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Impact of Conflict Resolution Strategies on Perception of Agency, Communion and Power Roles Evaluation

Abstract: Two experiments probed the role of strategies used in social conflicts on perception of agency and communion. In study 1, persons who revealed prosocial orientation were perceived as less agentic, but more communal than those who revealed competitive orientation. In study 2 these findings were replicated in the context of organizational conflict, those who decided to use confrontational strategies were also perceived as more agentic, although less communal than those who used cooperative strategies. In line with the theory of power effects on objectification of social targets, the perceived agency and communion were differently linked to superior's and subordinate's evaluation. While perceived agency predicted the subordinate's evaluation, perceived communion predicted superior's evaluation, but not the other way round. Moreover, perception of communion (but not agency) mediated the negative effect of confrontational strategies on supervisor's evaluation. On the other hand, perceived agency suppressed the effect of strategies on subordinate's evaluation.

Key words: agency, communion, power, social perception, conflict, conflict resolution strategies

People as social animals living predominantly in complex social environments dedicate a large amount of resources and time trying to make sense of others' behavior, recognize their intentions and traits in order to predict their future actions. These processes of interpretation of others' behavior, interpersonal impression formation and making judgments are called social cognition (Fiske & Taylor, 2013). It has been theorized and confirmed by the results of empirical research in the field of social cognition that these interpersonal judgments and impressions are underlain by two basic content dimensions of agency and communion (Wojciszke, 2010; Abele & Wojciszke, 2007; Fiske, Cuddy, & Glick, 2007; Judd, James-Hawkins, Yzerbyt, & Kashima, 2005) sometimes called the Big Two of social cognition (Abele & Bruckmüller, 2011).

Communion and Agency as Two Distinct Dimensions of Social Perception

The core of the distinction between these two underlying dimensions of interpersonal impressions is based on the extent to which the target person is perceived to realize her or his own interests and other people's interests (Cislak & Wojciszke, 2008). As postulated (Peeters, 1992)

and empirically verified (Wojciszke, 1997; Wojciszke, Dowhlyluk, & Jaworski, 1998; Wojciszke & Abele, 2008; Cislak & Wojciszke, 2008), the main difference between these two dimensions lies in their profitability: agency-related traits are self-profitable, while communion-related traits are mainly other-profitable. Summing it up, whereas agency pertains to goal-pursuit and involves qualities such as competence, efficiency, and tenacity, communion refers to social functioning and social relations, involving qualities such as warmth, trustworthiness and sincerity (Wojciszke, 2010).

Evaluations of communion therefore depend highly on the actions beneficial or harmful to the interests of other, but are not influenced by actions beneficial or harmful to self-interest. Evaluations of agency on the other hand, are significantly influenced by actions beneficial or harmful to self-interest, but are not related, neither positively, nor negatively, to the interests of others (Cislak & Wojciszke, 2008).

Strategies in Conflict and Social Perception

Conflicts between individuals and the whole groups tend to appear and evolve on everyday basis, and

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they are unavoidable in complex social reality. Avoiding the conflicts is not only possible, because of variety of vital interests that are usually involved, but more importantly it also would not be desirable, as conflicts may initiate social change and development (Coleman & Deutsch, 2006; Marcus, 2006). The attitudes toward social conflicts and means taken to resolve them are therefore one of the most vivid and fruitful research fields in contemporary social psychology (see for extensive review Deutsch & Coleman, 2006; Bar-Tal, 2011).

Dynamics and resolution of conflicts, depend primarily on intentions of the involved parties, whether the primary goal is to maximize proportion of their own gains over gains of the other side, and to impose their own will, or it is to take into account also the interests of the other party and to find a solution that can be accepted by both sides (Reykowski & Cislak, 2011; Van Lange, 1999). Tendency to maximize own advantage over other party results in competitive or confrontational approach, while tendency to benefit also the interests of the other side results in cooperative approach (Deutsch, 2006). Moreover, the results of empirical studies show that those who tend to maximize self-interest (proselfs) are more concerned with efficiency, while those who are oriented toward interests of others (prosocials) are more concerned with fairness (Stouten, de Cremer, & van Dijk, 2005).

