

**ANNI TAMM**

Conflicts and their management in  
early childhood and adolescence





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early childhood and adolescence

Department of Psychology, University of Tartu, Estonia

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## LIST OF ORIGINAL PUBLICATIONS

- I Tamm, A., Tõugu, P., & Tulviste, T. (2014). The influence of individual and situational factors on children's choice of a conflict management strategy. *Early Education and Development, 25*, 93–109.
- II Tulviste, T., & Tamm, A. (2014). Value priorities of early adolescents. *Journal of Adolescence, 37*, 525–529.
- III Tamm, A. & Tulviste, T. (2015). The role of gender, values, and culture in adolescent bystanders' strategies. *Journal of Interpersonal Violence, 30*, 384–399.
- IV Tamm, A., Urm, A., & Tulviste, T. (2015). Resolving different types of conflicts: Adolescents' strategies and reasons behind these strategies. Submitted for publication.
- V Tamm, A., Kasearu, K., Tulviste, T., Trommsdorff, G., & Saralieva, Z. Kh.-M. (2015). Helping parents with chores or going out with friends: Cultural differences in adolescents' responses to parent-child disagreement. Submitted for publication.
- VI Tamm, A., Kasearu, K., & Tulviste, T. (2014). The role of family in adolescents' peer acceptance. *Personal Relationships, 21*, 420–432.

### Contribution of the author:

For each study, I formulated the research questions and analysed the data.

For **Study IV**, I created the hypothetical conflict scenarios. For **Studies II** and **IV**, I participated in data collection. For **Studies I, III, IV**, and **V**, I developed the coding scheme and coded all the participants' responses.

As the first author, I wrote the first draft of the article and was responsible for the final version. In **Study II**, I was the second author and did not thus lead the writing process.

# INTRODUCTION

Preschool and adolescence are important periods in children's social development and adjustment. During these periods, significant changes take place in children's interpersonal relationships, and more complex social skills are needed for successful interactions with others. Research on children's social relationships has typically examined the quality of those relationships and also conflictual interactions (Dunn, Slomkowski, Donelan, & Herrera, 1995; Laursen & Williams, 1997; Steinberg, 2001). The ability to manage conflicts – situations in which our goals are incompatible with or oppose those of others (Laursen & Hafen, 2010) – effectively is critical for better social and psychological adjustment. This thesis examines the relative importance of individual and situational characteristics for children's and adolescents' conflict management strategies. As conflicts occur within social relationships, their nature and management is affected by the relationship characteristics (Laursen, 1995). Adolescents' relationships with parents and peers in general are thus also examined and discussed.

It is important to emphasize that conflict is not necessarily negative. Due to peers being relatively equal in terms of power, peer conflict offers more opportunities for negotiation than parent-child conflict, and thus facilitates social cognitive development (Piaget, 1932). Parent-child conflict has been claimed to promote adolescents' independence (Smetana, 1989). The kind of impact that conflict has on its counterparts largely depends on how it is managed. By using broad categories, one can distinguish between three types of strategies: (1) prosocial, which are oriented to finding a mutually satisfying solution (e.g. compromise), (2) self-assertive, which are oriented to only individual interests, and (3) avoidance, which are oriented to avoiding conflict by withdrawal or submission.

## Individual factors

Among individual factors, age, behavioural problems, gender, and cultural background are likely to be important for children's and adolescents' relationships and conflict management strategies.

**Age.** Studies included in this thesis are carried out among preschool-aged children and among early and middle adolescents. As children enter kindergarten, they start having contacts with a large group of peers outside their family and forming friendships that set the stage for later close relationships with age-mates (Gifford-Smith & Brownell, 2003). During adolescence, serious transformations take place in adolescents' family and peer relationships with peers and being accepted among them becomes increasingly important (Collins & Laursen, 2004; Steinberg & Silk, 2002). Whilst parental advice is valued for long-term issues (e.g. career choice), peers become more important in terms of support and matters of taste and style (De Goede, Branje, & Meeus, 2009a,

2009b; Furman & Buhrmester, 1992; Smetana, Campione-Barr, & Metzger, 2006).

Although relationships with peers and parents are kept apart, they are not independent of each other. Hartup's (1979, 1980) and Bowlby's (1973) theories state that on the basis of their relationships with parents, children develop expectations and assumptions about interactions and relationships with other people. According to social learning theory, behaviour learnt in one relationship can be generalized to another relationship (Bandura, 1977). Longitudinal studies show indeed that, for instance, mothers' and siblings' behaviour in conflict situations influences the way young children manage conflicts with peers (Dunn & Herrera, 1997; Herrera & Dunn, 1997). By late adolescence, there is an equal mutual influence between teens' relationships with parents and friends – both positive (i.e. support) and negative characteristics (i.e. conflict) of one type of relationship are carried over to another type of relationship (De Goede, Branje, Delsing, & Meeus, 2009). Few studies have, however, examined how other features of the family environment relate to children's success in the peer group. As Hartup (1979) notes, we should not focus only on the parent-child relationship and underestimate the role of other social systems within the family. **Study VI** extends previous research by examining the relative importance of the quality of adolescents' relationships with parents and grandparents, maternal parenting behaviour, the structure of the family, the number of siblings, and adolescents' own attachment style for their perceived peer acceptance.

Peer acceptance is associated with prosocial behaviour, such as cooperation and sharing (Gifford-Smith & Brownell, 2003). Thus, children with better conflict management skills are also likely to be more successful in the peer group as well as in dyadic peer relationships (Noakes & Rinaldi, 2006). When comparing preschoolers and adolescents, significant differences in their conflicts can be pointed out. With age, peer conflicts over object struggles decrease and conflicts over relationship issues increase in frequency (Adams & Laursen, 2001; Chen, Fein, Killen, & Tam, 2001; Laursen, 1995). Conflicts with friends tend to become less frequent as children grow older; within the parent-child relationship, there might be a slight increase in the incidence of conflict during adolescence (De Goede et al., 2009; Furman & Buhrmester, 1992). It is also well established that with age conflict management strategies improve along with social cognitive abilities (Dunn & Herrera, 1997). Moreover, experience that children gain through interacting with peers is likely to have a positive effect on their social skills (Piaget, 1932). Compared with younger children, adolescents tend to use less coercion and more negotiation (Laursen, 1993; Laursen, Finkelstein, & Betts, 2001; Noakes & Rinaldi, 2006). The use of prosocial strategies also tends to increase from early to middle adolescence (Yu, Branje, & Keijsers, 2014). Some studies indicate that significant differences are observable among 2-, 3-, and 4-year-olds' conflict management skills as well (Chen et al., 2001), whereas others suggest that children aged 3 to 5 are rather similar in that sense (Baumgartner & Strayer,



2008). **Study I** examines differences between 3-, 4-, and 5-year-olds' conflict management strategies.

**Behavioural problems.** The way children interpret the social situation clearly affects the way they respond to other people (Crick & Dodge, 1994). Aggressively behaving children and adolescents have been found to use aggressive strategies for resolving conflicts possibly due to their deficient processing of social information (Akhtar & Bradley, 1991; Keltikangas-Järvinen, 2001; Malik, Balda, & Punia, 2006; Pakaslahti, 2000; Webster-Stratton & Woolley Lindsay, 1999; Zucchetti, Ortega, Scholte, & Rabaglietti, 2014). For instance, aggressively behaving children tend to attribute more hostile intent to others and choose more aggressive goals than non-aggressively behaving children. Aggressive behaviour is strongly linked to peer rejection, which, in turn, can increase aggressive behaviour (Dodge, Lansford, Burks, Bates, Pettit, Fontaine, & Price, 2003; Gifford-Smith and Brownell, 2003). Early identification of at-risk children and interventions are thus extremely important. **Study I** addresses the question whether tendencies to manage conflicts aggressively are observable among preschool-aged children with behavioural problems that involve not only aggressive but also rebellious behaviour.

**Gender.** Studies on parent-child relationships have found that there are closer relationships between mothers and children (Georgas, Berry, van de Vijver, Kagıçibaşı, & Poortinga, 2006) and in same-gender parent-child dyads (Starrels, 1994; Steinberg & Silk, 2002). Some authors suggest that boys are socialized to be independent and achievement-oriented, whereas girls to be relationship-oriented and compliant (Hill & Lynch, 1983). These parental expectations are likely to be reflected in girls' and boys' conflicts with parents. Allison and Schultz (2004) found indeed that adolescent girls had conflicts with parents over their autonomy more frequently than boys. Boys, on the other hand, reported having conflicts over homework and good grades more frequently than girls. Conflicts between parents and daughters tended to be more intense, which might mean that they are also managed differently (Allison & Schultz, 2004).

In accordance with the findings on parents' socialization values, some studies have found that girls are more prosocial and less aggressive than boys (Baillargeon et al., 2007; Zimmer-Gembeck, Geiger, & Crick, 2005). Clear differences exist in boys' and girls' peer relationships, which more frequently involve children and adolescents of the same gender (Rose & Rudolph, 2006). Compared with girls, boys tend to engage in more rough-and-tumble play (Boulton, 1996), which can lead to real fighting (Smith, Hunter, Carvalho, & Costabile, 1992). Moreover, boys' same-gender interactions involve more dominance, competition, and conflict (De Goede, Branje, & Meeus, 2009; Tulviste & Koor, 2005; Maccoby, 1990).

Hall's (2011) meta-analysis further showed that while boys and girls have similar expectations about loyalty and trustworthiness in their same-gender friendships, girls expect higher levels of emotional availability and self-disclosure than boys. For boys, potential benefits of friends are more important

than for girls (Hall, 2011). Boys also interact in larger groups, and all their friends tend to be friends with one another (Rose & Rudolph, 2006). The reason why girls report more jealousy in their friendships (Deutz, Lansu, & Cillessen, 2015) might be due to the dyadic nature of their peer interactions.

The question is whether these differences in peer relationships are reflected in boys' and girls' conflict management strategies. The existing studies do not provide a straightforward answer. Some studies show that girls are indeed more prosocial and solve conflicts in a way that would not damage their friendships (Black, 2000; de Wied, Branje, & Meeus, 2007; Owens, Daly, & Slee, 2005; Tezer & Demir, 2011; Walker, Irving, & Berthelsen, 2002). Moreover, girls' greater empathy towards peers in distress (Rose & Rudolph, 2006) is likely to reflect in their helping behaviour during bullying incidents (Pozzoli & Gini, 2013; Salmivalli, Lagerspetz, Björkqvist, Österman, & Kaukiainen, 1996; Trach, Hymel, Waterhouse, & Neale, 2010).

