – Subordinates' performance P11 – Workshop competition P12:1 – High level conflict part 1 P12:2 – High level conflict part 2 P13:1 – Managing Director - tense situation P25 – Competition for position P29 – Arbitration only from superior P30 – Paperwork not in order P33:1 – Disagreement with senior P33:2 – Mistrust from German superior P34 – Position as Quality Manager P35 – Autocratic manager and customers P43 – New chairman

Table 7.2: Conflict category and issues of male interviewees (continued)

Conflict category	Conflict issues of male interviewees
Organisation	P3:1 – Warrenty P3:2 – Need of support from Board P4:1 – Training in workshops P9:1 – Mentality of mistrust P13:2 – Conflict with union P19 – Operational conflict with employees P20 – Conflict with a branch P32 – Work time company rules P41 – Germany or local contract in RSA
Race and Gender	P4:3 – Discilining a Black lady P9:2 – Black harassment P14:2 – Militant Black P22 – Racism towards a Black staff member P23 – Female accountants without ability P24 – First Black position
Composite	P1 – No conflict P26 – No record P31 – No conflict P39:1 – No conflict

Source: author's own construction

From Table 7.2 it is evident that the conflict category Composite contains four conflict issues. These four conflict issues have been subtracted from the total of 48 conflict issues of male interviewees. The remaining 44 conflict issues are distributed as follows:

- 15 conflict issues are linked to the conflict category of Communication and Treatment;

- 14 conflict issues are connected with the conflict category of Position and Competition;

- 9 conflict issues are assigned to the conflict category of Organisation; and

- 6 conflicts are linked to the conflict category of Race and Gender.

Twenty nine conflict issues of male interviewees are therefore linked to the first two conflict categories, with the main emphasis on Communication and

Treatment, followed by Position and Competition. Conflict in the categories of Organisation and Race and Gender were less important for male interviewees.

Table 7.3 shows the number of conflict issues per male and female managers according to the predetermined conflict categories.

Table 7.3: Ratios

Category	Number of issues per category: Male/ Total Issues	Number of issues per category: Female/ Total Issues	Male (percentage)	Female (percentage)
Communication and Treatment	15/48	4/11	31	36
Position and Competition	14/48	2/11	29	18
Organisation	9/48	1/11	19	9
Race and Gender	6/48	3/11	13	27
Composite	4/48	1/11	8	9

Source: author's own construction

Referring to Research question 8.1, a comparison of the number of conflict issues in the respective conflict categories experienced by male and female interviewees has revealed that:

- Male and female interviewees experienced the highest ratio, and nearly an equal ratio of conflict issues, in the category of Communication and Treatment. That means that there was no significant difference between male and female experiences with regard to the first conflict category Communication and Treatment.

- There were only significant differences in narrations between male and female interviewees in the categories Organisation and Race and

Gender. Organisational conflicts were experienced more than twice as much by male interviewees, while Race and Gender conflicts were narrated twice as much by female than by male interviewees.

With regard to the category Organisation, it can be assumed that the male interviewees were more often engaged in conflicts relating to structural and functional conflict issues, which were often more task-related and less relationship-oriented. In contrast, female interviewees were more involved in relationship-based conflicts, bound to aspects of personalities such as race and gender.

7.1.2   Race, conflict issues and conflict categories

Having presented the view of female interviewees regarding Race and Gender, this section poses research question 8.2: *How does racial belonging influence conflict issues?*

This research question will be answered from the perspective of interviewees belonging to minority groups within the organisation. The findings with regard to the White majority referring to racial and cultural issues will later on be addressed in this Chapter, Section 7.3. Therefore, Table 7.4 reflects seven conflict issues that are linked to the conflict categories, as well as conflict issues experienced by the seven interviewees of a non-White racial background who represent a minority on managerial level in the organisation: three Indian, two Black and one Coloured interviewee contributed their conflict narrations. Altogether Thirty eight (84.4 per cent) interviewees indicated that they were White. The White perspective is not evaluated in this section, due to the assumption that the way in which an organisation deals with its minorities and the way in which minorities (such as gender, race and national minorities) perceive the situation in the organisation provides a reliable impression of the quality of diversity management in the organisation.

Table 7.4: Conflict category, issue and race

Conflict category	Conflict issue	Race
Communication and Treatment	P18 – Share knowledge P42 – Rumours and mobbing P44 – Ways to do your job	Indian Indian Indian
Position and Competition	P24 – First Black position P25 – Competition for position P34 – Position as Quality Manager P11 – Workshop competition	Black Black Indian Coloured
Organisation	-	-
Race and Gender	P24 – First Black position	Black
Composite	-	-

Source: author's own construction

The main findings from Table 7.3 can be summarised as follows:

- Three conflict issues of the four Indian interviewees were linked to the conflict category of Communication and Treatment. One conflict issue was connected to the conflict category of Position and Competition.
  The focus of engagement in conflictive issues for the Indian interviewees obviously lay in the context of Communication and Treatment. For them, conflict in this category was often linked to the work atmosphere, which impacted on their effectiveness at work. Indian interviewees did not refer directly to conflict based on the category of Organisation or Race and Gender.

- The two Black interviewees experienced conflicts in the conflict category of Position and Competition. P24 raised two implicit topics: one was race-oriented (this orientation dominated the conflict); while the other was position- and competition-oriented (as shown in Table 7.4). The focus was on Position and Competition.

- The Coloured interviewee told of workshop competition, which was linked to the conflict category of Position and Competition. No other conflict category emerged.

In summary, it can be assumed that Indian interviewees tended to emphasise personal communication and a good relationship with others. The Black and Coloured interviewees emphasised the political aspects of their career struggle.

The minority groups did not show any interest in conflicts related to the structures and functions of the organisation, which were based on German culture and a White majority. It is supposed that they might not identify themselves with the organisational culture or the corporate identity of the organisation.

7.1.3 Age, conflict issues and conflict categories

In this section, conflict categories and conflict issues are presented according to the age cohorts (see Chapter 6, Section 6.2.3) of interviewees working in the organisation. Research question 8.3 will subsequently be addressed: *How do age groups experience conflicts?*

The following five tables (Table 7.5.a to Table 7.5.e) provide an overview of the findings, whilst the text between the tables presents conclusions on the findings.

Beginning with the age cohort of interviewees between 20 and 29 years old, the following overview is given, as indicted in Table 7.5.a:

Table 7.5.a: Conflict category, issue and age (20 to 29 years)

Conflict category	Conflict issue	Number of conflicts 20 to 29 yrs
Communication and Treatment	P36 – Childish e-mail	1
Position and Competition	-	-
Organisation	P20 – Conflict with a branch	1
Race and Gender	-	-
Composite	P31 – No conflict	1

Source: author's own construction

- The three interviewees in the first age cohort had experienced one conflict in the conflict categories Communication and Treatment and Organisation respectively. No specific conflict was recorded for either Position and Competition or Race and Gender. One conflict issue was linked to the conflict category Composite.

The small number of conflicts and the equal distribution of conflict issues linked to the conflict categories are unspecific.

The age cohort of interviewees between 30 to 39 years experienced the following conflicts linked to categories of conflict, as shown in Table 7.5.b:

Table 7.5.b: Conflict category, issue and age (30 to 39 years)

Conflict category	Conflict issue	Number of conflicts 30 to 39 yrs
Communication and Treatment	P6:1 – Miscommunication with boss P6:2 – Rudest e-mail P7:1 – Shouting manager P18 – Share knowledge P27 – E-mail to the boss P28 – Uses vehicles' price reduction P44 – Ways to do your job P45 – Belittling	8
Position and Competition	P13:1 – Managing Director - tense situation P30 – Paperwork not in order P37 – Competition for position	3
Organisation	P7:2 – Departmental conflict P13:2 – Conflict with union P32 – Work time company rules P41 – Germany or local contract in RSA	4
Race and Gender	P6:3 – Hiccup with Black colleague P24 – First Black position	2
Composite	P1 – No conflict	1

Source: author's own construction

- The 14 interviewees belonging to the age cohort between 30 to 39 years indicated 18 conflict narrations. Eight conflicts were linked to the category Communication and Treatment; four conflicts were connected to the category Organisation; three conflicts fell into the category Position and Competition; while two were connected to Race and Gender. One conflict was linked to the conflict category Composite.

The high number of conflicts in terms of Communication and Treatment leads to the assumption that this age cohort of interviewees was particularly stressed by the following:

- communication;

- ways of communicating with managers at higher levels; and

- e-mail communication, as referred to in Chapter 6, Section 6.3.2.2.

The age cohort of interviewees between 40 to 49 years experienced the following conflicts linked to categories of conflict, as shown in Table 7.5.c:

Table 7.5.c: Conflict category, issue and age (40 to 49 years)

Conflict category	Conflict issue	Number of conflicts 40 to 49 yrs
Communication and Treatment	P4:2 – Lack of information P39:2 – Suspicion by previous Managing Director	2
Position and competition	P5 – Competition for position P8 – Position overtaken P10 – Subordinate's performance P11 – Workshop competition P25 – Competition for position P29 – Arbitration only from superior P34 – Position as Quality Manager P43 – New chairman	8
Organisation	P3:1 – Warranty P3:2 – Need of support from Board P4:1 – Training in workshops	3
Race and Gender	P4:3 – Disciplining a Black lady P38 – Male Power P40 – Dealership and gender	3
Composite	P16 – No conflict P39:1 – No conflict	2

Source: author's own construction

- From Table 7.5.c it is evident that the 14 interviewees belonging to the age cohort between 40 to 49 years indicated 18 conflict narrations. Eight conflicts were linked to the category Position and Competition; three conflicts were connected with the category Organisation; three conflicts were linked to the category Race and Gender; while two were connected with the category Communication and Treatment. Additionally, two conflict issues were linked to the conflict category Composite.

The high number of conflicts under the category Position and Competition lead to the assumption that this age cohort of interviewees was mainly stressed by:

- fights, quarrels and endeavours with regard to achieving higher positions.

The age cohort of interviewees between 50 to 59 years experienced the following conflicts linked to categories of conflict, as shown in Table 7.5.d:

Table 7.5.d: Conflict category, issue and age (50 to 59 years)

Conflict category	Conflict issue	Number of conflicts 50 to 59 yrs
Communication and Treatment	P2 – Worst customer P9:3 – Exploding staff member P14:1 – Falsely accused of theft P15 – General Manager loses temper P21 – Decision-making in the field P33:3 – 'Boss does not listen to me' P42 – Rumours and mobbing	7
Position and Competition	P12:1 – High level conflict part 1 P12:2 – High level conflict part 2 P33:1 – Disagreement with senior P33:2 – Mistrust from German superior	4
Organisation	P9:1 – Mentality of mistrust P19 – Operational conflict with staff members	2
Race and Gender	P9:2 – Black harassment P14:2 – Militant Black	2
Composite	-	-

Source: author's own construction

- The nine interviewees belonging to the age cohort between 50 to 59 years contributed 15 conflict narrations. Seven conflicts were connected to the category Communication and Treatment; four conflicts were linked to the category Position and Competition; two conflicts were connected to the category Organisation; and two conflicts were linked to the category Race and Gender.

The high number of conflicts in the category Communication and Treatment leads to the assumption that this age cohort of interviewees was specifically stressed by:

- rude and harsh communication ruling in the organisation.

The age cohort of interviewees over 60 years experienced the following conflicts linked to categories of conflict, as indicated in Table 7.5.e:

Table 7.5.e: Conflict category, issue and age (over 60 years)

Conflict category	Conflict issue	Number of conflicts 60 yrs and older
Communication and Treatment	P17 – Afrikaans and English	1
Position and Competition	P35 – Autocratic manager and customers	1
Organisation	-	-
Race and ender	P22 – Racism towards a Black staff member P23 – Female accountants without ability	2
Composite	-	-

Source: author's own construction

- The four interviewees belonging to the age cohort over 60 years contributed four conflict narrations, as shown in Table 7.5.e. Two conflicts were linked to the conflict category Race and Gender. One conflict was connected to the conflict category Position and Competition. Another conflict was linked to the conflict category Communication and Treatment. No conflict was linked to the conflict category Organisation.

Beyond the equal distribution of conflicts concerning the conflict categories Communication and Treatment and Position and Competition, the finding of two conflicts linked to Race and Gender shows:

- the prevailing challenge of racial and gender issues in this age cohort.

This age cohort evidently did not experience any conflict dealing with organisational issues.

Regarding research question 8.3 *How do age groups experience conflicts?*, it can be clearly stated that different age groups experienced their conflict issues in different conflict categories. Conflicts experienced by interviewees between

40 and 49 years were located in the category Position and Competition (Chapter 8, Section 8.9.3).

7.1.4 <u>National origin, conflict issues and conflict categories</u>

Research question 8.4 enquires: *How does national origin influence conflictual issues?*

Regarding the national belonging of the interviewees: 82.2 per cent (37 out of 45 interviewees) were South African citizens of South African origin; 6.7 per cent (3 interviewees) were German citizens, while 2.2 per cent (1 interviewee each) originated from the Netherlands; the Netherlands with South African citizenship; Zimbabwe, with South African citizenship; and England, with South African citizenship. One interviewee had no record. The seven interviewees who did not originate from South Africa contributed eleven conflict narrations.

Table 7.6 provides an overview on the conflict issues contributed by seven interviewees without a South African national background.

<u>Table 7.6: Conflict category, issue and national origin</u>

Conflict category	Conflict issue	National origin
Communication and Treatment	P2 – Worst customer P9:3 – Exploding staff member P6:1 – Miscommunication with boss P6:2 – Rudest e-mail	Germany Netherlands Zimbabwe ZImbabwe
Position and Competition	P8 – Position overtaken P5 – Competition for position	Germany Netherlands
Organisation	P41 – Germany or local contract in RSA P9:1 – Mentality of mistrust	Germany Netherlands
Race and Gender	P9:2 – Black harassment P6:3 – Hiccup with Black colleague	Netherlands Zimbabwe
Composite	P1 – No conflict	Britain

Source: author's own construction

From Table 7.6 it is evident that the eleven conflict issues were nearly equally distributed, referring to the categories of conflict and compared with the total of 48 conflict issues gathered from the 37 South African interviewees of the organisation. The German, Dutch, Zimbabwean and British interviewees did not show any bias towards certain conflict issues linked to the five conflict categories. This leads to the assertion that the different national origins of the interviewees did not necessarily have a significant impact on the conflicts experienced in this organisation.

However, the conflict category Position and Competition was exceptional. Only two conflict issues were contributed by non-South African interviewees, while 14 conflict issues were contributed by South African interviewees. Considering this conflict category and the total number of conflict issues (11) linked to it, 18.2 per cent of conflict issues were contributed by non-South African interviewees. Considering the total number of conflict issues (48) contributed by South African interviewees, the ratio is 29.2 per cent. These findings lead to the assertion that the South African interviewees tended to focus more on conflict issues linked to the conflict category Position and Competition than their foreign colleagues (Chapter 8, Section 8.9.4).

7.1.5   Location of work, conflict issues and conflict categories

This section addresses research question 8.5: *Which differences in location of work at headquarters and branches can be stated with regard to conflict issues?*

Table 7.7.a to Table 7.7.d below show the distribution of conflict issues linked to the conflict categories of headquarters and the following three branches:

- South African headquarters of the organisation (33 interviewees);
- Branch I (6 interviewees);
- Branch II (3 interviewees); and
- Branch III (3 interviewees).

a.   Headquarters

The 33 interviewees at headquarters contributed altogether 45 conflict issues, as indicated in Table 7.7.a below:

Table 7.7.a: Conflict category and issue at headquarters

Conflict category	Conflict issue	Number of conflict issues at headquarters
Communication and Treatment	P2 – Worst customer P4:2 – Lack of information P6:1 – Miscommunication with boss P6:2 – Rudest e-mail P7:1 – Shouting manager P9:3 – Exploding staff member P14:1 – Falsely accused of theft P15 – General Manager loses temper P17 – Afrikaans and English P18 – Share knowledge P21 – Decision-making in the field P27 – E-mail to the boss P28 – Uses vehicles' price reduction P36 – Childish e-mail P39:2 – Suspicion by previous Managing Director	15
Position and Competition	P5 – Competition for position P8 – Position overtaken P10 – Subordinate's performance P11 – Workshop competition P12:1 – High level conflict part 1 P12:2 – High level conflict part 2 P13:1 – Managing Director - tense situation P25 – Competition for position P29 – Arbitration only from superior P30 – Paperwork not in order P35 – Autocratic manager and customers P37 – Competition for position	12
Organisation	P3:1 – Warranty P3:2 – Need of support from Board P4:1 – Training in workshops P7:2 – Departmental conflict P9:1 – Mentality of mistrust P13:2 – Conflict with union P19 – Operational conflict with staff members P20 – Conflict with a branch	8

Table 7.7.a: Conflict category and issue at headquarters (continued)

Conflict category	Conflict issue	Number of conflict issues at Headquarters
Race and Gender	P4:3 – Disciplining a Black lady P6:3 – Hiccup with Black colleague P9:2 – Black harassment P14:2 – Militant Black P38 – Male power	5
Composite	P1 – No conflict P16 – No conflict P26 – No record P31 – No conflict P39:1 – No conflict	5

Source: author's own construction

As shown in Table 7.7.a, at headquarters the 45 conflict issues linked to conflict categories were relatively equal distributed, when compared to the total of 59 conflict issues. Considering the conflict category Race and Gender, the number of five conflict issues only reflects a sub-representation compared to the total of nine conflicts gathered from 45 interviewees. The category Composite contains five conflict issues.

b.   Branch I

The six interviewees at Branch I highlighted six conflict issues, reflected in Table7.7.b:

Table 7.7.b: Conflict category and issue at Branch I

Conflict category	Conflict issue	Branch I
Communication and Treatment	P42 – Rumours and mobbing P44 – Ways to do your job P45 – Belittling	3
Position and Competition	P43 – New chairman	1
Organisation	P41 – Germany or local contract in RSA	1
Race and Gender	P40 – Dealership and gender	1
Composite	-	-

Source: author's own construction

The six conflict issues were linked to the following categories, evident in Table 7.7.b: three conflict issues (50 per cent) were linked to conflict category Communication and Treatment; one of each was linked to the remaining conflict issues, except for the conflict category Composite which indicated no conflict.

Branch I interviewees perceived a very high ratio (50 per cent) of conflict issues in the context of Communication and Treatment. Compared to the other 39 interviewees in the organisation, the Branch I interviewees had experienced only 16 conflict issues (30 per cent) in the context of Communication and Treatment. This leads to the assumption that Branch I interviewees were relatively sensitive to tensions in the context of Communication and Treatment.

c.   Branch II

The three interviewees at Branch II contributed three conflict issues, as reflected in Table 7.7.c:

Table 7.7.c: Conflict category and issue at Branch II

Conflict category	Conflict issue	Branch II
Communication and Treatment	-	0
Position and Competition	-	0
Organisation	-	0
Race and Gender	P22 – Racism towards a Black staff member P23 – Female accountants without ability P24 – First Black position	3
Composite	-	-

Source: author's own construction

All conflict issues at Branch II could be linked to the conflict category Race and Gender, highlighted in Table 7.7.c. Branch II interviewees perceived an absolutely high ratio (100 per cent) of conflict issues in the context Race and Gender. Zero of each conflict issue identified was linked to the conflict categories Communication and Treatment; Position and Competition; and Organisation. Compared with the remaining 39 interviewees in the organisation, they experienced only six conflict issues (11 per cent) in the context of Communication and Treatment. This leads to the assumption that Branch II interviewees were very sensitive to tensions in the context of Race and Gender.

d. **Branch III**

The three interviewees at Branch III contributed five conflict issues, as reflected in Table 7.7.d:

Table 7.7.d: Conflict category and issue at Branch III

Conflict category	Conflict issue	Branch III
Communication and Treatment	P33:3 – 'Boss does not listen to me'	1
Position and Competition	P33:1 – Disagreement with senior P33:2 – Mistrust from German superior P34 – Position as Quality Manager	3
Organisation	P32 – Work time company rules	1
Race and Gender	-	-
Composite	-	-

Source: author's own construction

Three out of five conflict issues (60 per cent) were linked to the conflict category Position and Competition, whereas one of each conflict issue was linked to the conflict categories Communication and Treatment and Organisation. There were no conflicts in the categories Race and Gender and Composite. The fact is that at Branch III a high ratio (60 per cent) of conflict issues was linked to the conflict category Position and Competition. At headquarters and the remaining branches I and II, a relatively low ratio of 24 per cent conflict issues was linked to the same category. This leads to the assumption that Branch III interviewees were more likely to experience conflicts in the context of Position and Competition than their colleagues at headquarters and the other branches.