In line with double interest model of perception (Cislak & Wojciszke, 2008), it may therefore be hypothesized that tendency to cooperate with others, as it is more closely linked to the interest of others, should be perceived as reflecting higher communion than tendency to confront or to compete with others. On the other hand, tendency to confront or to compete with others, as it is more closely linked to the self-interest, should be perceived as reflecting higher agency.

The Relative Role of Communion and Agency in Shaping Interpersonal Evaluations

From the evolutionary perspective communal traits, which pertain to ability to maintain positive social relations, are crucial for the survival of both individuals and whole groups. Therefore communion is “the bigger of the big two”: it is recognized more quickly, communal traits are categorized faster with regard to valence, more quickly inferred from the descriptions of behavior of others, and pointed out prior to agentic traits in spontaneous accounts of others (Abele & Bruckmüller, 2011). Since communal traits are more effective in guiding people in their actions toward others, especially whether to approach a target or not, they dominate interpersonal evaluations and attitudes toward others (Abele & Wojciszke, 2007). It has been found that behavior of others is interpreted in terms of communion rather than agency (Wojciszke, 1994), communion of others evokes stronger emotional responses than agency of others (Wojciszke & Szymków, 2003; Wojciszke, 2005a), and communion is more strongly related to global interpersonal evaluations (Wojciszke, 2005b).

This effect however, depends on the target of perception. First of all, agency dominates self-perception. According to the Double Perspective Model (Wojciszke, Baryla, Parzuchowski, Szymkow, & Abele, 2011; Abele & Wojciszke, in press) agentic traits are perceived as more self-profitable, and communal ones are evaluated as other-profitable (Abele & Wojciszke, 2007; Peeters, 1992), and therefore only agency has been found to be significantly related to self-esteem (Abele & Wojciszke, 2007; Wojciszke et al., 2011). Moreover, also the type of social relations between target and observer moderate the role of each dimension in forming general impressions and attitudes. People attach more importance to agency of those who are close to themselves or who act in their name (vicarious agents) (Wojciszke & Abele, 2008). Agency becomes more prominent in the processes of interpersonal perception, when actions of others are related to our own interests by a close or an instrumental relationship (Wojciszke & Abele, 2008; Cislak, 2013a).

Power Asymmetries in Perception of Agency and Communion

The results of previous research showed that power asymmetries may trigger tendency to perceive others instrumentally and objectify them (Keltner, Gruenfeld, & Anderson, 2003; Gruenfeld, Inesi, Magee, & Galinsky, 2008). Power has been found to shape interpersonal impressions not only by enhancing tendency to use categorical, rather than individual, information in the perception of those on lower positions (Fiske, 1993; Goodwin, Gubin, Fiske, & Yzerbyt, 2000; Overbeck & Park, 2001), but importantly also by directing attention to selected aspects of social information (Cislak, 2013a). As powerful persons are goal-oriented to a higher extent and more action-oriented (Galinsky, Gruenfeld, & Magee, 2003; Magee, Galinsky, & Gruenfeld, 2007; Smith & Bargh, 2008), they tend to perceive others in an instrumental way that facilitates goal attainment (Gruenfeld et al., 2008) and construe others “as means to their own ends” (Keltner et al., 2003, p. 272). Individuals in higher power position may gain from agency of those who are subjected to their power, as they would be more able to attain the goals imposed on them, but at the same time their intentions may be ignored by the powerful. Moreover, power also enhances egocentric perspective (Galinsky, Magee, Inesi, & Gruenfeld, 2006), and therefore may promote proself orientation. As mentioned above, proself orientation is associated with efficiency concerns more than with fairness or equality concerns (De Cremer & Van Lange, 2001; Stouten et al., 2005).