Studies about friendship expectations suggest that violations of trustworthiness and emotional availability are more detrimental to girls' friendships (Hall, 2011). This would be in accordance with the findings that girls' friendships last for a shorter time than those of boys (Benenson & Christakos, 2003; Johnson, 2004). MacAvoy and Asher (2012), on the contrary, found that although girls were more bothered by transgressions of friendship expectations, they did not suggest more aggressive strategies than boys. Instead, they were more oriented to maintaining the friendship. Furthermore, there are findings that male participants claimed using more accommodating behaviour during conflicts and being more likely to intervene in bullying than girls (Chaux, 2005; Lodge & Frydenberg, 2005; Tezer & Demir, 2001).

The present thesis examines gender differences in various conflict situations to reveal the degree to which boys' and girls' strategies differ. Are girls more oriented to joint interests and boys to individual interests regardless of their age and the type of conflict? For a deeper understanding of boys' and girls' goals during conflict situations, **Study IV** examines their reasons behind strategies.

**Cultural background and values.** Adolescence is a period of intensive identity development, which includes exploration of values provided by different socializers and finally commitment to those seeming to be most important (Erikson, 1968; Meeus, 1996). The norms prevalent in the particular cultural context strongly shape which values individuals become to consider important (Markus & Kitayama, 1991). This thesis includes adolescents from three countries – Estonia, Germany, and Russia – and from the two main cultural groups in Estonia – ethnic Estonians and the Russian-speaking minority. The main questions are how similar or different are conflict management strategies of adolescents with different cultural background and to what degree their values predict their strategies.

One of the most popular ways of describing values at the national level has been the individualism-collectivism framework. Individualism is best defined as the extent to which one's personal uniqueness and independence is valued, and collectivism is defined as the extent to which duty to one's in-group is valued

(Oyserman, Coon, & Kimmelmeier, 2002). USA and European countries have typically been described as high, whereas Asian, African, and Latin-American countries as low in individualism (Cooper, 1999). In Estonia and Germany, individualistic values are emphasized at the cultural level, whereas in Russia, individualistic values are less important (Hofstede, 2001). In cultures high in individualism, independent self-construal prevails (they prioritize uniqueness and independence from others) and in cultures high in collectivism, interdependent self-construal is more common (they prioritize connectedness among individuals; Markus & Kitayama, 1991). Kagitçibaşı's family-change theory (1996, 2013) distinguishes between three family models: (1) the model of interdependence, where family connectedness, conformity, and obedience are highly valued; (2) the model of independence, where child's self-enhancement and self-maximization are of high importance; and (3) the synthesis of the two previous models, where both autonomy (i.e. volitional agency) and relatedness (i.e. connectedness to others) are valued. Although due to urbanization and improved living conditions there is a general move towards adopting the third model, previous studies suggest that the cultural model of autonomy-relatedness is characteristic of Estonia, whereas Germans are more oriented to independence and Russians to interdependence (Durgel, Leyendecker, Yagmurlu, & Harwood, 2009; Friedlmeier, Schäfermeier, Vasconcellos, & Trommsdorff, 2008; Ispa, 2002; Kagitçibaşı, 2013; Realo & Allik, 1999; Tulviste, Mizera, & De Geer, 2012; Tulviste, Mizera, De Geer, & Tryggvason, 2007; Tõugu, Tulviste, Kasearu, & Talves, 2014; Tõugu, Tulviste, Schröder, Keller, & De Geer, 2011).

Significant differences have also been found among ethnic Estonians and Russian-speaking Estonians living in Estonia. Russian-Estonian adults have been found to value individualistic values less and collectivistic values more highly than ethnic Estonians (Realo & Allik, 1999; Tulviste, Mizera, & De Geer, 2012; Vihalemm & Kalmus, 2008). At the same time, Magun and Rudnev (2010) found that Russian-speaking adults in Estonia differed from 17 other European samples including Estonians by emphasizing self-enhancement values more and self-transcendence values less. Recent studies suggest that there are more differences in the value priorities of Estonians and Russian Estonians among 15- to 20-year-olds than among older individuals (Tulviste, Konstabel, & Tulviste, 2014). There are, however, also opposite findings that differences in Estonian and Russian-Estonian adolescents' value priorities are not as considerable as in the case of youth or adults (Vihalemm & Kalmus, 2008). The same has been observed in other countries – values held by children of immigrants tend to differ from those of their peers in the host country less than their parents' values differ from those of non-immigrant parents (Knafo & Schwartz, 2001; Phinney, Ong, & Madden, 2000; Stewart, Bond, Deeds, & Chung, 1999).

Peer relations are important in diverse cultural contexts, but links between peer relations and life satisfaction in adolescents have been found to be stronger in cultures where family values are emphasized (Diener & Diener, 1995;

Schwarz et al., 2012). The results of Deković, Engels, Shirai, Kort, and Anker (2002), however, indicated that Japanese adolescents perceived lower quality in their peer relationships than Dutch adolescents, but their expectations of autonomy development and well-being were more strongly associated with peer relations. Previous research suggests that individuals from cultures where collectivistic values prevail prefer equality and use more negotiation and compromise, whereas individuals from cultures where individualistic values are more important prefer to manage peer conflict with more assertive strategies, such as direct confrontation (Haar & Krahé, 1999; Martinez-Lozano, Sánchez-Medina, & Goudena, 2011; Oyserman et al., 2002).

Parent-child relationships also differ in some respects among individuals with different cultural backgrounds. In cultural contexts where family values are emphasized, close family relations are more important (Claes, 1998; Kagitçibaşı, 2012). Nevertheless, adolescents might disclose less to their parents in cultures where hierarchical nature and well-defined roles describe family relationships (Cooper, 1999; Trommsdorff & Schwarz, 2007; Wink, Gao, Jones, & Ghao, 1997; Yau, Tasopoulos-Chan, Smetana, 2009). There is some evidence of the existence of such hierarchical parent-child relations in Russia (Ispa, 1994; Hart, Nelson, Robinson, Olsen, & McNeilly-Choque, 1998). As to managing parent-child conflict, adolescents and youth who consider interdependence important are likely to be more considerate towards others during conflicts than their peers who value interdependence less (Phinney, Kim-Jo, Osorio, & Vilhjálmsdóttir, 2005; Sugimura, Yamazaki, Phinney, & Takeo, 2009).

### **Situational factors**

Along with individual factors, the role of situation-related variables, such as who is the conflict partner and what is the cause of conflict must be taken into account.

**Conflict partner.** The present thesis includes studies examining conflicts of preschoolers and adolescents within different types of relationships. It is thus important to acknowledge how the type of relationship that children have with their conflict partner can influence their strategies. Previous studies show that parent-child conflicts often concern children's autonomy and responsibilities, whereas peer conflicts are frequently over relationship issues (Adams & Laursen, 2001; Laursen, 1995). Differences in conflict topics do not, however, fully explain why conflicts with parents and peers are managed differently (Adams & Laursen, 2001). Homans' (1958) social exchange theory has been applied to research about interpersonal conflicts (e.g. Jensen-Campbell & Graziano, 2000) to clarify why conflicts with different people are solved differently. According to the theory, there are two important dimensions of relationships: closeness (i.e. whether individuals are interdependent) and openness (i.e. whether the relationship is voluntary). Within relationships that are close and open (e.g. friendship), individuals are likely to try to avoid the conflict or

manage it in a prosocial way in order to save their emotional investments in the closeness of the relationship and not to give the other person a reason to end the relationship. Relationships that are close but not open (i.e. between family members) are obligatory and cannot be ended so easily. Thus, although individuals love their family members, they can use self-assertive conflict management strategies without having to worry that this would lead to the dissolution of the relationship. Several studies provide support for the theory. For example, the meta-analysis by Laursen et al. (2001) showed that conflicts with friends were managed through negotiation more frequently than conflicts with acquaintances. Moreover, it has been found that adolescents from different cultures tend to assert themselves within parent-child conflicts (Chen-Gardini, 2012; Parkin & Kuczynski, 2012; Phinney et al., 2005; Smetana, Daddis, & Chuang, 2003; Sugimura et al., 2009; Yau & Smetana, 2003).

As children and adolescents interact with same-gender peers more frequently than with opposite-gender peers (Rose & Rudolph, 2006), conflicts with same-gender peers are likely to be more common and managed differently from conflicts with opposite-gender peers. Previous studies have reported mixed findings about whether and how conflict behaviour of young children differs with male and female peers (Green, Cillessen, Recheis, Patterson, & Hughes, 2008; Rubin & Krasnor, 1983; Walker et al., 2002; Westlund, Horowitz, Jansson, & Ljunberg, 2008). Do preschoolers change their behaviour when interacting with same-gender and opposite-gender peers? **Study I** addresses this question by examining how the gender of a conflict partner relates to conflict management strategies of preschool-aged children.

**Study I** also examines how the two conflict parties influence each other's behaviour. Research on this matter is scarce. The few existing studies suggest that children and adolescents tend to use more aggressive strategies as a response to their conflict partner's aggressive behaviour (Thornberg, 2006; Keltikangas-Järvinen, 2001).

**Type of conflict.** People encounter various conflicts in their everyday lives. This poses a question about the importance of the type of conflict for the conflict management strategies of young children and adolescents. Which situations trigger more self-assertive responses? One can distinguish between moral (i.e. individuals' rights, justice, and welfare), conventional (i.e. social expectations, rules, and norms), prudential (i.e. individual's own safety, harm to the self, and health), and personal issues (which affect only the actor; Nucci & Turiel, 1978; Smetana, 2006). Conflict situations that involve intentional physical or psychological harm can be considered most severe as most serious – moral rules – have been violated (Smetana, Crean, & Campione-Barr, 2005). As children grow older, they are better able to differentiate between minor and more severe conflicts (Selman, 1980). Compared with mild conflicts, severe conflicts are experienced less frequently (Laursen, 1995), but children and adolescents can be expected to manage them more frequently by using self-assertion. Walker et al. (2002) found that most preschoolers appealed to

authority in situations where the intentions of another child were unclear, whereas they used directives in intentional provocation situations.