The profile of conflict issues linked to the different conflict categories was exhibited and will be concluded with regard to the abovementioned research question 8.5 in Chapter 8, Section 8.9.5.

7.2 **CONFLICTS OF CATEGORY ORGANISATION**

This section analyses conflicts in the category Organisation with regard to the factors of conflicts issues, and the impact of identity and value patterns on conflict resolution and management styles. This analysis is based on research question 9, which enquires as follows:

How do values and identity impact on conflict resolution and management styles with regard to conflict issues which are interlinked with the conflict category Organisation?

The conflict category Organisation was specifically chosen to be analysed and presented to provide a deeper insight and gain a deeper understanding of conflicts in an international organisation, with special reference to the structure and function of the organisation.

Nine interviewees contributed ten conflicts linked to the category Organisation. Only White interviewees narrated organisational conflicts. However, as presented in Chapter 6, Section 6.4.3, the organisational conflict of P41 could be disregarded, because it concerned an intra-personal issue, while P3:2 did not provide enough information.

Referring to the eight remaining conflicts, values and identity were partly coincident in their effect on conflict resolution and management styles. Values and identity are defined as internal dispositions that impact on a person's behaviour and his or her conflict resolution and management styles. Based on these assumptions, the factors 'values' and 'identities' will be related to the factors of conflict resolution and management styles. The effect of values and identities on conflict resolution and management styles will be analysed with regard to the following eight conflict issues:

- P3:1   –   Warranty;
- P4:1   –   Training in workshops;
- P7:2   –   Departmental conflict;
- P9:1   –   Mentality of mistrust;
- P13:2   –   Conflict with union;
- P19   –   Operational conflict with staff members;
- P20   –   Conflict with a branch; and
- P32   –   Work time company rules.

7.2.1   P3:1 Warranty

A conflict regarding warranties was experienced as an intra-organisational (crossing departmental border) conflict and as a conflict between organisations (for example, different departments) and their customers. The conflict experienced by P3 touched on P3's core values of transparency and truth. These values, however, were not linked to the individual identity, but more to the organisational system, or his work-related organisational identity aspects. For P3, these values provided objectivity in the organisation and all persons involved. He felt strengthened by these values, because P3 was able to distinguish personal from task-related issues. At the same time, transparency and truth as core values helped P3 solve his conflicts in the organisation. He was convinced that it was right to emphasise the 'truth' in the organisation. His strong identity aspects guided him and his behaviour in conflicts. In his opinion, the management of conflicts included mediation and exchange of interpretation with regard to truth. Warranties helped him to follow the truth. He was prepared to give his subordinates 100 per cent support and assistance. However, he tried to retain objectivity regarding conflict by keeping at a medium distance from all his colleagues. His strong belief in his values strengthened him, focusing on power and success.

7.2.2   P4:1 Training in workshops

The inter-departmental conflict on the location of training touched the organisational value of flexibility. P4 did not feel personally hurt by the conflict. His personal principles regarding conflict were based on 'old school' values: if you are positioned as a manager, then you have to lead, you have to be decisive. Discussions and arguments were not desirable options for P4. So, he first analysed all available information to gain an 'objective overview' on the issue. P4 had developed a strong identity concerning his manager's job in the company. During organisational conflicts, he did not allow values of personal dignity or private virtues to be affected. This mental clearness made him more resistant against the personal injuries that might be caused by conflicts.

P4 emphasised objectivity. This made him a strong and successful manager. However, he was able to compromise, considering the interests of the other conflicting party, like in the described conflict. In his opinion, staff members

should stick to the rules and procedures of the organisation. If these rules were not respected, he preferred to submit the issue to the objective formal disciplinary system. His authoritarian management style, however, did not hold him back from learning new aspects of management, such as two-way and more interactive communication.

7.2.3   P7:2 Departmental conflict

The inter-departmental conflict experienced by a female interviewee touched on, and injured four core values:

- the value of equality of race (that still needs to be established);
- the value of equality of gender (that still needs to be established);
- the value of adequate conduct (top manager shouted); and
- the value of respect (top manager used bad language and fuelled intrigues).

The respondent suspected that the manager would have dismissed her to replace her with a male colleague, if he had the power. Her identity was consequently weakened. She felt intimidated and hesitant to speak out on conflicts. She was looking for other employment outside the organisation. She had received no positive backing from top management at Board level.

She linked her conflict experiences to her intra- and inter-departmental conflict, which she regarded as based on different ideas on ruling the organisation ('ruling from the top') and on the structure of the organisation. Besides this, her conflict was determined by the gender issue.

These relatively negative experiences had impacted on her concept of management styles: she tried managing around 'mannerism', bad conduct, disrespect and 'ruling from the top', but she was insecure how she should manage these issues from her position. At the same time, her core values were disrespected to the extent that her personality could not allocate enough strength and energy to manage her workload. Consequently, she intended to remove herself from the situation by leaving the organisation.

7.2.4 P9:1 Mentality of mistrust

This interviewee from the Netherlands described an intra-departmental conflict involving his supervisor: He was in serious conflict with his Portuguese superior and simultaneously experienced an intra-organisational conflict about the 'mentality of the entire organisation', with special regard to the relationship between the German and South African headquarters. Both conflicts, the one in his department and the one which he felt pervaded the entire organisation, related to his core values of transparency, building trust through social networking, sharing of information and 'opening up of files'. These values were, to him, highly work-related values that touched both organisational levels (intra-departmental and intra-organisational).

P9 was convinced that the growth of the organisation would, in the long run, lead to more open and trustful communication. Based on his strong personality and his direct approach he had enough energy and vision to fight against the prevailing mistrust; implementing an open-door policy as part of his management style; and sharing information as a source of building trust instead of following hidden agendas. P9 displayed a strong long-term and future-oriented approach in his management style.

7.2.5 P13:2 Conflict with union

This interviewee experienced a conflict between the organisation and the trade unions that constituted an inter-organisational conflict.

The interviewee was convinced that an organisation's highest value was to work in harmony. This value, however, was not linked to the personal values he applied to family and leisure-time.

His value of harmony was accompanied by a mature sense of collaboration: mature means 'not to stand against each other' due to incompatible interests, but rather to join together and pursue higher common goals. So, P13 emphasised the valuing of, and respect to each other. He stressed honesty, but admitted that some powers could, for certain periods, undermine his ideas of peaceful harmony and freedom to achieve the organisational targets. With regard to the value of 'harmony', he manages conflict in a team setting. He also

used mediation, but not inter-departmentally. To him, the struggles of interest groups were immature.

His strong identity and will to fight for his subordinates sustained him in discussions with the union. His management style was 'easy going' and left space and freedom to others, but he was clear and autocratic regarding deadlines.

7.2.6 P19: Operational conflict with staff members

P19 referred to the operational conflict he experienced as target conflict. He stated that conflicts always occurred in an organisation and were a 'normal operational thing'. He experienced many conflicts between himself and the staff. His conflicts concerned the different interests of managers and staff, lack of commitment, and the achievement of good results. Personal values were not involved, since P19 did not allude to personal values. He stated that his conflict experiences were mostly related to the values of achievement, especially the achievement of results for the company. This revealed a positive aspect of his identity that coincided with the company's goals. The interviewee did not show that his conflict experiences exerted any negative impact on his personality. To him, conflicts were limited and manageable. P19 was convinced that he led by strict controlling and that his behaviour was correct. He perceived himself as a disciplinarian in his function and position in the company and was convinced that this was the approach to adopt.

7.2.7 P20: Conflict with a branch

A conflict occurred between a department at the headquarters in South Africa and another branch. P20 experienced a lack of cooperation, an abuse of weakness and a break of confidence with regard to this branch when he made a pricing mistake. His values of truth and trustful networking seemed undermined. He partially judged the conflict on a personal level, even though he realised he should not take his organisational conflict personally. The values of trust and cooperation should, according to P20, be organisational values, rather than the values of single individuals.

P20 had succeeded in finding a solution for the conflict on a personal and organisational level. In consequence, he wanted to ensure that individual weaknesses and mistakes should not be abused by other individuals in the company. The organisational system should assist in that regard: he proposed a pricing system of relatively constant prices that could not easily be misused by colleagues seeking a private advantage. Through the implementation of such a system, P20 expected to regain and strengthen his managerial position.

7.2.8   P32: Work time company rules

The conflict narration of P32 included four key words: company; work; rules; and time. These words represented certain values that managers had to follow. He supported a corporate identity within the company, particularly when he experienced an intra-departmental conflict with a staff member who did not want to obey company rules. To him, the staff member had acted very irresponsibly, due to the fact that the staff member valued his leisure time more than corporate company rules and procedures. Therefore, to P32, the company values were being endangered. The interviewee wanted to avoid negotiating about the organisational rules and values. The challenges arising from the conflict in which he had been engaged were so strong that P32 felt disrespected and personally hurt. Therefore, the organisational conflict touched him personally and interfered with his personal identity concepts. He took the conflict to a disciplinary hearing. Through this process, the interviewee regained personal strength and rehabilitated his personal integrity. He described his management style as participative, but emphasised the distance that needed to be kept between managers and staff members and that personal and work issues should not be mixed. Still, he insisted that his subordinates were happy and could rely on him.

Having looked at the conflict category Organisation, the complexity of research question 9 – *How do values and identity impact on conflict resolution and management styles with regard to conflict issues which are interlinked with the conflict category Organisation?* – has been sufficiently addressed and will be concluded extensively in Chapter 8, Section 8.9.6.

The following section will focus on trans-cultural conflicts that constitute a category-pervading group of conflicts.

7.3   INTRODUCTION TO TRANS-CULTURAL CONFLICTS

This section deals with trans-cultural conflicts and their management and will answer research questions 10 and 10.1:

10.   What kind of trans-cultural conflicts occur in the organisation?

10.1   How, and to what extent does racial belonging influence the experiencing of conflicts?

These two research questions are of major importance in this research, based on the increasing diversity in international organisations in South Africa. The staff members of the selected organisation had to consider global influences and multicultural aspects in their work situations. Therefore, it was of major interest how the topic of culture and race – particularly in the South African context – manifested.

All 59 conflict issues have been categorised according to the five conflict categories (Chapter 6, Section 6.3.1). Trans-cultural conflicts constitute a separate group of conflicts. These trans-cultural conflicts underline the conflict issues, which are interlinked with conflict categories through cultural and racial aspects. Therefore, the trans-cultural conflicts are spread over the five conflict categories, containing at the same time cultural or racial issues.

Twelve conflicts could be defined as trans-cultural conflicts, as presented in Table 7.8 below. Two selection criteria apply in the definition of trans-cultural conflicts.

- Firstly, whenever an interviewee explicitly narrated cultural or racial phenomena as decisive in the reported conflict, the conflict was defined as a 'trans-cultural conflict', such as in the following example:

| 11 | Black (Branch II) | First Black position (P24), male, Black (RSA), 34 years |

Identity: I1: "It is more on the cultural side … because I feel he was not ready enough to a non-White being his deputy".

- Secondly, whenever the researcher identifies in his or her analysis (see levels of Ricoeur, Chapter 5, Section 5.3.1) any implicit cultural or racial background motivating a conflict, this conflict is defined as trans-cultural conflict, such as in the following example:

7	Indian (Branch I)	Share knowledge (P18) male, Indian, (RSA), 37 years

Value: V10: "I don't like to make it a racial issue".

Conflict: C5: "I am the only Indian … the only manager within them and … it's a fact."

Having defined the two criteria for identifying trans-cultural conflicts, Table7.8 shows the trans-cultural conflict issues experienced by 12 interviewees of different racial backgrounds.

Table 7.8: Trans-cultural conflict

Number of Trans-cultural conflict (T)	Race and branch	Conflict Issues (P1 to P45), sex, national origin and age
T1	White, Branch I	Disciplining a Black lady (P4:3), male, RSA, 48 years
T2	White, Branch I	Hiccup with Black colleague (P6:3), female, ZIM, 33 years
T3	White, Branch I	Black harassment (P9:2), male, Netherlands, 50 years
T4	White, Branch I	Militant Black (P14:2), male, RSA, 57 years
T5	White, Branch I	Afrikaans and English (P17), male, RSA, 60 years
T6	White Branch II	Racism towards a Black staff member (P22), male, RSA, 63 years
T7	Indian, Branch I	Share knowledge (P18), male, RSA, 37 years
T8	Indian, Branch III	Position as Quality Manager (P34), male, RSA, 46 years
T9	Indian, Branch I	Rumours and mobbing (P42), male, RSA, 52 years
T10	Indian, Branch I	Ways to do your job (P44), female, RSA, 35 years
T11	Black, Branch II	First Black position (P24), male, RSA, 34 years
T12	Black, Branch I	Competition for position (P25), male, RSA, 48 years

Source: author's own construction

In the next Section 7.3.1, in-depth content analysis will be conducted, following the sequence of number of trans-cultural conflicts (T1 to T12).

Additionally, the conflict factors (conflict (C), values (V), identity (I), conflict resolution and management (CR)) will be analysed in the context of racial groups (White, Indian, Black).

7.3.1   Content analysis of trans-cultural conflicts

In this section, the question of what kind of trans-cultural conflicts occurred in the company will be answered (research question 10) and the extent of influence of racial belonging on trans-cultural conflicts will be addressed (research question 10.1).

In this context, the role of the factors of conflict, values and identity will be assessed and interpretative abstracts on each of the trans-cultural conflicts will be given. Finally, the conflict resolution strategies will be mentioned.

The following sections (7.3.1.a to 7.3.1.b) are structured according to race groups.

a.   Trans-cultural conflicts narrated by White interviewees

Six out of 38 White interviewees experienced conflicts that contained trans-cultural aspects. These conflicts will be introduced, with special regard to culture and race.

T1	White, Branch I	Disciplining a Black lady (P4:3), male, RSA, 48 years

The conflict was titled 'Disciplining a Black lady' and was narrated by P4. He described a conflict with a Black female colleague whom he started to discipline, because she used to arrive late for work. The colleague emphasised that she was a 'Black lady'. P4 interpreted this insistence as that the lady wanted to emphasise strong self-consciousness.

P4 regarded the value of flexibility as very important, particularly in conflict situations. He stated that people should prove everything lest they make

incorrect statements. Otherwise they would become entangled in a war, which he did not appreciate. In P4's value system, the industrial virtue of punctuality was very high and contrasted with the value priorities of a female colleague. He emphasised that the conflict was about punctuality in reporting for work, not about gender, race or colour.

P4's identity concept was based on conservative values: 'I am still from the old school…', which underpinned an authoritarian management style and directive leadership, to reduce the daily chaos.

Five conflict resolution options were given by P4: 'stick to the things'; 'don't get involved in a sort of argument'; avoid the conflict in order to prevent chaos, but also 'talk again' about the conflict; and, if the conflict cannot be resolved by talking, he recommended that the 'necessary disciplinary steps' be taken.

| T2 | White, Branch I | Hiccup with Black colleague (P6:3), female, ZIM, 33 years |

P6 recounted a 'Hiccup with Black colleague'; which devolved into a conflict. She found it almost politically incorrect to talk about the incident, and asked that strict confidentiality be maintained. She referred to 'affirmative action' and admitted that she experienced the new work circumstances, and the fact that the work environment included previously disadvantaged people, as extremely difficult. These colleagues would take on new responsibilities and implement work properly, but were still given employment by governmental laws. She referred to a situation regarding a government tender, in which a Black colleague had to assist. A 'hiccup' occurred between the two of them.

P6 had been told by her superior to be open-minded towards other colleagues and her future in the company. But she could not easily follow these values, because she felt hurt by the colleague calling her 'girly'. To her, this was an offence, as it made her feel less respected.

P6's values orientations had not been matched and in her hurt, she screamed at her colleague, who criticised her for such emotional behaviour and a lack of communication skills. She experienced it as unfair that, as she stated, Blacks

are receiving special protection at work because of their race. The values she missed were equality and anti-discrimination. Her experiences at work had resulted in a negative attitude towards work. She saw Blacks as standing back, relaxing and letting others take care of the situation. She wanted the value of pride in the workplace and pride in accurate work to be instilled.

P6's identity had been shattered by negative e-mail communication, which she judged as a personal attack. She did not find it easy to defend herself and she felt abused and misused, particularly with regard to her gender. In the conflict situation she had even refused to accept an apology from her counterpart, although she emphasised that she generally loved everybody. She was frustrated and aggravated by the conflict, which had become a nightmare, and she was particularly afraid of being labelled a racist.

P6 had been transferred to another department to resolve the conflict, but it was still continuing, because her new superior was somehow also involved in the conflict. P6 felt victimised and was convinced that this conflict was, in fact, a gender conflict. In order to resolve the conflict, P6 initially wanted to take disciplinary steps, but regard the transfer as the best option.

P6 stated that the finalisation of the tender project had ended the conflict, but that she possibly should have considered sitting down together and talking to the other party.

| T3 | White, Branch I | Black harassment (P9:2), male, Netherlands, 50 years |

P9 reported a conflict about 'Black harassment'. A Black colleague, 51 years old and with three children, had inquired why he had not been empowered through Black Economic Empowerment (BEE). P9 experienced this as form of Black harassment.

P9 was involved in a conflict with a colleague, but despite this, that colleague would engage him in friendly conversation during break times. Therefore, P9 valued South African citizens as very open and friendly people.

The conflict had shaken P9's identity. For him, a direct communication approach, the truth and straightforwardness were important values.

P9 saw dismissal as the only solution in the described conflict situation.

T4	White, Branch I	Militant Black (P14:2), male, RSA, 57 years

P14 reported a conflict with a militant Black that happened in the 'old' South Africa. During these times, there were many militant Black fighters, fighting for equality and anti-racial discrimination. There were two sides only: 'you and us'.

Some core values of P14 were evidently hurt: his good reputation in the company had been damaged and he did not experience mutual respect regarding race or individuality. He appealed for true racial equality.

P14 was open and truthful and emphasised that he respected any form of possession. His identity had been injured through the elements of intrigue in the experienced conflict. His was obviously a very sensitive nature.

P14 redeemed his good reputation by conflict resolution via a successful hearing, but was still not fully satisfied. Other ways of conflict resolution included: working hand in hand; being cooperative; and not looking at race or other differences.

T5	White, Branch I	Afrikaans and English (P17), male, RSA, 60 years

P17 reported a conflict which he had observed regarding the usage of languages, Afrikaans and English. He judged the conflict as a minor one. A colleague, who was suspected of negligence at work, was asked to write a report about the incident. Being an Afrikaans speaker, he wrote the report in Afrikaans and then forwarded it to an English-speaking colleague, who did not understand Afrikaans. The result of this conflict was strong harassment.

P17 missed the value of mutual respect in the conflict situation.

Three options for conflict resolution were proposed by P17: intervention by the manager, in the form of an instruction that, during working hours, all communication and correspondence had to be in English only; secondly, a general solution as to talk in a language known by the other person; and thirdly, creating more transparency to diminish the opportunities for failure and conflict. In conclusion, P17 emphasised that the top level should always be briefed.

T6	White Branch II	Racism towards a Black staff member (P22), male, RSA, 63 years

P22 reported a conflict concerning an Indian staff member who allegedly was accused of being racist to one of his Black staff members. The Indian had used derogatory language, such as racial slurs.

P22 emphasised that he experienced good teamwork and understanding in the company and really did not value 'bad language' in the workplace. He preferred dealing with conflicts on an interpersonal level, stating that he was not worried about Black and White issues.

P22 presented four conflict resolution mechanisms: exploring the problem; just talking about the issue internally; apologising to each other; and mediating. He contended that intercultural conflict management – in this case, a White mediator mediating an Indian and a Black - seemed to resolve problems best.

Having presented the trans-cultural conflicts of White interviewees, the trans-cultural conflicts of Indian interviewees will now be screened.

b.   Trans-cultural conflicts narrated by Indian interviewees

The conflict narrated during four interviews with four Indian interviewees contained aspects of culture and race.

