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„Inter-organizational Conflict Resolution in Different  
Cultures“

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## Table of Contents

|                                                                 |           |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------|-----------|
| <b>Acknowledgement.....</b>                                     | <b>5</b>  |
| <b>1. Introduction .....</b>                                    | <b>6</b>  |
| <b>2. Section I. Theoretical Background.....</b>                | <b>8</b>  |
| <b>2.1. Understanding Inter-organizational Conflict .....</b>   | <b>8</b>  |
| 2.1.1. Conflict Typology .....                                  | 9         |
| 2.1.2. Sources of conflict.....                                 | 10        |
| <b>2.2. The Inter-organizational Conflict Actors.....</b>       | <b>12</b> |
| 2.2.1. Firms, Communities, Governments .....                    | 12        |
| 2.2.2. Non-governmental Organizations .....                     | 13        |
| <b>2.3. Conflict Resolution.....</b>                            | <b>16</b> |
| 2.3.1. The Thomas-Kilmann Model.....                            | 16        |
| 2.3.2. Conflict Resolution Methods .....                        | 18        |
| <b>2.4. Understanding Culture .....</b>                         | <b>21</b> |
| 2.4.1. Levels of Culture.....                                   | 21        |
| 2.4.2. National Culture: The Hofstede Framework .....           | 22        |
| <b>2.5. Culture and Inter-organizational Conflicts .....</b>    | <b>24</b> |
| 2.5.1. Cultural Dimensions and Thomas-Kilmann Model .....       | 25        |
| 2.5.2. Cultural Dimensions and Conflict Resolution Methods..... | 26        |
| <b>3. Section II. Empirical Study .....</b>                     | <b>28</b> |
| <b>3.1. Qualitative Research .....</b>                          | <b>28</b> |
| <b>3.2. Research Questions .....</b>                            | <b>29</b> |
| <b>3.3. Data Collection .....</b>                               | <b>30</b> |
| <b>3.4. Case Studies Analysis.....</b>                          | <b>30</b> |
| 3.4.1. NGO: Greenpeace .....                                    | 31        |
| 3.4.2. Countries, Companies, Conflicts .....                    | 32        |
| 3.4.2.1. Group I: High Individualism/ High Masculinity .....    | 33        |
| 3.4.2.2. Analysis: Group I .....                                | 43        |
| 3.4.2.3. Group II: High Individualism/ Low Masculinity .....    | 44        |
| 3.4.2.4. Analysis: Group II .....                               | 50        |
| 3.4.2.5. Group III: Low Individualism/ High Masculinity .....   | 51        |
| 3.4.2.6. Analysis: Group III.....                               | 58        |
| 3.4.2.7. Group IV: Low Individualism/ Low Masculinity .....     | 59        |
| 3.4.2.8. Analysis: Group IV.....                                | 64        |

|                                |           |
|--------------------------------|-----------|
| <b>4. Findings.....</b>        | <b>66</b> |
| <b>5. Conclusion.....</b>      | <b>71</b> |
| <b>References .....</b>        | <b>74</b> |
| <b>Abstract (English).....</b> | <b>81</b> |
| <b>Abstract (German) .....</b> | <b>82</b> |
| <b>CV (English) .....</b>      | <b>83</b> |
| <b>CV (German) .....</b>       | <b>85</b> |

***"In a conflict, being willing to change allows you to move from a point of view to a viewing point – a higher, more expansive place, from which you can see both sides. "***

— Thomas F. Crum, *The Magic Of Conflict: Turning a Life of Work into a Work of Art*, 1998

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# 1. Introduction

Organizations are operating in an uncertain environment in which they try to find different ways that will allow them to achieve an efficient performance and a high level of competitiveness. The organizations' external environment influences their performance being directly linked to their activities that they perform in order to accomplish their mission. In the relationship of organizations with their external environment, conflicts can develop and interfere with their process of reaching efficient development and performance. One of the most important actors of organizations' external environment is represented by other organizations. Organizations that operate in the same background can perform activities that may interfere with each other, making the appearance of conflicts inevitable. Since inter-organizational conflicts are inevitable in organizations' life cycle is very important for organizations to learn how to cope with them by understanding all their implications.

Inter-organizational conflict refers to the counteractions and disagreements that appear between two or more organizations. Inter-organizational conflict can affect organizations' relationships in both a positive and negative way. Conflicts and their resolutions are very important for them because they can diminish their resources, limit their alternatives, and cloud their vision. Companies involved in extensive conflicts can bear negative consequences, such as disintegration, degradations in relationships with partners or even bankruptcy.

There are different reasons why conflicts appear and there are many ways in which they can be solved. Inter-organizational conflicts should be managed in a positive way in order to create value for organizations. Organizations must avoid adopting unethical practices to resolve them and culture is an essential part of conflicts and their resolution. National culture can be very powerful and influence companies inter-organizational conflicts and their attempts to resolve them in significant ways.

The purpose of the thesis is to determine if inter-organizational conflict resolutions are approached in a distinctive way by different cultures. A particular look is taken at the relationship between national culture, conflict managing styles and conflict resolution methods. The focus of the thesis is on how culture influences companies' approaches to handling inter-organizational conflicts. It discusses what inter-organizational conflicts are, why and how they appear and how are they approached by different cultures.

The first part of the thesis introduces the theoretical framework related to inter-organizational conflicts, their actors, and different styles and methods of conflict resolution.

The Thomas-Kilmann Conflict Model is presented in order to identify the conflict handling styles that different cultures utilize. The competing, collaborating, compromising, avoiding and accommodating conflict handling styles are presented in relation to two cultural dimensions: individualism vs. collectivism and masculinity vs. femininity. These cultural dimensions are introduced by Hofstede's national culture framework.

The second part of the thesis presents an analysis of conflicts of interests from twelve different countries that share different cultural dimensions' indices. The countries are structured in clusters related to four possible types of cultural dimension combinations, such as: high individualism/high masculinity, high individualism/low masculinity, low individualism/high masculinity and low individualism/low masculinity. The conflicts which are analyzed are represented only by conflicts between business companies and NGOs. As a case study, the NGO Greenpeace conflicts with local business companies from these twelve countries will be presented and analyzed. The reasons of these conflicts appearance, approaches and resolution methods are compared in relationship with the national culture of the twelve countries. The analysis is focused on two main issues. The first issue is related to the effects of culture on organizations' preferences of conflict handling styles and conflict resolution methods. The second issue concerns the extent to which national culture is related to the reasons of inter-organizational conflicts. The analysis of these issues is conducted by following a conflict analysis plan in which the context, causes, actors, and the dynamics of the conflicts are examined and determined. The data used is gathered from Greenpeace NGO, documents, companies' websites and publications.

## **2. Section I. Theoretical Background**

This section is aimed to provide an overview of the inter-organizational conflict concept, actors and sources, as well as the relationship between culture, its dimensions and conflict resolution methods.

### **2.1. Understanding Inter-organizational Conflict**

The business environment is characterized by intercommunication processes between different individuals, groups and organizations. These processes are influenced by internal and external factors, and this can lead to conflict between these actors.

Inter-organizational conflict represents an important issue for organizations because it can have a major impact on their functionality, by influencing their way of performing and achieving results. Therefore, it is very important for organizations to learn not only how to diminish conflicts, but also how to utilize them in a constructive manner.

Inter-organizational conflict can be seen as a process that exists between two or more organizations that have opposing interests, and each believes that the other's actions will hinder its interest. Inter-organizational conflicts can also appear when one organization holds preferences which satisfaction is incompatible with the other organization's implementation of its own preferences. These preferences can be related to desirable resources that are in short supply and not everyone wishes can be fully satisfied (Rahim, 2001).

Following the general definitions of conflict from the literature, inter-organizational conflict can be defined as a process of incompatible activities (Deutsch, 1973) between two or more interdependent organizations that perceive contradictory goals (Tedeschi, et al., 1973), and believe that their interests and actions are negatively affected by the other organization (Rahim, 2001).

As mentioned above inter-organizational conflicts affect organizations' functionality. Their performance and outcomes can be influenced in a negative and/or positive way. The traditional view sees conflict as a negative influence and considers that it should be avoided. The modern view reflects the fact that conflict has both negative and positive influences on organizations. Conflict is seen not only as a problem but also as a solution, especially if inter-organizational conflicts are managed in the right way. Conflicts can influence organizations in a good way which will lead to positive outcomes. Exposing and problems' identification can

lead to cooperation and better decisions can be made, leading to a general improvement in the organizational decision making. Conflicts can make organizations aware of weaknesses and inconsistencies in their own views, and stimulates the parties to do and try new things, fostering change, innovation, creativity and growth. Also differences between organizations can be appreciated because it leads to a synergy between them (Eunson, 2007). New information and perspectives can be created, which makes organizations to search for new approaches, see things more clearly and take appropriate action. All these lead to synergistic solutions to common problems. Another positive influence of conflicts is that organizations might find that after the stress of conflict, the relationships between them become stronger and more important, because conflict can lead to a better way for them to articulate and clarify their positions. On the other hand, inter-organizational conflicts can also lead to negative outcomes for organizations. If conflicts are not approached in the right way, they can alter the relationship between organizations, damage their public image affecting customers' commitment and loyalty. Inside organizations, conflict can increase the resistance to change, affect the employees by causing job stress, burnout and dissatisfaction. Also the inter-organizational conflict can develop a climate of distrust and suspicion, reducing the communication between employees and between organizations. It is very important for organizations to manage conflicts in time, otherwise they can lead to waste of resources and time (Rahim, 2001).

### 2.1.1. Conflict Typology

Inter-organizational conflicts can be classified according to the reasons of their appearance and to their structure. The reasons why conflicts appear are defined by differences in needs, expectations and attitudes.

Regarding the **differences in needs**, inter-organizational conflicts can be classified as conflicts of interest and conflicts of goals. **Inter-organizational conflicts of interests** occur when each organization, *“sharing the same understanding of the situation, prefers a different solution to a problem, in order to satisfy their interest”* (Druckman & Zechmeister, 1973). This can refer to a distribution of scarce resources between them (Druckman & Zechmeister, 1973). **Inter-organizational conflicts of goals** are connected to previous one and appear when two or more organizations' objectives overlap or when one organization has hidden goals. This type of conflict is influenced by the organizations' aspirational concerning the results and goals they want to achieve.

Considering **differences in expectations**, inter-organizational conflicts can be classified in conflicts of values and conflicts of power. **Inter-organizational conflicts of values** appear when the involved organizations have different values and ideologies regarding the debated issues. These values have their roots in organizations' history or in the culture in which organizations perform their activities. **Inter-organizational conflicts of power** occur when one organization wants to expand the amount of influence that it has a relationship with another organization or in a social background. These conflicts occur whenever both organizations decide to take a power approach. Power is implied into all conflicts because organizations try to control each other (Fisher, 2000).

Regarding **differences in attitudes**, inter-organizational conflicts can be classified as retributive conflicts and conflicts of actions. **Inter-organizational retributive conflict** is defined by situations where one party engages in a conflict in order to punish another party, or taking revenge. So to say, each organization wants to gain more by incurring costs to the other (Saaty, 1990). **Inter-organizational conflicts of actions** appear when there are considerable differences on actions to be taken. Each organization supports its action, which it believes that is the best one to reach desired objectives.

According to **conflict' structure** it can be identified structured and unstructured conflict (Nastase, 2007). **The inter-organizational structured conflict** is represented by issues that imply certain well established steps. In order to control and solve this type of conflict special mechanisms and procedures are needed. **The inter-organizational unstructured conflict** appears automatically and most of the times informally. For this type of conflict there are no special procedures to solve it, making its controlling and solving difficult. This types of conflict usually last longer and involves more resources, having a big influence on organizations (Nastase, 2007).

### **2.1.2. Sources of conflict**

Inter-organizational conflicts can arise due to organizations' different nature, or due to the environment in which organizations perform. Inter-organizational conflicts can appear because of to competition for resources and power, and because of the structure of societies and institutions. The nature of policies and regulations, and cultural differences can also activate conflict initiation. B. Mayer identified six major sources of conflict, such as **communication, emotions, needs, values, structures, and history** (Mayer, 2000). In the case of inter-organizational conflicts emotions, won't be considered as a source.

**Communication** leads to conflict when organizations need to communicate full information but they refuse to do so. Sometimes organizations communicate misinformation and they tend to misinterpret the information received. Communication can be also influenced by the culture and environment in which organizations operate (Mayer, 2000).

**The needs** of organizations represent the center of all inter-organizational conflicts. Organizations usually get involved in conflicts mostly because their needs are met by the conflict process itself or because their needs are inconsistent with those of other organizations (Mayer, 2000).

**Values** are represented by organizations' beliefs regarding important things, what distinguishes right from wrong, and what principles should govern how they perform their activities (Mayer, 2000). The different way of life, ideology, worldview and the different criteria of evaluating ideas can lead to conflict. Values make it hard for organizations to compromise when core beliefs are in play, because they feel they are compromising their own integrity (Mayer, 2000).

**The Structures** within each interaction between organizations takes place or a problem develops can lead to conflicts. Even when compatible interests might move organizations toward a more cooperative attitude, the structure in which they are working may promote conflict. The elements of a structure include available resources, decision-making procedures, time constraints, communication procedures, and opponents' proximity, distribution of resources, information access, legal parameters, organizational structure, and political pressures (Mayer, 2000).

**The history** of the organizations in conflict, of the systems in which the conflict can occur and of the issues themselves has a powerful influence on the inter-organizational conflict process (Mayer, 2000).

Another important source of conflict is the **economic environment**, which gives competing motives to attain scarce resources. Every organization wishes to reach the most of scarce resources it can. The actions of each organization are focused on maximizing the gain. On the other hand, we have to take in consideration that many conflicts are not of a pure type, they involve a mixture of sources which makes them difficult to be solved (Fisher, 2000).

## **2.2. The Inter-organizational Conflict Actors**

The inter-organizational conflict actors include different types of organizations and institutions that are engaged in conflict, contribute to it or are being affected by it. These actors differ as to their goals and interests and the capacities to realize them, their positions, and their relationships. Interests are represented by organizations' underlying motivations and goals represent the strategies that they will use in order to pursue their interests. The actors' positions refer to the solution presented by them on emerging issues in a given context, irrespective of others' interests and goals. Inter-organizational relationships represent the interactions between actors at various levels, and their perceptions of these interactions. Inter-organizational conflicts exist among firms, between firms and communities, between firms and government and between firms and nongovernmental organizations.

### **2.2.1. Firms, Communities, Governments**

Firms are business organizations that involve a partnership of people and operate on a for-profit basis. Their main activities are represented by selling goods or services to customers. Conflicts between firms don't appear only in terms of competition and rivalry that characterizes firms operating in the same markets, there is a much deeper problem than market competition alone. An important role is represented by the existence of different interests such as financial or non-financial, goals such as being environmental friendly or reach high levels of productivity. Firms, communities and governments can have different expectations and feel the need to maximize the amount of influence and power. In relationships within a group of organizations, rules of dominance and subordination are present and power can lead to conflicts establishment. Conflict of interest can include conflict among member firms, conflict between competitive firms, and conflicts between firms and their partners. The existence of different interests may conflict, promoting opportunistic behaviors from one firm, while one tries to exercise higher control over the other (Vargas-Hernández & Noruzi, 2009).

Communities are represented by social groups formed of people with different characteristics, which share common interests and often have a common cultural and historical heritage and are located and engage in joint action in the same geographical area or

in a virtual environment. Conflicts between firms and communities are represented by arguments over property rights and environmental issues. Competition of firms, from different economic activities, such as agriculture, mining, cattle raising, forestry, over access to resources can lead to conflict with communities. These conflicts are influenced by differences in financial resources, power and cultural background (Vargas-Hernández & Noruzi, 2009).

A government represents a system, a group of people that governs a community, a state or a nation, by exercising administrative, executive political power through customs and institutions and laws. Governments aim to implement policies that provide both economic and social development to their citizens, and must be accepted by all the entities existing within the national boundaries (Chindalia, 2010). Firms and governments can face both cooperative and conflicting relationships. The conflict between firms and government is most of the time a conflict of interest. With the exception of public sectors' enterprises, survival, profit maximization and growth represent the main interest of firms. Economic efficiency may conflict with societal efficiency; therefore, economic activities are regulated and ordered. This enforced economic policies and regulations of activities led to disagreements. For example, some firms' activities include elimination of competition, exploitation of unauthorized resources, cost saving and environmental degradation. These activities violate the set laws and regulations of a nation. Therefore, the government will penalize organizations through existing regulatory and legal framework. Conflict between firms and governments can also appear due to disparities between expectations arising from a separate set of ideologies, perceptions, objectives and needs. For example, international firms oppose government restrictions that discourage their entrance to foreign markets (Vargas-Hernández & Noruzi, 2009).

### **2.2.2. Non-governmental Organizations**

The United Nations define Non-governmental organizations (NGOs) NGO as: *“A non-governmental organization (NGO) is any non-profit, voluntary citizens' group which is organized on a local, national or international level. Task-oriented and driven by people with a common interest, NGOs perform a variety of service and humanitarian functions, bring citizen concerns to Governments, advocate and monitor policies and encourage political participation through provision of information. Some are organized around specific issues, such as human rights, environment or health. They provide analysis and expertise, serve as*

*early warning mechanisms and help monitor and implement international agreements.”*  
(United Nations, 2014)

In the last years, NGOs have increased their activities at local, national and international level. NGOs main roles are represented by: emergency response, democracy building, conflict resolution, human rights work, cultural preservation, environmental activism, policy analysis, and research and information provision. NGOs deliver basic services to people in need, and organize policy advocacy and public campaigns for change (Lewis & Kanji, 2009).

