

CHAPTER 11

Managing Conflict on Organizational Partnerships

Elizabeth K. Briody

PARTNERSHIPS AND THEIR CHALLENGES

Interest and participation in various forms of partnerships have been on the rise over the last 25 years (Briody and Trotter 2008).¹ Firms enter into partnership agreements for many reasons including access to new knowledge, new assets, and new technologies, along with opportunities to improve organizational efficiency and effectiveness, share resources and risk, and respond to environmental pressures (Child and Faulkner 1998; Foster and Meinhard 2002; Hagedoorn 1993). Often there are multiple motivations for entering into partnering arrangements, depending on the participating organizations' goals and objectives. Studies have shown that by collaborating with either other firms or universities, companies are able to improve their ability to innovate (Hanel and St-Pierre 2006; Nieto and Santamaria 2010; Zhang *et al.* 2007). The form that these partnerships take varies. Some partnering relationships are formalized through the structure of a joint venture (Brannen and Salk 2000; Schuler 2001) or strategic alliance (Tsang 1999), while others are created as internal corporate ventures (Simon *et al.* 1999).

Key motivations for partnering across organizational units within a firm include such factors as cost reduction and improved efficiency. Such were the motivations of

one internal product program associated with a large US-based corporation charged with engineering car seats for a set of vehicles that would be sold both in and beyond the US market. A corporate strategy of *convergence* was designed to keep development costs to a minimum; the architecture and the component parts associated with the seats would be shared as much as possible across the three partnering units. At the same time, the resulting seats were expected to be sufficiently distinctive that they could be sold successfully in numerous markets.

Yet new corporate strategies and initiatives often come at a price in a globalizing world. Internal conflict often surfaces around issues of national culture and context (Almond and Ferner 2006; Boussebaa 2009; Zhang *et al.* 2007). There is likely to be resistance when individuals, groups, and internal organizations are asked to make sacrifices that affect their products, work practices, status, and power (Baba *et al.* 2004; Briody *et al.* 1995, 2010; Gluesing *et al.* 2003; Hamada and Sibley 1994). Convergence, for example, is difficult to achieve, as other automotive firms have discovered (Wernle and Auer 2000). Not only is there likely to be variation in technical, legal, and marketing requirements around the world, but work-process differences (e.g., design, manufacturing, assembly) are likely to differ as well.

Convergence, and the product-team matrices created to support it, was complicated further by the long-standing tradition of autonomy within this corporation. As with many US-based firms, this corporation's organizational structure, based on distinctive, differentiated, and typically self-contained units and functions, paralleled and reinforced a corporate culture that emphasized independence and self-reliance. Autonomy and convergence were polar opposites and were sure to clash despite corporate expectations for collaboration across organizational units. One of my goals was to help this firm develop strategies to cope with this likely clash.

Adapting an Acculturation Model for Partnerships

An anthropological model is useful in describing the process of contact and sustained interaction among autonomous groups. This model, known as the acculturation model, posits that changes in the cultural patterns of at least one, and potentially all, of the original groups will ensue. The model consists of three phases. In the first phase, contact is a "necessary" condition for acculturation to occur. In the second phase, conflict is "probable" given that "groups do not lightly give up valued features of their culture." Finally, in the third phase, some form of adaptation is "inevitable" (Berry 1980: 11). While this model has been employed to illustrate relationships such as those between indigenous peoples and Western societies, it also has applicability in organizational settings. Indeed, both productive and less productive interactions among work teams and organizational cultures have been documented as new organizational strategies have been proposed and/or implemented (Chesluk and Holmboe 2010; Gluesing and Gibson 2004; Metcalf 2011; Sengir *et al.* 2004; Trotter *et al.* 2008a; Wasson 2006).

On the ABC Seat Program, the "contact" phase of the acculturation model was the result of a corporate management decision to create a *global* product program. Corporate leaders assigned three organizations to this product program; the contact phase began at program launch because these organizations had not worked together

before. According to the acculturation model, conflict would appear in the second phase. Conflict typically develops when there is some degree of resistance on the part of the weaker culture(s), with the intensity and duration of the conflict reflecting the level of resistance (Zhang *et al.* 2007). The majority of ABC Program participants were from Engineering Group A, with minority representation from Engineering Group B and Engineering Group C. The model would predict that if there were any resistance, it would be initiated by one or more minority groups. Finally, the model suggests that when the conflict is reduced, adaptation results. For the ABC Seat Program, this adaptation phase might include an array of reactions to the new convergence strategy from consensus to continuing resistance.

Selecting an Appropriate Case Study

I selected one particular meeting to showcase the conflict surrounding convergence. In an excerpt from this meeting, participants test the convergence strategy. Convergence brings to light some of the technical and organizational-culture issues facing the program and the ways in which those issues were negotiated. Noticeable about the excerpt is the presence of *conflict*, defined as the struggle resulting from incompatible or opposing demands. The conflict appears quite suddenly, unfolding quickly among the meeting participants. The positions taken in the meeting are aligned with organizational boundaries: each engineering group argues for its own technical requirements, work practices, and traditions. The conflict symbolizes the lack of internal cohesion that existed on the ABC Seat Program.

Some might ask, why choose to highlight an excerpt from a meeting, which is in essence a case study? What value is there in using a case-study approach? Case studies can serve as a comprehensive research strategy incorporating a research design, set of data collection and analytic techniques, and reporting mechanisms (Yin 2009). Because they entail examining a phenomenon in context, they are useful in documenting the chronology of a particular incident or event, the cultural dynamics, structural constraints, and/or inherent symbolism. However, case studies also have great potential as a teaching tool. They can become a platform for organizational intervention and learning. I believed that the case of the ABC Seat Program would raise awareness of the thorny organizational-culture issues with which its members were grappling. When organizational challenges are made visible, partnership participants and corporate leadership are more informed and are in a better position to decide what course of action to take. Indeed, I viewed the case study as a critical method to help the ABC Seat Program move away from the conflict it was experiencing and speed its movement into some form of adaptation or accommodation. I also anticipated that once corporate leaders understood the cultural issues involved, they would play a key role in the change process.

This case raises questions about how to manage the conflict that will inevitably arise on organizational partnerships. Because conflict is both time and energy consuming, it is in the interest of the organizations involved to address the concerns as quickly and as effectively as possible. Understanding partnership conflict both holistically in terms of the broader corporate-culture context, and in-depth from the standpoint of the various partners, is a prerequisite to managing it successfully. Anthropology's emphasis on holism and on the "emic" (i.e., insider) perspective can

be valuable tools in analyzing cultural activity and identifying potential options open to organizations as they attempt to move beyond an impasse.