T7	Indian, Branch I	Share knowledge (P18), male, RSA, 37 years

P18 reported a conflict titled 'Share knowledge'. That Indian gentleman had started his career in the organisation in a newly created position. Not only was

he the only Indian amongst White interviewees, but his White colleagues were uncertain of what was expected of the staff member in this new position. At the same time, P18 was experienced as being superior and higher qualified – or maybe too qualified? – in comparison to the other colleagues. The Indian interviewee felt victimised and consequently started to withhold information.

P18 valued hard work and being successful at work. He believed in teamwork, the encouragement of people, and mutual cooperation to achieve best results. He confessed that he liked to be happy, because he believed that 'happy people can achieve happy results'. However, his reality perception was different: he felt disrespected and unappreciated. Conclusively, he sees the conflict as not being a racial conflict, although he repeatedly emphasised that he was the only Indian interviewee between Whites. However, he tried to maintain a positive frame of mind, because 'there is always light at the end of the tunnel'.

P18 felt unwanted and victimised. He questioned himself in his own identity; he had lost confidence and faith in others; and did not have any reliable relationships.

In order to regain satisfaction and respect, P18 saw the only resolution to the conflict as leaving the company or moving to another division.

T8	Indian, Branch III	Position as Quality Manager (P34), male, RSA, 46 years

P34 reported a conflict with regard to his position. In this position, he had built up a special part of the department he worked in, although he had never been trained in that field. He would have liked to be trained so he could demonstrate his competencies, but the new General Manager had changed the job descriptions and combined his position with two others, informing P34 that he could not apply for the new position. He experienced the conflict as competitive. P34 regarded this conflict as a personal attack, not as task related.

P34 suffered from an identity crisis: he was worried about the conflict and also irritated about the escalation of the conflict. In order to stabilise his shaken

identity, he asked to be allowed to compete with others. He wanted a more challenging job.

P34 believed that calming down heated emotions could do much to resolve conflicts.

T9	Indian, Branch I	Rumours and Mobbing (P42), male, RSA, 52 years

P42 reported a confidential conflict about 'mobbing' which originated in a new management structure. P42 felt excluded from various activities in the company and experienced rumours about him. When a German delegation from headquarters in Germany arrived at the branch he had felt excluded, because nobody introduced him to the visitors. However, he managed to introduce himself. P42 declared this conflict as personal, not work-related, and perceived the main problem to be a lack of communication. This conflict happened in a special situation when P42 was serving as chairman in a disciplinary hearing and the lady who was the subject of the hearing was dismissed temporarily.

P42 felt victimised, hurt and ignored since he served as member of that hearing. He expected more respect from top management, so that he could also pass on the respect to his subordinates.

P42's identity was stable and optimistic. He was an open person with an outgoing nature. He regarded everybody as equals. For him the future was positive, because he thought positively. He was prepared to deal with long-term difficulties in his job.

P42 offered several conflict-resolution options: conflict avoidance; compromising; round-table talks; win-win solutions; dismissal; and the official external recourse to the Labour Court.

T10	Indian, Branch I	Ways to do your job (P44), female, RSA, 35 years

P44 narrated a conflict entitled 'Ways to do your job'. This conflict involved miscommunication between two female colleagues. P44 had sent her work to a

colleague in another branch and presented it to her. Her colleague did not understand the work, and did not agree with it. Finally, the conflict escalated and the colleague shouted at P44 and told her to shut up and listen.

P44 placed a high premium on patience, but her colleague was impatient, upset, complaining and rude. She espoused tolerance, calmness and the values she had experienced in her family as a child, such as 'holding close relationships to each other'. In case of disagreement, she valued a calm nature that could bring conflicting parties together.

P44 was self-reliant and self-confident, based on her positive experiences in her family in early childhood. Family values and a feeling of meaningfulness had strengthened her identity.

P44 solved the conflict by sending an e-mail to top management to inform them about the issue and demand a formal apology.

Having presented the narrations of Indian interviewees on trans-cultural conflicts, the narrations of Black interviewees follow.

c.   Trans-cultural conflicts narrated by Black interviewees

The narrated conflicts during two interviews from two Black interviewees contained aspects of culture and race.

T11	Black, Branch II	First Black position (P24), male, RSA, 34 years

P24 reported a conflict concerning his struggle to get his first Black position in the company.

He perceived the conflict explicitly as a cultural conflict. He found the political changes in the company difficult, because the person who was supposed to be his 'caretaker' had the same job description. P24 felt limited in his job, remarking that he had been a senior manager in his former workplace. He expected enhancement in his new job, but saw himself being degraded to the level of a trainee. He suspected that his White colleagues might not even have

looked at his Curriculum Vitae, because he hailed from a 'disadvantaged and vulnerable group of the homeless people' and therefore required special treatment.

The main values P24 exhorted and missed were his acceptance as a Black colleague. For him, appreciation in his job was very important.

To resolve conflicts, he would be hard and use harsh language to make the others understand. However, P24 also suggested that top management help to resolve problems in the company, or resort to external consultancy.

P24 defined himself as Black and experiencing a minority-majority conflict. He perceived that becoming a 'yes-man' in an environment in which he was a member of a minority would be a self-destructive approach. Therefore, he resolved to appear strong and hard.

T12	Black, Branch I	Competition for position (P25), male, RSA, 48 years

P25 reported a conflict regarding his competition for a position. He and another manager had been appointed to the same management position at the same time. A fight about responsibilities ensued; simultaneously, P12 was prohibited to attend conferences at which he regarded his attendance as vital to perform well in his position.

Responding to the question about the prevailing values in the company, P25 identified a high degree of intolerance, especially racial intolerance. To him, it seems as if the racial issue ranked higher than his personal attributes and value to the company.

P25 held the opinion that the corporate identity of the company was still immature. The staff members were not able to manage diversity and resorted to fighting about personal issues. The narrated conflict had hurt P25: he had become extremely belligerent and aggressive, because he felt himself to be robbed of opportunities. He felt ostracized; in consequence, he suffered from

depression and had undergone a chance of identity. He felt his identity had been destroyed and he was staying on in the company simply to 'clean name'.

P25 preferred that a disciplinary hearing be held or that juridical steps be taken and lawyers be employed. However, the mutual interchange of facts and figures seemed to P25 be the best way of conflict prevention.

Having presented the complexity of trans-cultural conflicts according to racial belonging, the factors of conflict issues, values, identity and management in these trans-cultural conflicts will be assessed.

7.3.2   Trans-cultural conflict: conflict issues, values, identities and management

In the following sections of this study, the twelve trans-cultural conflicts will be linked to:

- the conflict issues (C);
- values (V);
- identity (I); and
- conflict resolution and management (CR).

These interlinkages were selected based on the thickness of findings that could be produced with regard to these factors. In this section of the chapter, the findings will be analysed and presented in clusters according to the racial and cultural belonging of the managers. The decision to cluster the findings according to these groupings was made based on similarities referring to conflict, values, identity and conflict management within each racial and cultural group.

a.   Trans-cultural conflicts and conflict issues

Below, a summary of trans-cultural conflict issues of Whites, Indians and Blacks will be presented, followed by a brief summary. The conclusions and recommendations regarding trans-cultural conflicts in the organisation will not be presented in Chapter 7, but in Chapter 8, Section 8.9.7.

i.   <u>White interviewees</u>

- The conflict was entitled 'Disciplining a Black lady' and was narrated by P4. He described a conflict with a Black female colleague whom he had started to discipline because she constantly came late to work. The colleague emphasised that she is a 'Black lady' and P4 interpreted this quotation as the lady wanting to emphasise her strong self-consciousness.

- P6 discussed a 'Hiccup with Black colleague'; which developed into a conflict. She was concerned that it might almost be politically incorrect to mention the incident and insisted that strict confidentiality be maintained. She referred to 'affirmative action', admitting that she experienced the new work circumstances and the fact that the workplace included previously disadvantaged people, as extremely difficult. These colleagues would take new responsibilities and implement work properly, but had, after all, been given employment through governmental laws. She recalled an incident involving a government tender, where a Black colleague had to come in to facilitate, and a 'hiccup' occurred between the two of them.

- P9 reported a conflict related to 'Black harassment'. A Black colleague, 51 years old and with three children, had enquired why he had not been, and was not being empowered through Black Economic Empowerment (BEE). P9 experienced this enquiry as a form of Black harassment.

- P14 reported a conflict with a militant Black that happened in the 'old' South Africa. During those times there were many militant Black fighters, fighting for equality and anti-racial discrimination. There were two sides only: 'you and us'.

- P17 reported a conflict, which he had observed, about the usage of language, Afrikaans and English. He judged the conflict as a minor one. A colleague was suspected of work negligence and was consequently requested to write a report about the incident. As an

Afrikaans speaker, he wrote the report in Afrikaans and then forwarded it to an English-speaking colleague, who did not understand Afrikaans. A conflict ensued, which ended in strong harassment.

- P22 reported a conflict concerning an Indian staff member who was alleged of racist conduct toward his Black staff members. The Indian had used derogatory language, such as racial slurs.

In summary, the main issues of conflict experienced by White interviewees had been affected by the political change in society (and therefore the organisation). A lady with a Zimbabwean background felt irritated by the situation in South Africa, where her Black colleagues gained more influence in private companies (T2). Another manager had suffered under 'Black harassment' (T3). Conflicts in the 'old times' in the company, when there were crucial fighting and blockades between the Whites and the politically conscious Black staff members, were also reported (T4: Militant Black).

Two language conflicts were identified: the one dealt with differences regarding the English and Afrikaans cultures and languages. Only English could be used during working hours to guarantee sound communication (T5).

The second language-related conflict had occurred between an Indian and a Black interviewee. This conflict was based on the use of 'bad language'. The Indian interviewee seemed to display disrespect towards the Black colleague. The Black colleague felt insulted by the Indian colleague's use of derogatory language (T6).

A typical trans-cultural conflict touches the value concept of punctuality. A White interviewee was irritated by the late arrival of a staff member (T1).

ii.   Indian interviewees

- P18 reported a conflict entitled 'Share knowledge'. This Indian gentleman had started his career in the organisation in a newly created position. Not only was he the only Indian amongst White managers, but his White colleagues were unsure what was expected of the incumbent

in that new position. At the same time, P18 was experienced as superior and higher qualified – or maybe too qualified? – compared to his new colleagues. The Indian interviewee felt victimised and consequently began to withhold information.

- P34 reported a conflict with regard to his position. In that position, he had built up a special part of the department he worked in, although he had never been trained in that field. He would have liked to be trained and to demonstrate his competencies, but the new General Manager changed the job descriptions, combining his position with two others, informing P34 that he could not apply for the new position. P34 experienced the conflict as competitive; a personal attack; not task related.

- P42 reported a confidential conflict about 'mobbing', which originated from a new management structure. P42 felt excluded from various activities in the company and suspected that rumours concerning him were circulating. When a German delegation from headquarters in Germany arrived at the branch he felt excluded, because he was not introduced to the delegation. However, he somehow managed to introduce himself. P42 declared this conflict as a personal, not work-related one, and perceived that a lack of communication played a major part. This conflict happened in a special situation when P42 served as chairman in a disciplinary hearing and the lady, who was the subject of the hearing, was dismissed temporarily.

- P44 narrated a conflict entitled 'Ways to do your job'. This conflict involved miscommunication between two female colleagues. P44 had sent her work to a colleague at another branch, and presented it to her. Her colleague did not understand the work and did not agree with it. Finally, the conflict escalated, and the colleague shouted at P44 to shut up and listen.

The conflict issues of Indian interviewees mainly dealt with acceptance in the work position. They felt that they had to defend their positions against

competitors. One Indian interviewee reported that his knowledge in the new position was not appreciated at all and that he consequently felt victimised (T7). Another conflict involved a severe competitive fighting between a White and an Indian interviewee, who occupied the same position in the company. This conflict was person- as well as task-related and involved trans-cultural aspects (T8). One Indian interviewee expressed feelings of being excluded from important activities and therefore felt demotivated and complained about the lack of communication in the organisation (T9).

iii. Black interviewees

- P24 reported a conflict regarding his struggle as a Black person to be appointed to the company. He perceived the conflict explicitly as a cultural conflict. He experienced the political changes in the company as difficult, as the person who was supposed to be his 'caretaker' had the same job description. P24 felt limited in his job, emphasising that he had been a senior manager in his former workplace. He expected enhancement in his new job, but sees himself being degraded to the level of a trainee. He suspected that his White colleagues might have not even looked at his Curriculum Vitae, because he hailed from a 'disadvantaged and vulnerable group of the homeless people' and therefore required special treatment.

- P25 reported a conflict around his competition for a position. He and another manager were appointed to the same management position at the same time. A fight about responsibilities ensued, and at the same time P12 was prohibited to attend conferences at which he thought his attendance was essential to perform well in his position.

Only one main issue of conflict, reported by two Black interviewees, related to position, competition and power. One interviewee narrated his experience as being limited to a particular position, because a White manager had been positioned at his side to 'take care' of him. The Black interviewee felt irritated by the 'caretaker'. He felt deprived through this controlling instance and not equally appreciated (T11). Similarly, another Black interviewee reported to be neglected and excluded by a White colleague, who was placed in his position when he

was away. When he returned, he was irritated that a White manager was holding the same position as him.

Having assessed the conflict issues, the value concepts in trans-cultural conflicts will be analysed.

b. Trans-cultural conflicts and values

In this section, the values of Whites, Indians and Blacks in trans-cultural conflicts will be presented. All conclusions and recommendations regarding trans-cultural conflicts in the organisation will be provided extensively in Chapter 8, Section 8.9.7.

i. <u>White interviewees</u>

- P4 saw the value of flexibility as very important, particularly in conflict situations. He stated that people should prove their statements before they made incorrect statements. Otherwise they become involved in a war which was something he did not appreciate.

- P6 had been advised by her superior to be open minded towards other colleagues and her future in the company. However, she found it difficult to follow this advice, because she felt hurt by a colleague calling her 'girlie'. To her, this was an offence, because it made her feel disrespected. P6's value orientations had not been matched and, in her hurt, she screamed at a colleague who then criticised her for her emotional behaviour and lack of communication skills. She experienced unfairness with regard to Blacks getting special protection in their jobs, simply based on their race. The values she missed were equality and anti-discrimination. Her experiences at work had resulted in a negative attitude towards work: her perception was that Blacks were standing back, relaxing and letting others take care of the situation. She valued pride in the workplace and in doing the work properly.

- P9 was engaged in a conflict with a colleague, but despite this conflict, the colleague would engage him in friendly conversation in break-time.

Therefore, P9 regarded South African citizens as very open and friendly people.

- Some core values of P14 had been hurt: his good reputation in the company had been damaged: and he did not experience mutual respect with regard to race or individuality. He appealed for true racial equality.

- P17 missed the value of mutual respect in the conflict situation.

- P22 emphasised that he had generally experienced good teamwork and understanding in the company, but he did not like 'bad language' in the workplace. He preferred dealing with conflicts on an inter-personal level, and emphasised that he was not worried about Black and White issues.

As discussed in Chapter 4, value concepts influence the individual and the organisation, while the individual and organisation also impact on the value concepts. Trans-cultural conflicts often conceal underlying value constellations and conflicts and individuals of different cultural backgrounds often experience 'value conflicts'.

One White interviewee was highly stressed that a Black lady constantly arrived late for work (T1). Another conflict (T2) revealed how the political framework could affect values in an organisational setting: if there was perceived inequality, for example through affirmative action, this could impact on the 'pride' in work that staff members experienced. So, both the legislative situation, with regard to equality, and the different ranking of pride in work influenced the conflictive situation.

The White interviewees clearly emphasised the values of good and direct communication (T3); cooperation (T4); respect (T5); teamwork; and good understanding (T6).

ii. <u>Indian interviewees</u>

- P18 valued working hard and being successful at work. He believed in teamwork, the encouragement of people and mutual cooperation to achieve the best results. He confessed that he liked to be happy, because he believes that 'happy people can achieve happy results'. However, his reality perception was different: he felt disrespected and unappreciated. He saw the conflict not as a racial conflict, although he repeatedly emphasised that he is the only Indian manager among many Whites. However, he tried to maintain a positive attitude, because 'there is always light at the end of the tunnel'.

- P34 did not refer to values.

- P42 felt himself victimised, hurt and ignored since he served as a member of a hearing. He expected more respect from top management so that he could also pass on this respect to his subordinates.

- P44 rated patience very highly, but her colleague was impatient, upset, complaining and rude. She valued tolerance, calmness and the values she had been taught in her family, such as 'holding close relationships to each other'. In case of disagreement, she placed a high premium on a calm nature, which could bring conflicting parties together.

The Indian interviewees emphasised values such as working hard, success-orientation, achievement, cooperation (T7), and equal treatment in the same position (T7, T9). Competition was appreciated by another interviewee (T8). A female Indian interviewee ranked listening skills, patience, and calmness are very high.

iii. <u>Black interviewees</u>

- The main value that P24 needed and missed was acceptance as a Black colleague. To him, appreciation in his job was very important.

- Concerning the values prevailing in the company, P25 identified a high level of intolerance, especially racial intolerance. To him, it seemed as

if the racial issue ranked higher than the personal attributes and the value of a person to this company.

Black interviewees in the company identified acceptance, appreciation in the job (T11) and tolerance, especially racial tolerance (T12), as very important.

As values and value constellations are a component of identity, this will lead to the factor of identity being assessed in the following section on trans-cultural conflicts.

c.   Trans-cultural conflicts and identity

In this section, the identity aspects of trans-cultural conflicts of Whites, Indians and Blacks will be presented. All conclusions and recommendations regarding trans-cultural conflicts in the organisation will be presented extensively in Chapter 8, Section 8.9.7.

i.   <u>White interviewees</u>

- P4's identity concept was based on conservative values 'I am still from the old school…' which stood for an authoritarian management style and directive leadership to reduce the daily chaos.

- P6's identity had been shattered by negative e-mail communication which she judged as a personal attack. She found it difficult to defend herself, and she felt abused and misused, particularly with regard to her gender. In the relevant conflict, she had even declined accepting the apology of her counterpart, but she stated that she generally loved everybody. She felt frustrated and aggravated by the conflict, which had become a nightmare, and she was particularly afraid of being labelled a racist.

- P9's conflict had shaken his identity. For him, a direct communication approach, the truth and straightforwardness were of high importance.

- P14 was open and truthful and emphasised that he respected any form of possession. His identity had been injured through the intrigues contained in conflict experienced. His was very sensitive in nature.

- P17 did not refer to identity.

- P22 did not refer to identity.

One interviewee prided himself in being from the 'old school'. His authoritarian management style and directive leadership helped him solve conflicts 'in his own way' (T1). A female interviewee that originated from Zimbabwe narrated her own identity as being aggravated and insecure. She did not know how to behave in confrontations with Black colleagues and was deeply irritated by the racial issues around her (T2). Another interviewee had experienced identity crises, but successfully overcame these because of his truth-orientation and straightforwardness in communication situations.

ii.   Indian interviewees

- P18 felt unwanted and victimised. He questioned himself in his own identity; he had lost confidence and faith in others and did not have any reliable relationships with others.

- P34 suffered from an identity crisis: he was concerned about the conflict and also irritated about the escalation of the conflict. In order to stabilise his shaken identity, he asked for a chance to compete with others. He would like to find a more challenging job.

- P42's identity was stable and optimistic. He was an open person with an outgoing nature. He regarded everybody as equal. For him, the future was positive, because he thought positively. He was prepared to deal with long-term difficulties in his job.

- P44 was self-reliant and self-confident, based on her happy family life in her family in early childhood years. Family values and a feeling of meaningfulness had strengthened her identity.

Indian interviewees faced different identity problems: one suffered from a feeling of being victimized (T7) and was losing faith and confidence with other people. This indicated a fundamental personality crisis. Another Indian interviewee had lost his sense of identity with his job and his position in the organisation, in competition with a top White manager (T8). He also missed acceptance from his colleagues.

iii.   Black interviewees

- P24 did not report on identity.

- P25 stated that the corporate identity of the company was still immature. The staff members were not able to manage the diversity around them and therefore resorted to fighting about personal issues. P25 had been hurt by the conflict narrated: he had become extremely belligerent and aggressive, because he felt himself to be robbed of opportunities. He felt ostracised; in consequence he had become depressed and undergone a change of identity. He felt that his identity had been spoiled and was only staying on in the company to 'clean name'.

