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Asian Ways of Managing Conflicts: A Cross Cultural Examination of Tactical Behaviors in Interpersonal Conflicts

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The Content

- **Conflict management styles**
- **Culture's impact on conflict behaviour**
- **Asians preferences of strategies to manage interpersonal conflicts**

DEFINITION(S)

- the perceived and / or actual **incompatibility** of values, expectations, processes, or outcomes between two or more parties over substantive and/or relational issues" (Ting-Toomey, 1994).

• **a communicative exchange** between at least two *interdependent* parties who have different, opposite, or incompatible opinions and goals and who perceive that the other is interfering in the achievement of his or her goals (Hocker & Wilmot, 1995).

•incompatible **activities**, where one person's

actions are interfering, obstructing, or in other ways

making *the behavior of another* **less effective** (Deutch).

DEFINITION(S)

CONFLICT **MANAGEMENT STYLE**

- **an overall approach to conflict interaction / an overall picture of a person's communication orientation toward conflict.**

- **Patterned responses or clusters of behavior, that people use in conflict**

- **<u>Individuals have a predominant conflict style</u>**

- The classification schemes range from the two-style approach to the ten-style approach.

1 – never 2-seldom 3-sometimes 4-often 5-always

SCORES

1)	2)	3)	4)	5)
6)	7)	8)	9)	10)
11)	12)	13)	14)	15)
16)	17)	18)	19)	20)
21)	22)	23)	24)	25)
SUM	SUM	SUM	SUM	SUM

How do you prefer to manage conflicts? **CONFLICT STYLE MANAGEMENT**

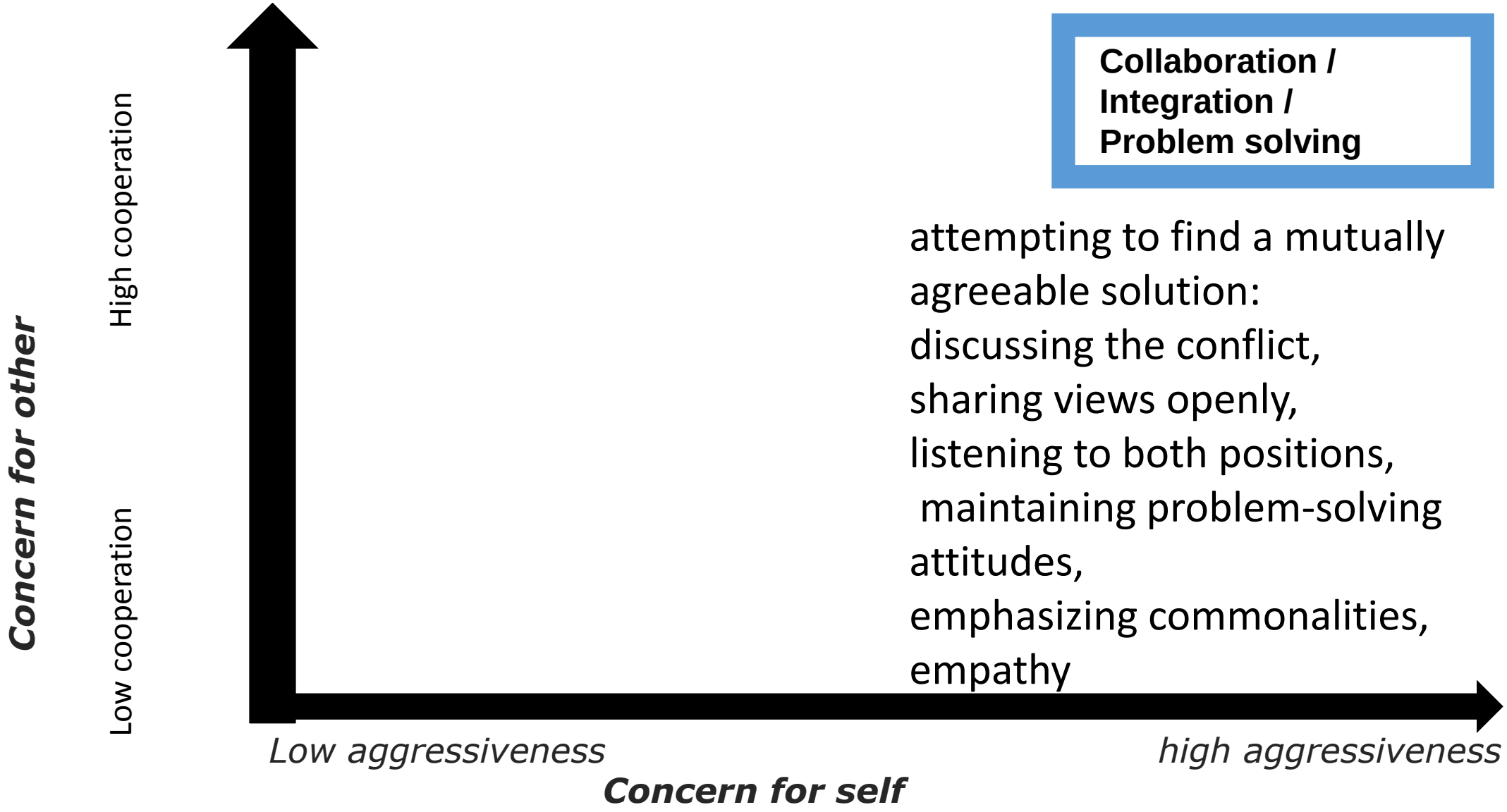
1. I avoid being put on the spot. I keep conflicts to myself
2. I use my influence to get my ideas accepted
3. I usually try to split the differences in order to resolve an issue
4. I generally try to satisfy the others' needs.
5. I try to investigate an issue to find a solution aceptable to us
6. I usually avoid open discussion of my difference with people
7. I use my authority to make a decisión in my favor
8. I try to find a middle course to resolve and inpass
9. I usually acommodate the others' issues
10. I try to integrate my ideas with the other to come up with a decisión
11. I try to stay away from disagreement
12. I use my expertise to make decisions that favor me.
13. I propose a middle ground for breaking dead-locks
14. I give in to other persons' ambitions
15. I try to work with others to find solutions that satisfy both our expectations
16. I try to keep my disagreements to myself in order to avoid hard feelings
17. I generally pursue my side of an issue
18. I negotiate with others to reach a compromiso
19. I often go with the others' sugestions
20. I exchange accurate information with others so that we can solve a problema together
21. I tried to avoid unpleasent exchanges
22. I sometimes use my power to win
23. I use give and take so that a comprimese can be reached
24. I try to satisfy the others' expectations
25. I try to bring all our concerns out in the open so that issues can be solved.