Regarding NGOs typologies, they can be generally divided along two dimensions. The first one concerns to whom the NGO is designed to benefit. NGOs have many sets of stakeholders including financial contributors, board members, executives, staff and beneficiaries. **Self-benefiting NGOs** are often membership associations designed primarily to provide a benefit to their members. Examples of self-benefiting NGOs are unions, business associations, church groups, community patrol groups, Alcoholics Anonymous and amateur sports club (Yaziji & Doh, 2009). **The other-benefiting NGOs** are organizations in which capital and labor contributors are not members of the primary intended beneficiary group. Supporters are not donating to gain excludable private goods for themselves or their self-identified group. The World Wildlife Fund, Greenpeace, CARE, Amnesty International are examples of other-benefiting NGOs. This type of NGOs acts as an intermediary between different sectors and engage in activities related to mediation. The second dimension relates to what NGOs do, and identifies service, advocacy, and hybrid NGOs (Yaziji & Doh, 2009). The **service oriented NGOs**, provide goods and services to clients with unmet needs. They do operational delivery of essential humanitarian, development, and/or social services. Examples of service-oriented NGOs are Red Cross, natural resources monitoring by WWF and the distribution of medical drugs by Doctors Without Borders (Yaziji & Doh, 2009). **Advocacy NGOs** are the ones that practice a systematic, democratic and organized effort to change, influence, initiate policies, laws, practices, and behavior so that disadvantaged citizens in particular or all citizens in general will benefit. After researching and analyzing problems, advocacy NGOs represent and inform people about these issues; they support citizen actions through media campaigns and other forms of activism, and lobby business leaders and policy makers. There are two types of advocacy NGOs known as “watchdog” and “social movements” (Yaziji & Doh, 2009). The watchdog NGOs are less ideologically radical, relative to the communities in which they operate and are generally satisfied with the broader economic, legislative, political and social institution. The social movements NGOs by contrast, are not trying to support the existing system, but to change and undermine it.

Examples of advocacy NGOs are PETA, The Food Commission, and Liberty. The hybrid NGOs pursue both activities of advocacy and service delivery. Examples of hybrid NGOs are Oxfam, Doctor Without Borders and WWF (Yaziji & Doh, 2009).

The interaction between firms and NGOs can be seen as beneficial or adversarial. The beneficial relationship is a humanitarian one. NGOs donate money or services concerned with relief and welfare assistance, and they are both positively and negatively concerned about the effects of business practices on their interest or the interest they want to protect. From the adversarial point of view, the existence of anti-business environmental groups, contrasts with the general NGOs' docile approach. Some firms have been concerned with the impact of NGOs upon their operations and strategies (Shah, 2001). Conflicts arise between organizations and NGOs because the NGOs activities are influencing firms' reputation, risk management, costs, revenues and social license to operate. They might also alter the development of new business models, new corporate accountability mechanism, institutional structures, and non-traditional cross-sector alliances. They can initiate changes in the public policy environments or framework conditions under which firms operate (Nelson, 2007).

Many firms can still be in the process of understanding and dealing with NGOs practices. Firms might generalize NGOs' activities, and many NGOs might generalize firms' behavior. Frequently, NGOs and firms denounce each other of exactly the same type of behavior. They each find that the other often has a hidden plan, or is powerful and always wins, or that the other is not accountable to anybody. Some firms may perceive that NGOs have little to offer when it comes to providing options for how firms can contribute to conflict solving and maintain their objectives in the same time (Zandvliet, 2005).

In conclusion, it can be said that NGOs' campaigns can severely threaten profitable firms and restrain their sphere for strategic action, making them vulnerable to social and political risks.

## 2.3. Conflict Resolution

Conflict resolution means reduction, elimination, or termination of conflicts. Conflict resolution uses different measures in intervening in conflicts with the scope to minimize them, accelerate the settlement, establish control mechanisms and determine punishment actions in case of disagreement (Chappell, 2007). Handling inter-organizational conflicts involves connecting the energies, expertise, and resources in order to reach solutions. Organizations approach conflicts in different ways by using different conflict handling styles and resolution methods. In the next sections, are presented the five styles of conflict handling instrument, and the most important conflict resolution methods.

### 2.3.1. The Thomas-Kilmann Model

Conflict analysts, Kenneth Thomas and Ralph Kilmann developed a Conflict Mode Instrument in which they identified different styles of handling conflicts which are described based on two dimensions: the assertive dimension and the cooperative dimension. The assertive dimension refers to the party's behavior to satisfy its own concerns. Here the party focus is on its own needs, desired outcomes and agenda. The cooperative dimension refers to behavior of parties to satisfy the concerns of others. Here the focus of parties is on other's needs and mutual relationships. Therefore, a company style of handling inter-organizational conflicts generally proceeds in a context that tends toward competition or cooperation. The five different styles that result from these two dimensions are represented by: **competing, collaborating, compromising, avoiding, and accommodating style** (Eunson, 2007).

The **competing style** refers to high concern for self and low concern for others and it has been identified to have a win-lose orientation known as "I win/you lose" approach (Rahim, 2001). A competing party is focused on winning at any costs and ignores the needs and expectations of the other. Competing also means that companies stand up for one's rights and defend their position which they believe it's correct. The competing style is necessary when problems are very important to one party and fast decision is needed, or when an unfavorable decision taken by one company is harmful to the other. This style is not useful when the issue is complex or not important to the party, and when decisions don't have to be taken quickly (Rahim, 2001). Companies characterized by this style sometimes exert their authority in form of rewards, threat of punishment or bribery (Doerr, 2004).

The **collaborating style** refers at high concern for self and other. This style is identified with a win-win orientation: “I win/you win” (Rahim, 2001). It is also known as problem solving and involves collaboration between organizations by the meaning of exchanging information and examination of differences, in order to reach a solution acceptable for both of them. This style is effective when companies deal with complex problems and when one company alone can’t solve the problem. It is recommended to be used by organizations when strategic issues exist related to their objectives which are planned on long term. Is not recommended to use this style when the problem is simple and when there is no time for problem solving, especially when other organizations do not have sufficient expertise and experience for problem solving, or when they are indifferent to outcomes (Rahim, 2001). Because of the focus on cooperation, collaboration is considered one of the best ways of managing conflicts, resulting in the perception that conflict management is constructive, and it can lead to a better cooperation in the future.

The **compromising style** indicates intermediate concern for self and others, involving sharing, whereby both parties give up something to make a mutually acceptable decision. This style is identified with “I win a little/ you win a little” approach (Rahim, 2001). The compromising style is appropriate when both parties are equally powerful and they reached a standstill in their negotiation. This style can be used when competing and collaborating style are not effective. It can be irrelevant when firms deal with complex problems which need a collaborating approach, and when one firms has more power than the other and believes that its position it is the right one (Rahim, 2001). Compromising can be seen as a method of solving conflicts through bargaining.

In the case of **avoiding style**, organizations make decisions of withdrawal or sidestepping and postpone issues until a better time. The organization, that avoids conflicts, fails to satisfy its own concerns as well as the concerns of the other. This style is identified with lose-lose approach: “I lose/ you lose” (Rahim, 2001). This style may not be useful when problems are important to one organization and when it is its responsibility to make decisions. Also this style is not recommended when organizations don’t want to wait, or when prompt action is required (Rahim, 2001).

An organization that uses the **accommodating style** focuses on the masses to satisfy the concern of the other organization. This indicates the organization’s generosity, charity or obedience to the other. This style can be identified with lose-win orientation: “I lose/ you win” (Rahim, 2001). The accommodating style is appropriate when a party is not familiar with problems related to the conflict, or the other party is right, and the issue is much more

important to the other party. It can be used as a strategy when an organization is weak and willing to give up something, hoping to get some benefit from the other party when needed, or the organization believes that preserving the relationship between them is important. This style is not appropriate to be used when the problems are very important to one organization or when one of them believes that the other is wrong or unethical (Rahim, 2001).

Managing conflicts involves matching styles with situations. Some consider that collaborating style is the most appropriate for managing inter-organizational conflict, studies indicated that conflicts should be managed functionally, which means to take in consideration that one style is more appropriate than another depending on the situation.

### 2.3.2. Conflict Resolution Methods

Factors that can influence inter-organizational conflict resolution are represented by conflicts' importance and intensity, time pressure, and position taken by parties and the perspective view of resolution need, which includes long-term versus short-term perspective (Schellenberg, 1996). All these factors lead to five basic practices for the conflict resolution represented by **coercion, negotiation and bargaining, adjudication or litigation, mediation and arbitration.**

**Coercion** refers at forcing one of the organization involved in conflict to reach a specific conclusion by using different threats such as physical or imposition of economic costs through reduction of trade or credit, and threat of interrupting the present and the possible future collaboration (Patchen, 1988). This practice is common in conflicts over resources, in conflicts between state and communities which have as a source the assignment of property rights over land and labor. Coercion can be also used in conflicts between companies and labor unions. Labor unions can employ a form of coercion via threats to disrupt the company's process of economic cooperation through strike or a strike-threat (Hutt, 1988). Coercion is not only threat-based, involving also activities which doesn't permit the entrance into economic relations with conflicting organizations. Coercion can take away opportunities by eliminating future benefits, in order to introduce a change in behavior. Economic sanctions can be applied by reducing the positive support of benefits and imposing sanctions which inflict costs (Hagmann, 2004).

The second conflict resolution method, **negotiation and bargaining** refers at involving organizations in a process of discussion with the scope of achieving a mutual agreement (SAIEA, 2004). It is a voluntary process, not involving law rules, and representing the center

of mediation practices. Generally there are three perspectives in which negotiation can be referred to, such as: *negotiation as Puzzle Solving*, *negotiation as Bargaining* and *negotiation as Organizational Management* (Druckman, 1997). These perspectives on negotiation differ in terms of their importance, complexity, and the particular processes they focus on, such as: preferences, the communication process, and an international system of diplomatic politics (Druckman, 1997). Negotiation is seen as a puzzle to be solved when more solutions to the problem are available, but also organizations have different preferences regarding the available set of solution. Therefore, organizations have to priorities their preferences and make them fit the solution by exchanging this information with the conflicting organization so the outcome will fit the preferences of both conflicting organizations. Negotiation is viewed as bargaining when organizations exchange benefits. In this case organizations have to have a clear vision of their needs and their importance, in order to be able to exchange benefits that are less important to them with benefits from the other organization that are more important to them. Negotiation can be seen as organizational management, when it represents a process of creating a general agreement between different parties with interest in the outcome (Druckman, 1997). This means that the conflicting organizations will try to create value during the process of negotiation. Creating value means that each of them will exchange easily benefits so both of them will get a good outcome (Tidwell, 1998).

**Adjudication or litigation** refers at using state's legal system in order to reach an authoritative conclusion (Tidwell, 1998). Many litigants use the courts in an effort to resolve disputes and conflict between organizations. This refers at a resolution which involves a lawsuit. Courts resolve points of law which might not always provide peace in conflict situation, but it might just aggravate it. Though, the use of courts is maybe the most common institutional method used in an effort to resolve inter-organizational conflicts. Courts appoint a settlement on organizations which have no option but to accept it (Tidwell, 1998).

**Mediation** refers at introducing a third party mediator agreed by both conflicting organizations, to help them to reach a mutually satisfactory arrangement (SAIEA, 2004). This practice is a private, confidential and a non-legal process. It can be defined as "*a process by which the participants, together with the assistance of a neutral person, systematically isolates disputed issues in order to develop options, considered alternatives, and reach consensual settlement that will accommodate their needs*" (Folberg & Taylor, 1984).

**Arbitration** refers at using a third party to make a ruling and decide on the issues in conflict. This is most of the time a voluntary process in which, organizations choose a neutral arbitrator to adjudicate. It is a more formal process than mediation, as the arbitrator's decision

is final and legally binding (SAIEA, 2004). The process grows out of a legal environment, and so it reflects many of the characteristics of legal discourse. Not all arbitration is voluntary because in some cases, contracts may stipulate the use of arbitration as a method of resolving problems. There are variations in a conduct of arbitration. Classical arbitration occurs when both organizations present their cases in a similar way to two sides in a legal case (Tidwell, 1998). The arbitrator hears both sides, weighs up the merits of both sides and creates an outcome for parties. Final-offer arbitration occurs with both organizations presenting a case (Tidwell, 1998). The arbitrator can choose only one of the two cases and the organization can't deviate from what is presented. In classical arbitration, organizations tend to exaggerate their cases, knowing that the arbitrator will base the solution on what is presented. The final-offer arbitration forces both organizations to be reasonable. The arbitrator can only choose the case presented by one or the other organization. Arbitration does not automatically involve courts (Tidwell, 1998).

## 2.4. Understanding Culture

Culture represents one of the factors that influence organizations' interaction processes. It can influence the inter-organizational communication channel, organizations' intentions and actions. Culture is very important because it can influence the way in which organizations approach conflicts, which can lead to different resolutions. Therefore, understanding culture is essential because it brings a better understanding and analysis of how organizations that operate in different cultures approach conflict.

Culture can be defined as *“the pattern of basic assumptions that a given group has invented, discovered, or developed in learning to cope with its problem of external adaptation and internal integration, and that have worked well enough to be considered valid, and, therefore, to be taught to new members as the correct way to perceive, think, and feel in relation to these problems”* (Kaarst-Brown et. al, 2004, p.34)

One of the most important characteristics of culture is that it is created, acquired, refined, and passed on to subsequent generations. Culture can be also transmitted through observation, by paying attention to things that surrounds us (Kottak & Gezon, 2013). Culture includes *“everything that a group thinks, says, does, and makes - its customs, language, material artifacts, and shared systems of attitudes and feelings”* (Rijamampianina, 1996, p.124)

Culture represents shared symbols that constitute collective or group identity. It serves to shape people's basic perceptions of their world appearing to individuals as a totally “natural” phenomenon or as “common sense”—and operates cognitively well below the level of individual conscious awareness (Avruch, 1998). Another characteristic of culture is that it represents an integrated system of patterns. Cultures are *“integrated not simply by their dominant economic activities and related social patterns but also by sets of values, ideas, symbols, and judgments”* (Kottak & Gezon, 2013).

### 2.4.1. Levels of Culture

A multi-level culture approach views culture as assemble of various levels, nested within each other from the macro-level of a global culture till cultural values at the individual level (Leung, et al., 2005). These levels of culture influence in different ways the organizations and their process of interaction. The levels of culture are represented by **global culture, national culture, organizational culture, group culture and individual culture** (Erez & Gati, 2004).

**Global Culture** is created by global networks and global institutions that cross national and cultural borders (Fletcher & Crawford, 2014). Global organizational structures need to adopt common rules and procedures in order to have a common “language” for communicating across cultural borders (Leung, et al., 2005).

**National Culture** represents the level that deals with awareness of cultural differences and patterns by nationality. National culture represents people’s held values regarding good vs. evil, normal vs. abnormal, safe vs. dangerous, and rational vs. irrational (Gyi, 2012). National cultural values can be learned early, held deeply and usually they change slowly over the course of generations.

**Organizational Culture** is the level of culture that focuses on the experience of cultural differences in an organization. Organizational culture represents the set of values, norms, guiding beliefs, and understandings shared by the members of an organization and taught to new members as correct (Daft, 2004).

**Group Culture** is the level of culture present within each organization, represented by sub-units that share the common national and organizational culture (Leung, et al., 2005).

**Individual Culture** is represented by the culture of individuals who through the socialization process acquire cultural values transmitted to them from higher levels of culture (Leung, et al., 2005).

In this thesis the focus is only on national cultures in which conflicts between organizations appear. Therefore, a deeper analysis regarding the national culture level will be presented in the next section.

#### **2.4.2. National Culture: The Hofstede Framework**

Cultures, in which conflicts between organizations arise, differ across the nations’ boundaries. The different nations’ cultural features, such as norms and personal styles can have different influences on inter-organizational conflict approaches; therefore, a better understanding of national cultures is required for the purpose of this thesis.

National culture was defined as “*a collective mental programming which distinguishes one nation from another*” (The Hofstede Centre, 2014). National culture can be explained as a component of individuals’ mental programming shared with their compatriots as different to other citizens. The cultural programs contain components associated with “*individuals’ profession, regional background, sex, age, group and the organizations to which they belong*” (Pervez & Usunier, 2003).

G. Hofstede explored national influences on the organization's cultures, starting with the idea that organizations are subcultures of larger cultural systems. He developed six dimensions of national culture: **power distance, individualism vs. collectivism, masculinity vs. femininity, uncertainty avoidance, long-term orientation vs. short-term orientation, and indulgence vs. restraint** (The Hofstede Centre, 2014). These dimensions represent countries grouped in clusters according to their values that distinguish them from each other.

**Power distance** refers to *“the extent to which the members of a culture are willing to accept an unequal distribution of power, wealth and prestige”* (The Hofstede Centre, 2014). For low power distance countries these types of inequalities are difficult to accept and considered that they should be minimized. In this culture powerful people should try to look less powerful than they are. In cultures with high level of power distance is considered that there should be an order of inequality in the world in which everyone has his rightful place. Here power is a basic fact of society which antedates good and evil and powerful people should try to look as powerful as possible (Hofstede, 1980).

**Individualism** can be defined as *“a preference for a loosely-bind social framework in which individuals are expected to take care of themselves and their immediate families only”* (The Hofstede Centre, 2014). **Collectivism** represents *“a preference for a tightly-bind framework in society in which individuals can expect their relatives or members of a particular in-group to look after them in exchange for unquestioning loyalty”* (The Hofstede Centre, 2014). It can be said that this dimension involves the degree to which individuals in a culture are expected to act independently. In highly individualistic countries, individual rights are superior (M. Hatch, A. Cunliffe, 2006, p. 184).

**Masculinity vs. Femininity** dimension refers to the degree of distinction between gender roles in society. The masculinity side represents a preference in society for achievement, heroism, assertiveness and material reward for success. A culture characterized by masculinity is more competitive. Femininity side stands for a preference for cooperation, modesty, caring for the weak and quality of life. The cultures characterized by femininity are more consensus-oriented (The Hofstede Centre, 2014). Highly masculine cultures tend to focus on goals related to career and financial motivations. The feminine cultures focus on goals concerning interpersonal relationships, service and preserving in the physical environment, their members value quality of life (M. Hatch, A. Cunliffe, 2006, p. 184, 185).