Both Black interviewees suffered from a special minority-related identity crisis, triggered by the conflicts in which they were involved. One Black interviewee revealed certain hardness when he spoke about the approach one should adopt in a conflictual situation. His minority position in the midst of a White managerial environment had encouraged him to stay hard ('be hard and use hard language') in defending his position in the organisation. He was aware that racial tensions still prevailed (T11). Another interviewee reflected the corporate identity of the company as being 'not mature yet', because there was no proper diversity management. Personally, he felt that he was occupying a minor and weak position: like an accused in court. He had experienced some identity changes and some desperate aspects in his identity, such as belligerence and aggressive behaviour. Simultaneously, he perceived that his name – an important part of his identity – was covered with dirt. He emphasised that he was just staying in the company to salvage his reputation.

The identity aspects have now been assessed in their broad variety. The following section deals with conflict resolution in trans-cultural conflicts.

d. Trans-cultural conflicts and conflict resolution

This section contains an overview on conflict resolution and conflict management actions in the trans-cultural conflicts of Whites, Indians and Blacks. All conclusions and recommendations regarding trans-cultural conflicts and its resolution will be presented in Chapter 8, Section 8.9.7.

i. <u>White interviewees</u>

- Five conflict resolution options were given by P4: 'stick to the things'; 'don't get involved in a sort of argument'; avoid the conflict in to prevent chaos, but also 'talk again' about the conflict; and, if the conflict cannot be resolved by talking, he recommended: 'take the necessary disciplinary steps'.

- P6 had been transferred to another department to resolve the conflict, but it still continued because her new superior was somehow also involved in the conflict. P6 felt victimised and was convinced that this conflict was a gender conflict. In order to resolve the conflict, P6 wanted to take disciplinary steps, but finally decided that a transfer was the best option.

- P6 stated that the finalising of the tender project had ended the conflict, but admitted that she could have considered sitting down and talking to the other party.

- P9 saw dismissal as the only solution in the described conflict situation.

- P14 redeemed his reputation by conflict resolution via a successful hearing, but was still not fully satisfied. Other ways of conflict resolution presented included: working hand in hand; being cooperative; and not looking at race or other differences.

- Three options for conflict resolution were suggested by P17: intervention by the manager in giving instructions that, during working hours, all communication and correspondence had to be in English; secondly, a general solution that staff members should communicate in a language known by the other person; and thirdly, more transparency should be created to diminish the opportunities for failure and conflict. The respondent emphasised that the top level should always be briefed.

- P22 developed four options of conflict resolution: exploring the problem, just talking about the issue internally; apologising to each other; and mediating. Intercultural conflict management – in the relevant case a White mediator mediating an Indian and a Black – seemed to resolve problems best.

White interviewees suggested numerous options, not only for conflict resolution, but also on conflict management: stick to the things; be clear; hold your position (T1). Conflict avoidance in order to prevent chaos seemed to be another practical option. Working hand in hand and other forms of cooperative activities may also prevent conflicts (T4). Intercultural management via mediation was a preferred tool for another interviewee (T6). Sitting together, talking through (T1, T2, T6) and exploring the problem (T6) were favoured by three out of six White interviewees. Keeping up the standards of communication and the standards of production announced in the company could also prevent conflicts (T2) Apologies were generally much appreciated. Taking disciplinary steps (T1); intervention by a higher positioned manager (T5); and dismissal (T3) were the strongest measures suggested.

ii.   <u>Indian interviewees</u>

- In order to regain satisfaction and respect, P18 reflected that the only conflict resolution measure available was either leaving the company or moving to another division.

- For P34, conflict could be resolved by calming down.

- P42 offered several conflict resolution options: conflict avoidance; compromising; round-table talks; win-win solutions; dismissal; and the official external way to the labour court.

- P44 had solved the conflict by sending an e-mail to top management to inform them of the issue and to demand a proper apology.

Indian interviewees recommended that the following options be pursued in conflict resolution: leaving the company for another job or asking for a transfer to another division. Moreover, it was recommendable to mediate the conflict by sending an e-mail to the next level. Finally, apologising could help to heal the wounds caused by a conflict experience.

iii.   Black interviewees

- Conflict resolution: be hard: use hard language to make the others understand; and fight for your rights. P24 would also ask top management to help resolve the problem, or for external consulting.

- P24 defined himself as Black and experiencing a minority-majority conflict. He knew if he became a 'yes man' in an environment where he was a minority, others would 'kill' him. Therefore, he resolved to appear strong and hard.

- P25 preferred to go the disciplinary hearing route or take juridical steps and employ lawyers. However, in the final analysis, a mutual interchange of facts and figures seemed to P25 to be the best way of conflict prevention.

Hard measures of conflict management are recommended by the Black interviewees: disciplinary hearings; asking lawyers for help; and fighting for your rights (T11; T12). Additionally, the consultation with consultants was also an option (T11). The interchange of facts and figures had the effect of making things more transparent for the conflictual parties and could therefore help to resolve conflicts (T12).

Now that the conflict resolution aspects have been assessed, the actions of conflict management are of further interest for analysis.

e. Trans-cultural conflicts and actions of conflict management

Referring to the actions they would take to resolve conflicts, the interviewees narrated the following key words, as shown in Table 7.9:

Table 7.9: Actions of conflict management

Conflict management strategies	Actions of conflict management
Direct communication	Discuss openly; call the person; explain; talk; explore the problem; eye-to-eye contact; consultations; mutual interchange of facts and figures to gain more transparency
Attitude	Be calm; be quiet; relax
Company rules	Use company rules and procedures; go for hearings; work separation; take disciplinary steps; transfer to another division or branch; keep standards regardless racial background
Cooperation	Cooperate and support; work hand in hand
Mediation	Mediate between conflict parties; send e-mail to upper level for triangulation
Education and Training	Educate and train staff members and managers
Keep to values	Be honest, trustful and open; build trust; tell the truth; stick to the things; be clear; apologise
Measures according to laws	Dismiss; employ lawyers for your rights

Source: author's own construction

Finally, the actions of conflict management could be analysed; preferred conflict strategies could be identified in the trans-cultural conflicts; and actions of conflict management could be linked to the strategies.

Regarding trans-cultural conflicts, the Research questions:

10. *What kind of trans-cultural conflicts occur in the organisation?*

10.1 *How, and to which extent does racial belonging influence the experiencing of conflicts?*

have been answered in depth. The main conclusions with regard to trans-cultural conflict will be presented in Chapter 8, Section 8.9.7.

7.4 SUMMARY

In this chapter, the relational research questions 8 to 10.1 have been answered. Numerous interlinkages between the selected biographical indicators and conflict issues and conflict categories were observed (research question 8):

- Male and female interviewees experienced a nearly equal number of conflict issues linked to the category Communication and Treatment. Significant differences were recorded in the number of conflict issues connected to the conflict category Organisation (male preference) and Race and Gender (female preference) (Section 7.1.1).

- The biographical indicator of race (Section 7.1.2) recorded a high number of conflict issues in the conflict category of Communication and Treatment; four interviewees (2 Black, 1 Indian, 1 Coloured) experienced conflicts related to Position and Competition.

- Section 7.1.3 shows the interlinkages between age cohorts and conflict issues and conflict categories. Major conflicts occurred in the age cohort of 40 to 49 years. Most of the issues belonged to the category Position and Competition. The interviewees younger than 30 years and over 60 years of age experienced the least conflicts in this conflict category.

- Regarding the national origins of the managers, the focus lay on the minority of non-South African interviewees and their conflict experiences. In contrast to South African interviewees, who often experienced conflicts in Position and Competition, non-South African interviewees mostly experience conflicts in the category Communication and Treatment (Chapter 7.1.4).

- Looking at the indicator of work location (Chapter 7.1.5):
  - Branch I focused on conflicts in Communication and Treatment;
  - Branch II focused on conflicts in Race and Gender;
  - Branch III focused on conflicts in Position and Competition; and
  - conflict issues at headquarters did not show any specific bias.

The conflicts occurring in the conflict category Organisation (Research question 9, Chapter 7, Section 7.2) revealed that the majority of interviewees succeeded in interlinking values and identity on the one hand, and conflict resolution and management styles on the other hand, to the extent that conflicts were solved, making it a winning solution for the manager (P3:1; P4:1; P9:1; P13:2; P19; P20; P32). These interviewees shared a strong identity (Chapter 6, Section 6.6) and tried not to get involved in the conflict personally. They preferred to follow the formal procedures of the organisation for conflict management. One interviewee (P7:2) did not succeed in solving the problem. Her identity concept, which included basic values such as equality, was deeply hurt. In consequence, she felt personally intimidated and her identity had weakened. She saw no solution but to resign. P32, too, felt personally disrespected. Finally, she basically decided to submit the conflict to the formal procedures of the organisation, instead of dealing with it personally.

Table 7.10: Overview organisational conflicts

Conflict Issue	Values	Identity	Conflict resolution	Aspects of Management style
P3:1	Tansparency; truth; clear order	Strongminded (+)	Mediation	Cooperative; supporting
P4:1	Conservative values; punctuality; equality	Strong leadership (+)	Avoiding; formal procedure	More interactive
P7:2	Respectful; equality	Intimidated; lost courage (-)	Communication; Resign	Not ruling from top; democratic
P9:1	No statement	Truth; direct approach (+)	Dismissal of Conflict partner	Open door; share information
P13:2	Openness; harmony; confidence	Social networking (+)	Mediation; Team	Relaxed; integrative; encouraging
P19	No statement	Strict, controlling (+)	Formal procedures	Participative; strict control
P20	Forgiveness; cooperation	Honest (+) Truth	Open communication; strategic pricing system	Integrative; networking
P32	Respect; cooperation	Optimist, works on his competence to be clear (+)	Formal procedures	Leadership, supports subordinates, holds medium distance

Source: author's own construction

Table 7.10 presents an overview of the conflicts experienced in the conflict category Organisation with regard to aspects of values, identity, conflict resolution and management style.

The summary with regard to trans-cultural conflicts emphasises results from research questions 10 and 10.1 (this chapter, Section 7.3). Trans-cultural conflicts trespass all five conflict categories, containing at the same time cultural or racial issues.

Twelve conflicts may be defined as trans-cultural conflicts: six White, four Indian and two Black interviewees had experienced trans-cultural conflicts or trans-cultural aspects in conflicts. The conflict narrations have been analysed with regard to the factors conflict issue, values, identity, conflict resolution and conflict management. The findings in this category are specifically bound to the racial and cultural belonging of the interviewees. The specificity of perspectives and perceptions of cultural issues in conflicts are mainly based on the findings regarding conflict issues and values. A detailed summary will be presented in Chapter 8.

CHAPTER 8

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

8.1   INTRODUCTION

Chapter 8 contains summaries and conclusions of the research findings related to the theoretical and methodological framework (Chapters 3, 4 and 5) of this study. Brief summaries and conclusions of the research findings (Part I in Chapter 6 and Part II in Chapter 7) will be presented in respect of:

Findings Part I: The factor of conflict in conflict issues and conflict categories:

- generating conflict issues and categories of conflict (Chapter 8, Section 8.2);

- summary and conclusion for all the defined factors of values (V), (Chapter 8, Section 8.3); identity (I), (Chapter 8, Section 8.4); conflict management/resolution (CR), (Chapter 8, Section 8.5); management styles (MS), (Chapter 8, Section 8.6); improvement (IMP), (Chapter 8, Section 8.7); and outside intervention (OI), (Chapter 8, Section 8.8);

Findings Part II: Biographical data linked to conflict categories and conflict:

- findings regarding the interlinkage of conflict issues, conflict categories and biographical data (gender, race, age, national origin and location of work) in Chapter 8, Section 8.9 and 8.9.1 to 8.9.5;

- findings regarding the conflicts of the category Organisation, including the conflict factors of conflict (C), values (V), identity (I), conflict management/resolution (CR) and management styles (MS) (Chapter 8, Section 8.9.6); and

- findings regarding trans-cultural conflicts in the organisation, referring to conflict, values, identity, conflict resolution and, particularly, conflict

management actions (including management styles and conflict resolution actions) narrated by the interviewees (Chapter 8, Section 8.9.7).

Through these summaries and conclusions, the theory-oriented Research questions (11 to 15), stated in Chapter 1, Section 1.2.3, (posed to canvass the introduced theory approaches and concepts in Chapter 3 and 4) will be interlinked. The theory-oriented Research questions 11 to 15 will be answered along with the summaries.

The Research question 11 - *Which theoretical approaches of conflict analysis apply to the research findings?* – will be answered in Section 8.2.6.

Section 8.3 will answer research question 12 - *How do value domains and dimensions of Schwartz's value theory* (Chapter 4, Section 4.4) *reflect the research findings?*

In Section 8.4, research question 13 - *To which extent do findings of identity aspects relate to theoretical concepts of identity?* (Chapter 3, Section 3.4) - will be answered.

The factor of conflict resolution and the theoretical approaches to conflict resolution and management (Chapter 3, Section 3.3) are addressed in research question 14, in Section 8.5: *Which findings of the factor of conflict resolution reflect which aspects of theoretical approaches to conflict management?*

Finally, research question 15 - *To which extent do aspects of management style theories* (Chapter 3, Section 3.3.3) *represent the findings of the factor management styles?* – will be answered in Section 8.6.

The summaries and conclusions pertaining to Part I will subsequently be discussed.

8.2   FINDINGS PART I: THE FACTOR OF CONFLICT IN CONFLICT ISSUES AND CONFLICT CATEGORIES

The conflict issues have been developed inductively on the basis of key words representing the conflict factor (C). From the conflict issues, five conflict categories have been generated: Communication and Treatment; Position and Competition; Organisation; Race and Gender; and Composite. The findings of conflict categories reveal that the main focus of narrated conflicts in this organisation is centred on conflict issues relating to Communication and Treatment (19 conflict issues out of 59); followed by 16 conflict issues linked to Position and Competition; ten conflict issues referring to Organisation; and ten conflict issues linked to Race and Gender. Only five conflict issues belong to the conflict category Composite, which include narrations that state explicitly that no conflict has been experienced in the organisation. Each of these conflict categories will subsequently be summarised and concluded.

8.2.1   Communication and Treatment

In summary, the conflict category of Communication and Treatment contains two sub-categories, namely communication and treatment. Regarding communication, three major sub-groupings of conflict narrations can be identified:

- exchange of information (P4:2, P18, P21);
- misuse of e-mail communication (P6:2, P27, P36); and
- language (P2, P17).

Based on the above sub-groupings of conflict narrations, there is the perception that the exchange of information in this organisation was conflictive with regard to lack of information and incomplete, missing or (consciously or unconsciously) hidden or unshared information.

Additionally, some conflicts reflected the misuse of new communication media, particularly e-mail communication. Through e-mail communication, personal e-mails had been sent to a mass of e-mail users in the organisation to inform them of the personal issues or conflicts of single and selected persons. Conflict accompanied, or caused by e-mail communication often included all levels of management. In this way, top managers were informed, through mass e-mails,

of the conflicts of managers at middle or lower management levels. Colleagues were also devalued across the departments in front of other e-mail users, using both intranet and e-mail systems. The phenomenon of using e-mail communication had gained impact on the communication and conflict patterns of this organisation: both private and personal conflicts were being publicised through the intranet and through the server, which often led to a loss of face for the colleagues involved. In this regard, one manager expressly stated that if he received an e-mail that addressed himself as a conflict party, he would immediately approach the sender of the e-mail to try to solve the conflict in a face-to-face situation, because it took less time to communicate directly and clarify issues of conflict. Thus, e-mail communication not only impacted on the conflicts, but also on the management of conflicts.

Two language-related communication conflicts were narrated: the first one was based on the use of 'bad language' between a customer and a manager; the second one dealt with differences regarding the use of English and Afrikaans in the organisation.

With regard to conflict narrations and inter-personal treatment, two sub-groupings of conflicts need to be mentioned:

- intrigues, including workplace bullying and harassment (P14:1; P39:1; P42); and

- managerial behaviour, especially shouting and arrogance (P7:1; P15; P33:3; P44; P45).

In the grouping concerning intrigues, bullying and harassment, one manager was falsely accused of theft, while another was suspected of intrigue against his Managing Director. The third manager felt excluded, due to rumours and bullying.

A high number of conflicts dealt with managerial behaviour that was perceived as inadequate. Such behaviour included shouting; loss of temper; the absence of the necessary listening and attentiveness; belittling; and impolite handing down of instructions.

In conclusion, the findings reflect a broad variety of conflict issues linked to Communication and Treatment in the organisation, across all managerial levels, departments, branches and headquarters, both German and South African. It can be assumed that Communication and Treatment, as a conflictual category, had assumed high importance in the entire organisation. Therefore, it might be necessary to improve managerial communication skills and behaviour, as recommended in this chapter in Section 8.11.

8.2.2   <u>Position and Competition</u>

The category Position and Competition comprises 16 conflict issues, which can further be divided into two sub-groups:

- nine conflicts are linked to 'position' (P8; P10; P13:1; P29; P30; P33:1; P33:2; P35; P43); and

- four conflicts refer to 'competition' (P5; P25; P34; P37).

The nine conflict issues linked to 'position' included the following conflictual aspects:

- top-down approaches, in terms of which manager received a certain position, was identified without any feedback to the team or department;

- non-acceptance of the superior and his/her instructions and competence;

- conflicts between top managers and the Board;

- arbitrator was expected to hold a superior position;

- responsibilities in certain positions;

- arguments between senior and junior managers in different positions;

- position of German superior and manager in South African management position; and

- position of German headquarters and decision-making in the South African context.

The conflicts referring to 'competition' contained both struggles for a special position and competing actions between colleagues with regard to those positions. The positions and their tasks had not been clearly defined and, therefore, competition regarding tasks and responsibilities arose. It also happened that two managers were appointed in the same position, at the same time, which led to serious competition and confusion. In another case, one position had been extended to include two more functions and the person who held this position before was informed that he should not reapply for the now extended position.

Referring to the conflicts around Position and Competition, it is an extraordinary phenomenon that many of the conflicts included the aspect that instructions from superiors were not acceptable to the narrator, or that even the competence of the superior and his or her decision-making ability was questioned.

Regarding the aspect of competition, it was alleged that higher levels of management, in some cases, failed to define the positions, tasks and responsibilities explicitly. At the same time, positions were also not appointed to one person only, and the managers involved therefore became irritated.

Managers experienced conflicts both inter-departmentally and internationally. Nine conflicts included conflict narrations with regard to Position and Competition, which occurred between different departments (P5; P8; P10; P25; P29; P33:1; P34; P37; P43). Four conflicts were described between the headquarters of the organisation in Germany and different departments in South Africa (P13:1; P30; P33:2; P35). In international conflicts, the role of headquarters and the positions of South African and German managers and their influence were not clearly defined. Therefore, competitiveness was often experienced in these conflicts, instead of cooperation or collaboration between the headquarters of the two countries.

In conclusion, different conflicts were connected to positions and competition in the organisation. These experienced conflicts transcended personal, departmental, branch, headquarters and the international lines and boundaries of the organisation.

8.2.3 <u>Organisation</u>

The category Organisation comprised ten conflict issues and included conflicts with regard to the organisation and its structure.

In this category, four conflicts were linked to managerial, departmental or headquarters parties (P3:1; P4:1; P7:2; P9:1), two conflicts occurred between staff and management (P19; P32), one conflict between management and the union (P13:2); one conflict between headquarters and a branch (P20); and, finally, one conflict occurred due to changes in contracts (P41).

The conflict on the same managerial levels referred to differences in opinions regarding, for example, warranties and, in a wider sense, the managerial and organisational procedures representing the organisation. Moreover, there were differences in interests regarding in-house education and vocational training, its aims and values. The next conflict dealt with two managers from different departments who did not exchange information or cooperate, due to personal dislike. Generally, another narrator indicated that there was a pervasive culture of distrust between the two headquarters.

The conflicts experienced between management and staff referred to the refusal of instruction to work; lack of commitment to the manager and the organisation; work pressure; and ignorance of organisational rules. Another conflict referred to the fight about political and economical values between the union and the organisation.

A young manager from headquarters experienced conflict with a branch and felt that there was a lack of commitment and collaboration. Finally, an expatriate manager felt demotivated because of a change in his contract: he felt downgraded by the fact that, after he has worked for years in South Africa, he

had to decide whether he would work on a local contract, based in South Africa, or return home to retain his German contract.