SCORES

1)	2)	3)	4)	5)
6)	7)	8)	9)	10)
11)	12)	13)	14)	15)
16)	17)	18)	19)	20)
21)	22)	23)	24)	25)
SUM	SUM	SUM	SUM	SUM
AVOIDING	**COMPETITION**	**COMPROMISE**	**ACCOMMODATION**	**COLLABORATION**

The styles of conflict management (Thomas 1976; Kilmann and Thomas 1975)

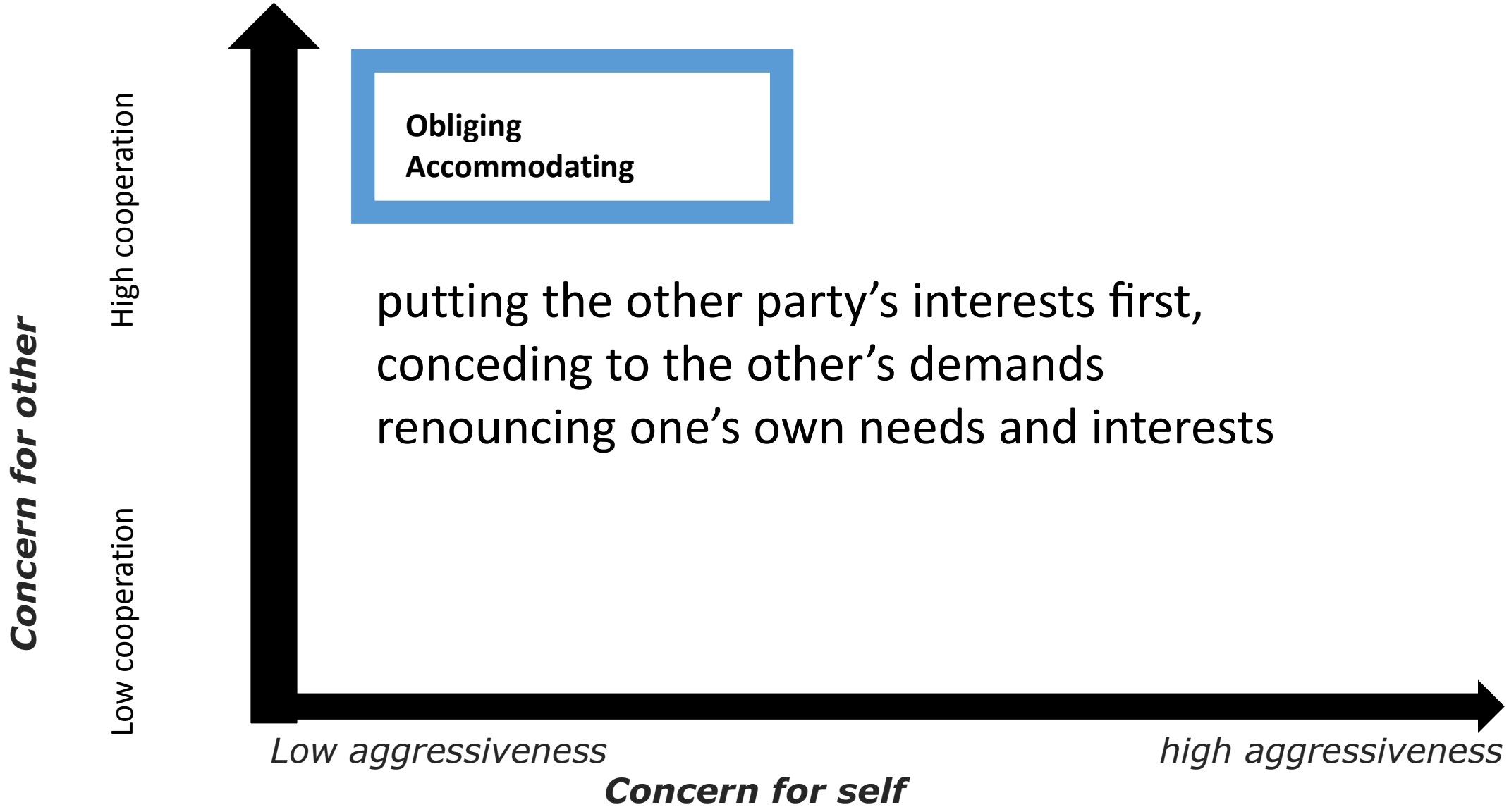
The styles of conflict resolution



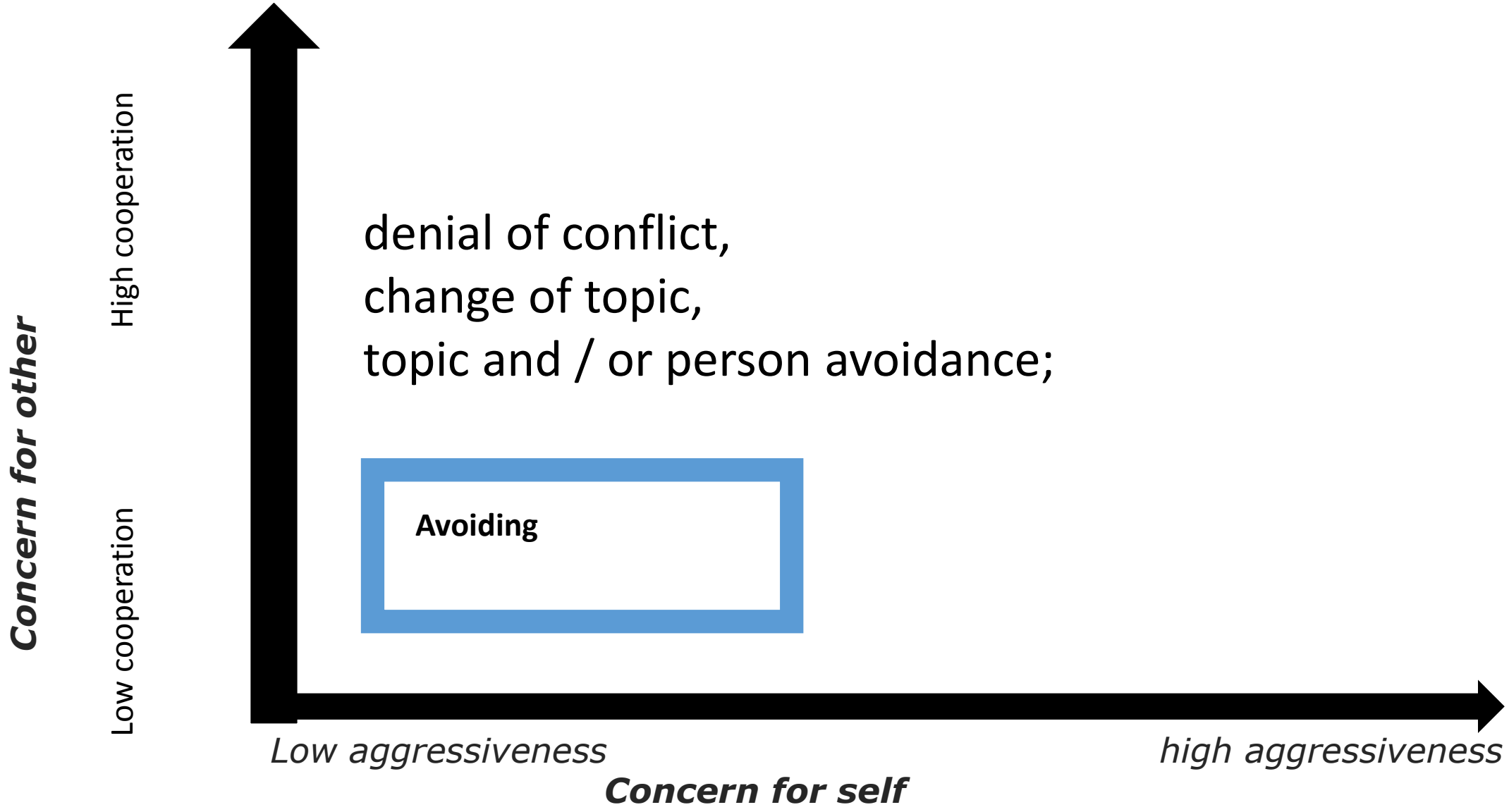
Collaboration /
Integration /
Problem solving

attempting to find a mutually agreeable solution:
discussing the conflict,
sharing views openly,
listening to both positions,
maintaining problem-solving attitudes,
emphasizing commonalities,
empathy