**The uncertainty avoidance** dimension refers to *“the degree to which the members of society feel uncomfortable with uncertainty and ambiguity”* (The Hofstede Centre, 2014). Countries exhibiting high uncertainty avoidance maintain rigid codes of belief and behavior

and are intolerant of deviant behavior and ideas. Societies characterized by low uncertainty avoidance maintain a more relaxed attitude in which practice counts more than principle (The Hofstede Centre, 2014).

**Long-term Orientation vs. Short-term Orientation** dimension describes cultural differences in inclination for austerity and perseverance as well as respect for tradition (The Hofstede Centre, 2014). According to Hofstede, high long-term orientation scores indicate belief that hard work will lead to long term rewards, and also that it may take longer to develop business in these countries, particularly for foreigners (Hatch & Cunliffe, 2006). Societies with a short-term orientation exhibit great respect for traditions, a relatively small propensity to save for the future, and a focus on achieving quick results (The Hofstede Centre, 2014).

**Indulgence vs. Restraint** dimension was added later in the year 2010 based on an analysis on the World Values Surveys. The indulgence side characterizes *“a society that allows relatively free gratification of basic and natural human drives related to enjoying life and having fun”* while the restraint side characterizes *“a society that suppresses gratification of needs and regulates it by means of strict social norms”* (The Hofstede Centre, 2014).

In this thesis the individualism vs. collectivism and masculinity vs. femininity dimensions are taken in consideration for the analysis of the cultural influences on inter-organizational conflict resolution.

## 2.5. Culture and Inter-organizational Conflicts

As presented in the previous chapter, inter-organizational conflicts have many different sources. They can be represented by a clash of interests, competition between companies over scarce resources, or the need of power in order to require them. The sources of these conflicts are determined by the individual's different perceptions. Culture is the most important determinant of individuals' perceptions, because it represents their socially inherited, shared and learned ways of living in virtue of their membership in society (Avruch, 1998).

According to G. Hofstede, national cultures can differ in many ways, and they can influence people's way of thinking, feeling and behaving. Because people's expectations, assumptions and behaviors are formed by cultural heritage, difficulties in reaching an agreement can appear and conflicts can become more intense and hard to manage. On the other hand, different values, orientations, and goals may ease conflicts by leading to different and more efficient resolution methods. The cultural understanding is needed since it includes

knowledge related to how and why organizations present in different cultures take different actions and follow different conflict handling styles.

Also, inter-organizational conflicts can be influenced by national culture since organizations' needs, aspirations and goals are enhanced in the culture in which they perform; therefore, the approaches they will use to conflicts can be different.

### 2.5.1. Cultural Dimensions and Thomas-Kilmann Model

In order to see how national culture can influence conflict handling styles, a link between Hofstede's cultural dimensions and Thomas-Kilmann Conflict Model can be made. As it was mentioned before, in this thesis, there will be analyzed two of cultural dimensions: individualism vs. collectivism and masculinity vs. femininity. Researches have shown that organizations' preferable strategies for handling conflict are clearly affected by culture.

Regarding the individualism vs. collectivism dimension, it was noticed that cultures characterized by **individualism** tend to use a **competing handling style** because a competing organization is focused on winning at any costs and ignores the needs and expectations of other organizations. Collective societies are those where an individual is concerned with the well-being of a wider group. Organizations that perform in cultures characterized by **collectivism** tend to use the **collaborating style** since here a high concern for the others is present. These cultures might use also the **avoiding style** because these parties in these cultures might avoid satisfying their own concerns and the concerns of others (Mohammed, et al., 2008). Collective cultures may be desirable to ensure that collective goals are pursued above individual goals. Therefore, collective cultures might use also the **accommodating style** by emphasizing the need to satisfy the concern of the collective.

The cultures characterized by a high degree of **masculinity** are expected to display more aggressive or assertive traits, which make them more likely to correlate with a **competing style** of conflict handling (Mohammed, et al., 2008). Since cultures characterized by a high degree of **femininity** tend to value relationship goals, have preferences for cooperation and interdependence, and they are more likely to use the **avoidance, compromising and collaborating style**.

The link between cultural orientations and organizations conflict handling style is summarized in Table 1. The dot represents the presence of the conflict handling style most likely to occur in three cultural dimensions. The empty cases mean that the tendency of the conflict handling styles in these dimensions is uncertain or less noticeable.

| Table 1. Cultural dimensions and Conflict handling styles |                          |               |              |          |               |
|-----------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------|---------------|--------------|----------|---------------|
| Cultural Dimensions                                       | Conflict Handling Styles |               |              |          |               |
|                                                           | Competing                | Collaborating | Compromising | Avoiding | Accommodating |
| Individualism<br>vs.<br>Collectivism                      | •                        |               |              |          |               |
|                                                           |                          | •             |              | •        | •             |
| Masculinity<br>vs.<br>Femininity                          | •                        |               |              |          |               |
|                                                           |                          | •             | •            | •        |               |

### 2.5.2. Cultural Dimensions and Conflict Resolution Methods

Taken in consideration the relationship between conflict handling styles and cultural dimensions presented in the previous sub-chapter, a link between conflict handling styles, cultural dimension and conflict resolution methods will be created. This link will show the relationship between cultural dimensions and conflict resolution methods with the help of conflict handling styles' analysis. Each conflict resolution method has to be analyzed in relationship with the conflict handling styles in order to find out which conflict resolution methods are more likely to be used in two cultural dimensions.

Regarding the **coercion method**, it can be said that organizations exercise coercive power in order to secure their main objectives at the costs of other organizations. This means that one organization expects itself to win and the other organization to lose. Therefore, coercion can be linked with the competitive handling style because this style is characterized by the win-lose approach. Also, the traditional view sees the use of coercive power as a barrier for organizations in their cooperation process, which means that coercive power reduces organizations' willingness to cooperate. Therefore, the collaborative handling style is less likely to be used in this case. Since cultures characterized by individualism or/and masculinity tend to use a competitive handling style it can be said that coercion is more likely to be used in these cultures.

The **negotiation and bargaining** definition tells us that organizations involve themselves in a process of discussion with the scope of achieving a mutual agreement, leading to a change of benefits between organizations. Collectivist cultures and the cultures

characterized by femininity tend to use a collaborative approach to conflict. These cultures present less resistance to change and embrace more flexible agreements. They prefer broad guidelines and few rules. In these cultures, conflict is seen as natural and dissent is accepted and they are willing to come to an agreement on less evidence (Hofstede, 1980). Therefore, it can be said that negotiation and bargaining is more likely to be present in these types of cultures. On the other hand, successful negotiations involve also high concern for one's own outcome, and it can be expected to be present also in individualistic and masculine cultures.

The **adjudication** method definition tells us that organizations will inquire the power of the legal system in order to reach an authoritative conclusion. Since adjudication is mostly considered to be a confrontational method, the handling style more likely to be linked to this method is represented by a competitive style. On the other hand, using the adjudication method to solve a conflict can be seen as a way of avoiding the conflict, since one party delegate a solution of the conflict to another party. This means that the individualistic, masculine and/or collectivist cultures are expected to use this method. According to the **mediation** method definition, organizations agree to introduce a third party mediator in their conflict in order to reach a mutual agreement. This method can be characterized by collaborative, compromising and accommodating conflict handling styles which describe cultures defined by collectivism and femininity.

The **arbitration** method is more formal than mediation and implies that the arbitrator imposes a legally binding solution for the organizations, which they have to accept as final. This method can be linked to the avoidance conflict handling style, because parties will refuse to solve the problems by themselves, requiring the help of a third party. Therefore, arbitration is more likely to be used in cultures characterized by femininity.

The Table 2 summarizes the relationship between cultural dimensions and conflict resolution method, where the dot represents the presence of a conflict resolution method which is very likely to be used in these cultural dimensions. To summarize the relationship between conflict resolution methods and cultural dimension, it can be assumed that coercion and adjudication are present mostly in cultures characterized by individualism, masculinity and collectivism. Negotiation and bargaining is expected to be present in all cultural dimensions. Mediation and arbitration are common in cultures characterized by collectivism and femininity cultures. In order to verify the theory, in the next section, conflicts from five individualistic and masculine cultures and five conflicts from collectivist and feminine cultures are analyzed.

| Table 2. Cultural dimensions and Conflict resolution methods |                             |                          |              |           |             |
|--------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------|--------------------------|--------------|-----------|-------------|
| Cultural Dimensions                                          | Conflict Resolution Methods |                          |              |           |             |
|                                                              | Coercion                    | Negotiation & Bargaining | Adjudication | Mediation | Arbitration |
| Individualism vs. Collectivism                               | •                           | •                        | •            |           |             |
|                                                              |                             | •                        | •            | •         |             |
| Masculinity vs. Femininity                                   | •                           | •                        |              |           |             |
|                                                              |                             | •                        |              | •         | •           |

### 3. Section II. Empirical Study

The purpose of this thesis is to determine and understand the influence of culture on different conflict resolution methods. Therefore, a process of examining and interpreting available data is required. Since the research process will be interpretive and will use a deductive approach, where data will follow and be compared with theory, a qualitative research will be needed.

#### 3.1. Qualitative Research

A multi-case study was selected as a research approach to describe and explain different inter-organizational conflict resolution methods in a cultural context. Observations of different cases of inter-organizational conflicts from twelve countries were made and compared. These are represented by conflicts between the NGO Greenpeace and business companies. The countries were clustered in four groups by taking in consideration all four combinations of individualism and masculinity dimensions. For the first group, **high individualistic and high masculinity**, conflicts present in the *USA*, *Australia* and *UK* are analyzed. For **high individualistic and low masculinity group** *Sweden*, *Norway* and *Finland* were selected as representative. The third group, **low individualistic and high masculinity**, is represented by *Ecuador*, *Mexico* and *Indonesia*, and the **low individualistic and the low masculinity group** is represented by *Thailand*, *South Korea* and *Chile*. In order to make sure

that the countries have same national culture from all Hofstede's cultural dimension perspective only countries which have almost the same values for all dimension were selected. This means that the indices for power distance, uncertainty avoidance, and long term orientation dimensions are almost at the same level for all three countries within each group.

Conflicts between Greenpeace and companies for each of these countries will be presented according to a conflict analysis plan. The profile of each conflict, its causes, actors, and resolution methods will be determined and examined. The reasons of these conflicts' emergence, approaches and resolution methods are compared and analyzed in relationship to Hofstede's national cultures. Conclusions will be drawn after a comparison will be made between the case study's findings and the theory presented in the first part of the thesis.

### **3.2. Research Questions**

The thesis focuses on the extent to which national culture influences the inter-organizational conflicts' resolution. This research aims to determine whether organizations from different cultures are using different conflict resolution methods. According to the theory, coercion and adjudication are present mostly in cultures characterized by individualism, masculinity and collectivism. Negotiation and bargaining is expected to be present in all cultural dimensions. Mediation and arbitration are common in cultures characterized by collectivism and femininity cultures. Therefore, the research will try to answer the following questions:

- 1. Does culture affects organizations' conflict handling styles in a way that individualistic and masculine cultures prefer to adopt a competing handling style, and collectivistic and femininity cultures prefer collaborating, compromising, avoiding and accommodating styles?**
- 2. Does culture influences organizations' preferences for different conflict resolution methods so that individualistic and masculine cultures adopt coercion, negotiation and adjudication methods, and collectivistic and femininity cultures prefer negotiation, adjudication, mediation and arbitration methods?**

### 3.3. Data Collection

The analyzed and interpreted data is descriptive. The data collection includes reviews of Greenpeace documents, which will be gathered mainly from the internet. Also information will be gathered from companies' websites and reviews of documents. Journals and other publications also represent a major source for the data.

### 3.4. Case Studies Analysis

This chapter presents information necessary to examine and interpret the available data related to inter-organizational conflict resolution methods. Selected case studies are represented by 23 local conflicts between Greenpeace and business companies from 12 countries. The conflicts are analyzed using a *conflict analysis scheme*, which is described in detail in the next section.

The profile of **NGO Greenpeace** is presented in order to understand its mission and its conflict approach methods. It is very important that Greenpeace's conflict approach can influence business companies' responses during confrontation.

In order to identify the resolution methods used by each group, a link between them and the conflict handling styles is made. Information about each cultural group is analyzed and presented separately.

A conflict analysis scheme (Saferworld, 2012) offers support in understanding the conflicts' circumstances, conditions, and handling styles in order to identify the resolution methods. It is based on the theoretical framework presented in the first part of the thesis, and consists the following elements: **actors, conflict type, sources, and resolution methods**.

**Actors** are introduced in order to understand the organization and companies that are engaged and affected by conflict. Actors' main interests, goals, positions, capacities and relationships are determined.

**Conflict type** provides a characterization of the situation in which conflict appears, taking in consideration the economic, ecologic and social issues.

**Conflict sources** are analyzed in order to understand the conflict type. Factors that contributed and built preconditions for conflict are determined. It is important to present conflicts as multi-causal phenomena in order to evaluate more thoroughly the relationship between conflict type and its sources.

**Conflict resolution** is represented by scenarios that lead to the assessment of different possible developments of appropriate responses. It provides an evaluation of what happened in a given context according to a particular timeframe. Here the main conflict handling styles and resolution methods used by conflicting actors are single out.

### **3.4.1. NGO: Greenpeace**

Greenpeace is an independent advocacy non-governmental organization, which stands for protection and conservation of environment and peace. Greenpeace was founded in 1971 in Canada and consists of Greenpeace International, based in Amsterdam, and 28 national and regional offices around the world. It provides in totally a presence in 40 countries from Europe, the Americas, Asia, Africa and Pacific. Greenpeace International represents the body that co-ordinates global Greenpeace policy and strategy. The national/ regional offices are independent in carrying out global campaign strategies within the local context they operate (Greenpeace International, 2014).

The organization doesn't accept donations from governments or other political parties, or corporations. It relies instead on voluntary donations of individual supporters and foundations grants. The main issues addressed in Greenpeace campaigns are represented by global warming and oil exploitation, deforestation, overfishing and pirate fishing, ecological farming, toxic pollution and nuclear weapons. The organization goals are (Greenpeace International, 2014):

- Catalyze an energy revolution by promoting climate change.
- Defend the oceans by challenging wasteful and destructive fishing, and creating a global network of marine reserves.
- Protect ancient forests and the animals, plants and people that depend on them.
- Promote disarmament and peace by tackling the causes of conflict and calling for the elimination of nuclear weapons.
- Create a toxic free future with safer alternatives to hazardous chemicals in products and manufacturing.
- Campaign for sustainable agriculture by rejecting genetically engineered organisms, protecting biodiversity and encourage socially responsible farming.

Greenpeace uses a non-violent, creative conflict confrontation methods represented by peaceful protests and creative communication. Greenpeace advocates by creating public pressure (Greenpeace International, 2014). The conflict approach methods used are represented by (Albert Einstein Institution, 2014):

- Use of slogans, symbols and caricatures
- Display of banners and posters
- Hand out leaflets, pamphlets and books
- Send letters of opposition and support
- Use of sky-writing and earth-writing
- Promote group and mass petitions
- Use nonviolent obstruction and/or occupation
- Apply guerrilla theatre
- Make public speeches

Criticisms to Greenpeace approach, tactics and methods were brought by different environmental groups (Kovarik, 2009). Greenpeace was accused of using illegal methods, and criticized that it doesn't focus only on research and lobbying. This criticism was also a result of Greenpeace internal conflicts. Disagreements between offices from USA and Europe were present due to different perspectives over nonviolence versus confrontation and direct action, anthropocentric peace activism versus a more biocentric environmentalist (Goode, 2014). Therefore, opinions about Greenpeace conflict approach are both positively and negatively perceived.

### 3.4.2. Countries, Companies, Conflicts

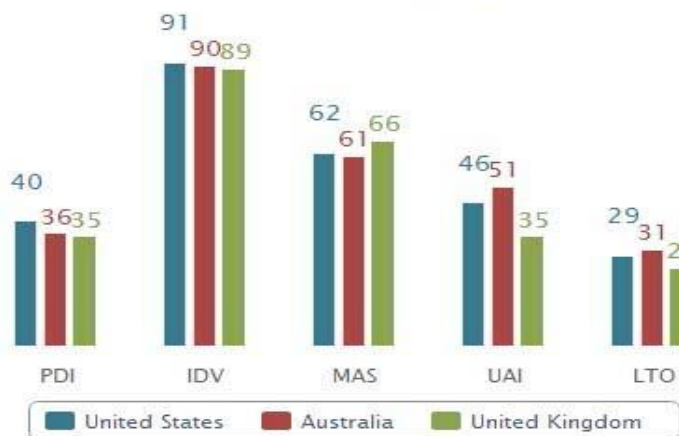
The selection of countries was made by using data from 2013, developed by “The Hofstede Centre” and related to national cultural dimension. Countries are clustered in 4 different cultural groups and each group includes a diverse number of conflicts, such as: 8 conflicts for **high individualism/ high masculinity**, 5 conflicts for **high individualism/ low masculinity**, 5 conflicts for **low individualism/ high masculinity** and 5 conflicts for **low individualism/ low masculinity**. Each of these conflicts is presented separately in the next section.

### 3.4.2.1. Group I: High Individualism/ High Masculinity

This group is represented by the **USA, Australia and United Kingdom**, and a total number of 8 conflicts are examined. According to Hofstede's framework, these countries national culture is characterized by high individualism and high masculinity which automatically implies low levels of collectivism and femininity.

**Figure 1** shows the indices' values of all six cultural dimensions. In order to have reliable results, these countries were selected because their indices for power distance, uncertainty avoidance and long term orientation dimensions have similar values. This suggests that these countries share same cultural characteristic, from all dimensions point of view. Also the values of the first three dimensions are definitively smaller than individualism and masculinity values, which shows that these countries indeed belong to high individualism/ high masculinity group.

**Figure 1: Group I - High Individualism/ High Masculinity**



Source: "The Hofstede Centre", 2013

#### **USA: Costco Wholesale, Dell Inc., Kimberly Clark**

In the case of USA, three conflicts analyzed: Greenpeace USA vs. Costco Wholesale, Greenpeace USA vs. Dell Inc. and Greenpeace USA vs. Kimberly-Clark.