As the reader will soon learn, however, this case is almost a satire. So much conflict erupts over such a seemingly small decision when there are hundreds, if not thousands, of decisions that need to be made to produce the seats for a car or truck. Indeed, the case represents an embarrassing standoff among the three engineering groups, so wedded are they to their positions. One of the anthropologist's roles is to negotiate that delicate balance among the three groups and put the case in context so that it does not reflect badly on them. The focus should be on using the case as a mechanism for problem solving, not for deriding either the individuals or the organizations involved. And that is the hope – that the case will motivate collaboration and resolution – whether in the current situation and/or in the prevention of similar future situations.

DATA AND METHODS

Anthropologists engaged in problem solving for organizations and communities (alternately referred to as practicing, applied, professional, or public interest anthropologists) use various methodologies to describe, explain, and assist their clients. Approaches to anthropological fieldwork vary, ranging from researcher-led projects to community-based participatory research (Kedia 2008). Commonly used research techniques in work organizations include interviews, observation, participant observation, and surveys, among others (Angrosino 2007; Fetterman 2010; Johnson *et al.* 2006). I initiated contact with the ABC Seat Program because of my long-standing interest in issues of work and culture. Though I was the sole researcher on this two-year project, I worked closely with key executives during all phases of the project: data gathering, analysis, validation, and proposed solutions. I chose observation as the centerpiece technique for this chapter, informed by selected interviews and knowledge acquired as part of my ongoing fieldwork on the product program.

Observation

My observations were largely confined to large product program meetings. The chief engineer invited me to participate in these meetings and formally introduced me to attendees as an anthropologist studying the Seat Program. Occasionally, he would joke about what I must be finding out about the product team's culture. (I felt that I was accepted and tried to reinforce this sense of acceptance by cultivating program relationships outside of meeting times.) I sat among the meeting participants – alongside one wall, but close enough to the front of the room where I could focus on the discussion. Because many attendees at these meetings took notes, it did not appear to be a problem that I also took notes.

My observations took a form of "continuous monitoring" in which "you watch a person, or group of people, and record their behavior as faithfully as possible" (Bernard 2011: 306). As an observer, I did my best to capture participants' statements as completely and as accurately as possible, using shorthand that I had developed for this purpose. Though I did not understand some of what I had written down either

because it entailed specialized vocabulary or unfamiliar engineering concepts and issues, I opted not to engage in interaction with attendees while the meetings were in progress. Instead, I used the detailed verbatim notes (later transcribed) as a cultural record of the meetings and as a point of reference for follow-up discussions. While direct observation provides more accurate results of actual activity compared to verbal reports of behavior (Bernard 2011), my methodological approach enabled me to supplement the observational data with clarifying and explanatory insights from key meeting attendees shortly after the meeting had occurred.

I selected an excerpt from one meeting of the 23 that I observed. Participation at this particular engineering meeting peaked at 33 attendees and lasted about 3.5 hours; its attendance, length, and content were representative of the other engineering meetings that I observed. This meeting was characterized by cross-organizational conflict, as were most other program meetings, though it provided one of the most poignant examples of conflict. Not only was the clarity of the positions taken by participants highly pronounced, but members of all three organizational units were active contributors to the debate.

Interviews

I conducted four follow-up interviews that focused on questions I had about the meeting, the flow of the discussion, the viewpoints represented, and the actions and inactions resulting from the meeting. As such, the interviews were designed to target specialized knowledge as it related to the attitudes and behaviors expressed at the meeting. I conducted one of the interviews with the chief engineer since he played a central role in shaping the discussion. I also interviewed three others who had participated in the discussion – one from each of the three engineering groups. Each interview lasted 45 minutes on average. Although these four interviews represent only a tiny fraction of the nearly 100 interviews I conducted on product-program partnerships within the firm, their content is entirely consistent with findings stemming from my larger interview sample.

Content Analysis

The meeting excerpt provided a window into the culture of this product program, as well as into the wider corporate culture in which the program was embedded. A content analysis of the meeting excerpt yielded cultural themes and patterns that helped make sense of participant statements and their behavior (Bernard 2011; Schensul and LeCompte 1999). Analysis of the meeting's content was informed by a variety of other features of the excerpt including the "turn taking" structure of the meeting exchange, the substance and persuasiveness of the arguments, the roles played by the meeting participants, and the speech attributes of the participants, including their tone of voice, vocabulary, and syntax (Boden 1994; Drew and Heritage 1992; Wasson 2000).

THE MEETING EXCERPT

The following excerpt presents the interaction surrounding the initial discussion of the plan for the ABC Seat Program vehicles. The excerpt focuses on a proposal

by Engineering Group A, reaction to it by seemingly frustrated program personnel from Engineering Groups B and C, and a more dispassionate response from the chief engineer. I have divided the excerpt into three segments for analytical purposes and enumerated the comments by each participant within each segment.

Segment 1

- 1.1. An Engineering Group A employee presented three alternatives for the front seats: (i) the carryover (i.e., previously developed) seat used by Engineering Group A, (ii) a "black-box" approach (in which the firm provides the seat requirements to the suppliers and the suppliers develop the design) using Engineering Group B requirements, and (iii) a de-contented Engineering Group C seat (in which selected features are eliminated to arrive at a baseline cost). The Engineering Group A presenter stated that after conducting a trade-off study, only the first two alternatives were under consideration.
- 1.2. An Engineering Group C employee asked, "Where did you get that decision?"
- 1.3. The Engineering Group A presenter mentioned his contact (an individual with an American-sounding name) at (Product Planning).
- 1.4. Almost immediately various meeting attendees (probably from Engineering Group C and possibly from Engineering Group B) voiced their disagreement.
- 1.5. The chief engineer intervened and said, "We need to take that (issue) out of here (this meeting)."

Segment 2

- 2.1. The Engineering Group A presenter, continuing with his presentation, showed a slide illustrating a variety of parameters including program timing, costs, and risks.
- 2.2. He then offered, "We don't understand the Engineering Group C requirements."
- 2.3. A second Engineering Group C employee, appearing frustrated, countered, "Why not? Three to four months ago, I took the requirements over there (to Product Planning) myself. I don't understand why you don't understand what the Engineering Group C requirements are."
- 2.4. Without directly responding to this question, the Engineering Group A presenter, trying to offer an explanation, began to defend the Engineering Group A proposal. He said, "Engineering Group A has redesigned (its) seating twice recently. There are a lot of start-up problems (when new seat designs are used). We do not feel we should do it again." He then added, "The supplier will give us quotes...."
- 2.5. An Engineering Group B employee, focusing on the purchasing issue, suggested to the Engineering Group A presenter that it was preferable to provide the requirements to the supplier: "You work on the requirement side and source that."