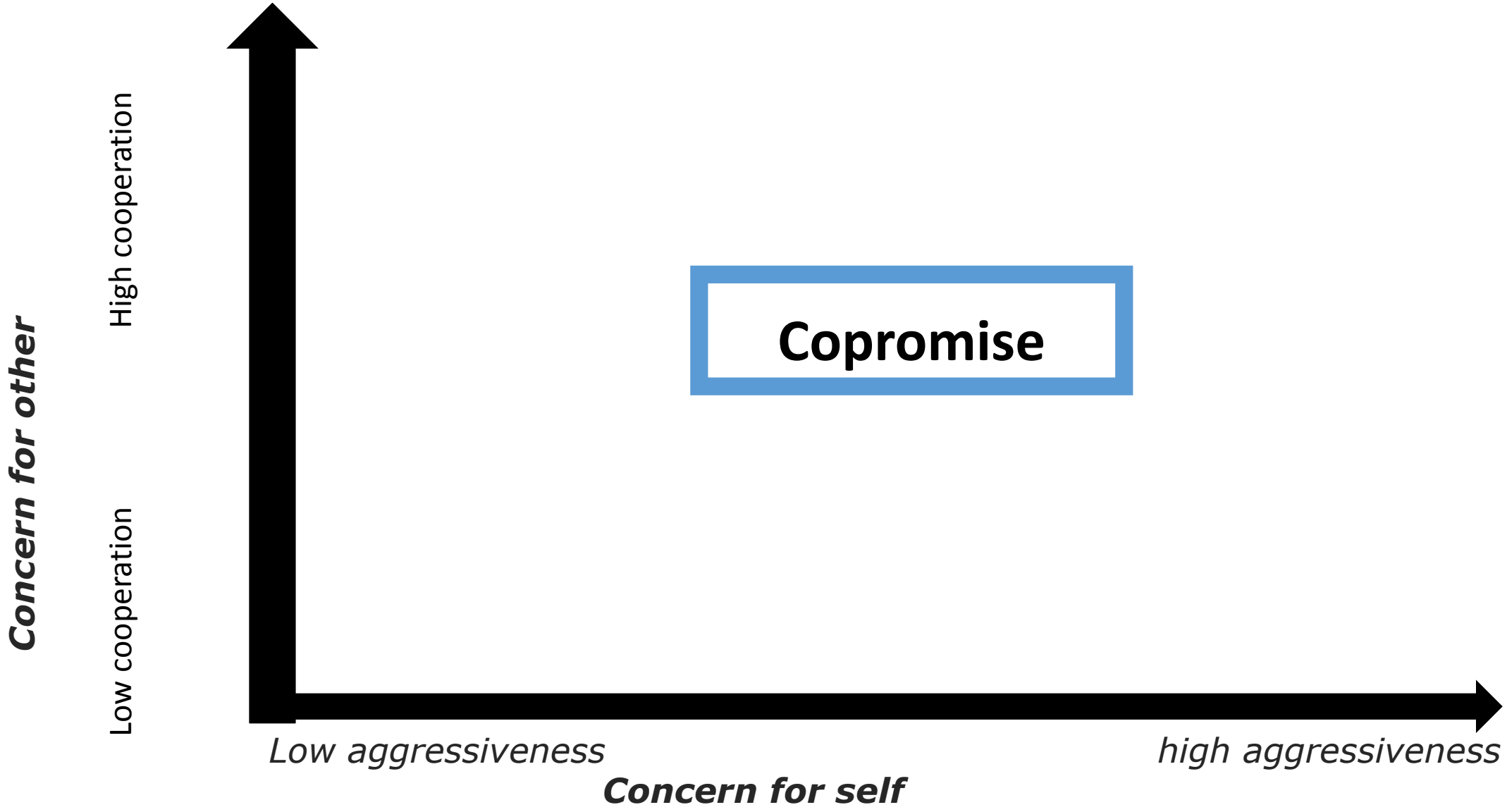
The styles of conflict resolution



The styles of conflict resolution

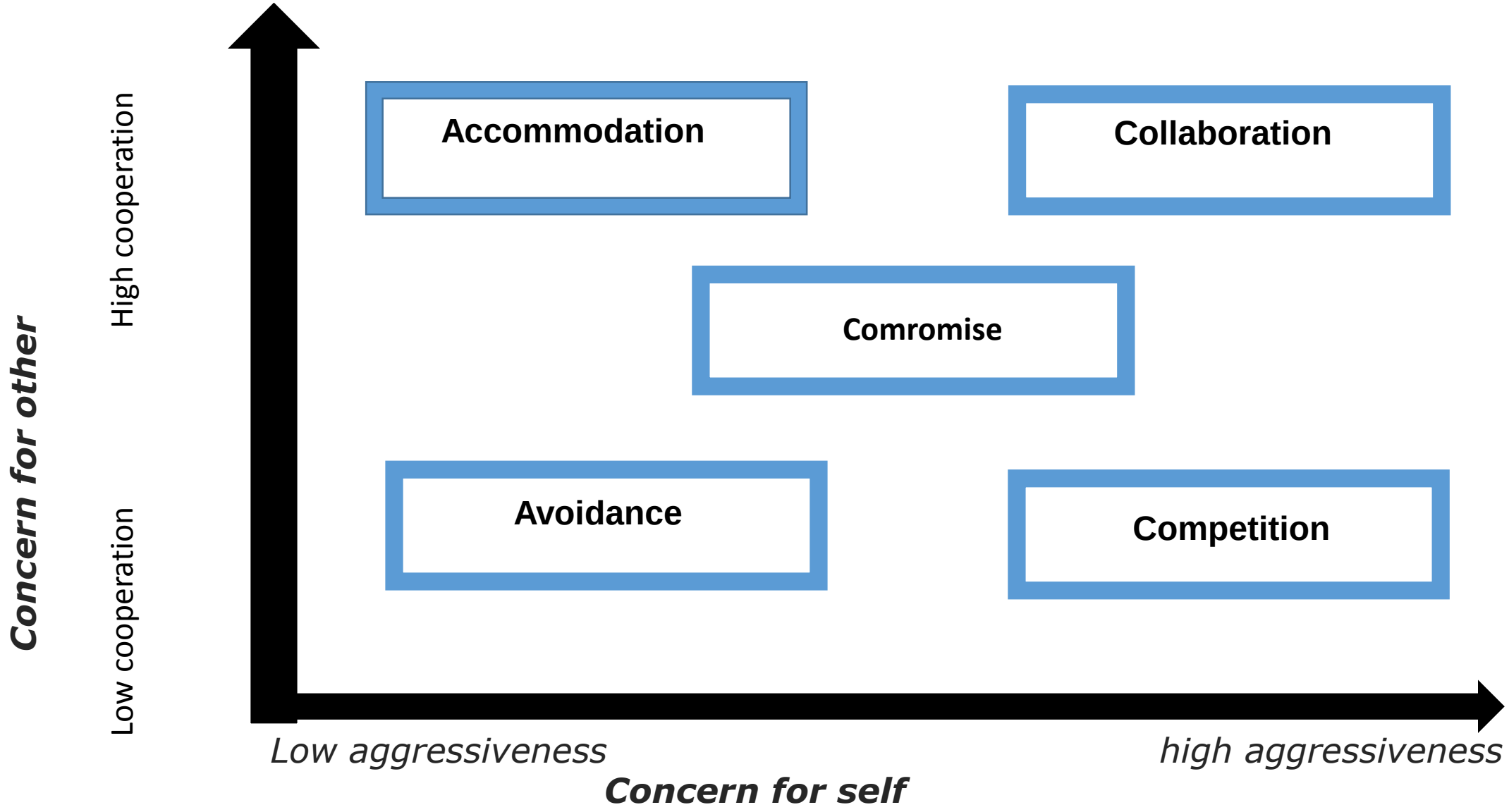


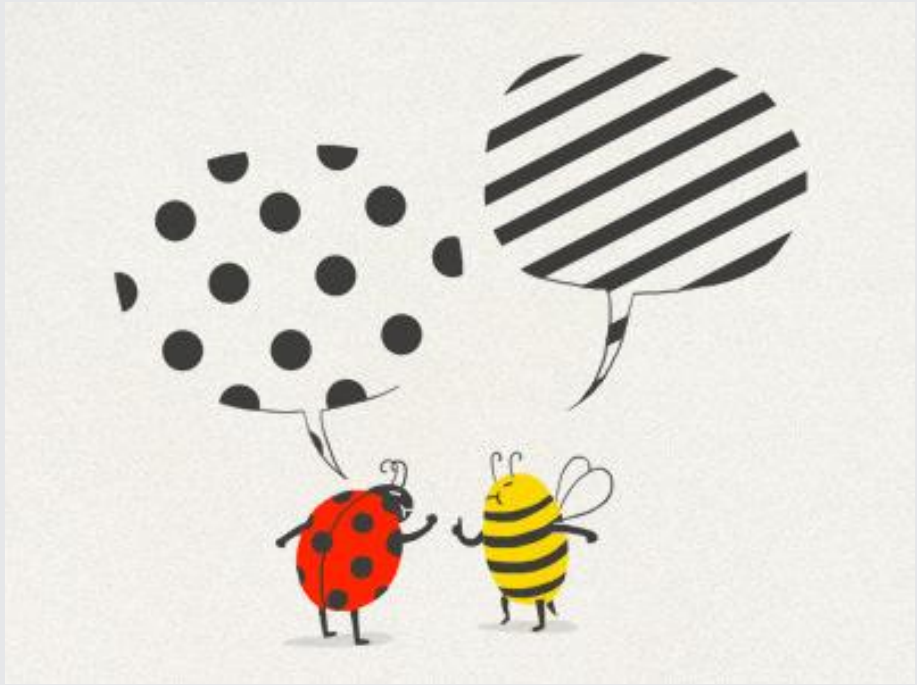
The styles of conflict resolution



The styles of conflict resolution

(Thomas 1976; Kilmann and Thomas 1975)





How we define the conflict problem,
how we “punctuate” the triggering event
that leads to the conflict problem,