The first Greenpeace entity in the USA was established in 1975 in San Francisco. In 1979 offices from Seattle, Portland and Denver and other states formed together Greenpeace USA, which is now one of the USA largest independent environmental organizations (Weyler, 2014). The mission of Greenpeace USA is *"to defend the natural world and promote peace by investigating, exposing and confronting environmental abuse, and championing environmentally responsible solutions* (Greenpeace, 2014).

The organization's goal is to expose companies responsible for environmental crime and work together with affected communities to identify optimal solutions. Greenpeace USA militates for a green, peaceful and equitable world. Its interest is to stop global environmental abuse and to raise the level and quality of public debate. Greenpeace acts to generate actions in order to create change (Greenpeace, 2014).

### **Greenpeace USA vs. Costco Wholesale:**

Costco Wholesale is a membership warehouse club, which began its operations in 1983 in Seattle, Washington. In October 1993, Costco merged with The Price Company, which had pioneered the membership warehouse concept, to form Price/Costco. In January 1997, after the spin-off of most of its non-warehouse assets to Price Enterprises, the Company changed its name to Costco Companies. In 1999, the Company changed its name to Costco Wholesale Corporation (Costco Wholesale, 2013).

The company provides a wide product category selection from groceries, apparel, electronics, toys, books, office supplies, meat and many more. The company's mission is to provide its members with the best quality products at lowest prices. Costco doesn't purchase products from distributors, only from manufactures which allows it to maximize volume and handle efficiencies, which leads to the elimination of many costs. It is also purchasing private label merchandise (Costco Wholesale, 2013).

The conflict between Greenpeace USA and Costco can be classified as a conflict of actions. Costco Wholesale is one of the companies that sells endangered seafood species, doesn't have a sustainable seafood policy and doesn't offer transparency in food labeling. Greenpeace USA wishes to protect the ocean and the endangered fish species, therefore, started a campaign in order to convince Costco to adopt sustainable policies and change its purchasing (Swarthmore College, 2011).

The conflict started with the report "*Carting Away the Oceans*", released by Greenpeace in 2008 in order to evaluate and rank supermarkets on their sustainability seafood policies. The purpose of the report was to inform retailers of the impacts their seafood sales have on oceans and to reward retailers that were willing to incorporate sustainable principles in their business (Trenor, 2010).

The report from 2009, found that Costco didn't have a sustainable seafood policy, and it was not affiliated with retailer groups, fishing industry groups, seafood companies, third-party auditors, or environmental conservation working on seafood sustainability. Also, the report accused Costco for not having labeled seafood products which promoted sustainable seafood,

or gave consumers the option of not purchasing destructively fished species. The Greenpeace survey found that Costco sold 15 out of 22 red list seafood (Trenor, 2010). Costco admitted that sustainability is a good approach to business, but it didn't agree with Greenpeace accusations (The Issaquah Press Inc., 2014). Costco interest was to provide its members with diverse products at very low prices by keeping its traditional methods of purchasing policies.

The conflict increased in 2010 when Greenpeace started an aggressive campaign against Costco by launching the website "*Oh No Costco*". Costco response was to try to avoid the conflict and ignore Greenpeace actions (Greenpeace, 2014). Under Greenpeace's pressure, Costco decided in 2011 to collaborate, and agreed not to sell anymore the red list species, to adopt a new sustainable seafood policy, to pursue better practices in aquaculture and become a leader in ongoing global effort to develop a sustainable tuna industry (Greenpeace USA, 2010). According to Greenpeace "*Carting Away the Oceans*" report from 2013 Costco is continuously making progress in seafood sourcing policy and implemented in 2012, a seafood sustainability missive, including all its seafood items. Costco actions express its decision to collaborate with Greenpeace. Therefore, Costco represents one case that uses a collaborating handling style and the negotiation & bargaining resolution method.

### **Greenpeace USA vs. Dell Inc.:**

Dell Inc. is a multinational computer technology company which delivers innovative technology and services to consumers since 1984. Its headquarters is in Texas, but it operates worldwide through subsidiaries (Dell Inc., 2011).

Dell Inc. activities include a broad portfolio of products and services. It designs, develops, manufactures, markets, sells and supports IT products and services. Most of the products it focuses on are represented by desktops, laptops, tablets, electronics, software and different accessories. The company also offers various customer financial services for their consumers in USA. Dell Inc. mission is to "*provide long term value creation through the delivery of customized solutions that make technology more efficient, more accessible and easier to use*" (Dell Inc., 2011).

Dell Inc. strategy is to offer its customers open, capable, affordable, and integrated solutions. The company motivations are to improve their competitiveness through cost efficiency initiatives that focus on improving design, supply chain, logistics, and operating expenses to adjust to the dynamics of the industry in which it operates (Dell Inc., 2011).

The conflict between Greenpeace USA and Dell Inc. can be classified as a conflict of interest. Dell Inc. is one of the companies that use toxins like PVC plastics and brominated

flame retardants (BFRs) in manufacturing their products. Greenpeace USA intention is to change the ways in which electronic products are manufactured, by eliminating the toxic chemical used in their production. Therefore, the organization started to persuade Dell Inc. to adopt green strategies by creating less toxic products and also take responsibility for its products once they are discarded by consumers (Greenpeace International, 2014).

The conflict started in 2006, when Greenpeace published the “Guide to Greener Electronics” report. The aim of the report was to rank Dell and other electronics companies on their global policies and practices on eliminating toxic chemicals. Due to pressure from public and Greenpeace, Dell Inc. decided to collaborate and promised to remove the worst toxic chemicals from its products till 2009. In 2008, the company withdraws its commitments deciding not to cooperate anymore. Greenpeace USA started protests at Dell Inc.’s headquarters and encouraged its supporters and volunteers to send e-mails and letters in which they asked the company to make its products less toxic. Greenpeace also used banners, posters and TV adds. In 2010, Dell Inc. decided to keep its first decision of collaborating with Greenpeace and committed to integrate environmentally friendly materials in production of their products by the end of 2011 (Leitner, 2014). Since 2012, Dell Inc. made substantial progress, occupying the fifth position in Greenpeace’s ranking, but is still criticized for not removing the chemicals from all of its products (Greenpeace International, 2014). Thus, Dell Inc.’s case is one in which collaborating and avoiding styles were present. This company used a negotiation & bargaining conflict resolution method.

### **Greenpeace USA vs. Kimberly-Clark:**

Kimberly-Clark is a personal and health care corporation established in 1928 in Delaware. The company manufactures and offers for sale a broad range of products related to personal care, consumer tissues, paper towels, napkins, and related products, and health care products which are related to surgical and infection prevention products for the operating room, and other medical devices. The company goal is to “*lead the world in essentials for a better life*”. Kimberly-Clark operates manufacturing facilities in 35 countries and sells its products in more than 175 countries (Kimberly - Clark Corporation, 2013).

The company’s values of being authentic, accountable, innovative and caring, describes how it operates and how it is judged by its customers, business partners and investors. These strong values can play a major role in its conflict resolution approach. Kimberly-Clark’s presents itself as a company having a heritage of honesty, integrity and doing the right thing. It also respects and cares for communities where it operates its activities (Kimberly - Clark

Corporation, 2014). The conflict between Greenpeace USA and Kimberly-Clark is a conflict of actions. Kimberly-Clark is one of the largest tissue-product manufacturers and represents the dominant consumer of wood fiber. In 2004, the company was taking 90% of its wood fiber from unsustainable managed forests, especially from the ancient Boreal Forest in Canada (Lehmann & Blount, 2011 - 2013). This fact contrasted with Greenpeace USA's mission of protecting ancient forests and eliminate deforestation (Greenpeace, 2014).

In 2004, Greenpeace launched a campaign against Kimberly-Clark, with the scope of protecting the Boreal forest and convince the corporation to change its sourcing policy in order to allow only sustainable Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) certified fiber and recycled resources. Kimberly-Clark was also purchasing fiber that was mostly logged in clear-cuts which represents a highly destructive form of logging. During the conflict, Greenpeace used many different actions to pursue the corporation to collaborate. Greenpeace USA used label transformation for the brand Kleenex, send public service announcements and distributed satirical pamphlets. The most important method used by Greenpeace USA was a coercive one, by establishing an international initiative called "Forest Friendly 500" via the Internet. The goal of this initiative was to gather 500 businesses from around the world to quit buying Kimberly-Clark products. This method is very competitive since it puts a lot of economic pressure on the corporation by taking away its business. Kimberly-Clark's tried to avoid the conflict by refusing Greenpeace and shareholders' demands and bringing defensive arguments and deciding on not taking any actions towards adopting sustainable production policies (Lehmann & Blount, 2011 - 2013).

The Greenpeace competitive style drove the organization to use nonviolent obstruction and occupation, and guerrilla theater. The organization also managed to convince 680 businesses to join "Forest Friendly 500" campaign. In 2007, Kimberly-Clark engaged in negotiations with Greenpeace. The negotiations turned out to be unsuccessful and Greenpeace continued to put pressure on Kimberly-Clark, until 2009 when the corporation decided to collaborate with Greenpeace and ended the conflict. The corporation agreed to implement a new fiber procurement policy which implies only purchases from environmentally and certified responsible places (Lehmann & Blount, 2011 - 2013). Kimberly-Clark adopted both a collaborating and an avoiding handling style. In order to solve the conflict, the company used negotiation.

## **Australia: Broken Hill Proprietary, Coles Supermarkets**

In Australia's case two conflicts are analyzed, such as: Greenpeace Australia vs. Broken Hill Proprietary and Greenpeace Australia Pacific vs. Coles Supermarkets.

The first action of Greenpeace in Australia took place in 1977 in Albany against the last whaling station, while the Pacific campaigns were run from New Zealand. In 1998, both Greenpeace entities merged forming Greenpeace Australia Pacific (Greenpeace Australia Pacific, 2012).

Greenpeace Australia Pacific mission is to promote and campaign for sustainable fishing practices in order to protect the ocean's biodiversity. It cooperates with local communities to fight illegal and destructive logging and to expand eco-forestry projects. Greenpeace militates also for elimination of toxic pollution and to prevent destructive climate change. It is also campaigning against the use of genetically modified crops and the use of nuclear power (Greenpeace Australia Pacific, 2012).

## **Greenpeace Australia Pacific vs. Broken Hill Proprietary Company:**

The Broken Hill Proprietary Company (BHP) is an Australian mining company founded in 1885. The company operated under this name till 2001 when it decided to merge with the Anglo-Dutch company Billiton, becoming the world's largest producer of resources such as: aluminum, coal, copper, iron ore, manganese, nickel, silver and uranium (BHP Billiton, 2013).

Greenpeace Australia targeted many times the company before and after the merger. One of the most relevant conflicts between Greenpeace Australia and BHP took place in 1991. This conflict was one of interest. BHP interest was to explore Australian coast Victoria in order to search for oil. The company hired the Western Odyssey vessel to conduct a seismic testing off the coast. Greenpeace considered that this action will affect the sensitive calving grounds of the endangered Southern Right Whale (Greenpeace Australia, 1991).

The conflict started when Greenpeace Australia sent its ship Rainbow Warrior to attempt to convince BHP to stop its oil exploration program in that area. According to Greenpeace briefing paper on BHP's 1991 injunction over oil exploration protest, the members of the Rainbow Warrior ship used traditional, strictly non-violent methods of direct action, and were committed to not endangering other people's lives or property. The protest prevented the ship from testing for 2 days (Greenpeace Australia, 1991).

In order to stop Greenpeace actions, BHP postponed its oil exploration program and used a competitive conflict handling style method, by deciding to take legal action and sue

Greenpeace. The company sought and obtained an injunction in the Federal Court of Australia prohibiting the Rainbow Warrior and any other Greenpeace vessels from going within three miles of the oil exploration ship Western Odyssey (Greenpeace Australia, 1991). BHP decided afterwards to stop its actions, due to public complaint and trade union pressures (Beder, 1991). The company applied in this case a competing handling style and used the arbitration resolution method.

### **Greenpeace Australia Pacific vs. Coles Supermarkets:**

Coles Supermarkets was founded in 1914, and it belongs nowadays to the Australian corporation Wesfarmers Ltd. Coles is one of the largest food, liquor and convenience, retailer in Australia. The company sells many of its private label brands. Its goal is to deliver quality products, outstanding customer service and great value (Coles Supermarkets Australia, 2014). Coles has a customer-focused strategy followed in order to improve the company's efficiency and productivity, by offering low prices and high quality (Wesfarmers, 2013).

The conflict between Greenpeace Australia Pacific and Coles is one of actions. Coles Supermarkets was purchasing the tuna, which it was selling under its private label, from fisheries in the Pacific which were using destructive fishing methods. According to Greenpeace, these destructive fishing practices kill tones of marine life. One of the Greenpeace Australia Pacific's goals is to bring fundamental changes in how oceans are managed and convince fisheries to stop using destructive methods and to adopt sustainable methods (Greenpeace Australia Pacific, 2012).

The conflict was initiated by Greenpeace in 2010, with the release of "Canned Tuna Guide" in order to force tuna brands to consider their role in the overfishing crisis. The report, accused Coles of selling overfished tuna. Coles Skip-jack Tuna was caught using methods that trapped and killed also unwanted animals. Coles was also blamed for not using the label that provides consumer information about fishing techniques or their sources. The report also explained that the supermarket didn't have an equitable sourcing policy, and asked the company to introduce such policy that rules out the destructive methods of catching tuna (Greenpeace Australia Pacific, 2010).

After a targeted consumer campaign, in 2012, Coles decided to collaborate with Greenpeace and made commitments to ban destructive fishing aggregation devices by 2015. It also decided to only sell tuna caught using environmentally responsible methods (Greenpeace Australia Pacific, 2012). This company used a collaborating style and the negotiation resolution method.

## **United Kingdom: British Petroleum, Marks & Spencer, Princes Group**

In the case of UK there are three conflicts analyzed, such as: Greenpeace UK vs. British Petroleum, Greenpeace UK vs. Marks & Spencer and Greenpeace UK vs. Princes Group.

### **Greenpeace UK vs. British Petroleum:**

British Petroleum (BP) was established in 1901 and is one of the world's leading international oil and gas companies. At the beginning, the company focused on producing and commercializing motor fuel. Nowadays, BP provides its customers with fuel, energy, engine lubricants and petrochemical products (British Petroleum, 2014).

In 1998, the company merged with Amoco Company and changed its position from the traditional oil company to progressive energy company. In 2000, BP turned its attention to climate change and announced that it will invest a portion of its revenues into research and development of alternative energy, varying from solar, wind, and hydroelectric power. In order to mark its interest in green energy, BP rebranded its logo from a shield to a Helios. The company's projects are focused in exploration, which consists of deep-water drilling and tarsands extraction (Garcia, 2011).

The conflict between Greenpeace UK and BP can be classified as a conflict of interest. The conflict started in 2010 when, due to BP actions of deep-water drilling, the Deepwater Horizon oil ring in the Gulf of Mexico blew up resulting in the worst accidental oil spill in history. Since then Greenpeace put pressure on BP in order to convince it to abandon exploration of fossil fuels and to adopt environmentally friendly practices (Greenpeace International, 2014). Greenpeace published a report on sustainable energy in which they bring arguments that support a climate change by implementing renewable solutions, respect the natural limit of the environment, phase out unsustainable energy sources and decouple economic growth from the consumption of fossil fuels (Greenpeace, 2014).

Greenpeace also started campaigns across London against BP in order to express the frustration with the massive oil spill and to criticize the company fossil fuel dependency. The Greenpeace actions included the interruption of BP business operations in more than 40 BP petrol stations (Garcia, 2011). Even if BP took all the responsibility of the oil spill didn't show any sign of collaborating with Greenpeace. The conflict with BP persisted due to its decision of continuing the activity of oil exploration. In the case of Stena Dee mobile oil ring in the Foinaven field of Shetland, Greenpeace initiated another campaign against BP. Greenpeace activists chained themselves to the mobile ring, on the platform where BP operated. The first response of BP was to threat Greenpeace with a lawsuit. Then the company

tried to negotiate with Greenpeace and made the offer to cancel the lawsuit if Greenpeace stops campaigning against oil exploration. After Greenpeace's refusal, BP won a court order which told Greenpeace to stop interfering with its offshore oil drilling (Greenpeace International, 2014). Conflicts between the two organizations are still running, and BP doesn't show any sign of cooperation. Even if the conflict is still running, it was noticed that BP used a combination of competing and collaboration handling styles. The company also tried to solve the conflict not only through adjudication but also by negotiation.

### **Greenpeace UK vs. Marks & Spencer:**

Marks & Spencer was founded in 1884 and represents one of the largest British multinational retailers which commercialize clothing, general merchandise and luxury food products in over 50 territories. The company's main motivation is to work hard in order to ensure its offer will continue to be relevant to its customers by keeping its values of quality, value, service, innovation and trust. Marks & Spencer's goal is to become the world's most sustainable retailer (Marks & Spencer, 2014).

The conflict between Greenpeace UK and Marks & Spencer started in 2011 and it represents a conflict of actions. In that year, Greenpeace started the "Detox Campaign" with the goal of challenging global clothing brands to promote a toxic-free future. The campaign exposed the direct links between global brands, including Marks & Spencer, and their suppliers which participate to toxic water pollution around the world. The campaign asked Marks & Spencer to eliminate all releases of hazardous chemicals from their supply chains and products, and to adopt fully transparent practices about the hazardous chemicals used and discharged when making their products. In order for the company's commitments to be taken in consideration, Greenpeace demanded that clear deadlines should be provided and the company should publicly demonstrate to others how it's making the transition to non-hazardous chemical use, so that its process and steps can be followed (Greenpeace International, 2014).