In addition to the severity, conflicts differ in terms of how important their issues are in the long run. Adolescents' goals during conflicts are likely to be more important when the issue in question is strongly linked to the normative developmental tasks (Rose & Asher, 1999; Strough & Keener, 2014). For instance, due to the fact that achievement of independence and autonomy is important during adolescence, teens probably consider conflict situations where their autonomy is threatened of high importance and intensity (Allison & Schultz, 2004; Laursen, 1995), and they might use self-assertion for managing such conflicts. Within the parent-child relationships, adolescents have indeed been found to be more self-assertive over important and long-term issues than over minor everyday disputes (Phinney et al., 2005; Smetana, 1995).

### **Aims of the dissertation**

This thesis examines how children and adolescents manage various conflict situations within different types of relationships. What is the relative role of individual and situational factors in the conflict management strategies of children and adolescents? To provide a more nuanced picture of adolescents' conflict management, the thesis examines their reasons for suggesting a particular strategy. This is also expected to shed more light on the nature of gender and cultural differences in adolescents' conflict management approach.

As conflicts cannot be separated from the relationship they occur in, this thesis also examines linkages among adolescents' peer relations and various family-related variables, such as the quality of relationships and the structure of the family. What kind of family environment contributes to adolescents' higher acceptance by peers?

Interpersonal conflicts are most commonly examined by using observation or hypothetical conflict situations. The studies included in this thesis used both methods: observation among young children and hypothetical conflict situations among adolescents. It can be claimed that observations enable us to examine how children solve conflicts, whereas by hypothetical scenarios one can examine what children know and how they think about conflicts (Rubin & Krasnor, 1992). It is important to address both of these questions, though it has been found that with increasing age, the data collected with self-reports and observations become more comparable (Laursen et al., 2001). Observations do allow us, however, to examine better how conflict parties influence each other. Hypothetical conflicts, on the other hand, place all participants in exactly the same conflict situation, thus making their responses more comparable.

## METHOD

In **Study I**, the sample consisted of 69 3-to-5-year-old kindergarten children from Estonia. The mean age of participants was 48 months (*min* = 38 months, *max* = 62 months). Children's behavioural problems were assessed by their teachers by using the Estonian-language version (Tulviste & Rohner, 2010) of the TESC (Teachers' Evaluation of Students' Conduct; Rohner, 2005). To examine children's conflict management strategies, they were filmed for about 20 minutes whilst playing a freely chosen game in groups of three.

**Studies II, III, and IV** were part of a large longitudinal project, where a representative sample of students in Estonia (ethnic Estonians and Russian Estonians) were followed for three years – from the 7th to the 9th grade. Each year, students completed a series of measures on a computer. The size of the sample in **Studies II, III, and IV** varied depending on how many students completed the relevant questionnaires. 572 adolescents participated in **Study II**. They filled in the Portrait Values Questionnaire (Schwartz et al., 2001) in the 7th (mean age = 13.02) and the 8th grade (mean age = 14.04). The questionnaire assessed ten motivationally distinct value types that are ordered along two dimensions: Openness to Change (stimulation, self-direction, and hedonism) vs. Conservation (tradition and security) and Self-Enhancement (achievement, power, and hedonism) vs. Self-Transcendence (universalism and benevolence). **Study III** was carried out among 682 seventh-graders. They were shown a video of two boys throwing around a younger boy's schoolbag in the schoolyard and an adult female bystander talking on the phone nearby and not intervening. The participants were asked to indicate whether they would behave similarly or differently from the bystander in the video and to describe more specifically what they would do if, instead of the adult bystander, they witnessed such a conflict situation. The data collected with the Portrait Values Questionnaire were also used. The sample in **Study IV** included 905 students attending the 8th grade. They read four vignettes depicting different conflict situations with their same-gender best friend: having different tastes in music, having romantic feelings for the same boy/girl, disagreeing over whom one can be friends with (exclusivity of friendship), and finding out that a friend has talked negatively about them behind their backs (backbiting). Three questions followed each vignette: how would you behave in such a situation, why would you behave this way, and how often do such situations occur between you and your same-gender best friend.

**Studies V and VI** were part of the VOC-IR (The Value of Children and Intergenerational Relations) project. In **Study V**, the sample included 894 adolescents: 285 from Estonia, 282 from Germany, and 327 from Russia. The mean age of participants was 15.53. The interdependent self of adolescents was measured by the relevant subscale from the Self Construal Scale (Singelis, 1994), and their satisfaction with family and friendships with single-item measures. To examine their responses to the parent-child conflict, they were asked to imagine the following situation: you and your friends have decided to

spend the day together, but your parents want you to help them with chores. After reading the story, adolescents had to indicate what they would do in such a situation by ticking either “spend the day helping my parents” or “spend the day with my friends”. Additionally, they were asked to provide reasons for their decision. **Study VI** was conducted among 300 Estonian adolescents ( $M = 15.5$ ) and their mothers ( $M = 41.5$ ). Adolescents’ peer acceptance was measured by the peer subscale of the Mother Father Peer Scale (Epstein, 1983). The quality of adolescents’ relationships with their parents (mothers and fathers) and maternal grandparents (grandmothers and grandfathers) was measured using the subscales of intimacy, conflict, and admiration from the Network of Relationship Inventory (Furman & Buhrmester, 1985). Mothers’ parenting behaviour was assessed using a short version of Rohner’s Parental Acceptance-Rejection/Control Questionnaire (Sherman & Donovan, 1991). Adolescents’ attachment style was assessed by the Adult Attachment Scale (Collins & Read, 1990).



# RESULTS

## Study I

**Study I** examined the role of individual (gender, age, and behavioural problems) and situational factors (the type of conflict, partner's gender and partner's strategy) in the conflict management strategies of kindergarten children. The results showed that children had conflicts over object sharing, and arguing or decision making most frequently, and that nearly half of them used prosocial strategy most frequently for managing conflicts with peers. Although children who were rated as having fewer behavioural problems were less likely to be involved in conflicts, there were no differences in conflict management strategies of children with and without behavioural problems. Other individual factors – gender and age – had also no significant effect on children's strategies.

Situational factors, on the contrary, predicted children's strategies well. The number of conflicts was the greatest in girls' groups and the lowest in mixed-gender groups. Children did not use different strategies for managing conflicts with boys and girls, but their behaviour did vary depending on their conflict partner's behaviour. In general, children tended to respond aggressively to aggression, and prosocially to prosociality. With regard to the role of the type of conflict, children were more likely to use aggressive or avoidance rather than prosocial strategies for managing conflicts over object sharing. Aggressive strategies were also frequently used for conflicts over object acquisition and name calling.

## Study II

**Study II** examined Estonian and Russian-Estonian adolescents' value priorities longitudinally and compared these with the pan-cultural adult value hierarchy (see Schwartz & Bardi, 2001). Both groups considered hedonism and stimulation (7th and 8th in the pan-cultural hierarchy) values most important, whereas power, tradition, and conformity values least important. Benevolence, which tops the pan-cultural value hierarchy, shared the 3–4th places with self-direction.

During both measurements, boys considered power and conformity more and benevolence less important than girls. For Russian-Estonian adolescents, hedonism was more important than for their Estonian peers. Estonian adolescents placed more importance on benevolence and security than Russian-Estonian adolescents. The importance of self-direction and universalism increased, whereas the importance of security decreased in importance during a one-year period. More changes were observable in Russian-Estonian adolescents' value priorities than in those of Estonians.

### Study III

**Study III** focused on adolescent bystanders' strategies for intervening in the bullying-like situation. The study examined how adolescents' gender, values, and cultural background relate to their suggested strategies. Only 10% of participants said that they would not intervene. Open-ended answers revealed that one reason for not intervening was the fear of becoming the next victim (e.g. *I would just be afraid that they'd do the same with me; Again, I wouldn't dare to intervene, otherwise I might be the next victim.*). Among adolescents who expressed willingness to intervene, the most frequently proposed actions were "go and help" and talking to the aggressors.

Boys and girls were equally willing to intervene. A few differences also emerged in their strategies for intervening. Girls were more likely than boys to suggest multiple strategies in their responses (e.g. *I'd at least go and try to forbid them to bully him, and tell them to give back his schoolbag. Or I'd go to the schoolhouse and tell the principal about the bullying.*).

Adolescents who valued conformity were less likely to suggest aggressive strategies. Doing nothing was more likely proposed by those valuing power and less likely by those valuing conformity. Estonian adolescents expressed higher willingness than their Russian-Estonian peers to intervene. At the same time, Estonian adolescents seemed to be more cautious and first wanted to find out what is going on (e.g. *I'd walk towards them whilst talking on the phone to find out whether they're playing or bullying.*).

### Study IV

**Study IV** examined how adolescents' strategies of managing hypothetical conflicts with their same-gender best friend and reasons behind these strategies vary depending on the type of conflict and adolescents' gender and cultural background. Across situations, negotiation and self-assertion were most frequently suggested strategies, and mutuality and self-orientation were the most popular reasons behind strategies. The examination of differences between the conflict scenarios revealed that adolescents proposed more self-assertive strategies for managing more severe conflicts. The percentage of adolescents suggesting ending the friendship (*I wouldn't want to socialize with such a person anymore, so I'd keep away from him and his friends.*) and blaming their friend (*Because what she did was wrong.*) was the highest in the case of conflict over backbiting. Self-assertion was also frequent in conflicts over romantic competition and the exclusivity of friendship. At the same time, there were many adolescents who suggested negotiation even for severe conflicts. Conflicts over different music tastes could be considered least severe. Adolescents reported these to be most frequent in real life and mostly suggested compromise (*We'd listen to some other band that we both like.*) and compliance (*I'd tell her fine, let's listen to your favourite song.*) with the aim of taking into account their own as well as their friend's interests (*Then no one gets hurt.*).

Boys' and girls' strategies were somewhat different only in the case of conflicts over romantic competition. Namely, girls were more likely than boys to suggest compromise and non-action rather than negotiation. No gender differences occurred in adolescents' reasons given for their strategies. Nevertheless, girls reported having all types of conflicts more frequently than boys. The frequency of conflicts had some effect on adolescents' strategies. For instance, with increasing frequency of conflicts over romantic competition, girls were less willing to suggest doing nothing in such situation. In the whole sample, the increasing frequency of conflicts over romantic competition was positively linked to suggesting compromise rather than negotiation and to appealing to a rule when explaining the reasons behind strategies.