and how we view the goals for satisfactory
conflict resolution
are all likely to vary across cultures,
situations, and individuals (Ting-Toomey and Oetzel, 2001, p.1).

The link between culture and conflict strategies is unque

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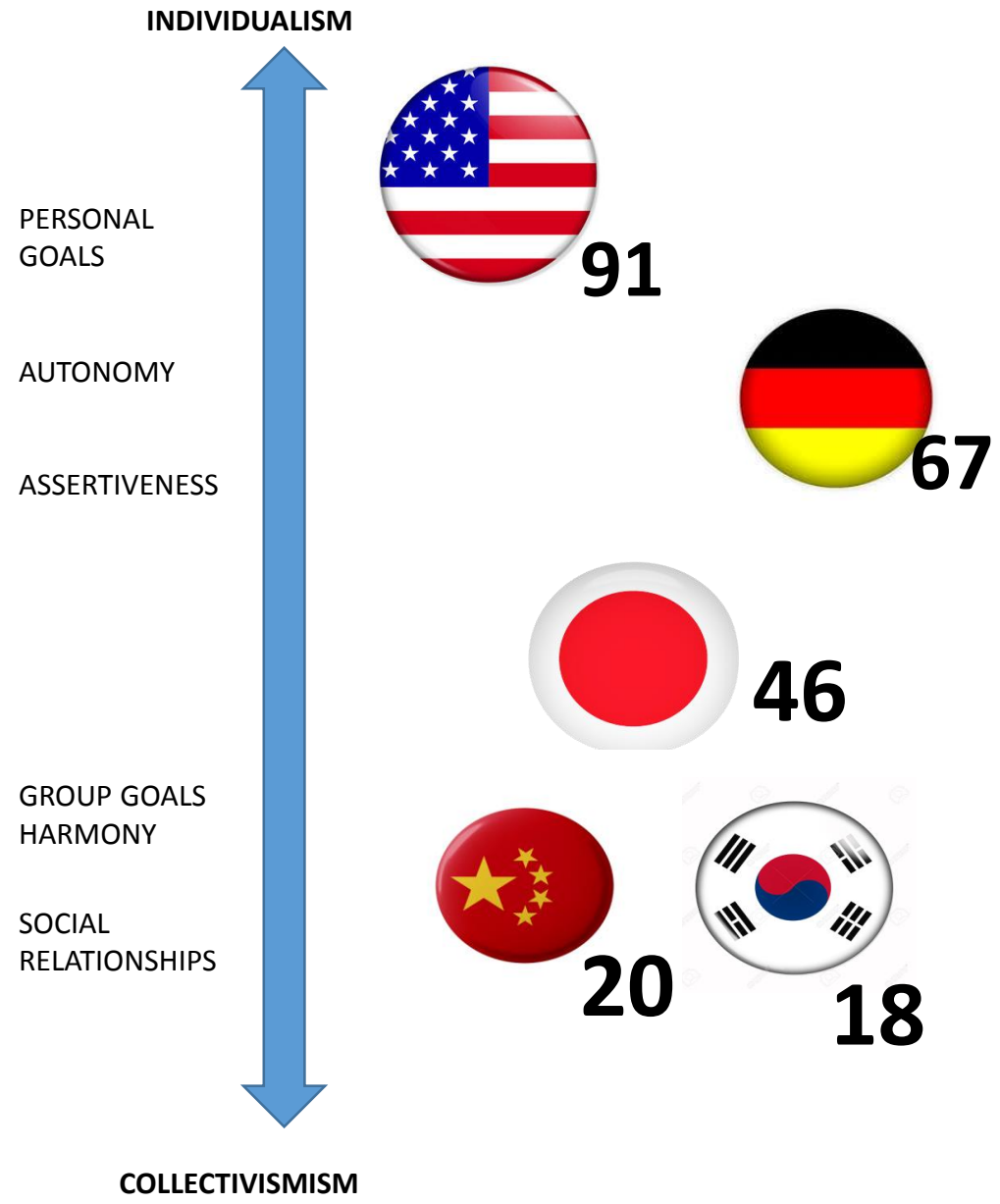
- It is valuable to understand how culture influences the way people manage conflict.