As a consequence, those who hold power tend to interpret behavior of others in terms of agentic rather than communal traits, are more interested in agency of their future subordinates, and favor agentic traits in them to a higher extent. On the other hand, those who are subjected to the power of others may gain from the benevolent intentions of the powerful, and therefore pay more attention to the communion of those in higher power positions than the other way round (Cislak, 2013a). Especially in organizations

where employees' self interests depend on the supervisors' intentions to harm or to help, but are weakly affected by their agency, for example in bureaucratic organizational context, employees evaluations of their supervisors are dominated by the communion (Wojciszke & Abele, 2008).

Overview of the Current Research

In line with the previous theorizing and research, it may be hypothesized, that revealing cooperative tendencies toward others, as it reflects tendency to benefit others, should be perceived as more communal than revealing confrontational or competitive strategies (Hypothesis 1). On the other hand, revealing competitive or confrontational tendencies, as it reflects tendency to act for self-interest, at the same time should be perceived as more agentic in comparison to cooperative tendencies (Hypothesis 2).

Moreover, extending the theorizing on the power asymmetries in the relative role of both dimensions in shaping interpersonal judgments, it may be hypothesized that as more attention is paid to the agency of the subordinates than to their communion, therefore revealing competitive or confrontational rather than cooperative tendencies should result in higher overall evaluations of the employees than of the supervisors (Hypothesis 3). At the same time, revealing cooperative rather than competitive or confrontational tendencies should result in higher overall evaluations of the supervisors, mediated by the perceived communion (Hypothesis 4).

In study 1 these hypotheses were tested using Social Value Orientation Scale (Van Lange, 1999), presumably already filled in by some other person, while in study 2 participants read the descriptions of the plans of the other person, which revealed a preference to cooperate with others in the future or to confront others. In both studies perceived agency and communion of the target person were measured. In study 2, participants were additionally asked to evaluate the extent, to which they would the target person to be their boss and their employee.

Study 1

Method

Participants. Participants were 90 students of University of Social Sciences and Humanities (69 women, 19 men, 2 failed to report their gender) ranging in age from 19 to 26 ($M = 19.64$; $SD = 1.19$).

Design and Procedure. They were asked to participate in the study focused on how future psychologists form interpersonal impressions, and were asked to form impression of another person based on the psychological test filled in by that person. Participants received a copy of the Social Value Orientation Scale by Van Lange (1999), presumably already filled in by someone else in a way that demonstrated either the prosocial, individualistic, or competitive orientation of the person participants were asked to evaluate. Each participant was randomly assigned one copy with either (1) 7 out of 9 cooperative choices, or (2) 7 competitive choices, or (3) 7 individualistic choices.

They were asked to read carefully the instruction and answers given by another person, and to evaluate agency and communion of the person who filled in SVO scale (and answer some filler questions regarding other characteristics of that person, for example age).

Finally, they were thanked, debriefed, and told that they would be informed on the results of the study later on (they were in fact informed about the results two weeks later).

Dependent Variables. Participants were presented with a list of 30 positive traits, 15 agentic (e.g. being consequent, strong-willed, ambitious) and 15 communal (e.g. being friendly, helpful, sensitive to the needs of others) as proposed by Wojciszke and Szlendak (2010). Participants were asked to evaluate the extent to which the target person can be described using each trait on a 7-point scales ranging from 1 (definitely not) to 7 (definitely yes). Values for each 15-trait set were averaged to create indices for perceived agency ($\alpha = .92$) and for perceived communion ($\alpha = .98$).

Results

A 3 (competitive vs individualistic vs cooperative) \times 2 (agency vs communion) ANOVA with repeated measurement on the last factor showed significant main effects of both orientation, $F(1, 87) = 9.22, p < .001, \eta^2 = .18$, and dimension, $F(1, 87) = 7.51, p < .001, \eta^2 = .08$. Importantly, both effects were qualified by a significant and strong interaction effect of orientation and dimension, $F(1, 87) = 34.18, p < .001, \eta^2 = 0.44$. As illustrated in Figure 1, persons revealing prosocial orientation were perceived as significantly less competent ($M = 3.89$) than competitive ($M = 4.96; p < .001$) and individualistic persons ($M = 4.72; p < .01$), with no significant differences between last two conditions. On the other hand, prosocial individuals were perceived as significantly more communal ($M = 5.49$) than persons declaring individualistic ($M = 3.75; p < .001$), and competitive orientation ($M = 2.80; p < .001$). Revealing individualistic orientation also resulted in being perceived as more communal in comparison to revealing competitive orientation ($p < .01$). Moreover, revealing high levels of prosocial orientation resulted in being perceived significantly more communal ($M = 5.49$) than agentic ($M = 3.89; p < .001$), whereas revealing high levels of competitive orientation resulted in being perceived as more agentic ($M = 4.96$) than communal ($M = 2.80; p < .001$), and the same effect was observed for revealing individualistic orientation ($M = 4.72$ and $M = 3.75$ respectively; $p < .001$).