Viewing the structure of conflicts attributed to Organisation, the following can be stated: conflicts on the same managerial level (P3:1; P4:1; P13:2; P20) dealt with warranty requests and responsibilities; prestige of hosting in-house training; political struggling with a trade union; and non-cooperative departmental competition. The conflicts experienced across the managerial levels (P7:1; P9:1; P19; P32) dealt with communication from the top that was experienced negatively; mistrust and an over-control mentality; and the disobedience of, and non-compliance by staff members.

In conclusion, the conflicts in Organisation show that many of the conflicts questioned the commitment in the organisation and that there was a lack of trust between the different entities. A lack of commitment and collaboration was perceived, and rules and procedures were not accepted or respected. Conflict narrators often referred to the fact that the conflicts perceived in this category were also bound to personal dislike or difficult personalities. That means that the implementation of rules, procedures and following the organisational structure always involved issues of personalities and identities, which either supported or opposed the implementation of the organisational setting and interest. Sometimes, even the organisational structures and procedures did not help to avoid, reduce or resolve conflicts that were relationship-based.

8.2.4   Race and Gender

The category Race and Gender comprised nine conflict issues. A group of five conflicts included aspects of both, race and politics (P4:3; P6:3; P9:2; P14:2; P24). Other conflicts were more gender-specific (P23; P38) or exclusively race oriented (P22). P40 started with a strong gender-oriented approach regarding the experienced conflict, but this later turned into a description of the conflict focusing on the relevant department.

Seven out of nine conflicts were collegial conflicts; one conflict happened between a representative of a Black liberation movement and a manager (P14:2); while the last one included management and staff as conflicting parties (P22).

In conclusion, the conflicts including racial and political aspects often referred to a conflict experience:

- based on race; and
- based on cultural belonging.

Racial and cultural belonging was often intermingled: for example, personally and culturally constructed time concepts were ascribed to a racial aspect. Conflicts were also experienced due to the country's political restructuring processes and the laws that have been implemented. Some of the conflicts related to race led back to the former political system and fighting during the apartheid times.

Gender-based conflicts were experienced by both male and female interviewees; females saw themselves as in a minority in the organisation, while male interviewees tended to be insecure about the competencies of female interviewees. The question of power was also addressed in the gender-related conflicts and interviewees narrated fights about positions, competencies and also about resources, as related in this category, not based on gender.

8.2.5   Composite

There were five conflicts in the conflict category Composite (P1; P16; P31; P39:2). Out of these five narrations, four narrators mentioned that they had never experienced any conflict in the organisation. One conflict was not recorded (P26), due to technical failure, and therefore did not contain any conflict narration.

Even though the interviews started with the question referring to conflicts experienced in the organisation, four narrators indicated that they were very happy in the organisation and had not experienced any conflict.

One of the four narrators emphasised that he had never experienced any conflict and that he also tried to avoid conflict by connecting to staff members in an honest and friendly way. Another interviewee emphasised that he had never – not in the company, nor in his life – experienced any conflict, even though he had been working in the company for the preceding 23 years. The third

interviewee had started employment in the company two months before, was still learning, and had not perceived any conflict at all. He did mention being a little frustrated about the way in which information and decisions in the organisation were being channelled.

The findings from the category Composite cannot be interpreted easily, due to the assumption that not experiencing or not narrating any conflict in this interview situation may have different causes and reasons that cannot be traced back in the data material.

8.2.6   <u>Conflict narrations and theoretical approaches</u>

Referring to the theory-oriented Research question 11: *Which theoretical approaches of conflict analysis apply to the research findings?*, the following can be stated:

Interlinking the findings with the theoretical approaches, the data material shows that conflicts were experienced by the narrators on the different levels of conflicts, as introduced by Miall, Ramsbotham and Woodhouse (2000), namely on global, international, organisational, inter-personal and intra-personal levels. The meaning of a conflict for the conflicting parties depended on its level of occurrence; the organisational structure; the conflict situation; and the character, values and identities of persons involved (Chapter 3, Section 3.1).

In Chapter 3, Section 3.2, conflict concepts were presented with regard to the aspect that conflict has, since the 1950s, been accepted as a phenomenon that carries many positive and change-bringing elements and could, therefore, be regarded as constructive. Referring to the findings in this research, it is very obvious that all interviewed managers implicitly or explicitly perceived conflict as a negative incident that was often accompanied by negative feelings and attempts to avoid them. As the findings in this research indicate, many of the managers saw the need for conflict management strategies and improvement of such in the organisation, as indicated by Miall, Ramsbotham and Woodhouse (2000) (Chapter 3, Section 3.2).

8.3   LEADING VALUES IN CONFLICTS

In the conflict narrations of P1 to 45, 37 conflict narratives that contained statements on values were analysed.

The findings revealed that value statements were often interlinked with identity statements.

In the following, the summary related to the questions:

- which values are mentioned in the conflict experienced? (Chapter 8, Section 8.3.1);
- which values could be inductively developed out of the data material (Chapter 8, Section 8.3.1); and
- which value domains of Schwartz (1994: 19pp) and Schwartz and Bilsky (1987: 550pp) were matched by the inductively analysed values of P1 to P45? (Chapter 8, Section 8.3.2).

Consequently, Research question 12: *How do value domains and dimensions of Schwartz's value theory* (Chapter 4, Section 4.4) *reflect the research findings?* will be discussed below.

8.3.1   <u>Values in conflict narrations</u>

An overview on the frequency of occurring value statement has revealed that equality, communication and respect are the most commonly indicated values in conflicts. These value concepts include sub-concepts such as:

- for equality: race, gender and human equality;
- for communication: open, personal, free, decent, calm and proactive communication; and
- for respect: mutual respect for self and others.

These findings show that equality values and concepts of equality were highly conflictive due to definitions of equality and ways of expressing and dealing with equality. Following the frequency of equality values, values attached to communication were highly differentiated. This leads to the conclusion that communication was a highly sensitive topic in work-related conflicts and that perceptions in the work situation were focused on communication. This

assumption is supported by the finding that most of the conflict issues were linked to the conflict category Communication and Treatment (Chapter 6, Section 6.4.1).

The values that were less frequently mentioned in the conflict narrations are: open-mindedness, honesty and truth, calmness, appreciation (of work and persons), politeness, cooperation, team-orientation and punctuality.

In conclusion, the findings show that these values occupied paramount importance for the organisational work environment, as the interviewees reported. Obviously, there were numerous work-related conflicts in which these mentioned value concepts were perceived to be ignored, neglected or insufficiently considered.

8.3.2   Value domains and value dimensions in conflict narrations

As shown in Chapter 6, Section 6.5, the values have been inductively gained from the data material and have been related to the value domains of Schwartz (1994: 19pp) and Schwartz and Bilsky (1987: 550pp) through deductive approaches (Chapter 4, Section 4.4). The value domains include universalism, benevolence, conformity, tradition, security, power, achievement, hedonism, stimulation and self-direction. The value dimensions are: openness to change, self-transcendence, self-enhancement and conservation. With regard to the value domains exhibited in Chapter 4, Section 4.2, most managers mentioned the values of the domain of universalism. This finding lead to the assumption that universalistic values, as defined by Schwartz and Bilsky (1987: 550pp) (Chapter 4, Section 4.4.1), such as respect, transparency, open-mindedness, tolerance, understanding and appreciation were mostly mentioned in conflict issues within the organisation.

The value domain of universalism is followed by the domain conformity, which includes values such as obedience, politeness, honouring parents, sticking to norms and orders, and the restraint of emotional impulses, such as verbal outbursts. These findings emphasise the assumption that interviewees preferred working with colleagues, partners, subordinates and superiors with a calm and polite behaviour.

The value domain of self-direction was very important in conflict narrations. This domain includes the values of independent thought, exploring the truth, freedom, and direct expression of the personality.

The value domain of benevolence was most frequently mentioned after self-direction. This value domain contains values that serve the enhancement and welfare of people, with whom one is in frequent personal contact, such as to be helpful, honest, forgiving, as well as mutual giving and taking. Obviously, these kinds of values were not sufficiently respected in the experienced conflicts. Although some interviewees expressed their support for their subordinates, conflict often arose through a lack of support, honesty and forgiveness.

Security, another value domain of Schwartz and Bilsky (1987: 550pp), includes harmony, trust in the social order and a peaceful social environment. In this conflict domain, it is underlined that individuals and groups in organisations need social parameters that they accept; that satisfy managers' needs; and that reassure a successful commitment of the managers involved. From the conflicts described in the conflict narrations, it may be concluded that the managers did not feel comfortable with regard to disharmony in the organisation and the social environment.

Power is another important value domain, even if it was hardly mentioned directly in the conflict narrations. Some of the conflicts attributed to different value domains also included aspects of power. Particularly, conflicts in the conflict categories of Position and Competition (Chapter 6, Section 6.4.2) often included aspects of power with regard to power, hierarchies and responsibilities.

The domain of stimulation was not represented at all in the values mentioned in the experienced conflicts. This finding may have been influenced by the fact that work-related values for these managers did not necessarily coincide with stimulation values, such as excitement, novelty and challenge in life.

The above findings pertaining to the domains of Schwartz and Bilsky (1987: 550pp) are summarised in Figure 8.1 according to their value dimensions of

self-transcendence versus self-enhancement, and openness to change versus conservation (see Chapter 4, Section 4.4.2).

Figure 8.1: Reflection of value domains and dimensions
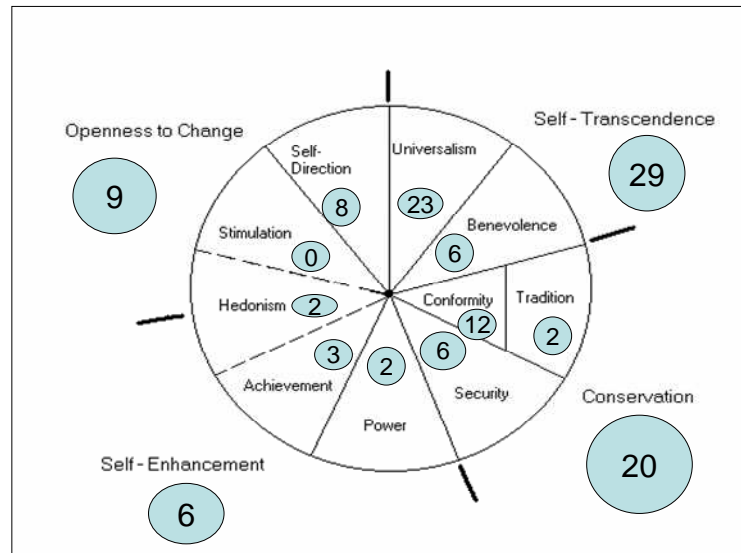
Source: author's own construction

The value dimension of self-transcendence (29 values mentioned) comprised the highest number of value statements according to the value domains of Schwartz (1994: 19pp) and Schwartz and Bilsky (1987: 550pp). This dimension included the value domains of universalism (23 values mentioned) and benevolence (six values mentioned).

The self-transcendence dimension was followed by the dimension of conservation (20 values mentioned), which included conformity (12 values mentioned), security (six values mentioned) and tradition (two values mentioned) as domains.

The counter-dimensions of openness to change and self-enhancement were mentioned in nine and six value statements, respectively. Openness to change contained the domains of self-direction (eight values mentioned), stimulation (no value mentioned) and partly hedonism (one value mentioned).

The dimension of self-enhancement had the lowest number of statements (six values mentioned) and which included the domains of power (two values mentioned), achievement (three values mentioned), and partly hedonism (one value mentioned).

These summarised findings lead to the conclusion that the organisation included a high number of managers whose value priorities lay in the value dimensions of self-transcendence and conservation. This shows that the interviewees were prepared to, through their value priorities, cope with the challenges of a globalised, universalistically thinking work environment. At the same time, these interviewees were exhibiting conservative values and principles that were compatible with the norms and rules of the organisation.

Research question 12, namely how value domains and dimensions of Schwartz's value theory (Chapter 4, Section 4.4.1) reflect the research findings, could be answered explicitly.

As indicated in Chapter 4, Section 4.5, an important topic in international business studies is the misunderstanding that arises from communication styles, negotiation and conflict management (Adler, 1986; Hofstede, 1991). This theoretical assumption was also obvious in the data material. Communication and Negotiation particularly included culture-specific aspects that could easily lead to misunderstanding and conflict, as described by Pye (1982). In this study, cultural, personal and value domains and dimensions provided a challenge in workplace conflicts with colleagues and managers from other cultures, as evaluated by Baird et al (1990), as well as Miller et al (1997).

As the findings show, communication was a very important value and accorded high priority across the gender, race and age groups of the selected organisation. The complexity of the communication value leads to the assumption that communication represents a value domain in the selected organisation that needs to be incorporated into the model of motivational value domains and dimensions. In this case, communication, as an extra value domain, could belong to the value dimension of self-transcendence.

For international organisations with a need for improved diversity management this means that Communication as a value domain could lead the integration of minorities of diverse background on the basis of humanity.

8.4   THE IDENTITY FACTOR IN CONFLICT NARRATIONS

This section concludes the findings regarding identity in conflict narrations and also answers the theory-based Research question:

13.   *To which extent do findings of identity aspects relate to theoretical concepts of identity?* (Chapter 3, Section 3.4).

The factor of identity consists of the key words that have been identified from the statements of the interviewees' conflict narratives: 37 of the 45 participating managers commented on identity issues (Chapter 6, Section 6.6).

As stated by Kriesberg (2003a, 2003b) and Lederach (2005), conflict is interlinked with identity. Similary, the data material in this research exhibited this interlinkage. However, the idea that "all conflicts are identity conflicts" (Lederach, 2005) cannot be supported from this data material. It can only be suggested that all conflicts are interlinked to identity issues and aspects (Kriesberg, 2003a).

A broad variety of identity aspects were mentioned in the narrations in this research as supported by the identity theories of Keupp (1994, 1997). From the research findings, it is obvious that managers in the selected organisation constructed their identities in conflict situations (Lederach, 2000) and conflict narrations (Cobb, 2003) and showed "patchwork identities" (Keupp, 1988). In organisational settings, organisational aspects also influence the identity of the individual, and *vice versa*.

Internal factors within each the organisation, the relations of adversaries and the system context are the bases of conflict of interviewees in the organisation (Kriesberg, 2003a).

Social and identity multiplicity provides creativity spaces and flexibility (Keupp, 1994; Chapter 3, Section 3.4) in cases of strong identity patterns (Chapter 6,

Section 6.6). Particularly with weak identities, there are conflict potentials that can lead to complex conflicts and challenges in conflict management (Coy and Woehrle, 2000; Kriesberg, 2003a).

The extracts in this research, based on the key words of the identity factors show that the identity factors were related to weakening or strengthening effects on identities (see Table 6.13, Chapter 6, Section 6.6). Ross (2000) also emphasises that identity has a crucial impact on conflict experiences and the successful resolution of conflicts.

The findings in this research show that 12 out of 37 (32.4 per cent) identity statements lead to the assumption that the identity of interviewees in the conflict of the narrated conflict had been weakened. While five (13.5 per cent) interviewees' statements on identity are assumed to have rather a neutral impact on the identity. That means that positive and negative statements with regard to identity are balanced. 20 out of 37 (54.1 per cent) statements on interviewees' identities are assumed to impact positively on the identity and, therefore, rather strengthen the identity in the context of the conflict narrative.

8.4.1   Strengthening and weakening identity aspects

The data material clearly revealed that external and internal aspects were influencing the interviewees' concepts of identity and therefore weakening and strengthening aspects of identity.

Interviewees experienced external aspects, weakening their identities, such as:
- philosophy of company, which was not sound;
- e-mail culture empowering intrigues and bullying;
- intimidation and ostracising by colleagues;
- race-related treatment;
- inadequate managerial behaviour; and
- personal privacy not respected.

This list provided the insight that interviewees particularly experienced environmental aspects which are related to ways of communication, behaviour and treatment and organisational aspects, as weakening.

Besides the external aspects, interviewees experienced internal aspects that impacted negatively on their identity concept:

- loss of face;
- lack of courage;
- lack of trust;
- defensive or volatile approach;
- taking conflicts personal; and
- injured integrity.

These aspects refer mainly to the intra-personal aspects of identity.

Besides the negatively experienced internal and external aspects, there were also positively experienced aspects, which seemed to strengthen the identity of the interviewee and the identity concept. The following external aspects of identity dominated:

- family support;
- social network; and
- a positive attitude towards the corporate identity of the organisation mentioned.

This shows that positive relationships inside and outside of the organisation tended to strengthen the identity aspects of interviewees who found themselves in work-related conflict.

Besides the external aspects, numerous internal aspects that impacted positively on interviewees' identities and identity concepts were identified:

- self-motivation;
- strong mindedness;
- strong leadership;
- sympath;
- optimism;
- truth orientation;
- direct approach;
- controlling;

- coping strategies; and

- self-conscious.

The internal aspects impacting positively on identity were more frequently represented in the statements of interviewees who had experienced work-related conflicts, rather than external aspects. That leads to the conclusion that a positive intra-personal attitude in managerial conflicts – which is built on a positive self-image (strong-mindedness, sympathetic, optimistic) and clear guidelines such as truth-orientation, controlling and copying strategies – supported their ability to cope with conflict situations.

Interviewees with strong identity aspects managed the described conflict situation easier than interviewees with weak identity aspects. This assumption is supported by the findings that the conflicts linked to rather negative identity aspects also revealed conflict resolution strategies that do not aim at win-win-solutions (for example, P2; P7:2 and P18). Weakening identity aspects, such as feeling limitations, intimidation or lost courage, lost trust or victimisation, lead to conflict resolution processes such as complaining, calming down, knocking out, resigning or transferring. Contrarily, strengthening identity aspects, such as experienced in P3:1, P5 and P14:2, include: 'strong mindedness', 'sympathetic', 'sensitive' and 'truth orientation', which lead to conflict resolution strategies aiming at win-win-solutions, such as mediation, integration, intervention, cooperation and hearings.

8.5 THE FACTOR OF CONFLICT RESOLUTION AND MANAGEMENT IN CONFLICTS

Regarding the factor of conflict resolution, 41 out of the 45 interviewees replied on the question of how they managed conflicts. It is important to interlink the summarised findings of the factor conflict resolution (in response to the Research question 14) and the theoretical concepts of Chapter 3, according to the theory-oriented Research question:

14.   *Which findings of the factor of conflict resolution reflect which aspects of theoretical approaches to conflict management* (Chapter 3, Section 3.3 and Chapter 6, Section 6.7)?

Keywords that, in the view of the interviewed managers, contributed to conflict resolution strategies, have been presented and clustered (Chapter 6, Section 6.8) as follows:

- communication (face-to-face communication);
- internal intervention (grievance, hearing, complaint);
- other resolution measures ('knock out', role-play);
- negotiation (advice and consultation);
- avoidance (conflict prevention);
- apologise (forgiveness);
- transfer (resign, dismissal);
- mediation; and
- external intervention (lawyer, trial).

In summary, the cluster of communication that includes talking, round-table talks, smooth communication, face-to-face communication and room meetings, was most often mentioned as useful for successful conflict resolution management. The communication cluster was followed in frequency by the cluster of internal intervention, which included the use of the formal structure of the organisation to resolve conflicts.

Many interviewees had different ideas about managing conflicts. These ideas were clustered in 'other resolution measures' and included, for example, knocking out the conflict party, role play ('change the work bench'), and team-building exercises.

Another cluster of negotiation included negotiation strategies, lateral thinking, advice, compromise and consultation, while the cluster of avoidance contained different avoiding behaviours, such as stepping back, withdrawal and preventive measures.

Only a small number of interviewees opted for apologising and forgiveness in the cluster 'apologise'. Even fewer interviewees proposed a transfer, resignation or dismissal as an adequate conflict resolution strategy (cluster 'transfer'). The cluster of mediation (including win-win-situation, intercultural mediation and diversity management) and external intervention, such as taking

the conflict to court, to a lawyer or to trial, were least often mentioned as adequate conflict resolution strategies in the organisation.

These summarised findings show that either direct communication to resolve conflicts was preferred or – if this approach was not successful – the formal internal intervention process.

This result can be interlinked with the predominant values dimensions of Self-transcendence and Conservation, as summarised in Chapter 8, Section 8.3.2. The direct approach in conflict resolution situations coincides with the value dimension of self-transcendence, containing value domains such as universalism and benevolence. These value domains include values such as broadmindedness, understanding, appreciation, tolerance and protection for the welfare of staff members, which also play a role in direct communication to resolve conflicts.