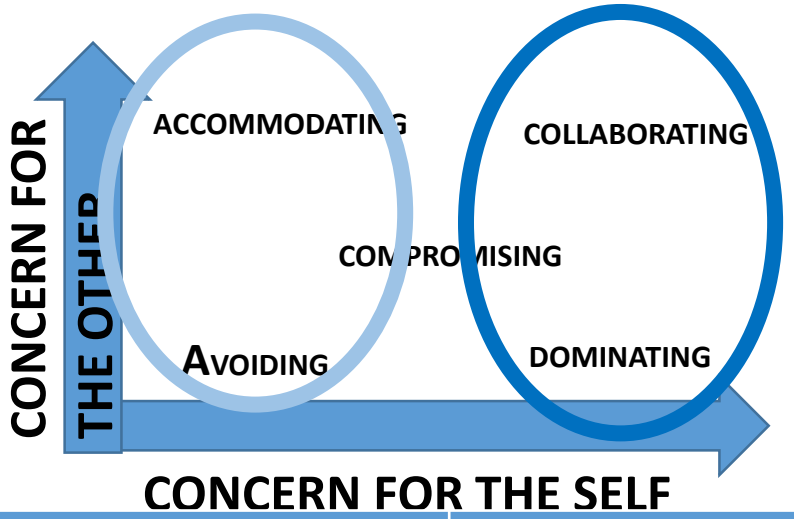
- Findings can be a valuable source in predicting conflict resolution patterns.

- Success and failure of international collaborations not only depends on managing economic and legal obstacles, but also on the effective handling of cultural differences in conflicts (Oudenhoven et al., 1998).

Among the cultural factors that may strongly affect the way people attempt to manage conflicts are VALUES they seek to achieve and expectations regarding the efficacy of various tactics in achiving the values (Ohbuchi et al., 1999).

Variations in conflict management as a function of country can be understood in terms of the cultural dimentions on which these countries vary. According to Hofstede (2001), national cultures may be distinguished along four fundamental diemensions.





STUDY	RESPONDENTS	Notes
Oetzel, 1995	Americans vs. Japanese	
Ohbuchi et al., 1999	Americans vs. Japanese	
Kim-Jo et al. , 2010; Lee and Rogan, 1991	American vs. Koreans	AVOIDING
Oetzel and Ting-Toomey, 2003	Chinese, Japanese vs. German and Americans	