In response to Greenpeace inquiries, Marks & Spencer decided in 2012 to make an agreement with the organization. It recognized the urgent need to eliminate the industrial release of all hazardous chemicals into environment and committed to eliminate all releases of hazardous chemicals throughout their entire supply chain and products by 2020 and become more transparent about what its suppliers are dumping into water (Greenpeace International, 2014). The conflict was solved by using the collaborative handling style and negotiation & bargaining method.

### **Greenpeace UK vs. Princes Group:**

Princes Group is an international food and drink company established in Liverpool in 1880. The company delivers products to retail, wholesale, foodservice and industrial consumers. Princes Group is specialized in sourcing products and ingredients from around the world, but also in manufacturing food and drink products. The company's goal is *"to be the first choice supplier of food and drink products to all the retail, wholesale and industrial customers across UK, mainland, Europe and beyond"*. Its strategy is represented by *"producing quality branded and customer own brand products that deliver innovation and convenience to meet customer's needs"* (Princes Ltd., 2014).

The conflict between Greenpeace UK and Princes Group started in 2008 when Greenpeace began a global tuna campaign. The highlight of the campaign was the companies' need to stop selling tuna caught with unsustainable methods. Greenpeace requested from supermarkets to eliminate unsustainably caught tuna from its supply chain. Therefore, Greenpeace published "First Tuna Brands Ranking Guide" in order to inform consumers about which supermarkets are selling under their own-label, unsustainable tuna. In this ranking, Princes Group was occupying the 7<sup>th</sup> place out of 8 (Greenpeace, 2014). Princes Group was accused to use tuna fished with unselective methods. The company image was promoted by Greenpeace as a company that threatens endangered wildlife (Greenpeace, 2014).

Princes Group decided to collaborate in 2010 and published a sustainable seafood sourcing policy. Greenpeace declared victory against Prince Group, but realized quickly that the company sourcing policy didn't meet their expectations. Because Princes answered to Greenpeace inquiries only with statements of concern regarding the unsustainable fishing methods, but didn't take proper action, Greenpeace continued its campaign until 2011. The organization put more pressure on the company and released in January 2011, a new ranking guide in which Princes was characterized as to be the least sustainable tuna brand in the UK market (Greenpeace, 2014). Greenpeace launched a new campaign against Princes and send its activists to protest in front of Princes Group headquarters in Liverpool. After public pressure, Princes Group decided to collaborate with Greenpeace and announced in 2011 to change its tuna sourcing policy by 2014, and no longer rely on indiscriminate and destructive fishing methods. This company used avoiding and collaborating style and solve the conflict by using the negotiation method.

### **3.4.2.2. Analysis: Group I**

According to the theoretical framework, companies that operate in a cultural environment characterized by high individualism and high masculinity are predisposed to care more about their business, making decisions that satisfy their own interest. Also, these companies tend to be more driven by competition, achievement and success, and more likely to embrace win-lose situations. Since this group is characterized by low collectivism and low femininity, it was expected from these companies to make decisions independently of members of society or members of the environment in which they operate. Further, the low femininity level shows that there shouldn't be more consensus-oriented preferences in the conflict approach.

Therefore, the conflict handling styles expected to be used by companies present in this cultural dimension, are represented by styles with aggressive approach such as the competitive style. Since there are low degrees of collectivism and femininity, wasn't expected to detect collaborating, compromising, avoiding or accommodating handling styles.

In the cases presented above it was noticed that almost all companies approached the conflict, using an avoiding handling style. Dell Inc. and Princes decided to use from the beginning a collaborating handling style, but quickly changed their decision and adopted an avoiding handling style. The companies Coles and Marks & Spencer chose also the collaborating style, without showing at all a desire to avoid the conflict. Therefore, contrary to our expectations, 4 out of 8 companies used in order to terminate the conflict the collaborative handling style. The only exceptions are represented by Broken Hill Proprietary and BP which used a competitive handling style and took legal action against Greenpeace.

Relating to conflict resolution methods, it can be said that according to the theory it was expected to find that these companies are more likely to use coercion and adjudication methods. Taking in consideration the relationship between conflict handling styles and conflict resolution methods, companies present in this cultural dimension are more likely to use negotiation and mediation methods, rather than coercion, adjudication or arbitration. The case of Kimberly-Clark is an example of company that used negotiation, and Broken Hill Proprietary is an example of company that used the adjudication method.

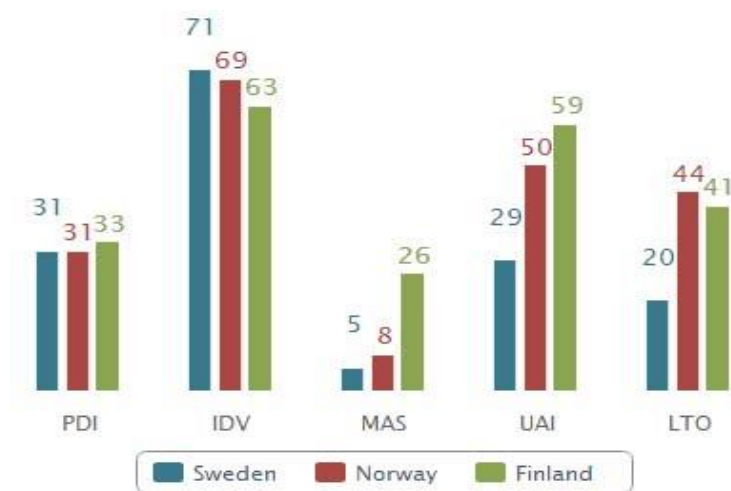
In conclusion, it can be said that theory expectations match the findings only to a very small degree. From a total of eight cases, only findings from two of them match the theory. The findings from the six cases show the contrary of our expectations.

### 3.4.2.3. Group II: High Individualism/ Low Masculinity

Five conflicts from **Sweden, Norway and Finland** are taken in consideration for this group. According to Hofstede's framework, these countries national culture is represented by high individualism and low masculinity which automatically implies low levels of collectivism and high levels of femininity.

**Figure 2** shows, also like Figure 1, the cultural indices of all six cultural dimensions. It can be seen that these three countries indices have very high values for individualism and very low values for masculinity. The power distance values are almost equal for all countries, but for Sweden the differences in the values of uncertainty avoidance and long term orientation smaller compared to Finland and Norway. It has to be taken in consideration that these differences, even if they are small, might influence our findings.

**Figure 2: Group II – High Individualism/ Low Masculinity**



Source: "The Hofstede Centre", 2013

#### **Sweden: H&M, Swedish Meats**

Two conflicts such as Greenpeace Nordic vs. H&M and Greenpeace Nordic vs. Swedish Meats, were chosen as examples in the case of Sweden.

Greenpeace Nordic operates offices in Sweden, Norway, Finland and Denmark. Greenpeace Nordic is coordinated by the Swedish office in Stockholm. Greenpeace established its first office in Sweden in 1983. Just like Greenpeace International, Greenpeace Nordic is co-operating with other environmental organizations. It uses public information, lobby activities and non-violent direct actions. It also doesn't accept financing via government subsidies or contributions from companies. It only accepts support from individuals (Greenpeace Nordic, 2004).

The mission of Greenpeace Nordic is to implement positive change through actions that defend nature and promotes peace. Its interest is to promote socially and environmentally responsible solutions in order to protect *“the ability of the earth to nurture life in all its diversity”* and *“investigate and expose environmental abuse by governments and corporations”* (Greenpeace Nordic, 2004).

Greenpeace Nordic’s campaigns focus on protecting the climate, defending the oceans and ancient forests, exposing nuclear, chemical and biological threats to the environment and human health and fight for clean production (Greenpeace Nordic, 2004).

### **Greenpeace Nordic vs. H&M:**

The company H&M was established in Sweden in 1947, and it represents nowadays one of the largest global retail-clothing companies. It operates 3 200 stores in 53 countries, and has its headquarters in Stockholm (H&M , 2014).

The company’s business includes clothing collections for women, men, teenagers and children. Its goal is to offer fashion and quality for everyone at best prices. The values and motivations that are at the root of its business are represented by *“teamwork, simplicity, entrepreneurial spirit, cost consciousness, straightforwardness and openness, as well as striving for constant improvements* (H&M, 2014).

The conflict between Greenpeace Nordic and H&M began in July 2012, when Greenpeace launched its global campaign “Detox Fashion Manifesto” by publishing the “Dirty Laundry” report. The report exposed hidden links between international brands, including H&M, and textiles manufacturing facilities in Indonesia and China. These manufacturing facilities discharge hazardous chemicals into the local water systems (Greenpeace, 2014). Therefore, Greenpeace started a campaign against H&M to convince it to stop the use of dangerous chemicals in its supply chain contributing that contribute to pollution (Blount, 2011).

Greenpeace started to gather online signatures and managed to convince most of the global companies targeted in their campaign, but H&M refused to respond to Greenpeace demands, adopting therefore, an avoiding conflict style. However, Greenpeace started to “attack” H&M by mobilizing its activist which shared information about the company’s practices (Blount, 2011). Due to public pressure, H&M decided to collaborate with Greenpeace and made the commitment to publish information about the factories from its supply chain and the chemicals released by them. H&M also promised to remove hazardous chemicals from its supply chain entirely by 2020 (Greenpeace, 2014). In order to solve the conflict H&M adopted a collaborating style and the negotiation method.

### **Greenpeace Nordic vs. Swedish Meats:**

Swedish Meats is an animal farming company which operates slaughter houses and meat packaging plants. The company offers a range of fresh meat and customized meat products to restaurants and retailers.

The conflict between Greenpeace Nordic and Swedish Meats began in 2006, when the company started to use genetically modified animal feed. This conflict can be classified as a conflict of interests. One of the Greenpeace Nordic's missions is to advocate for sustainable agriculture. They are against genetic modification of crops by sustaining that it makes society dependent on toxic chemicals and allows big corporations to have control over farming. Also Greenpeace promotes organic farming practices that can help reduce emission of greenhouse gases and help farmers to cope with climate change. Swedish Meats' interest in adopting the new policy was related to financial objectives. The company argued that the non-genetically modified food was more expensive and harder to find (Greenpeace Nordic, 2014).

Greenpeace Nordic started a campaign against Swedish Meats in order to convince the company to return to their old policy of using GMO free products. Greenpeace argued that with by adopting the new policy, Swedish Meats contributes to dangerous genetically experiment with the environment and food protection. Greenpeace also criticized the Swedish Meats' decision of commercializing products which didn't properly inform the consumer about the use of GMO.

The first action took by Greenpeace was to inform the public about Swedish Meats decisions. In order to do so, activists made a reinterpretation of the logo of Swedish Meats' brand Scan as "GMO – Scandal", and handed over two tons of GM free soya as a gift to Swedish Meats (Greenpeace Nordic, 2014). After four hours of campaigning in front of Swedish Meats headquarters, the company showed its interest in collaborating with Greenpeace. The company's environmental manager attended a meeting with Greenpeace representatives in which they both agreed that genetically modified soy beans prices will go up in the future, but Swedish Meats didn't promised on changing their policy. Greenpeace decided to continue its campaign and involved Swedish Meats consumers. The result was that consumers supported Greenpeace and expressed their disapproval in purchasing meat produced with GMO food. The conflict last till 2011, when due to Greenpeace and consumers' pressure Swedish Meats decided to collaborate and promised to return to their old policy and avoid genetically modified crops from their food chain, especially for its most known food brands, Scan (Greenpeace Nordic, 2014). The company solved the conflict choosing to apply a collaborating style and the negotiation resolution method.

## **Norway: Statoil**

The conflict taken in consideration for the case of Norway is the one between Greenpeace Norway and Statoil Company.

### **Greenpeace Nordic vs. Statoil:**

Statoil is an international energy company founded in 1972 in Norway. The company is one of the world's largest oil and gas producer and supplier, which operates in 34 countries. Its headquarters are in Stavanger, Norway. In 2007 the company merged with Norsk Hydro's oil and gas division and operated under the temporary name of StatoilHydro till 2009 when the company changed its name again to the initial one: Statoil (Statoil, 2014).

The company's main activities are represented by oil and gas exploration, production and supply. Statoil's goal is *"to accommodate the world's energy needs in a responsible manner, by applying technology and creating innovative business solutions"* (Statoil, 2014).

The conflict between Greenpeace Nordic and Statoil began in 2000, when the non-governmental organization started its campaign against Statoil's project of developing new fields in the Arctic. Greenpeace Nordic argued that Statoil's operations can potentially harm the region's delicate ecological system (Skjærseth & Skodvin, 2003).

This conflict can be characterized as a conflict of interest. Statoil has a financial interest, to increase their profits by obtaining more oil, while Greenpeace Nordic wants to protect the Arctic from possible oil spills and from its indirect threat on ecosystem (Greenpeace , 2014).

At the beginning of the year 2013 due to intensive campaigns, and other major company's decision to stop drilling, such as Shell, Statoil changed its plans and decided to quit drilling in Alaska, but change the location to Norwegian and Russian part of the Arctic. The company also decided to cooperate for its new project with the Russian company Rosneft. This led to a new Greenpeace' campaign against Statoil. Greenpeace changed its tactics and they try to convince the Norway's Prime-Minister, by sending letters from supporters, to decline the joint venture between the two companies. During the whole conflict, Statoil didn't show so far any sign of cooperation with Greenpeace. Greenpeace stated that the company postponed in April 2013 its plans of drilling in the Arctic because of regulatory uncertainties (Greenpeace , 2014). The company embraced an avoiding conflict handling style and didn't apply a resolution method.

## **Finland: Stora Enso, Neste Oil**

In Finland's case two conflicts analyzed: Greenpeace Nordic vs. Stora Enso and Greenpeace Nordic vs. Neste Oil.

### **Greenpeace Nordic vs. Stora Enso:**

Stora Enso was created in 1998 as a merger result of two forestry products companies: Stora, a Swedish company, and Enso a Finnish company. Stora Enso has its headquarters in Helsinki, and commercializes products such as paper, renewable packaging, wood-based products for building, construction and living, biomaterials for paper, board and tissues (Stora Enso, 2014).

The company operates in more than 35 countries focusing on business-to-business trade. Its main customers are represented by publishers, printing houses, paper merchants and packaging, joinery and construction companies. Stora Enso's strategy refers at reaching new opportunities by expanding in new markets, use renewable packaging, and achieve a cost-competitive plantation-based pulp raw material (Stora Enso, 2014).

The conflict of interest between Greenpeace Nordic and Stora Enso started in 2002, when Greenpeace published the report "Forest Crime File: Corporate Files". The report was exposing companies and their complicity in forests destruction. Stora Enso was accused of participating to the destruction of Finland's last ancient's forest by purchasing timber from these areas, which was also logged in contravention of European environmental law. Greenpeace argued that Stora Enso's actions leads to irreversible destruction of Europe's few remaining ancient forest, which has negative consequences on the habitat of endangered and threatened species and it also leads to the erosion of reindeer pastures ("Forest Crime File: Corporate Files", 2002, p. 12). Because Greenpeace stands for protecting the forests, they launched a campaign against Stora Enso in order to convince it to stop buying pulp and timber from ancient forests (Greenpeace, 2014).

Stora Enso didn't respond to Greenpeace accusations, and didn't show any sign of cooperation and also refused to meet with Greenpeace representatives. Therefore, Greenpeace continued its campaign, and convinced company's customers to stop buying its products. In 2007, Stora Enso decided to collaborate with Greenpeace and promised to suspend the purchase of timber and pulp from ancient forests. Their action took less than one year, and the company started again the purchase (Greenpeace Finland, 2014). The conflict lasted till 2009 when due to pressure from shareholders, Stora Enso announced at its Annual General Meeting to stop for good the purchase of pulp and timber from last Finnish ancient forests (Greenpeace

Finland, 2014). In this case, the company used both collaboration and avoidance and solved the conflict by using negotiation method.

### **Greenpeace Nordic vs. Neste Oil:**

Neste Oil is a refining and marketing company founded in Finland in 2004. The company operates in 15 countries and trades petroleum products and renewable fuels, like renewable diesel and renewable aviation fuel. The company focuses its activities mostly on Finish, European, and North American markets. Most of its customers are represented by wholesale purchasers like oil companies and business marketing oil, lubricants and fuel products. However, the company also sells to end users and distributors, industrial and agricultural customers, and heating customers (Neste Oil, 2013).

The company's strategy is represented by "*remaining the customer's preferred partner for cleaner traffic solution*". Also the company's values are represented by profitable growth, productivity, renewable feedstock, and customer focus (Neste Oil, 2013).

The conflict between these two actors is one of actions. In 2007 began the conflict when Greenpeace Nordic released a report regarding Neste Oil's use of palm oil from Southeast Asia. The company was purchasing palm oil in order to produce NExBTL –diesel, a fuel which they were marketing it as an environmentally-friendly alternative to fossil fuels (Greenpeace, 2014). The problem with Neste Oil's action of using palm oil was that, by doing so, the company contributed to deforestation in Southeast Asia, especially in Indonesia. Greenpeace Nordic was arguing that deforestation, burning rainforests and peat lands for oil palm plantations releases huge amount of carbon dioxide. Also excessive deforestation leads to the extinction of animal species like orangutan and the Sumatran tiger. Greenpeace Nordic criticized the fact that palm oil biodiesel is not a solution to climate change, but was actually making it worse if rainforests are cut down in order to produce it. Therefore, Greenpeace Nordic campaign was aiming to convince Neste Oil to stop using palm oil in producing diesel, and to start focus on waste-based raw materials (Greenpeace, 2014).