No cultural differences emerged in adolescents' reports of conflict frequencies. Estonian and Russian-Estonian adolescents also responded similarly to their friend's backbiting. For managing conflicts over romantic competition and the exclusivity of friendship, however, Estonian adolescents were less likely than their Russian-Estonian peers to prefer compromise over negotiation. In situations of having different musical tastes and romantic competition, Estonian adolescents were less likely than Russian Estonians to focus on their friend's needs rather than on mutual needs.

## **Study V**

**Study V** examined cultural differences in how adolescents solve conflicting goals between parents' and peers' expectations. The study examined willingness of Estonian, German, and Russian adolescents to comply with their parents' requests and how adolescents' interdependence values and satisfaction with family and friendships relate to their choice of staying at home or going out with friends. No gender differences emerged in adolescents' willingness to comply. There were, however, a number of cultural differences. Compared with Estonian adolescents, German adolescents were less and Russian adolescents more likely to comply with their parents. These differences were moderated by adolescents' values. Those who considered interdependence (the degree to which they consider family relations important, want to maintain harmony within the family, and would sacrifice self-interest for the benefit of the family) more important were more likely to comply. For Russian adolescents, interdependence was more important than for their Estonian and German peers. In terms of satisfaction with one's family, Russian adolescents did not differ from Estonian and German peers. Nevertheless, satisfaction with family was only related to Russian adolescents' decision: satisfaction with family increased one's willingness to comply with parents and stay at home. Satisfaction with friendships, on the contrary, was higher among German than Russian adolescents, but was not related to adolescents' actions in either of the cultural contexts.

When giving reasons for compliance, references to the importance of parents and family (e.g. *Because family is more important.*) were most frequent among adolescents from all cultural groups. Significantly more Russian adolescents, however, gave such reasons. The other two frequent reasons for complying with parents were obligation (*In case of important chores, I would just not be allowed to spend the day elsewhere.*) and adolescents' tolerance (i.e. adolescents do not mind staying home). These reasons were given by more German than Estonian and Russian adolescents. Unlike the Russian sample, there were some Estonian and German adolescents who claimed that compliance with their parents was in their own interests. This means that they expected to get something in return after having helped their parents (e.g. *When I help them this time, I will get to spend the day with my friends next time.*).

Although there were many fewer Russian than Estonian and German adolescents who claimed not to comply with their parents, adolescents from the three samples suggested self-oriented reasons for going out with friends with about the same frequency (e.g. *Because I don't feel like doing chores, I prefer to go out.*). References to the importance of friendships were slightly more popular among Russian adolescents (e.g. *Friends are very important.*). Moreover, Russian adolescents seemed to focus on the needs of the parents, friends, or their own needs. This means that they were less likely than Estonian and German adolescents to try to accommodate different expectations (i.e. to find a compromise and do both).

## Study VI

**Study VI** examined the relative importance of the quality of adolescents' relationships with their parents and grandparents, maternal acceptance (expressing warmth, affection, and support) and control (setting limits for children), the structure of the family, the number of siblings, and the attachment style of adolescents for perceived peer acceptance. Adolescents rated their relationships with mothers and grandmothers most frequently as high in quality. Low quality was most frequently reported in the father-child relationship. Some gender differences emerged in adolescents' relationships with parents and peers. Girls perceived higher peer acceptance than boys. More boys than girls, however, reported high quality in the relationship with their father.

In mother-child dyads where adolescents perceived low relationship quality, mothers reported being less accepting than mothers in mother-child dyads where children perceived high relationship quality. Adolescents who perceived high quality in their relationship with a mother had higher scores on both dependent (feeling that they can depend on others) and close (being comfortable with closeness) attachment styles than those who perceived low quality in the mother-child relationship. Those with high quality of the grandmother-grandchild relationship also had higher scores on the dependent attachment style than those who perceived low quality.

Among the relationship quality variables, only the mother-child relationship was related to adolescents' peer acceptance: adolescents who perceived low quality in the mother-child relationship also perceived lower peer acceptance. The quality of relationships with father, grandmother, and grandfather were not related to adolescents' perceptions of peer acceptance. Moreover, neither mother's acceptance nor control was associated with adolescents' relationships with peers.

Lower peer acceptance was perceived by adolescents who had more siblings, lived in a single-mother family, and reported being high on anxious attachment (feeling anxious about being abandoned or unloved). Those with higher scores on dependent and close attachment styles perceived higher acceptance by peers.

## DISCUSSION

The present thesis aimed primarily to enhance the understanding of children's and adolescents' conflict management strategies within peer and parent-child relationships. Although studies frequently examine either individual or situational influence, the present research shows that these two types of characteristics act interdependently. Differences at the individual level cannot be generalized to all conflict situations. Furthermore, examination of reasons behind suggested strategies provides unique information about children's and adolescents' approach to conflict management.

### Individual factors

**Age.** The findings of **Study I** parallel those of Chen et al. (2001) that during preschool years peer conflict frequently arises over object struggles. Conflicts over matters of taste and different opinions or preferences were also frequent among preschoolers in **Study I** and were reported to be fairly frequent by adolescents in **Study IV**. Although methodological differences limit the comparability of the findings, the present studies suggest that across various conflict situations prosocial strategies are common among adolescents as well as among preschoolers. When comparing the strategies of preschoolers (**Study I**) and adolescents (**Study IV**), one can even claim that the percentage of using three major types of strategies was very similar: about 40% of children and adolescents used prosocial strategies, about 30% used self-assertive, and about 15% used avoidance strategies. Rather similar results were reported by Noakes and Rinaldi (2006) who found that about 40% of both 4th and 8th grade students suggested using prosocial strategies. This by no means indicates that there are no differences in preschoolers' and adolescents' strategies. Among preschool-aged children, direct physical and verbal aggression was fairly frequent, whereas adolescents tended to suggest more sophisticated self-assertive strategies. For instance, they sometimes proposed using deception that conceals their self-oriented interests. The nature of prosocial acts also becomes more complex as children grow older.

In **Study I**, no significant differences emerged in the frequency and conflict management strategies of 3-, 4-, and 5-year-olds. It could well be that differences in linguistic and cognitive abilities that are related to conflict management skills among children aged 3, 4, and 5 are too small to cause any differences in the way these children manage conflicts. According to Piaget (1954), children of these ages are in the preoperational stage, and their thinking is still egocentric. Thus, the way they manage conflicts might be rather similar. It is, however, also likely that differences might be noticeable if children's behaviour is analysed in greater detail. For example, Chen et al. (2001) found age differences in the level of insistence during peer conflict.

**Behavioural problems.** As **Study I** indicated, preschool-aged children with behavioural problems were more likely to be involved in conflicts than their

peers without behavioural problems. Nevertheless, children's behavioural problems were not linked to their conflict management strategies. Deficiencies in social information processing might characterize the aggressive, clinic-referred group of children (e.g. Webster-Stratton & Woolley Lindsay, 1999) rather than typically developing children with mild behavioural problems. It is also possible that the present study did not find any links between children's behavioural problems and conflict management strategies due to methodological issues. Namely, kindergarten teachers assessed children's behaviour in a larger group, whereas we examined their conflict behaviour in small groups. Moreover, there were very few children who could be said to have behavioural problems.

**Gender.** Studies included in the present thesis suggest that during preschool years and adolescence, the conflict management strategies of boys and girls are fairly similar. No gender differences emerged in preschoolers' frequency of conflict and conflict management strategies (**Study I**) and in adolescents' willingness to comply with their parents (**Study V**). **Study I** hypothesized that differences might lie in the way boys and girls think about conflicts rather than how they actually solve them. Although observation and hypothetical scenarios were used among participants of different age groups, the results indicate that the conflict management strategies of boys and girls are rather similar in the case of both real and hypothetical conflicts.

Modest differences were found in **Studies III** and **IV**. The examination of these findings suggests that gender differences in peer conflict management strategies are highly context-specific. The result that girls suggested more multiple ways for intervening than boys in **Study III** might show that girls are better able to propose alternative solutions to conflict situations. Nevertheless, it might also be that girls suggested more strategies because they lack experience with conflicts among boys and do not know the best ways for managing them. As studies have shown, boys are almost exclusively third parties in boys' conflicts and girls in conflicts among other girls (Chaux, 2005). As a consequence, adolescents might show higher self-efficacy in managing conflicts between their same-gender peers.

In **Study IV**, girls reported having all four types of conflicts more frequently in real life than boys. Previous studies (e.g. Noakes & Rinaldi, 2006) indeed found that conflicts over relational issues, such as backbiting and the exclusivity of friendship in **Study IV** are more common among girls. Somewhat surprisingly, girls also seem to have romantic competitions and disagreements over taste differences more often. As to conflict management strategies, gender differences emerged in only one conflict scenario – romantic competition. Namely, girls were more likely than boys to prefer compromise and non-action over negotiation. It might be that gender differences in adolescents' strategies are more evident in competitive situations. Some differences in boys' and girls' peer relationships might transfer to the way they manage conflicts. Studies show that boys' relationships involve more dominance and competition (Hartup, 1992; Maccoby, 1990) and that competition is associated with greater

companionship in boys' friendships, whereas with less companionship among girls (Schneider, Woodburn, del Toro, & Udvari, 2005). Boys' greater use of negotiation might indicate their desire to compete. This does not mean that they are more self-oriented than girls. No gender differences occurred in adolescents' reasons given for their strategies. Boys' and girls' intentions can thus be quite similar, but they might use different strategies to achieve their goals. The same strategy might also lead to different outcomes in boys' and girls' conflicts.

Girls in **Study IV** might have suggested more compromise and non-action in the romantic competition scenario also due to the circumstance that in Estonia it is usually the boy who is expected to make the first move when it comes to romantic relationships. Interestingly, however, these differences seemed to decrease due to girls reporting such conflicts to be more frequent than boys. With increasing frequency of conflicts over romantic competition, girls were less willing to just wait and do nothing. It is likely that non-action may have not led to desirable outcomes in the past and is thus not used next time.