- 2.6. Returning to the redesign issue again, another Engineering Group A employee remarked, "We asked ourselves why we didn't (use carryover seats)."
- 2.7. The chief engineer then interrupted and said, "We need to get to common (a shared seat design) first. I understand what Engineering Group A went through – that Engineering Group A went through two of these seats recently. But, we are taking a different view here on the ABC Seat Program. Let's take that (discussion) out of here (this meeting)... We will have a hard time approving this without (agreement from) Engineering Group C."
- 2.8. The Engineering Group C employee (mentioned in Segment 2.3) remarked, "We need to force (the guy from Product Planning) to go to Germany (the home unit location for Engineering Group C). I had a phone call from him this morning and he said that everything on the seats was under control."

Segment 3

- 3.1. The gatekeeper (facilitator) of the meeting intervened in the discussion and said, "We need to move on," signaling that the time allocated to the seat discussion had been exceeded.
- 3.2. As the Engineering Group A presenter was leaving the room, the chief engineer said, "Good job."
- 3.3. The Engineering Group B employee (mentioned in Segment 2.5) joked to the Engineering Group A presenter saying, "Nice try."
- 3.4. After the Engineering Group A presenter left the room, someone questioned why the Engineering Group A presenter could not go to Germany to get a better understanding of what Engineering Group C needed.
- 3.5. The reply from the manager of the Engineering Group A presenter was, "We hadn't planned on sending (him) to Germany." The seat discussion ended.

CHARACTERIZATION OF THE CONFLICT

The three segments, examined as a whole, illustrate the negotiation process in motion. The proposal was presented (1.1, 2.1) and defended (1.3, 2.2, 2.4, 2.6, 3.5) by Engineering Group A. Their statements were challenged by Engineering Groups B and C (1.2, 1.4, 2.3, 2.5), refuted by the chief engineer (1.5, 2.7), and further contested by Engineering Group C (2.8), Engineering Group B (3.3), and either Engineering Groups C or B (3.4). Additional commentary (2.8, 3.3, 3.4, 3.5) followed the intervention attempts by the chief engineer (1.5, 2.7, 3.2). The key elements of the exchange included logic, frustration, defensiveness, objectivity, and joking. As an observer, I had the distinct impression that participants felt very strongly about their own views. Occasionally, the discussion became "heated" as the participants' tone of voice changed or as the pace of the exchange increased.

A "win-lose" metaphor is a useful way to conceptualize this exchange. Engineering Group A attempted to "win" or succeed in having the seat plan approved. By contrast, Engineering Groups B and C tried not to "lose" by ensuring that their requirements and work practices were comprehended in the plan. Engineering Group

A seems to have "lost" this round, as evident in the interventions of the chief engineer (1.5, 2.7) and one of the two parting comments to the Engineering Group A presenter as he left the room (3.3). However, neither Engineering Groups B nor C could claim a "win" because no final resolution on the seat plan was reached at the conclusion of the exchange.

PREVALENCE OF THE CONFLICT

The structure of presentation, challenge, defense, and rebuttal not only characterizes the three segments taken as a whole, but also two of the individual segments – 1 and 2. Program participants appear unwilling or unable to let the matter rest. In Segment 3, the structure is abbreviated and is limited to challenge and defense. The structure of the negotiation reflects the prevalence of the conflict throughout the exchange. It also reflects the repetitive nature of the conflict from segment to segment, suggesting that the conflict was likely to carry on into the future. Segments 1 and 2 also highlight the role of the chief engineer who twice suspended discussion of the issue (1.5, 2.7) and who was aided by the gatekeeper (3.1). The actions of these two individuals functioned to extend the conflict into the future as final resolution of the seat plan was postponed.

SOURCES OF THE CONFLICT

I identified three causes of the conflict in this excerpt: autonomy, convergence, and the interaction effects of autonomy and convergence. The evidence for these sources of conflict stems directly from the statements made by the meeting participants, and the manner in which they made those statements. The follow-up interviews and ongoing research within the firm confirmed and later validated these patterns.

Autonomy

Much of the conflict faced by program members can be attributed solely to the principle of autonomy and its allied concept of individualism: "Individual units within an organization may be distinctive and differentiated from other units by a set of traditions and shared identity" (Briody *et al.* 2010: 16). Three elements of the conflict are linked with autonomy: potential threats to the home units, organizational-culture differences, and parochialism.

Potential Threats to the Home Units. The key source of conflict attributable to autonomy concerns potential threats to the home units. Program personnel tried to ensure that cost and risk were minimized for their home units (2.4, 2.5, 2.6, 3.5), sometimes at the expense of the other units, and that the ABC Seat Program would satisfy the requirements of their customers (1.2, 1.4, 2.8, 3.4). Through these responses, it is possible to see how program members tried to protect their home units. Engineering Groups B and C appeared on the offensive, rather than defensive,

with Engineering Group A. Having a unit like Engineering Group A in the "hot seat" helps illustrate how units may act autonomously as they attempt to optimize locally for their own markets, rather than for the Seat Program as a whole. As the excerpt unfolds, Engineering Group A recognized that its seat plan might not be comprehensive enough – at least for Engineering Group C. There appeared to be a sense of frustration on the part of Engineering Group A because it did not fully comprehend what Engineering Group C required (2.2). Similarly, there seemed to be frustration on the part of Engineering Group C because it felt it had provided Engineering Group A with its requirements (2.3, 2.8). Engineering Group B seemed to have experienced some frustration as well (2.5).

Organizational-Culture Differences. A second source of the conflict attributable to autonomy is based on the organizational-culture differences among participants (Briody *et al.* 1995). According to later discussions I had with ABC Seat Program personnel, the apparent frustration over requirements also reflected a *difference in work practices* across units. Disconnects like this one occur frequently in which one party claims it provided what was asked and the other party indicates that the information provided was unsuitable or incomplete. Both Engineering Groups A and B employees later indicated to me that Engineering Group C's understanding of what technical requirements to provide differed from what Engineering Groups A and B expected. The differences seemed to be tied to the way in which work was done with suppliers. It appears that Engineering Group C suppliers work with Engineering Group C so that modifications in the design and testing are routine; the process is largely iterative. Consequently, all of Engineering Group C requirements do not need to be specified at the outset. Engineering Group A, by contrast, works with suppliers who expect all the technical specifications early on in the process. Their suppliers are compensated for the changes if the design changes.

Another organizational-culture difference in this excerpt involves *differences in sourcing* (i.e., purchasing components). Engineering Group B indicated that it uses a particular work practice with respect to sourcing; one of the Engineering Group B employees present at the meeting recommended that Engineering Group A conduct its purchasing as Engineering Group B does (2.5). Engineering Group B sends its requirements out to suppliers while Engineering Group A, at least in this case, stated that it was planning to source its carryover seats themselves (2.4).