POWER DISTANCE HIGH

AUTHORITY

OBEDIENCE

CONFORMITY

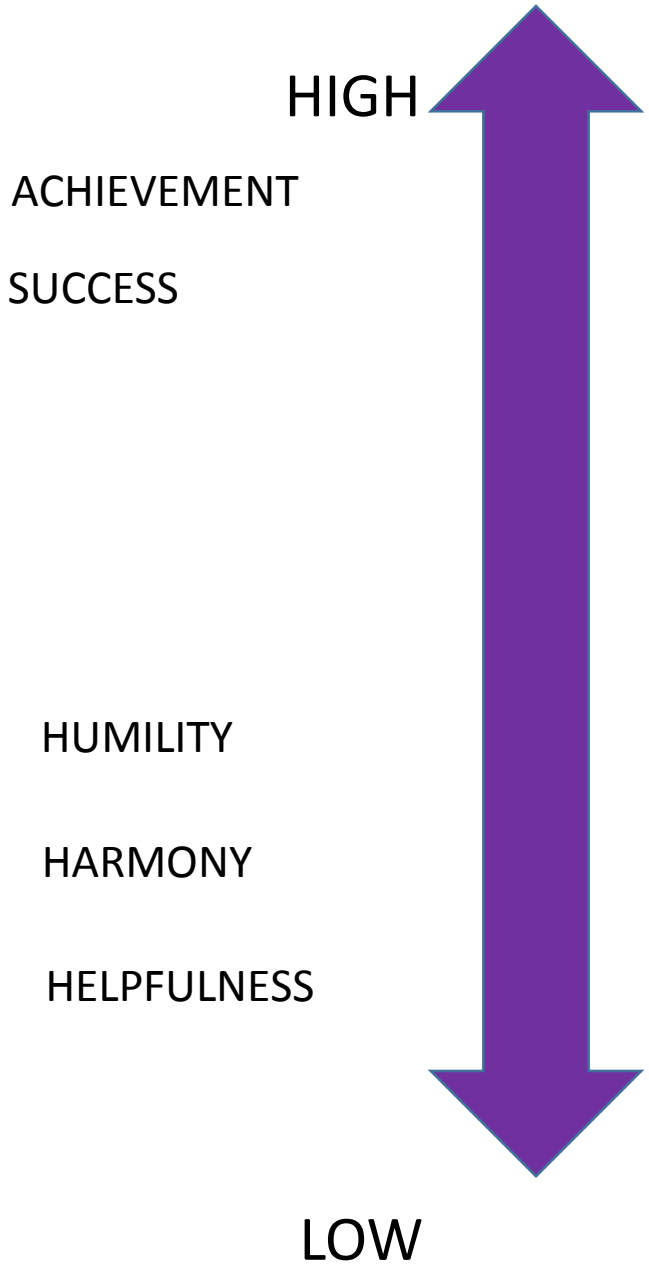
PATICIPATION IN DECISION MAKING

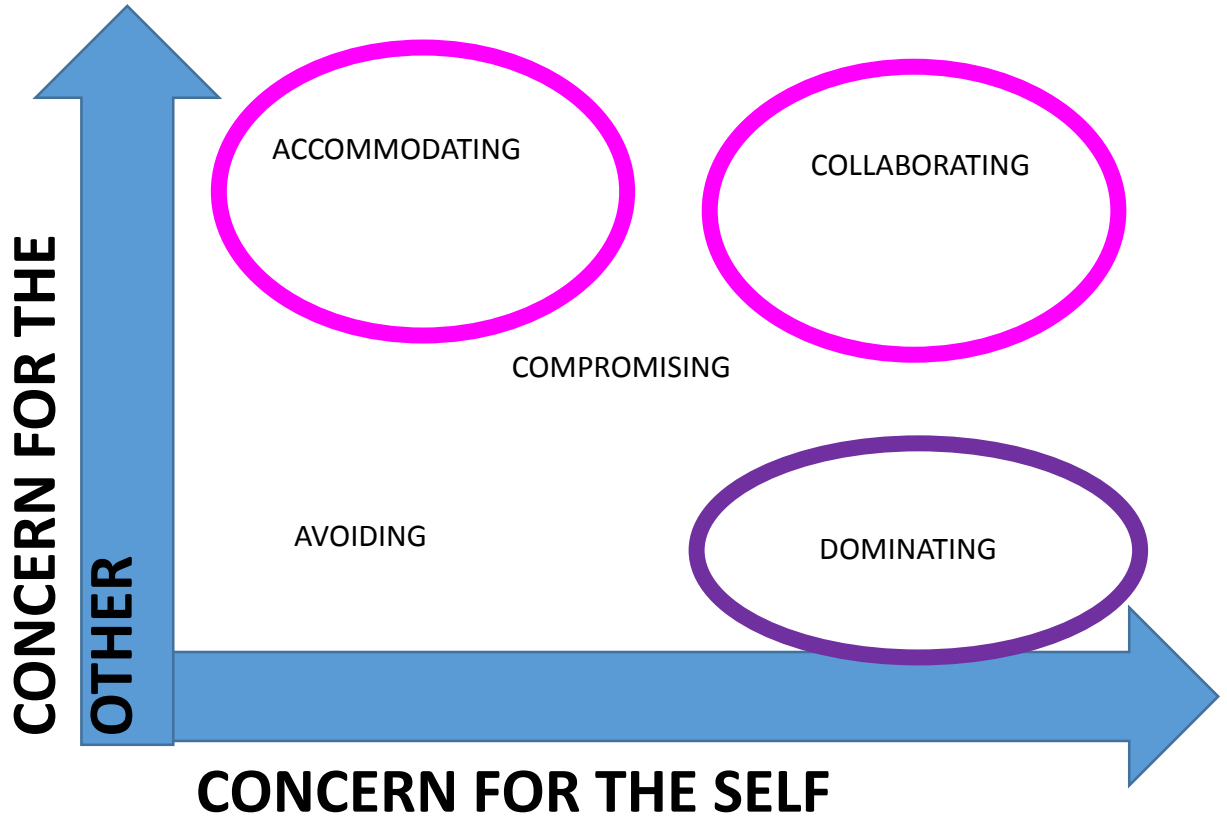
EQUALITY

POWER DISTANCE LOW

STUDY	RESPONDENTS	Notes
Oudenhoven, Mechelse and de Dreu (1998	Danish, Dutch, Belgian and British	

MASCULINITY – FEMININITY DIMENSION





STUDY	RESPONDENTS	Notes
Oudenhoven, Mechelse and de Dreu (1998	Danish, Dutch, Belgian and British , Spainish	AVOIDING - moderte

UNCENTAINTY AVOIDANCE DIMENSION

HIGH

ODERLINESS

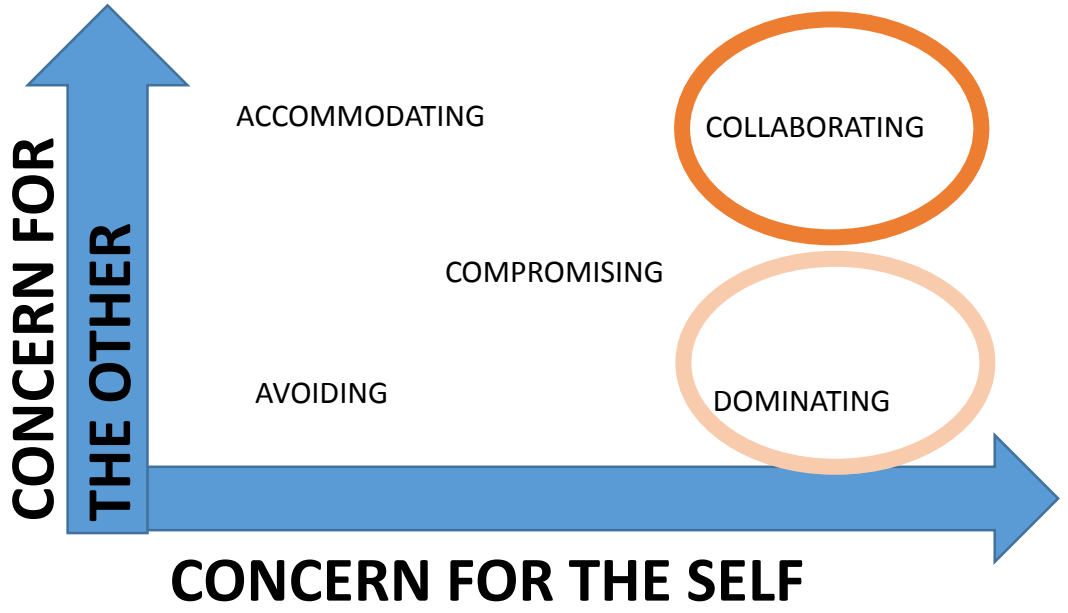
CONSISTENCY

STRUCTURE

FORMALIZED PROCEDURES

TOLERANCE OF AMBIGUITY

LOW



STUDY	RESPONDENTS	Notes
Oudenhoven, Mechelse and de Dreu (1998	Danish, Dutch, Belgian and British	

Do Asians differ in preferences for the various conflict management styles?

- Who are more likely to use **a dominating** style to solve an interpersonal conflict?

A) Chinese B) Japanese C) Koreans

D) there are no significant differences among Koreans, Chinese, and Japanese in dominating style

Do Asians differ in preferences for the various conflict management styles?

- Who are more likely to use **an integrating style** to solve an interpersonal conflict with their supervisor?

A) Chinese B) **Japanese** C) **Koreans**

D) there are no significant differences among Koreans, Chinese, and Japanese in integrating style

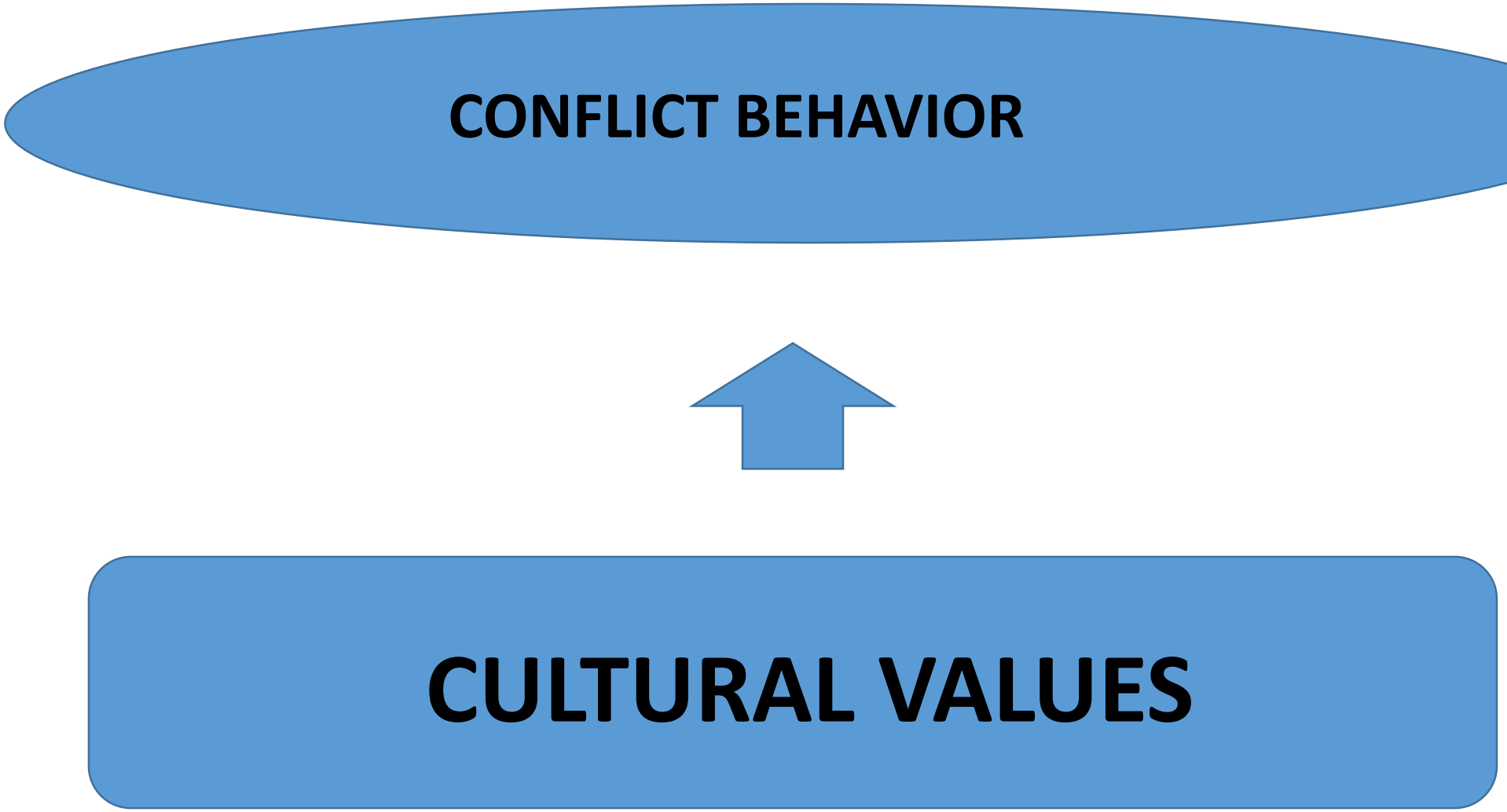
Do Asians differ in preferences for the various conflict management styles?