Although boys have been found to interact in larger groups (Rose & Rudolph, 2006), adolescent boys in **Study VI** perceived lower acceptance by peers than girls. **Study II** showed that adolescent girls considered benevolence more important and power and conformity less important than boys. These differences do not seem to reflect in the conflict management strategies of boys and girls. Unlike many previous studies (e.g. de Wied, Branje, & Meeus, 2007; Owens, Daly, & Slee, 2005), one cannot conclude that girls' strategies for managing conflicts are more prosocial than boys' strategies. The few gender differences that were found do not suggest any differences in prosociality and aggressiveness. It has been found that while boys exhibited more physical and verbal aggression than girls, girls were more relationally aggressive than boys (Ostrov & Keating, 2004). Therefore, the gender difference might lie in the type of aggression and not in the frequency of aggressive acts.

**Cultural background and values.** The short-term longitudinal **Study II** indicated that adolescents' values are not yet stable. Nevertheless, adolescents' values were linked to their suggested strategies in **Studies III** and **V**. **Study III** found that adolescents who valued conformity – were sensitive to social norms and tried to avoid negative outcomes for self – were more willing to intervene in the bullying-like situation and use prosocial strategies in doing that. Those who considered power values important – were concerned about their own social status and prestige – were less likely to intervene. Unexpectedly, benevolence and universalism values that reflect concern for others' welfare were not linked to adolescents' strategies. **Study II** showed that in general, benevolence and universalism were more important among adolescents than conformity and power. According to Bardi & Schwartz (2003), deciding to assert values that are among the least important ones in the peer group (conformity and power among adolescents in Estonia) means that individuals have to reject social pressure and express personal values. In such cases the decision to assert the value is also more deliberate (Bardi & Schwartz, 2003).



**Studies II, III, IV, and V** showed cultural differences in adolescents' values and conflict management ways. The comparison of Estonian and Russian-Estonian adolescents' values in **Study II** revealed that these did not differ as much as had been shown in studies of youth and adults in Estonia (Lauristin & Vihalemm, 1997; Tulviste et al., 2014; Vihalemm & Kalmus, 2008). Unlike adults who have been found to consider benevolence most important (Schwartz & Bardi, 2001), both groups of adolescents prioritized self-oriented values. Higher importance of self-oriented values among adolescents than adults has been reported in other cultures as well (Sabatier & Lannegrand-Willems, 2005). Russian-Estonian adolescents considered hedonism more and benevolence and security less important than their Estonian peers. In accordance with the findings of Magun and Rudnev (2010), the results of the present thesis suggest that Russian-Estonian adolescents consider self-enhancement more and self-transcendence less important than their Estonian peers. More changes occurred in Russian-Estonian adolescents' values during a one-year period. This might indicate that they struggle more to find their identity and that different values have been exposed to them in different contexts. Recent studies show that youth from immigrant groups did indeed experience high levels of value differentiation (Daniel et al., 2012; Vasques-Salgado, Greenfield, & Burgos-Cienfuegos, 2015).

As with values, there were many similarities but also some differences in Estonian and Russian-Estonian conflict management strategies. In **Study III** Estonian adolescents expressed higher willingness to intervene in the bullying-like situations. At the same time, they were more cautious – compared with Russian-Estonian adolescents, they claimed more frequently that they would try to find out what is going on rather than directly go and help the victim. It might be that Estonian adolescents interpreted the situation differently from Russian Estonians and considered the incident more serious. Estonian adolescents' higher carefulness compared to their Russian peers might also reflect their higher emphasis on security values.

Some inferences about what Estonian and Russian-Estonian adolescents consider important can be made by examining their reasons behind strategies. **Study IV** found no differences between the two groups of adolescents in terms of being self-oriented when responding to hypothetical conflicts with their same-gender best friend. Overall, the findings of **Study IV** suggest that both groups of adolescents consider friendship equally important. One might hypothesize, however, that their approach to maintaining friendships is different. Estonian adolescents seemed to regard focusing on mutual interests as a way of maintaining a close friendship. More Russian-Estonian than Estonian adolescents might, however, believe that prioritizing their friend's interests is essential in friendships. Higher willingness of Russian-Estonian adolescents to set aside their own interests would suggest that they value individualistic values less than Estonian adolescents (this has also been found by Realo & Allik, 1999; Tulviste, Mizera, & De Geer, 2012; Vihalemm & Kalmus, 2008). **Study II**, on the contrary, showed that Russian-Estonian adolescents valued

benevolence less and self-direction more than their Estonian peers. It is likely that different values are emphasized within close relationships than in the school context. For example, Daniel et al. (2012) found that benevolence was more important in the family than in the school context.

As could be expected, more substantial differences emerged among adolescents living in different cultural contexts than among adolescents from different cultural groups but living in the same country. The findings of **Study V** about differences in Estonian, German, and Russian adolescents' responses to parent-child conflict are compatible with the previous theory and research about these three cultures (Durgel et al., 2009; Ispa, 2002; Kagitçibaşı, 2013; Realo & Allik, 1999; Tulviste et al., 2012; Tulviste et al., 2007; Tõugu et al., 2014; Tõugu et al., 2011). The effect that German adolescents were more likely and Russian adolescents less likely than their Estonian peers to choose going out with friends over staying at home was moderated by adolescents' values. Interdependence (i.e. considering family relations important and sacrifice of self-interest for the benefit of the family) was more important for Russian than for Estonian and German adolescents. As expected and as previous studies (Phinney et al., 2005; Sugimura et al., 2009) have found, the willingness to comply rather than not to comply with parents increased along with the importance of interdependence values among adolescents from all cultural contexts. Russian adolescents' higher emphasis on interdependence might also be a reason why satisfaction with family increased their willingness to comply with parents. Estonian and German adolescents were as satisfied with their family as Russian adolescents, but their reported actions were not linked to it.

As in **Study IV**, Estonian, German, and Russian adolescents' reasons for compliance and non-compliance in **Study V** shed some light on what they consider important. Among all three groups of adolescents, the importance of family and parents was most frequently mentioned when giving reasons for compliance. Nevertheless, Russian adolescents gave such reasons significantly more frequently than Estonian and German adolescents. Given the findings of **Study V** and those of Phinney et al. (2005), it can be concluded that in cultures where collectivistic values are more important adolescents tend to express more love and care for their parents when giving reasons for their compliance as compared with individuals from cultures where individualistic values are of higher importance. The results of **Study V** also suggest that in cultures where individualistic goals prevail, adolescents are less likely to give up their needs and goals by choice – although most German adolescents decided not to comply with their parents, the percentage of adolescents who referred to obligation among their reasons for compliance was the largest in the German sample. Some studies suggest that individuals in both individualist and collectivist cultures feel obliged to help their family members, but at the same time, those from collectivist societies express greater desire to help (Janoff-Bulman & Leggatt, 2002). This is likely due to helping parents being more normative in cultures where close family relations are emphasized (Kagitçibaşı, 2012).

Among their reasons for non-compliance, Estonian, German, and Russian adolescents were equally likely to emphasize their own needs and their right to make this decision. Self-oriented reasons were most frequent among non-complying Estonian and German adolescents but not among Russian adolescents. Russians referred to the importance of friendships most frequently. One can thus conclude that Russian adolescents were more oriented to relationships than Estonian and German adolescents in both cases – when giving reasons for compliance and non-compliance with their parents. Further analyses have, however, shown that German adolescents are more oriented toward peer relations than Estonian and Russian adolescents (Tamm et al., 2015a, 2015b). It might be that in cultures where collectivistic values are emphasized adolescents are concerned with their friend's welfare and with what they can do for their friends. In cultures with more emphasis on individualistic values adolescents might rather think of friendship as something that is useful for them. Another interesting finding of **Study V** was that Russian adolescents seemed to focus on the parents', friends', or their own needs meaning that they were less likely than Estonian and German adolescents to try to accommodate different expectations (i.e. to find a compromise and do both).

### **Situational factors**

**Conflict partner.** Although neither of the studies examined how differently conflicts are managed with, for instance, friends and non-friends, the results of the present thesis do seem to be in accordance with the social exchange theory. As the theory suggests, adolescents in **Study IV** proposed negotiation and emphasized the need to take mutual interests into account most frequently across conflicts with their best friend. In **Study V** many adolescents from Estonia, Germany, and Russia claimed not to comply with their parents' requests for self-oriented reasons. By drawing upon the social exchange theory, this could be due to the strong nature of parent-child relationship – children's self-assertion during conflicts does not lead to the dissolution of the relationship.

One can draw more solid conclusions about how conflict partner's gender and behaviour relate to preschool-aged children's conflict management strategies. The results of **Study I** showed that there were fewer conflicts in mixed-gender than in same-gender triads. This does not necessarily mean that conflicts with opposite-gender peers are less common because conflict in a mixed-gender group could also have occurred among same-gender peers. However, it could well be that children interacted with each other less in mixed-gender groups compared with same-gender groups. Nevertheless, **Study I** suggests that preschoolers manage conflicts with same-gender and opposite-gender peers similarly. Following the social exchange theory, it might be that instead of partner's gender, children take into account the friendship status. As children were given the opportunity to pick their playmates in **Study I**, it is likely that most triads were composed of friends. Children have been found to

manage conflicts with friends differently than those with non-friends (Peets, Hodges, Kikas, & Salmivalli, 2007; Vespo, 1991; Vespo & Caplan, 1993).

**Study I** indicates that preschoolers' strategies are strongly linked to their conflict partner's strategies. They tend to respond to their peer's prosociality with a prosocial strategy and to peer's aggressiveness with an aggressive strategy. More specifically, a partner's calm tone of voice and explanations for his or her behaviour or needs (e.g. *But everybody can turn the page, it's not yours!*; *You can take building blocks from there. This one's for me, I went to get it.*) might be the cues that tell a child that a prosocial strategy is more appropriate than an aggressive one. Such cues as the partner's hostile verbalizations (e.g. *You're a cheapskate!*; *You're bad! I'm not your friend anymore!*) or physical aggression might be relied on when responding with an aggressive or avoidance strategy rather than with a prosocial one.