A third organizational-culture difference pertains to *differences in meeting styles* – in particular, the purpose of these large-scale meetings and the decision-making process associated with them. These differences also contribute to the tension (Schwartzman 1993; Wasson 2000). Engineering Group A seemed to have the goal of sharing information about the seat plan (1.1, 2.1); this attribute was consistent with Engineering Group A culture. However, the impression left by the exchange was that the Engineering Group A proposal represented what appeared to be a final decision on eliminating the Engineering Group C seat, rather than a proposal (1.3). I was able to confirm this impression later with the Engineering Group A presenter who stated that he gathered the data and made the decision. He did indicate, however, that his decision had the potential to be overruled. Unlike Engineering Group A, Engineering Groups B and C expected that this type of decision would have been made during the ABC Seat Program meeting rather than prior to it. Engineering

Groups B and C responded to this Engineering Group A strategy by attempting to get the Engineering Group A decision reversed (1.2, 1.4, 2.3, 2.5). Engineering Group A seemed to have been looking for and expecting to find support for its decisions. Instead, it encountered vocal opposition from both Engineering Groups B and C. In particular, the tone of voice employed by Engineering Group C (1.4, 2.3, 2.8) indicated its strong opposition to the proposal.

Parochialism. Another source of conflict attributable to autonomy is the parochialism that was sometimes evident on the ABC Seat Program. I define parochialism as holding and acting upon perspectives and interests that are locally determined. In two of the comments (1.3, 2.8), we learn that the Product Planning contact has an American-sounding name and that this individual is perceived to have no experience with Engineering Group C requirements (2.8). In a similar way, the Engineering Group A presenter, also an American, was perceived to have limited cross-cultural experience (3.4). Proposals were made to expose both the Product Planning employee (2.8) and the Engineering Group A presenter (3.4) to Engineering Group C requirements by sending them to Germany. Additional evidence for this theme of parochialism appears when the manager of the Engineering Group A presenter indicated rather tersely that there were no plans to send the Engineering Group A presenter to Germany (3.5).

Convergence

The term convergence, as used by program personnel, tends to be associated with technical, legal, and marketing requirements and their solutions. The excerpt provides some insight into the strategy of convergence. The chief engineer explained the ABC Seat Program approach (2.7), reinforcing the corporate view of and rationale for convergence. The chief engineer seemed to insist on a broader, more-inclusive perspective so that the requirements of the three home units would be taken into account. He ultimately rejected the proposed seat plan since it did not satisfy the goals of convergence.

However, as the excerpt unfolds, it is clear that there is limited recognition and acceptance of the convergence concept, particularly with respect to the concept of global architecture and converged parts. The Engineering Group A presenter confirmed with me later that he thought Engineering Group A would have its own seat design and Engineering Group C would have a different one. This kind of ambiguity was compounded by a lack of clarity in the official definition of convergence. There were many instances in which program personnel were not able to define or articulate when convergence had occurred, often asking, "How do you know when you have it?" For example, one individual stated, "Does a part have to have the same part number? If that part can be made off of the same tool, but with a different number of holes, is that considered to be common (i.e., a 'converged' part)?"

Interaction between Autonomy and Convergence

The third and final source of the conflict faced by ABC Seat Program members can be attributed to the interaction between autonomy and convergence. I describe two

examples of the implications of this interaction: program asymmetry and ambiguity surrounding responsibilities and linkages.

Program Asymmetry. Status and power differences among participating units often lead to conflict (Briody *et al.* 1995; Zhang *et al.* 2007). Because Engineering Group A was designated as the lead unit and home base for seat design and development, Engineering Group A was the initiator and developer of the proposal; Engineering Group B and Engineering Group C filled secondary roles. Leadership positions were designed to be held by members of the lead unit. As such, the Engineering Group A presenter acted in ways consistent with leadership expectations of him. Because Engineering Group A was the lead unit and had many more employees than either Engineering Groups B or C, it was the highest status unit of the three. Engineering Group A's status seemed affirmed by the way in which it presented its proposal (1.1) – in a very straightforward, matter-of-fact manner. The impression left by the presentation was that Engineering Group A assumed its decision on the front-seat plan would prevail. Engineering Group A's confidence in presenting its proposal was likely bolstered by support from within Engineering Group A and Product Planning. None of the Engineering Group A employees present at the meeting offered any criticism of the proposal, and Product Planning seemed to have been involved in the trade-off decision (1.2, 1.3).

The role played by Engineering Groups B and C involved a limited exercise of veto power over the Engineering Group A proposal, rather than direct participation in it. Engineering Groups B and C called attention to the fact that Engineering Group A worked largely alone in preparing its proposal. Engineering Group A's knowledge base of the appropriate Engineering Group C seat experts appeared restricted. Engineering Group C (1.2, 2.8), and possibly both Engineering Groups C and B (1.4), expressed their dissatisfaction with Engineering Group A's reliance on the contact at Product Planning. Through their various statements, those from Engineering Groups B and C seemed to be arguing that more input and information sharing among the three units was necessary to ensure the success of the entire program, not just one individual unit. The result was that the conclusions Engineering Group A drew in eliminating the de-contented Engineering Group C seat from consideration were rejected. Thus, with its contact network, and therefore methods, under attack, Engineering Group A attempted a defense (2.4), only to discover that its defense was in direct conflict with the strategy of convergence as expressed by the chief engineer (2.7). The Engineering Group A presenter later told me that it was a "very memorable meeting" because he felt that he had been "shot through with arrows and . . . wasn't sure why."

Ambiguities Surrounding Responsibilities and Linkages. Underlying tensions, unclear expectations, and confusion can also lead to conflict (Frost *et al.* 1991). When asked how Engineering Group A had arrived at only two seat-plan alternatives (1.2), Engineering Group A responded that it had relied on Product Planning (1.3). The reaction, particularly by Engineering Group C to this explanation (1.4, 2.8), was negative. The issue here is the strength of the organizational linkages between the three engineering groups with support organizations like Product Planning. In my follow-up interviews, I learned that there was virtually no history of interaction and

collaboration between Product Planning and Engineering Group C, or between Engineering Groups A and C. If units have no prior experience working together, it takes time to develop collaborative networks, understand and meld work-process differences, and develop effective ways of working together.

Adding to this problem were resource shortages – particularly a shortage of engineers – experienced by Engineering Group C. These shortages made it difficult to identify and then work with the appropriate Engineering Group C expert located in Germany. In this excerpt, resource shortages left Engineering Group C without a seat expert in Product Planning, exacerbating the communication between Engineering Group A and Engineering Group C, yet explaining, in part, why Engineering Group A relied so heavily on its seat expert in Product Planning. The Engineering Group A presenter mentioned to me later that Engineering Group A had continually asked for Engineering Group C representation in Product Planning, but that that representation was not forthcoming. This lack of a “dedicated guy” to work on seats paved the way for the Engineering Group C employee in the excerpt to step in and protest (2.3). He commented to me later that he had voiced his opposition “to keep us (Engineering Group C) going.”