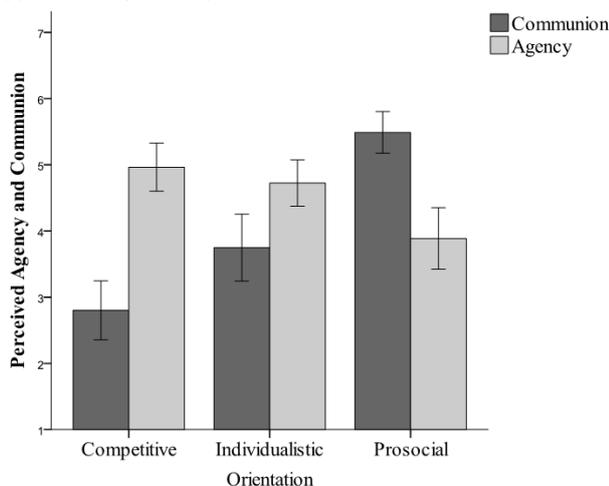
Discussion

As expected, the results of the study showed that revealing prosocial orientation is perceived as more communal than revealing competitive or individualistic orientation, in line with predictions of self- versus other-interests model (Cislak & Wojciszke, 2008). Much less trivial finding, also predicted by the same model, was the lower perceived agency of those who revealed prosocial orientation. While cooperation is perceived as communal,

competition is competent. Additionally, the results showed that persons revealing individualistic orientation (interested only in self-interest, regardless of interest of others) are in fact perceived as agentic to the same extent as competitive persons, but more so than prosocial. These results complement theorizing and results of empirical research regarding social value orientations (Van Lange, 1999; De Cremer & Van Lange, 2001). People revealing individualistic and competitive orientations assign similar weight to outcomes for self (Van Lange, 1999), and according to the results presented here, they are perceived as agentic to the same extent. On the other hand, people revealing competitive orientation attach more (negative) weight to the outcomes for others, and are also perceived as less communal than individualistic persons. Summing it up, these results are in line with the Hypotheses 1 and 2.

In study 2, a different manipulation of cooperative and competitive/confrontational tendencies was used. This time participants were asked to read the descriptions of actions that the target person planned in an organizational conflict. Importantly, also the potential consequences of revealing preference for cooperation versus competition for the perception in the workplace context were probed.

Figure 1. Perceived Communion and Agency Depending on Dominating Social Value Orientation



Study 2

Method

Participants. Participants were 62 adults, all employed at the time of the study (35 women), ranging in age from 19 to 60 ($M = 35$; $SD = 9.57$). They were recruited at their workplace and asked to fill the questionnaire at their convenience.

Design and Procedure. Participants were asked to take part in the study on social perception. Firstly, participants were asked to read the short vignette describing the person (male) planning his future actions regarding the international team meeting. This person was described in the materials as Adam, an employee of an international

company, who had been preparing for the meeting on the next year corporate budget proposal. According to this proposal, the Polish branch's budget was supposed to be cut by 50%, although the budget of the German branch was supposed to remain the same as last year. Adam was collecting information on all the successes and losses of both branches in order to be prepared for the European branches' meeting. Participants were randomly assigned to one of the two conditions. In the cooperative condition, Adam planned to explain the position of the Polish branch and listen to the other side, to search for the solution that would be satisfactory for all parties, to propose concessions and indicate what he wanted the other side to concede, to calm the others down and convince them that the situation was not as bad as it seemed. In a confrontational condition, Adam planned to oppose all of the proposals of the other side, criticize all the actions, to act as if he was never giving in, in order to discourage others, and to spread negative information about the other branch. Both cooperative and confrontational strategies were based on the strategies featured in Conflict Resolution Strategies Questionnaire by Agnieszka Golec (as described in Golec & Federico, 2004).