**Type of conflict.** The type of conflict seems to guide both young children's and adolescents' strategies for managing real as well as hypothetical conflicts. In general, children's and adolescents' strategies were more self-assertive in the case of more severe conflicts. Children used more aggressive than prosocial strategies during object struggles and name-calling incidents. The latter can be classified as provocative and a fairly severe conflict where psychological harm is caused to another child – thus moral rules are broken (Smetana et al., 2005). During object struggles, children's aggressive strategies might reflect their strong wish to have control over the toy. It has been found that young children understand the rights of ownership and possession (Eisenberg-Berg, Haake, & Bartlett, 1981; Eisenberg-Berg, Haake, Hand, & Sadalla, 1979) and tend to control the use of objects by others (Hay & Ross, 1982). Children's verbalizations during conflicts over object acquisition and sharing in **Study I** illustrate this well: *No! This is my car!*; *No! My train!*; *This is mine! Give it to me!*; *What are you doing? This is mine!*

Adolescents tended to suggest more self-assertive strategies in situations that could be considered more severe. In **Study IV** backbiting was expected to be most severe as it causes psychological harm to another person. Adolescents' responses to their friend's backbiting indicated that these types of transgressions were indeed taken seriously and could be more detrimental to the friendship than the other sources of conflicts. Many adolescents were disappointed in the way their friend acted. This is in accordance with Hall's (2011) conclusions that trustworthiness is one of the most important features of friendship. Nevertheless, there were also many adolescents who were willing to talk things through with their friend. Many participants first wanted to hear what their friend had to say about the backbiting. This suggests that adolescents are unlikely to end their close friendships without a solid reason.

**Study III** included only one type of conflict, but the situation also depicted psychological and physical harm. This time, however, harm was caused to somebody else and adolescents indicated their behaviour as a bystander. The majority of adolescents expressed willingness to intervene in the bullying-like situation and help the victim. They preferred to target the aggressors and to

intervene themselves than to seek help from others. Physical aggressiveness was rarely suggested. Adolescents' responses indicated that they consider bullying extremely severe, and it is vital to intervene in such situations (e.g. *I wouldn't be that stupid! I'd go over there and yell at them.*).

Adolescents are likely to claim their right to make decisions over personal issues (Nucci, 1996). In **Study V** there were many adolescents from all cultural contexts who claimed that they would not comply with parents' requests and follow their own plans instead. It might be that despite their cultural background, adolescents emphasize their own needs and their right to make decisions when they believe that the issue in question belongs to their personal domain (Smetana & Asquith, 1994).

**Study IV** included three different conflicts with best friends over personal issues: the choice of music, friend, and a dating partner. Adolescents suggested, however, different solutions to these conflicts. They were more self-assertive in conflicts over romantic competition and the exclusivity of friendship, and more focused on mutuality in conflict over different musical tastes. This might be due to these issues differing in terms of severity and impact. Deciding whose music to listen is unlikely to have any long-term consequences. Adolescents' increasing need for independence and autonomy and the importance of being involved in romantic relationships (Collins, Welsh, & Furman, 2009) probably increased their self-assertion in the case of the other two personal issues.

The findings of **Study IV** also suggest that the frequency of conflict influences the management of those conflicts that involve competition more strongly. Formal competitions, such as academic or sports competitions have rules in order to give participants equal opportunities. This seems to transfer to informal competitions between adolescent friends. After having disagreements over romantic competition several times, adolescents might have formed clear rules on how to behave. This is in accordance with the finding that the need for negotiation decreased. The finding that adolescents' proposed strategies and reasons were linked to their reports of conflict frequencies in real life also suggests that adolescents' responses to hypothetical conflicts might actually reflect their behaviour in real life.

### **Family environment and peer relations**

The thesis also examined which family environment contributes to adolescents' better peer relations. Previous studies have shown the importance of parent-child relationship for young children's relations with peers (Attili, Vermigli, & Roazzi, 2010; Granot & Mayseless, 2001). **Study VI** suggests that these linkages continue to exist in adolescence. Namely, adolescents who perceived high quality in the mother-child relationship also perceived higher peer acceptance. Moreover, in accordance with attachment theories, adolescents with a high quality mother-child relationship were higher on dependent and close attachment styles. These attachment styles, in turn, seem to be more positively

endorsed by peers as adolescents with dependent and close attachment styles perceived higher peer acceptance than adolescents with an anxious attachment style. Based on attachment theories, it might also be that adolescents with dependent and close attachment styles have developed more positive expectations towards social relationships and perceive their peers' behaviour more positively.

**Study VI** indicated that in addition to the mother-child relationship, the structure of the family plays an important role in adolescents' peer relations. Those from a single-mother family and with more siblings perceived lower peer acceptance. Reasons for these linkages need to be determined by future research, but it is possible that family relationship characteristics or the socio-economic status of a family mediate the effect of the family structure on adolescents' peer relations (Amato, 2000). Important findings also emerged in further analyses. Namely, the parent-child relationship was important for adolescents' peer relations in three different cultural contexts – Estonia, Germany, and Russia. There were, however, cultural differences in which dimensions of mother-child and father-child relationships were most important (Tamm, Kasearu, Tulviste, & Trommsdorff, 2015a, 2015b). For instance, maternal and paternal admiration was especially important for German and Russian adolescents' peer acceptance (Tamm et al., 2015a). Among Estonians, peer acceptance was also related to conflict level in both mother-child and father-child relationships. This supports the findings of De Goede et al. (2009) about the carryover effects in adolescents' relationships with peers and parents.

## STRENGTHS AND LIMITATIONS

Each study and each method have their own strengths and limitations. As discussed in the Introduction, both observation and hypothetical situations provide valuable data. In **Study I** children's real conflicts were observed. At the same time, many children did not have any instances of conflict during the time they were filmed. These children were thus excluded from the analyses, and the sample size was considerably reduced. Hypothetical conflicts are less time-consuming and enable to collect data from a large sample. However, one has to be careful when making conclusions about adolescents' behaviour in real life situations. Moreover, with hypothetical conflict scenarios, there is always the question about the selection of situations. Researchers have to decide where the focus is and not overwhelm participants by including every possible situation they can think of.

A combination of quantitative and qualitative data provides a deeper understanding of adolescents' conflict management. Open-ended answers give more freedom to express one's opinion as compared with forced-choice questions. In **Study I** children's conflict management strategies were divided into three categories. There was more variability in adolescents' answers in **Studies III, IV, and V**; hence, more complex coding schemes were developed. With categorical data, especially when the variable has many subcategories that have unequal sizes, there are fewer options for statistical data analysis. In some instances, we merged categories of conflict management strategies or excluded some categories from regression analyses.

In each study, there are factors that were not examined but that would have possibly helped to explain the results. For example, in **Study IV** the quality of adolescents' relationships with their best friend could have been examined. In **Study V** inclusion of more cultures would have enabled us to make stronger conclusions about how adolescents from different cultural contexts manage parent-child conflicts.

## CONCLUSIONS

This thesis adds to the understanding of children's and adolescents' conflicts and their management by showing the varying degree of importance of individual- and situation-level factors. Moreover, the findings suggest that there is a complex interplay of various individual and situational factors affecting the way children and adolescents manage conflicts.

Among preschoolers, the level of behavioural problems, child's age, and the conflict partner's gender were unrelated to their conflict management strategies. Children, however, tended to respond with aggressive strategies to their peer's aggression and with prosocial strategies to peer's prosociality.

Both young children and adolescents were guided by the type of conflict – more self-assertive strategies were used for more severe and provocative conflicts. Gender differences were modest and were likely caused by specific features of the conflict situation. Conflict frequency also interacted with gender. In the case of romantic competition with a friend, the greater frequency of such conflicts among girls led to a higher similarity between boys' and girls' strategies.

Adolescents' values were strongly linked to their strategies. Cultural differences in adolescents' conflict management strategies could also be explained by differences in values. For instance, Estonian, German, and Russian adolescents differed in how important family values were for them, and thus differed in their willingness to comply with parents' requests. Russian adolescents seemed to be especially guided by the importance and satisfaction with their family.

The studies further showed that it is not sufficient to examine only adolescents' strategies. Adolescents' reasons behind their strategies provide more information about the nature of gender and cultural differences. Although boys and girls suggested somewhat different strategies for one specific type of conflict in **Study IV**, their reasons did not differ. Thus, their intentions might be similar, but the way of achieving them was somewhat different. Cultural differences, on the contrary, were especially evident in adolescents' reasons. Russian adolescents showed more concern for their parents and friends, which suggests that they were more oriented to maintaining close relationships with parents and friends compared with their Estonian and German peers. Russian adolescents were also less likely than Estonian and German adolescents to accommodate parents' and friends' expectations, meaning that few of them suggested compromise. The responses of Russian adolescents living in Estonia showed similar patterns to those of Russian adolescents from Russia. Namely, Estonian adolescents tended to be more oriented to mutuality, whereas Russian-Estonian adolescents expressed higher willingness than their Estonian peers to subordinate their self-interest to their friend's interests. Self-oriented reasons were suggested with about the same frequency among adolescents with different cultural backgrounds. More self-assertion might, however, be expressed with parents than friends.



Last but not least, the present thesis indicated that adolescents' relationships with parents and peers were linked. This could mean that among other characteristics, conflict from one relationship is carried over to another relationship. As to the role of the family, the structure of the family made a unique contribution to adolescents' peer relations. Thus, in addition to relationships, other factors related to the family environment should be examined.

Many questions remain to be answered and confirmed. Regarding age-related changes in children's relationships and conflicts, longitudinal data would provide more valuable information. Studies should also include participants from diverse cultural contexts to determine whether the pattern of differences is similar to those found among Estonians, Germans, and Russians. Moreover, the studies showed interaction of individual and situational variables. These links should be further examined in order to attain a more complete picture of how different individuals approach various conflict situations. Observational research would be useful for studying conflict as a process and to show how and why individual strategies change during one conflict.

### **Implications for parents and teachers**

Parents should support their children's peer relationships outside home. In kindergartens and schools more could be done to improve relationships between the children. As teachers are familiar with each student's background, they could pay more attention to students with risk factors for lower peer acceptance.

The results of **Study II** confirmed that adolescents' values are not yet stable. This means that adolescence is the right time to monitor and support the development of values. Schools are encouraged to promote the values that are related to prosocial behaviour and to make these more explicit among both students and staff.

Intervention and prevention measures for children's and adolescents' conflict management skills should be applied to the entire group instead of selecting a few individuals and labelling them as children with poor social skills. A discussion of different ways of managing various conflict situations and role plays could be used. Crick and Dodge (1994) proposed that past memories of social interactions influence the management of conflicts. Therefore, practising the resolution of different types of conflict might have a positive effect on children's strategies in real life.

Children's and adolescents' behaviour should be considered in the context of a particular conflict situation. It is also important not to pay attention to only adolescents' strategies but also to the reasons behind their strategies. Various solutions can be offered to the same conflict.