COUNTERACTIONS TO THE CONFLICT

The one key force in this excerpt that works partially to offset the conflict experienced by program personnel is *program momentum*, defined as sustained focus on continuing the tasks at hand. Program momentum functioned to keep the ABC Seat Program moving toward its next program milestones, despite the conflict.

Two individuals in this excerpt played a role in ensuring that the Seat Program “stayed on track” as it progressed through its various phases of work. One of these individuals was the chief engineer. Despite the debate and negotiation surrounding the seat plan, he acted as an overseer of the discussion, intervening when necessary (1.5, 2.7). This leader later indicated to me that the approach he took was to “get the parties together in one room” so that they would share their views and come to a resolution of their differences. Because he felt that this kind of interaction was best accomplished outside of these large meetings, he often postponed further discussion of contentious issues. Even the syntax and vocabulary associated with his remark “We need to take that [issue] out of here (this meeting)” (1.5, 2.7), seem to reflect his relatively impartial approach to the matter. Similarly, the chief engineer praised the work of the Engineering Group A presenter (3.2), as he routinely did for each presenter. Although commentary from selected meeting participants continued following the remarks of the chief engineer (2.8, 3.3, 3.4, 3.5), discussion quickly wound down in recognition of that leader’s intentions. While intricately involved in the exchange, the chief engineer also seemed to possess a strong, strategic interest in the execution of the program.

A second individual fostering program momentum was the meeting’s gatekeeper. The gatekeeper’s role was to ensure that agenda items were discussed in approximately the amount of time allocated to them (3.1). Although the gatekeeper only appeared once in this excerpt, his role was influential in limiting the comments in Segment 3. The gatekeeper worked at a fairly specific, tactical, even administrative

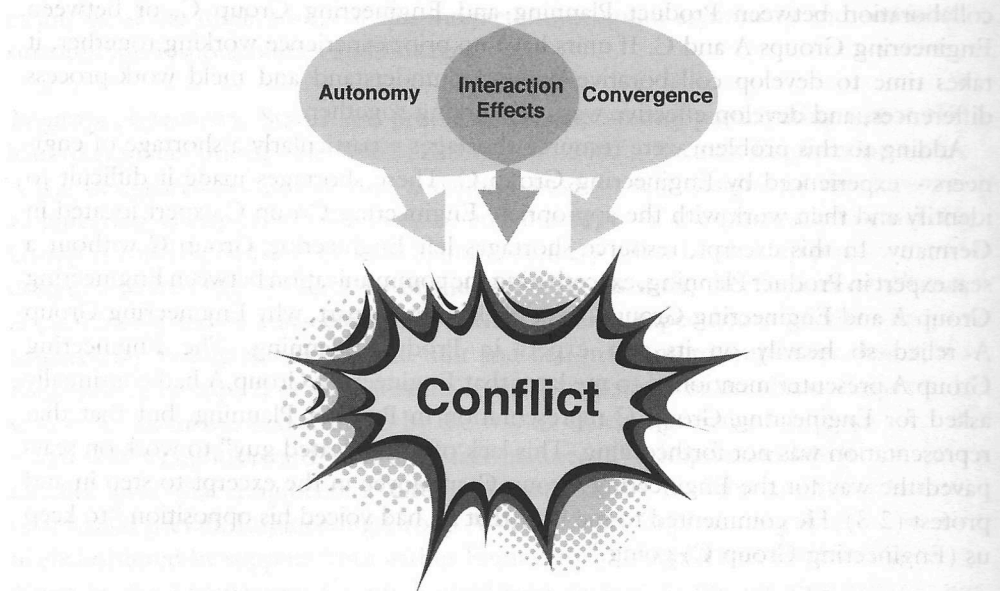


Figure 11.1 Modeling the Culture Clash.

level, to keep the agenda for the meeting on schedule – in contrast to the chief engineer.

MODELING THE CONFLICT

This excerpt brings to light some of the struggles among the three organizational units in their efforts to work as partners. There was an expectation that the ABC Seat Program would make the strategy of convergence work. In effect, it would be engaged in “implementation,” attempting to achieve some degree of convergence in its joint activities. Figure 11.1 illustrates the relationship among the opposing forces of autonomy and convergence, and their interaction effects. It depicts the resulting conflict that appears in the excerpt and that reflects the broader cultural patterns when autonomous units attempt to collaborate within this corporation.

THINKING ANTHROPOLOGICALLY ABOUT MANAGING CONFLICT

Holism

One attribute of anthropology that is particularly useful in understanding the conflict associated with organizational partnerships is the concept of holism. It reminds anthropologists to place the phenomenon under investigation – in this case, product program conflict – in its broader context. I was able to compile and organize the specific details of the meeting and view them in light of what else I knew about (i) the overarching program goals related to convergence, (ii) the autonomous nature

of the corporate culture including its ideological side (e.g., expectations, assumptions, attitudes), organizational-structural side (e.g., budget, headcount), and behavioral side (e.g., tensions manifested during the meeting excerpt). I was confident in the robustness of this analysis because of the extent of consistency between this particular meeting excerpt and other meetings I observed, and between program meetings generally and other sources of data I collected (e.g., interviews, documents).

By examining the conflict in context, it was clear that there was a misalignment between what the three engineering groups had been asked to do (i.e., converge) and their ability to complete their tasks successfully. The firm's autonomous culture did not change to accommodate the convergence strategy since there were no structures or policies in place to create allegiance to the product program and foster collaboration. Participants continued to look to the leadership of their own home units (i.e., own engineering group) for their instructions, decisions, and career rewards; as such, participant behavior was in line with their local, autonomous, home-unit culture. Moreover, the product program had no control over resources since the ability to control budget and headcount rested with the home units. Conflict arose as soon as it became clear that each home unit had its own priorities – priorities that were not shared among the three partnering organizations. Conflict became an ongoing feature of the program when the program leadership and their supervisors were unable to agree on and implement the convergence strategy. Examining a culture holistically focuses attention on the “degree of fit” among the various elements of culture such as ideology, structure, and behavior. The cultural evidence from this case demonstrates the lack of cohesion within this product program, particularly noticeable in the repeated expressions of conflict.