Additionally, the internal intervention strategy, which was used by the majority of the interviewees, reflected the value dimension of conservation, which included the value domains of tradition (including values of respect, commitment, acceptance of traditional ideas, humbleness and devoutness); conformity (containing values such as restraint of actions, inclinations and impulses to harm others and sticking to social norms); and security (reflecting values of safety, stability, harmony and social order).

This shows that conflict resolution strategies went together and were supported by the values guiding interviewees.

With regard to the theoretical concepts introduced in Chapter 3, Section 3.3.2, and the statement of Bradshaw (2006), conflict and its management was perceived as a challenge for the organisation, due to aspects such as the organisation's impact on the status and identity of its managers, and the hierarchical structures and the values in the organisations. The findings reveal a similar picture, as discussed in the literature. Conflict and its management was also a challenge for the interviewees in the selected organisation.

Cooperation, in the scientific literature (Blake and Mouton, 1986; Constantino and Sickles Merchant, 1996) is seen as a key concept in conflict management strategies. The findings show that cooperation and collaboration (see Chapter 6) were defined by the interviewees as missing value concepts which could help to reduce conflicts.

At the same time, the dimensions of Guetzkow and Gyr (1954), who discriminate between task-oriented and relationship-oriented conflicts, emphasise their importance for conflict management. Also, the interviewees in the selected organisation referred to task-related conflicts (interlinked with the category Organisation) and emotional-oriented conflicts (interlinked with the category Communication and Treatment). Obviously, the interviewees of the selected organisation had adopted different measures and styles to cope with these two different conflict dimensions.

Additionally, the findings show that special needs and values needed to be fulfilled to reduce conflicts. According to Burton (1990a), these needs and values comprised autonomy, dignity, belonging, security, justice and identity (Chapter 3, Section 3.3.2). These needs are viewed as stable and non-negotiable. Also, the findings of this study show that these needs and values occurred in conflictual situations and should be fulfilled to prevent or reduce conflicts in the organisation.

8.6   THE FACTOR OF MANAGEMENT STYLES IN CONFLICTS

The findings, with regard to the factor of management styles that have been developed through keyword analyses, lead to a cluster of six different management styles. The interviewees referred to their management styles as either relating to the conflict they have described, or to concepts and ideas of management styles in general.

A majority of interviewees stated that they combined several management styles according to the context and the situation.

Based on their statements, the following clusters were developed:

- participative (supportive);

- integrative (cooperative);
- autocratic (controlling);
- transparent (open-door);
- democratic (liberal); and
- others.

The participative style received the highest frequency of statements from interviewees in the organisation. Interviewees tended to support and encourage their subordinates, and were helpful to them, giving them freedom and feedback with regard to their work.

The integrative style was often used, referring to the cooperativeness of interviewees; the seeking of common interests; and fairness towards Blacks.

The autocratic style was mainly combined with ideas of controlling and even strict control, strong leadership, and sticking to basic rules and deadlines.

Transparency manifested in the sharing of information, and following an open-door policy and an open management style.

The democratic style mainly manifested in statements about not ruling from top; transferring responsibilities to lower levels; and liberal management.

The cluster 'others', contain relaxed management styles, team-oriented styles, and diversity management styles.

In summary, the data material did not provide sufficient information on how the management style impacted on the experienced conflict situations. However, it can be concluded that the interviewees who had adopted an integrative management style tended to prefer informal and mainly direct conflict resolution measures, such as avoidance, communication and apologising (for example P1; P15; P20). The interviewees that used integrative management styles and informal conflict resolution measures also revealed a strengthened identity concept (10 interviewees out of 12). This leads to the conclusion that integrative management styles need selected communication skills and abilities and that

strengthened identity aspects are required to support the implementation of such integrative management styles.

The interviewees that preferred an autocratic management style tended to use formal conflict resolution measures, such as internal intervention (for example, P2; P14; P32).These interviewees did not necessarily reveal strengthened identity aspects. This result leads to the assumption that autocratic interviewees, who mainly resolved conflict through formal and structure conflict resolution interventions provided by the organisation, did not necessarily rely on strong and strengthened aspects of their identity.

Considering the other management styles, with regard to conflict resolution and identity concepts, there was no evidence of a specific profile.

Answering the Research question:

14. *Which findings of the factor of conflict resolution reflect which aspects of theoretical approaches to conflict management* (Chapter 3, Section 3.3)?

it can be noted that individual interviewees preferred different styles of management, as pointed out by Cummings et al (1971). As in the scientific literature, managers mainly follow the authoritarian, democratic, and participative management styles. The relationship-oriented style (Fiedler, 1967) is not named explicitly in the findings, but it is evident that interviewees valued aspects of the relationship-oriented style, as was evident from their reference to trust, good communication, people's orientation, team-orientation and inter-personal interaction.

The participative style (Kim, 2002) was the most frequently mentioned style in the findings, referring to effective communication and high level job satisfaction, as is also mentioned in the scientific literature. The interviewees of the organisation concerned tended to highlight the empowerment of subordinates and their supportive behaviour, which is bound to the participative management style.

8.7 IMPROVEMENT IN MANAGEMENT

This Section 8.7 only includes summaries and conclusions on improvement in management and is not explicitly linked to theory-based research questions. Altogether 36 interviewees out of 45 interviewees commented on improvements in the organisation. Therefore, the interviewees referred to either conflicts or aspects that could be improved in the conflicts they have experienced, or they referred to improvement in the organisation in general.

In conclusion, the findings show that half of the interviewees commenting on improvements in the organisation mentioned communication needed to be improved. A majority stated that communication in general needed to be improved, while others specifically mentioned that an improvement in communication, between the different levels of management, was required. However, the need to improve top-down communication was singled out by most interviewees. Transparency in communication should be improved, was the viewpoint of another group of interviewees. Concrete proposals were also given on how communication could be improved: through plenary meetings, structured meetings, and 'action rooms'.

Additional to the improvement of communication, the improvement of teamwork, conflict resolution processes and relationships with customers was also mentioned as urgent requirements. There were also single statements that aimed at the improvement of e-mail communication and inter-racial communication.

These results revealed an urgent need for the improvement of communication, teamwork and flexibility, but also indicate that mutual relationships of managers and their interdependence could be improved. Communication, treatment and teamwork needed improvement in the frame of the structure and context of the organisation. In addition, the results show that there was a rather small need for improvement in the organisation with regard to technological development, the restructuring of rules and procedures, and management as such. The focus of the improvement needed, centered on the inter-personal sphere of managers.

8.8   OUTSIDE INTERVENTION AS A CONFLICT MANAGEMENT TOOL

This Section 8.8 only includes summaries and conclusions on outside intervention as a conflict management tool and is not explicitly linked to theory-based research questions.

The interviewees were asked in the interviews if they experienced a need for outside intervention in the organisation. This question had been answered by 41 of the 45 interviewees. These interviewees' responses revealed three different perspectives on outside intervention:

- pro outside intervention;
- contra outside intervention; and
- pro outside intervention under certain conditions only.

It can be clearly stated that the majority of interviewees were opposed to outside intervention. A smaller number of interviewees accepted outside intervention as an option of conflict resolution in the organisation. Only a few interviewees were pro outside intervention, under certain conditions.

The positive aspects perceived in outside intervention included the avoidance of tunnel vision and blindness of the internal management staff; the requirement to be open and develop new ideas; and the greater trust in external interveners in comparison to internal interveners. In outside intervention, higher objectivity was expected and other perspectives would be welcomed. Outside intervention was also expected to provide constructive ideas for diversity management.

The interviewees who were opposed to outside intervention argued that the job of managers included conflict resolution competencies and that internal managers had enough in-house training and education and should be competent enough to manage and resolve their conflicts themselves. Some interviewees had already experienced negative aspects in outside intervention and, therefore, did not believe in employing experts from the outside. Another assumption was that outsiders would not understand the company's culture and, on that basis, outside intervention was not accepted as an adequate tool in conflict resolution processes.

After Part I of the findings has been concluded and interlinked with the theoretical approaches, Part II of the findings will be presented and linked to theoretical concepts in the section below.

8.9 FINDINGS PART II: BIOGRAPHICAL DATA LINKED TO CONFLICT CATEGORIES AND CONFLICT ISSUES

In the research findings (Chapter 7) interrelationships of conflict issues, conflict categories and biographical data (gender, race, age, national origin and location of work) was analysed. The summary and conclusion to these findings will be given in the following sections. There is no theoretical research question to be answered in Section 8.9, 8.9.1 to 8.9.7.

8.9.1 Gender

In summary, gender played a role in the experienced conflicts in the workplace. The perspectives of female and male interviewees differed considerably. Female interviewees experienced conflicts mainly linked to the conflict categories of Communication and Treatment and Race and Gender. Male interviewees experienced conflicts mainly in the conflict categories Position and Competition and Organisation. However, the number of conflict issues rendered by male and female interviewees referring to the conflict category Communication and Treatment was the highest. This reveals that the issue of Communication and Treatment is not gender-related, but rather an important topic.

Comparing the conflict narrations of male and female interviewees, it can be summarised that three conflict categories showed highly significant differences in the number of conflict issues linked to conflict categories. Results indicate that male interviewees' ratio of conflict issues in the conflict category Position and Competition was nearly more than 50 per cent the number of conflict issues recorded in respect of female interviewees. According to the conflict category Organisation, male interviewees contributed more than 100 per cent than female interviewees. Finally, looking at the conflict category Race and Gender, male interviewees contributed less than 50 per cent of the number of conflict issues experienced by female interviewees.

In conclusion, the recorded differences between male and female interviewees in this organisation show that the males were sensitive to conflictual situations involving issues of Position and Competition, due to a strong competitive and task-oriented attitude. Also, males placed a high emphasis on conflicts in the category Organisation. This phenomenon leads to the assumption that male interviewees rather focus their attention on structural, procedural and functional topics and experience more conflicts in this category.

Contrarily, female interviewees presumably are more aware of minority-related and inter-personal issues. The sensitivity of the female interviewees to inter-personal issues might be gender-biased, but might also be due to the fact that they belonged to a gender minority and, in some cases, also to a racial minority in the organisation. Therefore, they experienced major conflicts in the Gender and Race conflict category.

These findings coincide with the scientific literature (Buttner, 2001; Eagly and Johnson, 1990) that has established the presence, rather than the absence of overall sex differences in management and conflict management. Buttner (2001) emphasises that female managers tend to experience and manage conflict on a more inter-personal level, whereas male managers seem to prefer task-related conflict experience and management. The findings of this study support these theoretical considerations.

8.9.2   <u>Race</u>

White interviewees constituted the vast majority of the sample in terms of race as a biographical indicator. There was only one Coloured interviewee, two Black interviewees and four Indian interviewees. The racial biographical indicator is assessed to gain insight into the distribution of conflict issues and conflict categories according to race. With regard to the racial minorities in this organisation, the Coloured interviewees experienced conflict in the category of Position and Competition; the Black interviewees in the categories Position and Competition and Race and Gender; three out of four Indian interviewees in the category Communication and Treatment; and one in the category Position and Competition. None of them experienced conflicts in the category Organisation.

Members of the minority groups in this organisation often implicitly related to the cultural aspects that they had experienced in conflicts, apart from racial aspects. Therefore, racial and cultural constructs seem to be intermingled, as confirmed by the findings of the trans-cultural conflicts (Chapter 7, Section 7.3.1). Even if racial, ethnic and cultural concepts are scientifically separated and particularly defined in the scientific literature (Fisher, 1998; Kriesberg, 2003b; Nagle, 1994; Sollors, 1986), the interviewees of this organisation interweaved concepts of race and culture in their conflict narrations. These two social constructs were additionally interlinked with the organisational culture which, according to Seel (2000), is an emergent result of continuing negotiations about values, meanings, proprieties and cultural and racial constructs between the managers of an organisation and its environment.

8.9.3 Age

Comparing the age cohorts consisting of interviewees between 20 and 29 years and older than 60 years, the following can be observed:

- Among 20 to 29 year old interviewees, no conflict was linked to the conflict category Position and Competition. This leads to the assumption that they did not yet focus on achieving higher positions.

Looking at the cohorts of interviewees between the ages of 30 to 39 years, 40 to 49 years and 50 to 59 years, there was a significant focus on the conflict categories of Communication and Treatment and Position and Competition.

- The cohort of 30 to 39 years and the cohort of 50 to 59 years experienced and perceived conflicts linked to Communication and Treatment more often than the cohort of the 40 to 49 year old interviewees. Additionally, for the 40 to 49 year old interviewees, conflicts linked to the conflict category Position and Competition were predominant.

The following Figure 8.2 shows the conflict category position and competition and age.

Figure 8.2: Conflict categories Position and Competition and Age
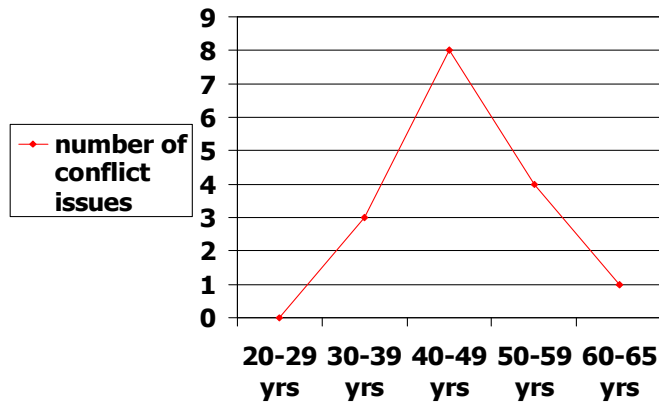
Source: author's own construction

Seen as a metaphor, the conflict category Position and Competition can be imagined as a huge wave designed by the number of conflicts experienced by the five age cohorts: the first cohort experienced zero conflicts; the second cohort three; the third cohort eight; the fourth cohort four; and the fifth cohort one. The amplitude of this wave of conflicts, linked to the conflict category Position and Competition, occurred in the third, middle cohort, flanked by two preceding and two succeeding cohorts. This finding shows that conflicts concerning competitive and positional aspects occurred mainly in mid-life, between 40 and 49 years, when enough work experience had been gained by the individual to compete at a high level.

8.9.4   National origin

The sample included German, Dutch, Zimbabwean and British interviewees. They contributed eleven conflict narrations that did not show any bias towards certain conflict issues linked to the five conflict categories. This leads to the conclusion that differences in the national origins of interviewees did not

necessarily lead to a significant impact on the experienced conflicts in this organisation.

Only one exception can be stated relating to the conflict category Position and Competition. In this category, only two conflict issues were contributed by non-South African interviewees, while 14 conflict issues were contributed by South African interviewees.

This finding leads to the conclusion that South African interviewees in the relevant organisation were more likely than their 'foreign' colleagues to focus on conflict issues linked to the conflict category Position and Competition. South African interviewees in the organisation intentionally experienced more competitive aspects with regard to their own career in the organisation. In contrast, non-South African interviewees or expatriates tended to continue their careers in the South African organisation in middle- or top-level positions and were not competing on the same level with South African interviewees. For the expatriates, the work contract in South Africa was often just a stepping stone to a higher-level position after the relocation to headquarters in Germany.

8.9.5   Location of work

Conflict issues were linked to the conflict categories of headquarters and the three branches. Focusing on conflict issues linked to the category Race and Gender, the number of conflicts experienced was underrepresented at headquarters, but overrepresented in Branch II: *all* conflicts experienced at Branch II fell in the category Race and Gender. This is the main finding with regard to location of work, conflict issues and conflict categories, leading to two assumptions:

- interviewees in Branch II were highly aware of conflicts related to Race and Gender ; and
- Branch II provided a particular organisational context for tension in this conflict category.

It may be concluded that management at Branch II had not yet succeeded to meet the challenges of diversity management.

Additionally, in Branch III, the focus of the conflicts experienced was identified as lying in the category Position and Competition. Here, all conflicts revolved around the issue of career building, with the emphasis on power and hierarchies. One conflict experienced even fell under the category Race and Gender.

These findings show that the number of conflict issues linked to the conflict categories established a special profile at Branch II and Branch III, but were rather unspecific at Branch I and headquarters.

8.9.6   Conflicts in category Organisation

Eight conflicts were linked to the conflict category Organisation, defined as conflicts dealing with operational, functional and task-related issues.

In conclusion, the majority of interviewees contributing to the conflict category Organisation defined and analysed conflicts related to organisational structures and functions in a rather 'objective way' (see Chapter 7, Section 7.2). This means that they did not take conflicts personally and did not feel personally hurt in conflict situations. Presumably, these interviewees succeeded more often in resolving conflicts constructively by using their individual resources, such as effective communication skills, strong identity aspects, and strong-mindedness. These interviewees retained their individual manageability throughout the conflict, remaining sovereign in handling the situation. Only one female interviewee had experienced a strong value-based conflict in the category Organisation. Her value concepts of equality clashed and she felt personally weakened, experienced a strong identity conflict, and was no longer able to manage it.

Regarding the management styles in the conflicts of this conflict category, a high variety of management styles were used. One interviewee stated explicitly that, in principle, he kept a 'medium distance' from subordinates. This inter-personal distance assisted him in remaining objective in conflict situations and to simultaneously feel accepted by his staff members. It is assumed that the other male interviewees who referred to the organisational conflict category also tried to keep a medium distance from conflicting parties by focusing on the

objective, functional and task-related levels of conflict, rather than on the relationship level. The female interviewee who narrated a conflict in this conflict category had dealt with it on an inter-personal and emotional level, and was experiencing an identity crisis. It is also remarkable that all the conflict narrations of male interviewees in this category included only a minimum of emotional expressions.

Having considered the specifics of the conflict category Organisation, the focus turns to trans-cultural conflicts that contribute a category-pervading group of conflicts.

8.9.7   Trans-cultural conflicts

Trans-cultural conflicts constitute a separate group of conflicts that are underlined with issues of culture and race, besides their belonging to a conflict category (Chapter 7, Section 7.3.) Therefore, the trans-cultural conflicts are spread over the five conflict categories, which at the same time contain cultural or racial issues.

Twelve conflicts have been identified as trans-cultural conflicts. In trans-cultural conflicts, interviewees narrated cultural issues explicitly or implicitly. Altogether six White, four Indian and two Black managers experienced trans-cultural conflicts or trans-cultural aspects in conflicts. The conflict narrations were analysed with regard to the following factors: conflict issue, values, identity, conflict resolution and conflict management.

a.   Conflict issues

In summary, the main conflict issues of White interviewees in the organisation were related to the political changes in South African society. Other conflicts dealt with language, specifically the use of the Afrikaans language in an organisation where the official language was English. Additionally, a language conflict had influenced the communication between a Black and an Indian interviewee, who used 'bad language'. Another conflict was related to the value of 'punctuality', and ways of dealing with it.

It may be concluded that White managers experienced three topics of trans-cultural conflicts: politics and the history of South Africa; the language issue; and industrial values. This leads to the assumption that the political change and the newly introduced laws and organisational policies in this organisation posed challenges for White managers. Furthermore, a struggle about language might affect communication negatively. Finally, value constellations lead to culturally based work conflicts, which harmed the work atmosphere.

In viewing the trans-cultural conflict issues of the Indian interviewees, it may be concluded that interviewees perceived challenges in the conflict category Position and Competition. The interviewees felt excluded from the flow of information and from common activities, or through being distracted to apply for a special management position. Presumably, the Indian interviewees experienced their own minority position strongly and were therefore particularly sensitive to any perceived racial discrimination and victimisation. They desired fair and equal chances to build their own careers.

In summary, the conflict issues experienced by the participating Black interviewees were similar to the conflicts experienced by the Indian interviewees: one interviewee felt excluded from diverse activities and that he was not being given a fair chance to demonstrate his competencies in a new 'Black' position. Another interviewee struggled with a White counterpart who held the same position. It is presumed that the political aspects of 'affirmative action' may have played a major role in the conflicts, because they reflect the expectations of Black managers to get an equal chance to White interviewees with regard to gaining higher executive positions in the company.

b.   Values

In terms of the values relevant in conflict situations, White interviewees preferred good and direct communication, cooperation, respect and teamwork. Only one female interviewee complained of a lack of pride in work, experiencing a conflict with a Black manager. It is presumed that the White interviewees tended to uphold the core values of the organisation. There seemed to be a

concern about future developments regarding political laws that affected the distribution of high management positions to certain racial groups.