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## SUMMARY IN ESTONIAN

### Konfliktid ja nende lahendamise viisid lapse- ja teismeeas

Eelkooli- ja teismeiga on lapse sotsiaalse arengu ja kohanemise seisukohalt olulised perioodid. Neil arenguetappidel toimuvad mitmed muutused sotsiaalsetes suhetes ning edukaks toimetulekuks on vaja kompleksseid sotsiaalseid oskusi. Igapäevaelus esineb paratamatult ka konfliktolukordi, kus inimeste huvid on vastuolus. Oskus taolisi situatsioone efektiivselt lahendada soodustab sotsiaalset ja psühholoogilist kohanemist. Käesolevas doktoritöös uuritakse nii indiviidi kui ka situatsiooniga seonduvate tegurite mõju laste ja teismeliste konfliktide lahendamise strateegiatele. Lisaks arutlen laiemalt laste ja teismeliste suhete üle vanemate ja eakaaslastega.

Oluline on rõhutada, et konflikti tagajärjed pole mitte tingimata negatiivsed. Kuna eakaaslaste vahel on võim võrdselt jaotunud – ei saa öelda, et üks oleks vanem ja targem – pakub konflikt eakaaslastega võimalusi läbirääkimiseks ja kompromissi leidmiseks, mis soodustavad lapse sotsiaal-kognitiivset arengut. Lapse ja vanema vaheline konflikt võib aga toetada lapse iseseisvumist. See, millist mõju konflikt selle osapooltele avaldab, sõltub suuresti konflikti lahendamise viisist. Eristada võib kolme peamist lahendusviisi: 1) prosotsiaalsed strateegiad, mis on suunatud mõlemaid osapooli rahuldava tulemuse saavutamisele; 2) ennast kehtestavad strateegiad, mis on orienteeritud vaid indiviidualsetele huvidele ja 3) vältivad strateegiad, mille korral hoidutakse konflikti lahendamisest või ignoreeritakse selle olemasolu.

Indiviidiga seotud teguritest käsitlen doktoritöös vanuse, käitumisprobleemide, soo ning väärtuste ja kultuurilise tausta seoseid väljapakutud konfliktide lahendamise strateegiatega.

#### **Vanus**

Ootuspäraselt esines eelkooliealistel lastel sageli konflikte mänguasjade jagamise üle. Erinevad arvamused ja maitsete küsimused põhjustasid konflikte nii eelkooli- kui teismeealiste seas. Konfliktolukordade üleselt kasutasid lapsed ja teismelised prosotsiaalseid strateegiaid kõige sagedamini. Sageduselt järgnesid ennast kehtestavad ning vältivad strateegiad. See ei tähenda aga, et vanusega konfliktide lahendamise viis ei muutu. Eelkoolieas hõlmavad ennast kehtestavad strateegiad sageli kas verbaalset või füüsilist agressiivsust. Teismelised nimetasid otsest agressiivsust harva. Näiteks oli neil üheks enesekehtestamise viisiks pettus, kus oma tahtmist püütakse saada konflikti teise osapoole teadmata. Ka prosotsiaalsed strateegiad muutuvad vanusega komplekssemaks.

**Uurimuses I** ei ilmnenud erinevusi 3-, 4- ja 5-aastaste laste konfliktide lahendamise strateegiates. Piaget' teooria järgi on selles vanuses lapsed ühel kognitiivse arengu tasemel ning neil on raske olukorda teise inimese vaatevinklist hinnata. Seetõttu ei pruugi erinevused nende konflikti lahendamise viisides suured olla.

## **Käitumisprobleemid**

**Uurimus I** näitas, et lastel, kellel lasteaiasõpetajate hinnangul oli käitumisprobleeme, tekkis suurema tõenäosusega konflikte kui käitumisprobleemideta lastel. Samas ei erinenud käitumisprobleemidega ja käitumisprobleemideta laste konfliktide lahendamise viisid.

## **Sugu**

Doktoritöö tulemuste järgi on eelkooli- ja teismeealiste poiste ning tüdrukute konfliktide lahendamise strateegiad üsna sarnased. Soolisi erinevusi ei ilmnenud eelkooliealiste seas **Uurimuses I** ega ka teismeealiste nõustumises vanemate soovidega **Uurimuses V**.

Mõningaid soolisi erinevusi leidsime **Uurimustes III** ja **IV**. Tulemused viitavad sellele, et soolised erinevused on tingitud mõnest konkreetse situatsiooniga seotud tegurist. **Uurimuses III** paluti teismelistel selgitada, kuidas nad sekkusid olukorda, kus kaks suuremat poissi kiusavad väiksemat poissi. See, et tüdrukud pakkusid vastustes sagedamini mitut erinevat sekkumisviisi, võib näidata, et nad suudavad poistest paremini leida alternatiivseid lahendusi. Samas võib mitme sekkumisviisi pakkumine näidata ka nende ebakindlust. Nimelt on tüdrukud kolmandad osapooled enamasti tüdrukute vahelistes konfliktides ning poisid poiste vahelistes konfliktides. Tüdrukud võisid seega erinevaid strateegiaid pakkuda, sest neil on poiste vaheliste konfliktidega vähem kogemusi ning nad ei tea, milline sekkumisviis oleks kõige efektiivsem.

**Uurimuses IV** selgus, et poisid ja tüdrukud pakkusid mõnevõrra erinevaid strateegiaid vaid ühes olukorras – neile ja nende samast soost parimale sõbrale hakkas meeldima sama poiss/tüdruk. Võrreldes poistega eelistasid tüdrukud sagedamini kompromissi või tegevusetust läbirääkimisele. Võib olla, et soolised erinevused tulevad esile just võistluslikes situatsioonides. Eelnevad uurimused on näidanud, et võistlemine on sagedasem poiste seas ning see pigem lähendab neid kui kahjustab nende omavahelisi suhteid. Läbirääkimise strateegia võimaldab rohkem võistlemist kui näiteks kompromiss. Doktoritöö tulemuste põhjal ei saa aga väita, et poisid oleksid rohkem enese huvidele orienteeritud kui tüdrukud. Teismeliste põhjendustes – miks Sa nii käituksid? – soolisi erinevusi polnud. Poiste ja tüdrukute kavatsused võivad seega olla sarnased, kuid tulemuseni jõudmise viis mõneti erinev.

**Uurimuses IV** leitud soolised erinevused võivad olla põhjustatud ka sellest, et vähemalt Eestis oodatakse sageli poisilt romantiliste suhete puhul esimese sammu astumist. Tüdrukute poolt sagedasem tegevusetuse mainimine võib just seda peegeldada. Tüdrukud hindasid taolisi konflikte oma parimate sõpradega sagedasemateks kui poisid. Konfliktide esinemissagedus mõjutas ka nende vastuseid: mida sagedasemaks tüdrukud n-õ romantilise võistlemise olukordi reaalses elus hindasid, seda sarnasemaid vastuseid nad poistega pakkusid.

## **Väärtused ja kultuuriline taust**

**Uurimus II** näitas, et teismeeas ei ole väärtussüsteem veel stabiliseerunud – ka ühe aasta jooksul toimus selles mitmeid muutusi. See, mida teismelised

oluliseks pidasid, mõjutas nende väljapakutud konfliktide lahendamise strateegiaid. **Uurimuses III** leiti, et teismelised, kes pidasid konformsust (sotsiaalseid ootusi ja norme) oluliseks, olid rohkem valmis kiusamisse sekkuma ning seejuures vähem agressiivseid strateegiaid kasutama. Võimu (sotsiaalset staatust) väärtustavad teismelised olid vähem valmis sekkuma.

Erineva kultuuritaustaga teismelised pidasid oluliseks mõneti erinevaid väärtusi ning erinesid seetõttu ka konfliktide lahendamise strateegiate poolest. Nii eesti kui eestivene teismelised hindasid enesele orienteeritud väärtusi nagu elust mõnu tundmine ja mitmekesine elu kõige tähtsamateks. Eestivene teismeliste jaoks oli elu nautimine tunduvalt tähtsam ning heasoovlikkus ja turvalisus vähem tähtsamad kui eesti teismeliste jaoks. Aasta jooksul toimus rohkem muutusi eestivene teismeliste väärtushinnangutes. Võib olla, et nad puutuvad erinevates kontekstides (nt kool ja kodu) kokku erinevate väärtustega ning neil on raskem enda jaoks oluliste väärtuste osas selgusele jõuda.

**Uurimuses III** väljendasid eesti teismelised suuremat valmidust kiusamis-situatsiooni sekkumiseks. Samas olid nad ettevaatlikumad kui nende eestivene eakaaslased – nad ütlesid sagedamini, et nad uuriksid, mis seal täpselt toimub, mitte ei läheks kohe appi. Tulemus on kooskõlas eesti teismeliste kõrgemate skooridega turvalisuse väärtuse skaalal. Samuti võib olla, et eesti ja eestivene teismelised tõlgendasid situatsiooni erinevalt.

Doktoritöö tulemused näitavad, et teismeliste konfliktikäitumise mõistmiseks ei piisa vaid nende strateegiate uurimisest. Paludes põhjendada väljapakutud strateegiat saame selgema pildi kultuurilistest erinevustest. **Uurimuses IV**, kus teismeliste kirjeldati erinevaid konflikte samast soost parima sõbraga, eesti ja eestivene teismeliste vahel enesele orienteerituses erinevusi polnud. Vastustest peegeldus, et mõlemasse gruppi kuuluvate teismeliste jaoks on sõprus oluline, kuid viis selle hoidmiseks võib olla erinev. Eesti teismelised olid eestivene teismelistest rohkem orienteeritud konflikti mõlema osapoole huvidega arvestamisele. Eestivene teismelised olid aga eesti teismelistest rohkem valmis sõbra huvisi esikohale seadma.