Emic Perspective

Another attribute of anthropology, the emic perspective, enables an exploration of world views that can provide insight into organizational functioning and effectiveness. Understanding the emic point of view positions anthropologists to examine similarities and differences (e.g., of attitudes, expectations, preferences) within a data set; contrasts emerging from observations can be compared with results from other sources of data (e.g., interviews). I noticed that participant verbal statements and behaviors from the meeting excerpt corresponded with organizational affiliation. I then compared this alignment of world views from the meeting excerpt with patterns of alignment in the larger data set (e.g., other meetings, interviews) and found a one-on-one correspondence between emic view and organizational affiliation. Each of the three participating organizations expressed its own orientation to the work and its own preferred ways of getting the job done.

By incorporating the emic approach into organizational analysis, anthropologists are able to describe the diversity of views present and how they map onto participant and organizational actions. As such, the emic perspective contributes to the concept of holism since it represents the various cultural groupings that form the organizational mosaic. The insider perspective is invaluable in helping to explain how organizations work and why they work as they do. Not only does the emic perspective offer clues about the extent of consensus or disagreement within a work environment, but it also can reveal areas of common ground around which problem

solving may be initiated. Managing conflict, or at least mitigating its impact, can improve the likelihood of positive organizational outcomes. When individuals work well together, there is a higher probability that they will seek common solutions to difficult issues, program goals will be met and perhaps exceeded, and future activities will build on prior collaborations (Trotter *et al.* 2008b).

Critique of the Acculturation Model

The acculturation model discussed in the Introduction depicts a conflict phase for those autonomous groups that come into contact. This conflict phase eventually transforms into an adaptation phase with one of three possible outcomes: adjustment to the culture of the dominant group, retaliation against that group, or withdrawal from that group (Berry 1980). I would argue that none of these three alternatives is optimal from the standpoint of the ABC Seat Program partnership. If two of the participating units completely accepted the work practices of the dominant unit, innovation opportunities might be reduced. If one or more of the units retaliated against the dominant unit, the conflict present in the second phase might continue indefinitely – if not worsen. Finally, if one or more of the participating units withdrew prematurely from the product program, the cultural theme of autonomy (rather than collaboration) would be reinforced, leadership credibility would be called into question, and benefits of the convergence strategy would not be realized.

A fourth option, not specified in the acculturation model, is possible – creating a “hybrid” culture among program personnel that engages participants to negotiate – and has the potential to lead to cultural synergy (Adler 1980; Gluesing and Gibson 2004; Sarala and Vaara 2010). Hybrid or negotiated cultures are characteristic of partnering arrangements (Brannen and Salk 2000; Briody and Trotter 2008; Clausen 2007). Such partnership cultures position themselves for greater partnership effectiveness. There is a recognition that each partner has strengths, knowledge, and experience that can be useful in developing and sustaining the partnership and in addressing difficulties during the partnership life cycle. The coordination of different but mutually reinforcing contributions from the partners is a critical element in partnership success, along with shared goals and performance measures, ongoing communication, and a strong support organization (Kania and Kramer 2011).

Unfortunately, this fourth option never materialized on the ABC Seat Program because partnership conditions were never conducive to the convergence strategy. Almost from the launch of the ABC Seat Program, the convergence strategy was actively contested. At least some program personnel wanted to diverge; that is, they wanted to return to other projects that were fully under the control of their home units. This insistence on divergence grew increasingly stronger over time, in part because the convergence strategy did not reduce program costs as anticipated, was culturally inconsistent with the way work got done, and was incompatible with the corporate organizational structure.

PROPOSING SOLUTIONS FOR THE FUTURE

The ABC Seat Program management asked me to provide feedback on what I was learning. I used the case-study method and found it to be instructive for them. It

revealed the distinctive attributes and behaviors of each engineering group in relation to the others. Members of the three engineering groups commented favorably on the analysis, stating that it helped them to understand some of the frustrations they were experiencing as part of the partnership. Not only did their comments validate the analysis and the case-study method in general, but their comments seemed to suggest an improved sensitivity to the organizational-culture differences within the partnership.

However, the three engineering groups were part of the broader corporate culture, whose structure, policies, incentives, and expectations were incompatible with the convergence strategy. In effect, participants working on the ABC Seat Program had little ability to change corporate conditions so as to reap the presumed benefits of convergence.

Using the case study to show the partnership's dysfunction turned out to be a much more effective method with corporate leaders. They were able to grasp the severity of the cultural dilemma and quickly recognized that the three engineering groups were frequently operating at cross purposes. They also understood that the conflict symbolized a disconnect between the seat program's goals and the autonomous nature of how work was structured and rewarded in the corporation. There was little to motivate partnership participants to act in the interests of the larger corporate culture, except perhaps good will. The meeting excerpt made a credible case that one's allegiance was defined in relation to one's own engineering group and not the corporation as a whole. Though it took a few years, this case study and other related work led to changes in the structure and management of all global product programs. I offered the following recommendations to speed the needed organizational and cultural change within the corporation.

Recommendation 1: Reexamine the Benefits and Costs of Convergence

Given the potential for resistance to any new corporate strategy, it is critical for the organizational leadership to plan carefully for how the partnership will work, not just what the partnership is expected to do. Strategic decisions should be reevaluated when organizational actions indicate that work output is being compromised. In this example, deciding when it is appropriate to converge and when to diverge should have been a central focus of senior leadership. Key questions, such as the following, should have been posed and addressed:

- What are the sources and magnitude of the cost savings of convergence?
- Where are the benefits of convergence large relative to the costs (e.g., in the architecture, components, work processes, cross-unit learning)?
- What is the impact of lengthy and heated negotiations and postponed decisions on the product program?
- To what extent have all the longer-term benefits of convergence, including those affecting future generations of the program, been considered?

Recommendation 2: Strengthen the Commitment to Convergence

If organizational leaders reassess a strategic decision and decide to "stay the course," the universe of potential areas of conflict narrows. The question then becomes how

to support the partnership generally so that it can be successful. Analysis can inform the strategic direction while decision making aligned with that direction can galvanize organizational activity. Work must be done to restore consensus and consistency across the firm, but particularly among the senior leadership. In general, mixed messages emanating from the leadership not only create ambiguity and uncertainty for employees, but they also damage the firm's credibility. Unity among the corporate leadership is critical to the effective functioning of an internal partnership and to sustained program momentum.

Efforts must be directed at creating and sustaining partnership teams given the firm's history of managing simultaneous product programs locally (i.e., within rather than across organizations). The three home units charged their Seat Program employees to represent their brand character and secure their requirements. They paid the salaries of their employees and played a significant role in determining their future career paths. Taken as a whole, the balance of the incentives lay with the home units rather than with the product program. It is not surprising, then, that all program participants acted autonomously with little regard for how they might work together. Developing global program metrics, appropriate budget and headcount allocations, and incentives and rewards can provide the necessary support to help create and sustain effective partnership teams.