After reading the description participants were asked to evaluate to what extent Adam's behavior was confrontational and cooperative, to assess Adam's agency and communion, and to evaluate the extent, to which they would like him to be their boss or their subordinate employee. They were then thanked, and debriefed, they also received information they might inquire about the results of the study in a few weeks by e-mail.

Control and Dependent Variables. Firstly, participants were asked to evaluate the extent to which the attitude of target persons is cooperative and confrontational, and the extent to which his behavior is cooperative and competitive on 7-point scales ranging from 1 (definitely not) to 7 (definitely yes). Values for each pair of questions were averaged to create indices for perceived cooperation ($\alpha = .98$) and perceived competition ($\alpha = .93$).

Then, participants were asked to evaluate the extent to which they would like the target person to be their supervisor and the extent to which they would like the target person to be their subordinate (Heilman & Okimoto, 2007) using 7-point scales ranging from 1 (definitely not) to 7 (definitely yes).

Finally, participants were asked to evaluate the extent to which the target person can be described using each of 14 positive traits, 7 agentic (e.g. being intelligent, active, persistent, competent, $\alpha = .81$) and 7 communal (e.g. being friendly, honest, sincere, supportive, $\alpha = .96$) on 7-point scales ranging from 1 (definitely not) to 7 (definitely yes).

Results

Manipulation Check. The results of ANOVA showed the behavior of the target person, and the target himself were perceived as cooperative to a high extent, when he used cooperative strategies, and not cooperative when he used confrontational strategies, $F(1,62) = 281.03$,

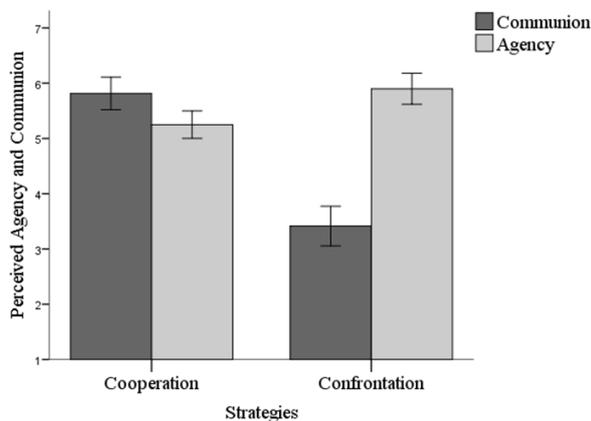
$p < .001$. On the other hand, when he used confrontational strategies, he was perceived as very competitive, and not confrontational when he used cooperative strategies, $F(1,62) = 283.16, p < .001$ (Table 1).

Table 1. Perceived cooperation and competition depending on the strategies of conflict resolution

| | Perceived Cooperation Mean (SD) | Perceived Competition Mean (SD) |
|----------------------|---------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| Cooperative Strategy | 6.20 (.57) | 2.20 (1.02) |
| Competitive Strategy | 1.91 (.93) | 6.50 (.65) |

Perceived Agency and Communion. A 2 (strategy: confrontational vs cooperative) x 2 (dimension: agency vs communion) ANOVA with repeated measurement on the last factor showed significant main effects of both strategy, $F(1, 60) = 30.63, p < .001, \eta^2 = 0.34$, and dimension, $F(1, 60) = 47.25, p < .001, \eta^2 = .44$. Again, these effects were qualified by a significant and strong interaction effect of strategy and dimension, $F(1, 60) = 119.66, p < .001, \eta^2 = .67$. As illustrated in Figure 2, persons using cooperative strategies were perceived as significantly less agentic ($M = 5.25$) than those who used confrontational strategies ($M = 5.90; p = .001$), but they were also perceived as significantly more communal ($M = 5.81$) than those who used confrontational strategies ($M = 3.42; p < .001$). Moreover, using cooperative strategies lead to being perceived as significantly more communal than agentic ($p < .01$), but using confrontational strategies resulted in being perceived as significantly more agentic than communal ($p < .001$).