**Uurimuses V** võrdlesime eesti, saksa ja vene teismeliste vastuseid hüpoteetilisele lapse ja vanema vahelisele konfliktile: teismeline oli otsustanud sõpradega välja minna, kuid vanemad tahtsid, et ta jääks koju neid majapidamistöodes aitama. Eesti teismeliste seas oli sõprade ja vanemate kasuks otsustajaid võrdselt. Üle 60% saksa teismelistest pakkus, et nad järgiksid oma esialgseid plaane ning läheksid välja. Protsentuaalselt oli sama palju vene teismelisi, kes otsustaksid vanemaid aitama jääda. Need erinevused olid täielikult seletatavad teismeliste väärtustega. Vene teismelised hindasid peresuhteid ja nende hoidmist tähtsamaks kui nende eakaaslased Eestist ja Saksamaalt. Peresuhte olulisus oli tugevas positiivses seoses vanemate aitamisega kõigis kolmes kultuurilises kontekstis. Peresuhetega rahulolus kolm gruppi teismelisi omavahel ei erinenud. See tunnus oli aga seotud vaid vene teismeliste otsusega – need, kes olid peresuhetega rohkem rahul, olid ka rohkem valmis vanemaid aitama jääma. Rahulolu sõprussuhtetega oli kõrgem saksa kui vene teismeliste seas, kuid ei seostunud teismeliste otsusega üheski riigis.

Vanemate aitamise valikut põhjendati kõige sagedamini vanemate olulisusega („Vanemad on kallid.“). Vene teismelised nimetasid taolisi põhjuseid aga palju sagedamini kui eesti ja saksa teismelised. Koos varasemate uurimuste tulemustega võib järeldada, et kultuurides, kus kollektivistlikud väärtused on olulisemad, viitavad teismelised vanematega nõustumist põhjendades sagedamini sellele, et nad armastavad oma vanemaid ning peret tuleb hoida. Kultuurides, kus rõhutatakse individualistlikke väärtuseid, on teismelised vähem valmis vabatahtlikult oma plaanidest loobuma. Olgugi, et saksa teismeliste seas oli vanemate aitamise kasuks otsustajaid kõige vähem, põhjendasid nad eesti ja vene teismelistest seda sagedamini vanemapoolse sunniga. Eelnevad uurimused on näidanud, et erineva kultuuritaustaga teismelised tunnevad ühtmoodi, et vanemaid peab aitama, kuid kollektivistlikes kultuurides ei tehta seda vastumeelselt.

Sõprade kasuks otsustamisel lähtusid nii eesti, saksa kui vene teismelised sageli enda huvidest: „Ma ei taha kodutöid teha.“, „Sõpradega on huvitavam.“. Vene teismeliste puhul oli aga sõprussuhte olulisusele viitamine veel sagedasem. Võib seega öelda, et vene teismelised on rohkem lähedaste suhete hoidmisele orienteeritud. Huvitav on ka see, et vene teismelised olid vähem valmis kompromissi tegema ning nii vanemate aitamist kui ühistegevusi sõpradega oma päevakavva mahutama. Pigem valisid nad ühe või teise.

Situatsiooniga seotud teguritest käsitlen doktoritöös konflikti teise osapoole ning konfliktitüübi seoseid laste ja teismeliste konfliktide lahendamise strateegiatega.

### **Konflikti teine osapool**

Sotsiaalse vahetuse teooria järgi saab iga suhet iseloomustada kahe dimensiooni – läheduse ja avatuse (vabatahtlikkuse) – kaudu. Sõprussuhte on lähedane ja avatud, mis tähendab, et sõbraga püütakse konflikte prosotsiaalselt lahendada. Enda tahtmise pidev läbisurumine võib viia sõprussuhte purunemiseni. **Uurimuses IV** leidsime, et teismelised pakkusid tõepoolest sõpradega tekkivate konfliktide puhul kõige sagedamini prosotsiaalseid strateegiaid. Suhe vanematega on samuti lähedane, kuid seevastu suletud. See tähendab, et isegi väga enesekeskne käitumine ei vii suhte purunemiseni. **Uurimus V** näitas, et igas kultuurikontekstis oli neid, kes lähtusid ainult enda huvidest ning otsustasid sõpradega välja minna.

**Uurimuses I** uurisime ka konfliktipartneri soo ning käitumise mõju eelkooliealiste laste käitumisele. Segagruppides, kus oli nii poisse kui tüdrukuid, esines kõige vähem konflikte. Samas ei lahendatud konflikte samast soost ja vastassoost eakaaslastega erinevalt. Võib olla, et kaaslaste soost olulisem on see, kas tegemist on sõbraga või mitte. Lasteaiaaeglaste konfliktide lahendamise strateegiad sõltusid aga konfliktipartneri käitumisest. Agressiivsusele vastati agressiivse käitumisega ning prosotsiaalsusele prosotsiaalsusega.

## Konfliktitüüp

Eristada saab moraalseid (õiglus, võrdsus), konventsionaalseid (sotsiaalsed kokkulepped), prudentsiaalseid (inimese enda turvalisus) ja personaalseid (inimest ennast puudutavaid) küsimusi. Olukordi, kus teist inimest kahjustatakse füüsiliselt või psühholoogiliselt, võib pidada kõige tõsisemateks, sest rikutakse moraalireegleid.

Doktoritöö näitab, et nii eelkooli- kui teismeealised juhivad konflikti lahendades selle põhjustest. Tõsisemate konfliktide puhul pakuti ennast kehtestavamaid strateegiaid sagedamini. Eelkoolieas oli taoliseks konfliktolukorraks narrimine. Ka mänguasjade jagamise üle tekkivates konfliktides kaldusid lapsed oma tahtmist läbi suruma. Eelnevad uurimused on leidnud, et omandiõigusi (kellele mänguasi kuulub) hakatakse üsna varakult mõistma ning tahetakse kontrollida objektide kasutamist teiste poolt. Mänguasjade üle kakeldes oli sageli kuulda omandiõigustele viitamist: „Ei! See on minu auto!“, „See on minu oma! Anna siia!“.

Teismelised pakkusid ennast kehtestavamaid strateegiaid tagarääkimise olukorras. Nende vastused näitavad, et tagarääkimisse suhtuti väga tõsiselt, paljud olid pettunud sõbra käitumises ning valmis sõprussuhet lõpetama. Samas oli palju ka neid, kes kõigepealt räägiksid oma sõbraga ning küsiksid selgitust. See näitab, et mõjuva põhjusteta sõprussuhet katkestama ei hakata.

**Uurimuses III** kirjeldati samuti teismeliste moraalireeglitega vastuolus olevat situatsiooni – kiusamist. Sel korral põhjustati aga füüsilist ja psühholoogilist kahju kellelegi teisele. Enamik teismelistest oli valmis kiusatavale appi minema. Seejuures eelistati pigem ise sekkuda kui kedagi teist appi kutsuda.

Personaalsete küsimuste puhul eeldatakse, et inimesel endal on õigus neid langetada. **Uurimuses V** võisid need teismelised, kes enda huvidele viidates sõpradega välja minemise kasuks otsustasid, pidada antud küsimust enda otsustusvaldkonda kuuluvaks. **Uurimuses IV** oli kolm personaalsesse sfääri kuuluvat küsimust: muusika, sõbra ning romantilise kaaslase valik. Teismelised olid ennast kehtestavamad kahe viimase puhul. Võrreldes muusika valikuga on sõbra ja romantilise kaaslase valik pikas plaanis palju olulisem. Olukorras, kus konflikt tekkis muusikalise maitse erinevuse üle, olid teismelised valmis kas sõbra soovidega kaasa minema või siis leidma kompromissi – kuulata muusikat, mis mõlemale meeldib.

## Suhted vanemate ja eakaaslastega

Konflikte vanemate ja eakaaslastega uurisime küll eraldi, kuid nagu **Uurimus VI** näitas, on teismeliste suhted eakaaslastega seotud ema-lapse suhte kvaliteediga. Teismelised, kes tajusid suhet oma emaga paremana, tajusid ka kõrgeimat eakaaslastepoolset aktsepteerimist. Kiindumusteooriaga kooskõlas on tulemus, et teismelised, kelle suhe emaga oli parem, said kõrgemaid skooore nendel kiindumusstiilidel, mis olid positiivselt eakaaslastepoolse aktsepteerimisega seotud. Madalamat eakaaslastepoolset aktsepteerimist tajusid üksikema peredes ning rohkemate õdede-vendadega kasvavad teismelised. Teismelise suhted eakaaslastega ei olnud selles uurimuses seotud nende suhetega isa ja

vanavanematega. Edasine andmete analüüs näitas aga ka isa olulisust ning seda nii eesti, saksa kui vene teismeliste eakaaslastega suhete jaoks. Tulemuste põhjal võib eeldada, et ühest suhtest kantakse teise üle ka konflikt ja selle lahendamise viisid.

Kokkuvõttes näitab doktoritöö, et nii eelkooli- kui teismeealiste konfliktide lahendamise viisid sõltusid suuresti konflikti tüübist. Samas esines mitmeid individuaalseid erinevusi selles osas, milliseid strateegiaid erinevatele konfliktolukordadele pakuti. Soolised erinevused olid väikesed ja esinesid vaid teatud konfliktolukordades. Teismeliste väärtused olid tugevalt seotud nende konfliktide lahendamise viisiga. Väärtuste abil saame seletada ka, miks erineva kultuuritaustaga teismelised konfliktidele mõneti erinevaid lahendusi pakkusid. Kultuurierinevused tulid esile eelkõige teismeliste väljapakutud strateegiatele antud põhjendustes.



## **PUBLICATIONS**

## CURRICULUM VITAE

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### Publications:

1. Tamm, A., Tõugu, P., & Tulviste, T. (2014). The influence of individual and situational factors on children's choice of a conflict management strategy. *Early Education and Development, 25*, 93–109.
2. Tulviste, T., & Tamm, A. (2014). Value priorities of early adolescents. *Journal of Adolescence, 37*, 525–529.
3. Tamm, A., Kasearu, K., & Tulviste, T. (2014). The role of family in adolescents' peer acceptance. *Personal Relationships, 21*, 420–432.
4. Tamm, A. & Tulviste, T. (2015). The role of gender, values, and culture in adolescent bystanders' strategies. *Journal of Interpersonal Violence, 30*, 384–399.

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1. Tamm, A., Tõugu, P., & Tulviste, T. (2014). The influence of individual and situational factors on children's choice of a conflict management strategy. *Early Education and Development, 25*, 93–109.
2. Tulviste, T., & Tamm, A. (2014). Value priorities of early adolescents. *Journal of Adolescence, 37*, 525–529.
3. Tamm, A., Kasearu, K., & Tulviste, T. (2014). The role of family in adolescents' peer acceptance. *Personal Relationships, 21*, 420–432.
4. Tamm, A. & Tulviste, T. (2015). The role of gender, values, and culture in adolescent bystanders' strategies. *Journal of Interpersonal Violence, 30*, 384–399.

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