Finally, program personnel need assistance in balancing the seat requirements of the home units with the seat requirements of the organizational partnership as a whole. What is needed is an entire system or infrastructure that balances the baseline requirements of the participating units. Expert teams that have both the technical skills and the ability to control resources could work as part of that permanent infrastructure to establish guidelines for trade-off decisions and baseline requirements. Use of such expert teams would have a side benefit of addressing some of the difficulties associated with program asymmetry. Minority units would have a greater voice in the establishment of these product requirements, thereby tempering the majority unit's dominance.

Recommendation 3: Improve Program Effectiveness

Generating consensus on work practices is another way to manage conflict on organizational partnerships. To arrive at consensus requires awareness of organizational-culture differences among the participating organizations, and agreement to develop a shared approach to getting the work done. Designing and conducting information-sharing opportunities could be a useful first step in helping participants understand both the similar and dissimilar ways in which they approach their work. Such interactions could include follow-up discussions in which participants work to create a consolidated set of work practices. Organizational development specialists and cross-cultural trainers could be tapped to facilitate such discussions, and help participants work through the conflict and create workable solutions (Cummings and Worley 2009). Alternately, information sharing among the partners might occur in the course of ongoing work activities. When partnership practices are negotiated, it is possible to "transcend a priori differences" (Parker and Selsky 2004: 465). Program effectiveness also can be aided by exposure to global ventures. Individuals who have worked abroad have had to come to terms with alternate ways of thinking and acting. Such

opportunities tend to broaden orientations to other perspectives and work styles and increase appreciation of cultural differences (Hong 2010; Yamazaki and Kayes 2004).

CONCLUSIONS

Conflict is common in a global business environment. It can emerge across functions, organizations, regions, and partners – wherever different groups interface or attempt to collaborate. Culture is powerful and linked with such attributes as identity, allegiance, expectations, and traditions. When two or more organizational cultures form a partnering arrangement, their cultures do not dissolve. In a best-case scenario, the partners figure out ways of working together effectively. In a worst-case scenario, the partners discover that conflict overwhelms their work. If that conflict continues indefinitely, it can have a devastating impact on partnering relationships and output. Conflict costs time and energy and limits the potential for success.

Conflict can arise in any part of the cultural system. Perceived slights, misunderstandings, and poor communication can result in tension among individuals and across organizations. Under these circumstances, a culturally astute person associated with the venture, or an outsider with cross-cultural and organizational development skills, may be able to help the parties bridge the divide so that they can get on with their joint work.

More problematic is the conflict that arises when one part of the cultural system is pit against another (e.g., autonomy and convergence). Sometimes little thought or effort goes into identifying what the likely culture clashes might be or how they might be addressed. Sometimes the corporate structure or resources do not support the new goals. There may not be a common set of performance measures. Internal organizations may stake out their positions relative to each other or relative to the corporate stance. Winners and losers can emerge – which can be damaging to at least some of the parties and harmful to the partnership as a whole.

Anthropologists are positioned to help organizations uncover such issues, propose potential solutions, and engage generally in problem solving. Their intent is neither to blame nor to ridicule, but rather to use the diagnosis of the cultural patterns as a way to guide change. Fortunately, they know how to develop rapport and build trust with the organizational partners. Moreover, their methodological “toolkit” of field methods, attention to the “whole,” and an appreciation of the emic point of view can yield valuable insights to create a strong foundation for healthy partnerships and improved organizational effectiveness.

The case study can be a critical tool to cope with the inevitable conflicts that will arise during partnership planning and execution. During the planning phase, case studies of failures, such as the one presented in this chapter, can be used as thought starters. They can help partnership participants understand conflicts that have occurred and get people talking about how they might deal with similar challenges. As such, they can serve as powerful motivators for successful interactions. Case studies also are valuable *a priori* in that they can raise awareness of cultural differences. Moreover, they can encourage participants to discuss differences in approach, expectations, incentives, work processes and practices, as well as a host of other factors.

During the execution phase of a partnership, case studies can assist with problem solving because they can reveal the underlying dynamics and structure of a particular conflict. Partnership participants can compare their current situation to the situation documented in this failed case study, or in a successful case. Based on the comparison, they are likely to be able to identify strategies that can be put in place to reduce the conflict or even potential solutions they can test to eliminate the conflict. Lessons from the cases also can be useful in preventing eruptions of new conflict. In the process of problem solving, partnering relationships can be strengthened. Discussion and negotiation then occur within the broader context of partnering relationships where there is a strong interest in attending to partner input and concerns, minimizing conflict, and ensuring that all parties are satisfied with the outcomes.

NOTE

- 1 I would like to thank the engineers who invited me to learn about organizational partnerships right alongside them and who shared their perspectives with me. I also appreciate the valuable comments on earlier drafts that I received from reviewers.

REFERENCES

- Adler, N.J. (1980). Cultural synergy: the management of cross-cultural organizations. In W.W. Burke and L.D. Goodstein (eds), *Trends and Issues in OD: Current Theory and Practice*. San Diego, CA: University Associates, pp. 163–184.
- Almond, P. and Ferner, A. (eds) (2006). *American Multinationals in Europe: Managing Employment Relations across National Borders*. Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press.
- Angrosino, M.V. (2007). *Naturalistic Observation*. Qualitative Essentials Series. Walnut Creek, CA: Left Coast Press, Inc.
- Baba, M.L., Gluesing, J., Ratner, H., and Wagner, K.H. (2004). The contexts of knowing: natural history of a globally distributed team. *Journal of Organizational Behaviour*, 25, 547–587.
- Bernard, H.R. (2011). *Research Methods in Anthropology: Qualitative and Quantitative Approaches*, 5th ed. Lanham, MD: AltaMira Press.
- Berry, J.W. (1980). Acculturation as varieties of adaptation. In A.M. Padilla (ed.), *Acculturation: Theory, Models and Some New Findings*. Boulder, CO: Westview Press, pp. 9–25.
- Boden, D. (1994). *The Business of Talk: Organizations in Action*. Cambridge, UK: Polity Press.
- Boussebaa, M. (2009). Struggling to organize across national borders: the case of global resource management in professional service firms. *Human Relations*, 62 (6), 829–850.
- Brannen, M.Y. and Salk, J.E. (2000). Partnering across borders: negotiating organizational culture in a German-Japanese joint venture. *Human Relations*, 53 (4), 451–487.
- Briody, E.K. and Trotter, R.T., II (eds) (2008). *Partnering for Organizational Performance: Collaboration and Culture in the Global Workplace*. Lanham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield Publishers, Inc.
- Briody, E.K., Baba, M.L., and Cooper, L. (1995). A tale of two career paths: the process of status acquisition by a new organizational unit. *Work and Occupations*, 22 (3), 301–327.
- Briody, E.K., Trotter, R.T., II, and Meerwarth, T.L. (2010). *Transforming Culture: Creating and Sustaining a Better Manufacturing Organization*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Chesluk, B. and Holmboe, E.S. (2010). How teams work – or don't – in primary care: a field study on internal medicine practices. *Health Affairs*, 29 (5), 874–879.