In terms of the values that Indian interviewees experienced in their trans-cultural conflicts it may be concluded that working hard, achievement and equal treatment represent their values. Presumably, Indian interviewees were conscious of their chance of gaining leading positions in management. For them, it was a *conditio sine qua non* that all managers in the company would receive equal treatment provided. They did not rely on affirmative action and other policies to reach high management positions, because they were basically intrinsically motivated through the values of goal achievement and working hard.

Black interviewees emphasised tolerance, especially racial tolerance, which indicated that they expected respect and appreciation, not only based on their position, but also for themselves as human beings. This leads to the assumption that Black interviewees were still struggling for acceptance in an organisation ruled by a majority of White managers.

c. Identity

The identity aspects in trans-cultural conflicts experienced by White managers comprised an 'old school' identity, irritations, and identity crises. White managers – if confronted with trans-cultural issues or conflicts – are presumed to experience difficulties in dealing with managers of diverse racial background. Possibly, the participating White interviewees did not yet possess enough intercultural knowledge that could reduce the irritations experienced in trans-cultural conflicts.

Identity aspects in conflicts that Indian interviewees experienced relate to victimisation, and losing faith and confidence. The remaining two Indian interviewees were optimistic, self reliant and self confident.

The two Black interviewees revealed a clear picture of their identity: both suffered from a minority-related identity crisis, which in the conflictive situation

became virulent. A new approach of diversity management was clearly necessary, one Black interviewee stated. Presumably, the Black interviewees saw themselves as the most discriminated against group in the organisation and, therefore, their identity had been deeply affected in the trans-cultural conflicts.

d.   Conflict resolution and management

In summary, the options for conflict resolution and conflict management that the White interviewees proposed or exercised were: sticking to things and being clear; sitting together and mediating; but also – if there was no other way – taking disciplinary steps, which could include dismissal. Obviously, White interviewees had a broad array of conflict resolution strategies that enabled them to manage conflicts to the benefit of both sides.

The Indian interviewees exercised conflict resolution mainly through resignation, transfer or mediation. Apologising was also an option toward resolving trans-cultural conflicts.

A clear profile of conflict resolution in trans-cultural conflicts was shown by the Black managers: they preferred hard measures such as disciplinary hearings, lawyers and fighting for their political and economical rights. This leads to the assumption that Black managers were clear about the route they wished to follow in trans-cultural conflicts, especially with Whites: they would fight for their rights with all juridical means available and not simply rely on talking and sitting down together.

In conclusion, Whites, Indians and Blacks experienced trans-cultural conflicts from different perspectives. Whilst for White interviewees, trans-cultural conflicts contained the side issues of racial equality and political influence, besides the other conflict issues in the organisation, for Black interviewees political, racial and economic equality was predominant in trans-cultural conflicts. The Indian interviewees did not express any political view on trans-cultural conflicts, except one statement on the minority status of Indian managers in the organisation.

- for the White interviewees, the communicative aspect was most important;

- for the Indian interviewees, the competitive aspect was virulent; and

- for the Black interviewees, the emancipative aspect was the dominant aspect of the trans-cultural conflicts they had experienced.

All these addressed aspects reflect the different value constellations that were relevant with regard to trans-cultural conflicts.

The findings of trans-cultural conflict reflect the theoretical considerations presented in Chapter 3, Section 3.4.4. The findings show that trans-cultural conflicts developed between the different cultural groups and were influenced by the experienced discrepancies between the known and the unknown (Mummendey, 1993). The data additionally show that the conflict experiences were not only based on individual experiences of discrepancies, but also on cultural and contextual racial knowledge. This theoretical consideration was supported, for example, by the finding that especially Black interviewees, in conflict situations with their White peers, would fight juristically for their political and economic rights in the organisation.

Therefore, cultural diversity in the relevant organisation was likely to increase intra-organisational conflict, as indicated in the theoretical approaches of Williams and O'Reilly (1998). Trans-cultural conflicts are particularly influenced by self- and other images, and usually accompanied by insecurity of feeling and behaviour (Layes, 2003), as the findings of this study have confirmed. If these insecurities coincide with unfavourable economic and political conditions, it is likely that culture-specific values will increase in importance, as stated by Burton (1990a). This viewpoint is also reflected in the trans-cultural conflict findings, as explained above.

The findings of Part I (Chapter 6) and Part II (Chapter 7) have been concluded and canvassed in relation to theoretical considerations. The final conclusions of this study will be presented in the following section according to Chapters 1 to 7.

8.10   MAIN CONTRIBUTIONS OF THIS RESEARCH

In the sections above, the main contributions of this research have been presented and will therefore not be repeated. In summary, the outstanding contributions of this study may be listed as following:

In Chapter 1, Section 1.4, it was pointed out that research assessing managerial perspectives on conflict, identity and values in the selected international organisation in the South African automotive industry had never been undertaken before and that this study could therefore be regarded ground-breaking case study research.

The contribution with regard to the theoretical approaches in Chapters 3 and 4 is mainly based on the development of the new value domain defined as Communication. Communication which might be a further domain in the value dimension of Openness to Change of Schwartz (1994) and Schwartz and Bilsky (1987) with regard to this sample.

The important qualitative contributions of this research are contained in Chapters 6, 7 and 8. The findings, summaries and conclusions presented in these three chapters contain new information on, and deeper insight into the conflict, values and identities in the selected organisation which were not generally known. The specific findings are deemed to be important contributions towards the scientific knowledge of, and insight in the body of management knowledge pertaining to the interrelationship of conflict, values and identity. As indicated in Chapter 8, it was possible to verify aspects of previous research, presented in Chapters 3 and 4, pertaining to conflict approaches; conflict management in organisational settings; identity and conflicts; and particularly the value domains and dimension of the Schwartz model of values.

The perception of especially trans-cultural conflicts in the organisation provides a deeper insight and understanding the complexity of culture as an underlying force in the conflict experiences and narrations of White, Black and Indian managers. Therefore, Chapter 7, Section 7.3, contributes to much-needed research-based knowledge on diversity management in the New South Africa.

Finally, this study provides findings that may serve as the primary sources for generating of tools for the automotive industry, such as:

- conflict management;
- trans-cultural mediation;
- coaching managerial competences;
- intercultural competence training; and
- diversity management.

Organisations that are similar to the organisation that formed the subject of this single case study may benefit from the research findings and the subsequet development of training and coaching tools to successfully face the challenges of growing globalisation and internal multiculturalisation in South Africa.

8.11 RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE SELECTED ORGANISATION

Based on the conclusions regarding the findings (Sections 8.1 to 8.10), selected recommendations may be formulated for the organisation. These recommendations may also provide useful information and ideas for other international organisations, working in the South African context, that possess similar structures and settings.

Firstly, recommendations are presented based on the findings referring to the conflict issues and categories occurring in this organisation.

a. Communication

There are three major fields of recommendations for communication:

- The organisation displays an urgent need for an improvement in the exchange of information, expectations and ideas. The communication system, particularly between the different levels of management, needs to be revised. There is a high demand for communicative improvement in top-down communication. The communication between all managerial levels should become more open and transparent. This

transparency can be improved through the establishment of new communication structures, including plenary meetings and actions rooms, both intra-departmental and inter-departmental.

- Additionally, there is a great need for the improvement of teamwork. This improvement can be achieved through team-building exercises, educational training and the adjustment of architecture and working structures.

- E-mail communication has gained a dominant role in the organisation's internal communication system. Unfortunately, this saw a proportionate increase in the misuse of e-mails. This abuse needs to be addressed by top management. The leadership of the organisation needs to serve as a guiding force to propose a new paradigm of e-mail communication that protects the staff from e-mail bullying and harassment.

- The use of pejorative language between managers clearly needs to be reduced. It is recommended that managers are offered leadership courses on communication and leading skills, with special regard to the rhetorical and ethical aspects of communication.

b.   Treatment

The recommendations regarding treatment comprise two main issues:

- The managerial behaviour in conflict and communication situations in the organisation needs to be improved, because the interviewed managers were highly sensitive in terms of perceiving arrogant attitudes from their communication partners. Additionally, behaviour such as losing one's temper and shouting at colleagues was regarded as highly disrespectful, but often experienced.

- Managers should therefore be offered individual consultancies and supervising to reflect their personal communication strategies and

behavioural patterns. They should also be trained to react to this kind of behaviour in an appropriate and de-escalating way.

- The second important point regarding treatment comprises intrigues, harassment and workplace bullying. To manage these forms of destructive behaviour, as experienced by the interviewees concerned, it is recommended that key persons, who are called 'ombuds', be introduced to the organisation. They will serve as mediators, facilitators or moderators. These ombuds will set up a so-called 'clearing centre', where all concerns and insults, workplace bullying and harassment can be mediated or facilitated before the parties concerned resort to the formal grievance procedures.

c. Position

Recommendations referring to Position are as follows:

- The cooperation between superiors and subordinates needs to be strengthened in terms of collaboration and transparent communication.

- Conflicts on position in the organisation were often based on unspecified information on tasks and appointments to a position. Therefore, job descriptions should be more specified and accessible for all managers concerned and the appointment procedures and criteria should be made transparent and open to all managers in question.

- The third conflictive point deals with conflicts on Board level, which spill over to lower levels and cause confusion. The recommendation is therefore to clarify conflicts on Board level to prevent aggravation and frustration on the upper and middle management levels. Strong, transparent leadership is needed to serve as an exemplary and guiding force to support the creation of a corporate and trustful identity within the organisation.

d.   Competition

There are two points of recommendation with regard to competition:

- The participating interviewees complained about poor career planning and lack of support to climb the ladder in the organisation. The expectations of the organisation and the managers, with regard to career planning, goal achievement and rewards, must be clearly stated. The process and procedures, their opportunities and limitations of 'climbing the ladder' should be made more transparent. Particularly, the options of female managers and managers from formerly disadvantaged groups should gain more consideration to appease the deep concerns of certain managers.

- Several of the South African managers interviewed felt overcontrolled by representatives of the German headquarters. They were convinced that they, as local managers, had the expertise in terms of economic, managerial and cultural skills and knowledge that the expatriate managers lacked. Expatriates and representatives of German headquarters should recognise this. Cultural orientation trainings are recommended for German managers to learn more about cultural aspects and diversity management in South African organisations. By improving intercultural competence, German managers might take a step back and open up mutual discussions on a more equal level.

e.   Organisation

With regard to conflicts in the conflict category Organisation, four recommendations are made:

- While South African interviewees felt overcontrolled from the German side, interviewees working at the different branches in South Africa felt overcontrolled by South African headquarters. Interviewees felt that the attitude of managers from headquarters should be less arrogant and more permissive. Therefore, communication patterns between headquarters and the branches need to shift towards more

collaborative and respectful attitudes. The communication systems and the definition of hierarchies need to be revised and redefined.

- In the context of inter-hierarchical communication, some interviewees missed a relationship of trust between German headquarters and South African headquarters, as well as between South African headquarters and the branches. Trust can be built through trust-building measures such as team-building exercises, transparent communication, and a caring and supportive environment. The organisational ethics and guiding values need to be reviewed with regard to their impact on trust and distrust in the organisation. Trust building needs to be supported and guided by the top level of the organisation. This should include a process of participative and democratic agreements on leading values and the corporate identity, from the bottom upwards.

- Commitment towards work and to the organisation was another point of concern for several interviewees. Sound diversity management is supposed to guide the way to a commonly accepted and shared commitment for both the majority and the minority groups in the organisation.

- The above-mentioned three points have led to the recommendation that the corporate identity of the entire organisation be reshaped, for it seems not to be sufficiently supported by top and middle management.

f.   Race and Gender

The following points need to be considered with regard to Race and Gender in the organisation:

- It is obvious that the organisation needs to address the issue of diversity management with regard to minority related issues.

- Differences in cultural concepts such as, for example time concepts, need to be discussed and understood. To a certain extent, linear time concepts in the organisation must be made more flexible to give managers the freedom of time management they need to work efficiently.

- There are fears and concerns about the future and the vision of the organisation with regard to diversity management and the Rainbow Nation concept. Therefore, the organisation needs to develop a concrete vision and a programme to address, on the one hand, the concerns of the managers and, on the other hand, to give directions to integrate its diverse workforce according to the new labour legislative framework of South Africa.

- Particularly with regard to the female minority in the organisation, a supportive and caring environment is needed to engage female managers in the male-dominated management arena. Female managers need to be empowered, as they will establish a more relationship-based and participative management style and a less competitive atmosphere.

g.   Values

The value profile of the interviewed managers shows a strong focus on self-transcendence and conservation with regard to value dimensions.

- In order to achieve a more balanced value profile between the poles of openness to change and conservation, it is desirable to strengthen values in the organisation that comprise the dimension of openness to change. This slight shift in value orientation might support a future-oriented, innovative and flexible work environment that is open to diverse influences and the constructive integration of human resources.

h.   Conflict management and resolution

In experienced conflicts, interviewees preferred face-to-face communication as conflict resolution strategies, followed by formal internal intervention. Negotiation strategies, as well as apologies and mediation, were rarely used as conflict resolution strategies.

Therefore, it is recommended that face-to-face communication and formal internal intervention be enhanced through negotiation, mediation and apology rites. These conflict resolution strategies might be especially effective in organisations with diverse management staff with regard to differences in cultural background and culture-based conflict resolution strategies. With regard to the enhancement of conflict resolution strategies, managers should be trained to improve their conflict resolution skills, as well as their trans-cultural competencies, as will be explained in more detail in the following section.

i.   Trans-cultural conflicts

With regard to trans-cultural management, the following recommendations can be offered:

- As the findings show, cultural and racial issues were an underlying topic in the experienced conflicts. Therefore, it is recommended that managers undergo training in culture, specifically in intercultural competence, diversity management, and intercultural communication and mediation. In such training, intercultural competencies can be improved through self-awareness exercises, cultural self-reflection and the reflection on the behaviour and attitudes of others. The training modules can be used not only to improve trans-cultural communication inside the organisation in South Africa, but also between the German headquarters and the South African headquarters. Additionally, managers with improved trans-cultural competence could support an interculturally sensitive customer orientation, so that the requirements of diverse customers and their culture-specific communication styles can be accommodated.

- From these findings, tools for conflict management in the organisation and trans-cultural conflict resolution training can be developed, particularly for this organisation, but may also be useful for other international organisations in a similar setting in the German-South African context.

In addition to the recommendations for the organisation, recommendations for further research are also provided.

8.12   RECOMMENDATION FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

Based on the outcome of this research, the following recommendations are suggested for consideration regarding future research in the field of conflict, its management and its interlinkage to values and identity, with special regard to trans-cultural conflict:

- A comprehensive review of the conflict management of the selected international organisation could be undertaken to obtain more precise and longer term insight in organisational changes, focusing on conflict experiences and the management thereof in the selected organisation.

- The study's research findings could be completed by further research studies, following a similar methodological approach, conducted at the headquarters in Germany and in other regions of the world-wide organisation.

- Perceptions pertaining to conflict issues linked to conflict categories could be compared with samples of other international organisations in South Africa.

- Further research could also identify conflict issues linked to conflict categories and compare the findings with samples of other international organisations in the automotive industry in South Africa.

- Further research could focus not only on managerial levels as a sample, but also consider conflict experiences and views of conflict

management with regard to the values and identities of staff members not working at management levels.

- Research regarding the conflict experiences of customers with management of the organisation need to be surveyed to obtain the viewpoint of other main groups involved in conflict.

- With regard to theoretical concepts and approaches, further research on values and value concepts and their meanings for managers is required to obtain a deeper insight into value constellation conflicts and their effects on the behavioural patterns of managers.

- It would be of interest to canvass identity concepts with regard to conflict management styles in the selected organisation. In this context, identity strengthening and identity weakening aspects should be evaluated and widely discussed.

- Further qualitative studies are needed to analyse the correlation between strengthening and weakening identity aspects and the competence to resolve conflicts in managerial positions.

- More research on trans-cultural conflict and, particularly, conflict management procedures could improve diversity management in the specific context of the selected organisation. A special focus should be posed on informal conflict management and communication strategies and their effectiveness in the ttrans-cultural sphere.

- Finally, with reference to the concepts of health and health promotion in the selected international organisation, it would be of interest to determine aspects of identity that support the salutogenesis and its factors of the 'sense of coherence' in managers. According to the vital 'sense of coherence', a high scoring in comprehensibility, manageability and meaningfulness as essential aspects of identity will enable managers to cope with highly stressful situations, such as personal and task-related conflicts. Therefore, more research is

urgently needed to ensure health and well-being on managerial levels in the organisation.

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APPENDIX A

INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

Interview questions 1 to 7

QUESTION 1

Thinking about your time at this company, could you please describe a specific incident of interpersonal or intergroup conflict that you have experienced personally? (Please describe exactly what happened in the situation: who was involved, where did it take place and which inner attitudes and personal values were involved in the situation?)

QUESTION 2

What do you think: why did the conflict take place? What were the reasons and causes of conflict in your opinion?

QUESTION 3

Now let us think about the actions towards conflict resolution: What did you do to resolve? What did the other parties do?

QUESTION 4

After we have looked at the conflict and its resolution, I would like to ask you, if you could please refer to your personal involvement in this conflict: Please describe which issues of your identity impacted on the situation?

QUESTION 5

Please describe your management style and how it impacts on your way of perceiving and managing conflict situations.

QUESTION 6

Where do you see the need for improvement in management and conflict resolution processes in the company?

<u>QUESTION 7</u>

In conclusion, I would like to ask you how you see the need for outside intervention, like outside consultancy, mediation or conflict management processes in the company?

APPENDIX B
TRANSCRIBED INTERVIEW EXCERPTS

APPENDIX B

Transcribed interview excerpt examples P1-P3

P1

1. Thinking about your time at this company, could you please describe a specific incident of interpersonal or intergroup conflict that you have experienced personally? Please describe exactly what happened in the situation: who was involved, where did it take place and which inner attitudes and personal values were involved in the situation?

I have never had any conflict. It's truly the best working environment that I have ever had. This is not for anybody like this, I suppose. I mean, I like to come to work on Monday, because I enjoy the people I work with and the job that I do. That's honest. Otherwise I wouldn't say that, I am sure.

2. What do you think: why did the conflict take place? What were the reasons and causes of conflict in your opinion?

Sometimes in conflicts…also culture plays a big role, especially in today's society, definitely. We are not all the same, we don't think all the same. I try and understand that, I try and understand that…that somebody else was not raised in the same way I was raised. We don't have the same opinions on items.

3. Now let us think about the actions towards conflict resolution: What did you do to resolve? What did the other parties do?

Generally I sometimes do avoid conflict or I do address it directly. I don't mind confrontation. But confrontation doesn't necessarily have to lead to conflict. So, I, I, I believe that…that if you gonna confront somebody…be totally open and honest. But then, when they are not, then it leads to conflict. So, if both parties are honest, then there is no reason to get involved in a conflict. So, if you are in a conflict…and you are straight and honest and the other party is not…then it can easily lead to conflict. So, if both parties are right, then there is no reason to

get involved in a conflict at the first place. And I believe, if you can look somebody in the eye and tell them how you feel…and, and be open and honest with them…and they, they do the same…there is no need to get into a conflict stage at all.

4. After we have looked at conflict and its resolution, I would like to ask you, if you could please refer to your personal involvement in this conflict: Please describe which issues of your identity and personality which impacted on the situation?

For me, it is important to grow myself in a company. Ahm…As a person I don't like conflict. I will avoid it at all cost. I think I am a person to get easy along with, I might think so…ahm…I'd like to think that I can deal with anybody in any situation at any time. Ahm… I am…ahm…it probably sounds a little bit arrogant, but…that's what I'd like to try and do. Ahm…I am ambitious…ahm…obviously I have a family and I want to provide the best lifestyle for my family and in order to do that I have to grow as a person. It's not just about men. It's…about stature and ambition…so that plays a big part in it…ahm…but ja, I am not gonna actionize myself and role over and accept somebody's decision when it is wrong. When something is wrong I am gonna let them know when I think it is wrong and then I'll disagree. So, maybe I am a little bit outspoken…sometimes. Sometimes it get's you into trouble, ahm (laughing), but ja, that's…that's how I am as a person. Being honest is important.
And language barriers are no longer a problem, because most people speak English anyway. We all manage to communicate in some form. But, ja, culture is something that not anybody keeps in his mind and that it creates different personalities and attitudes.