Figure 2. Perceived Communion and Agency Depending on Preference for Strategies of Conflict Resolution

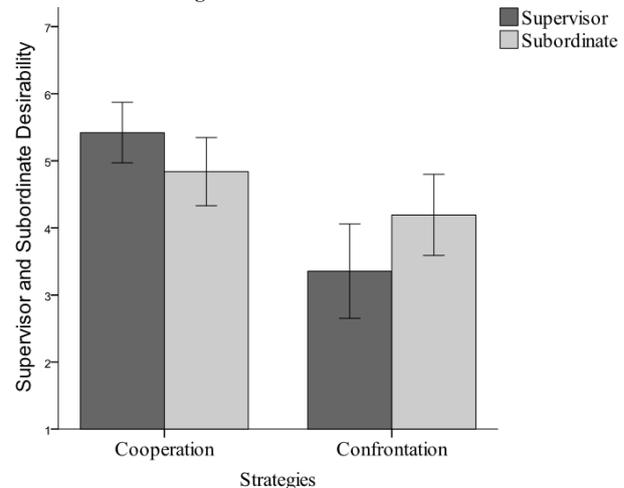


Supervisor and Subordinate Desirability.

A 2 (strategy: confrontational vs cooperative) x 2 (role: subordinate vs supervisor) ANOVA with repeated measurement on the last factor showed significant main

effects of strategy, $F(1, 60) = 17.00, p < .001, \eta^2 = .22$, and no significant main effect of role, $F(1, 60) = .29, p > .1$. Again, there was a significant interaction effect of strategy and role, $F(1, 60) = 8.77, p < .001, \eta^2 = .13$. As illustrated in Figure 3, participants would want persons using confrontational strategies to be their subordinates ($M = 4.19$) rather than their supervisors ($M = 3.36; p < .05$). At the same time, they tended to prefer cooperative persons as their bosses ($M = 5.42$) than their employees ($M = 4.84; p < .1$). They also strongly preferred cooperative than confrontational bosses ($p < .01$), although there were no differences between the cooperative and confrontational employee.

Figure 3. Supervisor and Subordinate Desirability Depending on his Preference for Strategies of Conflict Resolution



These results show that in line with the predictions, the desire to have a confrontational subordinate is in fact higher than the desire to have a confrontational boss, and the other way round for the cooperative person. However, although there were differences in the perception of cooperative and confrontational boss, there were no expected differences in the case of a subordinate. The absence of hypothesized correlation between two variables may suggest that this relation is controlled by a third variable (MacKinnon, Krull, & Lockwood, 2000; Cichocka & Bilewicz, 2010). In the case of a subordinate person, strategies in the conflict may be a more ambiguous signal than in the case of a boss (Overbeck, Tiedens, & Brion, 2006), and therefore it may lead to opposing perceptual processes that result in the absence of a direct effect, with nevertheless significant indirect effects.