As a response to Greenpeace campaign, the company argued that they purchase all of its palm oil from established plantations in Malaysia but refused to provide evidence of traceability in its supply chain (Greenpeace, 2014). Neste Oil's response was aimed to avoid the conflict with Greenpeace, but it just made it worse when they announced later in 2009 that it wants to expand its business and become the world's largest palm oil consumer. Greenpeace Nordic started massive protest at company's refineries and headquarters, by hanging banners and informing people about Neste Oil's actions. Due to pressure from Greenpeace, the

company started to negotiate with Greenpeace, and started to investigate its own palm oil supply chain and committed to purchase only certified palm oil produced with sustainable methods (Greenpeace, 2014). However, the conflict continued because Greenpeace released the report in 2013 “License to Kill” in which they accused Neste Oil of purchasing palm oil from Wilmar Company, one of the biggest Asian palm oil producers blamed of not producing sustainable palm oil. Neste Oil denied the accusations arguing its commitment to tackle deforestation and stated again that they were purchasing only sustainable palm oil (Neste Oil, 2014). Because the company refused to make public the names of its suppliers, Greenpeace Nordic still campaigns against the company, arguing that it Neste Oil didn’t keep their promises and still refuses to cooperate (Greenpeace Finland, 2014). Just like in the previous case, Neste Oil also used both collaboration and avoidance handling styles and solved the conflict by using the negotiation method.

#### **3.4.2.4. Analysis: Group II**

The theoretical framework indicates that companies performing in a cultural environment characterized by high individualism are more likely to be oriented to satisfy their own interest and get less involved in reaching common goals. They are less oriented towards group success and less willing to support group goals. Also they are expected to be competitive, focused on winning at any costs and ignoring interests of other parties involved in conflict. On the other hand, the high levels of femininity that characterizes the group suggest that companies that operate in this type of culture have an inclination to be consensus-oriented. They tend to value relationship goals, are focused on cooperation and motivated by values related to life quality.

According to these characteristics, it was expected from the companies to adopt any of the three conflict handling styles: competing, compromising or collaborating.

In the cases was observed that 3 out of 5 companies used the avoiding and collaborative handling styles. Their first action was to avoid the conflict and refused to get involved in negotiations. After the public pressure, all 3 companies decided to collaborate and change their actions. Only 1 company out of 5 selected from the beginning a collaboration handling style. Also only 1 company avoided the conflict, by choosing so far not to collaborate and not to accept any of the accusations brought to it.

Regarding conflict resolution methods, the combination of high individualism and low masculinity creates for companies the circumstances to use any of all five conflict resolution methods (see Table 2).

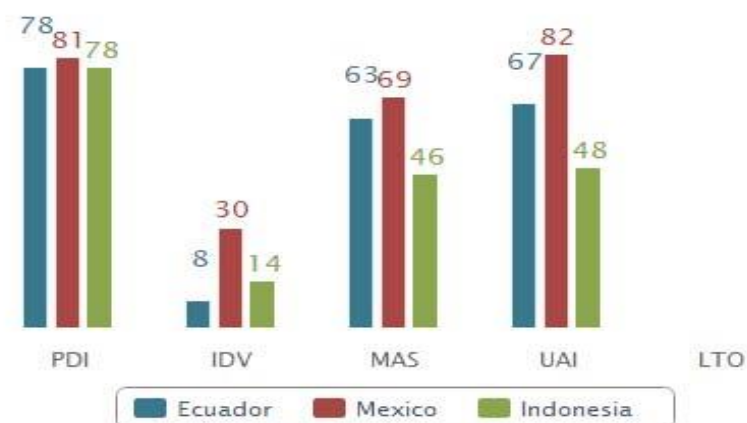
However, the findings match the theory to some extent. The findings show that companies are more likely to collaborate and use the negotiation resolution method. None of selected companies displayed a tendency to be competitive in solving conflicts.

#### 3.4.2.5. Group III: Low Individualism/ High Masculinity

In order to examine this group, a total number of five conflicts are presented. The countries considered are: **Ecuador, Mexico and Indonesia**. Hofstede's framework characterizes these countries national culture as being one of low individualism and high masculinity.

**Figure 3** illustrates the values of all cultural dimensions indices. No information is available related to the values of long term orientation dimension. Ecuador has an individualism index value of 8, Mexico has 30, and Indonesia 14. Even if there are differences between values, they still classify as being small. The values for masculinity dimension are clearly higher, such as 63 for Ecuador, 69 for Mexico and 46 for Indonesia. These countries clearly classify as countries with low individualism and high masculinity cultural dimensions. It can also be noticed that the values for power distance are the same for Ecuador and Indonesia, while Mexico's values are only 3 points higher. The uncertainty avoidance dimension might influence our findings since there are remarkable differences in the values of indices, for all three countries.

**Figure 3: Group III – Low Individualism/ High Masculinity**



Source: "The Hofstede Centre", 2013

## **Ecuador: Nirsa**

The conflict presented in the case of Ecuador is the one between Greenpeace and Nirsa Company.

### **Greenpeace vs. Nirsa**

The Ecuadorian company Nirsa was established in 1957. Its main activities are production and commercialization of canned fish products such as sardines, tuna, shrimp, but also fish oil, fishmeal and other frozen products (NIRSA, 2014).

Nirsa is a market leader for canned tuna products in Ecuador, holding 48% of market share. The company also exports its products worldwide, but mostly to USA and Europe. Nirsa operates tuna and sardines processing plants in Posorja, Guaya province, Ecuador. Its factories are supplied with fish from Nirsa's own fleet as well as third party vessels ("Fishy Business", Greenpeace International, 2007, p. 6). Nirsa has 11 tuna fishing boats and 5 sardine boats. The company mission is to be the leader of fish and sardine market, providing superior quality and personalized services. Nirsa's motivation, in order to reach its goals, is to be an innovative company, with a competitive advantage that helps consolidate its international image (NIRSA, 2014).

The conflict of actions, between Greenpeace and Nirsa began in 2007, when the company was accused of pirate fishing in the Pacific. The company had antecedents and was sanctioned by Ecuadorian Minister of production for having used destructive fishing methods, like explosive, during tuna fishing (Greenpeace International, 2007). Greenpeace aims to stop pirate fishing, arguing that this brings major losses globally, and leads to ocean life destruction (Greenpeace International, 2014).

One of Greenpeace's reports identified one ship belonging to Nirsa Company, Drennec, fishing illegally in US territorial waters. Due to company's illegal activity Greenpeace started a campaign in which they tried to convince Nirsa's customers, such as big European retailers, to stop purchasing fish from it. Nirsa decided to collaborate and engaged in negotiations and discussions with Greenpeace. In 2009, the company decided to join the International Seafood Sustainability Foundation, and decided to involve itself in establishing responsible administrative and commercial practices (Greenpeace International, 2014). In this case, the company applied a collaborating style and the negotiation resolution method.

## **Mexico: Lavamex, Grupo Kaltex**

In Mexico's case two conflicts are presented: Greenpeace Mexico vs. Lavamex and Greenpeace Mexico vs. Grupo Kaltex.

Greenpeace Mexico was founded in 1993 in order to research and document regional and national environmental issues. Greenpeace Mexico presents proposals and implements alternatives through non-violent direct actions, in order to protect the natural environment, and to stop the actions of companies and governments that can destroy Mexico's nature. Its main mission is to change the public and corporate policies in order to achieve social and responsible solutions. Greenpeace Mexico inspires and strengthens citizen movements towards a world free of environmental threats in the interest of reducing the effects of climate change (Greenpeace Mexico, 2014).

Greenpeace Mexico carries out five campaigns related to promotion of a sustainable agriculture by banning genetically modified crops, but also deforestation, energy and climate change, overfishing, and illegal dumping of toxic waste in Mexico's waters.

## **Greenpeace Mexico vs. Lavamex**

Lavamex is a Mexican textile factory that supplies clothing for global fashion denim brands. The company is located in Aguascalientes City in the center of Mexico. The factory conducts operations such as denim textiles dyeing and washing (Greenpeace International, 2012).

The conflict between Greenpeace Mexico and Lavamex can be characterized as a conflict of actions. The conflict started in 2012, when Greenpeace Mexico released a report in which they investigated the main sources of rivers pollution in Mexico. The findings showed that Lavamex is one of the two textile manufacturing facilities in Mexico which was discharging a wide range of hazardous substances in wastewaters (Greenpeace International, 2014). Greenpeace Mexico's actions try to stop companies to pollute waters, and convince governments to adopt "zero discharge" of all hazardous chemicals (Greenpeace Mexico, 2014). They argue that these substances are toxic to aquatic life, and remain in the environment long after their release (Greenpeace International, 2012).

In order to try to find a common solution Greenpeace Mexico tried to contact the company Lavamex but they couldn't reach the representatives. The company ignored the problem and tried to avoid accusations. Since the company didn't respond, Greenpeace Mexico decided to target Lavamex' customers and convince them to ask Lavamex to disclose pollution data and to adopt non-hazardous alternatives. Some of Lavamex customers, like

Levis decided to get involved and committed to take action (Greenpeace International, 2014). The campaign still continues till Greenpeace convinces all company's customers to put pressure on the company. Lavamex didn't show any sign of commitment to new practices or a willingness to collaborate with Greenpeace (Greenpeace International, 2014). Lavamex used the avoidance handling styles and didn't apply so far any conflict resolution method.

### **Greenpeace Mexico vs. Grupo Kaltex**

Grupo Kaltex is one of the largest textile companies in Latin America. The company was established in 1925 and is located in San Juan del Rio in central Mexico. Grupo Kaltex produces synthetic fibers, yarn, fabrics, garments and home products. The company owns and operates Kaltex facility, Kaltex Apparel, KaltexFibers and Kaltex Home (Greenpeace International, 2012).

The company's mission is *"to manufacture and commercialize textile products with excellence in quality and service, in order to satisfy the needs of domestic and foreign Clients, achieving an adequate profitability for the economic development of the company and the opportunity for a better quality of life for employees"* (Grupo Kaltex, n.d.). Grupo Kaltex exports its products to USA, Canada, Europe, and Central and South America. Its main customers are represented by fashion brands like Levis, Calvin Klein, C&A and Nike (Greenpeace International, 2012).

Like in the case of Lavamex, the conflict between Greenpeace Mexico and Grupo Kaltex started in 2012 when Greenpeace Mexico released the report related to the pollution of Mexico's rivers. Grupo Kaltex was accused that their Kaltex facility was discharging, in San Juan River, wastewater which contained hazardous substances. According to the report, the company was involved between 2003 and 2009 in other conflicts due to pollution practices. The company tried to avoid the conflict, and denied Greenpeace Mexico's accusations. Grupo Kaltex representatives argued that the company is not polluting the San Juan River, and they respect the environmental regulations (Greenpeace International, 2012).

Greenpeace Mexico started a campaign against Kaltex. Just like in the case of Lavamex, Greenpeace also targeted the company's customers and tried to convince them to put pressure on Kaltex to stop polluting the rivers and adopt non-hazardous alternatives. Currently only some of Group Kaltex' customers decided to cooperate with Greenpeace. The conflict is still taking place, and Group Kaltex still tries to avoid the conflict and denies the accusations (Greenpeace International, 2014).

## **Indonesia: Asia Pulp & Paper, Darmex Agro**

The first conflict presented occurred between Greenpeace Southeast Asia and Asia Pulp & Paper, and the second one between Greenpeace Southeast Asia and Darmex Agro.

Greenpeace Southeast Asia was established in the year 2000. The organization coordinates activities related to campaigns in Indonesia, Thailand and Philippines. Its campaigns are focused on fighting deforestation, on implementation of renewable energy policies, stop commercializing genetically modified rice and create national policies against water pollution (Greenpeace Southeast Asia, 2014).

The mission of Greenpeace Southeast Asia is to *“protect the region from further ecological ruin and serve as a beacon of awareness and action in the interest of environmental protection and sustainable development”* (Greenpeace Southeast Asia, 2014).

## **Greenpeace Southeast Asia vs. Asia Pulp & Paper**

Asia Pulp & Paper (APP) is an Indonesian company which trades bleached hardwood paper pulp and a full range of paper products like: tissue, packaging, industrial paper, writing and printing paper, coated paper and boards. The company was established in 1972 and now is one of the largest pulp and paper companies in the world (Asia Pulp & Paper, 2013).

APP mission is to *“become a leading and respected global pulp-and-paper company that provides values to our customers, community, employees and shareholders – responsibility and sustainability”* (Asia Pulp & Paper, 2013).

The conflict between the non-governmental organization and APP started in 2009, when Greenpeace Southeast Asia started its campaign against deforestation, and launched “Asia Pulp & Paper under Investigation” campaign. According to Greenpeace report, APP was destroying the forest and the peatland of Indonesia’s Kampar Peninsula Sumatra, in order to grow acacia plantations. Therefore, Greenpeace’s began its actions to convince the company to end the severe deforestation and their illegal logging practices (Greenpeace International, 2014).

Greenpeace used in its campaign declarations by organizations and institutions, group and mass petitions and newspapers, journals and television advertisements. Greenpeace activists locked down cranes at APP’s main port which lead to their arrest (Blount & Dunsmore, 2013). Since the company didn’t show any sign of collaboration, Greenpeace targeted APP’s international consumers. They asked big companies like Nestle, Tesco, Walmart, Auchan and many others to stop purchasing paper products from APP. In 2011, the conflict intensified due

to Greenpeace activists' actions of assaulting APP representatives and awarding ironically the company with golden chainsaw (Blount & Dunsmore, 2013).

The company didn't respond to Greenpeace actions, therefore, the organization continued its campaign by posting banners and persisted in convincing APP's customers. This led to commitments from companies like KFC to stop purchase APP paper products. APP responded with a very competitive style and between 2011 and 2012 started a campaign against Greenpeace. In their campaign, APP investigated the legal status of Greenpeace office in Indonesia, questioned publicly their founding sources and even put pressure on Indonesian government to refuse the head of Greenpeace UK entrance in Jakarta to a forestry conference (Blount & Dunsmore, 2013).

Through its aggressive campaign, APP tried intimidating Greenpeace, but it only worsened the situation and made more publicity for Greenpeace campaign. The result was that more than 100 companies decided to stop using APP's paper products and even the big Canadian company Mackenzie Investments stopped investing in APP operations (Blount & Dunsmore, 2013).

In this conflict, APP was very competitive and aggressive, but as a result of customer and public pressure, APP decided in 2013 to end the conflict and collaborate with Greenpeace by adopting the policy proposed by them called Forest Conservation Policy (Greenpeace International, 2014). The company committed to end permanently deforestation in its supply chain, and to improve its environmental performance, biodiversity conservation, and protection of community rights (Asia Pulp & Paper, 2013). Greenpeace ended its campaign against the company but still continues to monitor its actions. In this case APP used three conflict handling styles: competing, collaborating and avoiding; first the company tried to solve the conflict by using coercion, but the method didn't work and APP decided to end the conflict through negotiations.

### **Greenpeace Southeast Asia vs. Darmex Agro**

Darmex Agro is one of the largest palm oil business companies in Indonesia. The group was founded in Jakarta in 1987, and is also known under the name of Duta Palma. The main business activities operated by Darmex Agro are palm oil cultivation, production and exportation. Darmex Agro's goal is "*to become the leading sustainable palm oil company in Indonesia*" (Darmex Agro, n.d.).

The conflict between Greenpeace Southeast Asia and Darmex Agro can be classified as a conflict of interest. One of the most important Greenpeace Southeast Asia's missions is to

protect the forests and to implement zero deforestation policies till 2020. According to Greenpeace, Indonesia's biodiversity represents the home of 10-15% of all known species of animals, plants and birds. Also the mass destruction of Indonesian rainforests and carbon rich peatlands for palm oil made Indonesia one of the largest emitters of climate changing greenhouse gases (Greenpeace International, 2014). On the other hand, Darmex Argo focuses on expanding its business worldwide under objectives related to profitability and productivity. Its underlying mission is to build and develop downstream products at highest quality, in order to achieve high efficiency and create value for its shareholders (Darmex Agro, n.d.).

According to Greenpeace, the company was performing illegal and destructive operation in order to reach its goals. Greenpeace criticized the company activities, for the first time in 2007, but the conflict began in 2013 when Greenpeace released the report called "A Dirty Business". The report presented information regarding the company's damaging and illegal activities (Greenpeace International, 2014).

The first step Greenpeace took was to make direct contact with the company and convince representatives to implement forest conservation policies to stop deforestation, and to provide transparency in company's operations (Greenpeace International, 2013). Darmex Agro tried to avoid the conflict and refused to answer Greenpeace Southeast Asia's requests (Greenpeace International, 2014). The accusations brought were even more severe due to the fact that Darmex Agro was a member of the Roundtable on Sustainable Oil (RSPO). After the report was released numerous complaints from other environmental groups and communities were brought into RSPO's attention. Therefore, the organization dismissed the membership of Darmex Agro. RSPO argued that the company didn't act in agreement with the Code of Conduct. When RSPO tried to contact Darmex Agro, the company also avoided the confrontation and didn't respond (World Wildlife Fund, 2014).

Greenpeace managed to succeed in convincing Darmex Agro's business partners to quit collaborations with the company. Among them, big corporations such as Cargill and Wilmar International, decided to end the trade with Darmex Agro (Greenpeace International, 2014).

The conflict with Darmex Agro still continues, and the company still tries to avoid the conflict, not showing any initiatives towards a possible collaboration with Greenpeace. The non-governmental organization is still working on convincing more traders to commit to zero deforestation in their commodity supply chain. It also aims to pursue corporate customers in implementing purchasing policies that exclude commodities linked to deforestation (Greenpeace International, 2013). Therefore, it can be concluded that Darmex Agro used the avoiding conflict handling style and didn't adopt so far any resolution method.

#### **3.4.2.6. Analysis: Group III**

According to the characteristics of low individualism cultures, presented in the theoretical framework, it can be said that companies that operate in this context give priority to reach group related goals. The low individualism dimension tells us that companies are expected to place high value on tradition, security and conformity, and therefore, will prefer accommodation, avoiding and collaborating handling styles. In the cases presented above it was noticed that indeed companies prefer almost in all cases to avoid the conflict.

On the other hand, the characteristics of high masculinity dimension describes this group as being one which focuses on achievement and competition, and aims to reach goals related to financial returns. Companies that operate in this cultural context are not expected to take in consideration the quality of life and prefer the competing handling style. Therefore, it can be said that companies that operate in a low individualism and high masculinity context, tend to prefer mostly avoiding, accommodating or collaborating conflict handling styles, but also a competing handling style. Conform the theory related to conflict resolution methods, it was expected to observe the tendency of companies to apply negotiation and bargaining, mediation, coercion and adjudication.