- Who are more likely to use **an avoiding style** to solve an interpersonal conflict with their supervisor?

A) Chinese **B) Japanese** C) **Koreans**

D) there are no significant differences among Koreans, Chinese, and Japanese in avoiding style

WHY it might be assumed that there are differences?



Because of differences of CULTURAL VALUES

CONFLICT BEHAVIOR

46

Hong Kong
25

20

20

20

18

17

CULTURAL VALUES: **INDIVIDUALIS - COLLECTIVISM DIMENSION**

Because of differences of CULTURAL VALUES (1)

CONFLICT BEHAVIOR

80

Hong Kong

68

70

60

64

58

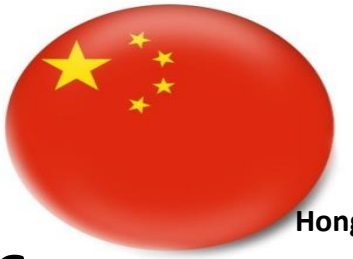
54

CULTURAL VALUES: **POWER DISTANCE DIMENSION**

Because of differences of CULTURAL VALUES (1)

CONFLICT BEHAVIOR

95


66

Hong Kong
57

45

40

39

34

CULTURAL VALUES: **MASCULINITY (FEMININITI) DIMENSION**

Asians differ in preferences for the various conflict management styles.

- Who are more likely to use **a dominating** style to solve an interpersonal conflict?

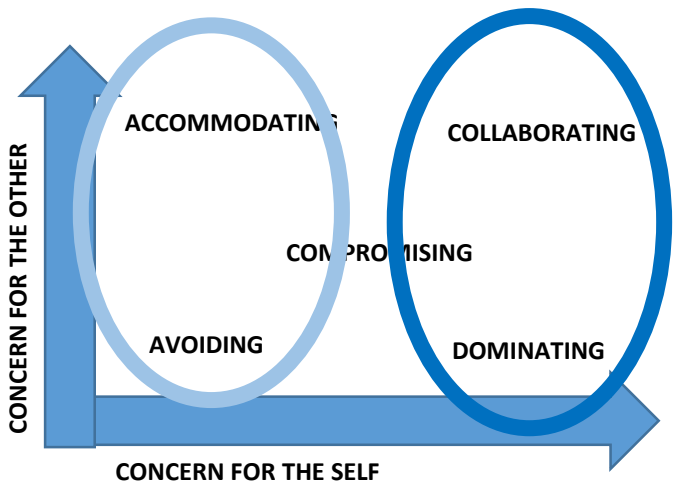
A) Chinese B) Japanese C) Koreans

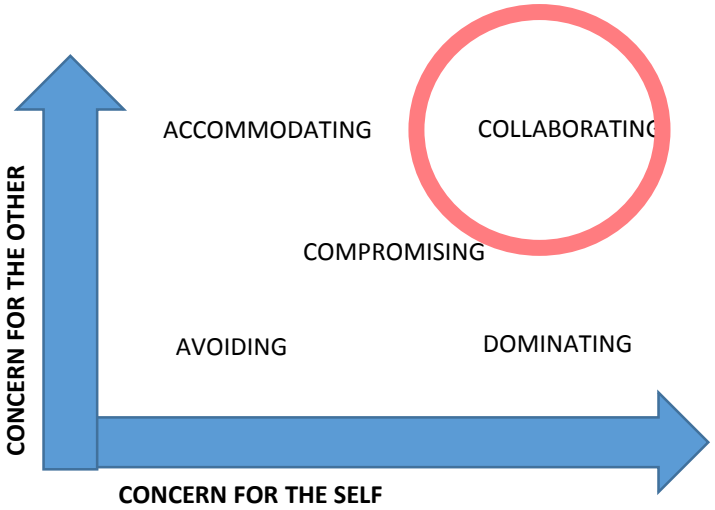
- Where /How cultural values can explain country differences in conflict management styles among Asians (the Japanese, Koreans, Chinese)?

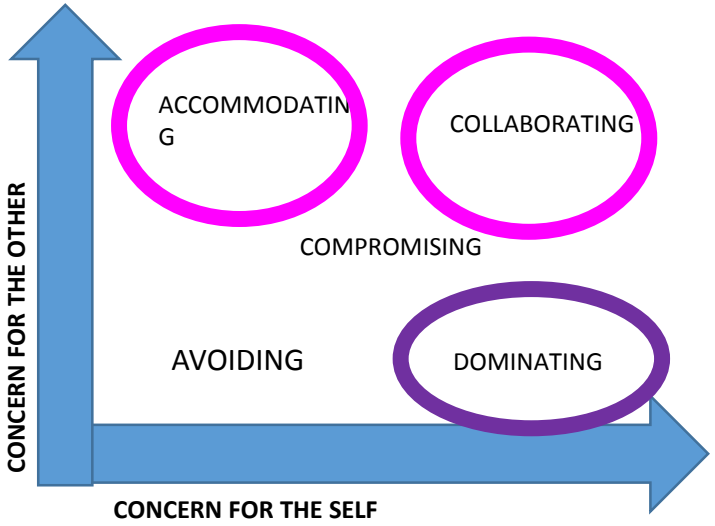
The relationship between conflict style and cultural dimensions

Which **dimension** is to be regarded as **the most correlated** to preference for a **dominating** style?

There are **conflicting expectations** regarding the relative preferences of the nationalities being studied for the various conflict management styles.







The relationship between conflict style and cultural dimensions

To overcome **conflicting expectations Onishi and Bliss (2006) suggested to comptute composite MASCULINITY scores predicting preference for dominating style.**

COMPETING	MAS scores		LTO max	LTO obs		
Japan =	95	+	(118	- 88) =	125	**JAPAN**
Hong Kong =	57	+	(118	- 61) =	114	THAILAND
China =	66	+	(118	- 87) =	97	HONG KONG
Thailand =	34	+	(118	- 32) =	120	**VIETNAM**
Vietnam =	40	+	(118	- 57) =	101	CHINA
South Korea =	39	+	(118	- 100) =	57	TAIWAN
Taiwan =	45	+	(118	- 93) =	70	SOUTH KOREA

Dominating

JAPAN	CHINA	(Hong Kong)	SOUTH KOREA	THAILAND	VIETNAM	TAIWAN		
								Kim et al., 2007 *(Conf. with supervisors)*
								Onishi and Bliss, 2006 *(Conf. with co-workers)*
								Chiu et al. (1998) *(In general)*
	 Demand-withdraw		 hostility					Lee et al, 2013 *(couples)*
	 defend							Oetzel et al., 2001 *(students)*
								Miyahara et al., 1998 ---
								Tjosvold et al., 2001 (co-workers)

Asians differ in preferences for the various conflict management styles.