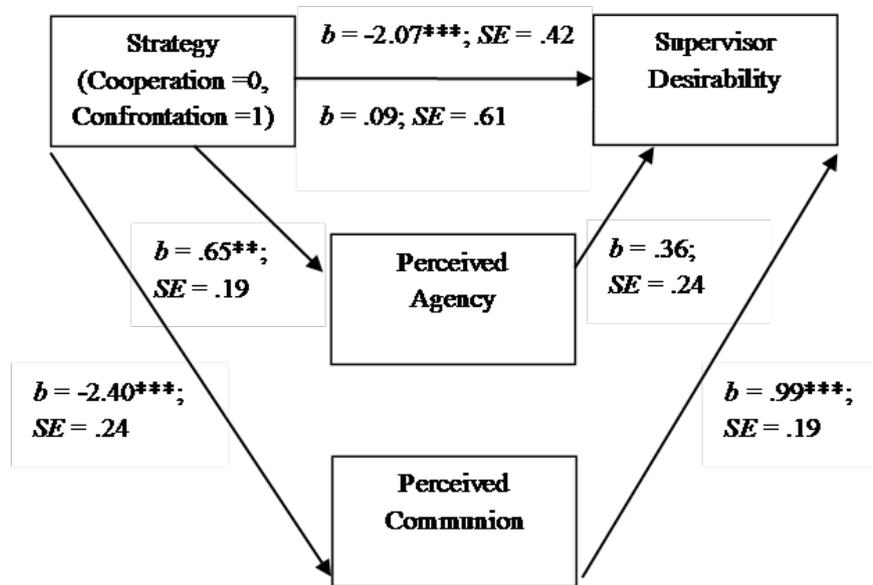
Mediation and Suppression Analyses. To test this idea, Hayes's (2012) bootstrapping computational procedure was used to compute 95% confidence intervals (with 5,000 re-samples in each case) that allows to analyze indirect effects of perceived agency and communion. Two models were tested, with strategies as an independent variable (cooperation = 0, competition = 1), and evaluation in the role of a supervisor and in the role of a subordinate as two dependent variables.

The first model, with supervisor desirability as a dependent variable was significant, $F(3, 58) = 22.69$; $p < .001$, $R^2 = .54$. As illustrated in Figure 4, being confrontational (in contrast to being cooperative) significantly enhanced perceived agency, but at the same time, it decreased perceived communion. However as expected, only perceived communion was a significant predictor of supervisor's evaluation, and therefore only communion was a significant mediator of strategies effect on supervisor's evaluation (point estimate = -2.39, 95% CI = -3.4717 to -1.4324). Perceived agency on the other hand, did not mediate strategies effect on supervisor's evaluation (point estimate = 0.23, 95% CI = -0.0047 to 0.6149). Together these results show that although confronting others increases perceived agency and decreases perceived communion, only perceived communion matters in the

evaluation of the superiors, and that is why the total effect of strategies on superior's evaluation is negative.

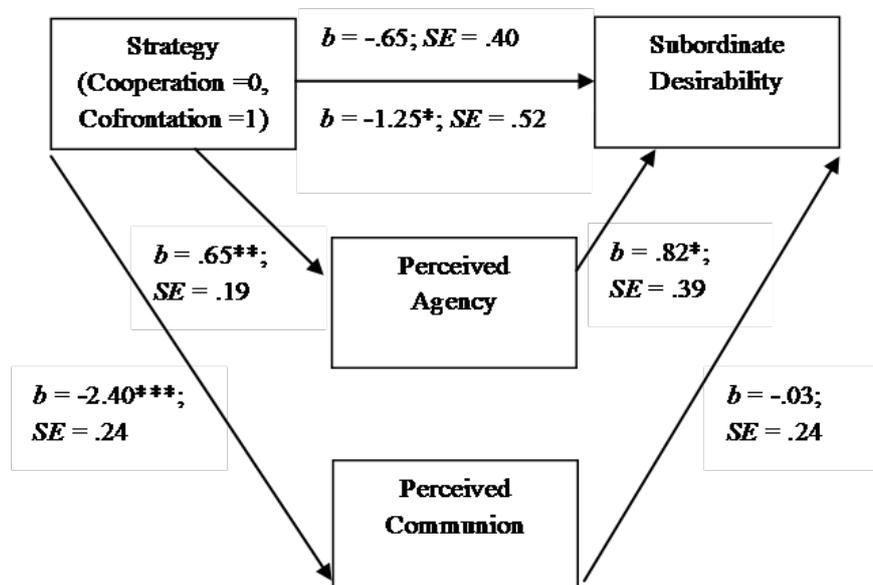
The second model, with subordinate desirability as a dependent variable was also significant, $F(3, 58) = 2.85$; $p < .05$, $R^2 = .19$ ¹. As illustrated in the Figure 5, when indirect effects of perceived agency and perceived communion were controlled for, the direct effect of strategy on subordinate's evaluation became significant and negative. However, only agency suppressed the effect of strategies on subordinate's evaluation (point estimate = 0.54, 95% CI = .0718 to 1.2879), but not communion (point estimate = 0.07, 95% CI = -1.0074 to 1.1754). Together these results indicate that being confrontational (in contrast to being cooperative) makes an impression of being agentic, but when the perceived agency is controlled for, the direct effect is negative, and it cannot be explained by low perceived communion.