In the cases presented 4 out of 5 companies, such as Lavamex, Kaltex, APP and Darmex Argo, chose the avoiding handling style. The Ecuadorian company Nirsa was the only one who adopted a collaborative handling style from the beginning of the conflict. These results match the theory. The APP's case is a distinctive one, since the company used 3 different conflict handling styles: avoiding, competing and collaborating. Therefore, it can be said that there is a chance that companies in this context to be competitive.

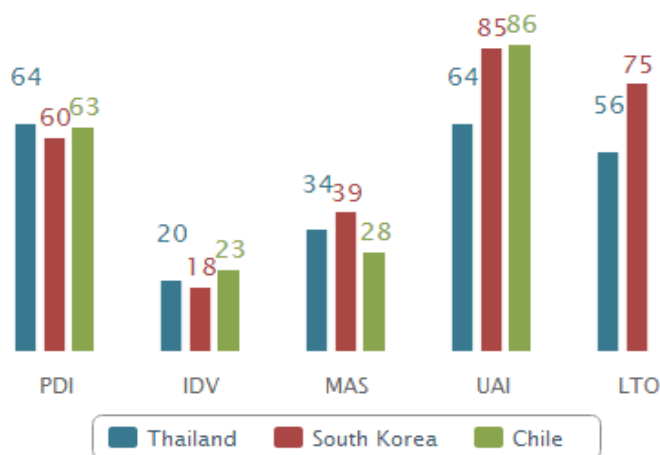
Regarding conflict resolution methods, it was noticed that only Nirsa used the negotiation and bargaining method. APP applied the coercion resolution methods but it just lead to conflict amplification. Even if there is no indication regarding mediation and adjudication, the findings still match the theory. In the cases of Lavamex, Kaltex and Darmex Argo the conflict still continues.

In conclusion it can be said that findings from our cases matched the theory of conflict handling styles and resolution methods. But we have to take in consideration that as mentioned before, uncertainty avoidance dimension might influence the results, since there are remarkable differences in values of indices for the two dimensions.

### 3.4.2.7. Group IV: Low Individualism/ Low Masculinity

This last group is represented by **Thailand, South Korea and Chile**, and a total number of 5 conflicts are examined. As represented in **Figure 4** these 3 countries national culture is described by low individualism and low masculinity which automatically implies high collectivism and femininity levels. In Chile's case, there is no information related to the value of long term orientation index. The differences between Thailand, South Korea and Chile, concerning the values of individualism and masculinity are very small, which means that these countries are very close culturally.

**Figure 4: Group IV – Low Individualism/ Low Masculinity**



Source: "The Hofstede Centre", 2013

### Thailand: PTT Global Chemical

In this section is presented information about the conflict between Greenpeace Thailand and PTT Global Chemical Company. Their interest, goals, motivations and strategies used in order to achieve their interest and its mission are introduced. Greenpeace Thailand, just like Greenpeace Indonesia, is represented by Greenpeace Southeast Asia.

### Greenpeace Southeast Asia vs. PTT Global Chemical

PTT Global Chemical (PTTGC) was established in 2011 as a result of the merger between PTT Chemical Public Company and PTT Aromatics and Refining Public Company. The company has an extremely large production capacity and represents Thailand's largest petrochemical and refining company. PTT Global Chemical produces and offers aromatics, polymer and refined petroleum products. The company's vision is to become "*a leading chemical company for a better living*" (PTT Global Chemical, 2011).

The conflict between Greenpeace and PTTGC can be identified as a conflict of interest. One of Greenpeace's interests in Southeast Asia is to protect the region from ecological destruction and to create and implement national policies to stop water sources' pollution (Greenpeace Southeast Asia, 2014), while PTTGC interest is to expand its business and become a leading global company by increasing its productivity (PTT Global Chemical, 2011). The conflict started in 2013, when one of the pipelines operated by PTTGC spilled 50,000 liters of oil into the Gulf Of Thailand, devastating one of the touristic island, Koh Samet, and the local fishing community. Therefore, Greenpeace initiated the "No More Oil Spill" campaign against PTTGC practices, by starting a petition in which they called on PTTGC, to conduct a rehabilitation assessment and carry all responsibility for the cost of restoring the natural environment, by paying full reparations to affected communities. The PTTGC tried to avoid the conflict and blamed the pipe manufacturer and argued that in the future they will take more caution and use a double-walled pipe (Greenpeace Southeast Asia, 2014).

Greenpeace is still currently gathering online signatures in order to support its "No More Oil Spill" Campaign, while PTTGC continues its activities in the Gulf Of Thailand not showing any sign of collaboration, or negotiation related to the reduction of its oil explorations (Greenpeace Southeast Asia, 2014). In this case, the company applied the avoiding style and no resolution method.

### **South Korea: Sajo Group, Dongwon Group, LG Electronics**

Greenpeace South Korea is a part of Greenpeace East Asia, which includes also Greenpeace China and Greenpeace Taiwan. The organization established its first office in Seoul in 2011 in order to "*fight climate change, stop toxic pollution, ensure food security, end illegal deforestation, and defend the oceans*" (Greenpeace East Asia, 2012). In the case of South Korea three conflicts are analyzed: Greenpeace East Asia vs. Sajo Group, Greenpeace East Asia vs. Dongwon Group and Greenpeace East Asia vs. LG Electronics.

### **Greenpeace East Asia vs. Sajo Group**

Sajo Group was established in 1971 and represents largest fishing company in Korea and the third largest in the world. The company's main business activities are related to deep sea fisheries, marine distribution, food processing, livestock, golf/leisure, and computer service and software development (SAJO Group, 2011).

The company aims to become one of the world's leading fisheries enterprises. The company's mission is *"leading the food culture with great passion and ceaseless efforts to provide safe, healthy food, and an enjoyable living"* to its customers (SAJO Group, 2011).

Greenpeace East Asia's conflict with Sajo Group began in 2011, shortly after Greenpeace established its first office in Seoul. The conflict between these organizations can be classified as a conflict of interest. Greenpeace is campaigning for a global network of marine reserve, and for a more sustainable fish industry, while Sajo Group interest is to become *"the world's No. 1 company"* by increasing their production and trade (SAJO Group, 2011). Greenpeace criticized the company's role in the decline of Pacific tuna stocks, its actions negative effects on other marine life and also the illegal activities of its fishing vessels (Greenpeace International, 2014). The first action took by Greenpeace East Asia, was to start a protest activity at office building of Sajo Group in Busan. Therefore, Greenpeace activists projected and animation which included images of destructive Pacific tuna fishing (Greenpeace International, 2014). The Sajo officials responded by sending a letter to Greenpeace in which the company requested the withdrawal of its statement (Greenpeace East Asia, 2012).

The first reaction of Sajo Group was to avoid the conflict, but due to Greenpeace East Asia pressures, the company decided to collaborate and to respond positively to Greenpeace allegations. According Greenpeace's report *"The Hidden Secret of Canned Tuna"*, Sajo announced an implementation of sustainability policies and also plans to improve equitable sourcing by increasing the percentage of sourcing tuna from local fleet from the Pacific. Greenpeace East Asia is still monitoring Sajo's activities (Greenpeace International, 2012). Sajo Group used both collaboration and avoidance handling styles and solved the conflict by using the negotiation method

### **Greenpeace East Asia vs. Dongwon Group**

Dongwon Group operates as one of the largest marine products and logistic company in South Korea. The Group was founded in 1969 and since then it specialized and separated its operations and departments, creating different companies under the same name, such as for example Dongwon F&B, Dongwon Enterprise, Dongwon Financial Holdings, Dongwon CNS, Dongwon Home Foods, Dongwon Wineplus and Dongwon Cold Plaza (Dongwon Group, 2013).

The company operates deep-sea fishing vessels, tuna long-liners and trawlers, and engages in operations like export and import of marine products, frozen fish, and general

cargo. The company mission is to “*become a pioneer in marine products*” (Dongwon Group, 2013).

Greenpeace International targeted Dongwon Group in 2008, when they published a report about the five major tuna suppliers in the world that use destructive overfishing methods, but the conflict between Greenpeace East Asia and Dongwon started in 2012 when Greenpeace released the report “The Hidden Secret of Canned Tuna” in which they analyzed and criticized the company’s operations. Greenpeace argued that the company has no sustainability policy for canned tuna, and that they refused to provide information on their products sustainability (Greenpeace International, 2012). Also Greenpeace confronted directly the company by sending its activists to company’s headquarters and to the dock where Dongwon vessels were offloaded to put banners that contained messages that urged the company to stop destructive fishing, and make its customers aware of the problem. Due to protest pressures Dongwon engaged in discussions with Greenpeace, showing its preference to collaborate, but they didn’t make any reliable commitment to improve its sustainability practices (Greenpeace International, 2014).

The conflict still continued in 2013, when Greenpeace East Asia asked South Korea government to put pressures on Dongwon and make investigation on its last activities including the ones related to illegal fishing in African waters. Greenpeace also awarded Dongwon with a fish bone trophy called “Worst Tuna Brand Award”, but even so the company didn’t show any sign of collaboration. The conflict still continues and Greenpeace is targeting now the company’s shareholders in order to make them aware of the problems Dongwon is facing and to make them demand more transparency in its business operation. Nevertheless Dongwon didn’t show any commitment of adopting sustainability practices or sign of collaboration with Greenpeace (Greenpeace International, 2014). Dongwon used collaboration handling style but didn’t apply yet any conflict resolution method.

### **Greenpeace East Asia vs. LG Electronics**

LG Electronics is part of LG Group, which represents one of the largest electronics conglomerate in the world. The company was established in 1958 and since then owns 114 local subsidiaries worldwide, becoming the world’s second largest producer of televisions and third largest mobile phones producer. LG consists of five businesses such as Home Entertainment, Mobile Communications, Home Appliance, Air Conditioning & Energy Solution and Vehicle Components. The company’s mission is focused on creating a lasting

relationship with their customers by offering them the highest satisfaction (LG Electronics, 2014).

The conflict between the two organizations started in 2005, when Greenpeace launched “Toxic Tech” campaign. Greenpeace’s interest in this campaign is to pressure companies like LG Electronics to act responsibly by taking back their e-waste and stop using harmful chemicals in their products. Initially LG Electronics didn’t respond to Greenpeace instigations and didn’t engage in making any commitments of removing the toxic chemicals from their products. Greenpeace continued their campaign and managed to persuade many global companies to change their practices related to toxic chemicals. Couple of months after the campaign was launched, LG decided to collaborate and contacted Greenpeace in order to find out what they can actually improve and committed to eliminating hazardous chemicals from their entire product range. Greenpeace still observes LG Electronics progress in adopting green alternatives in their practices in “The Guide of Greener Electronics”, which is a report that ranks companies according to their policies on toxic chemicals, recycling and climate change (Greenpeace International, 2014). LG Electronics also used both collaboration and avoidance handling styles and solved the conflict by using the negotiation method.

### **Chile: CELCO**

Greenpeace founded its office in Chile in 1981 in order to run closely its campaigns related to forest and ocean protection, climate change, ecological farming, toxic pollution and nuclear use (Greenpeace Chile, 2010). In the case of Chile one conflict is analyzed: Greenpeace Chile vs. CELCO.

### **Greenpeace Chile vs. CELCO**

The forestry company Celulosa Arauco y Constitucion (CELCO), also known as ARAUCO, was founded in 1979 in Santiago as a result of the merge between the companies Celulosa Arauco and Celulosa Constitution. The company focuses its activities in five business areas: forestry, woodpulp, timber, panels, energy, and sales and distribution (Celulosa Arauco y Constitucion, n.d.).

The conflict between the two organizations started in 2004 when Greenpeace Chile started a campaign to convince CELCO to close their Valdivia pulp mill, which was dumping toxic waste into Rio Cruces River damaging the ecosystem. Greenpeace accused CELCO of using illegal pipes to dump the waste presenting 19 irregularities in their environmental legislation. The company CEO refused to recognize the environmental responsibilities of the

company and tried to avoid the conflict. In 2005 due to public pressure the company's CEO resigned and CELCO committed to adopt cleaner technologies. The Valdivia pulp mill was closed through court order (Greenpeace Chile, 2010). Greenpeace Chile continued to keep the company under its observations and launched in 2006 campaign against the company plant Nueva Aldea in order to convince them to change their policies and stop polluting Itata River. During the protests, the company refused any cooperation with Greenpeace representatives and often called the police in order to deal with Greenpeace activists. Due to public pressure and active protests the company decided in 2007 to collaborate and announced their willingness to solve their environmental problems. CELCO used three conflict handling styles: competing, collaborating and avoidance; and solved the conflict by using the negotiation method

#### **3.4.2.8. Analysis: Group IV**

Conform theoretical background, companies present in a cultural environment characterized by low individualism and low masculinity are concerned with reaching a common goal that serves a common interests. The companies are more likely to be consensus oriented, focused on goals related to building business relationships, preserving physical environment and increase life quality. As a result, the conflict handling styles expected to be used by the companies from Group IV were: collaborative, avoiding, compromising and accommodating handling styles. The presence of the avoiding handling style is explained by the fact that these companies can present a preference for avoiding satisfying their own concerns and the concerns of others.

The cases presented it was observed that 4 out of 5 companies approached the conflict using the avoiding handling style. Only one company, Dongwon Group, decided to use a collaborative handling style. The first company analyzed, PTT Global Chemical, avoided the conflict and blamed another company for the reason of the conflict, and didn't show any sign of collaboration. Sajo Group, the second company, also avoided the conflict but in the end opted for a collaborative handling style. LG Electronics also used the avoiding handling style at the beginning of the conflict but when the conflict escalated, the company showed a high involvement and decided to use a collaborative handling style. The company CELCO was the only company that after adopting the avoiding handling style, choose a competing one. Because the competing handling style led to conflict escalation, the company decided to adopt a collaborative handling style.

Regarding the resolution methods theoretical background, it was expected to find that companies present in this cultural dimension, are more likely to use negotiation, mediation and arbitration methods. Analyzing the relationship between conflict handling styles and conflict resolution methods, companies are more likely to choose negotiation and mediation rather than arbitration. The case of Sajo Group is an example of a company that used negotiation, and the case of CELCO is an example of a company that during the conflict used the adjudication resolution method.

We can conclude by affirming that theory expectations match the findings since 4 out of 5 companies used a combination of avoiding and collaborative handling style.

## 4. Findings

The following section provides the findings of the research. After the cases studies were presented and analyzed, the research questions can be answered. The findings from all four groups are summarized and presented in two tables, Table 3 and Table 4.

Table 3 presents the findings regarding culture and its relation to conflict handling styles. For each group (Group I: **high individualism/ high masculinity**, Group II: **high individualism/ low masculinity**, Group III: **low individualism/ high masculinity** and Group

| Table 3. Findings: Cultural dimensions groups and Conflict handling styles |                             |                                                                       |              |                                                        |               |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------|--------------------------------------------------------|---------------|
| Cultural Dimension Groups                                                  | Conflict Handling Styles    |                                                                       |              |                                                        |               |
|                                                                            | Competing                   | Collaborating                                                         | Compromising | Avoiding                                               | Accommodating |
| Group I                                                                    | Broken Hill Proprietary, BP | Coles, Marks & Spencer, Dell Inc, Princes, BP, Kimberly Clark, Costco | n/a          | Dell Inc, Princes, Kimberly - Clark                    | n/a           |
| Group II                                                                   | n/a                         | H&M, Swedish Meats, Stora Enso, Neste Oil                             | n/a          | Statoil, Stora Enso, Neste Oil                         | n/a           |
| Group III                                                                  | APP                         | Nirsa, APP                                                            | n/a          | Lavamex, Kaltex, APP, Darmex                           | n/a           |
| Group IV                                                                   | CELCO                       | Dongwon Group, Sajo Group, LG Electronics, CELCO                      | n/a          | PTT Global Chemical, Sajo Group, LG Electronics, CELCO | n/a           |

IV: **low individualism/ low masculinity**) four styles are summarized and introduced.

The companies representing Group I used mostly the collaborating handling style. Four out of eight adopted a mixture of two handling styles such as: competing and collaborating (BP), and avoiding and collaborating (Dell Inc., Prices and Kimberly Clark). Contrary to our expectations only one company (Broken Hill Proprietary) chose a competitive handling style.

Regarding Group II four conflict handling styles were expected to be present: competing, collaborating, compromising and avoidance. Companies analyzed used mostly collaborating and avoiding handling styles. Therefore, it can be said that our findings match

the expectations. In this group two companies (Stora Enso, Neste Oil) also used a combination of the two handling styles and two companies (H&M, Swedish Meats) adopted from beginning a collaborative handling style while one company (Statoil) used only the avoiding style.

The findings related to Group III also match our expectations, since one company used a competing handling style, two companies used a collaborative handling style, and four used an avoiding one. In this group there is also present one company (APP) that combined three handling styles: competing, collaborating and avoiding.

As showed in the previous sections, for Group IV there are four styles expected to be present: avoiding, compromising, collaborating and accommodating. Companies representing Group IV applied the collaborating and the avoiding handling style. It was noticed that two out of five companies (Sajo Group, LG Electronics) used a combination of two handling styles: collaborating and avoiding; and one company (CELCO) used a combination of three handling styles: competing, collaborating and avoiding. Also one company (PTT Global Chemical) adopted only the avoiding handling style.

In all cultural dimension groups, it is noticed that culture can affect organizations conflict handling styles, since findings from three out of four groups match our expectations. It is also important to note that in the case of high individualism/ high masculinity (Group I) the culture didn't influence companies handling styles. Also most of the companies use a combination of many different styles, which can mean that companies might try more styles depending on different factors.