5. Please describe you management style and how it impacts on your way of perceiving and transforming conflict situations.

For example, I deal a lot with my counterparts in Germany, where sometimes, when we both can't find a neutral setting that we both are comfortable, we have to first talk about football and just find something with which we are both comfortable, just to find something to start off with. You find a ground where you

can always go back to…where….where you both are comfortable. And you can see it. It's a body language thing and how people speak and you can make a joke and have a laugh about something. And, I feel then you are in a comfort zone. It is a comfort zone. And if you go outside that comfort zone, then proceed slowly and test the water before you go in. That is my attitude anyway, to find a common ground. Then, if there is conflict, you can go back to that. Both can quickly go back there and, okay, let us both start from here again. You know, we get hassled a lot by salespeople and obviously the job is demanding. At times it does get frustrating ahm…and sometimes it is not very pleasant as it should be. Then you can quickly change to talk about "how was this weekend?" or something like that, you know? Just to get everybody calm again and then you can just get forward. That is how I do it. The more you know a person the better you can get on with him and avoid things like confrontations and conflicts and the best way to get around is to adapt wherever you are. But sometimes you have to stand your ground and stand for what you believe.

6. Where do you see the need for improvement in management and conflict resolution processes in the company?

This is what we have here in the company, right now, my direct superior is, he is extremely open and honest and also his team. And as I say, that's why when we have got confrontations…it doesn't get to that level. And a kind of work environment like that…it's a pleasure.

7. Conclusively, I would like to ask you how you see the need for outside intervention, like outside consultancy, mediation or conflict management processes in the company?

Sometimes it is…but again, I believe, that when two adult people can not resolve a problem, then there is something wrong with either one of them. So then…ahm…and I don't mean a mental problem, but just…an attitude problem. It is obviously an attitude problem. So then sometimes you have to bring in a mediator from outside who is totally neutral…which is obviously we have people like this like the Labour Court. So, ja, it is necessary because not everybody does agree with anybody all of the time.

<u>P2</u>

1. Thinking about your time at this company, could you please describe a specific incident of interpersonal or intergroup conflict that you have experienced personally? Please describe exactly what happened in the situation: who was involved, where did it take place and which inner attitudes and personal values were involved in the situation?

Just a few weeks ago, I had a big case with a customer of us, a Swiss guy; he is one of our worst customers. He starts shouting immediately, whatever happens, whatever goes on. His own people call him Hitler. He beats up the driver. If a driver makes a mistake, he just beats him up. He few weeks ago he met a driver in his car with a woman and he beat the driver up so that he went to hospital. And he came to our place two weeks ago and one of my colleagues came into my room and he said: "Hey, there is one of your friends outside." And I saw him and when he saw me he said: "Oh shit, o shit." Ja, okay, normally, I don't want to see him, but I went to him and we shacked hands. Ja. Maybe he mixed me up with somebody else, but this is his attitude and I know we had one case where we fixed his car in the evening. I got all the people together in the evening to solve his problem and to help him. Something went wrong this evening and the truck had a breakdown and went back to Jo'burg and he phoned me the next morning and he shouted me out. That is one of our famous customers. We have more like him but he is the worst. And he has got a lot of enemies. That is what I call a conflict. I should have knocked him out, but the customer is the king. Ja. He is one of our biggest customers. The management or the General Manager is not interested. The management wants to keep the customer. They try to keep all customers. The customer is more important than us. First comes the customer. And actually, I want to get out of it. That is one of the reasons why I am going back. The customer is not doing his job, not doing his part of it. If you have got a vehicle, you have to look after the maintenance. We have got our guidelines and the customer can not do several things. And our people are not interested. They want to keep the customer and the customer is always right. That's why I am not going to meetings. I know it will be a waste of time. South Africans they like to have meetings. You know, that is most important. Nothing gets done, ja, nobody has got the gouts to tell the customer: "Please customer, you have got to get your part right." Let's make a

deal. And that's not done. The customer starts immediately shouting and they…pull back. Ja, and he gets whatever he wants. That is why we have got a customer's satisfaction that is 94% (laughing). If you spoil your customers, definitely, you will get 94% (laughing). They discuss it every morning in the meeting, ja…to discuss and to discuss the customer's complaints.

But here is the conflict again. We also have got the salesmen. For the salesmen, the customer is always right. Ja. We had meetings, ja, in front of the customers and with the salesmen and he shouted me out in front of the customer. I told me, that I wouldn't do my work. So, at the end, I complained and I also complained to our management, but in the end we dropped the case and we had a similar situation like this where he called an engineer "useless", ja, and I don't know what the investigation was, but they went for a hearing. I, I can't remember now, but, you see, this is now conflict. That salesman, he gets the commission. Every bus he sales, ja, and here, we fight together. He should be on our side. He should tell the customer: "Dear customer, this is wrong, this is your fault." But…the customer is always right. Because he is getting money, he is getting the commission and he wants to sell. And we…we have to shut up. Ja…but this is not they way I work. This is not…we have a very good product, we are one of the best and in my opinion we don't need customers like this. But in the end we had to take this investigation, because he is one of our best salesmen (laughing). What can you do? You just have to shut up. There is money involved. But the question is: do we make money? He makes money, but on the other hand the company loses money. So…at the end…I don't know. So, this is the big question. We don't really make money and in the end we get a bad name because of the customers not looking after the vehicles and driving the vehicles into destruction. We get the bad name and this is not the way to go. But, that's life. But on the other side we have also good customers and I do like to support them.

2. What do you think: why did the conflict take place? What were the reasons and causes of conflict in your opinion?

I think he has got a lot of problems. He has got personality problems. As soon as something goes wrong on the truck side, yes, it's a problem. You know, at

our company, if you shout, the people just immediately…jump…and the reason is to get attention and to get whatever he wants and MAN is paying: whatever he wants, whatever goes wrong, MAN pays.

3. Now let us think about the actions towards conflict resolution: What did you do to resolve? What did the other parties do?

Ja, some people, they just turn around, ja and they think. "Let him shout first." Ja, you know I have got my experience, ja, have been all over the world. You have got to…ja…just to calm down. I let him calm down and then I will go back into the situation.

But in Germany, we would have told the customer: "Okay, listen! We can do it without you." That is what he did in Germany with a customer like him in Germany. We told him: "Okay, no, sorry. We can't do this for you." There is a difference. I just had a discussion with my colleague about it. Here, this is part of our management. Management says: "Happy customers. We want to be the best and, ja, the customer is the king. We only want happy customers." And we are paying and paying. Just to keep the customer happy and this is the main reason. That is how you keep customers. Sometimes you sell a few trucks less, but….in the end you are making more money. Ja, that is what we did in Germany, ja…you should not run after every customer.

4. After we have looked at conflict and its resolution, I would like to ask you, if you could please refer to your personal involvement in this conflict: Please describe which issues of your identity and personality which impacted on the situation?

Ja, so I had similar cases where the customer starts shouting at you and I just tell the customer: "Ja, please customer, don't shout, I want to help you." And then, later on, we can go on. But, shouting, shouting, that's a South African habit. Ja, especially South African. We have a lot of customers who shout and shout. I am not dealing with money. My job is to find a solution for the customer. But if the customer does not do his job with the maintenance, there is the problem.

5. Please describe you management style and how it impacts on your way of perceiving and transforming conflict situations.

I don't get the people from my Department. I used to have four people, four technicians and at the moment there is only two, because there is not enough money anymore to train people, to…ja…have more experts on our side…cause if you spoil your customers…at the end…there is no more money to spent on the company, for us left. So, I think, that is definitely the wrong way. It comes from the top. We should be stricter and we should check our customers regularly and we should…ask them to follow up our guidelines and tell them: "Sorry that is your fault; you have to follow up our guidelines." That is the only possibility. Otherwise you have to pay for it. We need to be clear about the communication towards the costumer. And in the management the attitude "happy customer" has to change. Ja…and…we should not run after every customer. Sure. We want to sell. We want to be the best.

6. Where do you see the need for improvement in management and conflict resolution processes in the company?

Sometimes you have to tell yourself: "Look, this is not a customer. You should leave him alone." We should go out before we lose our name…and…definitely…there is a court case coming up…about 40 Million….with one of our customers. Now…the customer….ahm…wants so sue us. Ja…for…for bad vehicle. Ja? And that was not the case. Ja…I know the customer and it was surely bad maintenance. We have got other customers, the same area…and…they don't have problems. Only this customer has problems. We spoilt him. Whatever went wrong, we paid him, we make "happy customers" and now the customer is suing us. He is one of the biggest bus operators here in Jo'burg. The company is out of control…but…MAN is keeping the customer. The drivers they don't look at speed limits. They are killing people. Ja. I listened to one conversation. It was a policeman and a businessman and suddenly the name of the company came up and then I listened to it. Every week one of the buses was confiscated by the police, because the drivers were killing people, driving too fast, speeding, killing people. Ja, and they always blame the vehicle. And that is what the driver always does – they blame the vehicle, the brakes.

But there is no control. They don't control. If they had disciplined the driver…but the next day it gets our problem, because it's our busses. It is never the customer's problem. They want all kinds of modifications but the only advice is to control the driver. And this is the kind of customers we've got and I am getting fed up. I have got no more interest.

7. Conclusively, I would like to ask you how you see the need for outside intervention, like outside consultancy, mediation or conflict management processes in the company?

Of course, in the company, between ourselves we need some interventions from the outside. Ja, there is also one in the company, we got one mediator here. Ja, ja, there is….ahm…disciplinary action …ah (laughing). But not…ja…there is, but I never got involved in such a situation.

P3

1. Thinking about your time at this company, could you please describe a specific incident of interpersonal or intergroup conflict that you have experienced personally? Please describe exactly what happened in the situation: who was involved, where did it take place and which inner attitudes and personal values were involved in the situation?

You know, in the department where I am, this is the department where there is always a conflict scenario, because you have to say "no"…no…ahm…it's, it's an occupation…it's…ahm…I always say to the people, you know, I am not here to make friends. I work in a department where it is my job to say "no". So, you have got a lot of conflict on regular bases, because people don't accept "no" for an answer. So, this is the career I have chosen. I, I enjoy it. I come from a financial background….ahm…ja, but it happens on a daily bases. People are not happy when you say "no". Because of warranty people say something to the customer and later on you have to go to the customer and tell him "no". And then you are the guy who said "no"…and warranty and then there is a customer's conflict. But it happens and it is in the department and it is high and you gotta manage it. Ja, and you have to mediate and at the end of the day, the

system….the system is transparent…then…conflict becomes minimized. It was a very tough….decision…to come into it, because it was in a mess and we had a lot of resistance out there. But today it is going well. If something happens, you live with it; you manage it…until acceptations…ja, it happens.

(…) Look, you have got two sides of conflict: you have got the conflict in the company, the departmental conflict…each got its own goals…its own targets…and everything and so you have got the conflict inside. And then you have got the conflict outside. You have got the branch and the leader network and then you've got the branches that are owned by us and then you've got the conflict from the independent people, because it's their enterprise, it's their money, it's their investment. So, that is the three kind of….but any specific…I mean…that is…is…very difficult…ja…ahm…I mean the main thing, if, if I take it in a whole, is…inside of this head office is…to get people back into a situation that they were used to having it their way and…striking over the department and…that department was moved up and…that was something that was huge, that was very, very huge, because people didn't understand and we have had a lot of criticism…and…and it was a lack of understanding and…it…was a situation of getting them trained and…getting the board of directors to support you…fully. They gotta, you know, whenever you are sitting around the table, you have to hear that: "You know, but you have got our support." But, I don't believe in that. I mean, that's fine, that's nice to have, but we want them to go outside and say: "We gotta support you." Then it becomes easier…and in the beginning that was difficult to get the guys get into it and …ahm…go out and say: "Look, we gotta support you."

2. What do you think: why did the conflict take place? What were the reasons and causes of conflict in your opinion?

Misunderstanding, lack of knowledge…definitely.

3. Now let us think about the actions towards conflict resolution: What did you do to resolve? What did the other parties do?

People read a document, sometimes, the way they wanna read it. And they don't want to read it in the way it is written and don't see that it is written from a company perspective. So…even today still…people attack me when we are in a meeting or in a conflict situation: "Your warranty conditions"….and…you gotta tell them: "It is not my warranty conditions….it is MAN's warranty condition." So, it is the understanding and the knowledge that they have got. A lot of people don't want to read the documents. They don't want to understand the documents condition and think it helps them. Ignorance…is a…good excuse that I didn't know. It is…what I did is…you had to train them, you had to train them…and you had to put the documents and tell them what is actually written in it and what is the understanding of it. The document was actually done through a group of high level managers…and we spend a lot of time and the easiest way is to go out and ask the guy: "Here is the document. Do you understand it? How do you interpret it?" Then we will tell the interpretation from our side, from the company's point of view…and stop referring to it as my warranty condition." …'cause they will go to the customers and some of the workshops have done it and they mention your name and they say that so and so has rejected your client. And then the customer phones the MD and says: "Who is this person?" You know, sometimes, I get very cross, 'cause all I am doing is following the rule. It's a truth rule and it's not my rule and…I think I let people understand what I am trying to do and I think a lot of the managers, still today, they are not taking the time. So actually, you have to get involved and I have invited them to sit with me. I said: "Come and sit, I will show you what is involved. Let me show you the full picture, because you only look at the half. And they see the half and then there comes the other half that you will be paid for." And that is wrong, because the moment you've got a full understanding how…what I do fits into the bottom line of MAN and…our decision today is actually over three years. Once I've got that understanding I have got sympathy with you decisions. And then they look also differently. When you make a decision, then they say: "Oh, well, that to me sounds as a good decision." Instead of saying: "Oh, ja, that's "Doctor No"." That is how they referred to me. I'm "Doctor No". (laughing).

4. After we have looked at conflict and its resolution, I would like to ask you, if you could please refer to your personal involvement in this conflict: Please describe which issues of your identity and personality which impacted on the situation?

My personality and my job that I am in today are actually very well aligned. The two complement each other. I am very strong minded. I believe in systems…I…always say to people that I am very lazy. And I tell everybody and they gonna look at me and they will say: "Oh, why do you say that?" And I will say that I will do one thing once…and then I will go and spent time and see how can I do that quicker and easier the second time around. And the second time I also trim around and see how can I make it easier…that that is what a person I am and that is why I am very successful. I have a very successful department and I turned it around. I have cleaned it out and there were huge numbers involved and it's purely because of my own personality in the role that I am. Today you are working with such a diverse work force and now it is not easy anymore: you got a lot of religion, you got a lot of cultural issues that come through and I think that is one of the biggest challenges that will come through, to look past the person, past the personalities. Look rather at the behaviour, rather than the person standing in front of you. And we are all back today, coming from our past. We grew up in this era. I will always have conflict with a strong mind of person…'cause none of us will go down. And I think this is one of my biggest weaknesses that I am very, very hard to stand out. And I can see it in my department. I have only got ten people, but if you look at their background, you look at where they come from, it is suddenly they put out…but there is one thing I have succeeded. When I started, nobody wanted warranty. We were like the real, real orphans and it was a bunch of misfits. And, and I have changed it and I have changed that people actually want to come to work in warranty and maintenance contract. I have just advertised now and I got a good response. People want to get in this team now, because we are a very strong team, a juvenile team. People enjoy what they do. In the past they were sitting there and it was like a graveyard…because…nobody was standing up for them. Nobody will confront the other departments. There was always…whenever they got feedback it was: warranty is a mess, warranty is a mess. These guys are loosing us head over hell. Now it has changed and that

is one thing I have succeeded. There are people who stand out for my staff and the people have seen it. I have got one or two staff members that have gone quantum leaves with their own way of looking at things. They have become outspoken and productive. They walk into my office and if the situation is right I will back them and I always say to them: "You are right." I will walk the line with you and I will go to war with you. I don't mind. But, if you are not sure, I won't walk the line with you. Ja, so, today, the success is in my people. So, my management style has changed drastically…that I must say…to the good (laughing).

5. Please describe you management style and how it impacts on your way of perceiving and transforming conflict situations.

People have to respect other peoples' boundaries and they have to respect what they are in it for. In my business people are always asking, do you want to go hunting with us or do you want to have lunch or do you want to do this and that, but it is very difficult. Because then you have to say "no" and then people think: "Oh, you are a real idiot." But you can not get to close to a dealer network and you can not get to close to a person, because other people will look at you and will say: "Well, they are good friends, they are at each others houses every weekend, and he must get preferential treatment." And it is very difficult, because you must actually stand back with the career and actually say "Oh, don't come to close." We can have the odd once a year when we see each other at a function, we can stand around and chat as much as we like and enjoy a couple of beers or whatever, but that's it. After that, it's gonna be: keep your distance. But I get cross and I say to a lot of people that I didn't come to MAN to make friends. I came to MAN to do my work. Other people get to places, because they have friends and it is not what you know, but who you know. It's not the…the career that I have chosen is opposite, but I believe in results. Everybody knows my course.

6. Where do you see the need for improvement in management and conflict resolution processes in the company?

My biggest drive, since I started, is to make the system transparent, and not to hide anything and I said it two years ago in an interview: "We have to make warranty transparent…even to the customer." When we gave him a document, it is open, it is not in an illegal jargon, and anybody can basically read it and understand it. Since that has been in the market, that transparency, the customer phones you up and you say: "So, we agreed on it in that way and that is how we agreed." Then he has lost his argument. So, then he will change and say: "Listen, I will now see what you mean. Can you help me?" Then it changes. It changes the whole situation and I can say: "Oh, well, I can't help you, but let me refer you to somebody else that might consider…assistance to you."…then only the customer perception changes. Like, also it helps MAN, all of us, when you speak the same language. So, if you call CT branch and the guy says: "Sorry, but this item is not covered under the warranty." And if this guy phones up head office and I will tell him that: "Sorry, Sir that is not covered under warranty." Nobody likes no, but once you have heart it from tow parties, the customer says: "I am dealing with an honest company that is transparent" and then the attitude changes. And then you are getting a customer satisfaction that improves. You are talking the same language all over. Somebody said to me yesterday – and this is actually true – not in our department, but as MAN we should start looking at the company to operate like a franchise. That is a good policy to have, to brand right through. It is happening to some extend, but not as successful as I would have wanted it. It's gotta be difficult. You have people that have been years in the business and in the organisation very long, you've got a salesman, a salesman is a salesman, he is here to make money, to sell, he will promise the customers a lot of things and more than the company can deliver…'cause once the vehicle is sold, he is out of it, he has got his commission, he has got his target and he moves on to the next. They are like lions: once you have eaten the one, once you get hungry, you go to the next one and you leave everything else behind. In our business, selling the first truck is difficult, but it's not as difficult as selling the second truck, 'cause the second truck is sold by service and it's sold by integrity, by honesty and it's sold by good relationships. So, that is where we come in. That's the background.

7. Conclusively, I would like to ask you how you see the need for outside intervention, like outside consultancy, mediation or conflict management processes in the company?

Outside intervention is….I must say… haven't been in such a situation where a third party must come in to resolve…so…it is difficult for me to comment on, so…I don't know the line with third parties as such. And I have never had a situation with a staff member where we had to bring in a referee. But I think you should deal with it internally. And you shouldn't bring a third party in. If you have to bring a third party there is…nothing is wrong, wrong with the company. If you can not resolve conflict in a company, something is wrong inside and if you go to call someone from the outside that means something is wrong. Somebody once said to me: "A marriage…" – and that is something which I take for very true. If you are getting married and you are signing a contract…and he said to me: "The day you pull the contract out…to have a look what was written in it….your marriage is over." And…it's a fact. And…it's, it's a fact in any time. If you buy something and if you sign a paperwork at the bank today….and what do you do with it? You will put it away. When there is trouble on the horizon then you go back to the contract which means something is going wrong. I look at it from a side point. If you gonna look for someone to come in to resolve conflict…then there is something seriously wrong. Then the company gotta change, to strategize and get around it. When our boss came in, he has involved a couple of outside companies and strategic workshops and alignment and that has helped. So, when it comes to a training aspect, there is a definite advantage to bring somebody in, because they will look at it from a fresh. We have had a strategic workshop that has been totally successful. It is not the situation that they tell you what to do. They just as you what you think and it's very interactive and in that aspect it is great, but you should do that upfront and not when there is a conflict situation. You should align yourself and get somebody to look at your business from a neutral point of view every now and then. From the perspective how I see it.