- Child, J. and Faulkner, D. (1998). *Strategies of Cooperation: Managing Alliances, Networks, and Joint Networks*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Clausen, L. (2007). Corporate communication challenges: a "negotiated" culture perspective. *International Journal of Cross Cultural Management*, 7 (3), 317-332.
- Cummings, T.G. and Worley, C.G. (2009). *Organization Development and Change*, 9th ed. Mason, OH: South-Western Cengage Learning.
- Drew, P. and Heritage, J. (1992). Analyzing talk at work: an introduction. In P. Drew and J. Heritage (eds), *Talk at Work: Interaction in Institutional Settings*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.
- Fetterman, D.M. (2010). *Ethnography Step-by-Step*, 3rd ed. Applied Social Research Methods Series, No. 17, Los Angeles, CA: Sage Publications.
- Foster, M.K. and Meinhard, A.G. (2002). A regression model explaining predisposition to collaboration. *Nonprofit and Voluntary Sector Quarterly*, 31 (4), 549-564.
- Frost, P.J., Moore, L.F., Louis, M.R., et al. (1991). *Reframing Organizational Culture*. Newbury Park, CA: Sage Publications.
- Gluesing, J., Alcorido, T., Baba, M., et al. (2003). The development of global virtual teams. In C. Gibson and S. Cohen (eds), *Virtual Teams that Work: Creating Conditions for Virtual Team Effectiveness*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass, pp. 353-380.
- Gluesing, J.C. and Gibson, C. (2004). Designing and forming global teams. In H.W. Lane, M.L. Maznevski, M.E. Mendenhall, and J. McNett (eds), *Handbook of Global Management: A Guide to Managing Complexity*. Oxford, UK: Blackwell.
- Hagedoorn, J. (1993). Understanding the rationale of strategic technology partnering: inter-organizational modes of cooperation and sectoral differences. *Strategic Management Journal*, 14, 371-385.
- Hamada, T. and Sibley, W.E. (eds) (1994). *Anthropological Perspectives on Organizational Culture*. Lanham, MD: University Press of America.
- Hanel, P. and St-Pierre, M. (2006). Industry-university collaboration by Canadian manufacturing firms. *Journal of Technology Transfer*, 31, 485-499.
- Hong, H.-J. (2010). Bicultural competence and its impact on team effectiveness. *International Journal of Cross Cultural Management*, 10 (1), 93-120.
- Johnson, J.C., Avenarius, C., and Weatherford, J. (2006). The active participant-observer: applying social role analysis to participant observation. *Field Methods*, 18 (2), 111-134.
- Kania, J. and Kramer, M. (2011). Collective impact. *Stanford Social Innovation Review*, Winter, 36-41.
- Kedia, S. (2008). Recent changes and trends in the practice of applied anthropology. In C. Guerrón-Montero (ed.), *Careers in Applied Anthropology in the 21st Century: Perspectives from Academics and Practitioners*. National Association for the Practice of Anthropology Bulletin 29. Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishing, pp. 14-28.
- Metcalf, C.J. (2011). Circulation of transdisciplinary knowledge and culture in a high-tech organization. *Anthropology News*, February, 28.
- Nieto, M.J. and Santamaria, L. (2010). Technological collaboration: bridging the innovation gap between small and large firms. *Journal of Small Business Management*, 8 (1), 44-69.
- Parker, B. and Selsky, J.W. (2004). Interface dynamics in cause-based partnerships: an exploration of emergent culture. *Nonprofit and Voluntary Sector Quarterly*, 33 (3), 458-488.
- Sarala, R.M. and Vaara E. (2010). Cultural differences, convergence, and crossvergence as explanations of knowledge transfer in international acquisitions. *Journal of International Business Studies*, 41, 1365-1390.
- Schensul, J.J. and LeCompte, M.D. (1999). *The Ethnographer's Tool Kit*. 7 vols. London, UK: Altamira.
- Schuler, R.S. (2001). Human resource issues and activities in international joint ventures. *International Journal of Human Resource Management*, 11 (1), 1-52.
- Schwartzman, H.B. (1993). *Ethnography in Organizations: Qualitative Research Methods*, Vol. 27. Newbury Park, CA: Sage Publications.

- Sengir, G.J., Trotter, R.T., II, Briody, E.K., *et al.* (2004). Modeling relationship dynamics in GM's research-institution partnerships. *Journal of Manufacturing Technology Management*, 15 (7), 541-559.
- Simon, M., Houghton, S.M., and Gurney, J. (1999). Succeeding at internal corporate venturing: roles needed to balance autonomy and control. *Journal of Applied Management Studies*, 8 (2), 145-159.
- Trotter, R.T., II, Briody, E.K., Sengir, G.H., and Meerwarth, T.L. (2008a). The life cycle of collaborative partnerships: evolutionary structure in industry-university research networks. *Connections* (International Network for Social Network Analysis), 28, 40-58.
- Trotter, R.T., II, Sengir, G.H., and Briody, E.K. (2008b). The cultural processes of partnerships. In E.K. Briody and R.T. Trotter, II (eds), *Partnering for Organizational Performance: Collaboration and Culture in the Global Workplace*. Lanham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield Publishers, Inc, pp. 15-54.
- Tsang, E.W.K. (1999). A preliminary typology of learning in international strategic alliances. *Journal of World Business*, 34 (3), 211-229.
- Wasson, C. (2000). Caution and consensus in American business meetings. *Pragmatics*, 10 (4), 457-481.
- Wasson, C. (2006). Being in two spaces at once: virtual meetings and THEIR representation. *Journal of Linguistic Anthropology*, 16 (1), 103-130.
- Wernle, B. and Auer, G. (2000). Ford's former world car is now mainly for Europe. *Automotive News Europe* 28, September 25.
- Yamazaki, Y. and Kayes, D.C. (2004). An experiential approach to cross-cultural learning: a review and integration of competencies for successful expatriate adaptation. *Academy of Management Learning and Education*, 3 (4), 362-379.
- Yin, R.K. (2009). *Case Study Research: Design and Method*, 4th ed. Applied Social Research Method Series Vol. 5, Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.
- Zhang, D., Lowry, P.B., Zhou, L., and Fu, X. (2007). The impact of individualism-collectivism, social presence, and group diversity on group decision making under majority influence. *Journal of Management Information Systems*, 23 (4), 53-80.