Figure 4. Direct and Indirect Effects of Strategies in Conflict on Supervisor Desirability



Note. + $p < 0.1$; * $p < 0.05$; ** $p < 0.01$; *** $p < 0.001$

Figure 5. Direct and Indirect Effects of Strategies in Conflict on Subordinate Desirability



Note. + $p < 0.1$; * $p < 0.05$; ** $p < 0.01$; *** $p < 0.001$

¹ Due to a multivariate outlier, heteroscedasticity-consistent standard errors were used to fit this model.

General Discussion

The line of studies presented here aimed at verifying the hypotheses regarding the impact of attitudes toward resolving social conflict on perception of agency and communion. Based on the double interest model of perception, it was predicted that cooperation enhances perceived communion, but decreases perceived agency in comparison to competition or confrontation. The results of two experiments, using two different manipulations and slightly different measures supported these predictions showing that competition is perceived as competent (although not communal).

The results also showed that being confrontational is differently evaluated when one is in the lower position rather than in the powerful position. Based on theories of effects of social power and previous results indicating that power activates agency dimension in social perception, it was hypothesized that revealing confrontational tendencies leads to more favorable evaluation in case of the subordinates than supervisors, and the other way round for revealing cooperative tendencies. The results showed that confronting others in comparison to cooperating with others at the same time increases perceived agency and decreases perceived communion. However, in workplace context people seem to focus on only one of these two dimensions in forming interpersonal evaluations: communal dimension influences boss desirability, while agentic dimension influences subordinate desirability, and not the other way round, in line with more general tendency of the powerful to treat others instrumentally. The psychological processes behind the effects of strategy in conflict on evaluation of superiors and subordinates are nevertheless more complex. In the case of supervisors, the total effect of confrontation on evaluation is negative, because only the (un)communal aspect of confronting others is taken into account, while agentic aspect is left out. In the case of subordinates on the other hand, agentic aspect suppresses the otherwise negative effect on evaluation, which cannot be explained in the same way as in the case of supervisors, by lack of communion ascribed to those revealing confrontational tendencies. The results indicate that there may be some other factor, that was not taken into account in the analyses presented here, producing opposite effect to perceived agency. We may speculate that a confrontational employee may eventually confront the boss him- or herself, and compete over power with her or him. Although the bosses may ignore the lack of communion, they cannot ignore a threat to their own position. This hypothesis however needs further research.

It should be noted that participants were asked for their interpersonal impressions of persons who had either cooperated or confronted others in the context of the Polish-German intergroup conflict. Defensive outgroup confrontation is a functional survival strategy sustained and promoted by physiological processes like oxytocin secretion (De Dreu *et al.*, 2010), and in that specific context cooperating with outgroup members might have been perceived as compliance and therefore negatively evaluated, while confronting outgroup members might have

been perceived as justified defense and positively evaluated. Therefore future research should also probe the possible moderating role of context in the impact of strategies on interpersonal evaluations.

Together these results show that cooperation and confrontation may instigate ambiguous associations, and the general evaluation of individuals pursuing certain strategy depends highly on the context (i.e. cooperating with others may be perceived positively in the case of a boss, but less positively in the case of an employee). On the one hand, cooperation is perceived as reflecting communion, on the other hand confrontation is interpreted as reflecting agency. Revealing confrontational tendencies brings about unequivocally negative reactions, when social context promotes focusing on communal content, for example due to the higher position of the target person. On the other hand, confronting others may bring higher social profits for these in lower positions, although they in fact may be less prone to confront others (Cislak, 2013b).

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