- Who are more likely to use **an integrating style** to solve an interpersonal conflict with their supervisor?

A) Chinese B) **Japanese** C) **Koreans**

Integrating

JAPAN	CHINA	(Hong Kong)	SOUTH KOREA	THAILAND	VIETNAM	TAIWAN	
							Kim et al., 2007
							Onishi and Bliss, 2006 C with co-workers
							Chiu et al., 1998
							Lee et al., 2013
							Oetzel et al., 2001
							Miyahara et al., 1998
							Tjosvold et al., 2001

Asians differ in preferences for the various conflict management styles.

- Who are more likely to use **an avoiding style** to solve an interpersonal conflict with their supervisor?

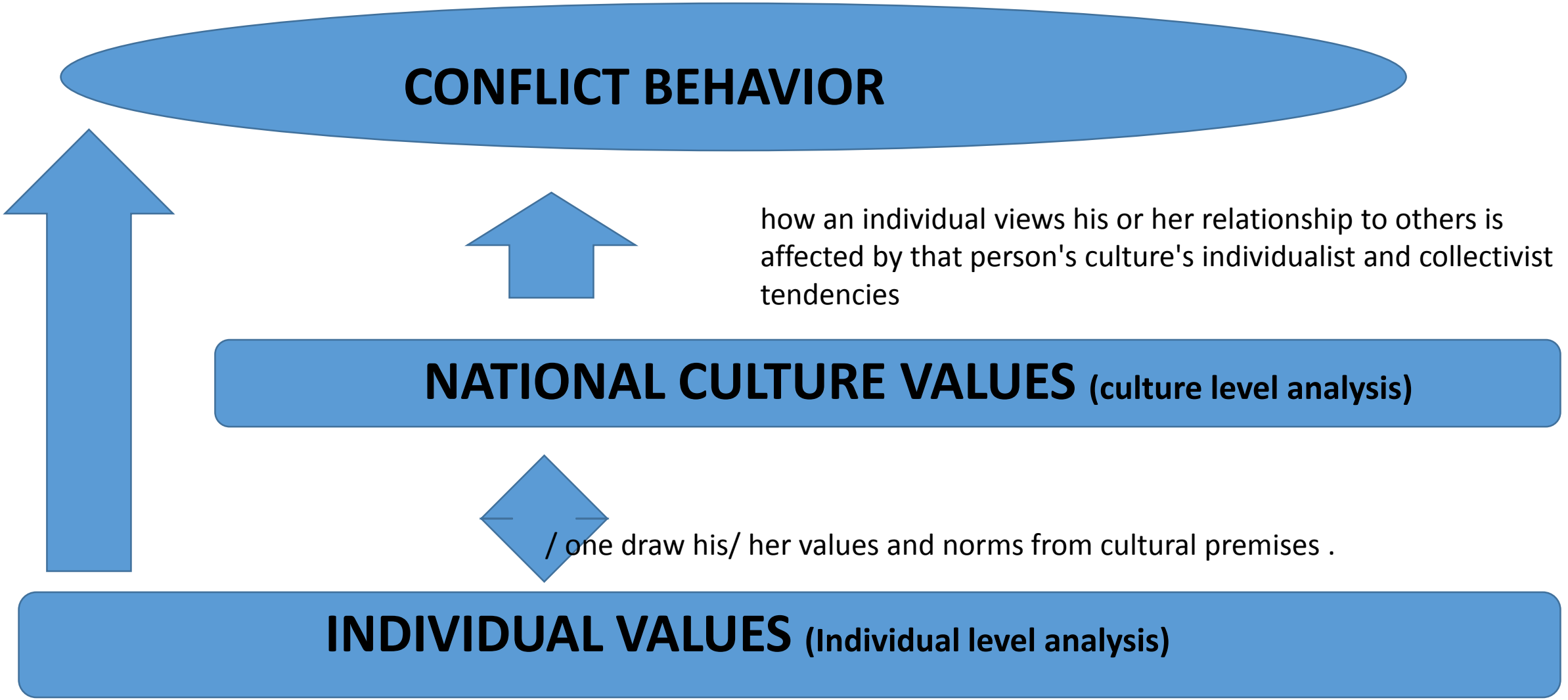
A) Chinese **B) Japanese** C) **Koreans**

Avoiding

JAPAN	CHINA	(Hong Kong)	SOUTH KOREA	THAILAND	VIETNAM	TAIWAN	
							Kim et al., 2007 *supervisor*
							Onishi and Bliss, 2006 C with co-workers
							Chiu et al., 2018
							Lee et al., 2013 *couples*
							Oetzel et al., 2001
Pretend							
							Miyahara et al., 1998
							Ting-Toomey et al., 1991
							Tjosvold et al., 2001

WHY there are differences?

cultural values have a direct effect on facework behaviors and an indirect effect on facework behaviors that is mediated through individual-level factors (Oetzel et al., 2001)



Hong Kong
25

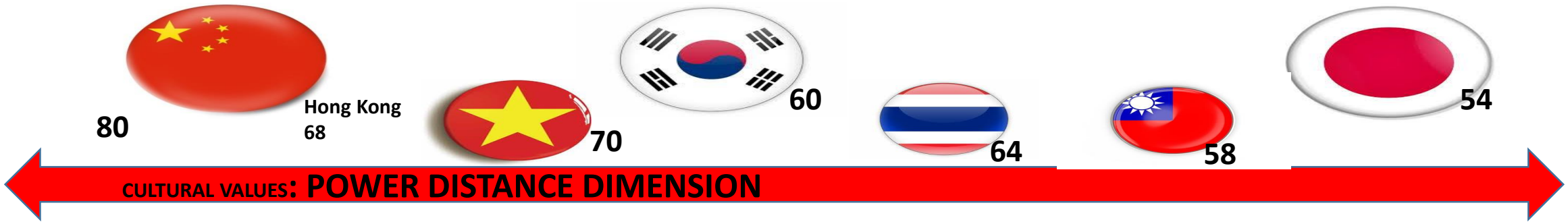
CULTURAL VALUES: INDIVIDUALIS - COLLECTIVISM DIMENSION

The Chinese reported significantly higher **concern for the self** than Koreans who also reported significantly higher concern for the self then the Japanese.

The Japanese were seen to be more likely **to sacrifice individual goals and interests** for their group than the Chinese and Koreans

Chinese	Koreans	Japanese

Kim et al., 2007



Chinese	Japanese	Koreans	Kim et al., 2007

CONCLUSIONS

- It is true that Asian nations may be more similar to each other than to Western countries. However, characterizations of an “Asian” or “Eastern” approach to conflict management masks important differences that exist in the behavioral orientation of Asians.

Style preference develop over a person’s lifetime based on complicated blend of genetics, life experiences, family background, and personal philosophy. Thus subject level values are to be considered as more important than culture level values while understanding freferences for conflict management.