Table 4 presents the findings related to culture and conflict resolution methods. For each group the four methods are summarized and introduced.

| <b>Table 4. Findings: Cultural dimensions groups and Conflict resolution methods</b> |                                    |                                                                                                 |                     |                  |                         |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------|------------------|-------------------------|
| <b>Cultural Dimension Groups</b>                                                     | <b>Conflict Resolution Methods</b> |                                                                                                 |                     |                  |                         |
|                                                                                      | <b>Coercion</b>                    | <b>Negotiation &amp; Bargaining</b>                                                             | <b>Adjudication</b> | <b>Mediation</b> | <b>Arbitration</b>      |
| <b>Group I</b>                                                                       | n/a                                | Costco, Dell Inc., Kimberly Clark, Broken Hill Proprietary, Coles, BP, Marks & Spencer, Princes | BP                  | n/a              | Broken Hill Proprietary |
| <b>Group II</b>                                                                      | n/a                                | H&M, Swedish Meats, Neste Oil, Stora Enso                                                       | n/a                 | n/a              | n/a                     |
| <b>Group III</b>                                                                     | APP                                | Nirsa, APP                                                                                      | n/a                 | n/a              | n/a                     |
| <b>Group IV</b>                                                                      | n/a                                | Sajo Group, LG, CELCO                                                                           | n/a                 | n/a              | n/a                     |

Concerning Group I it was expected to be found that companies might opt for adjudication and coercion method. The findings from our cases studies show that all companies solved the conflict using negotiation & bargaining method. Only one company (Broken Hill Proprietary) decided to use also the arbitration method, and one (BP) used also the adjudication method. In this case we can notice that culture doesn't affect organizations preference for a certain resolution method.

The findings related to Group II also don't match our expectations. Three out of five companies used negotiation method, while two companies didn't yet solve the conflict. According to the theory here we expected to be present the coercion, adjudication, mediation and arbitration.

Regarding the companies representing Group III, it was noticed that only two (Nirsa, APP) solved the conflict, while the other three companies (Lavamex, Grupo Kaltex and Darmex Agro) didn't solve the conflict. The fact that in this group the conflicts take longer to be solved might also depend on culture. Conform the theory, in this cultural dimension, it was anticipated that these companies would choose the negotiation, coercion, mediation and adjudication method. The findings show that negotiation and coercion were indeed adopted as resolution methods, which makes our finding to match partially the theory.

The companies from Group IV were expected to use mostly negotiation, mediation and arbitration method. In the cases presented in previous section, three out of five conflicts were solved, and the resolution method used by all three companies was represented by negotiation. In this case it can be said that the results match the theory.

Since only findings from two out of four groups match our expectations, it can't be said to what extent culture can really influence organizations preferences for particular conflict resolution method. Most of the companies used the negotiation method, while three companies used two method types. Therefore, it can be noticed that most of the companies are more likely to opt for negotiation not being influenced by the cultural context.

Companies might choose their resolution methods by taking in consideration a mix of different factors such as: **recent trends in conflict resolution, cultural globalization, social pressure, organizations' characteristics and conflict resolution patterns.**

**Recent trends in conflict resolution** can influence companies' decision when choosing a resolution method. The traditional default approach to conflict resolution was represented by adjudication. In the last years more and more companies take in consideration other methods that are less costly to them, such as negotiation, mediation and arbitration. Also using these procedures helps maintaining business relationships, are less time consuming, offer flexibility and are most of the time confidentially.

**Cultural globalization** can influence companies' perspective on life quality and therefore, also their decision regarding conflict resolution methods. The conflicts analyzed have as a source the desire of NGO Greenpeace of creating and supporting a better world in which life quality plays a very important role. Because of the continuous process of globalization, the cultural exchange has increased substantially and lead to an increase in tolerance and understanding. Also it is argued that globalization makes culture homogenous therefore, different movements and directions from one culture can be very easily embraced by another culture.

**The presence of social pressure** can have an effect on companies' decision regarding conflict resolution. It was noticed in most of the cases studies analyzed, that companies decided to solve the conflict after local communities put them under pressure. We also observed that companies took in consideration their customers' perspective on the conflict. Companies don't want harm their public image because this affects customers' commitment and loyalty.

**Organizations' characteristics** such as size and financial resources definitely affect companies actions related to conflict handling styles and resolution methods. If an

organization is big and has international presence it can have a different perspective regarding conflicts. The organization might wish to keep a valuable image in all markets. If the company has a bad reputation in home country then this will also expand to the other countries where the organization operates. This might be costly to its business, therefore, the company might decide to approach the conflict in a constructive way and choose conflict resolution methods such as negotiation and mediation. Companies that have enormous financial resources can lean more towards using competitive ways of solving conflicts, such as coercion or adjudication, because they can easily afford to finance these types of conflicts. While small companies might be afraid of huge losses of resources. Also these companies are more powerful from this point of view and many of them might use their power against small companies.

**Conflict resolution patterns** present in the moment of conflict, such as the ones based on peace-making and diplomacy can be followed by organizations in order to build relationships and improve business practices. Some of the organizations might choose a peaceful conflict handling style or resolution method, if other organization used it and it clearly benefited from it.

The findings show that most of the inter-organizational conflicts appear due to different interest, or contradictory actions taken by organizations. Culture plays an important part in influencing companies' preferences for conflict handling styles but not for conflict resolution methods. Also we couldn't find enough evidence that culture is the only factor that leads to a preference for a particular handling method.

## 5. Conclusion

The aim of the study was to provide evidence regarding the relationship between culture and conflict resolution methods. Through this research it has been identified the different national cultures effects on organizations' conflict handling styles and on their conflict resolution methods. Some researchers showed interest in analyzing the relationship between national culture and conflict handling styles, but they focused on determining the relationship between culture and conflict management by analyzing the approach of project managers from different cultures toward conflict (Mohammed, et al., 2008). However general theoretical literature on this subject is incomplete on several important questions. This study was intended to answer two of these questions:

1. Does culture affects organizations' conflict handling styles in a way that individualistic and masculine cultures prefer to adopt a competing handling style, and collectivistic and femininity cultures prefer collaborating, compromising, avoiding and accommodating styles?
2. Does culture influences organizations' preferences for different conflict resolution methods so that individualistic and masculine cultures adopt coercion, negotiation and adjudication methods, and collectivistic and femininity cultures prefer negotiation, adjudication, mediation and arbitration methods?

The multiple case study analysis covers 23 inter-organizational conflict cases, clustered in groups of four, by combining two of Hofstede's cultural dimensions: individualism vs. collectivism and masculinity vs. femininity. Culture appears to have an influence on organizations' approaches to conflict handling styles, but inter-organizational conflict resolutions are not necessarily approached in a distinctive way by different cultures.

The evidence of our arguments are presented in the subchapters: "*Analysis: Group I*", "*Analysis: Group II*", "*Analysis: Group III*" and "*Analysis: Group IV*". Findings that answer the first research question "*Does culture affects organizations' conflict handling styles?*" are integrated in this section. According to our analysis, findings from **Group I: High Individualism/ High Masculinity**, didn't match our expectations, because organizations present in this group applied mostly a collaborating handling style and not a competitive handling style. Although, there is enough evidence, which supports our expectations, gathered from the analysis of **Group II: High Individualism/ Low Masculinity**, **Group III: Low Individualism/ High Masculinity** and **Group IV: Low Individualism/ Low Masculinity**.

Organizations present in cultures characterized by high individualism and low masculinity used mainly collaborating and avoiding handling styles. There is no clear preference for the organizations that operate in low individualism and high masculinity cultures, since they use 4 out of 5 styles (avoiding, accommodating, collaborating and competing handling style) . The analysis shows, regarding low individualism and low masculinity cultures, that most of organizations applied the collaborating and the avoiding conflict handling styles. The study found that in all four groups, there is a relationship between culture and conflict handling styles. Though, the study shows that organizations also combine couple of different conflict handling styles such as competing, avoiding and collaborating, depending on how the other party reacts during the process.

The findings that answer the second research question *“Does culture influences organizations’ preferences for different conflict resolution methods so that individualistic and masculine cultures adopt coercion, negotiation and adjudication methods, and collectivistic and femininity cultures prefer negotiation, adjudication, mediation and arbitration methods?”* are also synthesized in this section. Our data gathered from all cases showed that culture doesn’t influence organizations’ preference for a particular conflict resolution method, and that most of organizations terminated the conflict using the negotiation method. Our findings show that organizations operating in a high individualism and high masculinity cultural dimension solved their conflicts using negotiation & bargaining and not adjudication or coercion. The same result was noticed in the case of organizations present in high individualism and low masculinity cultural dimension. Here the conflicts were solved using negotiation & bargaining. In the third group, low individualism and high masculinity, data showed that organizations also prefer to solve their conflict by using negotiation and coercion, while organizations present in low individualism and low masculinity cultures adopted only negotiation.

The study also identified briefly some of the major factors that can make culture to have an important role in influencing companies’ preferences for conflict handling styles but not for conflict resolution methods. The factors are represented by trends in conflict resolution, globalization, government role and social pressure, company’s characteristics and conflict resolution patterns.

The research has offered an evaluative perspective on the importance of culture on conflict resolution styles and methods, and it was conducted using a qualitative approach. As a direct consequence of this methodology, the study encountered a number of limitations, which need to be considered. One of the most significant limitations of study lay in limited

available data regarding conflict resolution methods. There were 23 case studies analyzed and in 8 of them the conflict was not terminated. Another limitation is represented by the fact that the study was focused only on two out of five Hofstede's cultural dimensions. The characteristics of other cultural dimensions, such as power distance (PDI), uncertainty avoidance (UAI), long term vs. short term orientation (LTO) and indulge vs. restraint, weren't take in consideration.

The countries chosen had almost similar indices for individualism vs. collectivism and masculinity vs. femininity dimensions, but there are significant variations in indices between these two dimensions and the other ones. In the first group, PDI and UAI have medium values while LTO has very small values in comparison with IDV (individualism) and MAS (masculinity). PDI has small values for the second group, while the values for UAI and LTO are all different. The third group presents very high values of PDI and UAI and there is no data available regarding LTO values. In the last group, the same circumstances as in the third group are present, the only difference is that we have data regarding LTO values for 2 countries.

The findings of this study give additional evidence to researches related to the existing relationship between culture, conflict handling styles and resolution methods. This study delivers important contribution for understanding the link between culture and conflict resolution. Understanding the influence of culture on conflict resolution is important for organizations that operate in intercultural background. For organizations that get involved in conflict with organizations from different cultures, it is important to be able to predict the conflict handling style of the other party and also to understand why the party is more likely to adopt a particular style. If organizations can predict and understand this information, they definitively can change their view point from one that includes one side to one that will include both sides. Doing so can be lead to effective results for organizations, solving the conflict faster, and prevent them in engaging in extensive conflicts that can cost them a lot of time and resources.

The gaps in this research give an additional motivation for future researchers to analyze the relationship between culture and conflict resolution methods. I would especially suggest that future research should address the link between conflict handling styles and power distance, uncertainty avoidance and long term vs. short term orientation cultural dimensions.

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## **Abstract (English)**

The study is specifically concerned with determining national culture effects on organizations' conflict resolution methods. It investigates mostly the influences of two of Hofstede's cultural dimensions, masculinity vs. femininity, and individualism vs. collectivism, on the approaches used by organizations to solve conflicts, such as coercion, negotiation & bargaining, adjudication, mediation and arbitration. Furthermore, the thesis attempts to deliver additional evidence on patterns of organizations' ways of handling conflict style, such as competing, collaborating, compromising, avoiding, and accommodating. The empirical analysis is based on a qualitative research in which we analyze particular selected cases of inter-organizational conflicts, between Greenpeace and 23 local business companies from 12 countries that match our chosen cultural dimensions. The 23 business companies are clustered in 4 cultural groups: high individualism/ high masculinity, high individualism/ low masculinity, low individualism/ high masculinity, low individualism/ low masculinity.

In the first part, the research focuses on examining the association between national cultural dimensions and organizations' patterns on conflict handling styles present in all 4 cultural groups. Later, the thesis examines organizations' preferences for particular resolution methods. The results suggest that there is a relationship between culture and conflict handling styles but that culture doesn't specifically influence organizations' preference for a particular conflict resolution method.

In conclusion, the thesis argues that organizations combine couple of different conflict handling styles and resolution methods and their preferences are influenced by a variation of factors.

## **Abstract (German)**

Die Studie untersucht den Zusammenhang zwischen dem Hofstede'schen Begriff der Nationalkultur und Konfliktlösungsansätze von Unternehmen. Dabei stehen zwei der Hofstede'schen Größen zur Beschreibung von Kulturen im Mittelpunkt: Maskulinität vs. Femininität und Individualismus vs. Kollektivismus. Unterschiedliche Ansätze seitens Organisationen zum Konfliktmanagement wie Zwangsausübung, Verhandlung & Vereinbarung, Mediation sowie Einbezug von Sachverständigen werden untersucht.

Darüber hinaus versucht diese Arbeit wiederkehrende Schemen von Konfliktlösungsmöglichkeiten wie Wettbewerb, Kollaboration, Kompromiss, Vermeidung oder Anpassung zu beschreiben.

Die empirische Analyse basiert auf einer qualitativen Studie, welche sich auf speziell ausgewählte Fälle organisationsübergreifender Konflikte zwischen Greenpeace und dreiundzwanzig anderen Unternehmen aus zwölf Ländern, ausgewählt nach Übereinstimmung mit vier kulturellen Größen, stützt. Diese 23 Organisationen werden in folgende 4 Gruppen eingeteilt: Hohes Ausmaß an Individualismus / hoher Maskulinitätswert, Hohes Ausmaß an Individualismus / niedriger Maskulinitätswert, Niedriges Ausmaß an Individualismus / hoher Maskulinitätswert, und Niedriges Ausmaß an Individualismus / niedriger Maskulinitätswert.

Im ersten Teil fokussiert sich die Studie auf die Untersuchung zwischen dem Zusammenhang der Hofstede'schen Nationalkultur und den Konfliktlösungsansätzen von Organisationen in allen vier beschriebenen kulturellen Gruppen. Anschließend behandelt diese Arbeit die Vorlieben von Organisationen für bestimmte Lösungsansätze. Als Resultat lässt sich erkennen, dass zwischen dem Begriff der Nationalen Kultur und verschiedenen Lösungsansätzen durchaus ein Zusammenhang besteht, dass jedoch Nationalkultur die Vorlieben von Organisationen zum Konfliktmanagement nicht beeinflusst.

Diese Arbeit untersucht verschiedene Lösungsansätze des Konfliktmanagements von Organisationen und behandelt deren Vorlieben, welche durch unterschiedliche Faktoren beeinflusst werden.

## CV (English)

### Curriculum Vitae Lavinia Chiper

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---

09/ 2014 - On-going **Geox Retail Austria**

Store Manager Assistant

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07/2007 – 09/2007 **Japan Tobacco International**

Brand Ambassador

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05/2007 - 06/2007 **Nokia International**

Product Promoter

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|                   |                                                                         |
|-------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 11/2006 – 04/2007 | <b>Heineken International</b><br>Team Leader<br>Constanta, Romania      |
| 07/2006- 10/2006  | <b>Alexandrion Group</b><br>Event Hostess<br>Constanta, Romania         |
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## Projects

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|                   |                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |
|-------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 03/2014 – 05/2014 | <b>Austrian Days at Fudan University, Shanghai</b><br>Organization of Austrian Days in 2014 at University of Shanghai on a voluntary basis. Assisted the Head of the OeAD Cooperation Office Shanghai, Mag. Andreas Kurz. |
|-------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|

## Skills

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|                  |                                                                                                                                    |
|------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Languages</b> | <b>English:</b> fluent, <b>German:</b> fluent, <b>Romanian:</b> mother tongue                                                      |
| <b>Computing</b> | MS PowerPoint (Advanced), MS Word (Advanced), MS Excel (Basic), FreeMind (Advanced), Edraw (Advanced), Stata (Basic), SPSS (Basic) |

## Interests and Activities

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Event Planning, Tea Culture, Yoga, Travel, Cinema

## CV (German)

### Lebenslauf Lavinia Chiper

#### Zu meiner Person

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Adresse: Koppstrasse 62/ 9 – 12, A- 1160 Wien, Österreich

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Email: chiper.lavinia@gmail.com

Geburtsdatum: 07.01.1986

Staatsbürgerschaft: Rumänien

#### Ausbildung

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10/2010 – 07/2014

**Universität Wien**

Masterstudium der internationalen Betriebswirtschaftslehre  
Spezialisierung “Organisation und Personal”

10/2005 – 07/2008

**Universität Ovidius (Constanta, Rumänien)**

Bachelorstudium der internationalen Betriebswirtschaftslehre  
Spezialisierung “Internationale Beziehungen”

#### Berufserfahrung

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09/2014 – jetzt

**Store Manager Assistentin** bei **Geox Retail Österreich**  
Wien, Österreich

07/2007 – 09/2007

**Markenbotschafterin** bei **Japan Tobacco International**  
Constanta, Rumänien

05/2007 – 06/2007

**Promoterin** bei **Nokia International**  
Constanta, Rumänien

11/2006 – 04/2007

**Teamleiterin** bei **Heineken International**  
Constanta, Rumänien

07/2006 – 10/2006

**Veranstaltung Hostess** bei der **Alexandria Group**  
Constanta, Rumänien

04/2006 – 06/2006      **Brand Ambassador** bei **Vodafone International**  
Constanta, Rumänien

### **Projekte**

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03/2014 – 05/2014      **Austrian Days at Fudan University, Shanghai**  
Organisation der Österreich-Tage 2014 and der Univerisität Shanghai  
auf freiwilliger Basis. Zusammenarbeit mit dem Leiter des OeAD-  
Kooperationsbüros Shanghai Mag. Andreas Kurz.

### **Kenntnisse**

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**Sprachen:**              Rumänisch (Muttersprache)  
                                Deutsch (Fließend)  
                                Englisch (Fließend)

**EDV-Kenntnisse:**    Edraw (Ausgezeichnet), FreeMind (Ausgezeichnet)  
                                MS Office (Fortgeschritten), Photoshop (Basiswissen)  
                                SPSS (Basiswissen), Stata (Basiswissen)

### **Interessen**

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Veranstaltungsplanung, Teekultur, Yoga, Reisen, Kino